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CHALLENGES IN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: PROBLEMS, DEFICIENCIES, AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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Abstract. The effectiveness of educational institutions largely depends on the quality of school leadership and management practices. School principals play a vital role in ensuring educational quality, organizational development, teacher motivation, and student achievement. However, modern educational systems face numerous managerial challenges that hinder the successful implementation of educational reforms and strategic goals. This article examines the major problems and deficiencies encountered in school principals' management activities and proposes practical strategies for improving leadership effectiveness. The study highlights issues such as excessive administrative workload, insufficient leadership competencies, communication barriers, resistance to change, inadequate resource management, and limited professional development opportunities. Recommendations are provided to enhance managerial performance and strengthen educational leadership in contemporary schools.

Keywords: school principal, educational leadership, management challenges, school administration, leadership competencies, organizational development, educational management.

Introduction

In the context of rapid globalization, technological advancement, and educational transformation, the role of school principals has become increasingly complex. Modern educational institutions require leaders who can effectively manage human resources, implement innovations, promote collaboration, and ensure high educational standards. School principals are expected not only to oversee administrative operations but also to act as instructional leaders, strategic planners, and change agents.

Despite the growing importance of educational leadership, many school principals encounter significant challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities. These challenges often affect organizational effectiveness, teacher performance, and student outcomes. Therefore, identifying the existing problems in principals' management activities and exploring effective solutions has become a critical issue in educational research and practice.

Literary review

Educational leadership scholars have emphasized the importance of effective school management in achieving educational success. According to Hallinger (2018), instructional leadership significantly influences school improvement and student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (2020) argue that transformational leadership enhances organizational commitment and professional collaboration among teachers.

Research conducted by Bush (2021) indicates that many school leaders struggle with balancing administrative duties and instructional leadership responsibilities. Similarly, Fullan (2022) highlights that resistance to change and inadequate leadership preparation remain major obstacles to educational reform. These findings suggest that improving principals' managerial competencies is essential for sustainable school development.

One of the most common challenges faced by school principals is the excessive amount of administrative tasks. Principals spend considerable time preparing reports, managing documentation, and complying with regulatory requirements. As a result, they often have limited opportunities to focus on instructional leadership, teacher development, and educational innovation.

Many principals assume leadership positions without receiving comprehensive training in educational management. Consequently, they may experience difficulties in strategic planning, decision-making, conflict resolution, and organizational development. A lack of managerial competence can negatively affect school performance and staff motivation.

Effective communication is fundamental to successful school management. However, principals frequently encounter communication barriers with teachers, students, parents, and community stakeholders. Miscommunication may lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and reduced organizational cohesion.

Educational reforms and innovations often encounter resistance from teachers and staff members. Principals may struggle to implement new policies, technologies, or teaching approaches due to organizational inertia and fear of change. Such resistance can slow down school development and limit innovation.

Table 1

Major management problems faced by school principals (n=120)

Management Problems	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Excessive administrative workload	102	85.0
Insufficient financial resources	94	78.3
Teacher motivation problems	88	73.3
Resistance to educational innovations	83	69.2
Communication difficulties	76	63.3
Lack of leadership training	71	59.2
Time management difficulties	68	56.7

The results indicate that excessive administrative workload represents the most significant challenge for school principals (85.0%). A substantial proportion of respondents also identified insufficient financial resources (78.3%) and teacher motivation problems (73.3%) as major obstacles affecting school effectiveness. Resistance to educational innovations and communication difficulties were reported by more than half of the participants. These findings suggest that school principals face multiple managerial challenges that limit their ability to focus on instructional leadership and strategic school development.

Many schools face shortages of financial, technological, and human resources. Principals must manage limited budgets while attempting to maintain educational quality. Inadequate resource allocation can hinder the implementation of educational programs and professional development initiatives.

Table 2

Leadership competency levels of school principals

Competency Area	High (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)
Strategic Planning	28.3	51.7	20.0
Decision-Making	34.2	48.3	17.5
Communication Skills	39.2	45.8	15.0

Conflict Resolution	26.7	53.3	20.0
Change Management	24.2	50.8	25.0
Team Leadership	36.7	45.0	18.3

The findings reveal that most principals demonstrate moderate levels of leadership competencies. Communication skills showed the highest proportion of highly competent leaders (39.2%), while change management exhibited the lowest level (24.2%). The relatively high percentage of principals with low competence in change management (25.0%) suggests difficulties in implementing educational reforms and innovations. These results highlight the need for continuous professional development programs focusing on leadership effectiveness.

Table 3

Impact of leadership challenges on school effectiveness

Variables	r
Administrative workload – School effectiveness	-0.68**
Leadership competency – School effectiveness	0.74**
Communication quality – School effectiveness	0.71**
Teacher motivation – School effectiveness	0.77**
Resource availability – School effectiveness	0.69**

p < 0.01

The correlation analysis demonstrates significant relationships between management factors and school effectiveness. Administrative workload showed a strong negative correlation (r = -0.68), indicating that increasing bureaucratic responsibilities reduce organizational effectiveness. In contrast, leadership competency (r = 0.74), communication quality (r = 0.71), teacher motivation (r = 0.77), and resource availability (r = 0.69) were positively associated with school performance. Teacher motivation emerged as the strongest predictor of school effectiveness.

Table 4

Proposed solutions for improving school management

Improvement Strategy	**Mean Score (M)**
Leadership training programs	4.82
Digital management systems	4.76
Increased financial support	4.71
Teacher motivation programs	4.68
Improved communication mechanisms	4.63
Delegation of administrative tasks	4.57

(5-point scale)

Respondents strongly supported leadership training programs as the most effective solution (M=4.82). Digital management systems and increased financial support were also highly rated. These findings indicate that principals perceive professional development and organizational support as key factors for improving management effectiveness.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model illustrating the major challenges affecting school principals' management activities and their impact on school effectiveness. The model demonstrates that school principals encounter three interconnected categories of challenges: administrative problems, professional deficiencies, and organizational barriers. Administrative challenges include excessive workload, extensive documentation requirements, and limited time resources. Professional deficiencies are primarily associated with insufficient leadership

competencies, weak strategic planning skills, and inadequate professional training. Organizational challenges involve teacher motivation issues, communication difficulties, resistance to innovation, and limited resource availability.

These factors collectively contribute to reduced school effectiveness and hinder the achievement of educational goals. The model further highlights that targeted intervention strategies, including leadership development programs, digital management systems, teacher motivation initiatives, and resource optimization mechanisms, can significantly improve managerial performance. As a result, educational institutions can achieve more effective leadership practices, stronger organizational performance, improved teaching quality, and better student outcomes.

The model emphasizes that sustainable school improvement depends not only on the personal qualities of principals but also on systematic organizational support and continuous professional development. Therefore, educational policymakers and stakeholders should adopt comprehensive approaches that address both individual leadership competencies and institutional management conditions. Such an integrated strategy is essential for enhancing school effectiveness in the context of contemporary educational reforms.

The results demonstrate that modern school principals operate in increasingly complex educational environments characterized by administrative pressures, limited resources, and growing expectations. The study confirms that leadership competencies, communication effectiveness, and teacher motivation are critical determinants of school success. Furthermore, excessive administrative workload remains one of the primary barriers preventing principals from exercising effective instructional leadership. Therefore, educational policymakers should prioritize leadership development initiatives, reduce bureaucratic burdens, and create supportive organizational conditions that enable principals to focus on improving teaching and learning outcomes.

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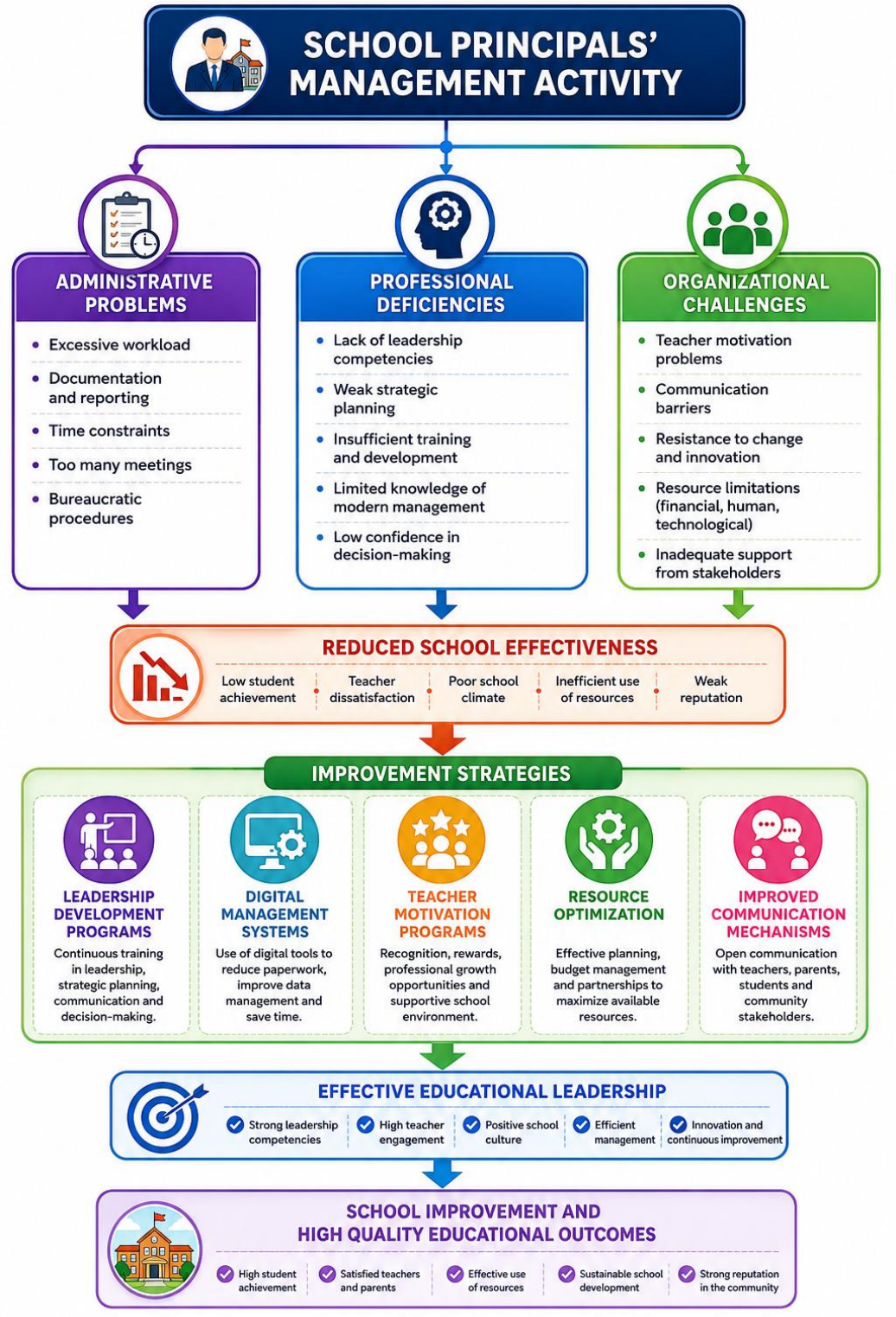


Figure 1. School principals' management activity

Maintaining teacher motivation is another significant challenge. Work-related stress, increasing responsibilities, and limited career advancement opportunities may reduce teacher

engagement. Principals often find it difficult to create supportive environments that foster continuous professional growth.

Comprehensive leadership development programs should be provided for both current and prospective school principals. Training should focus on strategic management, instructional leadership, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and change management.

Educational authorities should simplify bureaucratic procedures and introduce digital management systems to reduce paperwork. This would allow principals to dedicate more time to educational leadership and school improvement initiatives.

Schools should establish transparent communication channels involving teachers, parents, students, and community representatives. Regular meetings, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative decision-making processes can improve organizational relationships.

Principals should encourage innovation by creating supportive environments where teachers feel comfortable experimenting with new teaching methods and technologies. Recognition and rewards for innovative practices can increase participation in change initiatives.

Strategic planning and efficient budgeting practices can help schools maximize available resources. Partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community stakeholders may provide additional support for educational projects.

Principals should prioritize teacher professional development through mentoring programs, workshops, peer collaboration, and continuous learning opportunities. Motivated and professionally competent teachers contribute significantly to school effectiveness.

Discussion

The findings indicate that school principals face multidimensional challenges that require comprehensive and systematic solutions. Effective educational leadership is not limited to administrative competence; it also involves strategic vision, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and the ability to inspire others. Modern principals must be prepared to lead organizational change while fostering positive school cultures and supporting teacher development.

Addressing leadership challenges requires cooperation among policymakers, educational institutions, and professional development providers. Sustainable improvement can only be achieved through continuous investment in leadership capacity building and organizational support systems.

Conclusion

School principals play a crucial role in ensuring educational quality and institutional effectiveness. However, numerous challenges, including administrative overload, inadequate leadership competencies, communication difficulties, resistance to change, resource limitations, and teacher motivation issues, continue to affect management effectiveness. Addressing these challenges requires systematic leadership development, organizational support, improved communication, and innovative management practices. By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can strengthen school leadership and improve overall educational outcomes.

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