

# Determinants of Effective School Management: An Empirical Investigation to Explore ODL Prospects

By

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research article has examined the determinants of effective school management and explored prospects of ODL in the light of findings and conclusions of the study. School is a place which contributes a profound role in the development of new generation. They are being prepared as a productive human resource in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills. This generation can become more productive; if their minds are cultivated with positive behavior. It depends on the effective school management, school culture and conducive learning environment. The principals/heads and teachers are the key people who provided opportunities to the learners by practicing their leadership role in the schools.

**Methodology:** The study has been carried out in a carefully chosen representative sample of public schools three districts of the province of Punjab, Pakistan where principals/heads and teachers were selected as research participants. The study is descriptive in nature and a survey technique is used

for data collection. The data has been collected through questionnaire consisting of closed ended questions and personal interviews. The data was analyzed and interpreted.

**Originality/Value:** This study will help to understand the key determinants of effective school management and its importance. It will also keep the principals/heads and teachers to understand their capacity and roles in the areas of effective school management and explore how benefits of ODL and OER could be used to improve their access and quality. It proposed strategies for addressing the challenges for school development in times to come. This study will also be useful for policy makers and educational planners in assessing the effectiveness of the school management and the quality of education. The study will guide in shaping the future research in different school contexts to develop the whole school approaches with the goals of improving the academic, physical, and social wellbeing of the children and adolescents.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the basic necessity for being to understand the matters in all fields of life and to solve problems from basic to complex. Without education a sensible person cannot survive and it is as significant as food is to body. It is wealth and power for a person, which can be easily used by person whenever

and wherever it requires. As the saying goes; knowledge is power. It is more important for one's life. It helps a person to groom and gain a respectable position in society. The state must promote it, because education is the only means to understand its history, culture and to some extent their religion.

Education is the only means to unite a country and people as a nation (Larry, 2005).

Importance of education has been emphasized in religion. The holy book of Muslims, Quran in many places says that seeking knowledge is an obligation for all Muslims. Knowledgeable person is superior to one who does not know. In God's words, "say unto them O, Muhammad, (PBUH) are those who know equal with those who know not, but only men of understanding will pay lead" (Al-Quran 39:9).

The education is becoming one of the defining organizations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the emergence of globalization and increasing global competition. In the fast changing and competitive world, education and technology are the master keys for respectable survival and progress of the country. Pakistan is determined to respond positively to emerging needs, opportunities and challenges of globalization.

From its birth Pakistan is far behind in the field of effective education and management. It is facing major issues and challenges in all aspects of educational planning and management. The following headings show its clear picture.

### Missing Facilities in Schools of Pakistan

The following table is displaying the province wise missing facilities in schools of Pakistan.

**Table-1 Missing Facilities in Schools of Pakistan**

<b>Province/ Area</b>	<b>Without Building</b>	<b>Without Boundary Wall</b>	<b>Without Drinking Water</b>	<b>Without Latrine</b>	<b>Without Electricity</b>
<b>Punjab</b>	505	13,378	8,279	14,551	26,825
<b>Sindh</b>	11,669	24,470	26,240	22,588	39,616
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>	1,113	9,116	10,029	7,888	13,719
<b>Balochistan</b>	681	7,689	4,197	8,425	9,806
<b>AJK</b>	2,705	4,498	3,074	3,390	4,083
<b>Gilgit-Baltistan</b>	183	1,084	1,069	1,072	1,072
<b>FATA</b>	908	1,024	2,101	1,882	1,640
<b>ICT</b>	0	15	7	50	8
<b>Total Pakistan</b>	17,764	61,274	54,996	59,846	96,769
<b>In %</b>	10.9%	37.7%	33.9%	36.9%	59.6%

Source: NEMIS 2008-09 AEPAM, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.

The Poor quality of existing learning environment is evident from the fact that a large number of schools are missing basic necessities of life i.e. 37.7% schools up to elementary level are without boundary wall, 33.9% without drinking water facility, 37% without latrines and around 60% schools are without electricity. For higher education particularly for girls

existing schools should be upgraded with the provision of necessary equipments to improve the quality of education.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Global Trends in Education:

Hallinger (2003) identifies a number of key global trends in preparation and development in education including: new research-based knowledge about teaching and learning, to foster the development of capacities for lifelong learning, the process of leadership development, implementation of new knowledge and skills and professional preparation and development of school leaders.

### Principal/head, community and effective education:

Kirsi et al. (2011) provide a better understanding to school principals / heads and chief education officers through a research project. The results demonstrated that chief education officers considered technical and financial factors more critical for educational reforms, most of the principals/heads emphasized on the teaching skills while other consider themselves as team leaders in time-management skills. While traditional models (of educational change) require several turns around the cycle to modify the innovation, heads in high schools have neither the time nor the staff for such refinements. The model depends on the heads' ability to work quickly and pragmatically and to move on to the next activity. Therefore, it is the need of the hour that principals/heads should continuously improve their professional teaching expertise, while at the same time absorbing sufficient managerial and leadership skills to operate effectively within their own particular environments.

Mitsue (2003) suggested for community participation in education is very necessary to solve complicated issues contributing to poor educational quality. Through its projects, the World Bank aims at involving communities in various stages; preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Communities should develop these capacities so that they fulfill the work; the bank has initiated and continues to carry on. In this sense, the bank's job is to facilitate the process, providing communities with the necessary knowledge and skills. The community should be including parents, community members, teachers, and government officials.

### DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT:

A number of common characteristics have been identified in research done on effective school s management by Reynolds (1996) and resulted in the identification of nine key determinants associated with effective school management. These are professional leadership, shared vision and goals, learning environment, high quality teaching and learning, high expectations, positive reinforcement, monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' rights responsibilities. Hopkins (1996) discovered eight determinants for effective school management these are; school leadership, suitable climate within the school, focus on curriculum and teaching, clear goals and high expectation for students, monitoring performance and achievement, staff development and in-service training, parental involvement and external support. These determinants address the dynamics of schools as organizations.

Mortimore et al (1988) found out twelve determinants for effective school management, these are; purposeful leadership of the staff by the head, the involvement of the deputy head, the involvement of teachers, consistency among teachers, structured sessions, intellectually challenging teaching, work-centered environment, limited focus within lessons, maximum communication between teachers and pupils, record keeping, parental involvement and positive climate.

### Dimensions of Effective School Management:

David (1996) discovered the main dimensions of effective school management which are common to all sets of management arrangements. These dimensions consist of frameworks which guide the actions of all who are involved in the schools. Examples of frameworks are the school's aims and policies, and the systems for decision-making and consultation. Without clear frameworks, the school would soon lapse into confusion and conflict; the dimensions clarify roles and responsibilities. All who are involved in the school need to have a shared understanding of their respective roles and of whom in taking responsibility for what. Well-designed frameworks are useless without clear roles and responsibilities, the dimensions promote ways in which the people involved can work together so that each person finds their particular role enjoyable and rewarding, and at the same time the aims of the school as a whole can be achieved successfully.

The district education officers, heads and staff should ignore the traditional ways of managing the school. Governors in particular are looking for new ways of working with the head and staff which build upon the good relationships already established. Teachers are also realizing that the management of classrooms cannot be isolated from the management arrangements for the school as a whole. As budgets are delegated to schools systems for managing finance and resources have to be created to complement or replace existing arrangements. The National Curriculum is leading to a new approach to the whole curriculum, to the deployment of teachers and to the organization of teaching, learning and assessment.

Such changes are leading everyone in school to rethink the nature of management: what it is and what it needs to become. Management as empowerment may require a transformation of the school's culture. It is apparent from the above discussion that remember that the process may well involve cultural change, find ways in which every teacher, in the 'new' culture, becomes a manager of change, with particular roles and responsibilities but also with a grasp of, and commitment to, the process as a whole, review and continually adjust the management arrangements to empower all whole are engaged in the planning and implementation of change.

### **School Performance Indicators:**

Marilyn (1996) pointed out a success criterion is a form of school performance indicator, success criteria are distinctive in that they refer to future rather than past performance, relate to a planned target designed to improve performance, are chosen by the persons who set the target, influence the way the target is designed, emphasize success rather than failure and are key component of each stage of development planning.

These characteristics of success criteria should be shared by all performance indicators. In recent years there has been considerable discussion of school performance indicators in education. Different groups and agencies have produced lists possible performance indicator. There has also been wide discussion of the problems of division and using performance indicator; reliability and validity, fairness and credibility, value and justification.

Performance indicators operate at three levels; the school, by which the school judges its own performance, the performance and curriculum provision of its educational institutions as a whole, or of a single institution and the national bodies by which a whole system is judged. In devising success criteria for targets in a development plan, a school may draw upon the wide range of performance indicators developed at each of these three levels. A school may also use evidence of performance indicators collected at level to shape its own priorities and targets.

Performance indicators and success criteria are seen by many to be important because of their relevance to the accountability of school (how 'outsiders' judge their quality) and to the improvement of school (how 'insiders' plan development). These two functions can be in tension: greater accountability does not automatically lead to improvement and vice versa. Of equal importance are the way performance indicators and success criteria can exert a positive influence on way of thinking and way of working in that they are; promote desirable goals for schools, suggest standards appropriate to such goals, guide the action needed to achieve agreed standards, distinguish between process and outcome, indicate the evidence needed to judge success, help in reporting success and shape further action if the degree of success falls short of expectation. When these basic ideas permeate ways of thinking and working, the process of developments planning is enhanced.

### **FINDINGS:**

The research study was planned to find out the determinants of effective school management which are; purposeful leadership, supportive climate, challenging teaching and learning, parental involvement, monitoring performance and achievement, staff development, work centered environment, clear goals, high expectations, communications between Teachers and Pupils, Positive reinforcement, pupil rights and responsibilities. It also explored the scope of ODL, OER and Online Learning in the school setup to enhance their effectiveness. It also focused on the principals/heads understanding about key factors and areas which enable schools to create conducive teaching and learning environment and wider learning opportunities for student by using latest ICT medication.

Sixty three percent respondents said that weak management is the major problem of making the school management effective and fifty five percent responses were in favor of professional skills which can minimize the weaknesses to make school more effective and sixty two percent pointed out that we can maintain pleasant atmosphere in school with the cooperation of staff members. The important determinant of effective school management according to forty five percent responses was positive reinforcement as well as forty one percent found out the improve performance is a successful criteria for effective school management

Thirty eight percent respondents showed that validity is the most effective school performance tool and the same forty four percent indicated that the process of school development planning is enhanced by promoting desirable goals and forty four percent recommended that the most important element of school development planning cycle is performance evaluation and forty seven percent same population declared that the main advantage of school development planning is focus on vision & mission.

Sixty two percent respondents marked that the school development cone stresses on school achievement and forty five percent gave their opinion that the meaningful determinant of establishing frameworks was devising strategies and thirty eight percent principals/heads and teachers said that meaningful planning is the key factor which mostly affects the school performance and fifty three percent announced that roles and responsibilities is the common and main dimension of school improvement and forty four percent declared that wrong policies is the main cause of indiscipline in school management. Fifty five percent responses depicted that guidance the students is the most important role of principal and teacher in effective school management and forty two percent population showed out their opinions that purposeful leadership is the key factor of effective school management and forty two percent stressed that strategies is the most important component of school establishment as well as and thirty eight percent opinioned that staff development is the main determinant of effective school management, the same forty percent gave importance to positive

reinforcement is the essential key element of effective school management.

Thirty nine percent considered implementing strategies is the most important assumption which provide pillar for school improvement and forty five percent respondents gave their opinions that value added is the main indicator of school performance and sixty one percent said that through senior management we can improve school performance and thirty eight percent principal/heads and teachers proposed that professional development is the key global trend in educational development and fifty one percent stressed that global perspective education is the modern attitude towards school improvement as well as forty percent recommended that exchanging new ideas is he most effective element of human resource management and forty percent were in the favor of supportive climate variable which is mainly influencing school effectiveness.

The respondents were asked about the capacity of their schools. Eighty six percent responded that their institutions have enrolled students over one hundred and thirty percent of their capacity. They maintained that they refuse more than eighty percent candidates due to non-availability of capacity. They are buildings are not sufficient to accommodate all applicants. At this stage, the possibility of using ODL/Open Schooling was explored. More than ninety present opined that the current infrastructure capacity is insufficient to accommodate all children in the formal system. Open Schooling is the only viable option which may be used to achieve the objective of providing education. While going into the further details fifty percent respondents feel that the ICT may be used for providing education to the out of school children. However, its usage should be limited as per requirements of the area and infrastructure facilities. Interestingly, only five percent respondents were aware Open Educational Resources (OER) and when briefed eighty percent opined that the OER may be used in school education after suitable adaptation and repurposing. On the whole, the respondents supported introducing ODL mode at secondary education and using controlled ICT tools to enrich the offerings.

## CONCLUSION:

In the light of major findings the conclusions are drawn:

A large number of principals/heads and teachers concluded that researches and changes is the most effective key determinant for effective school management, the major problem of making the school management effective is weak management, we can minimize the weaknesses to make school more effective through professional skills and medication of ICT and we can maintain pleasant atmosphere in school with the cooperation of staff members.

Majority of the principals/heads and teachers indicated that the important determinant of effective school management is positive reinforcement, a successful criteria for effective school management is improve performance, the most effective school performance tool is validity, the process of school development planning is enhanced by promoting desirable goals, the most important element of school development planning cycle is performance evaluation, the main advantage of school development planning is focus on vision and mission, the school development cone stresses on school achievement. For effective management, the respondents are in favor of introducing ODL mode in the school education and using appropriate ICT to support the learners. They also supported use of repurposed and adapted OER in the school course material for effective education.

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