

## Role of Heads of Teaching Departments in the Promotion of Communication in Post Graduate Colleges as Perceived by Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges as perceived by teachers. The population of the study consisted of all teachers of postgraduate colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The researcher randomly selected 100 teachers from the eight selected postgraduate colleges out of 14. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean and Independent-Sample t-test was used for data analysis. The role of heads was positive in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges as perceived by teachers. No significant difference was found between the perceptions of teachers of natural and social sciences teachers, while significant difference was reported between the perceptions of teachers of up to 10 and 11-20 years work experience, up to 30 and 31-50 years age, lecturers and assistant professors regarding the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges.

**KEY WORDS:** Heads, Teaching department, Promotion, Communication, Perceptions, Teachers. Postgraduate colleges.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver. Communication is flow of information within an organization. Communication is a mean of processing meaning. Communication is central to the exercise of authority within an organization. Communication is the process of exchanging and sharing messages, ideas and feelings (Porter & Robert, 1976). By the use of face-to-face or technological media, individuals interact and influence each other through communication (Craig, 1999). Johnson (1992) states that the construct of organizational communication consists of five main dimensions. These dimensions include relationships, entities, contexts, configuration and temporal stability. Pettit, Goris, & Vaught (1997) described six dimensions of communication, i-e, information accuracy, desire for interaction, information load, trust in superior, influence of superior, and satisfaction with communication as predictors of job satisfaction with the greatest support. Communication is vital for all members in an organization. The functions of communication in an organization as stated by Baskin & Aronoff (1980) include (a) to co-ordinate actions of the members in an organization (b) information sharing, and (c) expression of feelings and emotions. Staton-Spicer & Spicer (1987) described four functions of communication in an organization. These functions include informative, integrative, regulative and innovative. Wiemann (2006) proposed five components model of communication competence: interaction management, empathy, affiliation/support, behavioral flexibility and social interaction. He reported strong, positive, linear relationship between interaction management and communicative competency. Positive correlation existed between competence and other components of the model. Communication is the socializing matrix. Ruesch & Bateson (1951) described four dimensions of communication in social matrix, i-e, (1) Intrapersonal communication (2) interpersonal communication (3) group-Individual communication, and (4) group-to-group communication.

The head of teaching department does multi-faceted jobs, which include setting objectives, organizing tasks, reviewing results, making decisions and motivating employees. Without effective communication, all these jobs of the head of teaching department cannot be completed on the campus. The centrality of communication to the overall job of an educational manager is evident from the time which he spends in sharing of information. Effective communication is necessary not only for the managers of postgraduate level institutions, but also necessary for school managers. The school principal spends a great deal of time in communication. As Lunenburg & Irby (1994) reported that principal of elementary schools, high schools and school superintendents spend 70 to 80 % of

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their time in communication. Mintzberg (1997) reported that educational administrators spend 80 % of their time in communication.

Leadership styles of an educational manager may affect communication within an institution. Supervisor task and relational leadership style are strongly related to supervisor' communication competence (Paul, 2008). Snyder & Morris (1984) found strong correlation among perceived communication variables, i.e., the quality of supervisory communication and information exchange within peer work groups, and critical revenue and workload measures of overall organization performance. Olaniran (1996) identified three variables of the predictors of members' communication satisfaction. These variables include easy use of communication medium, participation and decision confidence. Paulraj, Lado, & Chen (2008) stated that inter organizational communication was a relational competency which enhanced buyers' and suppliers' performance.

Postgraduate level institutions are those where education beyond bachelor degree program is imparted. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, postgraduate level institutions are postgraduate colleges and universities. Postgraduate colleges impart education at Master level. Provincial government of KPK exclusively finances PGCs. The Directorate of Colleges formulates rules and regulations for these colleges. The principal is the head of a postgraduate college. The secretary of higher education appoints the principal of a postgraduate college. The principal appoints a head of teaching department for the period of three years. Eligibility criteria for the appointment of a head of teaching department are experience and qualification. However, there are no strict rules and regulations considering experience and qualification as requirements for the appointment of the head of department.

### ***1.1 Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges as perceived by teachers. To compare perceptions of teachers of natural and social sciences, perceptions of up to 10 years and 11-20 years work experience, perceptions of teachers of up to 30 years and 31-50 years age, and lecturers and assistant professors regarding the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

## **2. Research Questions**

The following research questions were asked:

1. What is the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges as perceived by teachers?
2. Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of natural and social sciences departments' teachers regarding the role of heads in the promotion of communication?
3. Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 10 years and 11-20 years work experience regarding the role of heads in the promotion of communication?
4. Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 30 years and 31-50 years of age about the communicative role of heads?
5. Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of lecturers and assistant professors about the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges?

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1. Design of the study***

The research study was descriptive in nature.

### ***3.2. Population***

The population of the study consisted of all teachers of postgraduate colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

### ***3.3. Sample***

The researchers randomly selected eight postgraduate colleges out of 14 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The researcher randomly selected four teachers from each teaching department of the selected postgraduate colleges. The sample size was 100 respondents.

### ***3.4. Data collection instrument***

The researcher himself developed a questionnaire for data collection. A two-part questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the subjects. Part-1 of the questionnaire consisted of four independent variables as

demographic characteristics viz: Nature of department, age, working experience in the present department and designation.

Part- II of the questionnaire consisted of 27 Likert-type items, responded on a 5 point scale from "Always to Never", carrying a value of 5 to 1 respectively. Items designated positively are scored by 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Items designated negatively are scored in the reverse manner. Omitted or invalid responses are given a score of 3. Twenty-seven items of the questionnaire assess the perceptions of teachers about the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to the teachers to measure their perceptions regarding communicative role of heads of teaching departments in postgraduate colleges. For the purpose of reliability of the scale, a random sample of 60 (20 heads and 40 teachers) was selected for the pilot study. This number was excluded from the final sample. Cronbach's coefficient Alpha formula was used in estimating the internal consistency of the scale. Obtained Cronbach's Alpha was 0.937 of the scale. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient usually ranges between 0 and 1. There is no really lower limit to the coefficient. The nearer the reliability coefficient is to 1.0, the better the internal consistency of the item in the scale. In general the reliabilities less than 0.6 are considered to be poor, those in the 0.70 range are acceptable, and those over 0.8 are considered good (Sekaran, 1999: 311). George & Mallery (2003) gave these rules of thumb: " $\geq .9$  = Excellent,  $\geq .8$  = Good,  $\geq .7$  = Acceptable,  $\geq .6$  = Questionable,  $\geq .5$  = Poor, and  $\leq .5$  = Unacceptable" (cited in Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The scale was developed by the researcher himself, so its Cronbach's Alpha could not be compared to any other scale in the literature.

The content validity of the scale was checked by the researcher's Ph.D research supervisor and experts in social sciences.

### **3.5 Data analysis techniques**

The coded data were analyzed by utilizing statistical techniques Mean and Independent-Samples t-test. For the measurement of overall role of the heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication as perceived by teachers, Mean scores were placed into three categories viz:

(1) 0--2.49 = Below Average

(2) 2.50--3.49 = Average

(3) 3.50--5.00 = Above Average

Enueme & Egwunyenga (2008) categorized Mean scores into four categories in order to know principals' instructional leadership roles. These categories are as under:

3.50 – 4.00 = Very High Extent

2.50 – 3.49 = High Extent

1.50 – 2.49 = Low Extent

0.00 – 1.49 = Very Low Extent

Anyakoha, Uzuegbunam & Ezeike (1999) categorized Mean scores for the purpose of knowing the extent to which the channels of communication meet information needs of academics and administrators in Nigerian Universities. Mean scores were placed into the following three categories:

< 2.00 = Never meets information needs

2.00 – 2.49 = Meets information needs

2.50 – 3.00 = Always meets information needs

For the purpose of knowing the extent of attitude of different communities towards reproductive health education, Aziz (2009) placed Mean scores into the following three categories:

1 – 1.69 = Negative Attitude

1.70 – 2.39 = Moderate Attitude

2.40 – 3.00 = Positive Attitude (Aziz, 2009).

To find out Means difference between the views of natural and social sciences teachers, teachers of up to 10 and 11-20 years experience, up to 30 and 31-50 years age, lecturers and assistant professors, t-test was used. The use of t-test enables one to test whether there is or not significant difference between the samples Means. Typical value for the significance level set for testing null hypothesis was 0.05. Alpha level of statistical significance is placed at .05 for all types of research studies in social sciences (Stevens, 1996).

Two types of t-test may be performed:

1. Independent Samples: Cases are classified into two groups and a test of Mean difference is performed for specified variables.

2. Paired Samples: For paired observations arranged case wise, a test of treatment effects is performed. For example the same (similar) individual is measured before and after treatment.

The SPSS statistical software package, version 16.0, was used to analyze the quantitative data

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that Mean scores of all the items fall in Above Average Mean category (3.50-5.00) except items 1 and 9 which scores are 3.300 respectively. This means that role of heads of teaching departments is positive in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges as perceived by teachers.

Table 2 shows testing of significant difference between the perceptions of natural and social sciences departments' teachers about the communicative role of heads. Since  $p = 0.344 > \alpha = 0.05$ , so null hypothesis of no significant difference between the perceptions of natural and social sciences teachers about the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of natural and social sciences departments' teachers about the role of academic department heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges.

Table 3 shows testing of significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 10 years and 11-20 years work experience about the communicative role of heads. Since  $p = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ , so null hypothesis of no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 10 years and 11-20 years work experience about the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges is rejected. This means that there is significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 10 years and 11-20 years work experience about the role of academic department heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges.

Table 4 shows testing of significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 30 years and 31-50 years of age about the communicative role of heads. Since  $p = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ , so null hypothesis of no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 30 years and 31-50 years of age about the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges is rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers of up to 30 years and 31-50 years of age about the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges.

Table 5 shows testing of significant difference between the perceptions of lecturers and assistant professors about the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges. Since  $p = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ , so null hypothesis of no significant difference between the perceptions of lecturers and assistant professors about the role of heads of teaching departments in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges is rejected. This means that lecturers and assistant professors possess different views about the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges.

#### DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the views of teachers about the communicative role of heads. The Mean scores of all the items of the table fall in the above average Mean category except item one and nine, shows that teachers perceive that the role of heads is positive in promotion of communication on its all aspects. Sturo (2006) pointed out that information of job performance assisted in decision-making regarding promotion, demotion and transfer. Trust and commitment are developed among teachers through effective communication of heads. Team work, organizational communication and organizational trust are positively associated with effective commitment (Boon et al, 2006).

No significant difference was found between the perceptions of natural and social sciences departments' teachers about the communicative role of heads. The reasons of this insignificance difference may be:

1. The roles and responsibilities of the teachers of both the natural and social sciences departments are the same.
2. The official channels of communication are the same for the teachers of both disciplines.
3. The appointment and promotion criteria are the same for the teachers, of both the sciences in postgraduate colleges.
4. Equal professional development opportunities are available for the teachers, of both the sciences.
5. The performance appraisal and evaluation procedure are the same for the teachers of both the sciences.

Significant difference was reported between the perceptions of teachers of up to 10 years and 11-20 years work experience regarding the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges. Experience is much counted in the appointment of a head of teaching department. Usually an experienced teacher is appointed as a head of academic department. There are two separate set-ups of teaching departments: postgraduate college and

university teaching departments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Heads and teachers of postgraduate colleges are appointed by the Director of Colleges in KPK. These colleges are exclusively financed by provincial government of KPK. While universities are autonomous bodies, independent in making rules and regulations. Only guidelines are provided by HEC to the universities. Teachers and heads are appointed by the vice-chancellor. The heads of both institutions have similar responsibilities. They usually fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Academic leadership
2. Department governance
3. Staff guidance and management of performance
4. Finance and infrastructure management

Significant difference was found between the perceptions of teachers of up 30 years and 31-50 years age regarding the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the study of Zenger & Lawrence (1989). They revealed that age and tenure distribution had relationship with frequency of technical communication. McCann & Giles (2007) revealed that young workers experienced more difficulty in communicating with old workers as compare to their same age workers. People of different ages communicate differently (McCann et al, 2005). This means that age determines the patterns of communication. Minimum age is 18 years for the appointment of a government servant, and 60 years for retirement of an employee, in Pakistan. The same rule of age is applied to both heads and teachers. After retirement, a Ph.D degree holder can serve for the period of five years on contract basis in a university.

Significant difference was reported between the perceptions of lecturers and assistant professors regarding the role of heads in the promotion of communication in postgraduate colleges. By designation there are four categories of teachers in a postgraduate college. These are lecture, assistant professor, associate professor and professor. But the researcher only filled the questionnaires from lecturers and assistant professors. The teachers in capacity of associate professor and professor were either heads of teaching departments or were retired. That's why the researcher filled the questionnaires only from the lecturers and assistant professors.

Table 1: Show Means scores on items of questionnaire

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	100	3.3000	1.35214
2	100	3.8500	1.28216
3	100	4.3000	1.15032
4	100	4.0500	1.20918
5	100	3.8500	1.39534
6	100	3.7000	1.23501
7	100	4.05000	1.209182
8	100	3.9000	1.14150
9	100	3.3000	1.31426
10	100	4.1500	.91425
11	100	4.1000	1.18492
12	100	3.8500	1.35866
13	100	3.9500	1.32859
14	100	3.9500	1.29002
15	100	3.6500	1.32097
16	100	3.4500	1.29002
17	100	4.2000	1.12815
18	100	4.3500	.96792
19	100	3.8000	1.17207
20	100	3.8000	1.17207
21	100	4.0500	.97830
22	100	4.2000	1.03475
23	100	3.9500	1.20918
24	100	4.0000	1.10096
25	100	3.9000	1.26730
26	100	4.4000	.97442
27	100	4.2000	.98473

**Note:** Categorization of Mean

1. 0--2.49 =Below Average
2. 2.50--3.49 = Average
3. 3.50--5.00 = Above average

Table 2: Shows comparison between perceptions of natural and social sciences departments teachers

Discipline	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Natural	40	1.033	7.794	.954	62.65	.344	-4.79
Social	60	1.081	18.833				

Table 3: Shows comparison between perceptions of teachers of up to 10 and 11-20 years work experience

Experience	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Up to 10	50	25.45	10.07	6.49	42	.000	28.10
11-20	33	23.12	24.18				

Table 4: Shows comparison between perceptions of teachers of up to 30 and 31-50 years age

Age	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Up to 30	40	16.75	9.958	5.806	73	.000	22.250
31-50	55	13.37	25.90				

Table 5: Shows comparison between perceptions of lecturers and assistant professors

Designation	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Lecturer	60	10.59	18.61	5.03	72	.000	21.66
Assistant Professor	40	12.80	22.58				

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