

Analysis of School Performance in Relation to Principal's Performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

The current study explores public sector secondary school principals' role in providing quality education with major focus on understanding their problems and pinpointing the notable reasons behind any low performing areas. The main objective of the study was to examine the importance of vision and objectives for the principals of secondary schools and highlighting the importance of leadership role principals can play to improve their schools. 201 out of 420 public sector secondary school principals of district Peshawar, Charssada and Mardan were surveyed. The major areas of the survey included: Vision and Objectives, Instructional Leadership, Parental Attitude, Teaching and Administrative Problems. The questionnaire was validated through pilot study engaging 30 principals which resulted into Cronbach Alpha score 0.0890. Collected data was analyzed by utilizing SPSS software V.23.0. The study revealed that principals if skilled with qualities like planning and evaluation through following up of the activities with preset activity calendar based on coordination and cooperation with staff and leading them through the principle of flexibility with win-win approach by delegating powers and training with scientific approach for the staff in the field concerned added with strong and regular parental involvement, can lead a school to be a model institute. The study further revealed that personal skills like awareness, strategic thinking, communicative power, collection of information, decision making, relationship building, conflict management, professional knowledge and record maintenance are also needed for the principals in order to better administer schools and contribute towards a quality schooling.

Key Words: Education, Public Sector Schools, School Principal, School Leadership Problems

Introduction

Schools are meant for positive change in behavior (Roffey, 2012). There are different stake holders responsible for delivery of quality education but one of the leading stake holders are the principals of schools. It is generally assumed that some of the major responsibilities of principals

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of the public schools are needful implementation of national curriculum and national education policy to help teachers, students and community members to ascertain the national objectives of education and to ensure smooth functioning of the schools. Principals of the schools have to lead their staff members and set a path for them to follow. Juvonen (2004) states "As the organizational leaders of their schools, principals are in the position to foster school's climate, thereby influencing both the learning conditions of students and the working conditions of teachers." It is a general perception that public sector secondary schools do not contribute towards the quality education delivery as per expectations. Quality education can be provided through well administered schools, which is now an undeniable fact.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa existing government is highly interested to improve the education performance of public sector schools. In this regard, public sector secondary school principals are supposed to appear with well-administered schools, both in terms of staff management and effective teaching-learning process. Therefore, the researcher, being a public sector education manager, is interested to explore the feedback of such principals and understand their response pertaining to school affairs the principals concerned deal with. In this connection, what does the research literature suggests and what feedback public sector school principals provide in terms of their dealing with school affairs is worth studying.

Objectives of the research

To explore the school affairs of public sector secondary school principals of districts Peshawar, Charssada and Mardan.

To suggest, in the light of literature review and feedback of the principals, ways and means to improve the effective school management in public sector secondary schools.

Research Methodology

201 out 420 public sector secondary school principals of district Peshawar, Charssada and Mardan were surveyed. The major areas of the feedback from principals concerned included: Vision and Objectives, Instructional Leadership, Parental Attitude, Teaching-learning process and Administration. The questionnaire was validated through pilot study engaging 30 principals which resulted into Cronbach Alpha score 0.0890. Collected data was analyzed by utilizing SPSS software V.23.

Key Findings

In terms of school development plan, 98% respondents agreed that school development plan is must for the development of each school. Out of 201, 90% respondents agreed that one-year operational plan must be practiced in every school. Relating to classroom activities, 81% respondents agreed that classroom activities should be observed and recorded. Feedback regarding teacher's performance revealed that 86% respondents agreed that they assess the teacher's performance on regular basis. They also provide instructional feedback to their teachers; and agreed respondents in this regard were 86.7%.

In connection of team efforts, 100% respondents responded that they try to develop a professional relationship with the staff concerned. Furthermore, 99.3% of the respondents responded that they share relevant information with teachers and students. Regarding the arrangement of staff meetings on regular basis 97% responded in yes. 90% principals agreed that they incorporate the input of the staff and members of community regarding school's affairs in their administrative decision. While 96% respondents agreed with the statement that they provide support to the teachers in decision making. In terms of parental attitude 76% respondents disagreed with the statement that parents visit school on regular basis. While 69% respondents disagreed with the statement that positive feedback is provided by the parents. Moreover, 55% respondents disagreed with the statement that parents motivate their children to study. 76% respondents disagreed with the statement that parents discuss their child's progress and help the teachers to overcome the weaknesses. Furthermore, regarding teaching learning process and administering staff, 76% respondents agreed with the statement that teachers are very cooperative. 65% agreed that teachers perform their duty well. While with respect to effective teaching 39% respondents agreed that their teachers use A.V aids and involve students in practical work.

Based on the findings of the study and exploring the research literature, the following areas may be suggested in order to facilitate the effective role of the principals.

Principals of the schools should value all the concerned quarters and must gain their confidence so that they always stand by them. Jean et al. (2016) states "Moving your school forward requires regular reflection on your own work and giving honest but respectful feedback and support to your teachers, even when this involves difficult conversations. "Decisions regarding school's matter should be made in consultation with concerned staff on rational grounds not harming the organization's interest. Bond (2008) States "If decision makers adopt an overly narrow mind-set during the generation process, they may be incapable of

conjuring all the objectives that matter to them. "Follow up activities help us to save all the energies applied for reaching a specific point and remove all the hurdles, which drag us away from our chosen path. According to Cheng (1996) "Lack of understanding of the relationship of teachers' professionalism to students' educational outcomes, class room management, teachers' job attitudes, and organizational factors hinders any effort for promotion of teachers' professionalism in local and international contexts."

Principal is the icon of the school. He/she has to perform different tasks throughout the year, but he/she alone cannot perform all the tasks. Activity calendar and delegating their powers to the staff members are effective strategies for task completion. They may provide guidelines to the staff members and give them the timeline for task completion and act as a monitor to notice whether the given task is taking place in accordance with the guidelines or not. Cooperation helps all the team members to be on their toes and complete the given task in time. It is a kind of chain which tightens all the members of the organization. Wang & Gurr (2016) states "I think no leader can work alone and succeed in working alone. He or she needs the help of a wide spectrum of people – the middle managers, teachers and the support staff to implement the policies and carry out programs." Growth and success of the organization also depends upon the proper coordination of the concerned people.

Technological development has superseded the orthodox way of delivering in the modern world. It has revolutionized our way of life. Its presence and effects cannot be under estimated. We have to adopt ourselves with the changing scenario. Same is the case with the education. We have to adopt modern means of imparting education to facilitate our young generation and getting them ready to meet the future challenges. Principals should be flexible and democratic to adopt the modern ways in teaching learning process.

Every task initiated without planning may be fruitless. Planning and evaluation helps to comprehend the prevailing situation and access the future needs of the organization. Planning on rational grounds lessens the chances of occurrence of unfavorable situation. Principal of the school can also make strategies for adopting educational innovations. Planning is successful when it is followed by evaluation. This practice helps us to understand whether the activity initiated was successful and it added to the performance of organization or not. It also supports us to make further changes in our plans.

Parents trust principals and teachers when they send their children to schools. Now it becomes the responsibility of the school administration not to let down the confidence of the parents. Parents must be involved in

all the activities taking place inside the school. It will build up their confidence and they will share their innovative ideas with the school administration. They will also support the school administration for the better future of their children. Parental involvement also keeps the teachers on their toes and they work devotedly.

Principals of the school should have personal qualities to lead the school. They should have impressive personality. They should be choosy in selection of words because their words matter and pay due respect to others. They should be good listener to comprehend the ideas and recall the ideas when needed. They should be properly dressed up and take keen interest in all the actions that they are going to initiate.

The following personal skills on part of the principal can facilitate his/her work.

Some of the public school principals suffer due to their lack of knowledge. They are not up-to-date about educational issues and educational demands of the society. They should be vigilant and must keep themselves updated to avoid embarrassing situation. Their lack of knowledge can badly affect the environment of the school.

Principals should develop the art of strategic thinking. It helps the school managers to foresee the problems and find suitable solutions. It also helps the principals in future planning for the school. About strategic thinking Simerson (2015) says, it is recognizing the broad-based and multifaceted implications of people, processes, systems, mechanisms and events.

Principal of the school should avail all the opportunities for the wellbeing of educational institute. These opportunities can arise from the local area, community members, public representatives, teachers, parents, ex-students etc. proper utilization of these opportunities can put a good name to school and raise the image of the school in the community.

Communication is an art which helps you to convince others and leave good impression on others. Principals of the public schools must enjoy command over verbal and written communication skills. Principals for most of the time have to deal public matter, thus their communication skill matter a lot for the school and they can easily convince others for the best interest of the school. Töremen (2006) opines "For good communication it is necessary that a person must be aware of the internal and external world in detail." By knowing his/her strengths a person can modify his/her attitudes, behaviors and sensations accordingly.

Data helps us to know about our strength and weakness. It further helps us in future planning of the school. Principals should be vigilant in collecting all kinds of information that can assist them in running the school smoothly. Data collected should be critically analyzed and it must

be channelized for the best interest of the school. James et al. (2008) says "Beyond the ability to successfully gather and analyze school data, principals need to possess basic skills for using these data for setting directions, developing people, and reinventing the organization. The use of appropriate data helps to maintain a consistent focus on improving teaching and learning."

Decisions made at the right time helps to avoid many problems. Pending decisions are harmful for the development of the institution. Decisions should not be made abruptly, but they must be made on rational basis keeping in view the ground realities and stakeholders' responses. School managers should also be authorized to make necessary decision to overcome the difficult situation. Patrinos (2009) states "Decentralizing decision making encourages demand for a higher quality of education and ensures that schools reflect local priorities and values."

Planning and organizing minimize the threats and risk factors and pave the way of success which is necessary for the productive outcome of the organization. Principal of the school leads a team that builds the future of young generation; therefore, they must plan and organize all the events of the school in advance, acknowledging the fact that they have to get the maximum out of minimum recourses. Planning and organizing also minimize the burden of the principals and they can initiate other positive activities for the schools. Planning should be made on the basis of available data.

The post of the public school principal is of public dealing post. First of all, he/she should establish his/her rapport in public to build up the trust in public and strengthen his/her position in implementing policy matters. Public trust will facilitate his job as they will extend their full support to the principal. The main focus of the principal should be the overall development of the school.

The job of the principals of the public school is very much demanding and full of challenges. They should have the ability of persuading the officers, community members, parents and staff members for the initiative they are taking for the school welfare and get their support in achieving his/her vision, mission and goals.

Mostly, the principal has to deal with parents and students, therefore, his/her attitude should be client friendly. He/she should facilitate them in the best possible way and has to ensure that they are fully satisfied when they leave the school. Shukla (2003) says "The kind of effort to link the school and the home which is typified by parent-teacher organizations is one that deserves expansion and refinement. By this means a great deal can be done to reduce the conflicts and tensions which often adversely affect the school citizenship of pupils and teachers."

Conflict management helps the school administration to overcome the day to day problems. Conflict management facilitates the work of the principal. Issues among the staff members, students, parents, community members may arise, which can pollute the atmosphere of the school. Principals while dealing conflicting issues have to keep their nerves under control and settle the issue peacefully not harming the interest of any party.

Professional knowledge on part of the principals of the public schools always serve as covering shield for them, which protects them from many problems. Those who are expected to be appointed as principals in the near future must be given proper training of managing the schools. According to Zimmerman (2003) "The principals' instructional leadership is crucial for quality education. In cooperation with others, the principal should ensure student learning by developing the vision and mission of the school, a focus on learning, a strong culture of continuous improvement, appropriate use of available resources, and a strong human resource development program.

The principals of the public school have to cope with many with many issues in school (Lovely, 2004). They should have the skill of adaptability and resilience in the changing scenario. Situation may vary from time to time and place to place, but they have to adjust themselves keeping in view the real interest of the students and school.

In short, the current study was to know the feedback of school principals in order to explore the school affairs and further exploring the research literature to ameliorate the efficiency of the school principals. In this regard, it can be concluded that principals are interested to work as team leaders with focused activities through annual school development plan and annual activity calendar. They are satisfied with the working approach of their teachers but not in terms of teachers' use of A.V. Principals are interested to record and monitor classroom activities. They provide continuous instructional feedback to the teachers. However, they are not satisfied with parental attitude towards sharing their child's progress. In short, there is a dire need of coordination and SLOs focused collaboration from top leadership to bottom working force. Ultimately the center of all the activities is to improve the child in given time and given situation.

In terms of recommendations, principals and teachers may both be taken through orientation program and post related training as per their job description. There should be a proper follow-up of trainings, so that the effectiveness of the trainings could be rated and if needed revision process is to be exercised. List of SLOs (Student Learning Outcomes) recommended by Elementary and Secondary Education department (E&SED) for each grade may be made available in all important school

areas to smoothen teachers' initiatives and principals monitoring. Scheme of studies is needed to be developed in line with the latest national educational policy. It should be displayed in the classrooms and teachers should be provided continuous guidance and monitoring to teach according to the given scheme.

Annual planner for holistic development of both students and teachers may be set to smoothen the functioning of principals. Standardized tools/inventories etc. may be made available in the school in order to smoothen the functioning of teaching-learning activities. Principals' need to delegate powers to the team members for which trainings of both the former and the latter is indispensable. Parents, being important stakeholders, need to visit school regularly to discuss the progress of their children.

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