



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ACADEMIC DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES PREVAILING IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF DISTRICT DERA ISMAIL KHAN

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Abstract- The study was conducted to explore and hence compare the academic decision making practices prevailing in higher secondary schools of district D.I.Khan. A researcher made Academic Decision Making Questionnaire was used to gather the required data. The questionnaire was validated through face and content validity while the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.92. The population of the study consisted of 43 principals (Female=14 and Male=29). The questionnaire was distributed among all 43 principals and all 43 questionnaires were completely and properly filled showing 100% response rate. Data was analyzed using SPSS (Version 26.0). Three alternate hypotheses were also devised and accordingly tested. The data analysis revealed that no significant differences were found pertaining to gender, locality and marital status of principals regarding academic decision making practices. Various recommendations including conduct of management related specialized trainings for higher secondary school heads should be arranged.

Key Words: Academic Decision-Making Practices (ADMP), Management, Skills, Principals.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a country passing through developmental stages while its educational system is fronting numerous difficulties. Its educational system might stab to accomplish optimum internal efficiency by allocation and using of all human and material resources to their maximum, and ensuing effective management for refining the excellence of education. The condition of education segment predominantly that of educational administration in Pakistan is very weak. This ultimately means that decision making at school level is weak and needs to be rectified (Nadeem, Imran, & Sarwar, 2008).

The administrative sciences divide the role of managers into 3 groups naming decisional, informational and interpersonal. Griffin (2000) embraces the managerial roles as procedural, relational, theoretical, analytical, decision making, time management, communication and supervisory. All these roles are very important, thoroughly interconnected but the most important role is decisional one. Decision making is an intellectual process in which amongst many possible alternatives, best probable is chosen for resolving a specific problem (Chang & Sanfeys, 2008). Choudury (2001) stated that the main job of administrator lies at the core of management and the base of success mainly depends upon decision-making.

Ahmad (2013), proper decision making is obligatory to accomplish the managerial tasks of school heads. That's why it is not astonishing that decisions are the pivotal power point of the school management. The school principals have to struggle for the perfection of school effectiveness by increasing management abilities to take impartial decisions in multifaceted circumstances through models and decision making practices. Decision making is undeniably the utmost challenging and very necessary task to be performed by the school heads. The most significant skills related to decision making abilities of principals are to be learned by providing them training facilities (Choudury, 2001; Ahmad, 2013). Smooth operation of Educational institution's matters requires high competency on the part of their heads for the better performance of schools (Nadeem, Imran, & Sarwar, 2008).

Rationale of the study

The existing literature shows that in Pakistan, very few studies have been conducted on academic decision-making practices. Presently, there is a lot of pressure on regarding increasing admissions, curriculum transformation and reconstruction, shortage of teachers, maintaining educational standards, lack of funds, improper resource allocations, offering new courses, staff development, school adjustments, dropout, low school performance, students' and staff absenteeism are consequently outcome of poor academic decision-making practices. The eventual aim of the use of decision-making techniques is to enable the principals to make more coherent decisions regarding uncertain, conflict and unfavorable situations. Thus, it is

anticipated to intense a study in the area of decision making and measures the degree to which our principals adopt administrative techniques in making both the academic and administrative decisions.

Keeping in view the above, the researchers considered it mandatory to carry-out a study on academic decision-making practices prevailing in higher secondary schools of district D.I.Khan. The study was also further carried out in view of three different demographic variables counting gender of school heads, their marital status and school locality.

Statement of the problem

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Higher Secondary Schools are established to enroll intermediate class students. The heads of these schools are called Principals who are accountable to accomplish activities in their schools by maximum using human and material resources to boost students' academic achievement and teacher's performance. Therefore, school heads play a vivacious role in the quantitative extension and qualitative development of their schools. Being institutional heads, they have to control academic and administrative matters of their schools. The foremost and basic drive of school is to impart basic necessary skills and knowledge to their pupils. Therefore, these academic decisions are utmost significant task of school heads. These decisions directly affect all curricular and co-curricular activities. Therefore, keeping in view the importance of academic decision making on the part of school principals, the researchers conducted study under the title, "Comparative study of the academic decision-making practices prevailing in higher secondary schools of district Dera Ismail Khan".

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To find out various academic decision-making practices in schools.
2. To compare academic decision-making practices of various higher secondary school heads with regards to gender, locality and marital status.

Research Question: What are the various academic decision-making practices prevailing in higher secondary schools of district D.I.Khan? (Related to Objective 1).

Research Hypotheses

Following will be hypotheses of the study:

- H₁: There is significant difference between academic decision-making practices of male and female school heads (Related to objective 2).
- H₂: There is significant difference between academic decision-making practices of Rural and Urban school heads (Related to objective 2).
- H₃: There is significant difference between academic decision-making practices of Married and Unmarried school heads (Related to objective 2).

Limitations and delimitations of the study

The study was limited to 43 higher secondary school principals located in district D.I.Khan. The researchers used "Academic Decision-Making Practices Questionnaire" to collect data from the heads of Higher Secondary Schools. The study was delimited to the heads of only government higher secondary schools of district D.I.Khan. The study was delimited with respect to sample, methods and statistical techniques.

Significance of the study

Academic Decision-Making Practices has its importance for the smooth running of schools and maximum attainment of educational objectives. In the current study, the investigators has aimed to explore various dimensions of academic decision-making practices at higher secondary schools of district D.I.Khan. Further these practices were compared with regards to demographic variables to know which category is best practicing academic decision. The study will be helpful for teachers and their school heads as well as educational administrators and policy makers to identify and then formulate appropriate actions and policies regarding academic decisions. The true measures in this regard will undeniably improve teaching learning process.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Decision making is an organized process of administering things effectively involving several steps. These steps involve formulation of decisions, diagnosis of situation, developing action plan, choosing alternatives

and evaluation (Daft, 2003). Shami and Bashir (2007) highlighted that decision-making process comprised of situation analysis, identifying and formulating goals, devising policy, developing action plan and allocating resources. Whereas Masch (2004) identified four steps in decision making, i.e. identifying / recognizing problems, investigating and accumulating information, selecting and evaluating alternatives, conduct and review on the basis of that decision making.

Reddy (2006), principals can affect attitude, morale, and progress of both the teachers and students. The decisions of principals can have positive or negative impacts on all components of school and the decision-making practice of principals is utmost important. School administrators can make decisions rationally or intuitively (Olcum & Titrek, 2015).

Ahmed (2013) identified following decision-making practices in educational settings:

1. Academic decision making regarding overall management.
2. Academic decision-making practices regarding supervision of students.
3. Academic decision-making practices regarding supervision of teachers.
4. Academic decision regarding demonstration of lessons and experiments.
5. Supervision of curricular and co- curricular activities.
6. Evaluation and assessment of student's achievement.
7. Decision making for community participation.
8. Academic decision-making regarding role of School Council/PTAs.

Academic Decision-making process

After a comprehensive literature review, following steps are involved in academic decision-making practices in schools (Daft, 2003; Shami & Hussain, 2005; Shami & Waqar, 2007): Select an alternative, Implementation of decision, Evaluate alternatives, Develop alternatives, Define the problem, Investigate the problem, Follow up and check results.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was descriptive in nature, because in descriptive study, existing situation is under taken (Iqbal, 2018). The researchers tried to explore and hence compare various dimension of academic decision making practices of higher secondary schools in district DIKhan.

Population and Sample of the study

EMIS report of Govt: Schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 2020, as a whole there are 43 Higher Secondary Schools in district D.I.Khan. In these schools, there are 43 Principals (Male=29, Female=14). As the population is less than 100, so all 43 principals of HSS in D.I.Khan were selected as **sample** of the study as suggested by Gay and Airasian (2003).

Research Instruments

The wide literature review offers a strong base for the development of research instruments. Research instruments are tools for the collection of data. The researchers used questionnaire to collect the required data from the principals of Higher Secondary schools to discover their outlook regarding academic decision-making practices.

As the author-developed tool of research is recommended to be pilot tested to determine its efficacy and appropriateness to the subject matters (Johson and Christenson, 2000). Therefore, instrument was reviewed twice, one by a panel of experts in management and educational setting for determining its face validity, and second administered on the same kinds of respondents with a small number of sample to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaires. For reliability, the Cronbach's alpha value was found to be 0.92 which is highly acceptable as proposed by Bryman & Cramer (2010).

Data Collection Procedure

Administration of Teachers' Emotional Burnout Inventory

For the purpose of data collection, the questionnaire was distributed among 43 principals all higher secondary schools of district D.I.Khan. All principals responded appropriately. So response rate was 100%.

IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Preparation of data for analysis

Once the data is collected, it is properly prepared for analysis as suggested by Allen (2017). All the data was entered in SPSS (V-26.0). Further analysis of data is shown below:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Variables (N=229)	Categories	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	29	67.44
	Female	14	32.56
Locality	Urban	16	37.3
	Rural	27	62.7
Marital Status	Unmarried	39	90.7
	Married	04	.09

Table 1 shows that out of 43 principals, 67.44% were male while 32.56% were female. Similarly, 37.3% principals were posted in Urban while 62.7% were working in rural areas of D.I.Khan district. Further 90.7% principals were unmarried while only .09% principals were married. A graphical representation of the above table is shown below:

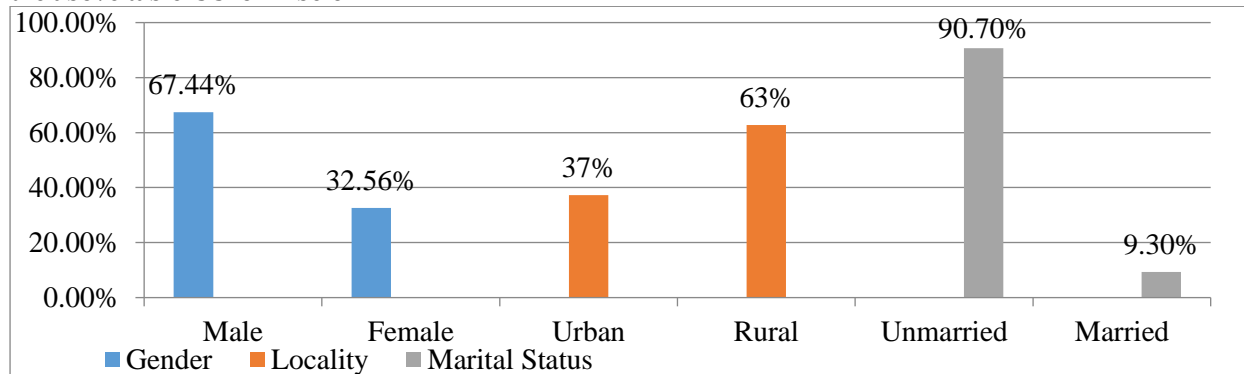


Figure 1 Showing percentage of Principals on gender, locality and marital status.

Table 2. Gender based analysis of data of Principals on ADMP

Gender	Group	N	Mean	SD	't'	df	'p'
Gender	Male	29	19.9525	8.21166	1.301	41	p=0.194>.05 Not Sig
	Female	14	18.4352	8.64588			

Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of male Principals (M=19.9525, SD=8.21166) and female Principals (M=18.4352, SD=8.64588) as $t(41)=1.301$, $p=0.194 > \alpha=0.05$. This means that ADMP were not influenced by gender. The observed differences in their means can be characterized to a chance factor of sampling error. Further, the observed mean of male principals was greater than Female SSTs showing slightly higher ADMP by male Principals. A t-distribution curve of gender based ADMP is respectively shown in the figure 1.

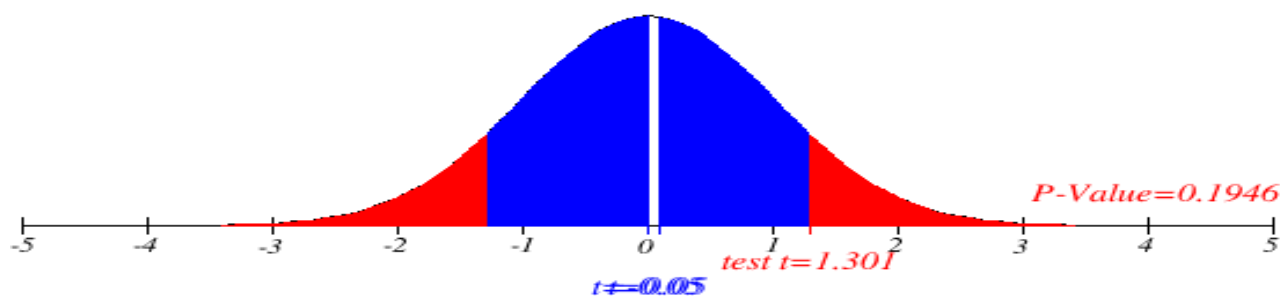


Figure1: Showing t-distribution curves of principals based on gender.

Table3. Locality based analysis of data of Principals on ADMP

Locality	Group	N	Mean	SD	't'	df	'p'
	Urban	16	19.4666	8.91575	.031	41	0.975>0.05
	Rural	27	19.4259	8.22247			Not Sig

Table 3 also shows that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of Urban Principals (M=19.4666, SD=8.91575) and Rural Principals (M=19.4259, SD=8.22247) as $t(41)=0.031$, $p=0.975>\alpha=0.05$. This means ADMP was also not influenced by locality. The observed differences in their means can be characterized to a chance factor of sampling error. Further, the observed mean of Urban Principals was greater than Rural Principals showing slightly higher ADMP in Urban Principals. A t-distribution curve of locality based ADMP is shown in Figure 2.

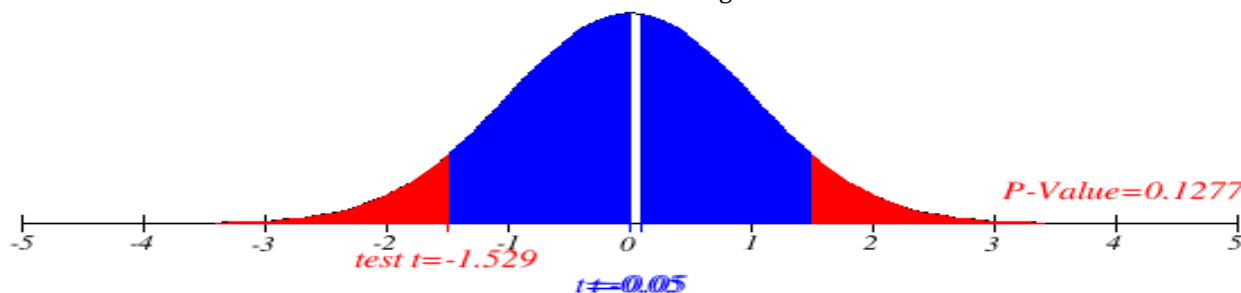


Figure 2: Showing t-distribution curves of principals based on locality.

Table4. Marital Status based analysis of data of Principals on ADMP

Marital Status	Group	N	Mean	SD	't'	df	'p'
	Unmarried	04	17.8986	9.53022	-1.529	41	0.128>0.05
	Married	39	19.8986	7.96532			Not Sig

Table 4 also shows that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of Unmarried Principals (M=17.8986, SD=9.53022) and Married Principals (M=19.8986, SD=7.96532) as $t(41)= -1.529$, $p=0.128>\alpha=0.05$. This means ADMP were not influenced by marital status. The observed differences in their means can be characterized to a chance factor of sampling error. Further, the observed mean of married principals was greater than unmarried principals showing slightly higher ADMP in married Principals. A t-distribution curve of marital status based ADMP is shown in Figure 3.



Figures 3: Showing t-distribution curves of principals based on marital status.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Answer to Research Question 1: The wide literature review and the personal experiences and on campus observation of the researchers found the following academic decision practices prevailing in higher secondary schools of district DIKhan. Academic decision-making practices include:

1. Overall school management.
2. Supervision of students.
3. Supervision of teachers.
4. Demonstration of lessons and experiments.
5. Supervision of curricular and co- curricular activities.
6. Evaluation and assessment of student's achievement.
7. Decision making for community participation.
8. Academic decision-making regarding role of School Council/PTAs.

The study is in line with Ahmad (2013), Ugurulu (2013) and Nadeem, Imran, & Sarwar (2008)

1. **Testing of Hypothesis H₁:** The data analysis clearly depicts that no significant difference exists in the principal's ADMP in consideration to their gender. So H₁ is rejected (Ref Table 2). This shows male and female principals apply same ADMP. However, the means of male and female principals were recorded as 19.9525 and 18.4352 respectively which shows that male SSTs were slightly more in ADMP than female principals. In Pakistani context, males are considered as heads of their families having diverse responsibilities including earning, family support in all affairs etc. They also run the administration of their homes. That's why male principals showed somewhat higher ADMP than females. The study is in line with Ahmad (2013) and Ugurulu (2013).

2. **Testing of Hypothesis H₂:** The data analysis also shows that no significant difference exists in the principals' ADMP as far as their school locality is concerned. So H₂ is also rejected (Ref Table 3). The means of urban and rural principals were recorded as 19.4666 and 19.4259 respectively which shows that urban principals were more slightly more in ADMP than rural principals. As compared to rural, urban principals have to do a lot for maintaining their standard which requires extra money and energy. They are directly under the observation of education and district administration. That's why urban principals have slightly higher ADMP than rural ones. Same results were reported by Ahmad (2013) and Ugurulu (2013).

3. **Testing of Hypothesis H₃:** The data analysis further portrays that no significant difference occurs in the principal's ADMP concerning their marital status. So H₃ is rejected (Ref Table 4). The means of unmarried and married SSTs were recorded as 17.8986 and 19.8986 respectively which shows that married principals were more in ADMP than unmarried ones. Married principals have diverse responsibilities including earning issues and family problems etc. due to which they showed slightly higher ADMP than their counterparts. The study is in line with Ahmad (2013) and Nadeem, Imran, & Sarwar (2008).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

From the above findings, following conclusions were drawn:

1. As a whole, various Academic decision-making practices include: Overall school management, Supervision of students and teachers, looking after teaching learning activities, supervision of curricular and co- curricular activities, evaluation and assessment of student's achievement, decision making for community participation, and the role of School Council/PTAs.
2. Male and female principals, as well as urban and rural and married and unmarried principals were statistically same in ADMP.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions, following recommendations were drawn:

1. As the success of teaching learning process mainly depends upon decision making on the part of school heads, so proper training of school leaders is mandatory. Further researches should be conducted
2. In Pakistani context, males are considered as the head of family. They have diverse responsibilities. Urban and married principals should be given due care. Government should take measures to strengthen

their decision making abilities and skills. Specialized management related trainings will certainly improve teaching learning outcomes.

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