

EFFECT OF SCHOOL'S LOCATION & STUDENTS' ENROLMENT ON PRINCIPALS' TIME MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore whether locality of school and enrollment of students has any effect on principals' time management practices. Six time management practices focusing on short and long term goals (planning and scheduling activities), managing meetings, delegating tasks, setting priorities, managing paperwork, and handling interruptions were used as in this study. A stratified sample of 344 secondary school principals was selected from seven divisional headquarter districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study results revealed significant differences in principals' time management practices by students' enrollment in schools. Thus students' enrollment in school was an important factor in principals' time management. Locality of school either urban or rural does not influence the principals' time management. For achieving balance in performance of effective managerial responsibilities and prioritizing tasks, cooperation with staff and delegation of simple tasks was recommended to avoid overburdening regardless of location of the schools and students' enrolment.

Keywords: *School principals, time management practices, Locality of school, Students' enrolment.*

INTRODUCTION

Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed (Weldy, 1974; Ojo & Olaniyan, 2008) and secondary school principals must make decisions about how to allocate their time among competing demands (Weldy, 1974; Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Hausman, Nebeker, McCrear, & Donaldson., 2002; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). These time management and organizational problems can raise stress levels, especially when school administrators must balance their work and family responsibilities (Fields & Egley, 2005; Hausman et al., 2002). Weldy (1974) stated that "time for school administrators is a resource, to be used productively. Good use of time requires self-understanding (personal preference), personal commitment, discipline, organization, and planning" (p. 5). The importance of time management for school principals is well documented and it is common to observe that they often

experience time management problems in their administrative positions (Lyons, 1993). Most of the successful school principals face time management issues in schools (Altun, 2011).

Effective time management potentially increases productivity, promotes advancement, limits burnout and improves both professional and personal satisfaction (Claessens, Eerde, Rute, & Roe's, 2007; Britton & Tesser, 1991; Kearns & Gardiner, 2007; Gorden & Borcken, 2014). Time use decisions are important for effective leadership, as evident by the relationship between school principal time use and school outcomes (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010). However, strategies or practices for improving time management is lacking in the current educational literature and is considered an obstacle in the completion of work (Liu, Rijmen, MacCann & Roberts, 2009). School principals get frustrated to complete paperwork, attending meetings, responding to emails and phone messages, and striving to meet unrealistic deadlines (Barnet et al, 2012).

High demands on one's time are characteristic of many professions (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). As Britton and Glynn (1989, p. 429) put it, "intellectually productive people usually have more things that they would like to do, or need to do, than they have time". This description certainly applies to the job of most secondary school principals, who entail responsibility for the time-intensive tasks of managing school operations, overseeing instructional programs, building relations among staff members, and so forth (Campbell & Williamson, 1991; Horng et al, 2010; Barnett et al, 2012). In such professions, becoming more productive means finding strategies to accomplish more given limited time resources. Managing one's time more ably is one way to fulfill this goal. School principals may behave differently in different school contexts, similarly they may change their profile of actions as they gain more experience or their choice of actions may differ based on their personal background characteristics (Horng et al, 2010). Claessens et al (2007) defined time management as "behaviour that aims at achieving an effective use of time while performing certain goal-directed activities" (p. 262). Literature suggests that better time management skills- which include the ability to set achievable goals, identify priorities, monitor one's own progress, and remain organized (Claessens et al, 2007; Chase et al, 2013).

There are some studies that have focused on time management in the context of school administration in the last several years and suggested that school principals need help in identifying strategies for becoming successful educational leaders

and managers (e.g. Edwards, 1990; Larry 2004; Goldring, Huff, May, & Camburn., 2008; Horng et al, 2010; Spillane, Camburn, & Pareja, 2007; Spillane & Hunt, 2010; Akomolafe & Oluwatimehin, 2013) but none of the studies, to the best of our knowledge, have tried to unearth the principals' time management practices and to discover whether locality of school and students' enrolment have any effect on principals' time management practices in Pakistani context.

Most of the research articles and literature on time management give hundreds of practices to make principals and other executives more efficient in using their time to get more things done efficiently and effectively. However in this research we identified six time management practices used in academic and non-academic institutions based on time management literature and on our personal experiences. These were:

1. Practices for scheduling contacts (planning and scheduling)
2. Practices for managing meetings
3. Practices for delegating tasks
4. Practices for managing paperwork
5. Practices for establishing priorities and
6. Practices for handling interruptions

The first practice of scheduling contacts, includes being clear finishing time and as well as a start time while setting up time for any activity. Always plan and schedule activities and try to stick to them according to the diary, planner chart or calendar in accomplishing educational goals and objectives (Claessens et al, 2007; Britton and Tesser, 1991; Gordan & Borken 2014). The second practice, managing meetings, includes how to conduct effective meetings, having clear agenda, time a meeting takes and the dynamics within the meeting (Crouch, 2005). Third practice, delegating tasks, includes delegation of tasks to subordinates based on principle 'right person for the right job', how delegation has worked and how we can develop people at workplace and having a system for monitoring and measuring performance (Akomolafe, 2005; Robertson, 1999).

The fourth practice, managing paperwork, includes minimizing the volume of paper on the tidy desk, responding quickly to letters, memos, faxes, reports, forms, proposals and having an efficient filing system (Akomolafe & Oluwatimehim, 2013; Gordan & Borken 2014). The fifth practice, establishing priorities, includes tasks such as setting aside time each day to plan out the day, week, and month's tasks and prioritize them by making lists on the urgency basis

and setting deadlines (Claessens et al, 2007; Kearns & Gardiner, 2007; Gordan & Borken 2014). The final practice is handling interruptions. The academic setting for both academic and general staff provides plentiful opportunities for interruptions and distractions, for example, student demands, visitors, emails, phone or mobile calls, and colleagues who just want a minute of your time (Widely, 1974; Kearns & Gardiner, 2007; Gordan & Borken 2014; Tracy, 2014).

There may be more practices that may improve the effective time management of secondary school principals. However this study is limited to the aforementioned practices, which were incorporated into a questionnaire that was designed to ascertain the time management practices of secondary school principals in the seven selected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Moreover investigating the demographic factors known to affect 'principals time management practices' the locality of school in which principal works and students' enrolment in schools enrolment was included to determine whether this had any effect on principals' time management practices. The scope of research was restricted in two ways to the number of location of secondary school (Urban and Rural) and the geographic location of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, thus generalization of the results should be treated with location.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the differences between principals' time management practices in urban and rural secondary schools?
- To study the effect of students' enrolment in schools on principals' time management practices.

Research hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant difference in principals' time management practices and locality of school.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in principals' time management practices with low, medium or high students' enrolments.

Statement of the problem

In order to better comprehend the effect of a variety of demands in school nowadays, the present study aimed to explore whether locality of school and students' enrollment in schools has any effect on principals' time management practices.

Significance of the study

This study attempts to examine those practices that will help principals to manage their time in such a way as to keep them focused on more important tasks. To perform managerial role effectively, managers require immense efforts and mental thinking to run the organization throughout the stages of planning, organizing, directing and evaluating. The consideration of time utilization for managerial and professional grades has not received much attention until recently. The time management is a subject which is basic to job performance. Current approaches are based on the one's management of his or her time efficiently and effectively.

Limitation of the study

This study was limited to the six core principals' time management practices in secondary and higher secondary schools situated in urban and rural areas of seven divisional headquarter districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research was to investigate principals' time management practices and to discover whether school's locality, students' enrollment in schools has any effect on principals' time management practices.

Research design

The nature of this research study was descriptive and survey research design was utilized.

Population

Pakistan is comprised of five provinces i.e. Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and Gilgit Baltistan. These provinces are further administratively sub-divided into Divisions, districts and tehsils. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which was formerly known as North-West Frontier Province (N-W.F.P) is one of the five provinces of Pakistan. This province is further administratively divided into seven divisions (Kohat, Dera Ismaial Khan, Peshawar, Hazara, Malakand, Bannu and Mardan) and twenty five districts. 1485 government and private secondary schools are located in these seven divisional headquarter districts in which 1485 permanent/acting school principals are serving (Source: Statistical Booklet on Elementary & Secondary Education Department; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2009-10).

Sample and sampling

Sample was selected from seven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The sampled divisional headquarter districts were selected purposively. Each sampled district was treated as stratum. Since the districts (strata) were spread geographically, thus sample was widening, huge and preferably representative of the population. 25% secondary school principals were proportionally selected from each sample district based on school's nature, location and gender. The sample for this study consisted of 372 secondary schools (184 Government and 188 Private), with due representation from all the seven districts. The composition of the sample were 311 secondary and 61 higher secondary school principals; 248 were male and 124 were female; 184 Government and 188 Private; and 181 school principals were working in urban area whereas 191 were working in rural area.

Construction of research instrument

A survey questionnaire was developed for gathering data pertaining to demographic variables (gender, age, nature of school, and level of school and locality of school) and different time management practices. Thirteen statements fall under practices for scheduling contacts, nine fall under practices for managing meetings, twelve fall under practices for delegation, nine fall under practices for managing paperwork, eleven fall under practices for establishing priorities and thirteen fall under practices for handling interruptions each.

For validity of the instrument initially an item-bank of 82 items was created by the researcher. After initial construction, it was reviewed by a panel of experts. These people had sufficient experience in teaching and knowledge of the field of Educational Leadership, Administration and Management studies. Four of these experts were professors holding Ph. D degree in Educational Management; six were assistant professors holding Ph. D degrees in Educational Leadership, teaching M. Ed and B. Ed levels and two were school principals, administering Regional Institute of Teacher Education (RITE), ten were secondary school principals and two were language teachers who were teaching in the schools. The researcher personally held meetings with these experts and discussed the questionnaire. The experts were asked to write comments for and suggest improvement regarding ambiguity in the instruction, too short or long questionnaire, clarity, design and nature of the questions in the questionnaire on a white paper. Their valuable suggestions were incorporated in the questionnaire.

After pre-testing, the refined and modified questionnaire consisting of 67 Likert-type items were pilot tested on thirty school principals to check accuracy of the instrument, the response was satisfactory. Of the 372 distributed questionnaires 280 usable and completed questionnaires were received, with a response rate of 75.26 percent. The response rates for every type of school were: government 51.42 percent (n= 144) and for privately managed 48. 58 percent (n=136). The Cronbach alpha value of (.864) for the 280 questionnaires was alike to the pilot (.96) test which indicated that the instrument was valid. Cronbach alpha calculated for the questionnaire regarding sub-categories of time management practices i.e. practices scheduling contacts, managing meetings, delegation, establishing priorities and handling interruptions for the secondary school principals were (.846, .843, .889, .867, .888, and .851) respectively.

The questionnaire was scored as always=5; often=4; sometimes=3; rarely=2 and never=1 respectively. Mean scores were interpreted as variables with mean score 1-2 was considered to be 'Minimum'; 2-3 as 'Below Average'; 3.0 as 'Average'; 3-4 as 'Above Average'; and 4-5 was considered to be 'Maximum/Sufficiently Above Average' respectively. The value of t-test will be significant if $p < 0.05$ and not significant if $p > 0.05$.

Table 1 Results for overall principals' time management practices

Locality of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test	Sig (2-tailed)
Urban	136	3.71	.652	.055	.229	.819
Rural	144	3.73	.550	.046		

Note: $p < .05$

The aim of this research was to investigate principals' time management practices and to identify if the locality of school had any effect on this. The mean principals' time management practices scores by locality of school for urban school principals were (3.71) and for rural (3.73). As there is a difference between principals' time management practices scores of principals working in the different locality of school, the first null hypothesis (H_{01}) can be rejected. However further analysis is required as the statistical significance of the differences is unknown. Consequently t-test was performed. The results reveal a non-significant difference between the mean scores of the different locality of schools as non-significance score greater than .05 (.819). Thus the first null

hypothesis (H_{01}) is accepted. It was concluded that locality of school has non-significant effect on principals' time management practices.

Table 2 One- way ANOVA for students' enrolment in schools

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	7.497	3	2.499	7.373	.000
Among Groups	92.192	277	.339		
Total	99.689	280			

The significance value for the test is less than .05, it was concluded that any significant difference between the mean overall principals' time management score when categorized by locality of school is statistically significant. Thus the second null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus there is significant difference in time management practices of school principals with low, medium and high students' enrolment. Therefore students' enrolment in school is a significant factor in principals' time management practices.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate a significant difference in the overall principals' time management practices scores by students' enrolment in schools. There was significant difference in time management practices of secondary school principals with low, medium and high enrolment in school. Those schools in which students' enrollment is less than 400 is consider as low; schools having students' enrollment between 400-800 is consider as medium and schools having students' enrollment between 800-1200 is consider as high. Therefore, students' enrolment in schools was an important factor in principals' time management practices. No significant difference in principals' time management practices was found when the data were analyzed by location of school. Locality of school has not significant effect on principals' time management practices.

The result of this study affirmed that students' enrolment is an important factor in management of time by principals. There was significant difference in principals' time management with low, medium or high students' enrolment. It also contradicted the findings of this study; he indicated that there was no significant difference in students' enrolment and their principals' allocation of time to task. Moreover, Allison and Mortiff's (1994) findings also support findings of this study; the authors found students' enrolment to be a predictor of time usage by principals. However Burke's research (1980) does correspond with the findings of

this study; the author found experience of the principals and school size to be predictors of time usage. Horng et al, (2010) see no notable difference in principals' time use based on the level of school (elementary, middle and high schools) and size of school. Principals in elementary schools and smaller schools report greater time management. Akomolafe and Oluwatimehin (2013) contradicted findings of this study; they found no significant differences in the principals' time management and the location of school. Furthermore they mentioned that students' enrolment and location of schools were not important in principals' time management skills.

As for as the results for the locality of school is concerned, a difference was found between mean score of the principals' time management practices and locality of school; rural school principals managed their time in a better way than urban school principals, however this difference is not significant. The study revealed that the location of schools has no influence on the principals' time management. It is probably because the school location either in rural or urban, does not affect the skills of principals' time management. Whatever the location, principals are required to put their skills and experience, in their efforts to achieve the best. Akomolafe and Oluwatimehin (2013) found no significant differences in the principals' time management and the location of school. It shows that location of school in either rural or urban cannot influence the principals' time management. The findings of this study is contrary Arubayi (1986), he confirmed that school' size, location and experience of principals affected their time utilization. The findings of Crouch (2005) negates this study because he found that a significant relationship between principals' time usage and school location. However, as the scores are so similar, there appears to be little point in pursuing this further.

It is noteworthy that all time management skills and strategies are learnable. It should be noted that if one knows how to use one's time effectively and efficiently, many of problems may be preempted and resolved effectively. It is noteworthy that planning and organizing can turn one's goals and visions into actions. This means balancing work, family, study and other commitments (Crouch, 2005). Thus balancing commitments means setting priorities and finally remembering that time management is not about getting more done; it's about doing the important things (Larry, 2003). Effective time management requires setting short term and long-term goals, setting priorities among competing responsibilities, planning and organizing activities, and minimizing exposure to circumstances that result in wasted time (Hemphill, 2002; Gordon & Borkan,

2014). If the aim of time management strategies is to improve performance and reduce stress, people need to learn to identify the purpose in their career, then plan their time accordingly, rather than uncluttered desks and hanging “do not disturb” signs on doors (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that location of school has no significant effect on principals’ time management practices. There was no significant difference in the principals’ time management practices and the location of school. In other words location of school and in either rural or urban cannot influence the principals’ time management practices. It was also concluded that students’ enrolment in schools has significant factor in principals’ time management practices. There was significant difference in time management practices of principals with low, medium or high students’ enrolment. High students’ enrolment school principals need greater time management skills as compared to low or medium students’ enrolment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to policy makers and principals for enhancing their school effectiveness. It was recommended that introductory courses, refresher courses, workshops, seminars on time management practices should be included for in-service principals to equip them with skills, knowledge and attitude on adequate time management practices regardless of their location and students’ enrolment in school. For performance of effective managerial responsibilities and prioritizing tasks with a balance time is also recommended. School meetings should be handled in such a manner that they do not consume time for classroom academic activities. Cooperation with staff, delegation of simple tasks to them to avoid overburdening and give priorities to core administrative duties while allocating time was also recommended. Setting aside discretionary time for school principals is also recommended.

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