

An Explorative Study to Investigate the Academic, Financial and Administrative Problems of the Principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools in the Province of Punjab

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Abstract

The intent of this study was to recognize the problems of Principals of Government higher secondary schools of the province of Punjab. This study was quantitative based on survey design. A survey was conducted for the collection of relevant data from the respondents. All the public higher secondary schools' principals of the province Punjab were the target population of this research, while the principals of 10 districts (e.g., Gujranwala, Gujarat, Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, MandiBaha-ud-Din, Bhakkar, Khushab, Mianwali, and Sargodha) of the province Punjab was the sample of this study. To draw the sample for this study, multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was adopted. To the tune of 187 principals of Government Higher Secondary schools was constituted the sample of this study. As a research instrument, a self-devised questionnaire was used to obtain the pertinent data from the respondents. Statistical techniques like frequency, t.test, and one-way ANOVA were applied for analysis of the data. It was found that principals of the public higher secondary schools were facing different kinds of problems like academic, financial and administrative in administrating of their schools. Consequently, some recommendations were made to deal with these problems efficiently.

Keywords: Principals, financial, administrative and academic problems, Higher secondary schools

Introduction

Education is the most prominent indicator of socio-economic development. The education rate at both the primary and secondary level is significant for the uplift of every segment of the society. In this regard, the institutions at the secondary level have an important role in the academic foundation of every child. Presently, these institutions are facing multi-dimensional problems which are a shortage of classrooms, lack of adequate funds, the dearth of the trained teachers and above all, the competent supervision. This study purposely chose to report on the work of the headteacher, herein referred to as headmaster of the Secondary School (Caroline & Agnes, 2013).

The major purpose was to describe the state of affairs as they exist based on the relationship between the teachers and the headmaster. The teachers in public sector secondary school, in most of the developing countries, are working in challenging circumstances in terms of lack of physical resources. In Pakistan, the situation is not different. In most of the public secondary schools in Pakistan, the teachers are confronted with a lack of physical resources which has contributed to a large extent in their demotivation towards their work (Makinde, 1984). "Recent studies also point out that it is only the teachers' working context which motivates or demotivates them. The research also recommends for the exploration of factors within the school context, which can contribute to teacher motivation". Research assumes that when teachers' work context is conducive for their motivation, then they are motivated (Konchar, 1988).

Literature considers that the headmaster can create an environment in the school through his/her influential role, which motivates teachers towards their work. "The head master's approach heartened teachers to work collaboratively towards the achievement of their goals. He also involved teachers in decision making and empowered them as autonomous professionals". He developed friendly relationships with the teachers and appreciated their efforts (Muli, 2005). The education system of Pakistan has many problems. Although, the general problems of the system of education in Pakistan have long been identified through various studies, in many instances, the causes of the problems of teachers are yet to be discovered. This study attempts to identify the main causes of problems of teachers underlying the education system of Pakistan due to which the function of schools, the process of teaching and learning, the quality of students' results are negatively affected.

Financial problem

In Pakistan education is the most neglected in terms of financial support from the government side. The government spends the least budget on education which is less than 2 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Due to receiving less financial support, the sector has remained the most underpaid and poor in performance. This fact has rendered the education sector as the most unattractive profession in the country. Teacher community is the most financially poor in the society which compels them to look for other sources of money at the cost of their professional integrity in some case. Teachers get more than fewer salaries in the country (Zafar, 2003). Teachers are unable to lead a decent life within the salary provided to them by the government. This factor has affected the motivation level of teachers. The teachers as a whole do not take an active interest in the performance of their duties. This situation has ultimately impacted the whole process of

quality in teaching and learning in schools. In many cases, teachers get salaries without attending schools. The ratio of teacher absenteeism in government schools is higher. Many teachers run their own businesses apart from their professional duties (Shahzadi and Perveen, 2002).

Administrative Problems

Due to the lack of teaching and learning aids in schools, the teacher faces many during the teaching process. Some schools even do not have basic aids such as boards and books. Some schools do not have classrooms and a library. There are no playgrounds for the physical development of students (Qureshi, 2002). This situation has created more problems for teachers as they cannot provide the students with wider opportunities for learning and development. Teachers are expected to cover courses well in time. In these conditions, teachers fail to create a meaningful learning environment in schools (Hussain, 2001).

Academic Problems

Curriculum development in Pakistan is a centralized activity. The curriculum is developed, and schools are supposed to implement it as it is without any manipulation. Teachers' role is that of the implementer. They cannot contribute on their own towards the process of curriculum development or evaluation (Hoodbhoy, 1998). This practice has left the teachers ignorant of many aspects of the curriculum which ultimately affects not only their own performance but also the process of teaching and learning in schools. In many cases, teachers are not aware of the aims or goals of the curriculum for certain levels. This creates gaps between the understating of the curriculum and its effective implementation. In developed countries of the world, teachers are invited to participate in the process of curriculum design and development. Their inputs are considered vital for the right direction of the education system (Government of Pakistan, 2001).

Issues regarding textbooks

The textbook is a vital ingredient of teaching and learning process. It is one of the important sources which provide opportunities for the improvement of reading and new knowledge for learners. Textbook development is a highly specialized area in curriculum development. A textbook as one of the sources of content is an essential element of education (Farooq, 1993). Teachers in Pakistani schools face the problem of instruction due to non-availability of quality textbooks. There is a culture of multi-medium of instructions in schools. This confuses both the teacher and the student. Besides, there is a lack of training of teachers on how to facilitate or explain concepts from different textbooks (Hussain, 2001). This lack of orientation has created confusion among teachers which reflects in their poor performances.

Lack of Professional Development and Resources

Within the realm of education, there are mounting concerns about the deficiencies in preparation and the general lack of quality professional development for school leaders (Cortez-Jiminez, 2012). Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, and Dean (2005), Lock, Budgen, and Lunay (2012), and Salazar's (2007) research indicated that rural principals need unique forms of leadership development for their rural circumstance. Additional research highlights that particular topics need to be threaded into professional development for rural principals, including mutually beneficial school-community partnerships and relations (Cortez-Jiminez, 2012), financial management for rural schools (Williams & Nierengarten, 2011), and mentorship for rural principals (Brown-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006).

Depending on the school district's economic situation and tax levies, lack of funding is often a major issue faced by rural principals (Arnold, 2004). Limited funding exacerbates issues already established within many rural contexts. Examples of such issues include travel costs for professional development, travel cost for extracurricular sports, the absence of specialized teachers and a school guidance counsellor, aging infrastructure problems, and reliable access to the Internet. As the leader of the school, the rural principal is often ascribed to find *extra* money, to enable school programs and educational services. Research highlights that a major concern for rural principals is effectively creating financially savvy school budgets (Williams, 2012). In turn, as compared to urban schools, rural principals are commonly required to be more creative and do more on a constrained budget.

Due to tight financial restraints, successful grant writing has become an important skill and responsibility of rural principals (Williams et al., 2009). Based on an Australian study involving 90 principals, Starr and White (2008) suggested that, for some rural schools, the most influential medium for receiving extra finances lay in the principal's ability to prepare a solid, convincing case for a particular grant or award. Moreover, when funding requests are successful, there is ongoing work to ensure continuity of funding. For example, upon receiving funding, suitable teachers need to be hired, progress reports need to be submitted, and detailed evidence of student improvement needs to be supplied to funding agencies to preserve the flow of finances.

On the topic of resources, one of the most valuable resources in any rural school is its teachers; however, as compared to urban principals, rural principals tend to face greater challenges in attracting highly qualified candidates for teaching positions (Montgomery, 2013). This point is especially true in the subjects/areas of technology (Cullen, Brush, Frey, Hinshaw, & Warren, 2006), high school sciences, mathematics, and French immersion special needs (Dykes, 2009), and ESL (Cortez-Jiminez, 2012). As compared to urban principals, rural principals often have smaller staff numbers to lead; however, with a small staff, the type of professional relationship between the principal and teacher has a great influence on retaining rural teachers (Haar, 2007).

In this modern-day era of educational accountability, school leadership has become increasingly stressful, political, complex, and time-consuming (Duke, Grogan, & Tucker, 2003). Starr and White (2008) described this intensified accountability as "a response to globalization, particularly with concern for

international competitiveness in trade, workforce capacity, innovation, and educational outcomes” (p. 2). Within the school environment, there is great emphasis on implementing centralized policies, commissioning continuous/school improvement goals, and documenting improved student achievement as gauged through standardized test results, all of which have intensified the workload of principals (Renihan & Noonan, 2012)

The significance of the study

The present study will identify the problems of government higher secondary schools’ principals in the Punjab province and their repercussions. The facts revealed by the study would help the planners and administrators to follow the better line of action, to enable the Principals of Higher Secondary Schools to combat and solve the problems they come across.

Policy makers may be able to understand the problems as well as the repercussions of the problems, faced by the principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools. Consequently, the policymakers may be able to prepare a need based modified policy as per on ground situation and requirements. The study may assist Educationists to understand the challenges of Principals at Higher Secondary Schools. It may also make the Educationists realize and recognize the ground situation. Consequently, these Educationists may attract concerning authorities and policymakers to give importance to concerns and problems of the Principals in their policies and plans. This awareness will bring about a positive and fruitful change in the educational process.

This study may be helpful for the other stakeholders like community, parents, and students by getting the real picture about the problems of principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools as well as the repercussions of these problems. After getting awareness of real situations, they will be able to play their role in a realistic and useful manner. They may show a more positive and realistic attitude toward the school administration and may extend their cooperation accordingly. Higher secondary level is a gateway to higher education. Its improvement definitely has a bearing upon higher education. This study will highlight the causes of presumed failures and drawbacks of the Higher Secondary School Scheme, indirectly. It may be a document for authorities to look over the challenges of this level and make a solid policy to meet the challenges regarding it. This study may serve as a milestone for future researchers on similar problems of the administrators in educational institutions.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of going on research was to investigate the problems faced by the Government Higher Secondary Schools’ Principals of the province of Punjab.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were as listed below:

1. To explore the perceptions of the principals regarding problems of higher secondary schools in the province of Punjab on the basis of job status promote/ selectee.
2. To explore the perceptions of the principals regarding problems of higher secondary schools in the province of Punjab on the basis of age.

Research questions of the study

The following research questions were framed for this investigation:

1. Do the perceptions of the principals on the basis of job status promote/ selectee regarding the problems of higher secondary schools differ?
2. What are the perceptions of the principals on the basis of age of the principals regarding the problems of higher secondary schools?

Research design

This research was descriptive in nature. A survey of the opinions of the principals was conducted to collect the information for this study regarding the problems of principals of Higher Secondary School. A questionnaire as a research tool which was developed on five points Likert scale was used to explore the problems.

The population of the research

The population of this study was comprised of all the Principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools of the province of Punjab. There were 676 principals of the Government Higher Secondary Schools all over the province of Punjab among them 327 were male and 349 according to the Punjab Management Information Unit (PMIU, 2017).

Sampling

Convenient sampling technique was applied in this research for the purpose of selection of the sample. Ten districts were selected at first stage viz; Gujranwala, Gujarat, Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahaud-Din, Bhakkar, Khushab, Mianwali, and Sargodha. Furthermore, 187 principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools of the targeted districts were approached to collect the data.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire as a research tool was devised by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of the following two parts: The first part consisted of the items regarding demographic information of participants. The second part consisted of the 40 items regarding the possible problems of the principals of the Government Higher Secondary Schools comprising academic, financial and administrative problems.

Validity and reliability

The questionnaire was validated by the experts of the field. Three experts from the relevant field

validated the items of the questionnaire and proposed some changes, which were incorporated accordingly therein. After the process of correction, the final version was applied for pilot testing to determine the reliability before the collection of data. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the forty principals that were not concluded in the sample for pilot testing. The collected data were analyzed, and their reliability was determined. Some amendments were made in the light of reliability test results. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the coefficient reliability of the questionnaire. The calculated value of Cronbach Alpha was 0.909, which shows high reliability that is displayed in the following table

Table 1

Reliability Statistics regarding the self-developed instrument “problems of government higher secondary schools’ principals in Punjab and their repercussions.”

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.909	40

Table shows the reliability index of the “Problems of Government Higher Secondary Schools’ Principals in Punjab and their repercussions.” There were 40 statements in this instrument. Reliability index, Cronbach’s Alpha was .909, which shows high reliability of the instrument.

Data collection

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the principals in person as well as with the help of fellows where it was possible to the 187 principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools. The number of the received questionnaire was 157 out of 187 with 83.95 % of return rate.

Analysis presentation

The collected data was computed using SPSS. Frequency, independent t.test, and ANOVA were applied for multiple comparisons. Descriptive analysis showed that 88 principles were male and 69 were female principals among 157 principals out of 187. The tune of 39 principals was from the urban area, and 118 principals were from rural area. Majority 72 principals were M.A and 51 principals were MSC whereas 29 principals were M. Phil and only 5 principals were Ph.D. degrees holders. It means that the major professional group of principal was 100, who was M. Ed or M.A (Edu). The second group of principal was 34 with B.Ed. degrees whereas 18 principals were B.S.Ed. and only 5 principals were MS. Ed degrees holders. It showed that majority of 82 principals were 1-5 years’ experience, 31 principals had the experience between 6-10 years in selected sample whereas 25 principals had the experience between 16 and above.

Table 2

Description of the table regarding the job status of principals

	Frequency	Percent
Promoted	61	39
Selected	96	61
Total	157	100

Table 2 indicated the job status of principals and percentage of selected principals. It showed that there are 61 were promoted, and 96 were selected principals participated in this study. The total sample consisted of 157 principals.

Table 3

Description of the table regarding the age of principals

	Frequency	Percent
20-30	15	10
31-40	26	16
41-50	50	32
51-60	66	42
Total	157	100

Table 3 indicated the age of principals in the shape of frequencies and percentages. It was shown that the majority of 66 principals had 51-60 years' age. Second 50 principals had 41-50 years' age in the selected sample. 26 principals had 31-40 years' age, and 15 principals had 20-30 years' age.

Table 4

An independent sample t-test for difference of principals' opinions on the basis of job status promoted and selected.

	Job	N	df	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Academic Problems	Promoted	61	155	54.72	6.473	-.928	.355
	Selected	96		55.65	5.831		
Financial Problems	Promoted	61	155	31.08	4.409	-.220	.826
	Selected	96		31.24	4.357		
Administrative Problems	Promoted	61	155	62.05	10.563	-1.316	.190
	Selected	96		64.16	9.250		

Table 4 shows that an independent sample t-test was applied to compare the different opinions of Promoted and Selected principals' related academic problems of higher secondary school principals. There was no significant difference in scores for Promoted (M = 54.72, SD = 6.473) and Selected, M = 55.65, SD= 5.831; $t(.928) = 155$, $p = .355$. Table shows that an independent sample t-test was applied to compare the different opinions of Promoted and Selected principals' related Financial Problems of higher secondary school principals. There was no significant difference in scores for Promoted (M = 31.08, SD = 4.409) and Selected, M = 31.24, SD= 4.357; $t(.220) = 155$, $p = .826$. Table shows that an independent sample t-test was applied to compare the different opinions of Promoted and Selected principals' related Administrative Problems of higher secondary school principals. There was no significant difference in scores for Promoted (M = 62.05, SD = 10.563) and Selected, M = 64.16, SD= 9.250; $t(1.316) = 155$, $p = .190$. Results show that there was no significant difference in their perception scores between promoted and selected principals of higher secondary schools regarding the academic, financial and administrative problems faced by principals of higher secondary schools.

Table 5

Comparison of Perceptions of the higher secondary school's principals on the Basis of age regarding the identification of the problems of government higher secondary schools' principals.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic Problems	Between Groups	188.626	3	62.875	1.722	.165
	Within Groups	5587.476	153	36.519		
	Total	5776.102	156			
Financial Problems	Between Groups	60.693	3	20.231	1.064	.366
	Within Groups	2910.313	153	19.022		
	Total	2971.006	156			
Administrative Problems	Between Groups	749.969	3	249.990	2.686	.049
	Within Groups	14239.139	153	93.066		
	Total	14989.108	156			

Table 5 shows academic problems that $F = 1.722$, $df = 3$ and $p = .165$ there was no significant difference among Perceptions of the higher secondary schools principals' on the basis of their age regarding the Academic Problems of government higher secondary schools' principals. Table shows financial problems that $F = 1.064$, $df = 3$ and $p = .366$ there was no significance difference among Perceptions of the higher secondary schools principals' on the basis of their age regarding the Financial Problems of government higher secondary schools' principals. Table shows administrative problems that $F = 2.686$, $df = 3$ and $p = .049$ there was significance difference among Perceptions of the higher secondary schools principals' on the basis of their age regarding the Administrative Problems of government higher secondary schools' principals. Results show that there was no significant difference in their perception scores among principals on the basis of age of higher secondary schools regarding the academic and financial problems and there was a significant difference on the basis of age in their perceptions regarding administrative problems faced by principals of higher secondary schools.

Findings

Addressing the research question 1” Do the perceptions of the principals on the basis of job status promote/ selectee regarding the problems of higher secondary schools differ?” It was found with the help of data collected from the principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools that there was no significant difference in their perception scores between promoted and selected principals of higher secondary schools regarding the academic, financial and administrative problems faced by principals of higher secondary schools. Regarding the second research question “What are the perceptions of the principals on the basis of age of the principals regarding the problems of higher secondary schools? It was found that there was no significant difference in their perceptions of the principals on the basis of age of higher secondary schools regarding the academic and financial problems but the notable thing which was found that there was significant difference on the basis of age in their perceptions regarding administrative problems faced by principals of higher secondary schools. The P-value .049 was less than the significant value that was .05. This means the common problem of the principals of the Government Higher secondary schools was administrative problems that they were facing.

Discussion

Principals confront new difficulties and problems as they enter a new millennium of educating America’s youth. These problems are frequently just changes or indications of more seasoned and existing issues. They may require inventive methodologies or new accentuation, as teachers endeavor to address them with regards to our quickly extending society. Many studies were conducted related to investigating the principals’ problems or challenges at the higher secondary school level. There is a need to compare the results of this current study with some studies about in such a manner, directed in the past around the globe.

The review was about the difficulties to optional school principals' initiative in northern locale of Nigeria. The expressive overview configuration was embraced for this review. The instrument for information accumulation was a 20 things survey title: Challenges to Secondary School Principals Leadership Challenges Questionnaires (CSSPLQ). The analysts found that Secondary school education board did not have an arrangement of sorting out courses for limit working to retrain and enhance initiative adequacy of principals in the district. Poor subsidizing of schools is a noteworthy issue of principals' initiative incapability and absence of accessibility of assets straightforwardly to the school’s record to run the schools seem likewise as an issue.

Recommendations

The government should take steps to overcome the problems of The Principals of the Schools which are highlighted in the findings of the research. After overcoming the problems of The Principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools,’ the principals can perform their duties more effectively and efficiently in schools. In this way, the performance of the school will be improved. Based on the above discussion and conclusion, the following recommendations can be made:

- Vacant posts of Higher Secondary Schools should be filled up. Keeping in view the scarcity and importance especially subject specialist of English should be ensured in each higher secondary school.
- The facilities including properly managed computer labs, well equipped science laboratories, established a library and playground should be ensured in each School.
- The irrelevant assignments from higher authorities create great hurdles in academic work. So, these assignments should be minimized and should not be at the peak of the session. Other duties of school staff should be minimized and be with the consent of principals only.
- Principals should be provided leadership training to enhance their leadership qualities to meet the challenges of changing era.

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