

**Professional Practices of Direct Selected and Promoted Head Teacher:  
Perceived Perspective of Secondary School Teachers**

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**Abstract**

Effective school leadership is a key determinant of educational success. In Punjab, Pakistan, head teachers are appointed through two main routes: direct selection (new recruitment) and promotion (internal advancement of existing teachers). The purpose of this study was to investigate how these two types of head teachers differ in their professional practices, particularly in areas like instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, and administrative management. The population of study was 800 secondary school teachers. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select sample. The sample size was 160 SST. Teachers' perceptions of their head teachers' instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, school culture management, professional development support, and administrative leadership were analyzed. Findings indicate that direct-selected head teachers scored significantly higher in several areas, including setting instructional goals, promoting innovative teaching methods, providing resources for instructional improvement and managing school finances effectively. Promoted head teachers, while effective in fostering stability and inclusivity, tended to adopt more traditional approaches, scoring lower in proactive instructional and management practices. The overall comparison shows a statistically significant difference ( $p = .001$ ) in the professional practices of direct-selected and promoted head teachers, with direct-selected head teachers scoring higher on average across all domains. These results suggest that a balanced approach to leadership combining the innovation of direct-selected head teachers with the experience of promoted head teachers may optimize school performance.

**Keywords:** Professional Practices Effectiveness of Management, Departmental promoted Direct Selected

**Introduction**

The success of schools and the academic performance of students is determined by the effective leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). In Punjab, Pakistan, head teachers, also known as principals, are selected through two methods: direct selection and promotion. Direct-selected head teachers are new candidates into the system through competitive recruitment, while promoted head teachers are existing teachers who come up through the ranks based on seniority and experience (Government of Punjab, 2014).

Head teachers are not only responsible for administration but also serve as instructional leaders. They lead teaching practices, adopt a positive school culture, manage resources, and lead professional development (Ahmad & Dilshad, 2020). The leadership styles and efficacy of head teachers have a philosophical effect on student outcomes and success of schools (Day et al., 2010). This study aims to compare the professional practices of direct-selected and promoted head teachers across several dimensions, such as instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, school culture management, and administrative leadership.

### **Systematic Recruitment**

The Punjab Government School Education Department maintains a school teacher recruitment policy. The recruiting policy specifies job titles, minimum academic and professional qualification criteria, fundamental rules for recruitment, recruitment steps and scheduling, job descriptions and job grade standards, job assignments, and recruitment terms and conditions. The rule of behavior for teacher recruiting is included in a document known as the recruiting Policy. Advertisements for teacher recruitment appear in major daily publications. Teachers are hired to fill all teaching positions guaranteeing excellent instruction and reaching 100% enrolment, retention, and dropout rate (Lunenburg, 2018).

In Punjab, Pakistan, there are two sorts of principal in public high schools. The first is to promote the principal, and the second is to choose the principal. Serving Secondary School Teachers (SST), Principals, and Senior Principals with the necessary qualifications and years of experience are promoted to higher levels with new titles and scaled up through the School Education Department. These employees are not required to pass any form of test or interview in order to be promoted.

In second method head teachers are directly selected through Punjab Public Service Commission as a new candidates in BS 17. They are new comer in education department as head teachers. In the same way their recruitment criteria are also different. New teachers in the lower grades apply for the BS-17 principal job, while experienced teachers apply for the BS-18 senior principle position (Government of the Punjab, 2014).

### **Effective Administration**

The leader of the agency is responsible for good administration and management. This effective administration keeps teaching and non-teaching personnel disciplined, and students organize and monitor the institution. The principal keeps all records on a regular and correct basis and promotes physical, social, and moral qualities among students. It routinely teaches and organizes sports, games, and extra-curricular activities for the institution's pupils (Maqsood, et.al, 2018).

Leadership is serious task for the smooth operation of any organization and has a direct influence on staff performance and progress. Active leadership lays the groundwork for an organization's growth and performance. Many characteristics are shared among academic leaders, including communication, honesty, humility, self-confidence, motivation, creativity, intellect, and cooperation. Although leadership is a worldwide phenomenon, it is also impacted by culture and circumstance. Leadership styles are an important aspect of school administration. Leadership and management styles are two sides of the same coin. As a result, the principal's role is critical, not only in identifying weak links in school administration, but also in providing direction for the school's effective operation (Mukherjee, 2013).

In Pakistan, most school administrators believe in the growth of teenage concerns, stress, and expectations (Shakil, 2019). The principal of the school is solely frustrated and unsatisfied with the personnel. The principal's role in attaining goals is dependent on instructional administration, parental participation, and student accomplishment improvement. The performance of principals is critical to the improvement of educational institutions (Muraina & Babatunde, 2018).

Strategic planning, according to researchers, focuses on the management processes of public sector organizations and agencies. He described a substantial association between school

success and the administrative efficacy of the principal. Adequate delegation of work and duties, adequate staff performance evaluation, and involvement in decision-making are all characteristics of main management effectiveness (Wildy., & Loudon.,2000). To increase academic achievement, school principals often use many quality improvement programs, such as collaboration, organizing seminars, and supporting mentorship (Nartisa, et.al, 2018). This study compares the professional practices of directly elected and promoted head in public secondary schools in Punjab, based on the various scenarios of principal management.

### **Statement of Problem**

Effective school leadership is recognized as a key determinant of educational success. In Punjab, Pakistan, head teachers are appointed through two primary methods: direct selection and promotion. However, there is limited understanding of how these two groups differ in their professional practices, particularly in areas such as instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, and administrative management. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the differences in professional practices between direct-selected and promoted head teachers and understanding the implications of these differences on school effectiveness.

### **Objective of the Study**

1. To find out the teachers perception regarding professional practices of prompted and direct selected head teachers
2. To find out the significant difference in the professional practices of prompted and direct selected head teachers

### **Research Question**

1. What is the perception of teachers regarding professional practices of prompted and direct selected head teachers?
2. Is there any significant difference in the professional practices of prompted and direct selected head teachers?

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

Comparative research design was adaptive to see the difference in the perception of teachers regarding the professional practices of direct selected and promoted head teacher at secondary school

#### **Participants and Sampling**

The study was conducted in the Dera Ghazi Khan district, a part of Southern Punjab. Population of study was 800 secondary school teachers (Sis, 2024).By using simple random sampling technique 160 SSTs were selected as sample.

#### **Instrument**

A self-developed instrument was used to collect the information. The questionnaire included items related to instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, school culture management, professional development support, and administrative leadership. The responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

#### **Pilot Study**

An instrument was piloted to ensure the validity and reliability. Validity was ensured by expert educationist and reliability was calculated by Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha =0.93$ )

## Results

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation of direct selected and promoted head teachers professional practices is presented

Statements	Mean (Direct Selected)	Std. (Direct Selected)	Mean (Promoted)	Std. (Promoted)	Mean Difference
My head teacher provides clear instructional goals.	4.23	0.831	3.42	1.322	0.81
My head teacher encourages the innovative teaching method.	4.23	0.893	3.52	1.105	0.71
My head teacher helps me to set professional goals.	4.15	0.899	3.66	0.923	0.49
My head teacher provides resources for instructional improvement.	4.35	0.726	3.35	1.138	1.00
My head teacher provides opportunities for teacher's professional growth.	4.00	0.838	3.55	1.311	0.45
My head teacher conducts regular classroom observations.	3.94	1.019	3.35	1.397	0.59
My head teacher provides constructive feedback.	4.15	0.714	3.34	1.278	0.81
My head teacher provides clear evaluation criteria.	4.21	0.600	3.26	1.215	0.95
My head teacher maintains accurate and confidential evaluation record.	4.11	0.765	3.58	1.130	0.53
My head teacher fosters a learning environment.	4.15	0.652	3.74	1.203	0.41
My head teacher promotes an inclusive culture.	4.05	0.804	3.89	0.904	0.16
My head teacher allows open communication among staff.	4.23	0.691	3.75	0.952	0.48
My head teacher maintains a safe and orderly school environment.	4.27	0.844	4.03	0.984	0.24
My head teacher promotes a culture of continuous improvement.	4.25	0.618	3.95	0.943	0.30
My head teacher encourages emotional	3.99	0.779	4.02	0.976	-0.03

engagement in professional development.					
My head teacher facilitates workshops and training sessions.	4.15	0.799	3.54	1.263	0.61
My head teacher encourages teachers to pursue higher education.	4.15	0.850	3.51	1.252	0.64
My head teacher provides feedback on professional development progress.	4.17	0.663	3.49	1.187	0.68
My head teacher manages school resources effectively.	4.17	0.986	3.57	1.185	0.60
My head teacher handles administrative tasks efficiently.	4.28	0.630	3.43	1.224	0.85
My head teacher focuses on school improvement.	4.24	0.614	3.80	1.301	0.44
My head teacher implements effective problem-solving strategies.	4.11	0.881	3.51	1.288	0.60
My head teacher manages school financial responsibility effectively.	4.39	0.789	3.63	0.977	0.76
My head teacher maintains school financial responsibility effectively.	4.39	0.789	3.63	0.977	0.76
Total	100.15	20.513	83.68	25.725	16.47
Mean	4.17	0.855	3.49	1.071	0.68

Above table shows generally, directly selected teachers have higher means across all statements, indicating a more favorable perception of their head teacher's leadership qualities compared to promoted teachers.

Table 2 Comparison of direct selected and prompted head teachers' professional practices

	Head Teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Professional Practices	Direct Selected	95	100.15	20.51	4.31	158	.001
	Promoted	65	83.68	25.72			

The overall comparison shows a statistically significant difference ( $p = .001$ ) in the professional practices of direct-selected and promoted head teachers, with direct-selected head teachers scoring higher on average across all domains. This result confirms that direct-selected head teachers tend to adopt more progressive, structured practices than promoted head teacher

## Conclusions

The purpose of study was to find out the difference in perception of secondary school teachers regarding the professional practices of promoted and direct selected head teachers. Population

consisted of 800 secondary school teachers of district dera Ghazi Khan. Simple random sampling technique was applied to select the sample. The size sample was 260 SSTs. The study's findings reveal a significant difference between the professional practices of Directly Selected and Promoted Head Teachers. The t-test results demonstrate that Directly Selected Head Teachers consistently achieve higher scores in professional practices compared to their Promoted counterparts, with a mean score of 95.96 for the former and 82.91 for the latter. This substantial disparity is statistically significant, as indicated by the p-value of .001. These results suggest that the method of head teacher selection could be an influential factor in determining their effectiveness in professional roles.

## **Discussion**

The principal's purpose is to ensure academic achievement while carrying out the mission of the school. Task dimensions are divided into two categories by effective principals. Administrative responsibilities related with policies, regulations, processes, and authority are one type. Making cultural linkages is the second category. He discovered a link between principals' managerial abilities and administrative efficiency (Yasin, et.al, 2019).

Maintaining discipline, promoting extracurricular activities, holding regular parent-teacher meetings, establishing a safe and secure environment, assigning the right tasks to the right people, implementing advanced assessment techniques, establishing quality education, and encouraging student assessment are all aspects of school management. Various methodologies, continual monitoring of students' development, frequent monitoring of instructors' instructional activities, improvement of Punjabi Examination Council (PEC) and Board (BISE) results, instilling a culture of mutual trust and respect Schools with directly elected principals do better in terms of time, enrollment growth, and retention (Yasin, et.al, 2019).

Maintain school infrastructure, priorities student development, foster community cooperation, reduce dropout rates, decentralize power appropriately, improve professional skills, foster a welcoming environment, develop timetables in comparison to directly selected principal schools, and provide necessary school physical resources. In promotion-principal schools, facilities and the development of a positive school atmosphere are more successful. As a result, this study shows that directly elected principals' overall administration is more successful than promoted principals'. Policymakers may create regulations to help schools run more efficiently, and principals can give frequent training on administrative, managerial, and decision-making procedures.

According to a study by Leithwood et al. (2009), effective leadership significantly influences student success and teacher performance. The current study findings support that Directly Selected Head Teachers might have been chosen for their particular skills to superior professional practices. A study by Robinson, et al (2008) emphasizes the importance of school leaders providing clear teaching goals, professional development, and a positive learning environment. The directly selected head teachers performed better on these parameters. Blase and Blase (1999) discovered that supportive leadership, which encourages innovations and helps for professional development, nurtures an engaging and successful teaching environment. The current study supports this, as directly selected head teachers had more means to provide professional tools and opportunity for growth than promoted head teachers.. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) underlined that good leaders observe instructors and provide actionable feedback to promote ongoing instructional growth. In this study, directly selected head teachers were more effective at providing these services. Promoted head teachers were less consistent in these areas, indicating potential training or leadership readiness inadequacies. Hallinger and Heck (2010) suggests that leaders who manage resources well foster a positive school culture enhance overall school achievement

The promoted head teachers, while still competent, fell behind in these areas, probably indicating that promotions were based on tenure. According to the study, directly elected principals have a more successful overall administration than promoted principals.

Policymakers can approve regulation to assist schools run more efficiently, and provide ongoing training on administrative, managerial, and decision-making procedures.

### Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, numerous recommendations are made to improve head teachers' professional practices

1. Given the lower ratings for promoted head teachers compared to those who were directly recruited, specialized professional development programs are required.
2. Because direct-selected head teachers scored higher on providing resources for instructional improvement. Workshops and courses on budget management, resource allocation, and strategy planning should be included in the leadership development curriculum.
3. Head teachers should be encouraged to create an inclusive and collaborative school atmosphere.
4. Constructive feedback should be provided, emphasizing areas of strength and potential for improvement.
5. Leadership development should stress data-driven decision-making and the implementation of evidence-based strategies that enhance school improvement.
6. To foster a comprehensive approach to school leadership, principals should actively connect with the school community, which includes parents and local groups.

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