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Problems faced by private and public sectors schools administrators

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ABSTRACT

Present research intended to find out various problems faced by the schools administrators pertaining to how much principals and head of institutions are responsible in planning and developing an educational institution, how much they are empowered or struggling the quality education and healthy comfortable environment to the students and whether expectations attached to their role are realistic or not. The main objective of this study was to explore these issues, and also find their impact on the public and private institutions. Population of the research was comprised of head of institutes, Principals or campus administrators and section heads of public and private schools and colleges of Islamabad. A random sample of 153 respondents was collected from various public, private (chain schools) and individual owned schools with the help to research questionnaire. The results showed a dissatisfaction of educational administrators towards the organizational procedures, availability of resources and funds, implementation of modern methodology and concerns about advanced and updated curriculum and general facilities.

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Introduction

Managing and administrating education institution is a dynamic portfolio. The typical role of a principal / head of institute is directly responsible for planning, organizing and controlling in overall management operations. In a typical environment education is not treated as a career like any other where special consideration is given to human resource, skill development and regular growth. Generally the role is assigned to people upgrading from the teaching line where the administration and human resource management are not likely being the part of job description. Vary from organization to organization the administrator is defined and evaluated on the basis for major tasks, such as fulfilling the goals of the organization, manage human resources and make them work for obtain the same goals, keep the staff and people working for him or her happy and maintain the human-aspect and continuous development of the organization and people working for the organizations (Field, 1982). Administrators, in a broad meaning are supposed to utilize all available resources to achieve the goals of an organization.

Henri Fayol (1995) one of the most renowned contributors to modern concepts of management defines management to consist of six functions:



Administration is responsible for the efficient and smooth working of educational organization. Educational administration is responsible for the direction, control and management of all matters relating to school affairs (Government of Pakistan, 1998). The primary purpose of the educational administration is to achieve the objectives of the organization. Unless the administration is updated with the right tools and gears to meet up the new challenges, no organization or system can be successful (Mohanty, 1998).

Good education is the result of good administration. Administration is a rapidly developing profession not just a managerial supportive role. It needs professional trainings, scientific methods, study of social trends and democratic leadership to be competent and proven in the role (Hunt and Pierce, 1958). Administration in all organizations is confronted with a common set of tasks. Being unique educational administration is greatly different with business, medical, military and other segments of administrations. (AEPAM).

Effective educational administrators are measured with their management of human resource in an organization. Motivating employees improve their performance and skills and increasing over-all performance of the organization. Skills of Educational Administrators include technical skills, interpersonal skills conceptual skills leadership skills, diagnostic skills communication skills, decision making and time management skills.

Smooth operations can only be ensured by a competent administrator; Principals manage day to day operations and lead with command in an educational institute. They also direct the educational programs and community service organizations. Educational administrators set standards and benchmarks for the quality of education and they are responsible to design and implement standard operating procedures to run the institute. They also supervise and support overall staff including teachers, sports coaches an librarians etc. principals draft curriculums, programs, manage communication with parents, deal with admissions, do the budgeting, and guide the students and many other important tasks like that. Educational administrators may handle all these functions if they are well trained and equipped with new knowledge and skills (Gul 2005).

Murphy and Louis (1994) stated that the stress and pressure experienced by the educational administrators today is a result of complex set of expectations and demands their institutions are facing. The domain of educational administration is full of

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issues, stress and pressures like unhappy and complaining people (students and teachers) and never ending demands from management including increased performance, detailed reports, meetings and putting up extra time to deal with all these. Professionalism also means being perfect in communication, social affairs and teaching methodologies (Majra and Rao, 1996).

Good education is the result of good administration. Administration is a rapidly developing profession and not just a managerial supportive role. It needs professional trainings, scientific methods, study of social trends and democratic leadership to be competent and proven in the role. Administration in all organizations is confronted with a common set of tasks. Being unique educational administration is greatly different with business, medical, military and other segments of administrations. Compare to the past when environment was more stable and organizations were less complex, at present, the educational administrators are facing a variety of problems in their respective organization.

The present research is purely based on the practical experiences and focused directly to the pain areas of educational administration and focused to highlight the problem areas and hurdles being faced by educational administrators. There's a wide range of issues that arise from planning to everyday routines and sometimes they become quite a hurdle in executing smooth operations or end up being unresolved conflicts between administrators and management/stakeholders. The study tried to cover different aspects including management/stake holders' pressure, budgets and resources, internal support /people management, communication, social pressures, systems and procedures. The primary object is to set up different correlations regarding type of institution, experience and skills of administrator; and then rate the arising problems accordingly.

Statement of the Problem

Problem under investigation was to explore various problems faced by the school administrators of the educational institutions working under the Federal capital.

Objectives of study

1. To explore the various problems faced by educational administrators at a level of principal/head of institute and section heads
2. To explore levels and dimensions of various administrative problems faced by school heads.
3. To grade the highlighted factors in co-relation to the type of organization and the experience/skills of the administrators.

Research Questions

1. Do educational administrators directly responsible for planning, organizational development, controlling and grooming of human resources?
2. Do educational administrators are not properly empowered to handle various administrative issues of their institutions?
3. What is the difference between the nature of the problems faced by the public and the private sector educational administrators?

Methods

The intent of present study was to explore problems being faced in the educational administration. As this is a unique study so for this purpose a indigenous research instrument was developed through standardized process. The pilot studies were conducted; by discussing the commonly originating problems and drafted out an indigenous instrument to gauge the impact of all those problems such that they can be grouped as a major

category and rate the occurrences and scope of the problems being faced.

Construction of Research Instrument

The instrument development process initiated a discussion group of administrators from various institutes making sure the presence of all type of organizations from public, private and top names in educational systems and chains of schools etc. All pain areas in the educational management were listed down taking in consideration the input from all participants. The second phase was to put discussions in the form of questions. It started with roughly a pool 90 questions, summarizing and then chose the probing questions that could help in exploring various problems being faced by head of the educational administration.

Pilot Testing

Pilot study conducted on 15 subjects was pretty much helpful in identifying and grouping the various factors that were covered in our study. It became the framework of further clarify the hypothesis and lead to some crucial analysis and dimensioning the base variables. Some additions and deletions of questions were performed to optimize reliability and efficiency of the instrument till the Cronbach's Alpha optimized to 0.90 to make sure the reliability of the instrument.

Population

Population of the study was comprised of head of institutes, Principals or campus administrators and section heads from public and private schools and colleges of Islamabad. It included complete range with respect to size and type of institution covering from independent private schools, government sector institutes and well established names like Roots, Beacon house School System, Westminster, City School, Frobel's, OPF College and Convent Schools.

Sample

A random sample of 153 male and female school administrator, heads and sections heads was collected from schools heads of various private and public sector schools, qualification of the respondents ranged from B.ED. M.ED. to MBA and MPA, their management experience ranged from 4 to 20 years

The Instrument

The survey is anonymous; including the base factors like segmentations based on public or private sector institutes or experience/qualification of administrators. The majority of questions are based on Likert scale except the last one in which the participants were given a freedom to rate the scope of impact of various problems. The major areas grouped on the nature of questions are as followed.

Table 1 describe the dimensions and nature of questions asked in the research instrument, the questions are tagged under six categories and grouped as problem areas faced by school administrators. Major dimensions of the problems faced by school heads includes management structure and bureaucratic roles, placements and skilled staff, relationship with staff and teamwork, curriculum, community relationship, funds resources and infrastructure,

Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined through Cronbach's Alpha which is 0.84.

Management Structure and Bureaucratic Roles

As displayed in the table 2, the mean alone is not enough to explain the behavior, the mode and frequencies are included separately to get a clear picture of distribution of responses. The dissatisfaction is clear in every aspect including, structure of the

organization, communication of targets, SOPs in place and time taken in decision making and most important, the administrators/principals are not happy with the authority vested in them.

Table no 3 describe various issues of schools head regarding availability and placement of skilled staff. Most of the heads are satisfied with Authority of principals, satisfied with staff compensations and training of staff.

Table 4 provide respondents scores on relationship with staff and team work. Most of respondents are dissatisfied with working environment of their institutes. Most of the heads have neutral attitudes towards staff compliance.

Table 5 describes the descriptive statistics of respondents scores on problems related with school curriculum, most of the heads are not satisfied with present curriculum. A very high frequency of disagreement has been observed in curriculum that shows participants' concern over management ownership, team inputs and uniform application of syllabus and exam system.

Table 6 describes problems related with community. Driving parents' to keep interest in their children's education, keeping the healthy work environment in the campus and fighting other pressures are common tasks for the job portfolio of an educational administrator and it remains constant with every type of institution. Most of the administrators feel problems in these areas.

Table 7 provides details about issues related with funds and resources. Generally get the funds approved and provide a good space and facilities to students seems to be one of the biggest problems in government sector. Financial issues are less of a concern in organized school systems which seem obvious with their organized structure and streamline processes.

Rating of Listed Problems

Q-42 of the research instrument gives participants to rate the listed problems as applied in their institution. The problems rated as per the impact (Highest to lowest) are:

Overall Rating

1. Lack of material and funds
2. Working environment and the fitness of campus
3. Lack of initiative from staff / internal conflicts
4. Operating procedures / Poorly defined targets or expectations
5. Management Pressures
6. Parents interest in grooming students
7. Overpopulated classrooms
8. Unqualified staff
9. Shortage of Staff
10. Cooperation from Management

Table 8 describe the sector wise comparison on problems and issues related with school heads, from this table it can be seen that in the public sector administrator generally faced problems related with management structure and bureaucratic roles, placements and skilled staff, funds relationship with staff and teamwork, resources and infrastructure. In the private system schools community relate issues are common, moreover they also have problems related with funds and infrastructure.

Table 9 present the problems of schools heads of with different length of service. Analyzing the change in concerns and type of problems varying with respect to management experience of the participants; from this study it is observed that in the initial period of service the administrators seem to handling more towards the organizational structure and system issues like funds, material and operating procedures. The more experienced administrators are focused on the facilities, staff

competence and driving parents' interest. The problems become more centric to quality of service with the experienced administrators that show with time they prove good in handling systems, procedures and management.

Discussion

In the modern age like today, success is complex. At all levels of management, innovative leadership practices can play a vital role to meet the requirements of fast changing environment. School head is a leader who is supposed to be visionary, creative, strategic thinker inspiring, motivating and encouraging, problem solving and well-connected so he or she can use connections to resolve problems both internally and externally. Efficient communicator at level and must be well capable to make right decision under stress and pressures.

As stated by Shultz (2002), the raised bar of expectations has set new challenges for the administrators and since they are fighting at so many fronts at the same time, various issues keep popping up. They are directly responsible to satisfy management, staff students and parents and every class has a different scale to measure the performance.

Perpetual negatives in our results compilation alarming situation showing dissatisfaction of educational administrators in systems and procedures, availability of funds and resources and high level of concern towards their striving efforts to provide good education, application of modern methodology, updated curriculum and state of the art facilities. Most of the heads are not satisfied with their administrative powers despite of this their crucial role of educational administration is untiringly fighting on all fronts; satisfying management, motivating parents, counseling students and keeping the spirits of teachers high.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The research is purely based on the practical experiences and focused directly to the problem areas of educational administration. This project was intended to keep distinct and least conventional in terms of discussing models, approaches or theories; rather it was intended to cover all the real and on-ground issues that are being faced and administrators deal on daily basis while executing their daily job responsibilities. The solution lies with the management only to create a healthy environment, streamline systems and procedures, be more considerate to the recommendations and decisions from the educational administrators so that the focus from the everyday issues of funds and materials, space for the students and shortage of the students be better diverted towards continuous improvement in educational practice and methods.

Suggestions for Further Research

This research was very much generalized to highlight the problems being faced by educational administrators. Further in-depth research is suggested to evaluate the performance of educational administrators and contribution of their skills and experiences towards the common problems being faced in educational practices.

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Table 1

Problem Areas	Questions
1 Management Structure and Bureaucratic Roles	Q1-Q10
Organizational Structure	Q1-Q2
Targets and Expectations	Q3
Authority of Principal	Q4,Q16
Management Interference	Q5
Standard Operating Procedures	Q6-Q8
Interest of Management	Q9-Q10
2 Placements and Skilled Staff	Q11-Q17
Qualified Staff and Placement	Q11,Q13
Headcount	Q12
Staff Trainings	Q14
Satisfaction of Staff and Compensation	Q15,Q17
Control over staff	Q16
3 Relationship with Staff and teamwork	Q18-Q23
Staff Compliance	Q19,Q22
Working Environment	Q18,Q20,Q21,Q23
4 Curriculum	Q24-Q28
Management Control on Curriculum	Q24
Team Input in Curriculum	Q25
Curriculum Satisfaction	Q26,Q27
Uniformity	Q28
5 Community Relationship	Q29-Q34
Parents' Interest	Q29,Q30
School Environment	Q31,Q32,Q34
External Pressures	Q33
6 Funds Resources and Infrastructure	Q35-Q41
Funds and Resources	Q35,Q39
Space and Facilities	Q36,Q37,Q38,Q40
Authority of Principal	Q41
7 Grading of Common Issues	Q42
Cooperation from Management	
Operating procedures / Poorly defined targets or expectations	
Unqualified staff	
Overpopulated classrooms	
Shortage of Staff	
Lack of initiative from staff / internal conflicts	
Parents interest in grooming students	
Lack of material and funds	
Management Pressures	
Working environment and the fitness of campus	

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Scores on Management Structure and Bureaucratic Roles

[illegible]

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Scores on Placement and Skilled Staff

Question Number	Category	Mean	Mode	Frequency (1)	Frequency (2)	Frequency (3)	Frequency (4)	Frequency (5)	Standard Deviation	Variance
Q11	Qualified Staff and Placement	4.00	4	-	17 (11%)	-	102 (67%)	34 (22%)	0.82	0.67
Q12	Headcounts	3.44	4	17 (11%)	17 (11%)	-	119 (78%)	-	1.07	1.14
Q13	Qualified Staff and Placement	3.71	4	17 (11%)	-	-	129 (84%)	7 (5%)	0.98	0.97
Q14	Staff Training	3.00	2	-	51 (33%)	51 (33%)	51 (33%)	-	0.82	0.67
Q15	Satisfaction of Staff and Compensation	3.22	2	-	68 (44%)	-	68 (44%)	17 (11%)	1.14	1.29
Q16	Authority of Principal	2.44	2	34 (22%)	68 (44%)	-	51 (33%)	-	1.17	1.37
Q17	Satisfaction of Staff and Compensation	2.44	2	-	119 (78%)	17 (11%)	-	17 (11%)	0.96	0.92
Q11-Q17	Group2 Placements and Skilled Staff	3.11	3						0.32	0.10
Q11,Q13	Qualified Staff and Placement	3.89	4						0.57	0.32
Q12	Headcount	3.44	4						1.07	1.14
Q14	Staff Trainings	3.00	2						0.82	0.67
Q15,Q17	Satisfaction of Staff and Compensation	3.00	3						0.95	0.89
Q16	Control over staff	2.44	2						1.17	1.37

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Scores on Relationship with Staff and Team Work

Question Number	Category	Mean	Mode	Frequency of (strong est agree	Frequency of agree	Frequency neutral	Frequency disagree	Frequency of strongly disagreed	Standard Deviation	Variance
Q18	Working Environment	3.44	4	-	34 (22%)	17 (11%)	102 (67%)	-	0.83	0.70
Q19	Staff Compliance	2.78	3	17 (11%)	34 (22%)	68 (44%)	34 (22%)	-	0.92	0.85
Q20	Working Environment	3.56	4	-	34 (22%)	-	119 (78%)	-	0.83	0.70
Q21	Working Environment	3.22	4	-	51 (33%)	17 (11%)	85 (56%)	-	0.92	0.85
Q22	Staff Compliance	2.78	2	-	102 (67%)	-	34 (22%)	17 (11%)	1.14	1.29
Q23	Working Environment	3.44	4	-	34 (22%)	34 (22%)	68 (44%)	17 (11%)	0.96	0.92
Q18-Q23	Group3 Relationship with Staff and teamwork	3.11	3						0.57	0.32
Q19,Q22	Staff Compliance	3.07	3						0.54	0.29
Q18,Q20,Q21,Q23	Working Environment	3.22	3						0.42	0.17

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Scores on Curriculum

Question Number	Category	Mean	Mode	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)	Standard Deviation	Variance
Q24	Management Control on Curriculum	3.38	4	-	23 (15%)	51 (33%)	77 (50%)	2 (1%)	0.75	0.57
Q25	Team input in curriculum	3.66	4	-	17 (11%)	26 (17%)	102 (67%)	8 (5%)	0.74	0.55
Q26	Curriculum Satisfaction	3.88	4	-	-	25 (16%)	121 (79%)	7 (5%)	0.44	0.20
Q27	Curriculum Satisfaction	3.89	4	-	17 (11%)	17 (11%)	85 (56%)	34 (22%)	0.88	0.77
Q28	Uniformity	4.00	4	-	-	17 (11%)	119 (78%)	17 (11%)	0.47	0.22
Q24-Q28	Group4 Curriculum	3.90	4							0.12
Q24	Management Control on Curriculum	3.38	4							0.57
Q25	Team Input in Curriculum	3.66	4							0.55
Q26,Q27	Curriculum Satisfaction	3.95	4							0.39
Q28	Uniformity	4.00	4							0.22

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Scores on Community Relationship

Question Number	Category	Mean	Mode	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (5)	Standard Deviation	Variance
Q29	Parents' interest	4.24	4	-	-	17 (11%)	83 (54%)	53 (35%)	0.64	0.40
Q30	Parents' interest	3.63	4	-	32 (21%)	10 (7%)	93 (61%)	18 (12%)	0.94	0.89
Q31	School Environment	4.12	4	-	-	-	135 (88%)	18 (12%)	0.32	0.10
Q32	School Environment	3.51	4	-	38 (25%)	3 (2%)	108 (71%)	4 (3%)	0.90	0.80
Q33	external pressures	2.44	2	-	102 (67%)	34 (22%)	17 (11%)	-	0.69	0.47
Q34	School Environment	3.58	4	-	17 (11%)	30 (20%)	106 (69%)	-	0.68	0.47
Q29-Q34	Group Community Relationship ⁵	3.67	4						0.48	0.23
Q29,Q30	Parents' Interest	4.07	4						0.69	0.48
Q31,Q32,Q34	School Environment	3.76	4						0.44	0.20
Q33	External Pressures	2.44	2						0.69	0.47

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Score on Funds and Resources

Question Number	Category	Mean	Mode	Frequency (1)	Frequency (2)	Frequency (3)	Frequency (4)	Frequency (5)	Standard Deviation	Variance
Q35	funds and resources	3.00	2	-	85 (56%)	-	51 (33%)	17 (11%)	1.16	1.34
Q36	space and facilities	3.56	4	-	51 (33%)	-	68 (44%)	34 (22%)	1.17	1.37
Q37	space and facilities	2.91	4	36 (24%)	38 (25%)	-	62 (41%)	17 (11%)	1.43	2.04
Q38	space and facilities	3.60	2	-	58 (38%)	-	40 (26%)	55 (36%)	1.31	1.73
Q39	funds and resources	3.22	2	-	77 (50%)	3 (2%)	35 (23%)	38 (25%)	1.30	1.69
Q40	space and facilities	3.10	4	-	63 (41%)	17 (11%)	68 (44%)	5 (3%)	0.99	0.98
Q41	Authority of Principal	2.52	4	51 (33%)	40 (26%)	-	56 (37%)	6 (4%)	1.38	1.90
Q35-Q41	Group6 Funds Resources and Infrastructure	3.03	3						0.77	0.59
Q35,Q39	Funds and Resources	3.19	2						1.05	1.10
Q36,Q37,Q38,Q40	Space and Facilities	3.44	4						0.76	0.58
Q41	Financial Authority of Principal	2.52	4						1.38	1.90

Table 8
Comparison of Results with Respect to Type of Institutions

SCORES	PUBLIC	(%)	PRIVATE (CHAIN/ SYSTEM)	(%)	INDIVIDUAL	(%)
Group1 Management Structure and Bureaucratic Roles						
1						
2						
3			68	88%	47	69%
4	8	100%	9	12%	21	31%
5						
Group2 Placements and Skilled Staff						
1						
2						
3			68	88%	68	100%
4	8	100%	9	12%		
5						
Group3 Relationship with Staff and teamwork						
1						
2			17	22%		
3			51	66%	51	75%
4	8	100%	9	12%	17	25%
5						
Group4 Curriculum						
1						
2						
3					17	25%
4	6	75%	77	100%	51	75%
5	2	25%				
Group 5 Community Relationship						
1						
2						
3			34	44%	17	25%
4	7	88%	43	56%	51	75%
5	1	13%				
Group6 Funds Resources and Infrastructure						
1						
2						
3			34	44%	9	13%
4			32	42%	31	46%
5	8	100%	11	14%	28	41%

Table 9
Comparison of Results with respect to Administrator Experience

SCORES	4 - 6 Years	(%)	6 - 10 Years	(%)	10 - 15 Years	(%)
Group1 Management Structure and Bureaucratic Roles						
1						
2						
3	34	68%	65	98%	16	43%
4	16	32%	1	2%	21	57%
5						
Group2 Placements and Skilled Staff						
1						
2						
3	34	68%	65	98%	37	100%
4	16	32%	1	2%		
5						
Group3 Relationship with Staff and teamwork						
1						
2	3	6%	14	21%	4	11%
3	31	62%	34	52%		
4	16	32%	18	27%	37	100%
5						
Group4 Curriculum						
1						
2						
3					17	46%
4	48	96%	66	100%	20	54%
5	2	4%				
Group 5 Community Relationship						
1						
2						
3	18	36%	13	20%	20	54%
4	31	62%	53	80%	17	46%
5	1	2%				
Group6 Funds Resources and Infrastructure						
1						
3	18	36%	17	26%	8	22%
2	15	30%	30	45%	18	49%
3	17	34%	19	29%	11	30%
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