TIME MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS' PRINCIPALS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of secondary school principals (SSP) regarding time management practices (TMP) and sought to identify problems in time management in schools. A stratified sample of 344 secondary school principals was selected from seven divisional headquarter districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For data collection, a questionnaire was developed after review of related literature and previous studies comprising six categories of time management practices(TMP); scheduling contacts, managing meetings, delegation practices, managing paperwork, establishing priorities and handling interruptions- constructed to help (SSP) focus on essential tasks. Results show that heads manage their time in schools frequently by using practices of scheduling contacts, goal setting, planning activities, prioritizing tasks, delegating works to subordinates, managing paperwork, and managing unnecessary interruptions. Main problems that they face regarding time management were poor planning, unnecessary telephone calls, frequent interruptions by visitors, multitask, unscheduled meetings, failure to delegate, dump of papers on desk, do not prioritize tasks, do not make "to-do" list, lack of training, junk mails, and do not know how to say "no" to subordinates. Introductory courses, workshops, seminars should be arranged for in-service principals to equip them with skills, knowledge and attitude on adequate time management practices and prioritizing tasks.

Keywords: *Secondary School principal, time management practices, managing paperwork, multiple tasks, to-do list.*

INTRODUCTION

Subject of time management have become more important to employees and managers in various organizations. In contrast to the large amount of literature on the philosophical aspects of time, there is paucity of scientific literature on temporal issues in organizations. Furthermore, literature on how people deal with time at workplace is comparatively limited when compared to the popular consideration for time issues at workplace. In the field of education, studies on time management are very few, even though the issue of lack of time management concerns the principals seriously and is

considered an obstacle in the completion of their work. School principals' responsibilities comprise responding to the demands of teachers, parents, staff members, students and central office (Grissom, Loeb, & Mitani, 2013; Goldring, Huff, May, & Camburn, 2008; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010; Kennedy, 2002).

Growing demands in today's employees have led to time management being viewed as an extremely precious resource (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). In our scientific enriched society, employees are often required to multitask, prioritizing tasks and work against deadlines in a timely fashion (Orlikowsky & Yates, 2002). Time management topic has got the attention of industrial organizational psychologists, educational researchers, and entrepreneurs, because of its possible impact on job satisfaction, academic achievement, and quality of life (Liu, Rijmen, MacCann, & Roberts, 2009). Yet, research on time management has not kept pace with this enthusiasm due to extant investigations suffering from a number of problems (Macan, 1994).

Time management is defined as resources for keeping an eye on and controlling time, setting goals and generating tasks from the goals and as the perception of a more structured and purposive life (Eilam & Aharon, 2003). Similarly, Claessens, Van Eerde, Rute, and Roe's (2007) defined time management as "behaviour that aims at achieving an effective use of time while performing certain goal-directed activities" (p. 362). The studies on time management have recommended that school principals need to be of assistance in recognizing approaches for becoming victorious educational managers and leaders (Spillane & Hunt, 2010). However, none of the studies, to the best of our knowledge, have tried to unearth principals' (TMP) and to discover obstacles to appropriate time management in schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The principals of school work in a very complex environment and they perform multiple tasks and responsibilities. The environment of the school is also a factor which leads to various distractions that can disrupt efficiency and decrease productivity. School principals' working day is chaotic, filled with regular problems and interruptions that have needs concentration. School principals are frequently called on to meet students' parents or deal with parental concerns (Miller, 2001). Principals use great part of their day in planned and unplanned meetings and on completion of administrative responsibilities (Horng et al, 2010). Hallinger and

Murphy (2013) recognize that finding time to perform multifarious tasks is one of the greatest challenges of leadership for school improvement in the principals' job.

The administrative process is multifaceted and challenging with constant change, high testing, dealing with public and a numerous responsibilities both planned and unplanned (e.g. meetings, phone calls, discipline, email). Therefore, it is necessary that school principals should plan their lives and discover ways to manage their time effectively and efficiently (Hager, 2006). Similarly, Tracy (2004) found that people are bounded to others and situations that waste time and weaken the efficiency all daytime long. Akomolafe (2005) found that school principals faces difficulties in managing their time in schools for good planning, categorizing tasks on priorities bases, frequent need to respond to crises, lack of enough time to carry out activities that is needed for building professional standards, and being stressed because of not completing assigned tasks within the specified period of time and leaving them incomplete. Cole (1990) mentioned that most of the administrators waste their time because of prolong unnecessary meetings, frequent interruptions from colleagues or staff, needless paperwork and memorandum and travelling from one place to another during job. Emmett (2000) viewed time management as a systematic approach to manage of the issues that people deal with day to day basis. Research signified that most time management practices need minimal common sense approaches (Crouch, 2005; Hemphill, 2002).

Successful time management strategies allow school principals to uphold center of attention on their job, contributing to school productivity. For developing and sustaining a successful program of school is possible only by improving time management skills. Different time management practices to improve time management including optimizing planning, setting realistic goals, prioritizing tasks, problem-solving barriers, involving a team, and effectively handling interruptions can make easy to maintain focus on tasks (Chase et al, 2013). Mullins (2005) points out that "whatever, the attributes or qualities of successful managers are, or the qualities of subordinate staff are, one essential underlying criterion is the effective use of time" (p.265). Time management or making efficient and dynamic use of time requires practices and good quality planning behaviours.

Previous studies and several books recommend that an individual can use time productively and efficiently by setting long-term and short-term goals, prioritizing tasks, keeping time logs, making to-do lists, scheduling and organizing an individual workplace (Claessens et al, 2007). In this particular study we identified six TMP used

in academic and non-academic institutions based on time management literature and on our personal experiences. These are: Practices for scheduling contacts (planning and scheduling), Practices for managing meetings, Practices for delegating tasks, Practices for managing paperwork, Practices for establishing priorities and Practices for handling interruptions

Study aims
This study investigated the perceptions of secondary school principals (SSP) regarding time management practices (TMP) and sought to identify problems in time management in schools in the given time management literature.

Research questions
1. What are the perceptions of secondary school heads regarding TMP?
2. What are the major problems faced by secondary school principals to the appropriate investment of time allotted to the administrative process in the time management literature?

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

Population
The population of this study consisted of all school principals of both private and government secondary schools, including boys and girls belonging to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Sample & Sampling
The nature of the study was of survey, on the basis of probability sampling methods (area or cluster sampling, multi stage sampling, stratified sampling & simple random sampling). Sample was selected from the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is administratively divided into seven divisions that include Kohat, Dera Ismaial Khan, Peshawar, Hazara, Malakand, Bannu and Mardan. Sample was obtained from seven divisional headquarter districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 25% secondary school principals were randomly selected from each sample district by school's nature wise, location wise and gender wise.

Method and Procedure

For data collection purpose a questionnaire was constructed, designed to assess demographic variables (age, gender, type of position) and various time management practices. Questionnaires were distributed to participants with a return addressed envelope. Directives on the first page pointed out the participant was needed to respond the questions in the first part of the questionnaire, then to read each one statement and specify using the 1-5 Rating scale ranging from always (5) to never (1), whether the statement applied to their place of work. This sample represents 66.8% of male principals and 33.2% of female principals. 50% were of Government and 50% were of privately managed schools. Cronbach alpha calculated for questionnaire regarding sub-categories of TMP i.e. practices scheduling contacts, managing meetings, delegation, establishing priorities and handling interruptions for the secondary school principals were 0.846, 0.843, 0.889, 0.867, 0.888, and 0.851 respectively. The overall inter-item correlation for questionnaire was 0.971.

Table 01: Practices for Scheduling Contacts

S. N	Items	Mean	S.D
1	Allow secretary/clerk to manage you.	3.30	1.07
2	Having someone to protect you from unnecessary calls.	3.21	1.09
3	Using a diary or planner chart.	3.46	1.02
4	Spending most of time on major activities	2.91	1.29
5	Focusing on a single task at a time.	3.03	1.25
6	Trying to finish one task before going to other	3.09	1.30
7	Planning and scheduling activities	3.86	1.12
8	Planning travelling/meetings/appointments to save time.	3.98	0.98
9	Clear about own strength and weaknesses	3.71	1.16
10	Constantly monitoring using of time	3.87	1.00
11	Using of time saving devices	3.85	1.09
12	Having regular time for routine work	3.91	1.07
13	Asking to one's self about making best use of time right now	3.98	1.06
	Total Mean value and Standard Deviation	**3.55**	**0.57**

The above table shows the practices used to evaluate schedule contacts. Perceptions of secondary school principals regarding "planning traveling/meetings/appointments to save time" and "best utilization of time" were observed to have the maximum same mean score (3.98) which shows that these statements have the maximum level of observance among the thirteen statements. On the other hand "spending most of time on major activities" was observed to have the minimum mean score (2.91). It shows

the lowest level of observance among the thirteen items of practices for scheduling contacts.

Table 02: Practices for Managing Meetings

S. N	Items	Mean	S.D
1	Distribution of agenda of meeting one day prior.	3.83	1.11
2	Setting clear time limits for meetings and tasks.	3.57	1.16
3	Placing a limit on scheduling meetings.	3.62	1.21
4	Setting time to begin and end meetings and stick to them.	3.65	1.14
5	Placing a time limit on unscheduled meetings/visitors.	3.46	1.26
6	Dealing effectively with interruptions	3.61	1.20
7	Meetings start and end on time.	3.61	1.20
8	Summarization of major points at the end of meeting.	3.66	1.00
9	Using follow-up system on actions to be taken after meeting.	3.46	1.17
	Total Mean value and Standard Deviation	**3.62**	**0.79**

The table 2 elaborates the practices used to assess meetings. Perception of secondary school principals regarding "distribution of meetings' agenda before a day" was observed to have the maximum mean score i.e. (3.83) which shows that this statement has the maximum level of observance among nine statements. On the other hand "system used for follow up resulting from the meeting" was observed to have the minimum mean score (3.46). It shows that this statement has the lowest level of observance among the nine items regarding meetings.

Table 03: Delegation Practices

S. No	Items	Mean	S.D
1	Secretary/Clerk knows to whom you delegate and inform them.	3.69	1.11
2	Developing and delegating to staff according to their abilities.	3.67	1.10
3	Provision of necessary authority, resources and support to staff.	3.87	1.00
4	Staff knows to whom certain responsibilities are delegated.	3.86	1.07
5	Use time lines when you delegate.	3.46	1.16
6	Using a Tickler file or other system to monitor delegation.	3.67	1.07
7	Dividing co-curricular activities' supervision among staff.	3.86	1.12

8	Allowing assistants to make decisions regarding assigned tasks.	3.81	0.99
9	Delegation of authority and responsibility to right person.	3.76	0.93
10	Having complete faith in staff's ability.	3.76	0.99
11	Subordinates know how their efforts work to organization's goals.	4.00	0.91
12	Give time to staff to brief you about their assigned task.	3.73	0.97
	Total Mean value and Standard Deviation	**3.77**	**0.63**

The table 3 displays the practices used to assess delegation. Perception of secondary school principals regarding "knowledge of subordinates that how their work contributes to the organization's purposes" was observed to have the maximum mean score i.e. (4.00) which shows that this statement has the maximum level of observance among the twelve statements. On the other hand "using time lines for delegated tasks" was observed to have the minimum mean score (3.46). It shows that this item has the minimum level of observance among the twelve statements of delegation practices.

Table 04: Practices for Managing Paperwork

S. No	Items	Mean	S.D
1	Having system for organizing paperwork.	3.91	1.09
2	Group reading letters, memos, emails into one block during day.	3.83	0.99
3	Filter out paper you don't need.	3.72	1.07
4	Attempt to keep desk clear except necessary materials/papers.	3.87	0.98
5	Act on every piece of paper as received.	3.82	1.15
6	Keeping accurate files of work items.	3.62	1.06
7	Allocate time for routine paperwork on regular basis.	3.72	0.06
8	Writing notes to remind one's self of what to do.	3.91	1.07
9	Composing of letters by clerks from key ideas.	3.87	1.09
	Total Mean value and Standard Deviation	**3.81**	**0.74**

The table 4 shows the practices used to assess managing paper work. Perception of secondary school principals regarding "having system for organizing paperwork" and "writing of notes for reminding what you need to do" were observed to have the maximum mean score i.e. (3.91) which shows that these statements have the maximum level of observance among the nine statements. On the other hand "keeping

accurate work files" was observed to have the minimum mean score (3.62). It shows that "keeping accurate files of work items" has the minimum level of observance among the nine items of practices for managing paperwork.

Table 05: Practices for Establishing Priorities

S. No	Items	Mean	S.D
1	Having clear ideas about job's purposes and priorities.	3.92	1.10
2	Developing a priority to-do list each day.	3.88	1.03
3	Opening of mails and prioritizing by clerk/secretary for you.	3.65	1.17
4	Making a daily priority list.	3.66	1.09
5	Making a daily to-do list for a week.	3.80	1.12
6	Evaluating daily to-do list at the end of the day.	3.86	1.03
7	Work on set priority order of tasks.	3.30	1.23
8	Setting clear priorities to subordinates.	3.70	1.11
9	Link between daily activities and school priorities.	3.68	1.00
10	Linking school priorities with district's education priorities.	3.66	1.15
11	Sharing of master list of priorities with all school's personnel.	3.69	1.09
	Total Mean value and Standard Deviation	**3.71**	**0.75**

The table 5 shows the practices used to assess establishing priorities. Perception of secondary school principals regarding "having idea about job purposes and priorities" was observed to have the maximum mean score (3.92) which shows that this item has the maximum level of observance among the eleven statements of practices for establishing priorities. On the other hand "working on set priorities" was observed to have the minimum mean score (3.30) which shows that this statement has the minimum level of observance among the eleven items.

Table 06: Practices for Handling Interruptions

S. No	Items	Mean	S.D
1	Constantly interrupted by unnecessary visitors.	3.85	0.91
2	Try to handle problems as they arise.	3.88	0.85
3	Try to avoid gossip in official times.	3.69	1.07
4	Obedience to rules and focusing on goals are contributors to organization's success.	3.69	0.97
5	Screened telephone calls.	3.69	0.64
6	Not allowing staff to distract your attention from trivial issues.	3.69	0.62

7	Constantly review and follow up the assigned tasks to subordinates.	3.71	0.65
8	Having courage to stop unnecessary visitors during school hours.	3.73	0.73
9	Having someone to protect you from unnecessary interruptions.	3.54	0.87
10	Plan travelling/meetings/appointments to save time.	3.61	0.76
11	Place a time limit on unscheduled meetings or visitors.	3.70	0.67
12	Knowing the techniques of saying 'no' to subordinates or friends.	3.79	0.72
13	Constantly monitor use of time.	3.59	0.74
	Total Mean value and Standard Deviation	**3.59**	**0.47**

The table 6 shows the practices used to assess managing interruptions. Perception of secondary school principals regarding "try to handle problems as they arise" was observed to have the maximum mean score i.e. (3.88) which shows that this statement has the maximum level of observance among the thirteen statements. On the other hand "having someone to protect from unnecessary telephone calls or interruptions" was observed to have the minimum mean score (3.54). It shows that this item has minimum level of observance among the thirteen items of practices for managing interruptions.

DISCUSSION
The study identified the worthwhile TMP for secondary school principals including goal setting, proper planning for activities, making written plans, setting clear priorities, creating daily-to-do list, controlling interruptions, managing the telephone or mobile, technological interruptions, conducting effective meetings, decision-making, and delegating tasks among subordinates, managing paperwork properly, organizing work place and scheduling the activities. Managing paperwork was the most vital strategies perceived usefulness at workplace, followed by delegation practices which indicates the delegation of tasks to the employees and after that to follow subordinates and to make sure that employees perform the task delegated to them appropriately- has a massive significance for the rest of practices of managing time (Glodt, 2006; Darash & Male, 2004; Mahoney, 1998; Abu-Naseer, 2008; Chase et al, 2013).

The study results show that the main obstacles that secondary school principals face during time management were disorganization, unclear goals, unnecessary telephone

calls, frequent interruptions by visitors, focus on multiple tasks simultaneously, poor planning, unscheduled meetings, failure to delegate, dump of papers on desk, procrastination, not prioritizing tasks, not making "to-do" list, lack of training, junk mails, and do not know how to say "no" to subordinate or visitors. These results have been reported in several studies (e.g. Tracy, 2014, Ugwulashi, 2011; Burnt, Weststrate, Brown & Champion, 2009; Grissom et al, 2013). Results showed that social characteristics and social patterns play a significant role in wasting the time of the secondary school principals. These results have also been testified by Chase et al (2013), Akomolafe and Oluwatimehim (2013), in which they submitted that poor planning, led to disability to complete task without interruptions and that administrators did not create enough time for students' academic achievement.

For better time management, the school principals define personal, family and organizational goals. Write these goals on a paper and rank them on priority basis. Place at least one major priority every day and struggle to attain it. Get some time for one self- time to study, time to calm down, and time to be alive. These techniques have also been well documented by (Hassanzabeh & Ebadi, 2007; Chase et al, 2013; Robertson, 1999)**.** If the goal of time management practices is to increase efficiency and decrease stress, individuals require learning to discover the goals in their profession, then manage their time accordingly, rather than neat and orderly desks and hanging "do not disturb" symbols on doors (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007; Gordan & Borkan, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
As a whole, school heads often try their best to manage time to run different school activities efficiently. Six categories of time management practices -scheduling contacts, managing meetings, delegation practices, managing paperwork, establishing priorities and handling interruptions, were designed to help school heads to focus their attention on important tasks throughout the day. All the categories of TMP got the above average mean value. Main problems which they face regarding time management were disorganization, unclear goals, unnecessary telephone calls, disjoined process, frequent interruptions by visitors, focus on multiple tasks simultaneously, poor planning, unscheduled meetings, failure to delegate, dump of papers on desk, procrastination, not prioritizing tasks on urgency basis, not making "to-do" list lack of training, junk mails, and not knowing how to say "no" to subordinates.

This research study was restricted to understand successful school principals' time management practices from a quantitative paradigm. More research is needed from quantitative and qualitative paradigms with large sample. Edifying time management capacities of school principals may be a worthwhile plan for increasing principals' centre of attention on instructional leadership and pursuing school improvement. Principals ought to evaluate their own time to find out problems and facilitators to efficient time management. Moreover, short-term and long-term planning and implementing a diversity of practices based on this personalized assessment will encourage changes in time management practices. In conclusion, monitor improvement will support recognition of achievements in time management practices and other instructional areas which requires more perfection.

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