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A STUDY OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS FACED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS IN DISTRICT LAHORE

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the administrative problems faced by secondary school heads while performing their administrative responsibilities in District Lahore. The study focused on six major areas of administrative problems: Instructional Supervision, Community Problems, Superordinate Problems, Interpersonal Relationship Problems, Management and Funds Problems, and Personal Problems. A quantitative survey research design was employed for the study. Data were collected from 150 secondary school heads in District Lahore through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert-type scale. Data were analyze through descriptive statistics, an independent-samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA and examine differences in administrative problems according to gender, years of experience, and age. The findings revealed that Interpersonal Relationship Problems were the most prominent administrative problems, followed by Instructional Supervision Problems. Management and Funds Problems and Superordinate Problems were also identified as notable areas of concern, whereas Community Problems and Personal Problems were comparatively less prominent. The findings further showed that there was no statistically significant difference in administrative problems based on gender, years of experience, and age. The study concludes that secondary school heads experience various administrative challenges, particularly in interpersonal relationships and instructional supervision. The findings highlight the need for appropriate professional development, administrative support, and institutional resources to help school heads manage their responsibilities more effectively.

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INTRODUCTION

Secondary education is an important level of the education system where students are prepared for higher education, professional life, and responsible participation in society. The effective functioning of secondary schools largely depends on proper administration and the ability of school heads to manage the various responsibilities associated with school affairs (Guzman, 2022). A head teacher, sometimes known as a principle, headmaster, or headmistress, is a key figure in a school's management and leadership. As a key educational leader, the head teacher influences the school community by guiding teachers, supporting students, and contributing to the development of a positive learning environment. One of their important responsibilities is to encourage and facilitate teachers' continuous professional development so that they remain informed about current educational approaches and practices. Overall, the role of a head teacher includes providing educational leadership, managing administrative affairs, supporting teachers' professional growth, and promoting an effective and supportive environment for teaching and learning (Olorunsola & Belo, 2018). As the administrative head of a school, the school head performs a range of duties related to planning, organization, coordination, supervision, decision-making, resource management, staff relations, and communication with different stakeholders (Syakur et al., 2020). However, school heads may encounter various administrative problems while performing these responsibilities. Administrative problems can affect the smooth functioning of schools and may arise from different sources. These problems are not limited to the internal management of the school but may also involve relationships with the community, higher authorities, colleagues, available financial resources, and the personal circumstances of school heads. Therefore, examining administrative problems from different dimensions is important for understanding the challenges faced by school heads in managing secondary schools (Estrada, 2022). Community problems is one of the important community problems which have arisen in administration. Communication and cooperation with parents, community and other stakeholders must be maintained by school heads. For school leaders, the lack of community support, low parent involvement, and misaligned school and community expectations can be barriers to their ability to perform their jobs well. Hence, good school administration (Skaalvik, 2023) depends on good school-community collaboration and coordination. The superordinate problems are another aspect, as this could relate to the dynamic between head teachers and the upper level authorities or education departments. School principals must establish policies, obey administration, report, and follow instructions from their principal. Difficulties related to excessive directives, limited authority, lack of administrative support, or communication with higher authorities may create challenges for school heads in managing school affairs effectively (Lacsa, 2022). Another aspect of administrative challenges is interpersonal relationship problems. School heads interact with teachers, non-teaching staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders on a regular basis. Differences of opinion, communication gaps, conflicts, lack of cooperation, and difficulties in maintaining positive working relationships may make administrative responsibilities more challenging. Maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships is therefore an important part of effective school administration (Estrada (2022).

Review of Related Literature

In order to ensure that the curriculum meets students' learning needs and aligns with recognized educational standards, the head teacher plays a crucial role in its development and implementation (Kubai, 2023). A head teacher, sometimes known as a principal, headmaster, or headmistress, has a variety of duties within the school. Establishing and maintaining a productive

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learning environment needs a combination of managerial skills, leadership competences, educational understanding, and successful interpersonal talents (Funderburk, 2021). Head teachers have an impact on instructors, students, and the larger school community through their leadership and administrative techniques, which enhances the institution's overall efficacy. Head teachers have a crucial role in maintaining the efficient operation of the educational environment at the secondary school level. As administrators, they are responsible for managing staff, overseeing administrative activities, coordinating school operations, and creating conditions that facilitate students' academic and personal development (Uleanya & Mkhasibe, 2021). However, head teachers can find themselves facing a number of administrative issues that can make their duties difficult. The problems can impact them in their school management and the attainment of goals for an institution. Thus, it is significant to examine administrative problems faced by the secondary school heads to see the problems that face them in school administration. The quality and performance of a school are influenced by good administration. Management is the processes and practices by which an organization is directed and its resources are used to attain its desired objectives (Akala, 2021). Drawing on the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Sidhu (1996) asserts that effective human development promotion in educational administration entails staff coordination and the use of suitable resources. In this way, educational administration offers a methodical framework to guaranty the smooth, productive, and successful operation of educational establishments. Research from several nations has shown how crucial head teachers are to the growth and efficacy of educational institutions (Abeid, 2015). The performance of school heads is closely associated with the success or failure of an educational institution. Over time, educational systems in various countries have introduced reforms that have emphasized effective management as an essential element in the improvement and advancement of schools. The important role head teachers play in accomplishing institutional goals, improving school performance, and promoting overall school development has been repeatedly emphasized by researchers and educational practitioners (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018). Head teachers hold a prominent place in the educational system as administrators of their own schools and are in charge of efficiently managing a variety of school operations. One of their major responsibilities involves managing financial resources and ensuring their appropriate utilization. This is done by making financial decisions based on institutional priorities, meeting core needs and ensuring financial sustainability of the school. In addition, head teachers are also part of the discussions on the allocation of the teaching role, choosing teaching materials, caring for the educational facilities and other issues related to the effective functioning of the school (Nikezic & Nikezic, 2021). The modern head teacher's job is complex and demands that he/she can carry out a number of tasks competently. A school leader can be a head teacher, a mediator, a facilitator, a coordinator, an advisor, a leader, a supervisor, an administrator and a teacher. The head teacher will also have the responsibility of developing a clear vision and mission for the school and communicate the school's purpose and vision to the wider school community. But administrative work can take up a lot of time and resources away from these basic educational tasks. If head teachers are spending all their time on administrative issues, they may not have enough time to focus on curriculum development, student engagement, teaching improvement, and other educational issues. Meeting administrative challenges demands good leadership, communication, planning, problem solving and flexibility in the face of varying situations, CPD and access to suitable professional help could also support head teachers in effectively managing complex administrative tasks (Ahmed et al., 2020). As with

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other educational leaders, head teachers will face a variety of administrative issues, depending on the size of the schools, the institutional environment, the community, and the external context. Head teachers often have several challenges in the daily performance of their job, which can affect their job performance. Head teachers hold a key role in the educational system as administrators of their respective schools and are accountable for the efficient functioning of various activities in schools. One of their primary duties is to handle their finances and how they're used. This involves resources for institutional priorities, for identified needs and the financial sustainability of the school. Head teachers also participate in significant decisions on the allocation of the teaching position, choice of teaching materials, maintenance of school facilities and other issues that impact the effective school operation (Nikezic & Nikezic, 2021). The modern head teacher has a variety of roles to fulfil, and must be able to handle a range of tasks competently. A head teacher can play multiple roles in the mediation, facilitation, coordination, advice, leadership, supervision, administration and teaching. The head teacher is responsible for communicating the institutional objectives and goals to the entire school community as well as developing a clear vision and mission for the institution, in addition to these responsibilities. Administrative problems, however, can be obstacles on the path to these fundamental learning tasks. If the head teacher is constantly spending time on administrative issues, it may result in a reduced ability to dedicate time to curriculum development, student engagement, changes to instruction and other educational concerns. Effective leadership, good communication skills, strategic planning, problem-solving and flexibility are essential for tackling administrative problems. Ongoing professional learning and access to the right professional help may also help head teachers to effectively deal with complex administrative tasks (Ahmed et al., 2020). Head teachers, like other educational leaders, can face a variety of administrative issues depending on various factors including community characteristics, external issues, school size, and institutional context. Head teachers often have to deal with a number of issues in their daily work that could affect their job performance. They have to play multiple roles when working in the school such as administrator, supervisor and leader, to ensure effective school administration (Usman, 2016). It has also been determined that poor or lack of planning going forward is one of the challenges in school administration. Khan (2000) pointed out some serious issues which head teachers of secondary school faced in Pakistan which show that the work of head teacher is very complex in Pakistan. For secondary school administrators, another key challenge is to keep the school and community well connected. Building positive relationships with parents and community is a key part of good school leadership. Well-managed head teachers strive to develop effective links with parents, encourage parental involvement in education and attend community events. It is also important, for example, to build a school climate that encourages open communication, teamwork, respect for each other, and shared responsibility, to create positive relationships amongst school community members. However, maintaining meaningful and ongoing parental involvement might continue to be a major obstacle for school administrators.

Methods and Materials

This study adopted descriptive survey research design with quantitative research method. The survey method was used in collecting data from the secondary schools heads on the administrative problems faced in school administration and management. The study sought to identify and describe administrative problems of secondary school heads in their real educational environment, hence the descriptive survey design was found appropriate. The study specifically aimed to find out the existing administrative issues at the School Heads in District Lahore. The population in the study included all the head

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teachers of government secondary schools (both boys and girls) in District Lahore. The study was conducted on 150 head teachers of government secondary schools of District Lahore. Analysis of data gathered from the respondents was done using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Means and standard deviations were computed to provide a description of the participants' responses and to identify the central tendency and variability of the data. Descriptive statistics (mean and SD) were used to report results related to the study factors. An independent-samples t-test was used for gender differences for administrative issues. A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to ascertain whether there were statistically significant differences in administrative problems experienced between the different levels of professional experiences of the school heads. Throughout the whole research process and data collecting, ethical norms were upheld. The goal and nature of the study were explained to the participants, and they were given the assurance that any information they submitted would be kept private. The study was voluntary and respondents could answer the research instrument as per their willingness and choice. All subjects' identities were kept anonymous and the data collected was kept confidential, and only for academic and research purposes. They were allowed to respond anonymously and voluntarily. No pressure and influence was put on the participants to answer the questionnaire. All information and data gathered from the study were kept secure and confidential and were utilized just for academic and research purposes.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Administrative Problems of School Heads

Problems	*M*	*SD*
Interpersonal Relationship problems	3.83	.629
Instructional Supervision Problems	3.75	.696
Management and Funds Problems	3.60	.795
Superordinate Problems	3.59	.644
Community Related Problems	3.38	.590
Personal Problems	3.26	.679

N=150

The following table shows the descriptive scores of Heads' Administrative Problems according to six factors. The highest mean score (M = 3.83, SD = .644) was for the Interpersonal Relationship Problems scale, followed by the scale for Instructional Supervision Problems (M = 3.75, SD = .629). This suggests that the interpersonal relationships and instructional supervision were the most salient areas of administrative problems that were reported by the head. Management and Funds Problems obtained a mean score of 3.60 (*SD* = .590), while Superordinate Problems had a closely similar mean score (M = 3.59, *SD* = .795). These results show that financial and management-related matters, along with issues involving superordinates, were also considerable concerns for the heads. The higher standard deviation for Superordinate Problems indicates comparatively greater variation in the responses. Community Problems recorded a mean score of 3.38 (*SD* = .696), whereas Personal Problems had the lowest mean score (M = 3.26, *SD* = .679). This suggests that personal problems were comparatively less prominent than the other administrative problem areas. Overall, the mean scores ranged from 3.26 to 3.83, indicating

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variation in the level of administrative problems experienced across the six factors. Interpersonal Relationship Problems emerged as the highest-scoring factor, whereas Personal Problems had the lowest mean score among the factors examined. The findings therefore highlight interpersonal relationships and instructional supervision as relatively more prominent administrative problem areas among the 150 secondary school heads.

Table 2 Independent-Samples *t*-Test of Gender Differences in Heads' Administrative Problems

	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*Df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Heads' Problems	Male	65	3.52	.490	-1.083	148	.281
	Female	85	3.60	.414			

Table 2 describe the result about an independent-samples *t*-test conducted to assess whether male and female school heads differed significantly in their reported administrative problems. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups, t (148) = −1.083, p = .281 (two-tailed). Male heads obtained a mean score of 3.52 (*SD* = .490), compared with a mean score of 3.60 (*SD* = .414) among female heads. Since the *p*-value exceeded the .05 level of significance, the observed difference between male and female heads was not statistically significant. Thus, the findings indicate that male and female heads reported a similar level of administrative problems.

Table 3 ANOVA for Comparative Heads' Administrative Problems based on Experience

Experience	*N*	M	*SD*	*F*	*P*
1 to 10 years	45	3.59	.394		
11 to 20 years	75	3.60	.399	.303	.739
21 to more	30	3.53	.512		
Total	150	3.57	.445		

Table 3 presents the results of a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether heads' administrative problems differed significantly according to their years of professional experience. The findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference among heads with different levels of experience, F (2, 147) = 0.303, p = .739. Heads having 1–10 years of experience obtained a mean score of 3.59 (*SD* = .394), while those with 11–20 years of experience reported a mean score of 3.60 (*SD* = .399). Heads with 21 years or more of experience had a mean score of 3.53 (*SD* = .512). Overall, the results indicate that years of experience did not significantly influence the level of administrative problems reported by the school heads. Since the significance value was greater than .05, the difference among the three experience groups was not statistically significant. Thus, heads reported a similar level of administrative problems regardless of their years of experience.

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Table 4 ANOVA for Comparative Heads' Administrative Problems based on Age

Age	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*P*
40 to 45 years	50	3.95	.503		
46 to 50 years	70	3.90	.685	0.236	.790
51 to more	30	3.98	.644		
Total	150	3.96	.595		

Table 4 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to examine differences in heads' administrative problems based on age. The results show that there was no statistically significant difference in administrative issues between heads of various age groups (F (0.236), p =.790). Heads aged 40–45 years reported a mean score of 3.95 (*SD* = .503), heads aged 46–50 years reported a mean score of 3.90 (*SD* = .685), while heads aged 51 years and above reported a mean score of 3.98 (*SD* = .644). Since the significance value was greater than .05, the difference among the three age groups was not statistically significant. Thus, the level of administrative problems did not differ significantly across the age groups of the heads.

Discussion

The present study examined the administrative problems faced by secondary school heads and further investigated whether these problems differed according to gender, years of experience, and age. The findings provide an overall picture of the areas in which school heads experienced greater administrative difficulties and whether these difficulties varied across different demographic groups. Interpersonal Relationship Problems was the most salient category of administrative difficulty and had the highest mean score (M = 3.83, SD = .644). The discovery indicates that one of the challenges that may face secondary school heads is maintaining effective relationship with the various stakeholders. School leaders must engage with teachers, students, the parents, the community and senior leaders, as well as other staff members. Expectations, ways of communicating, professional interests, and opinions can cause conflicts in establishing harmonious working relationships. The relatively high mean score in this area emphasizes the value of interpersonal skills, effective communication, conflict resolution and cooperation in school administration. Instructional Supervision Problems (M = 3.75, SD = .629) were the second highest mean score. This indicates that supervising teaching and learning activities was also a considerable administrative challenge. The school head is expected to oversee the instruction, give direction to teachers, evaluate educational activities, and ensure the standards of learning are upheld. It may be challenging when heads are responsible for teaching as well as a number of administrative and organizational tasks. Therefore, the finding indicates that instructional supervision is still a very significant need to be supported in effective ways by administrations and adequately prepared for by teachers. Financial and management-related problems received a mean of 3.60 (SD = .590), which also highlighted these. School administration is the best when resources are used and allocated appropriately. School leaders may be required to take on extra responsibilities because of short supply of funds, competing school demands, procurement needs and administrative duties. The results indicate that heads' capacity to effectively manage available resources could be a key part of their administrative duties. According to Wachira (1996), weak financial management abilities are the main reason why head teachers view financial management as one of the most difficult aspects of

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school administration and management. Similarly, Superordinate Problems obtained a mean score of 3.59 (*SD* = .795). The relatively high score mean indicates that interactions, coordination and administrative issues with higher authorities was a significant issue for school heads. The relatively high standard deviation indicates a larger spread in heads' answers, indicating that experiences with superordinates were not consistent among all respondents. Differences in institutional structures, administrative expectations, communication with higher authorities, and levels of decision-making autonomy may contribute to this variation. Community Problems had a comparatively lower mean score (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = .696). Although this factor ranked below interpersonal relationships, instructional supervision, management and funds, and superordinate problems, its mean score still indicates that community-related issues were present to a noticeable extent. School heads often have to maintain communication with parents, community representatives, and other local stakeholders. Their expectations and demands may sometimes differ from those of the school, creating additional administrative responsibilities. Spain (1956) and Lydiah and Nasonges (2009) explored the community problems and physical resources related problem of the heads. Personal Problems received the lowest mean score (*M* = 3.26, *SD* = .679) among the six factors. This indicates that personal difficulties were comparatively less prominent than the other categories examined. However, the mean score still reflects the presence of some personal challenges among school heads. Administrative responsibilities, workload, time constraints, and the need to balance professional and personal responsibilities may influence heads' experiences, even though these issues were not the most prominent problems in the present findings. Demographic differences were analyzed as a secondary way to gain a deeper understanding of the results. However, using the independent-samples t-test, no statistically significant difference was found between the male and female heads on administrative problems, t (148) = -1.083, p = .281. Female heads did not score significantly higher (M = 3.60, SD = .414) than male heads (M = 3.52, SD = .490). This implies that the heads experienced the following administrative issues at the same level, regarding gender. The discovery could signal that heads of schools, regardless of gender, face similar challenges in their work. The one-way ANOVA for the experience by years also showed no significant difference in administrative problems, F (2, 147) = 0.303, p = .739. Heads with 1–10 years of experience reported a mean score of 3.59 (*SD* = .394), those with 11–20 years reported 3.60 (*SD* = .399), while heads with 21 years and above reported 3.53 (*SD* = .512). The relatively close mean scores across the three groups indicate that administrative problems were experienced at broadly similar levels regardless of professional experience. This discovery indicates that experience alone does not necessarily means that administrative struggles are gone when it comes to school leadership. Issues regarding interpersonal relations, supervision, resources, and institutional requirements are among the issues that may continue to be part of the regular duties of school leaders during their service. Ndana (2010) in his research on the administrative challenges found out that major cause of poor academic performance in schools. The age based analysis also showed that there was no statistically significant difference for age group when it came to administrative problems. The mean scores of the three age groups (40-45, 46-50, 51 years and above) were not significantly different, suggesting that age has not significantly differentiated the respondents' level of administrative problems reported. The gender and experience results and this finding indicate that the administrative challenges detected in the study are not strongly related to the demographic characteristics of the heads. The combined results showed that the administrative issues faced by the secondary school heads were related to the type and demands of school administration rather than gender,

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experience or age of the respondents. Descriptive results indicated interpersonal relationships and instructional supervision as the most salient areas while the inferential analyses indicated that the general administrative problems were not significantly different among the demographic groups studied. Importance of this combination of findings: shift the focus from the personal characteristics of school heads to organizational and contextual needs of school administration. The findings also have implications for the preparation and professional development of school heads. The study generally revealed that secondary school heads have various administrative challenges; interpersonal relationship problems and instructional supervision problems are the most salient problems.

Conclusion

The present study found secondary school heads have various administrative issues in carrying out their professional duties. Interpersonal Relationship Problems were found to be the greatest concern and followed by Instructional Supervision Problems out of the 6 areas analyzed. Conversely, noted areas of difficulty included Management and Funds Problems and Superordinate Problems; Personal and Community Problems did not receive as high of mean scores. In general, the results show that the administrative difficulties of school leaders are strongly related to interpersonal relationships and supervision of instructional activities, as well as the use of resources and funds, and organizational authorities. The results also indicated that these administrative issues were not significantly different by gender. The mean score of the female heads is higher than the male heads, however this was not statistically significant. Likewise the analysis on the basis of years of experience revealed no significant differences between heads of differing levels of professional experience. The age based analysis also showed no significant differences between the age groups. The results indicate that administrative issues are common to most secondary school principals rather than significantly different based on their gender, experience and age. The study thus establishes that for secondary school to have better administrative functioning, the nature of the administrative responsibilities and the organizational environment in which the heads of secondary schools perform their duties should be taken into consideration. Interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, instructional supervision, resource and financial management, and effective communication and relations with higher authorities and community stakeholders may be emphasized. School leaders might be able to deal with these challenges better with appropriate professional development, institutional support, and adequate institutional resources. Finally, the results indicated that administrative challenges are a very important part of the secondary school head's duties and responsibilities, especially interpersonal relationships and instructional supervision. However, the level of problems reported was uniform across gender, experience and age so support and capacity-building programs should be offered to school heads, and not limited to specific demographic groups.

Recommendations

Based on the results and recommendations of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Heads of secondary schools should be trained in interpersonal skills to improve communication, conflict management, team work and relationship building between school and teachers, students and parents and other stakeholders.
2. Professional development programs should emphasize instructional supervision: observation, providing constructive feedback, guiding teachers and monitoring teaching and learning activities.
3. Heads of schools must be given adequate training in financial and resource management, to allow

them to make effective and transparent use of the funds and resources available.

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4.There should be good communication channels between school leaders and decision makers to minimize administrative challenges in supervision, instructions, reporting and decision making.

5.Schools should foster partnership with parents and community members to solve community issues and enhance cooperation to meet school goals.

6.Administrative support and leadership development opportunities for school heads, irrespective of gender, age and experience, should be offered on a continuous basis by the educational authority.

7 School leadership is to be given sufficient administrative support and institutional support to enable them to run their duties effectively.

8.For future study, similar research can be done in other districts and provinces to determine if the administrative issues identified are similar in other educational settings. Qualitative interviews or mixed-method approaches could be used in subsequent research to illuminate the root causes of administrative issues, and to gather more in-depth comments from school leaders and other stakeholders.

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