

Instructional Leadership Challenges Facing Secondary School Principals and Their Impact on Teachers' Productivity

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Abstract

This qualitative investigation explores the research delves into the complex issues that secondary school principals confront when it comes to instructional leadership and how such obstacles affect teachers' productivity. The article explores the various challenges that principals confront in creating a learning environment that is optimal for students via a thorough analysis of important literature and empirical evidence. Examining the effects on overall productivity and morale of teaching personnel, the inquiry reveals critical difficulties from curriculum creation to staff management. In addition, the abstract highlights how instructional leadership is crucial in changing the educational environment and provides suggestions for how principals might be more successful in the face of these problems. To enhance education quality as a whole, the results provide light on the complex relationship between leadership practices and teacher productivity in secondary school settings, which in turn allows for more well-informed interventions and policy suggestions.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, secondary school principals, challenges, teachers' productivity, curriculum development, staff management, educational leadership

Introduction:

At the secondary level, students embark on their academic journey, and principals play a vital role in ensuring that students get strong instructional leadership. Principals of secondary schools confront a number of obstacles when it comes to instructional leadership, and this introduction looks at those obstacles and how they affect teachers' efficiency in the classroom. The requirement for adaptable leadership is growing in the face of changing educational environments. From the difficulties of staff management to those of curriculum creation, this research explores the complicated web of problems faced by principals. For well-informed initiatives and policies to be developed to improve secondary school education as a whole, it is crucial to comprehend how these difficulties affect teachers' productivity. The purpose of this study is to provide light on the complex and far-reaching nature of instructional leadership issues by reviewing the relevant literature and doing empirical research. Pakistani secondary school administrators face a plethora of issues that have a major influence on the classroom climate as a result of the ever-changing nature of education (Parveen et al., 2021). These leaders traverse a complicated landscape influenced by educational, economic, and social forces as guardians of educational institutions. The difficulties encountered by secondary school administrators in Pakistan, ranging from limited resources to new teaching methods, are indicative of the worldwide character of educational leadership issues and not limited to Pakistan alone. This investigation aims to dive into the complex challenges faced by Pakistani secondary school administrators, illuminating the complex web of problems that influence their day-to-day work and decision-making. In order to improve the country's educational system as a whole, it is crucial to have a firm grasp of these obstacles.

Background:

Secondary school administrators in Pakistan face a heavy burden in an ever-changing educational system, which has a major influence on the system's efficacy and quality. Drawing on insights from academic research and other sources, this introduction will dig into a brief study of some important problems encountered by secondary school administrators in Pakistan. Difficulties Encountered by Pakistani Secondary School Principals. The operation of secondary schools in Pakistan is greatly impacted by a dynamic interplay of elements that characterize the educational environment. Principals of secondary schools face a multitude of issues that affect both the efficacy and quality of education in today's globally interconnected society, which is characterized by cultural variety, socioeconomic diversity, and the fast pace of

globalization. Since its establishment, Pakistan's educational system has seen several changes. What we see now in secondary school is a product of a long history of policy and social transformations. In order to understand the difficulties that modern secondary school administrators confront, it is essential to grasp this historical background.

1. Limited Resources:

Secondary schools in Pakistan often face challenges related to a lack of funding, outdated facilities, and unsuitable curriculum materials. In spite of these limited resources, principals nevertheless have a responsibility to create a welcoming classroom for all kids (Parveen & Tran, 2020).

2. Pedagogical and Curriculum Changes:

Principals have a constant battle when it comes to adopting and adjusting to new educational policies and curricular frameworks (Farooq et al., 2011). There must be strategic leadership and professional development programs to ensure that teaching tactics are always in line with changing pedagogical approaches.

3. Economics and Social Inequality:

There is a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds represented in Pakistani secondary schools, which contributes to the uneven educational achievements of the pupils. To eliminate these inequalities, principals should create inclusive policies that meet the requirements of every student (Asdaque et al., 2018).

4. The Incorporation of Technology:

Secondary school administrators in this age of fast technological change have the difficult task of incorporating technology into the classroom. Crucial issues in this area include bridging the digital divide, improving teacher training, and expanding access to technology (Siddiquei & Khalid, 2020).

Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must have a thorough understanding of these problems in order to create focused interventions and support structures that enable secondary school administrators in Pakistan to successfully traverse these complexity. In order to provide a thorough study of the problems at hand, the following investigation will go into each obstacle in more depth. Secondary school administrators in Pakistan confront complicated concerns, and understanding their history is the first step in solving them. It lays the groundwork for well-informed studies and deliberate actions to create a school climate that equips children for success in the modern world by making high-quality education accessible to everyone. In order to address these difficulties and help improve Pakistan's educational system, it is crucial to have a thorough awareness of the backdrop.

Significance of the Study:

Educational policymakers, school administrators, and those engaged in the training and professional development of educational leaders would do well to understand the difficulties faced by secondary school principals. The study's overarching goal is to improve secondary education by understanding the difficulties principals face and developing ways to help them succeed in their positions. In what follows, we will undertake a qualitative investigation of the challenges faced by secondary school administrators in exercising effective educational leadership by giving a platform to their stories and perspectives.

Research Question:

This research centers on the question:

- **Research Question:**
- How do the instructional leadership challenges faced by secondary school principals impact the productivity of teachers, and what strategies can be identified to address these challenges effectively?
- **Research Objectives:**
- Examine the instructional leadership challenges faced by secondary school principals impact the productivity of teachers, and what strategies can be identified to address these challenges effectively.

Literature Review:

According to many studies (Ahmad et al., 2020; Kraft et al., 2015), school heads' instructional leadership methods have a considerable impact on teachers' performance and also play a vital role in the development of schools. Worldwide, successful school-level teaching approaches have adopted the idea of instructional leadership, which originated in American primary schools. Instructional leadership has been the subject of much study and practice in a variety of global classrooms. Student success and school progress as a whole have been positively affected.

The instructional leadership responsibilities of secondary school administrators are vital to the efficiency and output of the teaching staff as a whole. Examining the obstacles that secondary school administrators encounter while carrying out their responsibilities as instructional leaders and how these obstacles could impact teacher efficiency is the primary goal of this research analysis. The purpose of this literature study is to provide light on the challenges faced by principals in advocating instructional leadership methods and their effects on the teaching staff by reviewing the relevant literature.

I. Secondary School Instructional Leadership:

Defining instructional leadership within the framework of secondary education is crucial for laying the groundwork. According to Hallinger (2010), school leaders engage in instructional leadership when they foster an encouraging learning atmosphere, establish lofty goals for students, and provide resources to help instructors

achieve those goals. When instructional leaders are effective, both student outcomes and teacher performance increase (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

2. Difficulties Encountered by Principals of Secondary Schools:

a. limitations of time:

Time restrictions are a major obstacle for secondary school administrators when it comes to instructional leadership. There is little time for administrators to be actively involved in classroom activities since they are so busy with administrative duties, according to the research (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Sancar et al., 2021). Because of this limitation, they may not be able to provide instructors timely and helpful criticism.

b. Professional Development:

When it comes to instructional leadership, many principals struggle to find enough chances for professional development (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Svendsen, 2020). Because of this deficiency in training, they may be unable to adequately assist and advise educators when they adopt new methods of teaching.

c. Skepticism of New Directions:

A major obstacle that administrators face when trying to implement new methods of education is teachers' resistance to change (Louis & Miles, 1990). Some school administrators may lack the leadership and communication skills necessary to successfully overcome student opposition (Chinn et al., 2021).

3. Effect on Educators' Efficiency:

a) How Satisfied and Motivated Teachers Are:

Low morale and dissatisfaction with one's employment among teachers could be a result of problems with instructional leadership. Teachers' dedication and output in the classroom might take a hit when they feel their superiors aren't on their side (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020).

b) The Caliber of Instruction:

According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), the quality of classroom teaching and learning is strongly impacted by instructional leadership strategies and how well they work. When school administrators struggle to lead teaching, student engagement suffers and instructors are less able to meet the needs of their pupils.

Research Design:

This study employs a phenomenological method to qualitative research in order to examine the difficulties encountered by secondary school administrators in the area of instructional leadership and how these difficulties affect the productivity of teachers. When trying to get to the bottom of complicated phenomena, phenomenology is the way to go since it lends itself so well to investigating people's actual experiences and perspectives.

a. Framework for Research:

Recognizing that knowledge is both subjective and socially created, the study embraces a constructivist perspective. The paradigm is in line with phenomenology's exploratory character as it focuses on the meanings that people assign to their experiences.

b. Sample:

Secondary school administrators and educators were the subjects of this research. Participants having direct expertise with instructional leadership difficulties were recruited via the use of a purposeful sample technique. We will assure a deep and complete examination of the phenomenon by selecting a broad sample that represents different demographics, school sizes, and geographic regions.

c. Data Collection:

The information was gathered by means of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Participants' experiences may be explored more freely in semi-structured interviews, whereas shared viewpoints and interactions can be better explored in focus groups. Interview questions were crafted to elicit in-depth accounts of administrators' struggles and their perceived effects on teachers' efficiency in the classroom.

d. Analyzing the Data:

In order to make sense of the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used. Data is coded and categorized in order to reveal patterns and themes. The inductive method enables themes to arise from the participants' experiences, which enhances our comprehension of the phenomenon.

e. Research Ethics

All during the study, kept ethical issues at the forefront. Everyone who took part in the study gave their informed permission, therefore it was completely voluntary. Ethical standards for the handling of sensitive material were followed, and participants' identities were kept secret.

f. Reliability and Strictness:

Methods including member verification, peer debriefing, and triangulation were used to make the research more trustworthy. Peer debriefing is asking for feedback from coworkers to guarantee methodological rigor, while member checking entails sharing results with participants to confirm interpretations. The process of triangulation entails using a number of different data sources to support conclusions.

g. Limitation of the Study:

It was critical to recognize possible constraints, such as the contextual distinctiveness of the study and the subjective character of qualitative research. Extensive descriptions of the study setting and participants were produced in an attempt to increase transferability, although generalizability remained confined to the investigated population.

Data Analysis:

This section presents the data analysis process used to uncover and interpret the challenges faced by secondary school principals. The qualitative case study

methodology was employed, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the experiences of principals within the context of their respective schools.

a. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen as the primary method for analyzing the collected data. This approach enables the identification and interpretation of patterns, themes, and trends within the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis process unfolded in several iterative stages, emphasizing the systematic organization of data into meaningful themes.

b. Data Preparation:

All data, including transcriptions of interviews, observational notes, and relevant documents, were prepared for analysis. The data were organized, labeled, and anonymized to ensure confidentiality and facilitate the analysis process.

c. Initial Coding:

The initial coding phase involved breaking down the data into meaningful segments, assigning descriptive codes to capture key concepts, ideas, and challenges expressed by the participants. Two independent researchers conducted initial coding, enhancing the reliability of the coding process.

d. Pattern Recognition:

Codes were then grouped into preliminary patterns and themes. This stage involved identifying recurring challenges and patterns across different cases, shedding light on commonalities and variations in the experiences of secondary school principals.

e. Theme Development:

Themes were refined and developed through an iterative process. This involved revisiting the data, comparing patterns, and discussing emerging themes. Themes were characterized in accordance to the research question and their capacity to encapsulate the essence of the challenges faced by principals.

f. Data Triangulation:

To enhance the validity of the findings, data triangulation was employed. This involved comparing information from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to corroborate and validate the identified themes.

g. Member Checking:

To further ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, member checking was performed. Preliminary findings and themes were shared with participants, allowing them to provide feedback and confirm the accuracy of the interpretations.

Demographic of Interview Participants

Table I Demographic of Interview Participants

Gender	Male	10
	Female	8
Qualification	PhD.	2

	Master	16
Experience	5 to 10	6
	11 to 15	4
	16 to 20	3
	21 to Above	5
Age	25 to 30	4
	31 to 35	8
	36 to 40	3
	40 to Above	3
Working as Principal	1 to 3	5
	3 to 5	5
	5 to 10	6
	10 to above	2
Head Gender	Male	10
	Female	8

As shown in above table Out of the total of 18 individuals, 10 identified as male and 8 as female. (02) Two members of the group have doctoral degrees, while sixteen more have master's degrees or above. (06) Six people have 5–10 years of experience, four have 11–15 years, (03) three have 16–20 years, and five have 21 years or more. The degrees of experience clearly differ across the participants. (04) Four individuals are in the 25–30 age range, (08) eight are in the 31–35 age range, (03) three are in the 36–40 age range, and (03) three are 40 and over. Regarding the primary responsibilities, there are 5 participants with 1-3 years of experience, 5 with 3-5 years, 6 with 5-10 years, and 2 with 10 years or more. There are (10) ten men and eight women in positions of leadership.

Thematic Analysis:

Both demographic and open-ended questions were administered to the participants. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English (Urdu) for the purpose of the research. After that, themes and patterns were extracted from these recordings. In order to draw conclusions from the research, the results were analyzed to understand the participants' viewpoints and life experiences. Future research and decisions in the area were informed by the study's results. Thematic analysis may be guided by either an inductive or a deductive method. Without any prior theoretical frameworks, patterns may be discovered by inductive thematic analysis, which entails drawing themes straight from the data. In contrast, deductive thematic analysis uses already existing ideas or theories to help find themes in the data. In their

2012 book "Applied Thematic Analysis," Guest, MacQueen, and Namey add to our knowledge of theme analysis. They provide practical advice on how to use theme analysis, how to manage and organize big datasets, how to improve the validity and dependability of conclusions, and how to display results effectively. Researchers interested in using theme analysis in qualitative investigations will find this book to be an invaluable resource. Maintaining the credibility of theme analysis is crucial. Addressing issues with the validity and rigor of qualitative research, they give light on methods for improving the theme analysis process in terms of credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (Nowell et al., 2017).

- **Principals Challenges**

After a brief introduction main questions were asked:

How did instructional leadership problems affect your daily teaching practices and overall productivity as a secondary school teacher? Can you provide particular instances? In what ways were these obstacles a hindrance to your capacity to accommodate the demands of your diverse student?

As (P-4) said that

“As a secondary school teacher, instructional leadership issues affected my everyday teaching and productivity. One example was the school's quick curriculum adjustment to meet new requirements. The instructional leadership team's unclear communication and instructions left me rushing to change lesson plans and assessments without help. This increased my workload and raised questions about whether I was meeting my different students' learning requirements. I also struggled to learn new teaching methods due to insufficient professional development. The school's technology-driven approach to education made it hard for me to incorporate these tools into my courses. Lack of specialized training left me feeling unprepared, hurting my productivity and instruction. Support for tailored education was uneven, making it harder to accommodate varied students. Without clear instructions on learning styles and capacities, it was hard to personalize my courses to each student. This hurt student involvement and my ability to create an inclusive classroom.”

Another (P-9): *“Discordance between school policy and educational objectives has been a source of instructional leadership issues that have an impact on my day-to-day pedagogical work. The lack of consistency made it difficult to convey clear academic goals and evaluation standards, which in turn made it difficult to provide students with a consistent and relevant learning experience. I had a hard time navigating competing expectations and adapting my teaching strategies to meet the needs of my students because leadership lacked a clear vision. The significance of coherent instructional leadership in creating a supportive environment for teachers and improving students' learning was highlighted by this.”*

- **Strategic Leadership for Educational Technology Integration**

How do you plan to adapt to the changing world of educational technology as a school leader and make sure that educators are well-equipped to use these tools in the classroom? I was wondering if you could provide any examples of programs or practices that have helped educators make good use of technology in the classroom.

As (P-11) respond *“Educational technology is always evolving, but school leaders can stay ahead of the curve by instituting professional development programs, building collaborative learning communities, hiring technology integration specialists, keeping resources up-to-date, running pilot programs, advocating for flexible learning models, including students in technology decisions, making data-driven decisions, forming partnerships with the community, and regularly assessing and providing feedback. Following these steps will guarantee that teachers have all the tools they need to make good use of technology in the classroom.”*

Another (P-17) said *“My goal as a school administrator is to encourage a spirit of lifelong learning so that my faculty and staff can keep up with the rapidly evolving landscape of educational technology. Making ensuring teachers have access to materials that will help them keep up with new technology is an important part of this. We will also promote collaborative venues where people can share creative ideas and best practices. Implementing an LMS, such as Google Classroom or Canvas, is a good example since it simplifies evaluation, material distribution, and lesson preparation. Further, encouraging the use of subject-specific internet resources and interactive educational applications may boost engagement and individualization of instruction. Teachers may better prepare their students to succeed in today's technologically advanced world by creating a welcoming classroom climate and using tools that are easy for pupils to use.”*

One respondent (P-5) said that

“Investing in infrastructure and hardware should be a top priority for school leaders like me so we can stay up with the ever-changing world of educational technology. Successful technology integration in the classroom requires that schools have modern gadgets and a reliable internet connection. I also want to form alliances with tech firms in order to provide teachers with the resources they need to use cutting-edge technology in the classroom. One effective approach is a technology mentoring program, in which experienced educators help less experienced educators learn to use technology effectively in the classroom. When teachers work together in an encouraging environment, they are better able to keep up with technology developments and find ways to incorporate them into their lessons.”

- **Professional Development for Adaptive Teaching**

When thinking back on your professional growth, are there any specific examples of how you were able to improve your teaching methods via the use of specialized training and support? On the other side, have you ever felt that you were unable to adjust to changes in the curriculum or implement new teaching methods because you had not received enough appropriate professional development? What are your

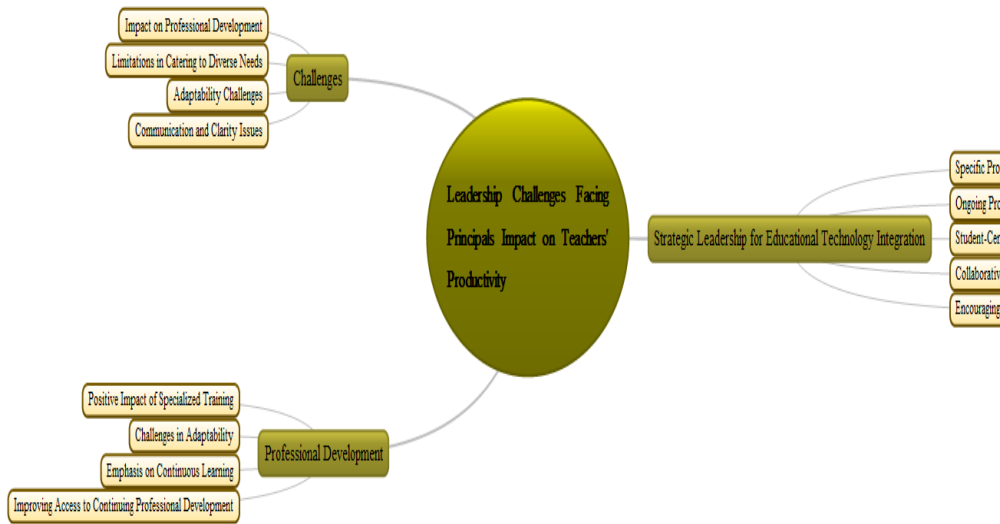
thoughts on how we might improve teachers' access to continuing professional development to keep up with the dynamic nature of education?

As participant (P-2): *“My pedagogical practices were much enhanced after participating in specialized training, such as a workshop on project-based learning. Unfortunately, I was unable to fully adjust to changes in the curriculum due to instances of inadequate professional development. A holistic approach that incorporates individualized seminars, online classes, mentoring programs, and partnerships with organizations and professionals in the field is essential to increase instructors' access to professional development opportunities. In order to keep up with the ever-changing field of education, it is crucial for educators to provide a nurturing environment that prioritizes continuous learning.”*

Another response (P-4): *“Getting specialized training in project-based learning was a watershed event for my career because it transformed the way I teach. My ability to adjust to new course requirements was hampered, on the other hand, by a lack of suitable professional growth. A holistic approach including individualized seminars, online classes, mentoring programs, and partnerships is necessary to increase accessibility. To stay up with the ever-changing nature of education, it is essential for educators to cultivate a culture that supports and values continuous learning.”*

One more (P-9): *“My pedagogical practices were much improved by specialized training, especially in project-based learning, which supplied me with useful methodologies and materials. On the flip side, my adaptability to curricular changes has been delayed by a lack of professional development, which has affected my confidence and efficacy. It is essential to implement a holistic approach that incorporates individualized workshops, online courses, mentoring, and partnerships with universities in order to enhance access. For educators to effectively navigate the ever-changing field of education, it is necessary to establish a culture that supports and values continuous learning.”*

Figure 1 Principal Challenges Theme



Conclusion:

Teachers in secondary schools have substantial difficulties in the area of instructional leadership, which affects both their day-to-day work as educators and their capacity to get things done. Problems with communication, curriculum changes on the fly, and inconsistent school regulations all add up to make it hard to provide good education. Teacher testimonies from both the primary and secondary grades highlight the significance of consistent instructional leadership in fostering a positive learning environment for all stakeholders.

School administrators must take the initiative to adopt strategic leadership practices in order to deal with the ever-changing world of educational technology. The importance of investing in infrastructure, collaborative learning communities, and professional development programs is emphasized in the responses from P-II, P-17, and P-5 educators. Partnerships with tech companies, technology mentorship programs, the adoption of new devices, and stable internet connections are all necessary components of a comprehensive strategy to keep up with technological changes.

One of the most important things that can be done to improve adaptive teaching techniques is professional development. P-2, P-4, and P-9 participants emphasized the power of ongoing education by describing the advantages of specialized training. Nevertheless, a comprehensive strategy is required to overcome the obstacles of insufficient professional development that impede classroom adaptation to

curricular changes. In order to equip educators to adapt to the always evolving area of education, it is vital to pursue this method that incorporates online courses, mentorship, personalized workshops, and collaborations with other groups.

Recommendations:

- **Improve Instructional Leadership Communication and Consistency:**
 - Inside instructional leadership teams, make sure there are open lines of communication.
 - Give students a sense of academic purpose by making sure school regulations and learning outcomes are consistent.
- **Taking the Lead in Integrating Educational Technology:**
 - Make sure teachers participate in ongoing professional development to stay current on technology trends.
 - The promotion of technology mentorship programs and cooperative learning communities should be prioritized.
 - Collaborate with IT companies to access state-of-the-art resources and invest in contemporary infrastructure.
- **Make Long-Term Career Growth a Top Priority:**
 - Provide advanced education in theory and practice of new methods of instruction.
 - To meet the demands of a wide range of students, design tailored seminars, online classes, and mentorship programs.
 - Create an all-encompassing environment for professional growth by forming collaborations with educational institutions and other groups.
- **Foster an Environment of Lifelong Learning:**
 - Foster a nurturing atmosphere that recognizes the need of educators' ongoing professional development.
 - Have educators weigh in on matters of professional development and curricular shifts.
 - Implementing these suggestions may help schools overcome obstacles, provide a better workplace for educators, and provide them the skills they need to adapt to a changing education system.

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