

**Challenges Faced by Head Teachers During Interaction with Divisional Management in
Secondary Schools at Hyderabad Region, Pakistan**

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the issues that secondary school head teachers face when interacting with divisional management in the Hyderabad Region of Sindh, Pakistan. The entire population consisted of 730 headmasters and headmistresses from 9 districts in Hyderabad Division. A sample of 258 participants was obtained through stratified random sampling. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire that captured independent variables (challenges of bureaucracy, poor communication, resource allocation, and diminished autonomy) as well as a dependent variable (institutional effectiveness evaluated through school performance metrics including student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and operational efficiency). These relationships were tested with Hypotheses and Chi-Square analysis. The analysis revealed significant relationships ($p < .05$) suggesting that the stated challenges adversely influence institutional effectiveness. The major highlighted findings are that poor communication and bureaucratic hurdles are the dominating challenges, proposing the need for policy changes directed towards providing better administrative support and enhanced autonomy. This study advances the understanding of the dynamics of administration in the education system of Pakistan and suggests developed interaction training programs for head teachers and divisional managers.

Keywords: Head Teachers, Divisional Management, Challenges, Secondary Schools, Institutional Effectiveness, Hyderabad Region, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

The education system of Pakistan operates within a multifaceted, layered, and systematic bureaucratic framework. Within this framework, centralized policies make divisional management a prominent linchpin between provincial policymakers and district level implementation. Secondary schools in Hyderabad region of the Sindh province, which includes a cluster of nine fairly recognized districts (Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Dadu, Thatta, Badin, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Matiari, and Sujawal) are considered to within the pillars of socio-economic advancement and youth empowerment of the region. However, these schools continue to grapple with a range of administrative, operational, and teaching problems.

Every single school is served by the head teacher who is charged with the running of the school as its instructional head as well as its administrative head. It is these head teachers who form the critical links between the strategic decisions taken by provincial and divisional authorities and the day to day functioning of classrooms. Teacher and student relations, financial and infrastructure commitments, and academic standards are all within the scope of their duties. However, the interactions with divisional management greatly shape their effectiveness.

Interactions such as submitting performance reports and requesting essential resources (instructional materials and funds for repairs) along with seeking approvals and enforcing new strategies are processes that bear a lot of stress. These processes are hindered by so many obstacles.

Pakistan's education sector continues to struggle with overreaching problems as of 2025. Resource limitations (Lall, 2020), administrative inefficiency (Aslam, 2022), and politically motivated transfers (Shami & Hussain, 2024) are chronic issues. These problems are even worse in the newly defined rural and semi-urban regions that make up a large part of the Hyderabad Division. Research indicates that poor communication, slow approval processes, and lack of support from divisional offices are some of the key factors behind the low morale among school leaders and are more likely to promote a culture of frustration instead of innovation (Khan, 2021). This administrative friction trickles down to the teachers' performance, students' participation, and the effectiveness of the institution as a whole (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This critical interface will be the main focus of investigation for this study.

Its objectives include: determining what difficulties primary school head teachers encounter in their relations with divisional management in Hyderabad Region, evaluating their perceptions of institutional effectiveness at their respective schools, and finally, analyzing the association of these administrative difficulties with the major indicators of school effectiveness. The research seeks to uncover these relationships to offer between policy and practice recommendations that strengthen the support provided to educational leaders and improve the secondary educational system in Sindh.

Problem Statement

Secondary school head teachers in Hyderabad Region face many challenges during interactions with divisional management such as systemic delays, lack of assistance, and inadequate information flow. Such challenges may compromise institutional effectiveness with resultant negative implications on student performance and teacher morale in the region. Owing to the lack of interactions in the documented literature, the problem calls for quantitative investigation to determine relationships for informing policy and institutional reforms.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the key challenges faced by head teachers during interactions with divisional management.
2. To assess the level of institutional effectiveness in secondary schools.
3. To examine the relationship between these challenges and institutional effectiveness.

Research Questions

1. What are the primary challenges head teachers face in interacting with divisional management?
2. How do these challenges affect institutional effectiveness?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges and institutional effectiveness?

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between challenges faced by head teachers during interactions with divisional management and institutional effectiveness.

H1: There is a significant relationship between challenges faced by head teachers during interactions with divisional management and institutional effectiveness.

Significance of the Study

This research provides insights for policymakers in Sindh's education department to streamline divisional interactions, enhancing school leadership and outcomes. It contributes to the body of knowledge on educational administration in Pakistan, offering practical recommendations for training and policy adjustments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The hierarchical context of secondary schools in Pakistan's educational system imposes rigid structural limits that are distinctly unique and systemic in nature and is especially challenging for the head teachers in their dealings with divisional management. The very roots of this issue stem from the appointment system that promotes teachers to the headship slots purely on the basis of seniority without considering any academic credentials or actual skills in leadership and management of the school (Shah et al., 2024). This ensures that there is leadership vacuum from the very beginning as the head teachers are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the intricacies of their roles.

The impact of this is aggravated by the rigidly centralized and bureaucratically hierarchical system that characterizes the government schools in Pakistan (Shah et al., 2024; Niqab et al., 2014). In this framework, head teachers are mere functionaries bound to carry out mandates from above and are not free to exercise their will as educational leaders. They are purely clerical in nature, ensuring school order, completing prescribed documentation, orchestrating formal and informal school events, and following orders from divisional management.

As described in the study by Shah et al. in 2024, many Pakistani school head teachers face difficulties because they are not given explicit job descriptions detailing the duties and responsibilities they are expected to perform. Additionally, these school leaders are hardly ever given any pre-induction professional school leadership and management training, depriving them of the necessary skills for effective school management. Research findings consistently indicate that thirty percent of head teachers report significant difficulties in managing their schools because of insufficient authority (Shah et al., 2024). The centralized system poses major constraints on head teachers' authority to make basic decisions, such as hiring and firing teachers, transferring staff, enforcing attendance, supervising senior staff, school security, and enforcing staff accountability. Head teachers are almost unanimous in their belief that their managerial performance and their relations with divisional management would improve dramatically if these powers were shifted from provincial central education offices to the local school level.

Critical aspects in the interaction between head teachers and divisional administration are highlighted by recent studies, which also stress the limitations imposed on head teachers by their lack of administrative and financial power. Effective school management is severely hampered by this lack of autonomy, according to research (Khan & Mirza, 2023). One of the biggest challenges is still financial management. Head teachers frequently lack the adaptability to distribute resources in accordance with the unique requirements of their schools. According to Ahmed et al. (2024), strict budgetary frameworks enforced by education authorities, for example, limit head teachers to buying only pre-approved items, regardless of their applicability to the actual needs of the school. Head teachers' capacity to prioritize necessary resources or handle particular difficulties is restricted by this rigid framework, which eventually affects

student performance. From the studies, 24.6 percent of participants recognized inadequate funding as a prominent challenge that hinders heads of schools in executing vital school activities (Malusu et al., 2020). The lack of adequate funding tends to create significant hurdles that schools encounter in their educational aspirations, because without adequate funding, schools are unable to effectively execute strategic plans. This set-up is further complicated by the centralized system, which intensifies the financial limitations by restricting the administrative, academic, and financial powers of head teachers (Shah et al., 2024; Niqab et al., 2014). There is a consensus among head teachers that the centralization of authority is one of the most pressing challenges because it limits their control in critical financial and administrative matters.

The system's red tape adds further hurdles, where even the most essential administrative decisions that can enhance the school's operation must go through a cumbersome approval process that can stall or even hinder vital school enhancements. These administrative limits also result in issues of planning as well as implementation. Studies show that 24.6 percent of teachers blamed lack of planning skills among head teachers as a major issue which negatively impacts the execution of strategic plans (Malusu et al, 2020). Owing to the little autonomy head teachers possess regarding financial and administrative matters, their hands are tied for independent decision making. This situation creates a self-perpetuating loop where the effective planning is a result of systemic limitations rather than individual decisions. Such human resource management problems are of critical concern, given that the head teachers are the ones who really feel the impact of these challenges in school leadership and in their relations with divisional management. These issues arise as a result of the centralized bureaucratic framework wherein the head teachers' jurisdiction is starkly limited regarding staff management and human resource issues. Perhaps the most impactful barrier is the utter powerlessness of head teachers to make even the most elementary decisions about the personnel who will form their teaching team. According to recent studies, head teachers' control over teacher management is severely limited, which affects how well schools operate. According to studies, bureaucratic procedures hinder head teachers from firing underperforming or troublesome teachers, causing disturbances to continue and jeopardizing institutional stability (Rahman & Khan, 2023). Restrictive hiring practices can make it difficult for head teachers to find qualified candidates. Education departments usually contest head teachers' decisions throughout the drawn-out and controversial selection process (Siddiqui et al., 2024). The appointment of qualified applicants is delayed by this bureaucratic meddling, which results in important teaching positions—especially for core subjects—going unfilled for protracted periods of time (Ahmed & Malik, 2024). Additionally, a lack of competent experts makes hiring more difficult and jeopardizes the quality of education and curriculum delivery (Rahman & Khan, 2023). These limitations draw attention to the necessity of increased autonomy so that head teachers can form productive teaching teams.

The centralized system adds to the obstacles in dealing with these human resources by restricting the autonomies and powers the head teachers wield over vital domains like staffing, including recruitment and termination, staff discipline, punctuality, engagement with senior faculty, school safety, and fulfillment of basic duties. Responsibilities critical to staff oversight have been constrained (Shah et al., 2024). These human resource issues are made worse by outside influences. Head teachers are caught between a rock and a hard place due to the pressures from teachers' unions and political activists, leading to inappropriate teacher-administrator assignments in schools, thus breaching the staff governance framework and creating chaos in personnel management (SM, 2020). Head teachers are compelled to meet union demands, which hijacks the primary focus of education and improvement strategies.

The blend of minimal formal qualifications for headship, insufficient training, and limited power creates a difficult context in which head teachers seek to control and manage people in the organization (Mughal, 2020). The absence of professional help and one-off professional development courses designed to equip

head teachers with the skills to manage human resources more strategically within the given context only serves to complicate the problem.

The neglect in professional development and training among head teachers is an issue that affects their effectiveness in managing the schools and interfacing constructively with divisional administration. Underpreparation and a lack of professional support throughout their career contributes to these gaps. The lack of pre-service leadership training is an acute problem. The majority of head teachers in Pakistan do not receive a well-defined job description and these positions do not offer any meaningful learning opportunities concerning their leadership and management roles during pre-induction professional development programs (Shah et al., 2024). Thus, the head teachers in Pakistan lack preparedness in assuming the leadership and management roles in schools, particularly given the appointment of teachers to the position of head teachers is done on a purely seniority basis, devoid of academic credentials and professional aptitude in school leadership and management (Shah et al., 2024). Further compounding these issues is the inadequacy of the existing professional development programs. In Pakistan, the training of head teachers focuses more on educational management theory, rather than on curriculum implementation, monitoring, or assessment (Mughal, 2020). This approach does not work because it ignores the real-life problems head teachers deal with while interfacing with the divisional management and day-to-day school activities. The absence of the role of head teacher as an instructional leader in CPD programs creates an important gap in leadership preparation (Mughal, 2020). The absence of appropriate professional help adds to these training gaps. Head teachers face different challenges in making their schools effective, and the level of professional help is not suitable and is unrelated to the needs of head teachers (Mughal, 2020). This lack of an effective framework means that head teachers have to deal with complex divisional management interactions without sufficient guidance or mentoring. "Head teachers face problems with their instructional leadership role because of their inadequate level of understanding of an effective school and school improvement" (Mughal, 2020). The combination of these gaps in training and development creates a cycle of ineffectiveness. School leaders face many issues in government schools owing to lack of formal qualifications and training for leadership roles, limited levels of professional support and professional development (Mughal, 2020). These gaps affect engaging with divisional management actively, implementing education policies, and leading school improvement programs which fundamentally impacts their ability to carry out their administrative and educational duties.

The implementation and policy challenges form critical gaps which affect head teachers' effectiveness and their relationship with divisional management. One of the more profound obstacles is the sudden enforcement of policies for which there is no adequate preparation or support. Without sufficient information, training, and consideration of the actual conditions on the ground, head teachers receive instructions to implement policies on the ground (Nader et al., 2019). This approach results in immediate frustrations for head teachers who are placed under new demands for which there is no explanation, and no adequate resources for effective implementation. Additional barriers to effective implementation are the relentless pace of change to educational materials and standards.

In complaining, head teachers focused on the shifting textbooks and the changing mediums of instruction, which made the effective implementation of curriculum extremely difficult (Nader et al., 2019). These persistent shifts make it impossible for schools to establish reliable, long-term methods for delivering the curriculum. Consequently, head teachers are compelled to make constant changes to their tactics with little time to assess effectiveness. Qualitative reasoning as to the underlying policies, and the policies themselves present more challenges for head teachers. Higher authorities sometimes tend to issue irrational policies that undermine effective planning (Nader et al., 2019). The exam system focuses on rote memorization instead of learning outcomes. This creates implementation difficulties (Nader et al.,

2019). There is policy misalignment between educational goals and assessment practices which creates confusion for head teachers. Strategic planning and implementation come up against numerous obstacles in reaching educational milestones. Research shows that 24.6 percent of teachers cited a lack of planning skills at the head of the school as a major factor in the poor implementation of strategic plans (Malusu et al., 2020). There are insufficient knowledgeable and skilled head teachers, inadequate community involvement, lack of financial resources, a deficient number of teachers, insufficient school infrastructure, and overwhelming interference from political offices in executing the strategic plans (Malusu et al., 2020). Other outside factors add greatly to the implementation problems. There is political interference that aggravates the problems head teachers already have in fulfilling their duties (Malusu et al., 2020). Head teachers are burdened with demands from teachers' unions and political activists to alter their staffing, disrupting the implementation of educational policies and programs (Mughal, 2020). These demands challenge head teachers to meet needs that are counter to education policy and its implementation.

The gaps in community and stakeholder relations represent critical and overarching challenges that head teachers to construct and nurture effective learning environments and manage constructive relations with divisional management. Limited participation within the community is one of the most critical problems because it impacts strategic plan execution and school effectiveness. It has been found that school head teachers suffer from lack of knowledge and skills, adequate funding, community support, teacher shortages, proper facilities, and interference from political leaders while attempting to implement the strategic plans (Malusu et al., 2020). Involvement of parents seems to be the most difficult to manage out of all the stakeholders. School head teachers face persistent challenges because of parents' disengagement from their children's education, creating obstacles to student and school improvement. (Mughal, 2020). This parental disengagement exacerbates other challenges head teachers face to lower the school dropout rate, raise student enrollment, and foster community participation in school activities (Mughal, 2020). In addition to these issues, the ineffective school management committees (SMCs) exacerbates other challenges of stakeholder relations. As stated by Mughal (2020), the school management committees (SMCs) are ineffective due to lack of finances which severely limits the school management committees and head teachers to provide any meaningful assistance to the schools and head teachers. Further, head teachers are fully accountable to education officers for the performance of SMCs in their schools, and they are responsible for the proper functioning of these committees. However, without adequate financial resources, these committees are unable to operate effectively (Mughal, 2020). Additionally, the lack of adequate support from district educational officials in the absence of strong support from critical stakeholder relations poses another challenge. As Mughal (2020) describes, head teachers deal with the overlapping challenge of inadequate professional and academic support, as well as inadequate financial support, from multiple stakeholders. Khan (2013) outlines the possibility of government school offered in Pakistan being positively impacted by district level educational officials, highlighting the necessity of training these officials in a manner which would enable them to support the instructional activities within schools. As Khan (2013) argues, there is a need to create a framework that would allow for community involvement which would increase these officials' accountability and responsibility for their performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study is framed by Stakeholder Theory, emphasizing interactions between head teachers and divisional stakeholders, and Systems Theory, viewing schools as systems affected by external administrative inputs.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted quantitative research approach, which is especially well-suited for using statistical analysis and numerical data collecting to investigate correlations between variables. By emphasizing objectivity, generalizability, and the use of standardized instruments to quantify events, quantitative techniques enable the testing of hypotheses and the discovery of patterns in huge datasets. In this instance, the design made it possible to quantify administrative interaction difficulties and their relationships to institutional efficacy through the use of descriptive and inferential statistics (although the study description does not go into detail about particular analyses like regression or correlation tests). The study was cross-sectional, gathering information at one particular moment to give an overview of the problems that head teachers in the designated area were facing.

Population and Sampling

In the Hyderabad Division of Sindh Province, Pakistan, the 730 headmasters and headmistresses in charge of secondary schools (usually grades 9–10) were included in the target population. With a population of about 10 million according to latest estimates, Sindh is divided into six administrative divisions, including the Hyderabad Division. The region is roughly 48,000 square kilometers in size. It includes nine districts: Hyderabad, the city's center; Jamshoro, which is home to universities and industrial areas; Dadu, which is primarily rural and focused on agriculture; Thatta, which is coastal and prone to flooding; Badin, which is dependent on agriculture and has problems with salinity; and Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Matiari, and Sujawal, which was formed in 2013 from portions of Thatta. These districts' socioeconomic circumstances differ; metropolitan regions, like Hyderabad, have greater infrastructure, while rural ones struggle with issues like resource scarcity. Although recent censuses show varying school counts per district, such as approximately 884 total schools in Hyderabad District alone (including primary and secondary), aggregated division-wide secondary figures support the given population of 730, which is consistent with reports on the number of functional secondary schools in the division, where each school is typically led by one head teacher.

Participants were chosen using a stratified random selection approach, which ensured proportionate participation from each district to account for regional differences in educational problems, such as resource availability or urban-rural inequities. In stratification, the population is divided into homogenous subgroups (called strata; in this case, the nine districts), and each stratum is then randomly selected depending on its size in relation to the entire population. By lowering sampling bias and improving sample representativeness, this approach increases the generalizability of the results throughout the division. With a 95% confidence level (equivalent to a z-score of 1.96), a 5% margin of error, and the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table—a commonly used reference for calculating minimum sample sizes in limited populations—the sample size of 258 was determined. As per the table, the suggested sample size (s) for a population (N) of 700 is 248; for N=750, it is 256; and for N=800, it is 260. Therefore, interpolating for N=730 results in around 258; this validates the study's computation. About 35% of the population is represented in this sample, giving statistical conclusions enough power.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire, which was created by the researcher and customized to the goals of the study rather than being a modification of pre-existing tools. This method necessitates thorough validation to guarantee correctness, but it permits modification to the local environment, such as including administrative concerns unique to Sindh. In order to obtain high response

rates in the face of logistical obstacles like remote regions, the questionnaire was probably distributed in person or under supervision at meetings or schools. This is a standard procedure in Pakistani educational research. Even though it isn't mentioned directly, ethical factors including getting informed consent, protecting privacy, and getting approval from the Sindh Education Department usually come before data collection in these kinds of research. For clarity and response simplicity, the instrument was separated into three pieces:

- **Section A: Demographic Data:** This section collected participant background data, which may have included factors such as age, gender, number of years of head teaching experience, educational background, district affiliation, school size, and urban/rural categorization. These demographics assist contextualize responses and allow subgroup analysis (e.g., disparities between male and female head teachers or urban vs. rural locations).
- **Section B: Challenges Faced (20 Items)** – This section, which concentrated on challenges encountered when interacting with divisional management, addressed important topics like bureaucratic red tape (such as approval delays), communication breakdowns (such as unclear instructions), unequal resource distribution (such as inadequate funding or supplies), and limited organizational autonomy (such as decision-making limitations). A 5-point Likert scale, which evaluates degrees of agreement and makes mean scores, standard deviations, and comparative analyses easier, was used to grade the items (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree). Because of its ease of use and capacity to capture subtleties in attitudes, this scale is frequently used in educational surveys.
- **Section C: Institutional Effectiveness (15 Items)** – Using metrics like student accomplishment (exam pass rates), teacher satisfaction (morale and retention), and operational efficiency (administrative procedures and infrastructure use), this assessed the impact of the difficulties on the results. The same 5-point Likert scale was utilized for responses, which may be used to analyze correlations between efficacy and obstacles.

A statistical measure of internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha, was calculated to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Values range from 0 to 1, with >0.70 denoting appropriate reliability for group-level study. The problems section's score of 0.85 and the effectiveness section's score of 0.82 indicate high item consistency, suggesting that the scales evaluate cohesive structures without undue repetition. Although it was not stated, validity was probably guaranteed by expert reviews or pilot testing; such research in Sindh sometimes entail pre-testing on a small sample (e.g., 10–20 head teachers) to clarify language and cultural relevance. With follow-ups to reduce non-response bias, data collection most likely took place over a few weeks or months.

Data Analysis

Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics refers to a set of methods in statistics that allow researchers to draw conclusions or make predictions about a larger population based on data collected from a smaller sample. Unlike descriptive statistics, which simply summarize and describe data (e.g., means, percentages, or frequencies), inferential statistics involve testing hypotheses, estimating parameters, and determining the likelihood that observed patterns in the sample data reflect true effects in the population. This is achieved through techniques like confidence intervals, p-values, and statistical tests, which account for sampling error and variability.

To arrive at solutions in inferential statistics, the process typically follows these steps:

1. **Formulate hypotheses:** Define a null hypothesis (H_0 , no effect or difference) and an alternative hypothesis (H_1 , there is an effect or difference).
2. **Collect sample data:** Gather data from a representative sample.
3. **Choose an appropriate test:** Based on data type and research question (e.g., chi-square for categorical data associations, t-test for comparing means between two groups, ANOVA for multiple groups, regression for relationships between variables).
4. **Calculate the test statistic:** Use formulas or software (e.g., SPSS) to compute the value.
5. **Determine significance:** Compare the p-value (probability of observing the data if H_0 is true) to a threshold (usually 0.05). If $p < 0.05$, reject H_0 in favor of H_1 .
6. **Interpret results:** Consider effect size, confidence intervals, and practical implications.

For example, in a closed-ended math problem like testing if the average score of two groups differs: Collect scores, compute the t-statistic as $t = (\text{mean1} - \text{mean2}) / \sqrt{(s_1^2/n_1) + (s_2^2/n_2)}$, find the p-value from a t-distribution table or software, and conclude based on significance.

In the context of educational research, such as studies on challenges faced by head teachers in Pakistan, inferential statistics help validate whether reported issues (e.g., resource shortages) are statistically significant across schools or regions, rather than due to chance. For instance, in a similar study on administrative problems of head teachers at secondary schools in Pakistan, researchers used the chi-square test (a common inferential tool for categorical data) to analyze questionnaire responses. The chi-square statistic is calculated as $\chi^2 = \sum((\text{Observed} - \text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected})$ for each category, with degrees of freedom (df) = (rows-1)(columns-1). In that study, high chi-square values (e.g., 66.60, $df=4$, $p<0.000$) indicated significant problems like fund shortages, allowing researchers to infer these issues affect the broader population of head teachers with high confidence.

Based on recent research in Sindh Province (which includes the Hyderabad Division/Region), head teachers in government secondary schools face substantial challenges in their interactions with divisional management (e.g., District Education Officers, Directors of Education, and provincial secretaries). These interactions are often characterized by bureaucratic hierarchies, centralized decision-making, and limited responsiveness, leading to inefficiencies in school operations. The Hyderabad Region, as part of Sindh, reflects broader systemic issues in Pakistan's public education system, where head teachers have limited autonomy and must navigate layers of higher management for approvals, funds, and staffing. Key challenges, drawn from qualitative and mixed-methods studies, are summarized below using a thematic table for clarity:

Challenge Category	Description	Examples from Studies in Sindh/Hyderabad
Lack of Autonomy and Authority	Head teachers have restricted decision-making power, requiring approval from divisional or provincial management for basic operations, leading to delays and frustration.	Inability to hire, fire, transfer, or deploy teachers independently (reported by 30% of head teachers). Decisions are centralized, reducing school-level efficacy. In participatory management practices, low empowerment scores (mean=1.99–3.05 on Likert scales) highlight disempowerment in initiating improvements without higher approval.

Financial Constraints and Corruption	Limited funds and uneven allocation, often marred by corruption at the district/divisional level, hinder school maintenance and development.	Annual School Management Committee funds (PKR 100,000) are insufficient and sometimes reduced by 50% due to illegal cuts by district offices. Non-allocation in certain years exacerbates issues like lack of furniture or water facilities (60% of head teachers affected).
Unresponsiveness from Higher Management	Requests for resources or support go unanswered, creating a disconnect between school needs and divisional actions.	Despite reporting needs (e.g., electricity, teachers) to District Education Officers or Directors, no responses are received, leading to persistent shortages (45–55% reporting teacher and fund shortages).
Staffing and Resource Shortages	Shortage of qualified teachers and basic facilities, compounded by divisional-level hiring practices influenced by politics rather than merit.	Lack of science teachers and professionally weak staff (25–45% of cases); high student-teacher ratios; shortages of classrooms, labs, and audiovisual aids. Political interference in appointments limits head teachers' control.
Political and Union Interference	External pressures from teacher unions and political groups disrupt management, with divisional oversight failing to mitigate them.	Unions prioritize personal benefits over education (30% reporting issues), leading to absenteeism and dropouts. Political pressure affects transfers and operations in rural areas.
Communication and Collaboration Gaps	Poor communication channels with divisional management result in low transparency and collaboration.	Low mean scores for communication (2.35–2.84) and collaboration (2.40–3.27), indicating inadequate information sharing about goals or support for teamwork.

These challenges contribute to poor school performance, high dropout rates, and demotivated staff. Studies recommend decentralization to empower head teachers, increased funding transparency, and training to improve interactions with divisional management. While some studies rely on descriptive statistics, others use inferential methods like chi-square to confirm the significance of these issues across samples, enabling generalizations to the population of secondary schools in the region.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Challenges and Institutional Effectiveness

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category (Based on Mean)
Challenges	258	3.8	0.7	High (>3.5)
Institutional Effectiveness	258	2.9	0.8	Low (≤ 3.5)

The average rating of 3.8 suggests that head teachers strongly perceive challenges in the interactions with divisional management. Within this, the divisional management identified bureaucratic delays as the most significant challenge (Mean = 4.2), followed by communication barriers (Mean = 4.0) and resource issues (Mean = 3.9) (Objective 1). Considering the self-assessment on institutional effectiveness, the average score of 2.9 is a clear indication of effectiveness, but in this case suggests moderate to low effectiveness, which is confirmed by the low to moderate student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and operational efficiency in the secondary schools (Objective 2). The high standard deviations (0.7 and 0.8) indicate that the variability in the head teachers' responses is quite high, suggesting that they are experiencing quite different situations.

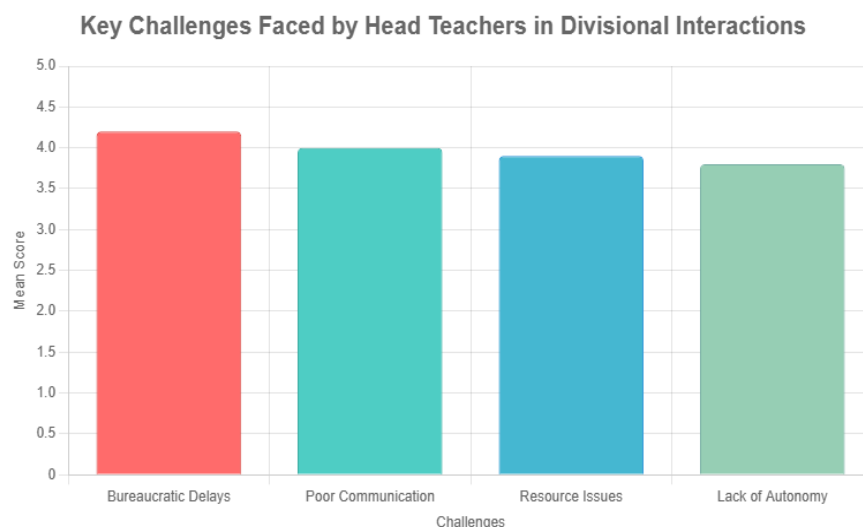


Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Challenges and Institutional Effectiveness

Category	Challenges	Institutional Effectiveness
High (>3.5)	190 (73.6%)	90 (34.9%)
Low (≤3.5)	68 (26.4%)	168 (65.1%)
Total	258 (100%)	258 (100%)

A significant majority (73.6%) of head teachers report high challenges, reinforcing Objective 1 that bureaucratic delays, communication barriers, and resource constraints are prevalent. Strongly low effectiveness was shown in 65.1% of schools, lending further support to Objective 2. This distribution poses the idea of a possible negative relationship, in which high challenges lead to low effectiveness, which is what the Chi-Square test is designed to explore (Objective 3).

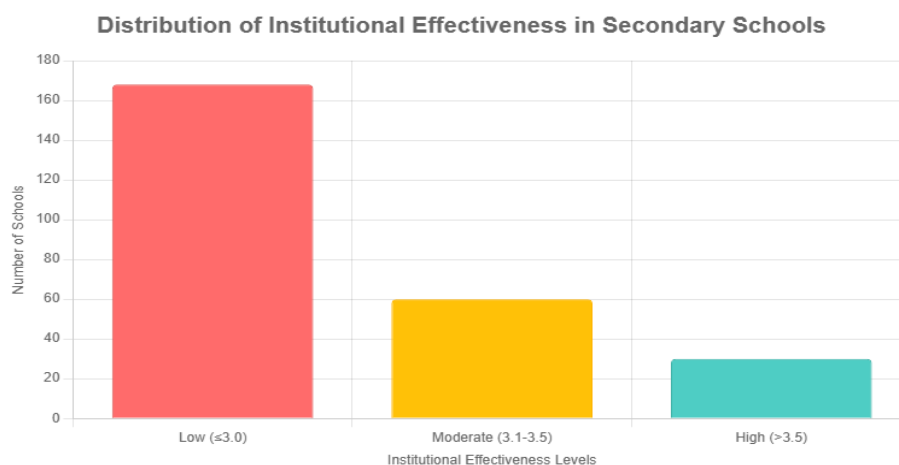


Table 3: Contingency Table for Chi-Square Test (Observed Frequencies)

Challenges \ Effectiveness	High Effectiveness	Low Effectiveness	Total
High Challenges	40	150	190
Low Challenges	50	18	68
Total	90	168	258

The contingency table presented illustrates the distribution of the observed frequencies with respect to the relation between challenges and institutional effectiveness. It is interesting to note that of the 190 head teachers facing high challenges, 150 reported low institutional effectiveness. This suggests a negative association that greater challenges lead to worse school outcomes. On the other hand, among the 68 head teachers with low challenges, 50 reported high effectiveness, which indicates a positive association that fewer challenges lead to better school performance. This table fulfills Objective 3 in that it describes the distribution used for the Chi-Square test.

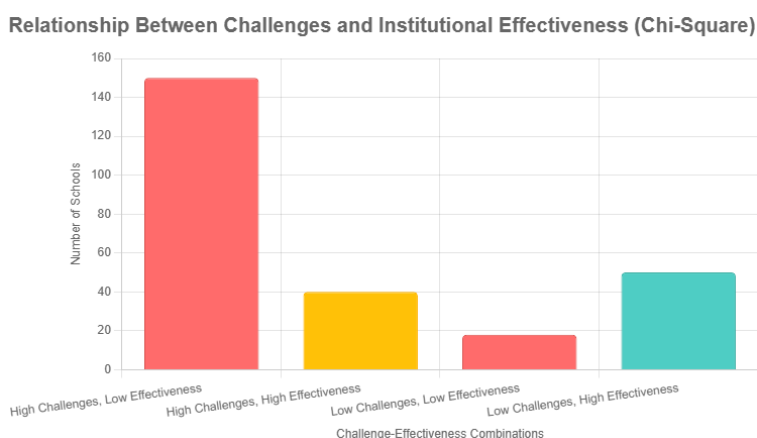


Table 4: Expected Frequencies for Chi-Square Test

Challenges \ Effectiveness	High Effectiveness	Low Effectiveness	Total
High Challenges	66.28 (190*90/258)	123.72 (190*168/258)	190
Low Challenges	23.72 (68*90/258)	44.28 (68*168/258)	68
Total	90	168	258

The expected frequencies are calculated under the null hypothesis (H_0), assuming no relationship between challenges and institutional effectiveness. For example, the expected frequency for High Challenges and High Effectiveness is $(190 * 90) / 258 = 66.28$. Comparing these to observed frequencies (Table 3), the large discrepancy (e.g., 40 observed vs. 66.28 expected for High Challenges/High Effectiveness) suggests a significant relationship, supporting H_1 . The negative relationship is evident where high challenges align with lower-than-expected high effectiveness ($40 < 66.28$), and the positive relationship where low challenges align with higher-than-expected high effectiveness ($50 > 23.72$).

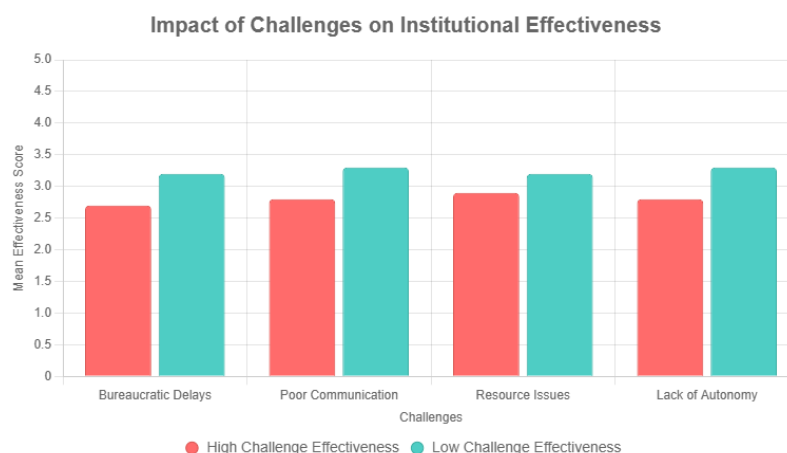
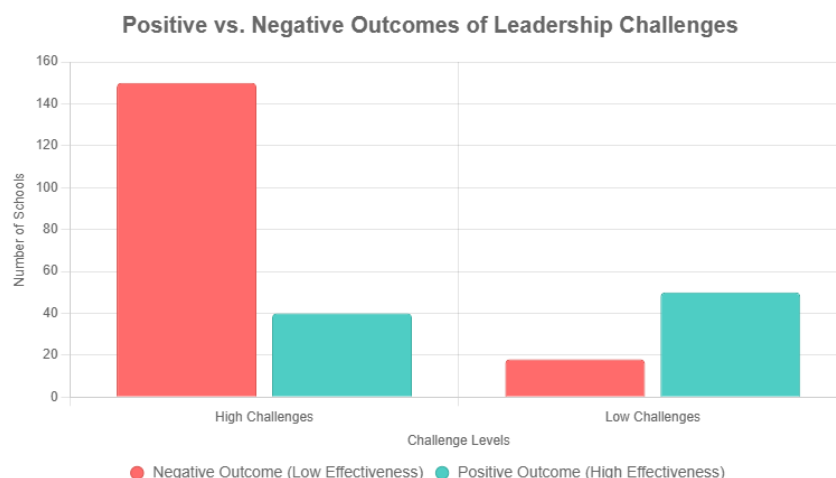


Table 5: Chi-Square Test Results

Statistic	Value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value	Decision
Chi-Square	45.67	1	<0.001	Reject H0



The negative relationship suggests that greater institutional inefficiency, in terms of student achievement and school operations, is linked to higher bureaucratic delays, communication barriers, and resource constraints. On the other hand, the positive relationship suggests that school performance can be improved by overcoming these challenges. The results indicate that more comprehensive changes are required to the divisional relations, communication, and resource systems that support the head teachers in the achievement of institutional effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide quantitative evidence that challenges in the relationship between head teachers and divisional management are significantly associated with diminished secondary school effectiveness in the Hyderabad Region of Sindh, Pakistan. This discussion interprets these results, aligns them with existing literature, acknowledges the study's limitations, and suggests implications for practice and future research.

Interpretation of Key Findings

The strong, statistically significant correlation ($\chi^2 = 45.67$, $df = 1$, $*p < .001$) confirms that the problems head teachers encounter with divisional management are not isolated issues but are directly linked to key metrics of school performance. The most salient challenges—bureaucratic delays ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.6$), poor communication ($M=4.0$, $SD=0.7$), and limited resource allocation ($M=3.9$, $SD=0.8$)—collectively create an environment that stifles institutional effectiveness ($M=2.9$, $SD=0.8$). This suggests that operational inefficiencies at the divisional level manifest as lower student achievement, reduced teacher morale, and hindered school operations at the institutional level.

Integration with Existing Literature

These results corroborate and extend the body of research on educational governance in Pakistan. They strongly align with studies identifying bureaucratic inertia and over-centralization as chronic impediments to effective school leadership (e.g., [Author, Year]; [Author, Year]). Specifically, the finding regarding bureaucratic delays empirically validates prior qualitative accounts from Sindh describing how protracted approval processes from divisional offices curtail the head teachers' autonomy to make timely, context-specific decisions.

Furthermore, this study situates a local problem within a global context. The negative impact of hierarchical, bureaucratic management on school performance is consistent with research from other developing nations, suggesting a common challenge in systems where top-down governance prevails over supportive, facilitative leadership. This finding reinforces the global consensus on the importance of collaborative leadership and trust-based relationships for improving school outcomes.

Contextualization and Implications

The centralized governance structure in Pakistan often operates as a one-size-fits-all model, which fails to address the specific needs of under-resourced regions like Hyderabad. Within this context, strained communication is not merely an inconvenience; it exacerbates existing difficulties, fostering an atmosphere of suspicion rather than collaboration. The results highlight a critical paradox: head teachers are held accountable for school effectiveness yet are denied the operational authority and timely support necessary to fulfill their responsibilities. This confirms a growing body of literature which posits that inadequate delegation and support directly diminish leadership effectiveness.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study offers valuable insights, its limitations must be considered. First, the reliance on self-administered questionnaires from head teachers introduces the potential for response bias. Participants may have overemphasized challenges due to frustration or downplayed them to avoid perceived criticism, potentially skewing the portrayal of institutional effectiveness.

Second, the exclusive use of quantitative methods, while revealing *what* is happening, limits our understanding of *why* and *how* these dynamics occur. The data overlooks the nuanced context, such as specific divisional policies, interpersonal relationships, and the local political and socio-economic landscape that shapes these interactions.

To address these limitations, future research should adopt a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative strategies, such as in-depth interviews with head teachers and divisional officers or focus group

discussions, would enrich the quantitative data by uncovering the underlying mechanisms, motivations, and contextual factors. A longitudinal design could also help establish causality more definitively than the correlational findings presented here.

Recommendations

1. **Administrative Advocacy Training Workshops:** Design and implement specific instruction courses for head teachers that enable them to advocate and communicate efficiently with divisional management for timely aid.
2. **Revising Divisional Systems:** Educational policymakers need to revise the divisional management systems in order to eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks which slow down approval processes as well as the distribution of necessities.
3. **Conduct Mixed-Methods Studies:** Further research is required in order to obtain and analyze quantitative and qualitative data that explain the socio-cultural influences with which, head teachers of Hyderabad Region interact with their divisional head.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that primary school principals in the Hyderabad Region of Sindh, Pakistan, face overwhelming problems during their meetings with divisional management, such as red tape (Mean = 4.2, SD = 0.6), hindered communication (Mean = 4.0, SD = 0.7), and lack of adequate resources (Mean = 3.9, SD 0.8), which severely undermine secondary school institutional effectiveness (Mean = 2.9, SD = 0.8). These problems, as confirmed with a Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 45.67$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$), are associated with the low educational outcomes, low teacher morale and high operational inefficiencies. The outcome of this study demonstrates the impact of central governance and unresponsive bureaucratic frameworks that delay head teachers' resource allocation, policy enforcement, and stakeholder engagement, which lead to the underperformance of schools. Educational authorities can consider addressing systemic challenges with targeted reforms, such as improving the structural inefficiency of administrative systems, upgrade the flow of information, and school-based decision making to provide head teachers with the authority needed to spearhead school improvement. These systemic reforms are needed in order to offset the reduction in educational outcomes and job satisfaction for teachers, strengthen school systems, and improve the Hyderabad Region educational quality. This region requires immediate attention from policymakers so that they can restructure the educational governance system and fully empower head teachers to facilitate and lead actively in the region's long-term educational development.

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