

# Gaps in Policy and Practice of District Education Officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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## Abstract

*The purpose of the study was to analyze gaps in policy and practice of District Education officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The main objectives of the study were; to obtain perceptions of District Education Officers regarding various institutional policies in the Elementary and Secondary education department, to explore the actual administrative practices of the District Education Officers, to identify the gaps between policy and practice of the District Education Officers. The population of the study was all the District Education officers of KP. After rationalizing through raosoft Sample size calculator, the sample size of the study remained 60. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview. Major findings were lack of in-service training in Computer Literacy, Office Management, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Planning & Development and Communication Skills. The study recommended the Elementary & Secondary Education Department to stop the unwarranted political intervention in the practices of District Education Officers and to take feasible measures to utilize both human and financial resources for implementation of policies.*

**Keywords:** Policy & Practice, District Education Officer, Elementary & Secondary Education,

## Introduction

The objectives of education are achievable provided administrative practices coincide with the theoretical framework and institutional policies. According to Iqbal, education policy refers to the policy of the Government which provide direction for implementation of programs of education that have a direct and identifiable effect on population and institutions of the country.<sup>1</sup>

According to Ministry of Education (MOE, 2015 p. 88) the Provincial Departments of Education is responsible for implementation

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of national education policies and management of elementary, secondary, technical and higher education. Teacher's absenteeism and weak supervisory mechanism also affect the managerial policies of education sector. The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faces more challenges and hardships which have adversely affected the implementation process of the policies. District Education Officers perform key role in delivery of education services.<sup>2</sup>

The administrative practices of District Education Officers are actually what they do on the ground. The theoretical framework given to them in the form of job description, rules and regulations, code of ethics and some of the administrative orders issued to them are some of the parameters of the departmental policies in this study. As indicated by Shah (2010), the fundamental roles of the District Education Officers are;

- 1) Implementation of policies
- 2) Office management
- 3) Human and financial resource management
- 4) Budgeting

All these areas require professional approach to reduce the gaps between policy and practice at the District level. So, the researcher chose the problem to evaluate the process of policy and practice.<sup>3</sup>

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following were the objectives of the study;

- 1) To ascertain knowledge of District Education Officers regarding various institutional policies in the Elementary and Secondary education department
- 2) To explore the actual administrative practices of the District Education Officers
- 3) To identify the gaps between policy and practices of the District Education Officers.

### **Methodology**

Being descriptive study, mixed method approach was applied to conduct this study.

*Population*

All the District Education Officers (25 male and 25 female) and all the provincial level officers of Education of Pakhtunkhwa, constituted the population for the current study.

*Sample Size*

All the 50 District Education Officers, twenty five male and twenty five female, of all 25 Districts were selected for the study. In addition 10 key informants at the provincial level were purposively selected for obtaining information from them on the basis of semi-structured interviews. The sample was rationalized through Morgan Table and *raosoft* Sample size online calculator.

*Sampling Technique*

According to Business Dictionary (2016) convenient sampling is selecting sample because of their availability or easy access. So, the convenient sampling technique was used.<sup>4</sup>

*Instrument of the Study*

A questionnaire was developed for District Education Officers to identify gaps in institutional policies and practices. A 5-point Likert scale was used for response categories of (Strongly agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, and strongly disagree=5). The questionnaire also contained some open ended questions to elicit further responses of the DEOs.

A semi-structured interview protocol was also developed for the Provincial Officers of the E&SE Department. Participants were asked open-ended questions using a one-to-one interview format.

**Data Collection**

The questionnaires were distributed personally in a monthly scheduled meeting with all DEOs and were collected back in person by the researcher. The interviews were held with key informants of Education Department.

*Data Analysis*

The data were given both qualitative and quantitative treatment. The data obtained from questionnaire were analyzed in a tabular form. Descriptive statistics like Frequency, Percentage, and Mean, Standard Deviation, and Rank order correlation were applied for analysis of data. Data were

analyzed by using IBM SPSS (V-21). Following are the results of the study.

Table 1: Per unit change in the job satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.297	.245		1.21	.227
Political and Social Pressure	.314	.034	.480	9.133	.000
Devolution and local Government system	.119	.032	.261	3.707	.000
Hierarchy of implementation	.028	.027	.050	1.065	.288
Available Resources	.018	.037	.029	.485	.628
Job Related training	.416	.091	.783	4.570	.000
Outcome of institutional policies	-.113	.024	-.280	-4.749	.000
Participation in developing policy decisions	.040	.090	.076	.447	.655
Monitoring and feedback	-.047	.081	-.100	-.576	.565
Clear goals and standard	-.370	.110	-.635	-3.370	.001
Clarity of instruction	.032	.041	.042	.795	.427
Disposition towards work	.496	.043	.579	11.453	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SATISFACTION

### Interpretation of Data

The values in the Table-1 showed per unit change in the job satisfaction due to political pressure, devolution and local government system, hierarchy for implementation, available resources, job related training, outcomes of institutional policies, participation in the departmental policy decisions, monitoring and feedback, clear goals, clarity of instruction, disposition towards works.

The value of beta for political and social pressure, devolution and local government system, hierarchy of implementation, available resources, job related training, participation in developing the policy decisions, clarity of goals and disposition towards work are having

positive betas which means that the job satisfaction will be changed when these variables are changed.

The betas of outcome of institutional policies, monitoring and feedback and clear goals and standard are negative which means that the job satisfaction will be decreasing when these variables are changed.

After evaluating the t-values of the variables, it is concluded that political pressure, devolution and local government system, job related training, outcomes and institutional policies, clear goals and standard, and disposition towards works have significant effects on the job satisfaction while the hierarchy of implementation, available resources, participation in developing policy decisions, monitoring and feedback and clarity of instruction shows an insignificant effects on the job satisfaction.

### **Findings**

- 1) The Government policy reported adequate know how on behalf of District Education Officers in in-service trainings in the areas of Computer Literacy, Office Management, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Planning & Development and Communication Skills.
- 2) From the study it was found that only 40% District Education officers have got training
- 3) From the study it was also found that Policy implementation in different areas requires both financial and human resources needed by the District Education Officers.
- 4) The study found that due to lack of knowhow, the District Education Officers are not capable enough to contribute to the policy formulation of the provincial government.
- 5) The study showed that 63% didn't know how policies are initiated by the department.
- 6) As per implementation plan at the district and directorate levels, 100% of the respondents identified the following challenges regarding Implementation.
  - a) There is a lack of ownership of the responsibilities both at the district and directorate levels.
  - b) There is lack of capacity at the district level.
  - c) Devolution of powers to district governments created a lot of problems at the district level.

- d) Districts are directly facing the problems that are posed to them by the local governments.
- e) The study revealed that 88% of the respondents were not in support of devolution of powers to district governments.
- f) The study showed that District Education Officers are facing politicization and departmental pressure at their levels.
- g) Study revealed that 100% respondents agreed that they have no proper working relationship with the District Governments.
- h) All the respondents (100%) were of the view that they did not have any proper tool at any level to measure how much the policies have been implemented.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were framed to address the gaps between policies and practices on the basis of findings and discussion drawn from the study.

- 1) Representatives of stakeholders are recommended to be involved in policy formulation and implementation strategies resulting in bridging the identified gaps of the study.
- 2) Strong coordination and cooperation is recommended among the districts and the directorate to bridge the identified gaps.
- 3) Accountability system should be initiated to eradicate the malpractices of corruption.
- 4) In order to overcome financial constraints, practical measures should be taken for effective planning and utilization of available both human and developmental resources.
- 5) The people involved in the process of formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies should be trained to develop their knowledge and skills in the area of administration, management and coordination.
- 6) The Elementary & Secondary Department should arrange continuing professional development programs both at district and directorate levels.
- 7) The step of decentralization should be strengthened and bridged with district political setup. District political setup should be trained for effective implementation of policies at district levels. It will decrease the delays in implementation measures taken at the central level.

**Conclusion**

The following conclusions are based on the findings of the study.

The District Education Officers were not fully exposed to in-service training in different areas such as Human Resource Management, Computer Literacy, Personnel Management, Office Management, Financial Management, and Communication Skills.

All the DEOs need adequate training in educational planning & development. All the District Education Officers and key informants opposed the devolution of powers in education to District Governments. The current political set up is multi layered and devolution of powers to lower level need orientation sessions due to immature political will at gross route level. The study found that there is lack of awareness regarding policies initiation and formulation which is creating hurdles in implementation of policies at district and directorate levels. The findings further revealed that there is lack of competency in implementation of policies with its true letter and spirit at the district and directorate levels. The study further revealed that districts are facing problems regarding finance and human resources. Politicization and departmental pressure at district levels is also creating hurdles in implementation of policies with its true letter and spirit. The data of the study revealed that district management is unaware of background of the policies and they had problems at their levels.

## Notes & References

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Iqbal., Doctoral Dissertation, the Pennsylvania State University, USA, (1990).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education, A report on quality of education, Academy of Education Planning and Management, Islamabad, Pakistan, (2015), 88.

<sup>3</sup> Shah, S. 'Educational Leadership: an Islamic perspective', in T. Abbas (ed.) *Islam and Education*; Volume 1, (Routledge, 2010), 141-166.

<sup>4</sup> Business Dictionary, Methodology. Retrieved August 21, 2016 from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/methodology.html>.