EVALUATION OF HEAD TEACHER ROLE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL

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Abstract

This research project examined the impact of head teachers' role on school performance. Effective head teachers were defined by their possession of certain qualities, actions, and behaviors that align with established standards of excellence. School performance was measured by the achievement of short-term and long-term educational goals. To collect data, a multi-stage sampling approach was employed, starting with the random selection of a single tehsil (Nankana) from the Nankana Sahib district. Subsequently, a survey was administered to elementary school teachers and head teachers in the selected tehsil to assess the role of head teachers in driving school improvement. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on educational leadership, highlighting the critical importance of effective head teachers in enhancing school performance.

Keywords: Administration, effectiveness, head teachers, learning environment, leadership, school performance

1.Introduction

This research endeavor seeks to scrutinize the pivotal role of head teachers in spearheading school improvement in Pakistan. Historically, head teachers were expected to possess robust administrative and leadership acumen, but their role has undergone a significant transformation, necessitating a more diverse range of leadership skills. This study endeavors to investigate the correlation between head teachers' responsibilities and school performance, providing invaluable insights for stakeholders to enhance the quality of education in Pakistan. Contemporary head teachers grapple with a multitude of challenges that extend beyond academic excellence, including managerial tasks, ensuring a safe learning environment, data analysis, financial management, and more. Thus, they require a comprehensive understanding of school administration and a versatile skill set, in addition to effective pedagogical leadership qualities. By motivating teachers to achieve their educational goals, head teachers play a vital role in driving school excellence.

The school principal, also known as the head teacher, holds a multifaceted position that encompasses a range of management and leadership responsibilities, all aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of maximizing school performance and realizing its objectives (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; McCullough et al., 2016).

Establishing a rigorous evaluation system grounded in quality performance standards is essential for assessing head teacher effectiveness, which is critical for their professional growth and development, ultimately leading to improved school outcomes and maximized performance (Karatas, 2016).

Head teacher effectiveness is defined as the measurable impact of a head teacher's performance on school improvement, and a clear and precise definition is essential to establish a valid, authentic, and purposeful evaluation system that accurately assesses their effectiveness and informs meaningful professional development (Clifford et al., 2012).

Today's school head teachers play a vital role in inspiring teachers to excel, creating a nurturing environment that empowers them to achieve their educational goals to the highest possible level. Studies have shown that the head teacher's leadership style has a profound impact on student academic achievement, making it a critical factor in determining students' academic success (Stronge et al., 2008).

1.1 Objectives and Significance of Study

School heads play a vital role in creating a high-quality educational experience and a supportive learning environment. This study investigates the impact of head teachers' roles on these essential aspects of education. Specifically, it explores how head teachers promote positive educational outcomes and foster a conducive school environment. Empirical research has consistently shown that implementing quality performance standards has a positive impact on school improvement, making this a critical area of investigation (Goldring et al., 2009; McCullough et al., 2016; Niqab et al., 2015; Salfi, 2011; Salfi et al., 2014a, b).

A thorough analysis of existing research reveals that effective leadership behaviors and skills demonstrated by head teachers have a significant and positive influence on student learning outcomes and school performance, ultimately contributing to the achievement of educational objectives (Day & Sammons, 2013; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008).

Main objectives of the study

1. Find out relationship between head teacher effectiveness and school performance.
2. **2.** To find out the impact of Head teacher on school performance.
3. To investigate the role of Head teacher in learning environment .

2.Problem Statement

Head teachers play a vital role in driving school improvement and performance. By creating a positive and supportive school climate, they foster a productive and inclusive learning community. Through their leadership, they navigate complex dynamics, promote respect, and set high expectations, engaging all stakeholders in the process. By doing so, they set the tone for a collaborative and effective learning environment, ultimately leading to enhanced student outcomes and improved overall school performance.

This research investigates the correlation between head teacher roles and school improvement, seeking to identify the critical factors that characterize effective head teacher leadership and its subsequent impact on school performance and outcomes.

3.Literature Review

A head teacher's role encompasses the strategic leadership and management of a school, with a focus on optimizing student outcomes, fostering teacher growth, and driving school development. Their responsibilities include creating a supportive learning environment, promoting excellence in teaching and learning, and building a positive school culture. Effective head teachers inspire and motivate their staff, foster collaborative relationships with stakeholders, and drive continuous improvement to achieve exceptional results (Clifford et al., 2012; Goldring et al., 2009; Salfi, 2011).

Head teacher effectiveness is measured by their ability to deliver desired outcomes, including improved student learning, teacher professional growth, and enhanced school performance, through their leadership, management, and strategic decision-making. Assessing the effectiveness of a head teacher involves a rigorous evaluation process that measures their

leadership skills, behaviors, and qualities against predetermined performance benchmarks (Jones et al., 2018; Stronge et al., 2013).

Effective head teachers consistently demonstrate high-level performance, cultivating a culture of excellence and continuous improvement in their schools. By regularly assessing their effectiveness, they identify areas for growth and development, revealing the gap between current performance and desired outcomes. This data-driven approach enables informed decision-making and strategic planning, empowering head teachers to bridge the gap and drive progress towards their school's goals and targets (Bullock, 2006).

Research has uncovered intriguing insights into how different genders are perceived in head teacher roles. The study revealed that women in leadership positions are often credited with exceptional interpersonal skills, fostering collaborative relationships and effective communication. On the other hand, men in similar roles are frequently perceived as possessing strong leadership qualities, with a focus on strategic direction and management prowess (Ibrahim & Al-Taneiji, 2013).

Sustainable school leadership is crucial for ensuring continuity and stability in schools. To achieve this, head teachers must commit to ongoing professional growth and development, tailoring their approach to the unique needs of their school and community. Effective leadership requires a range of skills, including the ability to lead learning and distribute leadership responsibilities. However, it is equally important for head teachers to cultivate enduring qualities such as vision, empathy, and resilience, which enable them to drive consistent excellence and achieve long-term school success (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

In this study, school performance is a key variable, as it is closely linked to the effectiveness of head teachers' leadership qualities and performance standards. The term "school" refers to an educational institution that provides instruction and nurtures the development of students. Meanwhile, "performance" encompasses the successful execution and achievement of goals, objectives, and tasks, serving as a vital indicator of a school's overall quality and effectiveness. By examining school performance, researchers can gain valuable insights into the impact of head teachers' leadership on student outcomes, teacher development, and overall school success (Habib, 2010).

School performance is a multifaceted concept that encompasses both effectiveness and efficiency in all areas of school operations. Effectiveness measures the extent to which a school successfully achieves its intended goals, outcomes, and student learning objectives. Efficiency, on the other hand, evaluates the optimal utilization of resources, such as time, budget, and personnel, in achieving those objectives (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Maslowski, 2001).

To excel in their roles, head teachers need to develop a distinctive blend of leadership skills and qualities, including the ability to drive instructional excellence, empower teacher collaboration, and foster a culture of distributed leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

According to this model, effective head teachers must possess five core skills:
1. Instructional leadership, to drive academic excellence
2. School climate management, to foster a positive learning environment
3. Teacher evaluation and development, to support teacher growth
4. Organizational management, to oversee school operations effectively
5. Communication and community relations, to engage stakeholders and build partnerships.

A head teacher's leadership is evaluated based on their capacity to drive meaningful change and improvement in the school's overall performance. This is evident in the advancement of student academic success, the growth and development of teachers, and the school's enhanced standing in the community. By fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement, effective head teachers make a lasting impact on the school's reputation, student outcomes, and teacher development, ultimately shaping the future of education (Clifford et al., 2012; Goldring et al., 2009).

The head teacher evaluation process has a dual purpose: firstly, to hold leaders accountable for their management practices and the academic achievement of their students, and secondly, to provide a framework for ongoing professional growth and development, enabling head teachers to refine their skills, address areas for improvement, and enhance their overall effectiveness (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006).

To establish the credibility of head teacher evaluation tools, it is crucial to align them with the skills and knowledge that characterize outstanding school leaders. However, the absence of a universally accepted framework for effective leadership practices and standards often poses a challenge. A more effective approach is to directly link the evaluation instrument to specific, measurable school performance metrics, ensuring that the assessment criteria are grounded in the tangible impact of head teachers' leadership on student achievement, school culture, and overall academic excellence (Player, 2018).

4.Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research design, aiming to provide a detailed and accurate portrayal of the phenomenon being investigated (Habib, 2010).

Descriptive research involves gathering and analyzing data to create a detailed and accurate representation of a particular phenomenon or behavior. This approach aims to provide a clear and concise overview of the topic, often utilizing visual aids like charts, graphs, and tables to facilitate comprehension (Goldring et al., 2009).

4.1 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

This study focuses on the Nankana Sahib district, specifically the Tehsil Nankana Sahib, due to time and resource constraints. Out of a total of 47 elementary schools in the area, 30 schools (both male and female) were intentionally selected as the study population. The research targets a specific group, comprising head teachers and teachers working in elementary schools within the Nankana Sahib district, with the aim of exploring their perceptions, experiences, and practices related to the topic under investigation.

A sample is a carefully chosen subset of individuals from a larger population, selected to reflect the characteristics and diversity of the whole. By analyzing the traits and behaviors of this smaller group, researchers can make informed deductions and extend their findings to the larger population, enabling them to draw meaningful conclusions and make informed decisions (Leithwood et al., 2009).

To select a representative subset of head teachers and teachers from elementary schools in Nankana Sahib, a probability sampling method was employed. Specifically, simple random sampling was used to ensure that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected, resulting in a sample that is truly representative of the larger population.

The research study settled on a sample size of 101 participants, comprising both male and female head teachers and teachers from Tehsil Nankana Sahib, a subset of the larger district of Nankana Sahib.

4.2 Data collection Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was designed to explore the role of head teachers in improving schools, with a specific focus on the factors that influence their effectiveness and their attitudes towards leadership.

To maximize participant engagement and minimize response fatigue, the Head teacher Role Scale was deliberately designed to be concise, clear, and easy to understand.

The scale and its numerical values are given below:

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5.Always

4.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to condense and present the data in a straightforward and easily digestible format, offering a succinct overview of the primary characteristics of the data (Leithwood et al., 2009).

The use of measures of dispersion, such as standard deviation, provides crucial insights into the extent of variability in the responses, revealing the spread of the data. By leveraging descriptive statistics, researchers can develop a more nuanced understanding of the data, uncovering subtle patterns and trends that might otherwise remain hidden (Dee & Wykoff, 2015; Jones et al., 2018; Teh et al., 2014).

5.Results and Discussions

Table 5.1: *Respondent Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	44.5
Female	56	55.4
Total	101	100

Table 5.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study's sample, comprising 101 participants. A gender-balanced sample was achieved, with an equal proportion of male and female teachers and head teachers each constituting 44.5% and 55.4% respectively.

Table 5.2 *Expert opinion Regarding role of head teacher for improvement of school*

Questionnaire	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %	Mean	Std Dev
The head teacher provide clear guidance and direction to the staff	3.9	18.8	2.9	49.5	24.7	3.59	1.205

The head teacher actively engages with parents to support student success	10.8	26.7	1.9	17.8	42.6	3.41	1.393
The head teacher encourages innovation and creativity in teaching and learning	1.9	1.9	19.8	30.6	45.5	3.72	1.229
The head teacher foster positive relation with students creating a conducive learning environment	2.9	11.8	20.5	31.6	32.7	3.48	1.377
Head supervises the utilization of school funds	4.0	17.8	11.8	50.4	15.8	3.50	1.54
The head teacher emphasizes and monitors the functioning of facilities in school	2.97	9.9	9.9	30.6	46.5	3.74	1.413
School head maintains and supervises the school cleanliness	8.9	19.8	0.9	54.5	15.8	3.53	1.429

In table 5.2, Item 1 reveals that a significant majority of respondents (75%) concurred that head teacher supports professional development opportunity for the teachers. Item 2 shows that a majority of respondents (77%) concurred that The head teacher provide clear guidance and direction to the staff. Item 3 reveals that a significant majority of respondents (86%) concurred that The head teacher actively engages with parents to support student success. Item 4 reveals a notable disparity in opinions, The mean score of 3.72, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.229, suggesting a considerable divide in perceptions regarding innovation and creativity in learning. Item 5 indicates that mean score 3.48 and standard deviation 1.377 indicate agreement with the statement, The head teacher foster positive relation with students creating a conducive learning environment . Item 6 shows a strong consensus, with 69% of respondents agreeing that Head supervises the utilization of school funds. The mean score 3.50 of Item 7 indicates that majority of respondents were in agreement of statement, The head teacher emphasizes and monitors the functioning of facilities in school. Item 8 falls squarely within the level of agreement, indicating a majority of respondents (87%)in favour of statement School head maintains and supervises the school cleanliness.

6. Conclusion

This study delved into the vital role of head teachers in spearheading improvement in public elementary schools within District Nankana Sahib. A comprehensive questionnaire, comprising a 5-point Likert scale, was administered to a diverse sample of 101 educational professionals, including both male and female teachers and head teachers. The primary research goals were to investigate the leadership and management strategies employed by head teachers and their subsequent impact on school performance and development. Following a meticulous analysis of the collected data, the results revealed meaningful insights into the head teachers' influence on school improvement initiatives, underscoring their critical role in shaping educational outcomes.

The statistical analysis yielded a significant finding: an overwhelming majority of respondents held a positive view of the head teacher's role in maintaining overall school performance. This outcome indicates that the head teacher's leadership and management practices play a vital role in driving the school's success, underscoring the significance of effective leadership in shaping the school's overall performance and outcomes. The data suggests that head teachers are critical in fostering a supportive and productive educational environment, and their leadership styles and management approaches have a direct impact on the school's overall excellence.

Head teachers who consistently demonstrate exceptional leadership, management, and administrative skills are more likely to achieve outstanding results and maximize student success. Effective headship is defined by a distinctive combination of leadership qualities, managerial expertise, and administrative capabilities, which together foster a supportive and productive educational environment (Stronge , 2013).

The sustainability of effective school leadership relies on the head teacher's continuous professional development, aligned with the evolving needs of the school and community. To maintain excellence in leadership and teaching practices, head teachers must possess essential skills and qualities, including leading learning and distributed leadership. This study highlights the importance of these leadership skills, while also emphasizing the need for head teachers to sustain and cultivate these qualities over time. By doing so, they can ensure the continuity of school performance and excellence, fostering a culture of ongoing improvement and innovation that benefits both the school and the wider community (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

The effectiveness of a head teacher is measured by their leadership's impact on the school's overall performance, including student academic achievement, teacher professional growth, and the school's overall excellence. In other words, a head teacher's effectiveness is defined by their ability to positively influence student learning outcomes, foster teacher development, and drive school success (Clifford et al., 2012; Goldring et al., 2009).

Regular attendance and active participation in school are crucial factors in achieving academic success, as extensive research has consistently demonstrated that students who attend school regularly tend to outperform those who do not, highlighting the importance of consistent engagement in the learning process (Ediger & Rao, 2006).

The head teacher evaluation process serves two main purposes: firstly, to ensure accountability by assessing their performance and impact on the school's overall quality, and secondly, to support their ongoing professional growth and development, providing valuable feedback and insights to enhance their leadership and teaching practices (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006).

7. Recommendations

Future Research Directions:

1.Conducting this study in other public elementary schools at the district or tehsil level would facilitate the generalizability of the findings, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

2. Investigating the relationship between the knowledge, skills, and behavior of head teachers and school performance at the secondary and higher secondary levels could yield invaluable insights into enhancing school performance and creating a conducive learning environment.

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