

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS APPRAISAL SYSTEMS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

There is no unified Teacher Appraisal (TA) system in Private Schools of Pakistan. Therefore, this quantitative study focuses on exploring various systems of TA currently prevailing in private schools in Karachi, the largest city of Pakistan. Data was collected through different sources of teachers' appraisals prevailed in these schools. It also examines teachers' perceptions about the purpose of TA. Descriptive survey method was employed to meet the objectives of the research. The survey was conducted in 6 private schools of Karachi selected through random sampling technique. The study included 78 teachers and 12 head teachers of private schools. A questionnaire, comprised of two sections A and B with 4 and 8 items respectively, was developed for data collection. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were already aware of the purpose behind the appraisal in their schools. Surprisingly a significant gap was observed between the perceptions of teachers and the actual purpose of appraisal in their schools. It was also noticed that the number of appraisals during a year varies from a minimum of one time to a maximum of four times during a year. The major sources of appraisal are found to be the classroom observation and assessment based on yearly lesson plans. Since this research does not include the comprehensive exploration of the whole system of appraisal, there is a need to explore the purposes of appraisal in detail including methods of classroom observation and procedures of giving feedback. This research was limited only to the

metropolitan city of Pakistan and further inclusion of other big cities can make results more generaliz at the country level.

Key Words: *Teacher Appraisal (TA), Appraise, Appraiser, Performance, Performance Management.*

INTRODUCTION

Economic and social prosperity of any nation is mainly reliant on the progress of its education sector (Farah, Fauzee & Daud, 2016). Ahmed (2017), in his research work on managing knowledge and innovation, mentioned that an increase of 20-30% in the literacy can, in turn, helps a boost 8-16% in any country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The role and contribution of teachers in enhancing literacy in society can never be undermined. The personal and professional growth of teachers must be given due attention and importance by the management of educational institutes (Shahzad, Bashir & Ramay, 2008; Naseer ud din et al., 2011). Research carried out by Barrens (2000), Ovando (2001), Tiang and Zhang (2004) and Zarro (2005) as cited in Zhang and Ming Ng (2011) found that a Teacher Appraisal (TA) greatly helps a teacher's professional development. The appraisal is one of the key components of the overall performance management system that determines how well an individual employee has performed over a period of time (Middlewood, 2002).

An effective process of appraisal, in a real sense potentially can help both the employees and the organization (Mullins, 1996; Stronge, Xu & Leeper, 2013). Stronge et al. (2013) assert that the relationship between a teacher and the school is dynamic and synergistic which enhances the ability of both the teacher and the school to improve the working life and to achieve their desired goals. The benefits which a teacher could get are the identification of his/her strengths, weaknesses, and problems that can restrict progress. Furthermore, regular and timely feedback provided through effective appraisal improves teachers' performance in the classroom (Stronge & Tucker, 2003). It improves teachers' effectiveness and supports their professional development (Beerens, 2000; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Fletcher, 2001; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Brown and Benson (2003) found "effective appraisal can improve commitment and productivity of the employees through planning promotions and compensations by the management". The data gathered through appraisal also assist in planning professional development programs (Stronge et al., 2013).

The perceptions have an effect on teachers' job commitment (OECD,

2009). A study conducted in Botswana by Monyatsi, Steyn and Kamper (2006) demonstrates that the perceptions of teachers affect the effectiveness of a TA. A better quality of teaching is vital for improving student performance and minimizing the gaps in students' achievement. Hence, the TA provides teachers with meaningful appraisals that encourage professional learning and growth (Stronge, 2006). The Performance appraisal has the potential to improve teachers' performance in the classroom (Brown & Benson as cited in Shahzad, Bashir & Ramay, 2008). Kim and Holzer (2016) as cited by Dobbins (1994) states that the performance appraisal fails to achieve its targets when employees perceive it as unfair, unsatisfying, and/or inequitable. They further assert that the effectiveness of performance appraisal is dependent upon employees' acceptance. Effective performance appraisal tries to balance both the purposes of appraisal i.e. accountability and professional development (Stronge, 2006). Kim and Holzer (2016) claim that if a performance appraisal is solely carried out for evaluative purposes and does not focus on the effort put into the work by the employee then it is likely to be perceived as procedurally unfair by the employees.

The education system in Pakistan is not uniform and differs widely throughout the country. There are several different kinds of systems and type of schools prevailing in the country such as Government Schools, Privately owned Schools, the schools run by NGO, Islamic religious Schools known as Madaris, the army-run Cadet Schools and Garrison Institutions, local and foreign Missionary Schools, etc. (Iqbal, 2011). Since these schools run under difference regulatory boards and systems hence different types of systems for teacher appraisal are also being followed by the school management. Farah et al., (2016) conclude that the focus of private schools is more on improving teachers' performance therefore they try to appraise teachers regularly. As there is no single or uniform teacher appraisal system in private schools, this study focuses on finding out the differences in teacher appraisal systems prevailed in private schools of Pakistan. A study conducted in Botswana by Monyatsi, Steyn and Kamper (2006) demonstrates that the perceptions of teachers about the clarity in the purpose of a Teachers Performance Appraisal (TPA) affect the effectiveness of appraisal system. Therefore, this study focuses on finding teachers' perceptions of the effects of clarity of purpose of appraisal in private schools in Pakistan. It is hoped that the outcome of this research will not only contribute to highlight the effective elements of the appraisal

systems but will also contribute academic literature on the subject under study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of appraisal has initially come from the field of industry and commerce. This concept incorporates some major objectives: motivation of employees, modification of behaviours to ultimately improvise the effective working habits, provision of feedback on performance and the availability of performance data for future assignments and compensations (Monyatsi et al., 2006). Bartlett (2000) states that the main objective of an appraisal is to improve individual performance and motivation whereas in an educational setting the main purpose of the appraisal is to make teaching and learning effective. Therefore, TA should be such that motivates teachers to improve their performance in the classroom. There are two major purposes of a TA, one is accountability and other is improvement/development. Accountability is aimed at ensuring that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning while improvement/development seeks to improve the teacher's practice by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development. (Craft, 2000; Daniel & McGreal, 2000; Middlewood, 2002; Peterson, 2000; Stronge, 2006).

The accountability aspect of the process of evaluating teachers focus on making teachers liable by themselves for their performance which as a result adversely affect their career (Monyatsi et al., 2007) and incentivize teachers for best possible performance. This characteristically necessitates a performance-based career growth and/or salary increments, special bonuses, and conversely in some countries, due to underperformance sanctions are imposed on the possibility of promotions (Schleicher & OECD, 2011, p.40). The accountability function is viewed as a summative evaluation of teachers. This purpose helps the school or any organization to improve by focusing on the results or outcomes. Researchers assert that a TA system will be effective if it matches with the mission and goals of the school and the district (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Stronge & Helm, 1991).

A TA for the improvement of teaching practices focuses on the feedback that is useful in this regard. It helps and in a way incentivizes teachers to learn more and that to reflect as an improvement in their practices. Barber, Evans and Johnsons as cited in Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004) reported survey findings that appraisal helped in the identification of the

developmental needs of staff and the effective use of resources. The study also inferred that an appraisal system which saw appraisal as making judgements on individuals and not as a means to future improvement was distrusted by staff members. This type of teachers' evaluation that targets teachers' performance improvement, is formative in nature. The balance between the two purposes of an appraisal is essential for a high-quality TA system and Stronge (2006) argues that these two functions are not in competition with each other but are supportive of each other.

Landy and Conte (2010), in this study mentioned three basic characteristics of teachers' performance appraisal process. Bollington, Hopkins and West (1990) have also provided a similar framework for the process of teacher performance appraisal with a slight difference. The process is continuous and comprises three steps. The first step is the *definition of performance* and this step involves an awareness of the system of appraisal. The teacher is oriented with the procedure of the appraisal through a meeting. The meeting develops an understanding of the range of approaches to data gathering on a teacher's performance. This helps the teacher to understand what is expected from him/her. The teacher has a chance to clarify the objectives for her teaching procedure. Sometimes goals are formulated by the teacher so that he/she can self-evaluate his/her success. The second component is the *measurement of performance* which involves the collection of data using four distinct but related sources which are 1) formal and informal classroom observations, 2) students' results, 3) a survey of students and parents comments and remarks, 3) a self-assessment and peers' evaluation, and 4) the achievement percentage of goals previously set or given (Marsh, 2000). Neely (2007) argues that the main purpose of measuring performance is to focus teachers' attention onto the required aspects of work which are to be measured. She further asserts that performance measurement assists in evaluating teachers' performance for future professional developmental arrangements. The third step of the process is *communication between the appraiser and the appraisee*. Chow, Wong, Yeueng and Mo; Wanzare as cited in Monyatsi et al. (2006) affirm that "the relationship between the teacher and the appraisers is vital for the effectiveness of appraisal" (p.435). Landy and Conte (2010) state that a meta-analysis of 27 studies have proven that open communication unlocks doors to participate in the process of appraisal, hence enhancing the feelings of satisfaction and acceptance of the appraisal system.

Bollington et al. (1990) have divided the component of communication involved in the process of TA into two steps - *interview* and *follow-up*. An interview is a reflective session of previous performances and future planning. Bollington et al. (1990) explain that during this session multiple issues are discussed. The work is done by the teacher since the last appraisal is reviewed. Targets are set for both the potential and possible development of the current job and for the career growth and professional progress of individuals. After setting targets the head and the teacher mutually define the ways for achieving these targets. Criteria are then set for the successful accomplishment of these targets and to evaluate teachers' performance. The interview session ends with the agreement on the outcome statement of the appraisal. Then comes the follow-up which is the most important stage of the appraisal process. At this stage, teachers are required to work on their targets, which are then supported and monitored by the heads (Bollington et al., 1990). McKirchy (2008) asserts that follow up starts immediately after the appraisal interview through informal meetings. Follow up helps to certify that the teacher has understood the task completely. The two-way relationship instils the idea in teachers' minds that they are not alone in the path of achieving the targets. Furthermore, the teachers feel comfortable in discussing and sharing problems confronted by them during their performance. Lack of follow up can lead to failure of an appraisal system. McKirchy (2008) argues that since changing behaviour is not an easy task head should not leave any opportunity to reinforce changed behaviour through praising positive behaviour rather than focusing on criticizing negative behaviours. He further suggests that follow up meetings should begin and end with a positive note.

Ruwan (2007) asserts that performance evaluation and reward increase efficiency hence, these improve performance. The relationship between perceived employees' performance and evaluated performance is established in human resource management (Teseema & Soeters, 2006). When this relationship was researched in Pakistani educational institutions by Shahzad and Ahmad (2011) and Shahzad, Bashir and Ramay (2008), it was found that the correlation between the two variables was weak. It means that performance appraisal in Pakistani educational institutions does not resultantly improve teachers' performance. The reason for this weak relationship as considered by the two studies is the improper or ineffective existing system of appraisal in the institutions. Teachers perceive that since

evaluation practices are not connected with compensation and promotion they are ineffective for performance improvement, proven by the stated studies. Khan, Saeed and Fatima (2009) and Zaman, Khurram and Shaiq (2019) conclude that a teacher's performance in the classroom increases if s/he perceives his/her headteachers or principals positively. They suggest that the relationship between teachers' and heads' performances is essential for raising educational standards. Rasheed et al. (2011); and Anjum et al. (2011) have revealed that teachers are not involved in the appraisal planning process although they see their participation as an important factor in making an effective appraisal system. This has also led to a lack of communication about the performance goals between the appraiser and the appraisee. They found that the purpose of the appraisal was not clear to the majority of the teachers.

It is observed that many teachers are not aware of the purpose of their performance appraisal. This fact is also validated by Khan (2015) in his research where he has highlighted that the unawareness about the purpose of appraisal creates confusions among the appraisees and the appraisers. He further explores that teachers perceive that appraisal is focused on taking administrative decisions whereas administrators perceive it as to be more focused towards a developmental purpose. In his research teachers opined that the purpose of TPA must be more focused towards resolving the issues faced by the teachers inside their classrooms. The differences in the perceived purposes of appraisal resultantly make it an unfair and ineffective system to evaluate teachers' performance and its impact on classroom practices.

Research Questions

1. Is there any difference in teachers' classroom performance if they perceive the purpose of TA in school to be the **annual increment**?
2. Is there any difference in teachers' classroom performance if the purpose of TA in school is to give **annual promotion**?
3. Is there any difference in teachers' classroom performance if the purpose of TA in school is to **motivate the teachers**?
4. Is there any difference in teachers' classroom performance if the purpose of TA in school is for the **identification of weaknesses**?

Research Hypothesis

In this research, the dependent variable (DV) is the performance of teachers in the classrooms whereas the independent variable (IV) is the

clarity of purpose or the perception of teacher appraisal.

H₀¹: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the effects of clarity of purpose on higher elementary teachers' performance in the classroom

This study addressed the above null hypothesis having four subscales regarding the perceived effects of teacher appraisal. The purposes of teacher appraisal were selected as the *annual increment, promotion, motivation and finding out weaknesses* for training purposes. For each subscale, one sub-hypothesis was formulated and tested.

METHOD

The investigation of the appraisal system is carried out through a quantitative research method. The descriptive research design was employed as it helps to explore the elements of an appraisal. T-test was done to determine the significant difference for rejecting or accepting the null hypothesis related to perceptions of teachers. Ninety teachers from 6 private schools were selected through random sampling technique. There were 12 items in the questionnaire. Three questions were related to the demographics of the participants, Four items were designed to explore the appraisal system and its purposes in private schools. The remaining 6 items were designed for collecting information on teachers' perceptions through Likert scale.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Exploring the TA System in Private Schools

The purpose of this study was to ascertain what the teachers of private secondary schools perceive regarding TA. However, before finding out their perceptions, it is essential to provide some information about the background of their own experience about the appraisal in the schools where they are currently teaching. For example, what sources of appraisal are used in the school for collecting the information about the teachers? What is the main purpose of appraisal in responding to teachers' schools? How often does the appraisal take place in teachers' schools? and the most important question is whether the respondent teachers are aware of the existing system of appraisal in their schools? Besides, if the response to the previous query is a 'yes' then to what extent do teachers know the appraisal system in their school? Four items were formulated regarding collecting information about the existing

system of appraisal in schools. The data for these four items are tabulated in figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4.

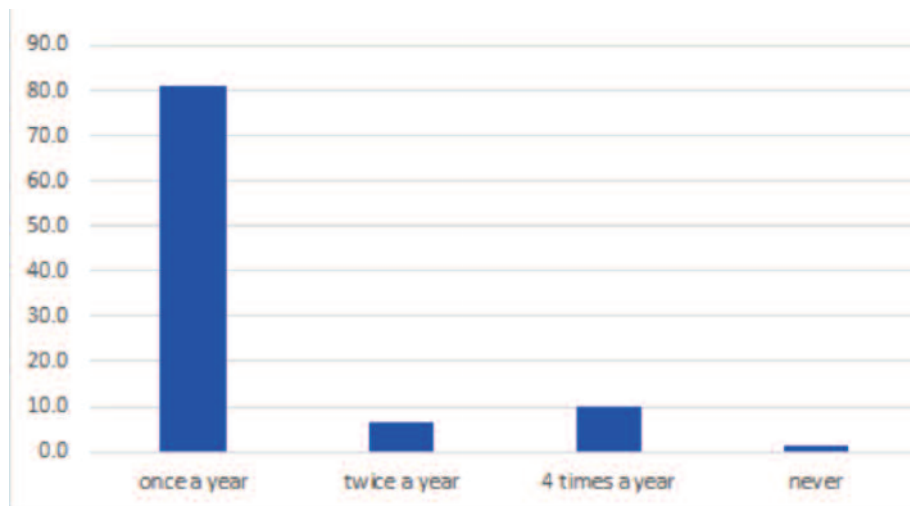


Figure 1.1a Frequency of TA in Private Schools

Figure 1.1a depicts that the majority of the schools follow an annual TA policy. Surprisingly, the private sector being independent of following any imposed policy of TA seems consistent with following once-a-year, twice-a-year or four-times-a-year TA policies. It is interesting to see that 60% of the headteachers reported that the frequency of TA is twice a year as shown in figure 1.1b.

Frequency of TA in your school?

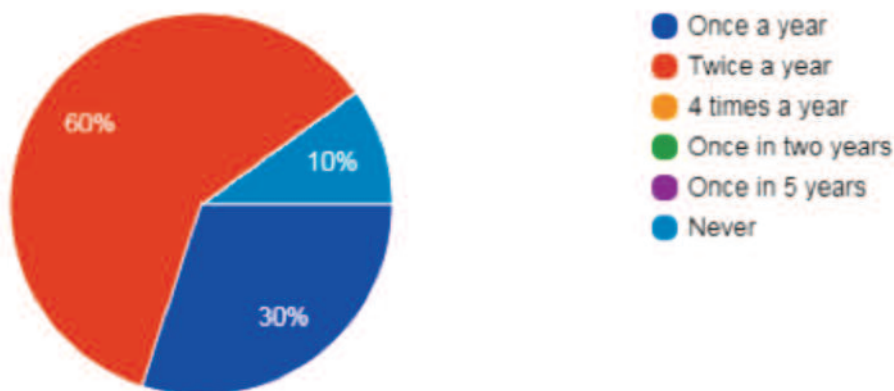
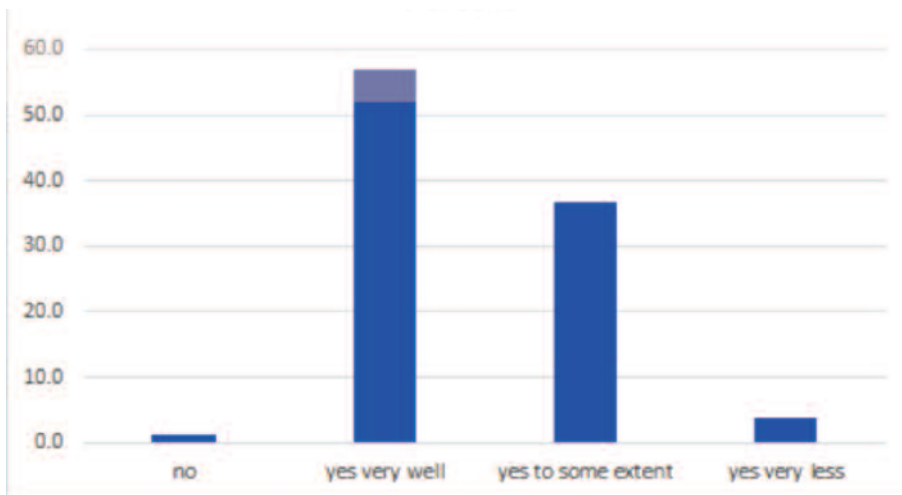


Figure 1.2: Teachers' level of awareness of TA in their schools



It is shown in figure 1.2 that majority of the teachers are very well aware of the existing appraisal systems of TA in their schools. As shown in figure 1.2 a considerable percentage of teachers are aware of TA in their schools to some extent. There were very few teachers who had less knowledge about TA in their school systems.

Sources of data collection for TA

The sources added in the questionnaire were classroom observation, students’ report cards, analysis of yearly lesson plans, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, a survey of students’ feedback, a survey of parents’ feedback, goal setting before the beginning of the academic year and any other source.

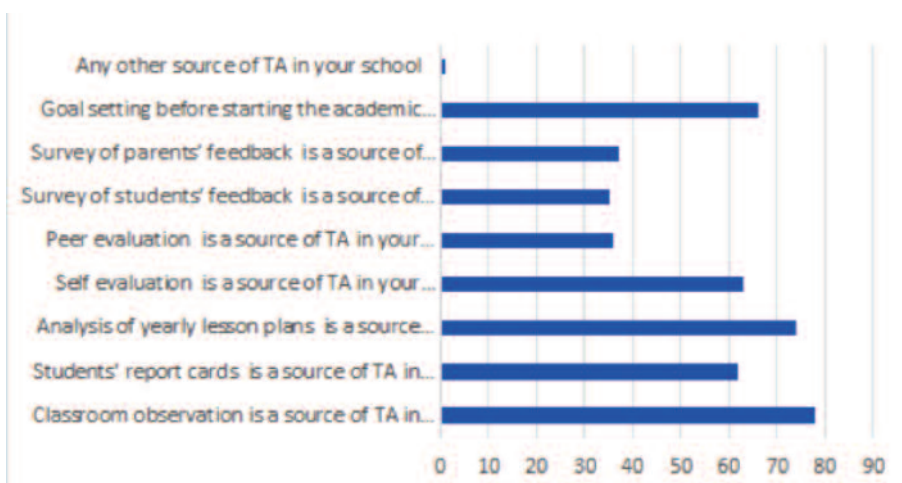


Figure 1.3: Sources of TA in private schools

A fact that is evident from the figure 1.3 that although the private schools, to a great extent, consider all above sources, but classroom observation is considered to be the most appropriate source for TA data collection. While assisting in filling out the questionnaire a teacher provided a reason for not using peer evaluation as a tool for data collection is that it tended to put the non favorites down.

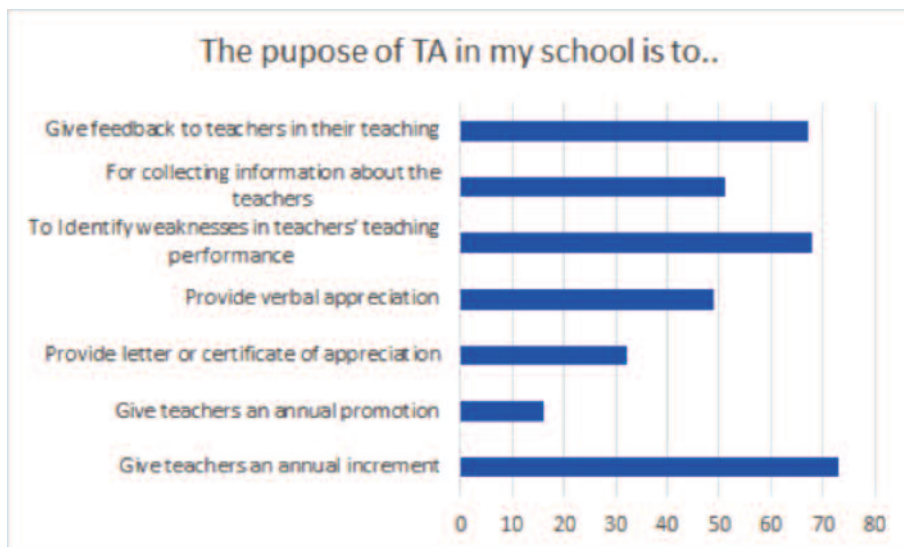


Figure 1.4: Purpose of TA in private schools

The three major purposes of TA found in private schools are annual increment, identification of weaknesses and to provide feedback for training purposes. Annual promotion is the least desirable purpose for TA in private schools. Ahmad and Shahzad (2011); Shahzad et al. (2008) and Shahzad, Rehman and Abbas (2010), researching the universities in various province and cities found a high correlation between performance evaluation i.e. TA and compensation practices i.e. salary increment. Financial reward tied to performance is an incentive that motivates teachers to perform better in the classroom (Caruth & Handlogten, 2001).

Contrary to the results of Anjum's study (2011) carried out in a public sector university of Punjab, the purpose of TA as a promotion in this study has received the least responses. Sixty-four per cent of the participants (n=45) in Anjum's research study responded that the main purpose of appraisal in their university was promotion.

Perceived effects of clarity of purpose on teachers' performance in the classroom

The Null hypothesis was formulated to find a significant difference among

the perceptions of private school teachers regarding the clarity of the purposes of the appraisal on teachers' classroom performance. The t-test results of significance indicate that the perceptions of private school teachers are significantly different from one another. This study addressed a null hypothesis having four subscales regarding the perceived effects of teacher appraisal. The dependent variable (DV) is the performance of the teachers in the classrooms whereas the independent variable (IV) was the clarity of purpose of teacher appraisal. The purposes of teacher appraisal were selected as the annual increment, promotion, motivation and finding out weaknesses for training purposes. For each subscale, one hypothesis was formulated and tested. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to explore the perceptions of private school teachers about the effect of the clarity of purpose of TA. The null hypothesis was rejected as the value of p is found to be less than 0.01. The results suggest that this difference in perceptions of private school teachers are statistically significant because $p < 0.01$.

Perceptions of teachers regarding existing TA systems in Pakistani private schools

Since there is no uniform system of TA in Pakistani private schools, the experiences of teachers about TA are different. Perceptions are based on personal experiences and interactions with the environment through our senses (Passer & Smith, 2007). Following are the major purposes of TA collected from the researches and added in this study.

Salary Increment

Salary increment is a compensation practice in human resource management and is highly correlated with teachers' performance as researched by Shahzad et al., (2008) and Ahmad et al., (2011) in the Pakistani context. The information collected from the questionnaire where the teachers were asked to identify the purposes of TA in their current schools, revealed that TA in a private school is tied up with compensation practices of salary increment. One of the purposes of TA in private schools is annual salary increment. Majority of the private school teachers favorably perceived the effectiveness of improving teachers' performance in the classroom. The studies carried out in various universities of Punjab reinforce this result by presenting a positive correlation between salary increment and teachers' performance in Pakistan.

Promotion

Taseema and Soeters (2006) have found a positive relationship of

promotion practices with performance but the same relationship was found weak in Pakistani educational institutions by Ahmad and Shahzad (2011). It has been presented that although TA has a positive impact on teachers' performance in private schools of Karachi, the percentage of connecting promotion to appraisal is only 20%. Furthermore, data collected for this purpose of appraisal revealed that 71% of private secondary school teachers perceived promotion as an effective tool for effective classroom management. On the other hand, 16% of private school teachers considered promotion as an insignificant factor in increasing teachers' performance. Hence, majority of the teachers perceived promotion as an effective tool for increasing their classroom performance. In Pakistani higher elementary schools, the criterion of promotion is three years of teaching experience and not improved the performance of the teachers; therefore, promotion practices do not affect teachers' performance in the classroom.

Appreciation

Tariq et al. (2012) assert that appreciation is an energy booster that accelerates the efficiency of teachers. Appreciation is a reward that significantly affects teacher motivation, self-esteem and efficacy (Blase & Blase, 1999). The results for the effect of appreciation on TA are surprising. The number of teachers in the private sector who receive appreciation is significant. Results have provided evidence that 40% of private school teachers receive a letter of appreciation and 62% receive verbal appreciation for the acknowledgement of their efforts from the administration. This analysis is also supported by Tariq et al. (2012) who confirm that private school teachers always receive appreciation. According to Blasé and Blasé (1999), the level of reflective behaviour is raised by appreciation and effective teaching strategies are reinforced and risk-taking and innovation/creativity are augmented.

Motivation

Statistics have shown a great level of agreement towards motivation as a significant factor for TA. Ninety-four per cent of private school teachers perceive TA as an important factor in increasing teachers' motivation towards better performance. Statistics have also revealed the fact that teachers perceive salary increment and promotion practices as motivators towards better performance. Surprisingly (and contrary to the findings from the literature the majority of the teachers (63%) do not perceive appreciation as an effective tool for their motivation. Appreciation needs to be linked with monetary rewards as suggested by Fakharyan, Jalilvand,

Dini and Dehafrin (2012) for developing motivation among the teachers.

Professional Development

The administrative purpose of TA and professional development move hand in hand (Monyatsi et al. 2006; Beerens, 2000; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Stronge & Tucker, 2003, Stronge, 2006; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Statistics demonstrate that 60% of private school teachers see TA as an effective tool for improving the performance of the teachers. Twenty per cent of teachers were neutral or uncertain about the answer. The reason behind this could be the difference in experiencing this purpose of appraisal of professional development. Identification of weaknesses and providing feedback were practiced more frequently in private schools. Therefore, it can be said that professional development is an important purpose of TA in private sector schools.

CONCLUSION

The perception of teachers about the purpose of TA is an important factor in building trust and hence affects their performance levels in the classroom. The results of this study conclude that major sources of TA in private schools of Karachi are the classroom observations, analysis of yearly lesson planners, goal setting before the academic term, self-evaluation and the students' report cards. These sources clearly explain that private schools of Karachi strive to improve the quality of teaching by doing strict appraisals at schools. Furthermore, it is revealed that TA in private schools is greatly linked with annual increment along with the purpose of providing feedback and identify training needs for professional development purposes. Promotion is found to be the least applicable purpose of TA in private schools. There is a significant difference found in the perceptions of teachers about the purpose of appraisals found in their schools.

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