Effective Schools: Teachers' Perceptions

Mohammad Iqbal, Parveen Khan and Wasal Khan

Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, KP, Pakistan

Abstract: The deteriorating quality of education in Pakistan is a matter of concern and anxiety to all. There are social and moral responsibilities to recast the education system to make it compatible with the growing needs of stakeholders and the facts of globalization. Excellence is identified with effective schools which, like other human enterprises, grow over a period of time, through persistent efforts for changing conditions; painstaking approaches for maintaining the complex processes and relationship within and outside the schools. Research suggest that improving the quality of personal relationships among stakeholders especially teachers and parents is instrumental to better school climate, staff morale and public confidence in schooling. This study focused on teachers' perceptions of school effectiveness in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. The population of the study included all the 2964 teachers. The tool of the study was an opinionnaire that contained items and statements of a multi-dimensional nature. The outcome of the study revealed a number of factors that could help convert a school into a centre of excellence.

Key words: Factors · Effective · Effectiveness · Excellence · Multi-dimensional nature · Opinionnaire · Public and private boys' high schools

INTRODUCTION

It is generally believed that educational effectiveness is multi-dimensional. Not only had the achievement of high scores but many other factors contributed to the effectiveness of schools. Important elements that typically contributed to effectiveness included curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, the physical infrastructure and academic facilities, learning and human resources, finance and management, research and scholarship, community links and outreach.

This process comprises four main elements: instructional objectives, instructional procedures and evaluation. In education, the effectiveness of an instructional programme is always judged by the quality of its product. In broad terms the very purpose of the instructional process is to help students in a fairly wide range of subjects, which are related to.

It is generally believed that those schools are considered successful where most students have the advantage of high-test scores and comparatively better academic achievements in lower grades. For them there is an easy fit between the students' and the schools' goals for education. Schools, on the other hand, are unsuccessful places for those students who are below average in academic skills, failing one or more subjects, or socially isolated, or without clear goals for future and further education.

Effective schools, like other human enterprises, take considerable time for growth through persistent efforts for changing conditions and painstaking approaches for maintaining the complex process and relationship inside and outside the schools, that attempting to improve the quality of personal relationships among stakeholders improves school climate, promotes staff morale and public confidence in schooling.

Research on school effectiveness is not scarce. Thomas J. Sergiovanni (1983) [1] stated, "Competence, by contrasting, is marked by mastery of certain predetermined, essential fundamentals like, in playing the harmonica; the player achieves mastery and thus is able to play the notes unmistakably and delivers a performance recognized as technically competent."

He further stated, "In excellent schools, things 'hang together' a sense of purpose brings people to a common cause; work has meaning and life is smooth and significant; teachers and students work together and with spirit; and accomplishments are readily recognized."

Corresponding Author: Mohammad Iqbal, Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, KPK, Pakistan.

Imran (2008) [2] stated that the quality of education should be understood in an appropriate manner, keeping in view the changeable organized settings in which schools were operating. The development framework of the zone, in question, provided an external environment [3, 4]. The operational setting in which the schools functioned provided the internal environment in the schools, which was evident from infrastructural facilities; human resources; teaching learning process and students' gains.

According to Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) [5] teachers and parents were in frequent contact in effective schools. They expected good work from students, who worked to fulfill their expectations. The overall climate in those schools was conducive to effective teaching learning process. Every one from students to staff and administrator to parents craved and worked for excellence. However, in ineffective schools, teachers did not care for students' level and expected them to attain higher achievement. The principals' expectations were lower than teachers but they wasted so much of resources on non-academic endeavors and other aspects (social/personal growth etc) were not given the needed importance.

School effectiveness remained the primary concern of educators and the public in Pakistan during the last over 20 years is the extent to which the goals of an institution are achieved is the ability or the quality of a school to be successful in achieving its desired ends and in preparing students to develop their potential for the next stage of life. More specifically, it is the type of schooling that meets national needs for socio-economic development of the individual and society.

The teaching methodology, different activities in the class room and the home work that is given to the students show the extent of effectiveness of teaching and learning process at a school. A school is considered an effective school that provides its students with needed services. Those include, among others, guidance and counseling services, which play vital role in providing correct direction to students' plans. Guidance and counseling really help a school to be effective in achieving its goals.

Ed Balls (2008) [6] stated that the distinctive contribution of good schools was excellent teaching and learning, which helped children to develop confidence, learn about teamwork, leadership, responsibility and successful relationships. As a vital community resource, schools could offer wider opportunities for children and their families to take part in sports and cultural activities. Good schools have an understanding of the whole child and are places which can identify and address emerging problems before they become serious.

A study conducted by a forum called Teaching and Learning Research Program (TLRP) in 2006 highlighted in its report the most important purpose of learning and reported that it was to make a person able to unfold his internal qualities. Simultaneously it required teachers to keep in mind previous knowledge of the learner. The study also reported that teachers should perform different activities in the class in order to make the environment of the class healthy by discussing and solving pupils' social and emotional problems, which can help a teacher to make the learning effective.

Generally, those schools were valued high where students achieved high test scores due to matching attributes between students and school objectives. On the contrary, those schools that had students below average remained either socially isolated or did not have vivid objectives in their lives regarding further education. They were ranked average.

According to James and Pollard (2006) [7] "Promoting the learning and achievement of pupils is the main aim of school education. Teaching is the main way of achieving this purpose. Teaching and learning are what ultimately make difference in the mind of learner's and thus affect knowledge, skills, attitudes and the capacity of young people to contribute to contemporary societies."

Hopkins (2001) [8] while quoting Gray *et al* (1999) made multiple approaches to 'school improvement'. The crux of those approaches was to find out how they could make schools better places for the teachers and the taught.

MATERIALS AND METHODOS

This paper reports a descriptive study that attempted to identify factors that could promote effectiveness in 30 boys' high schools both in the public and private sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The following tools were used for collection of data.

- Opinionnaire for 60 teachers in sampled 30 schools.
- Literature review.

The tools were validated and made reliable through pilot study, unbiased approach and application of statistical measures.

Table 1:

S. No. (Questions)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	36	22	1	1	0	60
2	4	16	5	24	11	60
3	33	26	0	0	1	60
4	14	26	12	8	0	60
5	36	22	0	1	1	60
6	33	25	0	0	2	60
7	42	13	2	1	2	60
8	33	23	1	1	2	60
9	33	23	2	2	0	60
10	32	21	4	1	2	60
11	43	14	1	0	2	60
12	40	17	1	0	2	60
13	22	29	3	4	2	60
14	18	29	10	2	1	60
15	2	29	10	9	10	60
16	12	32	13	2	1	60
17	25	29	3	2	1	60
18	28	24	3	4	1	60
19	10	30	13	6	1	60
20	6	27	13	9	5	60

Table 2:

S. No. (Questions)	N	Median	Ave Rank
1	5	1.000	42.7
2	5	11.000	59.7
3	5	1.000	41.2
4	5	12.000	53.3
5	5	1.000	40.1
6	5	2.000	43.7
7	5	2.000	49.7
8	5	2.000	48.1
9	5	2.000	48.4
10	5	4.000	51.9
11	5	2.000	45.0
12	5	2.000	45.1
13	5	4.000	56.1
14	5	10.000	53.1
15	5	10.000	57.3
16	5	12.000	53.4
17	5	3.000	52.1
18	5	4.000	53.6
19	5	10.000	55.7
20	5	9.000	59.8

$H = 4.07$ $DF = 19$ $P = 1.000$
$H = 4.10$ $DF = 19$ $P = 1.000$ (adjusted for ties)

Data Analysis: The sources of data collection were partly primary and partly secondary. Primary data were based on information obtained from teachers through opinionnaires. The secondary data were obtained from a study of documents as well as review of relevant literature. An opinionnaire containing 20 items/statements was fielded to 60 teachers. Their responses were obtained, which were graphically presented with discussion on each item. The data were quantified, converted into percentages and presented with the help of graphs for drawing inferences and results.

The responses obtained from teachers on the basis of opinionnaire regarding factors promoting effectiveness in schools were subjected to statistical analysis by using a non-parametric test, i-e- Krushkal Wallis test, through minitab to test the similarities in the principals responses. The number of subjects was twenty who were given five choices and their responses were obtained on the traditional scale of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The research questions formulated for the study was statistically proved equally important. The conclusion was that the responses of all teachers were the same, at the average as shown in Figure 1.

Statistical Analysis of Teachers' Responses: The responses obtained from 60 teachers on the basis of opinionnaire regarding factors promoting effectiveness in schools were subjected to statistical analysis by using a non-parametric test, i-e- Krushkal Wallis test, through Minitab to test the similarities in the teachers responses. The number of subjects were 20 with five choices are given in Table 1.

Testing of Statistical Hypothesis: The responses of 60 teachers were tested by using a non-parametric test, I-e- Krushkal Wallis test, through Minitab to see whether their responses were the same or not about various questions. Null hypothesis for this purpose was "the responses of all teachers were the same at the average". The results obtained about 20 subjects with five choices were given in Table 2.
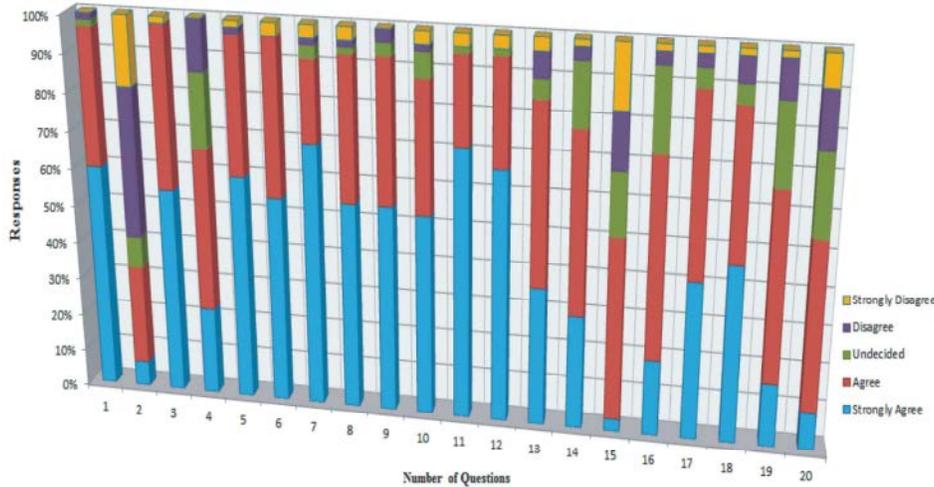
Fig. 1: Teacher's Responses

From Table 2 above mentioned p-value it revealed that the statistical hypothesis of the study was insignificant. Conclusively, the responses of all teachers were the same at the average.

Outcome of the Study: The outcome of the study was that the following factors could contribute to promote the effectiveness of secondary schools both in public and private sectors:

• Job satisfaction of teachers,
• Holding refresher courses for professional development of teachers,
• Principals' interest in solving problems of adults and students,
• School community relationship,
• Use of modern technologies for teaching learning process,
• Arranging various activities for students for their better learning,
• Better communication helped in teaching learning process,
• Parents' involvement in school improvement activities.

CONCLUSION

The perception of teachers about effective schools were that capacity building of teachers was needed along with principals' potential for solution of school based problems and the growing need for promoting school-home relationship as well as use of information technology in teaching learning process.

REFERENCES

1. Sergiovanni, T.J., 1983. Leadership and Excellence in Schooling, Journal of Social Science, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign.
2. Imran, M., 2008. A Comparative Study of Quality of Education in Public and Private Secondary Schools of Punjab, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi Pakistan, 6: 9-10, 45-46.
3. Anatoliy Viktorovich Molodchik, 2013. Leadership Development: A Case of a Russian Business School, Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research, 15(2): 222-228.
4. Meruert Kylyshbaevna Bissenova and Ermek Talantuly Nurmaganbet. The Notion of Guilt and Problems of Legislative Regulations of its Forms: The Notion of Guilt in the Criminal Law of Kazakstan, Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research, 15(2): 229-236.
5. Teddlie, C. and D. Reynolds, 2000. The International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research, London, Falmer.
6. Balls, E.D., 2008. Promoting excellence for all - School Improvement Strategy: raising standards, supporting schools. Nottingham, UK: DCSF.
7. Pollard, M. and A. James, 2006. Improving Teaching and Learning in School, Journal of Social Science, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way WC1H 0AL, University of London. UK.
8. David Hopkins, 2001. School Improvement for Real. London: Routledge Falmer.