



Problems Encountered by Head Teachers at Primary Schools in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Principals are main agent of school improvements. Head teachers encounter many problems and challenges driven by many internal factors operating in the school. These problems are threat to the continuation of head teachers themselves in their position and the success of school. Thus, the main purpose of the study was to explore the problems encountered by head teachers at primary level in central Punjab and finding out the difference among male and female heads teachers of primary school in Punjab. Data was collected through survey method and study was quantitative in nature. Population of this study was comprised of all head teachers at primary level in the public schools (32348) of Punjab. After delimitation Lahore district is considered to be the final population that comprised of 523 primary schools. All the head teachers of primary schools in Lahore were selected as a sample of the study and the response rate was 90.7% making the final sample as 475 primary schools. Census sampling technique was used. Self-developed questionnaire was used for collection of data. The numbers of items in head teachers' tool were 27 and Cronbach's Alpha value of head teacher instrument was .704. The data was analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Packages for social Sciences). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to calculate the data. In descriptive statistics was used to calculate the Mean, Standard Deviation and frequency. In inferential statistics, independent samples t-test was used to find out the significance difference among demographic variables (gender). There found significant difference in the opinion of male and female head teachers regarding problem encountered. Main problems indicated by the head teachers were student based, teacher based, departmental and personal. It is recommended that school education department should develop a committee in which solutions to such problems should be addressed and resolved in order to quality educational management of public sector schools. The study suggested further qualitative in-depth research to pose solutions of these problems so that policy makers may develop a systematic structure and proceedings of the committee.

Keywords: Problems, head teachers, Punjab, principals, educational managers

1. Introduction

Management of primary schools is critical. Every level of education has different policies to ensure that resources are used appropriately. The management controls decision regarding implementation, and choices for execution, in order to attain intended goals (Kobayashi, 2022). The educational manager attempts to manage all the resources of the school. In primary schools, the head teacher is in charge of all academic operations related to teaching staff, students, and department, academic and financial matters (Tintoré, Cunha, Cabral, & Alves, 2022).

Literacy rate of Pakistan is very low. The primary school enrolment ratio is also quite low; almost 50% of the students are not enrolled; and the primary school infrastructure and system are out dated (Ishtiaq, 2019). A number of inadequacies exist in the administration of the primary school system; yet, beneficial changes in the development of primary school students need are observed in studies (Ishtiaq, 2019). The study in had analysed the problems encountered by head teachers in primary school of Punjab. The study aimed to identify the problems encountered by primary schools heads teachers of Punjab; furthermore, it also evaluated gender wise difference in opinions regarding problems of primary school head teachers.

The study further suggested how these issues impact the growth of elementary schools. The finding of study may serve as a source of direction to the heads of primary schools. It can also give insights to authorities and administrators of education department. The empirical evidence provided by this study presented the highlights about academic and non-academic problem of primary school head teachers. The results may also be useful in removing inadequacies in elementary schools that are being addressed by school principals. The findings are useful for educational policymakers for developing policies that can reduce such hurdles for principals so the smooth operations of primary schools. The results highlighted students-related, teacher-related, financial, departmental and personal problems faced by the head teachers of primary schools of Punjab.

With the evolution of modern schools, the roles of school heads are evolving day by day (Ediger, 2014; Ishtiaq, 2019). "Most principals think that their responsibilities now have changed compared to five years ago and that the work has expanded in complexity," was how a recent national survey's findings were summarized (MetLife, 2013; Bozkus, 2022). The principal in today's public schools must be influential on wide range of fields with increased emphasis on the academic performance of students. This includes managing a complex human organization in the quickly changing dynamics of schools and society (Hallinger, 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2013; Marc & Ali, 2016; Marc & Ali, 2017; Mpezeni, 2022).

New school administrators must be equipped with the knowledge and abilities necessary to run the organization, but they also need to be able to provide effective instructional leadership that will raise the academic success of all students (Garza et al, 2014; Bush, 2022). Recent researches had revealed substantial deviations in our schools

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such as low students intake in public sector school (Holme et al, 2014; Maxwell, 2014), English not being the medium of instruction (Cline et al, 2014; Zarate & Pineda, 2014), and high poverty rate in rural areas (Kallestad, 2010; Sajid & Ali, 2018; Senturk & Ali, 2021; Ves, Davis & Varlaam, 2022). The majority of these problems reflect societal changes, and school administrators must be equipped to handle them. This paper is particularly intended for those who train future educational leaders and must be informed about the new problems principals are facing.

2. Literature Review

Literacy is vital in human growth because it allows individuals to combat poverty. Literacy has a vital effect on overall conditions of a country i.e. social, economic, political etc. A literate citizen has a better economic future than an uneducated person. Primary school education is directly responsible in increasing the literacy index of any country because it can produce those citizens who can at least read and write. Primary schools may quickly transform a kid into a confident individual with a strong sense of self-worth who is able to work successfully in a team and is imaginative. It can also direct a learner who self-reflects and accepts responsibility for his/her own learning (MICS, 2004; Mansor, Hamid, Medina, Vikaraman, Abdul-Wahab, Nor & Alias, 2022).

The developed nations have focused on school management in education reforms, and several organisations have also made contributions. The schools operational system includes intakes, instructions, performances, and feedback. The most essential variables influencing academic excellence are the education process and management, and management is dependent on managers, who are the leadership of the school. One of the most critical aspects influencing student success is the school management. The school principal is responsible for shaping teachers' growth, determining educational goals, and taking action to attain those goals (Brennan et al, 2014; Mansor et al, 2022).

The phrases education management and education administration are interchangeable and have the same meaning. In many circumstances, it refers to the everyday routines of principals and heads of schools, whilst in others; it refers to two distinct duties carried out by two dissimilar offices, such as administration and management. Typically, the school head is at the top management; they are hired by the government, and their tasks include enforcing government laws and regulations, as well as managing people and material resources in order to execute both management and administrative duties (Domike, & Edward, 2014; Bush, 2022).

Each personality has their own expectations, and the purpose of a head of an institute is to offer an inspiring atmosphere to develop common understanding and synchronisation among everyone to work jointly and in partnership for the advancement of students and school community. Because students are the primary focus of the school's objective, all associated activities should be increased to foster engagement (Forde, Torrance, Mitchell, McMahon, & Harvie, 2022). In this regard, it is critical to focus students' attention to the comprehension of the conclusions reached and to have an active part in decision-making, resulting in the bravery of excellent quality governance. It is the obligation of the institution's head to consult and recruit active involvement for the seamless operation and management of schools (Forde et al, 2022).

The institution's director and their subordinates must collaborate to make the institute a diverse learning environment for students of all levels and to offer them with equal opportunity to learn together (Forde et al, 2022). Human differences are natural phenomena, and they are reflected in school culture. Everyone must be treated with optimism. All pupils must be given equal opportunity to participate and contribute to the efforts through a diverse variety of working methodologies and individual treatment (Cheruto, & Kyalo, 2010; Bush, 2022).

3. Pakistan's Stance

Pakistan is consisted of 158,378 primary schools having 17,043,460 students and 447,890 teachers. Among these 37.8% schools are devoid of boundaries and 32.3% of water, while 56.4% of electricity and 40.5% of toilets, rests 6.8% do not have infrastructure. As per the Pakistan's constitution (1973), children must be having equal rights and access of education (Ishtiaq, 2019). They also have full rights of high quality education with healthy learning environment and safety. Global communities concentrating on and claiming education as a significant gateway to wealth, social and economic growth, harmony, peace, respect for people, law, and self-sufficiency (Farooq, 2013; Ishtiaq, 2019). While defining Education Administration policies in Pakistan, the constitution of Pakistan 1973 defines the allocation of responsibility between provinces and the federal government. The federal Ministry of Education is ultimately responsible for the formulation and management of national policies, plans, and programmes relating to education, including curriculum development, whilst local governments are responsible for policy implementation. Each province has its own Department of Education. The Education Ministry directly manages the educational institutions located in the capital. In the 1990s, Pakistan faced several challenges in improving educational provision, such as insufficient school buildings, a lack of basic amenities, unskilled instructors, a lack of classrooms, and a lack of textbooks. According to the education ministry of Pakistan, law requiring compulsory education had been enacted lately (eight years of compulsory education) (Nzeli, 2013; Ishtiaq, 2019).

4. Methodology of the Study

The review of the literature shows that it was necessary to conduct a study on the challenges faced by head teachers at primary level. Data was collected through survey method and study was quantitative in nature. Characteristics of population are being studied in Descriptive research. This methodology focuses more on the “what” of the research subject rather than the “why” of the research subject (Ishtiaq, 2019).

4.1. Population and Sampling

Population was comprised of the head teachers at primary level in the public schools of Punjab. There are 32348 primary schools in Punjab. Due to resource, time and financial constraints, the head teachers at primary level in the public schools of Lahore were considered to be the accessible population of the study i.e. Lahore to be the capital of Punjab and most populated city. The total number of primary schools in Lahore is 523. The sample is selected through census sampling and head teachers of all 523 schools were approached. The questionnaire returned were 475 becoming the final sample size. The response rate was 90.8%.

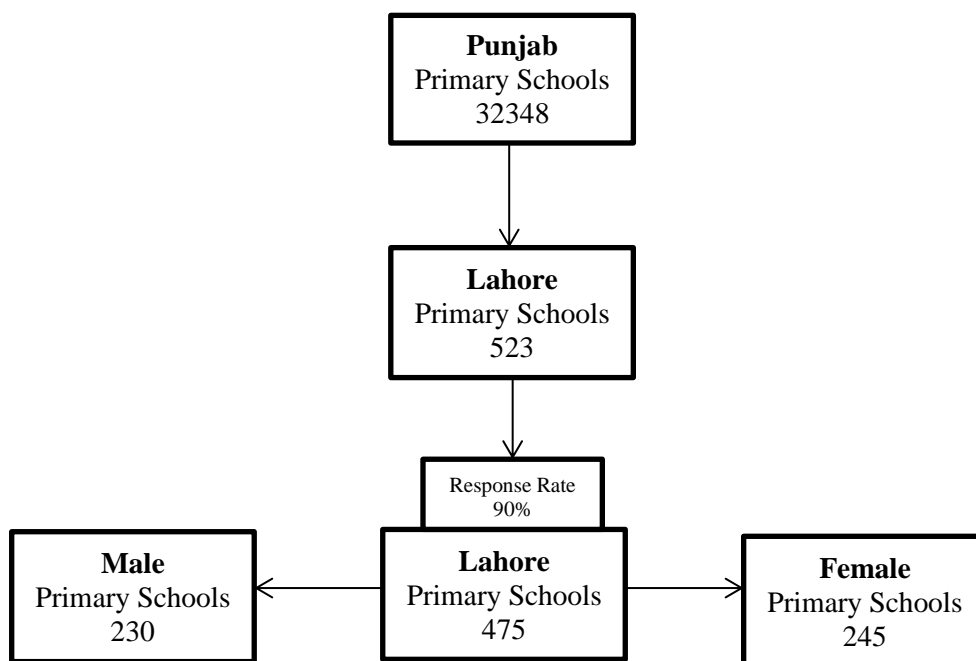


Figure-1

4.2. Instrumentation and Data Collection

Self-developed questionnaire was used for collection of data. The questionnaire was consisted two parts. First part was consisted on demographic variable like (gender, qualification, and experience) and second part was consisted on challenges of heads teachers (problems related to students, financial problems, problems related to teachers, departmental problems, general problems, personal problems). The numbers of items in the questionnaire were 27 and Cronbach's Alpha value of head teacher instrument was .704.

The data was collected from head teachers of Punjab. Researcher distributed the questionnaire personally and then collected from the head teachers. All the respondents were clearly informed that the activity of the data collection was only for the purpose of research. The data was analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Packages for social Sciences). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to calculate the data. In descriptive statistics was used to calculate the Mean, Standard Deviation and frequency. In inferential statistics, independent samples t-test was used to find out the significance difference among demographic variables (gender).

5. Results and Interpretations

Results are calculated and interpreted in terms of descriptive statistics for demographics and factors of the study. Moreover, gender wise significant difference related to problems faced by head teachers were evaluated through t-test.

The table-1 shows that the gender of the selected heads of primary schools. Male were (230= 48.4%) and female were (245= 51.6%) of primary school heads. The qualification of the selected heads of primary schools shows that there were (208= 43.8%) male and female primary school heads had B.A/B.Sc qualification and (261= 59.9%) of primary school heads had M.A/M.Sc and (6= 1.3%) heads had M. Phil qualification. The experience of the selected heads of primary schools shows that there were (214= 45.1%) male and female primary school heads had less than five-year experience and (165= 34.1%) of primary school heads had 6-10 years' experience and (95= 20%) heads had 11-15 years' experience and (1= .2%) had more than 16 years' experience. Total sample consisted 475 heads of primary schools.

Table-1: Distribution of Sample on the basis of gender, qualification and experience

Demographics	Attributes	Percent (n)
Gender	Male	48.4 (230)
	Female	51.6 (245)
Qualification	B.A/B.SC	43.8 (208)
	M.A/M.SC	54.9 (261)
	M. Phil	1.3 (6)
	less than 5 years	45.1 (214)
Experience	6-10 years	34.7 (165)
	11-15 years	20.0 (95)
	more than 16 years	.2 (1)
Total		100 (475)

Table-2: Factor-wise mean response values and standard deviation

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.
Students-based Problem	21.5789	2.81339
Departmental Problem	20.8211	3.18083
Teacher-based Problem	20.2463	2.35113
Personal Problem	12.7389	1.90913
Financial Problem	11.3116	2.62167

The above table shows that most problems faced by head teachers were students related problems ($M= 21.58$, $SD= 2.81$). The problems related to departmental ($M= 20.8$, $SD= 3.18$) and teacher related ones were comparatively moderate that were faced by head teachers. The lowest problems faced by head teachers were related to their own selves ($M= 12.73$, $SD= 1.90$) and financial ones ($M= 11.31$, $SD= 2.62$).

Table. 3: Gender-wise significant difference regarding problems faced by primary school head teachers

Factors	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	t	Sig.
Student	Male	230	21.75	2.69	473	1.268	.198
	Female	245	21.42	2.93			
Financial	Male	230	11.23	3.22		-.653	.514
	Female	245	11.39	1.90			
Teacher	Male	230	20.30	2.34		.443	.631
	Female	245	20.20	2.36			
Departmental	Male	230	20.7000	2.94216		1.436	.810
	Female	245	20.3061	3.02993			
Personal	Male	230	12.8348	1.86875		1.060	.050
	Female	245	12.6490	1.94579			

The difference between male and female head teacher at primary level regarding various problems related students was calculated in the above table.

There was no significant difference between male ($M=21.7478$, $SD=2.68538$) and female ($M=21.4204$, $SD=2.92509$), $t=1.268$, $P=.198$ head teachers' for student related problem. There was no significant difference between male ($M=11.2304$, $SD=3.21893$) and female ($M=11.3878$, $SD=1.90143$), $t=-.653$, $P=.514$ head teachers' for financial related problems. There was no significant difference between male ($M=20.2957$, $SD=2.34185$) and female ($M=20.2000$, $SD=2.36366$), $t=-.443$, $P=.631$ head teachers' for teacher related problems. There was no significant difference between male ($M=20.7000$, $SD=2.94216$) and female ($M=20.3061$, $SD=3.02993$), $t=-.1436$, $P=.810$ head teachers for departmental related problems. Therefore, it shows that there was no difference among male and female regarding problems related teachers.

On the other hand, there found a significant difference between male ($M=12.8348$, $SD=1.86875$) and female ($M=12.6490$, $SD=1.94579$), $t= 1.060$, $P=.050$ head teachers for personal related problems. Therefore, it shows that there was difference among male and female regarding general problems.

The table-4 indicated that One Way ANOVA was used to find the difference among head teachers at primary level. Results indicated that there was no significant difference $F(474)$, .839, $p=.633$ head teachers regarding their qualification (B.A/B. Sc, M.A/M. Sc, M. Phil). Therefore, it shows that there was difference among male and female regarding students' related problems. Results also indicated that there was no significant difference $F(474)$, 1.396, $p= .171$ head teachers regarding their qualification (B.A/B. Sc, M.A/M. Sc, M. Phil). Therefore, it shows that there was difference among male and female regarding financial problems. Findings indicated that there was no significant difference $F(474)$, 1.898, $p= .016$ head teachers regarding their qualification (B.A/B. Sc, M.A/M. Sc, M. Phil). Therefore, it shows that there was difference among male and female regarding departmental

problems. The data indicated that there was no significant difference $F(474), 1.035, p = .417$ head teachers regarding their qualification (B.A/B. Sc, M.A/M. Sc, M. Phil). Therefore, it shows that there was difference among male and female regarding personal problems.

Table. 4: Qualification-wise difference in problems encountered by Head Teachers

Problems	Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Student-based	Between Groups	3.420	15	.228	.839	.633
	Within Groups	124.677	459	.272		
	Total	128.097	474			
Financial	Between Groups	4.113	11	.374	1.396	.171
	Within Groups	123.984	463	.268		
	Total	128.097	474			
Departmental	Between Groups	8.446	17	.497	1.898	.016
	Within Groups	119.651	457	.262		
	Total	128.097	474			
Teacher-based	Between Groups	3.241	15	.216	.794	.684
	Within Groups	124.856	459	.272		
	Total	128.097	474			
Personal	Between Groups	9.297	15	.620	1.035	.417
	Within Groups	274.884	459	.599		
	Total	284.181	474			

6. Conclusion and Discussion

According to the study's findings, primary school head teachers encountered a number of obstacles while putting strategic management plans into practice. The head teachers also confront a number of obstacles when it comes to raising academic performance in schools; if these obstacles were to be overcome, performance in schools would increase. When it comes to maintaining high standards of discipline in schools, head teachers face difficulties such as a lack of sufficient parental support and the prevalence of drug addiction among pupils, not to mention the fact that physical punishment cannot be used on disobedient kids. For better management of educational institutions, it is necessary to solve the aforementioned difficulties. The study comes to the conclusion that although head teachers encounter numerous difficulties while putting strategic management plans into practice, the impact of those difficulties may be reduced if those difficulties are acknowledged and resolved. Strong leadership that is prepared to bring together all the stakeholders in the education sector is necessary for this. If the finest outcomes are to be obtained in schools, it is necessary to remind all the stakeholders of what is expected of them once they have been brought on board. Education institutions are, after all, public entities that must be well-managed for a better society.

The main issues facing elementary schools were resource management, ensuring access to clean drinking water, managing the sewage system, evaluating teachers' instructional methods, and reducing the school dropout rate. The use of physical punishment, instructors' attitudes toward students and administrators, and teachers' absences in rural areas were the other issues. It was discovered that elementary schools lacked a designated budget or yearly spending plan. These issues have a direct impact on the school manager's performance. The school managers were happy with their leadership, but they lacked knowledge and were out of date. It was also determined that the majority of administrators and educators lacked a thorough understanding of the 2006 curriculum. Primary and high school students presently follow Curriculum 2006, which is the current curriculum. USAID has started an initiative to introduce and execute a national curriculum in Baluchistan. However, the aforementioned initiative was made public in twelve Province districts. Teachers in primary schools were unclear about the revised curriculum. Even the majority of instructors were unaware of the main goals of the curriculum and instruction. The majority of head teachers lacked the skills necessary to run their classrooms in accordance with the 2006 curriculum. A checklist for the oversight of educational activities in elementary schools was not able to be created. They were deemed incapable to write reports and carry out their choices within the purview of the school.

The results support the findings of past studies i.e., that educational authorities should be taken as act regarding creation and sustenance of educational overall environment where large groups of students can get education (Adeyemi, 2012; Waweru & Orodho, 2014; Bush, 2022). Our present investigation made clear that most school heads/instructors lacked the necessary training in school administration. However, in current era, effective education management is becoming a mean to the edge of all corporate, domestic and international competitive development (Waweru & Orodho, 2014; Ishtiaq, 2022). Therefore, it is said that effective educational management is the procedure that employ quality educational services and performance of the students (Bizimana & Orodho, 2014; Forde, 2022). According to the past studies, effective implementation of a quality and excellence-based educational management system may significantly impact overall performance of the school. Recently, two significant studies examined the connection between performance and quality of educational management systems (Hendricks & Singhal, 2001; Mpenzi, 2022). Quality seems to have a key role in both studies

in contributing significantly to long-term organizational success. This raises the likelihood that implementing a performance management system based on quality and excellence would be a protracted process requiring the support of management and corporate culture at both the government and institutional levels (Waweru & Orodho, 2014; Bozkus, 2022). The results suggest that much work has to be done in the study area of Chogoria Division to improve the management skills of head teachers.

This is essential because there is a compelling justification for investing in enhancing the ability of head teachers to lead in order to enable the implementation of curricular and larger school changes (Fullan, Bertani & Qumine, 2004; Tintore et al, 2022). Additionally, according to the literature, heads have the power and capacity to greatly affect changes to the school environment because of their important role in the institution (Waweru & Orodho, 2014; Kobayashi, 2022). They also have the chance to impact change outside of the classroom since they are respected leaders in the school community (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013). Finally, any school principals hired to run any educational institution must be sufficiently trained in terms of general institutional management strategies. Since, they serve as a channel, introducing new connection among schools and the administrative system of schools (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013). In light of the aforementioned, it should be highlighted yet again that principals are at the core of a network of connections and, as such, have the ability to effect reform in order to increase educational standards. However, in the majority of institutions in developing countries, the interaction between head teachers, teachers, and school reforms has not yet been studied deeply (Orodho, 2014; Mansor et al, 2022).

The Commonwealth Education Partnerships (2013) highlight the significance of empowering teachers with appropriate opportunity and assistance through professional education. As school administrators, principals are capable of achieving their mission and create time-bound targets for improving school operations (Ishtiaq, 2019). They are capable of making proper decisions that are geared toward the institution's primary goals, ultimately having improved school outcomes. This study's findings are timely in light of these assertions. Therefore, it is necessary to embrace the difficulties encountered and implement leadership development programs that increase head teachers' capability to lead effectively in the area that is essential to their ability to serve as school administrators.

It is impossible to disregard the administration of primary schools. Punjab's urban and rural areas both have thousands of primary schools open for education. The majority of primary schools had two to three classrooms and three to five instructors, although some also had single teachers. Managing the school's physical and personnel resources is the primary responsibility of the primary head teachers or principals. Thus, Punjab government should take a strong notice in resolving issues of head teachers for quality education and leadership. The authorities should develop resolving committee and leadership development plan and also include these committees in new education policies so that head teachers may find a leverage of a support from school education department of Punjab for their professional stability and sustainability.

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