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## **Perceptions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Sector High School Principals Regarding Students', Teachers' and Parents' Response Towards Academic Progress**

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### **Abstract**

The current descriptive- quantitative study was to highlight perceptions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public sector high school principals regarding their students', teachers' and parents' response towards academic progress. The objectives of the study were: to explore the perceptions of the public sector secondary school principals regarding their school students in terms of the students' response; to explore the perceptions of the public sector secondary school principals regarding response of their school teachers in terms of teaching learning process; to explore the perceptions of the public sector secondary school principals regarding parental attitude in terms of school-parents collaboration towards the better student performance and finally to suggest/recommend suitable ways and means to deal the problems faced by public sector school principals. In this regard, the sample comprised of the high school principals of districts Peshawar, Mardan and Charsadda of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. As per the annual statistical report of government high schools (2017-18) through elementary & Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa website, out of total 420 high school principals, 201 principals as sample, through Morgan Table, was selected under multi-stage sampling approach with stratified, cluster and finally simple random sampling. A self-developed, Five-Point-Likert scale, questionnaire with Cronbach alpha of .089 of total 55 items was personally distributed among the participants. The collected data was analyzed through SPSS V. 23.0 by utilizing descriptive statistics: mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics: chi-square. In the light of analyses and findings enough evidence was not found to reject all the three hypotheses. Some major findings of the study appeared to be as follow: principals of high schools of this study found their students irresponsible towards teaching learning activities; do not complete their tasks in time, work part time and are not energetic in school. Regarding their teachers, principals view their teachers to be devoted, complete their courses in time, are not problematic and are cooperative; however, the teachers do not use A.V. aids while teaching and were found doing their personal work in school hours. In terms of parents' response, the principals



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found parents to be lacking interest in their children's academic progress and regularly visiting school to discuss their children's progress. They, on the contrary, engage their children in 'other-than-school' activities.

**Key Words:** School managers, secondary schools, parental attitude, teachers' performance, academic progress, school survey

### **Introduction**

Education is the holistic development of a person i.e. to develop one's intellectual, physical, philosophical, spiritual, aesthetic and ethical areas (El-Moslimany, 2018). The principal, being a focal person in a school, must be sentient towards water leak in the library, the learner who is struggling with math concepts, the teacher who is lost in thought of his ill child at home without good supervision, a student whose parents are in the midst of a bitter divorce and a young learner who discovered just now how to read and is now reading whatever comes in front of him. School leaders face everyone's problems though have the opportunity to work with those also who have no problems and are supporting (Bergman et al., 2010).

Terry cited in Chance (2015) expresses that "School leadership is a set of behaviors, attitudes, and activities which, when done right can and do inspire others to effective group efforts." They develop congenial relations with other institutes to work in collaboration with them to learn from their experiences and compete with them (Peña-López, 2009). They are responsible for both curricular and co-curriculum outcomes of their schools, which include providing leadership, evaluating support staff; facilitating teachers for effective teaching learning process; communicating school's work to staff in the form of objectives and providing instructional feedback to teachers (Khan & Iqbal, 2013). To lead a school is a full time job. Nkwoh (2001) observed that school principals must have competencies to lead schools effectively to ascertain the educational goals; they also need to understand the changing expectations from the leaders what they need to know and must be able to do.

Siddique (1979) presents leadership qualities for the principals of secondary schools in Pakistan which are: knowledge of ideological foundations of Pakistan; Human relations management skills; Counseling techniques; Creative and innovative faculties; Observance of Islamic Shari's and Strategies for diffusing and adopting educational innovations.

Thus, proactive school management was defined as a process which includes rich and various responsibilities that are not only related to the line managers' responsibility but it covers many sides of school and its population's needs. While a principal hires academic success, he or she also embraces the responsibility of cultivating success through human development enhancement. With parents support, and challenging those accountable for school development and provision, leaders contribute to school planning, effective modeling and development, and monitoring of all aspects of school life to ensure the best quality teaching and learning experience for each member of the school community.

### **Literature Review**

In the literature concerning school leadership, much attention is paid to the



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centrality of leadership for managing schools and augmenting positive outcomes for learning institutions. In the years of research, a number of articles have been written on the different facets of leadership concerning the quality of teachers, students' outcome and staff. A number of theorists have underlined leadership roles including the ability to develop a vision for the school, build partnerships and to offer encouragement for teachers and learners. In addition, increased educational demands also include: student enrollment heterogeneity, integration of technologies into the learning process and thus revitalizing leadership practices.

Wells (2016) expressing the stressful job of the principal states that principals of high schools face considerable stress in present day of accountability and high visibility. The analysis of Pakistan's educational system reveals that "the most serious constraint affecting the efficiency of our school system has been the management capability needed to meet the challenge of change and development" (Govt of Pakistan, MOE, 1997). Adams et al. (2019) about leadership programmes states "In Pakistan there are leadership problems like limited autonomy for educational leaders, insufficient professional training, encouraging dependency and autocratic leadership style and programmes like Bachelor of Arts (B.A) and Master of Arts (M.A) that do not produce leadership skills. Fullan (2002) states that for continuous educational reforms, school leaders have a key role to perform for sustainable progress.

Leithwood et al (2008) states that a successful school leader considers certain things while making plans for school development like observing teaching learning process, responding to the situation of learning, taking measures for improving learning, developing leadership qualities and distributing the tasks among the staff members of the school.

Crowther & Seifi (2016) opine that education department is responsible for developing proper mechanism for the smooth running of the schools. There must be close coordination among all the stake holders for the ultimate purpose of client's satisfaction.

Wang (2016) states that "I think no leader can work alone and succeed in working alone. He or she needs the help of a wide spectrum of people – the middle managers, teachers and the support staff to implement the policies and carry out programmes." Fullan (2002) states that principals of the schools should be trained to focus and prioritize the things and spare the maximum time to deal with the important things. This is how they can make them action oriented principals of the schools.

According to Dipaola & Moran (2003) the role of school principals has completely changed and the emphasis is now on how they can lead to improve learning style of students by providing them effective feedback and ensuring that the students perform well in achievement tests and meet their different learning needs. Counseling in this regard can be helpful to gain greater self-understanding, which as a result leads students to accept responsibility for their actions and change their behaviors (Lancaster & Waryold, 2008). Pakistan being a developing country with most of the people living in rural setting having low economic status often have to support their families financially by allowing their children work part time. Majority of the children studying in public sector schools work part time after schooling to support their families (Singh, 1998).



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Students worked more hours had negative effects on their academic achievement while young students working for more hours had severe effects than old students. (Muluk, 2017).

Linking school principals with students, the ultimate goal of principals is to achieve preset student learning outcomes. Anjum cited in Hina (2017) opines that the problem of education in Pakistan is the caliber of learning and level of competency of learners and instructors. In reality, increase in enrollment is defenseless without improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at classroom level.

Students' response to teachers and school activities depend upon many internal and external factors. Cohen et al (2010), by analyzing the role of the teachers say that personality development of a child depends upon teachers who enjoy command on the subject they teach, have good understanding of National Curriculum, understand the aims and values, contents and scheme of study it offers.

High lighting the importance of teachers, Kerlinger (1993) is of the view that, "Teachers have both intrinsic and extrinsic needs. A teacher who is intrinsically motivated may be observed to undertake a task for its own sake, for the satisfaction it provides or for the feeling of accomplishment and self-actualization. On the other hand, an extrinsically motivated teacher performs the activity/duty in order to obtain some reward such as salary. Therefore, the aim of the organization should be to build on and enhance the intrinsic motivation of teachers to teach effectively and at the same time, to provide some extrinsic motivation too.

Cohen et al (2010) forwarded following suggestions for the teachers to inculcate in their personality. They should be fair, active, vigilant, set realistic and manageable tasks, use praise and encouragement, use motivational techniques, have sense of humor, promote positive environment and communicate effectively. About teaching strategies, Akram (2010) says that methods of teaching can be divided into four categories, i.e. teachers' directed methods, student-directed methods, interactive methods and problem solving methods. Application of all these four methods, if properly utilized by the teachers can have far-reaching results. High lighting the importance of professional development of teachers, Darling et al (2017) asserts that professional development of teachers provided as and job-embedded activity to increase teachers' capabilities and help them change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning.

School leaders can encourage the teachers and staff to jointly find the solutions of the problems, because they are in the better position to solve them. Some people by birth have natural tendency towards teaching; their ability to engage and inspire others, to transmit ideas or knowledge, and to control the behavior of groups of people is outstanding, which leads them to be counted as change makers (Cowley, 2006).

Mere school teachers and their leader cannot fully achieve the goals effectively if parents of the learners are not playing their expected role. Parents' involvement in their children education leads to improvement in children's attitude, behavior, and attendance at school and in their mental health. It also helps to improve parent-teacher relationship, teacher morale, and the school climate (Hornby



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2011). Bastiani cited in Vincent (1996) says “If the least cooperative parent rose to the level of the most cooperative, the effect would be much larger than if the worst school rose to the level of the best, or the least prosperous parent rose to the level of the most prosperous.” Children can prosper and overcome their problems, if parents give them proper attention. Nieto (2004) narrates that students’ achievements were the result of the effective participation of parents in academic decisions of schools. The more parents were involved in school-based decisions; the better would be the output of the schools.

Lopez et al (2001) points out that “Research suggests that parents’ participation often enhances students’ self-esteem, improves parent-child relationship, and helps parents develop positive attitude toward schools.”

Involvement of parents is also a source to monitor and evaluate teachers and school management; because frequent and regular visits of parents bound teachers to improve their performance and alerts school management and teachers to become more vigilant in their duties. Sandler’s model cited in Jaspen (2012) states that “The extent to which parents become involved in their children’s education depends on how parents define and perceive their role; how confident they are in assuming that role; whether they perceive that the school, teachers, and their children want them to be involved; and how they feel about challenges from life context variables such as skills and knowledge as well as time and energy.”

Roy et al, (2004) assert that “the administrative responsibility of principals is to establish linkages with teachers, specialists, students, parents and communities. These relationships serve as effective linkages between the school staff, students and communities.”

In short principals, through the support of his/her teachers and parents of the students, get enough support to work efficiently to achieve student learning outcomes (SLOs).

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To explore the perceptions of the public sector secondary school principals regarding their school students in terms of the students’ status and their response;
- ii. To explore the perceptions of the public sector secondary school principals regarding dealing their school teachers in terms of teaching learning process;
- iii. To explore the perceptions of the public sector secondary school principals regarding parental attitude in terms of school-parents’ collaboration towards better student performance;
- iv. To suggest/recommend suitable ways and means to deal the problems faced by public sector school principals;

### **Research Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: Public sector secondary school principals are not satisfied with the response of students in terms of teaching learning activities.

H<sub>A1</sub>: Public sector secondary school principals are satisfied with the response students in terms of teaching learning activities.

H<sub>02</sub>: Public sector secondary school principals are not satisfied with the



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performance of their school teachers.

H<sub>A2</sub>: Public sector secondary school principals are satisfied with the performance of their school teachers.

H<sub>03</sub>: Public sector secondary school principals believe that parents do not play their role towards supporting school-parents' collaboration for the betterment of student performance.

H<sub>A3</sub>: Public sector secondary school principals believe that parents play their role towards supporting school-parents' collaboration for the betterment of student performance.

### Methodology

The present study was descriptive-quantitative survey (Brew et al 2016) The target population or sampling frame, as Creswell (2005) view it, to be a group of those individuals that share some distinctive characteristics ('head or principal at secondary school in mentioned districts' in this study) through which a list of nominees is identified by the researcher. In this study principals (both male and female) of Peshawar, Mardan and Charsadda have been included for the research purpose (Best and Kahn, 2010).

In short, all the government high school principals of urban and rural areas of District Peshawar, Mardan and Charsadda comprised the sampling frame for this study.

#### *District Peshawar (2017-18)*

S. No.	Urban	Rural	Total
High Schools (M+F)	31+28 = 59	46+36=82	141
Principals (M+F)	59	82	141

Annual Statistical Report of Government High Schools (2017-18)

#### *District Mardan (2017-18)*

S. No.	Urban	Rural	Total
High Schools (M+F)	11+5 = 16	76+75 = 151	167
Principals (M+F)	16	151	167

Annual Statistical Report of Government High Schools (2017-18)

#### *District Charsadda (2017-18)*

S. No.	Urban	Rural	Total
High Schools (M + F)	13 + 5 = 18	58 + 36 = 94	112
Principals (M+F)	18	94	112

Annual Statistical Report of Government High Schools (2017-18)

To draw statistically representative sample, Morgan Table (Sahu, 2013) was utilized followed by multi-stage sampling:

The multi-stage sampling followed 3-stage-sampling process:

1. Stage 1: stratified sampling: here two stratum i.e. Male and Female strata were developed because of the heterogeneous nature of the sample.



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2. Stage 2: cluster sampling: here the two strata were divided into randomly selected clusters i.e. first one is urban and second one is rural.
3. In stage 3: through simple random sampling, out of total 420 government high school principals (both male and female), 201 principals were selected through Morgan's Table (Sahu, 2013).

The resultant statistics in this regard, appeared as follow:

### *Sample drawn through Morgan Table*

Population/Sample	Peshawar (M+F)	Mardan (M+F)	Charsadda (M+F)
420	141	167	112
201	68	80	53

Male and female ratio in sample appeared to be 37:31(Peshawar), 42:38 (Mardan) and 34:19 (Charsadda).

A self- developed questionnaire, based on likert scale, (Hardy & Bryman 2009) with part A, B and C as structural parts, was utilized for data collection, which was first piloted on 30 principals to set its reliability and validity.

### **Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.890	55

The data was collected in three steps i.e. formal permissions from concerned authorities, brief interview for rapport development followed by survey through the self-developed questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed by utilizing SPSS Software V 23.0 with finding mean, standard deviation and application of inferential statistics such as chi-square.

## **Results**

### **Results of Hypotheses Testing**

A chi-square test was performed to examine the perceptions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public sector high school principals in terms of students' response to the teaching learning activities. The relation between these variables was significant,  $X^2 (1, N = 201) = p = .000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

A chi-square test was performed to examine the perceptions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public sector high school principals in terms of teachers' response to the school principals. The relation between these variables was significant,  $X^2 (1, N = 201) = p = .000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

A chi-square test was performed to examine perceptions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public sector high school principals in terms of parents' response to support the learning progress of their children. The relation between these variables was significant,  $X^2 (1, N = 201) = p = .000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Objective 1:** To explore the perceptions of the secondary school principals regarding their school students in terms of the students' status and their



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response;

- Acknowledging the importance of students' involvement in school affairs majority of the respondents agreed that they arrange meetings with the students to know about their problems.
- The public school children are always energetic and intelligent was not supported by the respondents.
- Majority of the respondents disagreed that public school children always complete their tasks in time,
- Public school children respond well to what is taught to them was not supported by majority of the principals.
- Public school children are mostly part time workers.
- Public school children are mostly problematic was agreed upon by majority of the principals.
- Children in public schools mostly come from lower middle class and poor class; hence they have more responsibilities to shoulder as compared to students going to private schools.
- Public school children experience academic difficulties as they do not have time to study in the evening.
- 100% respondents agreed that they share relevant information with teachers and students.
- Majority of the respondents responded positively that they try to provide conducive environment in the school.

**Objective 2:** To explore the perceptions of the secondary school principals regarding dealing their school teachers in terms of teaching learning process;

- Regarding performance of duty by the teachers' majority of the respondents agreed that teachers perform their duty well.
- Teachers are devoted to their work.
- They always complete their courses in time.
- They favoured the view that teachers are cooperative.
- They neither use A.V. aids nor involve students in practical activities.
- Teachers perform their personal work in school timing was agreed upon by majority of the principals.
- Teachers do not use any political pressures to get their work done.

**Objective 3:** To explore the perceptions of the secondary school principals regarding parental attitude in terms of school-parents collaboration towards better student performance;

- Parents do not cooperate in terms of school-parent collaboration.
- Parents do not visit school on regular basis. They visit school occasionally.
- They do not provide positive feedback.
- Parents do not motivate their children to study rather they engage their children in 'other-than-school-activities'.
- Parents do not discuss their child's progress to help the teachers to overcome their own and their students' weak areas.





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### Discussion

Our whole education system revolves around the student. All efforts are applied to educate him/her because student is the future builder of the any nation. Most of the principals were not satisfied with their students as they do not complete their tasks in time. The reason is most of the public school children belong to poor families. They do part time jobs to support their families. They go back home late in evening, thus remain unable to find time to do their homework. According to Moro-Egido et al (2010) "Part-time students face significant time constraints, that is, their studies carry a huge opportunity cost." Secondly, the places where they work, they have to fulfill the demands of their employers, for which they remain absent from their school, which of course tells upon their performance. Moro-Egido et al (2010) further states that "Part-time students cannot take full advantage of the facilities and amenities available to full-time students. Lack of access or participation may lead part-time students to assess their academic performance more negatively." Thirdly, they have more responsibilities to shoulder as compared to students of private schools, which leads to their dropout from the school because education becomes secondary importance for them. These students, as a result, face academic difficulties due to time constraints.

Education of the child is the joint responsibility of parents and teachers. This can ensure progress keeping the right track. Principals of the public schools found that parents are not cooperative. They are invited to visit the school and discuss their child's progress, but they do not respond. They mostly work on daily wages and find it difficult to spare time to visit the school. Teachers need feedback from the parents, so that they can jointly make efforts to overcome the problems faced by the children, but no such feedback is provided by the parents. They do not motivate their children to study and establish bright future for them, but rather they prefer their children to do more home related jobs, which is priority for them. This attitude of parents has a negative impact on students' performance due to which their results decline day by day. Research suggests that the potential of parental involvement is essential for improving academic achievement and social outcomes of children (Hornby, 2011).

Teachers, being backbone of the school, are strength of the school leader. Teachers in this study were found to be cooperative and they perform their duty well. They are devoted and complete their courses in time, however, they do not engage their learners practically and do not use A.V. aids. In this regard, "Ketcham and Heath cited in Deliman, (1969) found that the type of audio-visual presentation used mattered less for high-aptitude. The low-aptitude students, on the other hand, gained better when addition of image to sound was practiced. Utilizing audio and video devices allow the learners to utilize more than the only sense of hearing. Learning style differ and relevant learning style facilitates learning. Therefore, low economic background learners can facilitated through practice and the use of audio-video aids.

### Conclusion

The study reveals that principals are not satisfied with the performance of the students. Students being mostly part time workers stay engaged in other activities than learning and practice to fulfill their family financial



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responsibilities. They find little time to study at home.

Teachers of the public schools support the school administration in running the school affairs. Some teachers are problematic but majority of them cooperate with the principals, however, only few teachers make use of audio visual aids during their teaching learning process. Their level of engaging their learners in practical work is also quite low.

Principals were also not satisfied with the parental attitude. Parents rarely visit the school, they do not discuss the progress of their children with the teachers, and extend least cooperation to the school administration.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are presented:

- i. The teaching learning process may be followed up keeping in view the students learning outcomes already developed by the Elementary and Secondary Education department (E&SED).
- ii. Detailed job description of every person working in the organization may be developed and may be handed over to every individual and then their performance may be rated according to their job description.
- iii. Scheme of studies may be developed by the department for every class from K.G (Kindergarten) to higher secondary level. It may be displayed in the classrooms and teachers may be strictly directed to teach according to the given scheme. Principals of the schools may ensure that such schemes are being properly followed up.
- iv. There may be annual school calendar reflecting all the curricular and co-curricular activities during the academic year. All the activities mentioned in the calendar may be strictly monitored and observed. Principals alone cannot do all these tasks. They may form committees to look into matters and report back.
- v. There may be a checklist of all the activities taking place in the school. Those teachers and students scoring high in the checklist may be encouraged and awarded for their high performance.
- vi. Record keeping is always helpful in setting direction and future planning. Principals of the secondary schools may keep complete record of all the activities taking place inside the school. Minutes of meetings with the community members, parents, teachers and students may properly be recorded and incorporated in decisions making.
- vii. Principals of the schools may be trained professionally in terms of managerial skills to make them capable in utilizing other peoples' talents and skills efficiently.
- viii. Community members and parents are stakeholders in education. But unfortunately, they do not acknowledge the important role they can play in school's improvement. Awareness campaign may be launched through various mediums to make them realize the role they can play in improving their children's progress.



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- ix. Parents need to visit the school regularly at particular intervals to discuss their child's progress. Parent teachers' meetings may be arranged at regular interval in this regard.
- x. Use of A.V aids is always helpful and supportive in clarifying the concepts to the students. Principals should ensure the availability of A.V aids in schools. Furthermore, they have to monitor that teachers are using them inside the classrooms to facilitate the student.
- xi. Some principals in their remarks stated that primary school teachers after their promotion are shifted to high schools without giving them any training relating to the teaching at high school. Those teachers find it difficult to adjust in the high school, students also suffer, due to their lack of experience. They should be shifted to the high schools after receiving proper training.
- xii. Students of public school mostly belong to poor families; they face psychological problems which ultimately affect their teaching learning process. For the purpose of guidance and counseling services of some psychologists should be hired or training should be given to the teachers to deal with such students.

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