

Examining the Leadership Abilities of Head Teachers in Public Sector Primary Schools at Karachi Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine the administrative abilities of head teachers in public sector primary schools in the Korangi district. The study design employed was a descriptive survey utilizing closed-ended questions. The study population comprised 95 public primary schools (N=95). The survey had a total of 215 participants, with 95 being head teachers and 120 being teachers of both genders. The study utilized the Simple random sample technique to gather data from school head teachers and teachers in four municipalities of District Korangi. The study included a self-designed questionnaire to obtain data on administrative skills. The findings indicate that gender does not determine conceptual, human, and technical capabilities. However, the successful execution of administrative skills and talents is heavily influenced by the level of qualification and experience. The study findings revealed that elementary school teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of their head teachers. Most teachers and head teachers were uninformed about their obligations and held negative views regarding their head teacher's administrative capabilities. Furthermore, the study's findings revealed that a significant number of head teachers exhibit a distinctively autocratic and negligent demeanor, which poses obstacles in their relationships with instructors. Head teachers should demonstrate proactive leadership by addressing internal conflicts and fostering positive relationships to effectively harness the potential of their human resources. Head teachers should organize in-service training programs to enhance their technical proficiency and inspire them to cultivate their skills at all levels. Concrete recommendations were derived from the study findings.

Keywords: Leadership Abilities, Administrative, Head Teachers, Primary level

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine the significant drop in the standard of government schools in Karachi, which were once highly effective just ten years ago. It is distressing to watch this decline. The majority of primary schools in Karachi are not adhering to the fundamental principles necessary to guarantee high-quality education. The majority of schools in the Korangi district are experiencing several issues that have been commonly identified in studies. These issues include inadequate governance and administration, subpar infrastructure, political interference, insufficient number of qualified teachers, lack of staff punctuality, absence of basic amenities, and an unfavorable learning environment. It is necessary to assess the administrative skills of the head teachers in a methodical and structured manner. Consequently, a researcher has undertaken the task of analyzing the administrative capabilities of head teachers at public sector primary schools in the Korangi area. Currently, there is a lack of research conducted on this highly significant topic. The effectiveness of administration can be assessed by the presence of a conducive learning process. A head teacher is an individual who holds a position of leadership and authority within a school. The head teacher assumes responsibility for the teaching of all students, the supervision of staff, the establishment of educational goals and direction, and the formulation of school policies. Ultimately, head teachers are accountable for ensuring the efficient operation of a school rather than actively instructing in classrooms. Head teachers effectively guide, inspire, and oversee personnel by assigning tasks, establishing expectations, and assessing staff performance. This work necessitates robust engagement with both internal and external stakeholders, both within and outside of

the institution (Ahmad, Ali, & Sewani, 2021). The head teachers in Government schools lack administrative advice and practical experience, as their appointment is based only on seniority. This also leads to a disparity between their instructional and managerial responsibilities. The appointment of head teachers, at all levels, is primarily based on seniority rather than on suitable expertise. Consequently, they administer their schools through rigorous assessments. Consequently, they transform into individuals who merely patch up issues instead of effectively resolving them. Memon (2000) asserts that head teachers bear the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the efficient operation of a school. The head teacher ensures the high standard of academic performance. While the head teacher may have extensive expertise, their primary responsibility is to provide educational guidance and leadership, rather than actively teaching in classrooms. Qutoshi and Khaki (2014) demonstrate that head teachers effectively lead, inspire, and oversee personnel by assigning roles, establishing tasks, and assessing staff performance. This job necessitates robust engagement with all stakeholders, both within and outside of the institution. The head teacher is considered a change agent responsible for overseeing and motivating others to attain objectives. Head teachers have advanced qualifications, extensive years of experience, and significant exposure to academic and professional training. The primary responsibilities of the head position encompass leadership, supervision, and management. As facilitators or change agents, individuals should possess strong administrative skills and decision-making abilities. They must be prepared, equipped, and dedicated to meeting the requirements of children, addressing the concerns of parents and teachers, and tackling the various challenges posed by the community in terms of learning, economic, public, and cultural aspects.

The administration of an institution must strive for optimal outcomes. The administrator is responsible for designing, implementing, and enhancing the academic programmes. The main component of the institution is responsible for providing guidance and facilitating the growth of others in conjunction with itself. It encompasses more than just the administrative role. An administrator is entrusted with numerous obligations that necessitate proficiency in management, academic knowledge, and other relevant skills. The ability to make sound decisions is crucial for excelling in this role. An excellent headmaster demonstrates optimism, confidence, and adeptly maintains positive relationships with people while overseeing the work of instructors. An effective administrator maintains strong communication and fosters a supportive relationship with the pupils. This may address the issue of discipline since it allows the pupil to become acquainted with their headmaster. A competent headmaster possesses exceptional social skills. The head teacher assumes the position of an educational leader in order to address challenges, enhance the skills of the staff, and create a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Efficient governance enhances the individual's rapport with educators and the community, thereby fostering school advancement. The entire management of the school is dependent on the head teacher, meaning that the success or failure of the school is in their hands. Head instructors establish objectives and goals in accordance with national objectives, and delegate responsibility to staff members based on their specialization and expertise. According to Westman and Keith (2010), head teachers fulfil their responsibilities of overseeing, administering, making decisions, managing, and establishing educational improvements in schools. Pakistan has three main educational systems: public, private, and religious. These systems cater to the educational requirements of its population, which is approximately 200 million.

Government schools consistently encounter several issues related to inadequate resources and substandard conditions and education. Most school head teachers mostly operate as passive recipients of governmental decisions rather than actively contributing to the development of quality education in schools. A majority of Pakistani youngsters enroll in government schools as a result of their poor household finances. Khan (2010) highlighted the fact that Pakistani school administrators lack a comprehensive grasp of their role, mostly due to the absence of professional development programmes. They limit themselves to administrative duties rather than actively engaging in educational processes within schools, such as overseeing, professional development programmes, or enhancing the curriculum. Typically, head teachers are expected to fulfil both their academic and administrative responsibilities concurrently. Inadequate proficiency, ambiguous job responsibilities, and insufficient professional knowledge lead to unsatisfactory results. Similarly, primary schools are managed by head teachers who are promoted based on their seniority. According to Kandasamay and Bleton (2004), there are three essential qualifications that an individual must have in order to become the head teacher of a public school. 1. Pedagogical expertise 2. Duration of service 3. Excellent Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs).

Khan (2012) argue that school heads, who are selected based on seniority from the teaching staff, lack fundamental leadership abilities. The recruitment of head teachers neglects the development of management and interpersonal skills, resulting in a reduced capacity to make effective judgments due to inadequate training. Warwick and Reimers, (1995) classified Pakistani school principals as individuals who lack administrative skills and are unaware of their roles and responsibilities. Memon (2000) stated that Pakistan lacks well-defined government

policies that priorities the role of school heads and their professional growth. Therefore, head teachers have a limited comprehension of important ideas such as the formulation of a vision, involving others in decision-making, distributing authority, evaluating and assessing, teaching techniques, engaging parents and the community, and other educational and leadership matters. Khan (2010) expressed disapproval of the managerial abilities of head teachers in Pakistan. Typically, head instructors possess a bachelor's and master's degree. The majority of head teachers lack professional expertise. Khan (2000) highlighted that in Government primary schools in Sindh, the promotion of head teachers is primarily based on seniority and the possession of sufficient Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs), with around 85 percent of head teachers being promoted through this criteria. The head teacher writes ACRs (Annual Confidential Reports) for instructors by observing several aspects.

The head teachers in the public sector lack both administrative training and managerial skills. Their primary emphasis is on management rather than academics, leading to an imbalance between their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Typically, elementary school head teachers are appointed without undergoing any induction or orientation process. Consequently, they acquire skills and techniques through practical experiences while on duty. It enables them to excel at resolving issues rather than merely identifying them, (Dinham, 2005). Researchers have proposed that there exists a substantial disparity in the selection criterion for head teachers in Pakistan compared to other nations. It is imperative to ascertain the specific information, abilities, and strategy required for head teachers to achieve success as school leaders and managers. In the present day, the tasks of administration and management have become more intricate and varied. Consequently, schools want capable, well-structured, and dedicated Head teachers who can effectively address the demands of the 21st century. Qutoshi & Khaki (2014) suggested that substantial modifications are necessary in educational administration to enhance the efficiency of the system. Acknowledging the importance of educational leadership, many mechanisms have initiated a series of educational reforms. Therefore, it is necessary to make efforts to comprehend the responsibilities of head teachers and ascertain the specific information, abilities, and attitude required to become an efficient school administrator and successful management (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Pakistan, education serves as a vehicle for enacting national development. The National Education Policy has established aims and objectives for Pakistan's educational advancement. A key role that head teachers play in accomplishing these aims and goals. As an administrator, manager, and leader, the head of school holds a special position and uses school resources to further institutional objectives (Khan, et al. 2020). In Pakistan, school management has not received enough attention in the past few years. It is becoming increasingly clear that we need better educational pioneers as we struggle to advance in our shift towards change. Due to this lack of investigation, chiefs and strategists are unable to comprehend the full scope of the challenges facing Pakistani school heads (Mansoor, 2015). In Pakistan, the National Education Policies also emphasized the value of professional development for school employees. Through school clustering and other strategies, the National Education Policy 1998–2010 advocated for the institutionalization of in-service training for educators, teacher trainers, and educational administrators in order to boost the efficacy of the professional development system. Khan (2012). However, the National Education Policies highlighted the need for reform in all domains, including professional development, pre-service training and qualification standardization, teacher salary, career advancement, and status, and governance and management of the teaching workforce.

Head teachers are now spending more time in study halls than in offices due to a significant shift in the past few decades in the conventional responsibilities of administrators, with student learning and accomplishment remaining the primary objectives. Education is a profession that requires administrators just like any other. The academic environment is changing quickly these days, and qualified school administrators who possess the abilities to overcome significant obstacles and improve student achievement are becoming an increasingly crucial component of this paradigm change. Over the past few decades, numerous modifications have been made to school management. The head teacher's job used to be solely administrative, but it has since expanded and become more demanding. Teachers are undoubtedly the most visible individuals in the classroom, but head teachers are ultimately in charge of creating the ideal learning environment. In order to achieve the advancements and progressions needed in public schools, there are a few standard characteristics that apply, even though the stated tasks of head teachers vary depending on the school level they oversee. We now hold them more accountable than ever for the development and upgrading of an environment that supports individual understudy learning and advancement due to the advancements in teaching methodologies. Through research, head teachers have a significant impact on the success of schools. While this impact is not directly related to the head teacher's role, it is indirectly related to the actions, instructions, and policies the head teacher implements in the classroom to meet the objectives of education.

Contemporary school principals should possess a high level of knowledge and demonstrate professional and administrative competence. The government should allocate resources to support principals by sponsoring their attendance at conferences and providing opportunities for professional development. This will not only promote their professional growth but also serve as an incentive for their performance. Additionally, principals should collaborate with teachers to define objectives, as their involvement in the decision-making process will enhance their commitment to achieving these objectives, (Ogundele, et al., 2015)

The position of head teacher leadership has evolved in tandem with school administration's rising complexity and power in response to everyday, higher-level learning objectives. These days, the head teacher is in charge of overseeing all parties involved, including students, parents, instructors, board members, and policy makers. According to Mangin (2007), the head teacher serves as a liaison between the community and the school, providing the necessary financial, human, and intellectual resources to provide the frameworks necessary for efficient teaching and learning. The way a school is run has a significant impact on its character. The mechanism that allows an organization or establishment to be managed is called organization. It is therefore a system or arrangement for the efficient operation of any association, including educational institutions. The board receives direction, oversight, and authority over all matters pertaining to schools from the instructive organization. Direction is provided by the authorities within the educational system and the community, and control and organization function as teaching tools. Sidhu (1996–). A school's principal is thought to possess abilities in personnel utilization, curriculum development, management, and coordination. They also oversee all major activities carried out in the school. In the sphere of education, management plays a crucial role. The accomplishment of established objectives and goals is not feasible in the absence of coordination and management by all parties involved in the field of education. The foundation of both student growth and school improvement is the administration of the school. In instructional leadership, teachers receive support in their pedagogical techniques and problem-solving abilities. The institution's head promotes, encourages, and lets teachers acquire new skills in order to meet the social and intellectual demands of the pupils. It is the fundamental responsibility of the head of the school to be involved in the teaching and learning process; to observe teachers in action and assist them in improving instruction; to set and communicate the goals of the school; to direct and assess instruction; to organize educational programs; to monitor the educational progress and improvement of the students; to ensure instructional time; to maintain high standards; to provide teachers with encouragement or support; to advance proficient improvement; to create and implement scholarly standards; and to provide learning with motivating forces. The instructional administration views the head teacher as the institution's leader (Ahmad, Sewani, & Ali, 2021; Ahmad, Thomas, & Hamid, 2020).

The management, control, and instruction of the educational programs, peaceful consideration, discipline, appraisal assessment, asset distribution, costing and planning ahead, staff liaison, and the application of commonsense skills necessary in long-term strategies of association, such as judgment, arrangement, correspondence, handling conflicts, holding meetings, etc., are all components of school organization. These tasks can be broken down into the following categories: planning, organizing, supervising, and evaluating the educational establishments. The head of the school's operations should ensure that these lead to efficient instruction and learning outcomes in the classroom. As a result, the head of a school serves as a coordinator, administrator, regulator, facilitator, and problem solution. According to Kelechukwu (2011), the head teacher is the administrator and occupies a crucial role in the school. He is the employees' and students' personal manager. In addition, he oversees finances and is responsible for communicating with the government and stakeholders. Head teachers oversee a variety of responsibilities, including staff and student administration, curriculum development, instruction, school finances, planning, and other general duties. He is a standard-setter, someone who takes the lead in encouraging teachers and students to have high expectations of their performance (Imran, et al., 2023; Khoso, Oad, & Ahmad, 2023). According to Amina (2022), leadership styles propounded by different scholars have been evolving. Therefore, providing quality leadership amid crises and pandemics gives rise to the exploitation of new ways of leadership style. The literature on this topic provided an overview of school organization and its importance to head teachers in particular. Schools' administrative duties cannot be disregarded. Although the field of studying school policies is new, it will continue to grow as more schools are established. Examining school policies has grown crucial since schools need skilled management to oversee employees and achieve goals. Educational objectives cannot be achieved if there is no authority or if the organization is unable to manage the resources entrusted to it. Implementing educational policy correctly calls for capable administrators who can make efficient use of both human and material resources.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research strategy was implemented. Surveys are employed because of their significant advantages, such as being a study conducted in the field and the convenience of approaching a large number of respondents. Conducting the task is straightforward given the scarcity of resources in terms of time and money. Research can easily engage in direct connection with study respondents and collect data without squandering valuable resources. Survey research involves gathering data from a subset of persons by asking them questions, as described by Check and Schutt (2012). The survey research strategy is commonly employed to analyze and investigate human behaviors in the fields of Social Sciences, Education, and Psychology (Dixon, et al., 2016). The study primarily examined the administrative abilities of head teachers in public sector primary schools located in the Korangi region of Karachi. The technique is valuable for examining, comprehending, and evaluating the efficacy of administrative abilities of head instructors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The vast majority (96%) of primary school teachers believe that head teachers do not effectively manage staff attendance for timeliness. 58% of primary school teachers reported that head teachers do not regularly visit classrooms to observe current teaching and learning activities. According to 63% of primary school instructors, head teachers are often negligent in overseeing the lesson plans created by the teachers. Primary school teachers report that, in the majority of cases (51%), head teachers do not assess teacher observations and fail to provide them with essential guidance for improvement. (88%) Teachers from public sector primary schools report that head teachers are typically hesitant to delegate certain responsibilities to their staff. According to 62% of instructors in public sector primary schools, head teachers generally lack faith in evaluating the preparation and execution of the curriculum. (63%) Primary school instructors believe that head teachers frequently neglect to regularly evaluate staff performance. Based on the findings of a survey conducted among 63% of primary school teachers, it is commonly observed that head teachers often fail to acknowledge the factors that drive motivation among their staff and children. The user's text "(60%)" remains unchanged. Primary school instructors reported that head teachers often fail to ensure that staff members are working collaboratively. The majority (83%) of primary school teachers believe that head teachers lack the technical skills to effectively allocate existing finances based on the priority of really important expenses. Approximately 61% of primary school teachers reported that head teachers generally lack sufficient training in maintaining the cash book, as well as handling supporting vouchers and bills. (68%) Primary school instructors often assert that head teachers are often permissive in procuring funding from sources other than the government for the purpose of enhancing the school.

According to 61% of primary school instructors, head teachers frequently neglect to ensure the orientation of new students in their school. Approximately 55% of primary school instructors believe that head teachers generally show a lack of interest in consulting with students. (50%) Teachers from public sector primary schools assess that head teachers typically possess a conventional mindset and do not foster the development of innovative ideas from teachers. Approximately 56% of primary school teachers report that head teachers often fail to make essential decisions for school improvement. Approximately 55% of primary school teachers believe that head teachers tend to avoid frequent meetings for the purpose of making decisions. Approximately 53% of primary school teachers report that head teachers frequently neglect to involve staff members in decision-making and matters that affect them. (52%) Teachers from public sector elementary schools claim that head teachers fail to cultivate a positive rapport with the community and stakeholders. Approximately 57% of primary school teachers typically organize Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) and actively seek input and guidance from parents. The percentage is 71%. Teachers from public sector primary schools report that a majority of the head teachers do not engage the community in school programmes. Approximately 54.2% of head teachers in elementary schools do not value the efforts made by their workers. Primary school instructors report that head teachers are often hesitant to publicly praise staff initiatives and prefer to provide private criticism, according to 64% of respondents. (53%) Teachers from public sector elementary schools think that head teachers lack the ability to effectively manage difficult situations.

According to the perception of 55% of primary school teachers, head teachers typically exhibit biased attitude during conflicts. According to the perspective of 56% of primary school teachers, head teachers generally struggle to establish trust between instructors and students. Primary school teachers, according to 61% of them, believe that head teachers do not generally exhibit the behaviours that they demand from others. According to 55% of primary school teachers, head teachers often display biased behavior and do not provide equal opportunity to all staff members. Additionally, 55% of teachers from public sector primary schools report that head teachers frequently neglect to ensure the effective execution of government policies. According to 58% of primary school teachers, head teachers typically neglect their obligation to offer essential amenities for pupils and staff. According

to 66% of primary school teachers, head teachers are unsuccessful in creating a conducive learning atmosphere. Approximately 52% of primary school teachers report that head teachers demonstrate a general lack of concern when it comes to safeguarding school resources. The majority (69%) of primary school teachers report that head teachers fail to assume responsibility for the development of new instructional content. According to a primary school teacher's opinion, around 54% of head teachers typically lack interest in the cleaning and maintenance of school assets. Approximately 53% of primary school teachers believe that head teachers generally neglect their duty to foster a culture of accountability. Approximately 59% of primary school teachers report that the school's objectives have not been properly articulated, primarily by the head teachers. Primary school instructors report that 53% of head teachers have failed to manage and follow the timetable. (62%) Teachers from public sector elementary schools believe that head teachers do not consistently provide monthly assessments. Approximately 64% of primary school instructors hold the belief that head teachers demonstrate negligence when it comes to assessing students' exercise books. Approximately two-thirds (66%) of primary school teachers report that head teachers lack a solid foundation of expertise in disciplinary practices.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted by reviewing relevant literature and administering questionnaires to determine the fundamental administrative skills possessed by head teachers in public sector primary schools. The findings revealed that a significant majority of head teachers lack the essential administrative skills that are vital for school development. The latest research revealed that male and female head teachers possess equivalent administrative abilities. Head teachers with higher levels of professionalism, qualifications, and overall experience tend to possess superior administrative skills compared to those who are less qualified, less educated, and less experienced. The study aimed to observe the various administration abilities of head teachers, such as conceptual, human, and technical skills, in public sector primary schools located in the Korangi district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Head teachers in today's educational system must possess a high level of knowledge, expertise in both management and professional matters, as well as practical skills in order to support government initiatives and effectively implement policies. Teachers were found to believe that their head teachers do not fulfill the majority of their duties. Primarily, their efficiency was subpar. To enhance their efficiency, individuals must fulfill their allocated obligations. Due to the limited scope of this small-scale study, it is challenging to provide definitive recommendations. However, the following proposals are proposed to enhance school management and improve the quality of education. A head teacher must possess both knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to arrange training sessions, refresher courses, and seminars to increase their professional abilities. In order to enhance the quality of education and ensure the appointment of competent individuals, it is advisable to promote experienced experts as head teachers. Appointing someone as a principal only based on their experience is akin to jeopardizing the success of an institution. While expertise is valuable, the selection process for a head teacher should include a set of specific criteria. The government should provide training to head teachers both before they start their job and throughout their service in order to enhance their competencies. The government should ensure accountability and implement checks and balances for all the responsibilities and job descriptions of their head teachers. In order to enhance intrapersonal interactions between head teachers and teachers, it is important to recognize that a head teacher cannot effectively operate independently without the collaboration of instructors. The head teacher should collaborate with teachers to clearly articulate the objectives and ensure their successful attainment, as teachers have actively contributed to the decision-making process about these aims. The Head teacher should prioritize academic matters by minimizing the time spent on secretarial and administrative tasks. Head teachers are advised to actively engage the local community and many stakeholders through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in order to enhance the school facilities. It is advisable to convene staff meetings in order to deliberate on their academic advancement and challenges. Head instructors must possess precise financial data on their school. Head teachers should proactively adopt numerous measures to enhance the well-being of their staff members, such as improving working circumstances, upgrading infrastructure, and ensuring cleanliness, instead of depending solely on the government. In order to achieve generality, it is imperative to gather the perspectives of both parents and students in additional research studies. To evaluate the head teacher's approach and actual growth in institutions, it is necessary to undertake qualitative research through observations and interviews.

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