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ANALYZING EFFECTS OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS OF GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL HEADS ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF LARKANA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the effects of the managerial skills of school heads on the academic performance of students in district Larkana, Sindh. The major objectives of the study were to determine the specific managerial skills of school heads, the effects of those skills on the performance of high schools of Larkana, and strategies to improve them. A saturated sampling technique was utilized for selecting respondents for the present study. A total of twenty-five government high school heads of Larkana district were considered as respondents for data collection. Close-ended and open-ended questionnaires were utilized for gathering data. Reliability was tested using Cronbach Coefficient Aloha where coefficient 0.757 was considered to be realizable. Analyzed data, which were shown in Tables, indicated that most of the government high school heads of Larkana district were able to utilize numerous managerial skills that were affecting school performance. However, for further improvement of their skills, different strategies needed to be implemented. It was also suggested that high school heads should be dedicated to their built-in managerial skills and use them in their daily duties. They should also avail opportunities of participation in training and workshops for honing their managerial skills and thereby positively influencing the school's performance.

Keywords: Managerial skill; School heads; School performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of education in the advancement of a country is not something unknown. Education develops people who are capable enough to compete in the global market, who are responsible citizens, and who hold the reigns of the country to change its fate. This educated manpower is produced in schools and a nation's quality depends on the existence and performance of its schools (Beare et. al., 2018). For instance, Kartini et al. (2020) hold that learners, as well as their parents, teachers, and educational authorities in every part of the world share the concern about school performance. Given the significance of schools' performance, researchers have tried to figure out the factors that have influence on it. There are many factors that are ascribed to effective school performance throughout the world (Stronge & Xu, 2021). Though these factors have not been clarified, the research studies reveal that the managerial skills of school heads are the major factors having a significant influence on school performance. Educational institutions need to create an environment conducive to learning (Daniels et al., 2018). The creation of a conducive learning environment in schools becomes the work of school heads. For that to materialize, the school heads need to possess certain managerial skills. These are skills like conceptual skills, technical skills, decision-making skills, and political skills which if displayed by a school head lead to acquiring intended academic outcomes in the institution. Leaders can influence school outcomes in diverse ways which

include students' academic performance, effective teachers' recruitment, motivation of teachers, identification, and attainment of the goals of the school, allocation of resources in an effective way, and laying down the basis of the structure of the organization to facilitate instruction and learning (Loeb et al, 2010). The managerial skills of the school heads contribute to the overall success of the school as it is the head teacher with whose approval crucial decisions are taken within the school (Munir et al., 2020).

The word management is a broad term and it exceeds the limits of small organizations. As far as it is concerned with school management, it is all about handling the school-related tasks, whether it is policy making, decision making, or curriculum-related activities (Liu & Hillinger, 2019). Research shows that general management is an act of arranging different activities in order to accomplish the objectives of an organization (Acton, 2021). Each successful supervisor has a few skills that empower him to perform effectively and successfully at various administrative levels (Mujtaba, 2013). On the other hand, school management is somehow different from organizational management as school management is defined as maintaining and managing the school policies, educational curriculum, recruitment process, and so on. Research also shows that in the school management process, the most responsible person is the head of the school who is also known as the headmaster or school leader (Webster & Litchka, 2020).

According to the findings of a study being a school leader is not an easy task, rather one needs different managerial and leadership skills which will help one to fulfill the desired goals of the school and to improve the quality of school education (Karakose et al., 2021). Studies show that the school principal is a key figure of school leaders or managers who are responsible for the school's success (Ward et al., 2016). Whereas, the effective managerial skills play a critical role which helping school managers ensure the success of the school's educational system. At different management levels, school managers face different challenges or obstacles that can be overcome by the managerial skills of school managers (Custódio et al., 2019).

Background

Management' is a word that is mostly utilized in businesses. In addition, the person who handles the management is called a manager, and that manager does all tasks related to management through particular skills which are called the managerial skills of that person (Mujtaba, 2013). Managers indulge themselves with different exercises and individuals overseeing them predominantly with a plan to acquire intended results. They are the individuals who plan and work with the intention of acquiring fruitful results from any sort of organization. To do that leaders or managers are to go with business choices and lead subordinates inside an organization, and for that, they need certain administrative skills (Alkashami et al., 2023). A few investigations on the connection between administrative expertise and performance of execution have been completed. Kamete (2014) viewed the critical relationship between the managerial skills of the head of the organization, head authorization, and school performance. Research by Gamala and Marpa (2022) likewise found a huge relationship between head administrative abilities and school adequacy. Exactly the same thing was found by Kamete (2014) about the impact of head managerial skills on compelling school performance. Gamala and Marpa (2022) observed that administrative skills are emphatically related to drug store execution. These examinations show that further developing presentation requires a supervisor who has administrative abilities that make him effective in his obligations.

Custódio et al. (2019) noticed that school leaders ought to be given quite a large number of amazing open doors for proficient advancement or training for professional development to work on the nature of managerial abilities. A sufficient level of preparation should make them talented in driving and overseeing schools. On different events in their schedule, leaders are confronted with circumstances that require abilities, information, and mentalities to adapt to different requests and changes (Daniels et al., 2018). A few examinations demonstrated that preparing emphatically influenced administrative abilities and execution. Alkashami et al. (2023) tracked that training reinforces people to secure information, abilities, and perspectives to accomplish satisfactory execution. Abdullah and Forawi (2017) tracked down a critical effect of preparing hierarchical execution to guarantee the best strategy for the business. Ongoing

examinations have shown that exercise has a positive and huge impact on execution (Abdullah & Forawi, 2017) and head skills. This study attempts to compensate for past investigations' lack that analyzed the connection between managerial abilities and school performance.

Problem statement

The discussion on the performance of schools, especially in terms of extracting satisfactory learning outcomes, is attached immense importance. All the related stakeholders whether they be students, parents, teachers, educational authorities and even the government are concerned about what factors influence the academic performance of schools. In this context, knowing the role of heads of schools becomes very important as they are the center of power and authority whose approval leads to the implementation of any plan or policy in schools (Munir et al., 2020). The managerial skills of the school heads, which are their qualities or abilities to effectively carry out the administrative functions in the school, are of enormous significance here. The way a school head leads a school might determine the level of the performance of the school (Rasool et al., 2019). So the need is to do research on these managerial skills of the school heads in order to investigate their impact on schools' performance. Given this, the present study tried to identify the impact of the managerial skills of the school heads on the schools

LITERATURE REVIEW

For many years, the leaders of schools are to be considered as crucial to the performance of schools. Their management of the school has a direct influence on learning outcomes. According to a study, in which the relationship between the managerial skills of school heads and the performance of the school was investigated, which was conducted by Gamala and Marapa (2022), school heads' managerial skills have a direct influence on the performance of the schools. If a school is managed well the academic outcomes would be satisfactory, otherwise there would be poor school performance. Hence, it is necessary that a school leader should possess the necessary managerial skills to run the school. As the study of Nzoka and Orodho (2014) suggested if the school heads want to transform the schools they are to display certain managerial skills in order to get it done and these managerial skills are necessary capabilities for the materialization of academic goals. The studies related to the role of school principals in improving the quality of education in school indicate that it is the principal who has the central role in determining the academic performance of the school. The leadership style of managers brings about the success level of an organization (Munir et al., 2020). The performance of the school would be better if the teachers work well and it is the leadership style of a Principal that has a great influence on the performance of the teachers as has been mentioned by Alkashami et al. (2023). Munir et al. (2020) mentioned in detail the effect of school leadership on school learning outcomes. The author was of the view that leadership of school principals affects the formation of professionalism in teachers and it directly influences the quality of learning in the school. The study revealed that the major factor in materializing better school performance is the leadership of the principal. Schools having effective learning environments need leaders who are equipped with the necessary managerial skills.

As per the findings of the study of Kaso (2021), which focused on school heads' attitudes, actions, and policies' impact on the performance of the school, improvement in standards of education in a school is not separate from the function of a principal as a leader who is majorly responsible for managing the work of the school. The authors maintained that as the top leader, the school head has the power and authority to manage the school, and with particular or mixed type of leadership styles he or she has the capacity to organize and develop the teaching and nonteaching staff in the school professionally. According to a study the principal enjoys the role of leader, administrator and academic supervisor in school. There are three types of managerial skills that need to be developed by principals. The first one is conceptual skill, the second is human relation skill and the third one is technical skill. In order to effectively do tasks related to management, the possession of these three managerial skills is necessary, though the application of each of the three skills depends on its level (Gamala & Marapa, 2022). On the other hand, the results of the study

of Kamete (2014), which was conducted in Tanzania, revealed that most of the school heads in government schools at the secondary level possess adequate managerial skills. The study recommended that school leaders need to possess and apply conceptual, human, communication and leadership skills so as to motivate the teachers to improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom by exposing learners to competence-based types of learning. It was also recommended by the study that the government of Tanzania should arrange training programs for school heads in order to develop and hone their managerial skills. In the context of joint decision-making and arrangement in school, managerial competencies matter. Managerial skills add up to effectiveness in school leadership. Information and abilities are major administrative skills. Gamala and Marapa (2022) formed it as $\text{Ability} = \text{Knowledge} + \text{Skill}$. Ability is an element of information and expertise. The great managerial capacity of school heads will make quality. The chief necessities: (1) a comprehension of the use of administrative skills; (2) the ability to streamline the school's social potential; (3) the strength of training and initiative; (4) the emblematic strength of their expert position; and (5) a worth situated culture of value and a high hard-working attitude.

Moreover, the principal, as the head of a school association who is in a situation to impact others, must have abilities that can make them exploit that position. To be capable of driving a school, the concerned leader requires managerial skills. School managerial abilities are very important in separating effectual and ineffectual schools. Kaso (2021) in their review, of arranged departmental administration and human administration jobs, didn't have satisfactory information, managerial capabilities, and mentalities expected to show feeble authority in dealing with a school. A few investigations on the connection between preparing, school managerial expertise, and execution have been completed. Chabala and Naidoo (2021) saw a huge relationship between the viability of the head of the school and school execution.

Additionally, Chabala and Naidoo (2021) noticed that administrators ought to be offered many chances for proficient advancement to work on the nature of administrative abilities. To accomplish this, legitimate and proper preparation should make them talented in driving and overseeing schools. On different events in their schedule, administrators are confronted with circumstances that require abilities, information, and perspectives to adapt to numerous requests and changes (Abdullah & Forawi, 2017). In addition, literature also shows that a certified principal shows able managerial skills in some ways: (a) utilizing existing assets to give satisfactory help for instructors, materials improvement, and the upkeep of good offices; (b) giving adequate opportunity to the administration and coordination of the informative interaction; and (c) discussing routinely with staff, teachers, guardians, and the connected networks.

Key factors that decide the managerial capacity of school leaders incorporate their degree of information on administrative skills like preparation, coordinating, execution, correspondence, inspiration, course, control, and management. The managerial skills of the school heads influence the actions of schools which include the teaching method of the teachers, knowledge acquisition by the students, and the overall success of the school (Munir et al., 2020). Though previous studies have been conducted on the relationship between managerial skills and school performance, however more scientific work needs to be carried out to precisely establish a relationship between the variables: managerial skills and school performance.

METHODOLOGY

The present study utilized the survey research as a research design. Thus, the study aimed to draw out the facts without interpreting the information (Orodho, 2009). This design of research made the current study proficient as workable for getting maximum data with appropriate efforts, time and funding. Additionally, the design of the research also coordinated with the objectives of the present study.

While, the population of the present study was all the individuals that were under consideration in any area of inquiry (Kothari, 2008). However, twenty-five school heads from government high schools of Larkana District were chosen as the targeted population of this study. In addition, the present study utilized a mixed approach of research which helped in the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative methods in data

collection and data analysis. Mixed method research benefited in a way that the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods gave a more comprehension of the research problem than possibly a single research approach (Creswell, 2012). A survey questionnaire was adopted for collecting data in this study.

The present study utilized the saturated sampling technique; therefore, all the participants had a chance to be involved in the study. A total of twenty-five government high school heads of Larkana District generated the outcomes. Piloting was done in order to guarantee the reliability of the instrument in the present study. Considering twenty high school heads from government high schools of Larkana District. The reliability statistics disclosed that Conbach's Alpha was set to examine reliability that produced a correlation of 0.757. This was viewed as reliable. In addition, both open-ended as well as close-ended questionnaires were included for gathering data. According to Creswell (2012), survey forms are mostly preferred because of cost-effectiveness and quick data collection. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22 version was utilized to calculate percentages, frequency distribution, mean score, and standard deviations for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to analyze managerial skills that high school heads possess and the effects of those managerial skills on academic performance. Below is given table that shows the managerial skills of high school heads, their effects on academic achievement and the strategies through which high school heads can enhance their managerial skills. In the below tables "A" stands for agree, "N" stands for neutral, and "D" stands for disagree.

Table 1. Managerial skills that high school heads possess.

Managerial skills	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	Total F (%)
Introduction of new roles to their new staff	19(76%)	2(8%)	4(16%)	25(100%)
Skills of financial management	13(52%)	3(12%)	9(36%)	25(100%)
Skill of communication	18(72%)	5(20%)	2(8%)	25(100%)
Ethics of work	12(48%)	4(16%)	9(36%)	25(100%)
Guidance and assessment of staff	6(24%)	2(8%)	17(68%)	25(100%)
Participatory decision making	16(64%)	4(16%)	5(20%)	25(100%)
Skills of using ICT	10(40%)	6(24%)	9(36%)	25(100%)
Management of students	17(68%)	7(28%)	1(4%)	25(100%)
Service for welfare of staff	16(64%)	2(8%)	7(28%)	25(100%)
Choosing appropriate staff for academics	19(76%)	5(20%)	1(4%)	25(100%)
Skill of public relation	16(64%)	3(12%)	6(24%)	25(100%)
Risk taking skills	14(56%)	3(12%)	8(32%)	25(100%)

Source: Field research (2023).

Table 1 defines the first object of the present study which was to identify the managerial skills that government high school heads possess and these skills help them to enhance the academic performance of government high schools of Larkana District. Findings of the present study disclosed that government high school heads of Larkana District have enough managerial abilities like introduction of new roles to their new staff 76%, risk-taking skills 56%, skill of public relation 64%, choosing appropriate staff for academics 76%, service for welfare of staff 64%, management of students 68%, skills of using ICT 40%, participatory decision making 64%, guidance and assessment of staff 24%, ethics of work 48%, skill of communication 72%, and skills of financial management 52%. The analyzed data revealed that government high school heads have much expertise on two skills i.e. choosing appropriate staff for academic work and introducing new roles to their new staff because seventy-six percent of the participants agreed to these skills. While twenty-four percent of participants responded that government high school heads lack in the

skill of guidance and assessment of staff. However, guidance and assessment of the staff of school play a pivotal role in academic performance of the school.

Table 2. Effects of managerial skills of high school heads on academic performance.

Effects of Managerial skills	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	Total F (%)
Managing the resources that are available	16(64%)	3(12%)	6(24%)	25(100%)
Bringing innovative solution	13(52%)	2(8%)	10(40%)	25(100%)
Preparing a useful strategy for slow learners	17(68%)	3(12%)	5(20%)	25(100%)
Creating a favourable learning environment	20(80%)	4(16%)	1(4%)	25(100%)
Motivation of teachers	17(68%)	2(8%)	6(24%)	25(100%)
Maintaining discipline among students and staff	15(60%)	5(20%)	5(20%)	25(100%)
Skills of problem solving	16(64%)	6(24%)	3(12%)	25(100%)
Staff evaluation to enhance performance	14(56%)	4(16%)	7(28%)	25(100%)
Skill of time management	16(64%)	3(12%)	6(24%)	25(100%)
Skill of managing examination	19(76%)	2(8%)	4(16%)	25(100%)
Team building skill	16(64%)	3(12%)	6(24%)	25(100%)

The second objective of the present study is disclosed in Table 2 which was to analyze the effects of managerial skills of government high school heads on the academic performance in the Larkana District. The analyzed data present exhibits that team building skills, the skill of managing examination, the skill of time management, staff evaluation to enhance performance, skills of problem-solving, maintaining discipline among students and staff, motivation of teachers, creating a favorable learning environment, preparing a useful strategy for slow learners, managing the resources that are available and bringing innovative solution were triggering factors that used to affect academic performance. However, creating a favorable learning environment was one of the major factors that influence positively academic performance because eighty percent of the participants agreed so. While bringing innovative solutions was one of the least influencing factors as fifty-two percent of the respondents agreed on this.

Table 3. Strategies for enhancing managerial skills of high school heads.

Strategies for enhancing managerial skills	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	Total F (%)
Conducting workshops	17(68%)	2(8%)	6(24%)	25(100%)
Organizing seminars	13(52%)	3(12%)	9(36%)	25(100%)
Preparing a useful strategy for slow learners	15(60%)	5(20%)	5(20%)	25(100%)
Guiding skills	21(84%)	0(0%)	4(16%)	25(100%)
Online training	14(56%)	4(16%)	7(28%)	25(100%)
Professional development	11(44%)	2(8%)	12(48%)	25(100%)
Online induction courses	17(68%)	3(12%)	5(20%)	25(100%)
In-person training	19(76%)	4(16%)	2(8%)	25(100%)
Arranging meetings	18(72%)	2(8%)	5(20%)	25(100%)

Table 3 reveals the third objective which was strategies for enhancing the managerial skills of government high school heads of the Larkana District. The data disclosed that conducting workshops, organizing seminars, preparing a useful strategy for slow learners, guiding skills, online training, online training, professional development, online induction courses, in-person training, and arranging meetings are a few important strategies that can be utilized to improve the managerial skills of government high school heads of Larkana District. However, data showed that guiding skills is one of the important strategies which eighty-four percent of the participants agreed is needed to enhance the managerial skills of government high school heads of Larkana District. While, the least number of respondents, i.e. forty-four percent of the respondents, agreed that professional development is an important strategy to enhance the managerial skills of high school heads of Larkana District.

Discussion

This study had three objectives. One of the main objectives was to identify the managerial skills that government high school heads possess. The findings of the present study also disclosed similar skills. Also, the literature suggests the same skills of institutional heads that help them to enhance students' academic achievements. The findings of the present study revealed that government high school heads of Larkana District have few managerial abilities. Managerial skills like the introduction of new roles to their new staff, risk-taking skills, the skill of public relations, choosing appropriate staff for academic work, service for the welfare of staff, management of students, skills of using ICT, participatory decision-making, guidance and assessment of staff, ethics of work, the skill of communication, skills of financial management. The objectives of the present study that was to identify the managerial skills that government high school heads possess and it was revealed that these skills help them to enhance the academic performance of government high schools of Larkana District.

In addition, the second objective of the study was to analyze the effects of the managerial skills of school heads on students' academic achievement. The current study, and also the study of Akpan (2012), showed that the managerial skills of heads of schools have both positive and negative effects on students' academic achievement. Further, it was also mentioned that the factors that affect learners' academic achievement depend on their use. When those skills are utilized positively, academic achievement would boost and it would decline when those skills are utilized negatively. Also, Hurley (2015) supported the same view. Furthermore, the findings of the present study also exhibit that team building skills, the skill of managing examination, the skill of time management, staff evaluation to enhance performance, skills of problem-solving, maintaining discipline among students and staff, motivation of teachers, creating a favorable learning environment, preparing a useful strategy for slow learners, managing the resources that are available and bringing innovative solution were triggering factors that affected academic performance.

The third objective was to identify strategies for enhancing the managerial skills of government high school heads of the Larkana District. The findings disclosed that conducting workshops, organizing seminars, preparing a useful strategy for slow learners, guiding skills, online training, professional development, online induction courses, in-person training, and arranging meetings are a few important strategies that can be utilized to improve the managerial skills of government high school heads of Larkana District. On the other hand, Komba and Nkumbi (2008) in her study showed that there are numerous ways to enhance the managerial capabilities of heads of schools which will further affect students' academic achievement. However, the current study recommended that higher authorities should take measures and consider these strategies in order to enhance the managerial skills of high school heads so that students' academic achievement could be enhanced.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study concludes that the government high school heads of Larkana District have inadequate managerial abilities which have a negative influence on students' academic achievements. Nevertheless, there were a few school heads who had recently joined their respective positions were facing a few challenges in performing their roles. In addition, the present study also concluded that heads of government high schools of Larkana don't have sufficient ICT skills because of their negative attitude towards the integration of ICT into the teaching and learning process and their less acquaintance with ICT tools. Therefore, the study recommended that government school heads should be given proper training in order to enhance their managerial skills which directly or indirectly affect the academic performance of learners.

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