The Supervisory Role of the Headmaster at the Higher Secondary Level: A Teacher's Perception

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Abstract
The secondary school headmaster occupies a well-established position in educational administration. However, views concerning the appropriate and functional roles of this post are by no means stabilized. Research studies reveal conflicting perceptions and expectations of appropriate responsibilities of school administrators. Therefore the search for adequate conceptual formulations of the role of the school administrator is significant and must continue. The current study sought to explore the relationship between teaching staff and the headmaster at the secondary level. It is also crucial to explore the impact of this relationship upon the students' performance and their academic achievements. Additionally, a cross-cultural comparison was made between the attitude and behavior of the teaching staff and headmaster. The positive relationship between the teacher's and the head of the institution (Headmaster) is the critical success factors for any institution including the schools, colleges and the Universities. There is an acute need of exploring the dimensions and issues of teaching staff in the secondary schools. This study will strive to make a substantial contribution to fill the existing gap in understanding the link.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most prominent indicator of the socio-economic development. The education rate at both the primary and secondary level is significant for the uplift of the every segment of the society. In this regard, the institutions at the secondary level have an important role in the academic foundation of every child. Presently, these institutions are facing multi-dimensional problems which are shortage of classrooms, lack of adequate funds, dearth of the trained teachers and above all, the competent supervision. This study purposely chose to report on the work of the head teacher, herein referred to as headmaster of the Secondary School (Caroline & Agnes, 2013). The major purpose was to describe the state of affairs as they exist based on the relationship between the teachers and the headmaster.

The teachers in public sector secondary school, in most of the developing countries, are working in challenging circumstances in terms of lack of physical resources. In Pakistan, the situation is not different. In most of the public secondary schools in Pakistan, the teachers are confronted with lack of physical resources which has contributed to a large extent in their demotivation towards their work (Makinde, 1984). "Recent studies also point out that it is only the teachers' working context which motivates or demotivates them. The research also recommends for the exploration of factors within the school context, which can contribute to teacher motivation". Research assumes that when teachers' work context is conducive for their motivation, then they are motivated (Konchar, 1988). Literature considers that the head master can create an environment in the school through his/her influential role, which motivates teachers towards their work. "The head master's approach heartened teachers to work collaboratively towards the achievement of their goals. He also involved teachers in decision making and empowered them as autonomous professionals". He developed friendly relationships with the teachers and appreciated their efforts (Muli, 2005).

2. SUPERVISORY ROLE OF HEAD TEACHER

The headmaster is the overall in charge of the school. He/she supervises the whole school program and bears the ultimate responsibility for performance, proficiency and effectiveness of all school programs and peer counseling program inclusive. "The headmaster's supervision in the secondary school plays a vital role through planning and developing the counseling program based on the students' needs". The teacher through counseling relationship assists each student to understand oneself in relation to the social and psychological world in which the student lives (Wango & Mungai, 2007). The student therefore is able to accept oneself, develop personal decision-making competences and resolve personal problems. "A school's head is a planner and manager of educational experiences of his/her students which will contribute to the development of knowledge, skills, personal qualities, habits of thoughts, decision-making and proper attitude towards themselves and others as a preparation to adulthood" (Muthondu, 2007).

The head-teacher supervision acts as the peer coordinator by providing counseling for peer group members and looking after the welfare of the students involved in the scheme, not only the important issue of their emotional welfare, but ensuring that, time-wise, they can cope with their academic work. The head-teacher supervision also organizes and provides appropriate training to the new teachers and helps the group maintain a flow of new volunteers (Mwalala, 2007). "In addition, he/she provides assistance with general administration especially when it comes to raising money from the school bursar and providing the group with an administrative budget for publicity and badges among others". The teacher counseling acts as a mediator within the group when problems arise and deals with difficult issues within the group, for example, a member breaching confidentiality (Lydiah & Nasongo, 2009).

"The supervisory role of the headmaster as perceived by the students in secondary schools is guided by the following objectives: promoting personal development in helpers; creating a positive influence on the emotional climate in the school environment; providing a bridge between troubled peers and friends: by listening rather than necessarily giving advice; offering basic skills in supporting the other peers who might need psychological support for example the bereaved, alienated and drug users; enabling the individual to meet personal needs in order to be more fully functional and take control of his/her life in different settings; reducing the amount of bullying in school by supporting those involved; acting as an additional service to that provided by staff, that is complementing rather than competing with it" (Okutu, Chumba, Shadrack & Kurgat, 2011).

2.1 Leadership and management

Without a headmaster, no institution can possibly function. Leadership is an essential factor among all social animals from the insects to man. "The nature of leadership is largely determined by the nature of the organization and that of society. There are varied styles of leadership in the market such as: coercive leadership which is commonly labeled as dictatorship". In this style, those who are led have very little or no say at all about the way things ought to be (Lydiah & Nasongo, 2009). There are some head masters and class teachers who still find it fashionable to use this approach in dealing with their teachers and pupils rather than allowing room for freedom of expression. "The head master and or the staff make all decisions without consulting the staff and or pupils. Laissez-faire leadership is a French phrase that literally means let people do what they want". Here the leader is just symbolic. The democratic leadership derives its power from the governed. The democratic leadership followers build up patterns of response which yield results and give much satisfaction as well.

The head master functions are varied within an educational setting. The key functional word that describes well the headmaster is that of a manager and a leader in educational dimensions. Earlier writers on management have struggled with two related but distinct questions: what is management and what managers actually do? Wango (2007) separates managerial functions into four areas of planning, organizing, motivating and controlling. "Instructional leadership functions involve all the beliefs, decisions, strategies and tactics that head master use to generate instructional effectiveness in classrooms. Managers focus on 'running a smooth ship', while instructional leaders focus on learning and instruction". Although the role of the principal as instructional leader is very vital in developing an effective school, headmaster cannot be effective instructional leaders if they are not good managers (Okutu et al., 2011).

2.2 Administrative, management and leadership delineation

In this study, the principal in trying to differentiate between administration, management and leadership aspects ended up saying that, the headmaster does all these work, they are inter-related. "There is no boundary and therefore giving a distinction is not possible due to over-lapping. However, management tends to be reflected on equitable use of both personnel and material resources to achieve optimal benefits. This forms what is called the ideal roles that leadership is a characteristic that emanates from the interpretation of the ideal roles and how one feels it should be done as a person and this forms the actual role of the headmaster". The principal said that due to the dynamism in schools, a school head master must domesticate the ideal roles and make them fit into the situation in their schools (Judith & Richard, 2013).

2.3 Management dimension

One of the tasks that the headmaster is involved in terms of management includes budgeting. As mentioned earlier, accountability seems to be the agenda of many stakeholders in the education sector. "This seems to emanate from the aspect of corruption that has pervaded every sector of the economy in the country. The government has stipulated some policies governing the finances of a school". These stringent measures are good as the headmaster asserted, but he/she quick to say that the introduction of free tuition in secondary schools had complicated her budgeting; the reason is that the government has been late in the disbursement of those funds (Lydiah & Nasongo, 2009). "When the funds were finally available, he/she had the school budget made under

the following sub-headings each with a detailed cost; staff i.e. teaching, non-teaching; tuition which include school equipment and stores; local transport and travelling that include internal traveling expenses, teacher's seminars; electricity, water and conservancy, which cover charges and maintenance of the said items; contingencies concerns expenditure on the school office like stationery, telephone and staff uniforms; repairs, maintenance and improvement that cover minor repairs and maintenance of buildings, equipment and furniture repair" (Okutu et al., 2011).

2.4 Accountability and transparency

Apart from the school bursar being expected to issue a receipt immediately for any monies received and prepare payment vouchers which the head counter checks before signing, the headmaster directs the accountant to prepare a trial balance and bank reconciliation books which helped her maintain a watchful eye on the frivolities of expenditure and payments (Muthondu, 2007). "The headmaster talked of accountability passionately in an equivalence of Socrates who was accountable unto death for his teaching and the sophists who were accountable to their students, for here lay their means of livelihood. Today the headmaster is legally accountable to the school boards and morally accountable to self, profession, community and nation". As this principal talked good of being accountable, the researchers sought to find her views on the issue of performance contracting that the government is serious on introducing in all sectors in the country (Caroline, 2013).

2.5 Educational dimension

One of the priorities of headmaster of the school is to monitor the teaching learning process in their schools. "Monitoring involves actions envisaged by the head to ensure that things are going according to the goals and objectives set at the school and national levels at different points in time and also to see to it that things are revolving according to plan and in line with the targets set" (Lydiah & Nasongo, 2009). The purpose of monitoring is, as such, to increase efficiency and improve effectiveness of the systems in place in school since heads are input variables in a school. "The headmaster spent most of her time in dealing with managerial issues. Although the educational dimensions of the school heads are being emphasized, it is hardly practiced; hence, basically the headmaster's role is that of a manager. The literature reveals that the elementary school headmasters spent 62.2% of their time on managerial issues and 11% on instructional leadership issues, even after undergoing training in in-service for the role of instructional leader" (Judith, 2013).

Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework
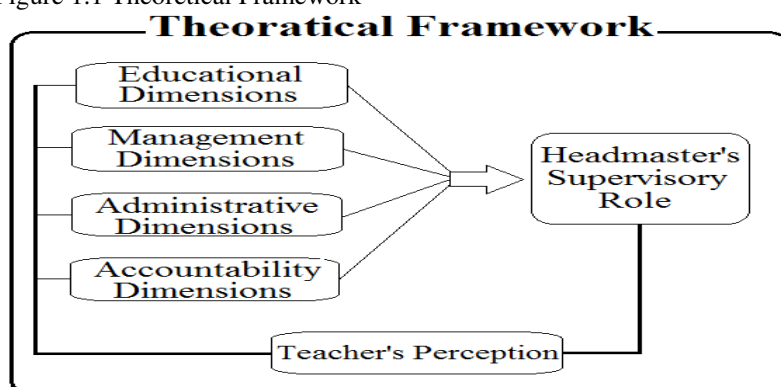
3. DICUSSIONS

Schools can make a difference to students' achievement and head master's leadership is one of the factors which contribute to success or failure. "Other school factors that the headmaster's ought to address due to their influence on students' behavior and scholastic achievement include: amount of teaching and degree of academic emphasis; the extent and nature of ability groupings; teacher expectation; styles of teaching and classroom management; size of the school; patterns of discipline and characteristics of school climate" (Lydiah & Nasongo, 2009). Headmaster's in effective schools therefore involve themselves in improving instruction and training and are responsible for day-to-day assignment of duties and supervision of the teachers. Teachers are nominally required to follow the directions given by the headmasters of whom they are liable for disciplinary action (Okutu et al., 2011).

The foremost function of educational management is the assurance that sound policies, goals and objectives are formulated in a given school and that methods are determined for the achievement of these objectives. "The headmaster has to ensure that policies and objectives of the school are clearly stipulated and well known to the

school community, that is, the teachers, students, parents, staff and other stakeholders" (Judith & Richard, 2013). It is through policies and objectives that the directions and destinations of the school's activities can be patterned. "The headmaster has a responsibility to ensure that the long-term aims of the education system are made feasible through the short-term objectives of the school. This is achieved by formulating sound school-based policies". These policies have to be in line with the national policies on education as formulated by the ministry of education (Caroline et al., 2013). More often than not, school heads fail to be democratic in policy formulation and implementation, a fact which builds up resentment and results in unrest in schools, and in turn affects student achievement negatively (Wekesa, 1993).

4. CONCLUSION

The present study is an attempt to analyze the relationship between the teaching staff and the concerned head of the institution (Headmaster). The headmaster is supposed to be the role model not for the students only rather his mode of management is followed by the teachers as well. In the most cases, the headmaster is among the senior most teachers and eldest in his/her age. But contemporarily because of the direct induction, headmasters of the younger age are also assuming their duties as the headmaster. Comparatively, though highly qualified yet they are less experienced with minimum skills for the assigned tasks. Because our society is mostly dominated by the elders in every sphere therefore, teachers in this case show their reluctance and this obedience in following the orders and discipline of their young headmaster. The aims and objectives of education can be better achieved if the headmaster involves all stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of school policies. Headmasters need to be democratic in policy formulation and implementation.

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