PRINCIPALS' STRATEGIES FOR CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract. *This paper provides an insight on the strategies adopted by principals in the implementation of curriculum at secondary level. The objectives of the study were to find out the impact of strategies adopted by principals and identifying the gaps acting as potential hampers in managing the implementation of curriculum. For this purpose, a close ended questionnaire with 5 points Likert scale was designed and the entire population was taken as sample of the study. The collected data were treated with Chi–square statistics. The results revealed that the principals were not accompanied with the curricular materials, physical and financial facilities and least training regarding the application of strategies for implementation of curriculum were provided. The recommendation like provision of formal training to strengthen the academics, development of organizational commitment among the employer and employees were made.*

Keywords: Principals, Curriculum, Implementation, Management, Strategies

Introduction

Principals play multidisciplinary role at school level. They are academic managers, instructional supervisor, administrator and curriculum implementers. The main responsibility of the principal is to strengthen the academics of students, which is possible when implementation of curriculum is ensured. Carl (2002:275) defined curriculum as "Number of arranged planning for which school is responsible." The term curriculum is often baffled with syllabus and course of study. According to Print (1993), the union of contents, intent of curriculum statement (aims, goals and objectives) along with components of curriculum and pattern of evaluation are termed as curriculum. A list of content, which are to be assessed in due course of time regarding a particular theme or subject is termed as syllabus.

A principal is responsible for implementation of curriculum, which is possible by supervising teachers during an academic session. The whole instructional supervision becomes the sole accountability of principals (Van Deventer, 2003). Different strategies are required by teachers for implementation of curriculum, which ought to be aligned with the objectives and plethora outcomes of prescribed curriculum.

Isa (2014) was of the notion that the principals should merge some themes in their supervisory role, which encompasses development of conducive milieu, eliciting chances for professional development of teachers, strengthening the spirit of team work, problem solving approach, act as a bridge between the school and community, and assessment of novel teachers aiming to get acquainted with proper skills to achieve the desired goals and objectives in stipulated time frame.

Instructional supervision helps in preventing low quality education. The goals oriented and keen supervision of principals helps in elimination of errors and feeble aspects of a program. If in case, teachers are not frequently supervised and having zero level check and balance on them, a least sense of commitment arises among teachers, which results in failure of system. It is important to keep an imperative eye on the performance of teachers and other staff to develop sense of accountability regarding their assigned duties. Principals should continuously facilitate the faculty members by subjecting them to suitable academic stuff aiming suitable feedback concerning their performance in teaching–learning process. Similar approaches ensure an understanding about the pathetic dimensions regarding their performance and also helpful for future rectification of the program.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

Find out the association of Principals' strategies in the implementation of curriculum in the sample area

Identify the gaps which creates hamper to principals in implementation of the curriculum

Make suggestions for improving the role of principal in curriculum implementation

Research hypothesis

The study intends to testify the following research hypothesis:

H0 = The principals employ instructional leadership strategies to implement the curriculum.

H1 = The principals do not employ instructional leadership strategies to implement the curriculum.

Significance of the study

The current study attempts to give an insight to curriculum implementers regarding the pattern and strategies to be adopted for implementation of curriculum at secondary level. The design and development of curriculum absorbs maximum efforts and national resources but at the stage of implementation due to number of issues, it fails, which results in wastage of entire efforts and resources. This study also underlined the main issues and problems, which were often confronted during the implementation of curriculum. A number of strategies were jot down in the recommendation sections, which can help the principals and education authority to cope up the problem of curriculum implementation at grass-root level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The basic responsibility of principals is to develop conducive ambient for teaching–learning process in several programs. Teachers' involvement in implementation of curriculum can be ensured by provision of modern trends and strategies in enhancing the pedagogical skills which helps them in teaching process. The commitment of teachers and other staff members can be evaluated by conservative supervision and monitoring of principals with respect to curriculum implementation. As far as, the implementation of curriculum is concerned, it is a task of great responsibility and the principals often adopt number of strategies to ensure the implementation process. The following strategies are often followed:

The Central role of the Principals

According to Isa (2014) the core management of a school includes principals, vice principals and section in-charge. These staff members play a significant role in implementation of curriculum. The principals

often develop and design vivid strategies (i.e. taking informed consent from other teachers and staff regarding any innovative step, giving training on acquaintance with new learning materials) for curriculum implementation and their timely management.

Context awareness

Marsh (1997) and Ornstein (2004) focus on the reflection of strategies for curriculum implementation in a specific school with the sense of approachability and symbolism. In this regard, an assessment plan reflecting the vision, mission skill and customs needs to be patch up in the context of school to achieve the objectives via implementation of curriculum. Through the assessment plan, if any needs and demands are diagnosed, they will be included in the implementation plan followed by management of curriculum implementation.

Administration

For maximum implementation of curriculum, the role of administration cannot be denied. In school setting, the principals are responsible for controlling the overall academic activities in a given time frame (Merwe, 2002). It is the sole responsibility of school management to elicit appraisal for effective and efficient administrator work and develop conducive environment for teaching–learning process. Coleman et al (2003) stated that often the principals are subjected to curriculum from the Bureaus of Curriculum, which eliminate their involvement in the process of curriculum development.

Coleman et al (2003) and Wolfson, (1997) were of the opinions that strong administration nurtures the implementation of curriculum. It is also essential to keep a bird eye on the performance of teachers, classes' schedules, discipline and exercising of rules and regulations, utilization of course materials and books.

Formulating job description

Logan (1997) is of the view that the entitlement of explanatory job description ought to be supported via additional government documents like guidelines about curriculum and associated manuals. The senior teachers of schools can play a major role in this regard.

Coleman et al (2003) stated that due importance is given to formulating clear and vivid job descriptions for all the staff members,

who are involved in the process of curriculum implementation. Due to its vital importance, they give focus to the point that regular and vivid modes of communication are made and they suggest regular curriculum meetings, where the competent authority assigns particular job description.

Resource management

Tomlinson, (2004) and Rogan, (2003) argues that the proper distribution and management of resources are important for curriculum implementation. In the similar context, Coleman et al (2003) shared his views that factors like effective management, resources availability, employing rules and regulations, procurement, course contents, teaching aids and other facilities plays significant role in implementation of curriculum. Early and Bubb (2004) give emphasis on the provision of timely financial support from the principals as it acts as backbone of any program.

Rogan and Greyson (2003) stated that physical facilities ought to be provided by principals to speedy the process of curriculum implementation. Through the provision of physical resources, the performance of teachers and learners are directly affected. The importance of provision of physical resources, finances, teaching aided materials, proper budgeting and other relevant stuff were mentioned by above researchers and educationist, which pave way to implementation of curriculum.

Pastoral care

Rhodes et al (2004) were of the view that demands of teachers in terms of personal and specialized capacity ware not supervise by the principals. Most of the scholars demand that there is a dire need of such mentors, who provide guidance and encouragement to the teachers regarding the acceptance of confronted and futuristic challenges. Upon the execution of confronted challenges, the self–esteem of teachers greatly enriches.

Coleman et al (2003) argues that the appropriate and suitable morale of teachers pave ways to curriculum implementation. It is evident from number of researches that often the teachers are in skirmish condition with their colleagues, which divert their focus and concentration on implementation of curriculum. Due to such situation, the teachers lack

faith in each other, which results in failure of achievement of approved objectives. Moreover, the shortage of resources, crowded classrooms, increase in teachers' work load, low self–esteem also acts as potential barriers in implementation of curriculum.

Performance management

Tomlinson (2004) specified the fundamental role of principals and senior level management, which involves their performance in setting goals and targets. These set goals and targets are communicated to general public in terms of implementation of curriculum. Moreover, the communication process is only possible when goals are set and in the form of bottom –up, reflecting the demands and needs of the students, society and community. On the other hand, according to Day (2007) while in designing bottom–up pattern, the teachers and mid-level management majorly involves in an encompassing the desires and demands of nations regarding the implementation of curriculum in its full swing.

The foremost responsibility to be taken part by these stakeholders it becomes more significant to ensure and evaluate their efficiency and consequent performance needs that to be well monitored and professionally managed along with gradual progress reported by continuous supervision and monitoring (Nkomo, 1995). It becomes crucial to develop a certain approach for true assessment of the standard of work in progress. Keeping in view that professional managing of recital attitude always needs to have some activities of looking through various results showing the pros and cons from people belonging from various spheres of society treated under permanent and consistently engaged in order to establish an effective and progressive norm of necessary requirements.

Middlewood (2003) have already focused on the similar view of conformist way of monitoring as well as the required norm of necessary supervision that basically tends to enhance the environment of full filling different liabilities among the people with respect to their specific goals. It is also likely stated that some of the key factors necessary for initiating this sort of unadventurous controlling system should or at least be professionally handled. In spite of this they also focus and continuously necessitate that during the process of policy making, these stakeholders must be treated as the basic component of the process of policy

formation for the purpose of creating a well-managed evaluating and assessment performance of those ways that will lead to set up various dimensions leading towards enhancement of pedagogy teaching standards, erudition helpfulness and creating an archive of different ongoing events (Virgilo; 2001).

Middlewood (2004) in this regard have their own perspectives and recommend that higher faculty should have a scheduled plan for certain monitoring and inspection of classrooms in order to effectively implement a curriculum with respect to the overall approved policies.

Early and Bubbs (2004) similarly also focused and shared some comprehensive points that basically develop the needs of specific questionnaire and some interviews along with the expected outcomes that may be helpful to discuss and compare the results with regards to excellence in the overall techniques of regulation. Of course, there are some miscellaneous techniques and procedures that may recurrently be considered in accumulating and shaping various random samples and data. If properly and the desired data is collected based on the past frequencies with regards to the required norms, then the expected outcomes have always possessed the best chances of confirmation of course more precisely and effectively.

Smit (2003) also strappingly favored the encouragement and inspiring the recital management through classroom scrutiny. Such etiquettes always helpful to encourage the process of functioning in a real way. Classrooms visits have to be arranged that must be performed by taking help of some of the senior faculty, who possess real capabilities to ensure instructional help that basically deal serious issues and similarly ensure to monitor classroom and do firm inspection.

Early and Bubbs (2004) stress on the regular and continuous feedback, that creates help with the monitoring and inspection teams. The solitary purpose of the feedback is to focus and exclude those elements that ensure to make the implementation process better. In this regard, some recommendations are to be followed that could be implemented by some personnel to make these recommendations more professional and clearer.

Rhodes et al (2004) stated that, due to personage inequalities, rationally the abstract logics of stakeholders along with several thinking

always create new professional and personal needs, which in turn always lead to the climb of novel concepts and outlooks acting as foundations for the up-coming planning activities. Here new events and elements are introduced that look more approving and sympathetic to successfully employ the syllabus necessary according to the given   objectives.

Tomlinson (2004) looked and analyzed that results of pre-planned with clear aims and visions are always easy achievable through the monitoring of people's planned and organized actions. The same was hold by Early and Bubbs (2004) that several new and widely expressed norms of evaluating performance could be utilized at various standards levels in the background of pedagogy and about the performance of faculty attitude at the development of these people. These scholars focused on the management, which includes such figures like principals, vice- principals, and headmasters, assistant headmasters along with other administrative and managerial staff that must be assessed using these standards regarding their performance. Smit (2003) also included a tip and concluded that each and every school should always develop and establish their individual line of responsibilities and guidelines that basically will ensure the quality standard requirement along with the provision of individual job description pertaining to each staff member for which he will be answerable.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research method with a special reference to non– experimental research design was opted for the study focusing on to explore the ideas, notions and thoughts of secondary school principals.

Population and sample of the study

All the principals (77) of public secondary school in district Peshawar constitutes the population of the study. 70 principals were taken as sample of the study.

Instrument for data collection

A closed ended questionnaire with 5 point Likert scale (SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N=Neutral, DA= Disagree and SDA= Strongly Disagree) based on eight items, addressing some crucial aspects regarding the strategies for implementation of curriculum, was used for data collection from the respondents.

Pilot study

Adaptive trail design method was used for piloting the questionnaire (Thabane et al., 2010). Necessary modifications and amendments were made for making the questionnaire tangible and target oriented.

Validation and Reliability of research instrument

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the relevant field. After piloting the questionnaire, the reliability of the research instruments was measured through Cronbach Alpha (Tavakol, & Dennick, 2011), which was 0.86.

Administering the instrument

After the piloting phase, the questionnaire was then administered to the actual sample for gathering data pertaining to the topic. The response rate of the questionnaires was almost 100% as the third author distributed and collected the filled out questionnaires personally. Ethical considerations were taken into account.

Analysis of the data

After the completion of data collection, the raw data was arranged, organized, tabulated, analyzed and then subjected to interpretation using chi square tests (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002).

RESULTS

The results discussed in this section are drawn from the question items of the questionnaire. The main thrust of items was on the provision of various strategies helpful in implementation of curriculum at secondary level.

The analysis of data presented in table 1 revealed that the calculated value (2.28) does not exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that statement "the elements of curriculum are associated with the learners' opportunities and environment provided" is supported by test statistics.

Table 1: Showing that the elements of curriculum are associated with the learners' opportunities and environment provided.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	S A	A	N	S D A	D A		
7 0	1 8	1 4	1 4	1 4	1 0	2.28	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 2 revealed that the calculated value (26.42) exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "the association of instructional practices with elements of curriculum" is not supported by test statistics.

Table 2: Indicates the association of instructional practices with elements of curriculum.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	S A	A	N	S D A	D A		
7 0	1 0	3 1	9	8	1 2	26.42	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 3 revealed that the calculated value (2.71) does not exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "the implementation of curriculum is ensured by using supported strategies like giving training to implementers" is supported by the test statistics.

Table 3: Indicates that the implementation of curriculum is ensured by using supported strategies like giving training to implementers.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	SA	A	N	SDA	DA		
70	14	18	16	11	11	2.71	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 4 revealed that the calculated value (27.09) exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "the implementation of curriculum is confirmed by observing peers in practical scenario" is not supported by statistics.

Table 4: Showing that the implementation of curriculum is confirmed by observing peers in practical scenario.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	SA	A	N	SDA	DA		
70	15	30	6	11	8	26.14	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 5 revealed that the calculated value (33.28) exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "the regular staff meetings are conducted for reflective discussions regarding curriculum implementation" is not supported by the test statistics.

Table 5: Showing that the regular staff meetings are conducted for reflective discussions regarding curriculum implementation.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	S A	A	N	S D A	D A		
7 0	8	3 3	1 2	1 0	7	33.28	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 6 revealed that the calculated value (15.28) exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "the stress on effective classroom teaching–learning process is made to implement the curriculum" is not supported by test statistics.

Table 6: Showing that the stress on effective classroom teaching – learning process is made to implement the curriculum.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	S A	A	N	S D A	D A		
7 0	8	2 5	1 0	1 8	9	15.28	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 7 revealed that the calculated value (17.57) exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "for effective curriculum implementation plans, you ensure the development of staff in terms of academic and professional arena" is not supported by test statistics.

Table 7: Indicating that for effective curriculum implementation plans, you ensure the development of staff in terms of academic and professional arena.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	SA	A	N	SDA	DA		
70	13	26	13	14	4	17.57	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

The analysis of data presented in table 8 revealed that the calculated value (10.14) exceeded from the tabulated value (9.49) using 0.05 level of significance with 4 degree of freedom, which means that the statement "the acquaintance of curriculum implementers is ensured to adjust their classroom interactions according to the requirements of curriculum" is not supported by test statistics.

Table 8: Showing that the acquaintance of curriculum implementers is ensured to adjust their classroom interactions according to the requirements of curriculum.

N	Nature of Responses					χ^2 Calculated Value	χ^2 Tabulated Value
	SA	A	N	SDA	DA		
70	18	22	12	11	7	10.14	9.49

Level of Significance = 0.05 Degree of freedom = v = 4

Discussion

After the analysis, some of the statements were supported by chi-square test statistics, which included the statements "the elements of curriculum are associated with the learners' opportunities and environment provided", and "the implementation of curriculum is

ensured by using supported strategies like giving training to implementers", which means that the principals provide opportunities to the stakeholders in terms of conducive environment for learning and associated strategies for the achievement of desired objectives. It was also supported by Marsh (1997) whose focus was on the application of different strategies for the implementation of curriculum. In fact, it is evident that for the achievement of desired objectives, the provision of facilities and opportunities by the head, principal, leader, in-charge or managers, enhance the success rate.

Contrary to that, majority of the statements were rejected by the chi-square test statistics, which include "the association of instructional practices with elements of curriculum", "the implementation of curriculum is confirmed by observing peers in practical scenario" and "the regular staff meetings are conducted for reflective discussions regarding curriculum implementation". In fact, the principals of public school often conduct least or no academic meetings with their staff and faculty members. For instance, meetings relevant to academics' affairs are mostly conducted with the senior level managements i.e. District Education Officers (DEOs), Section Officers (SOs), and Secretary. Despite that the main personal of curriculum implementation in any academic institute are the teachers because they are mostly engaged in teaching learning process. In the same context, Isa (2014) stated that the main responsible personnel in school includes principals, vice principals, and in-charge of section, who play a significant role in curriculum implementation. The top managers often design clear strategies by taking proper consent from teachers. In Pakistani perspective, the situation is change as main decisions are mostly taken by top managers and have least involvement of teachers in decision making process.

The statement "for effective curriculum implementation plans, you ensure the development of staff in terms of academic and professional arena" was not supported by the chi–square test statistics. For any professional training at school level, most of the time, the principals send the teachers of his/her own choice irrespective of the presence of other competent teachers. It is evident from the results that at school level staff development are minute and having least chances. This statement was also supported by Rhodes et al (2004) that the demands and needs of teachers were not supervised or fulfilled by the principals. In current

scenario, there is a dire need of such leaders, who assist the teachers in provision of proper guidance and encouragement and to make them capable of confronting any sort of futuristic challenges. At the time, when the head persons offer curricular materials various techniques necessary for investigating the potential barriers (that comprises of organizational pledge, least provision of essential and core amenities for implementation of curriculum including financial, physical facilities etc.) defers excess results. These assessments always ensure the provision of a systematic achievement of pre-set goals that are basically helpful to achieve objectives. In spite of this, the components of programme are always tried to be linked with the strategic goals and objectives that always affect the final score of pre determine planning and strategies implemented by the heads.

Conclusions

A number of strategies were employed by the principals of public secondary school. The main strategies were the management of available resources, establishing strong administration, pastoral care and performance management of subordinates. The elements of curriculum were associated with the opportunities provided to learners and conducive environment were provided for learning process. Middlewood (2003) also supported that the provision and creation of conducive environment have positive impact on the overall performance of principals, teachers and students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn making objectives of the study as foundations and satisfied the research questions.

Pessimism among principals regarding curriculum implementation

It is suggested that some principals are passive in the process of curriculum implementation. The principals do not take keen interest in implementation of curriculum, so such elements need to be dealt with dare consequences.

Eliminate the political pressure in the process of curriculum implementation

Curriculum implementation is a process of great responsibility. It is important to eradicate all sort of political involvement from educational setting to achieve the desired goals.

Assessing suitable supervision

For effective and controlled monitoring, it is suggested that another team of high caliber officers may also be established, who look after all the matters relevant to implementation of curriculum. Delegation of powers may also be descended to the team to give rewards and punishment on the spot. This will help in overall rectification of curriculum implementation process in a limited time frame.

Provision of training to principals

It is suggested that the principals ought to be subjected for training on regular basis, which might be accompanied by assessment to check the understanding level of school managers.

Problem solving approach

It is also suggested that the curriculum encompasses the problem solving approach. The students be subjected to problems reflecting real life situation for better understanding and enhancement of innovative skills.

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