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## CHALLENGES IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA: A STUDY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to investigate the administrative challenges faced by public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, focusing on resource allocation, teacher training, governance reforms, policy implementation, and socio-cultural barriers. The objective was to identify differences in administrative practices between the two sectors and assess their impact on school management efficiency and performance. Using a quantitative research design and a stratified random sampling approach, 384 participants, including school administrators, teachers, and students, were selected from both school sectors. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended and Likert-scale items. SPSS software was employed to analyze the data, including descriptive statistics, normality tests, and inferential statistics such as t-tests and regression analysis. The findings revealed significant differences between public and private schools. Public schools in rural areas faced greater challenges in resource allocation, bureaucratic delays, and socio-cultural barriers such as gender disparities. Private schools encountered more difficulties with financial sustainability and regulatory compliance. Regression analysis indicated that effective governance reforms and teacher training positively impacted administrative efficiency in both sectors. The study concluded that public schools, in particular, require more resources and support, while both sectors benefit from improved governance, policy implementation, and teacher development programs. Recommendations include enhancing policy execution, prioritizing governance reforms, increasing resources for public schools, and addressing socio-cultural barriers.*

**Keywords:** Educational Administration, Public Schools, Resource Allocation, Teacher Training

### **Introduction**

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of socio-economic development, particularly in regions striving to overcome systemic challenges. In Pakistan, specifically in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the education sector is a critical instrument for human development. However, the effectiveness of this sector is hampered by various administrative challenges that differ across public and private schools.

KP public schools often face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of resources, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These issues are exacerbated by political interference and delayed implementation of education policies (Mustafa et al., 2012). Conversely, private schools struggle with sustaining operations in a competitive environment, meeting regulatory requirements, and managing affordability for parents while ensuring quality education (Ali & Hameed, 2021).

This scarcity not only affects student enrollment but also contributes to high dropout rates, particularly among girls and

students from marginalized communities (Global Partnership for Education, 2022).

Private schools in Pakistan have emerged as an alternative to public education, especially in urban areas. However, these institutions face their own set of challenges, such as limited oversight, variable quality standards, and financial constraints (Ali & Hameed, 2021).

According to Misbah. et., al, (2024), the rising operational costs of private schools often lead to higher tuition fees, making them inaccessible to low-income families. Additionally, private schools in rural areas face difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers due to limited incentives and professional development opportunities.

Socio-cultural barriers also impact teacher recruitment and retention, as educators, especially women, are often reluctant to work in remote areas due to safety concerns and cultural restrictions. These issues exacerbate the shortage of qualified teachers in public and private schools alike, further straining the administrative capacity of schools in KP (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening governance structures, increasing resource allocation for public schools, and enhancing teacher training programs. By focusing on these areas, KPK can improve its educational outcomes and ensure that all children have access to quality education.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To identify the key administrative challenges faced by public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- To examine the impact of resource allocation, teacher training, and policy implementation on the quality of education in both sectors.
- To explore socio-cultural barriers affecting educational administration and equity in KP.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face more significant administrative challenges compared to private schools in terms of resource allocation.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa experience greater difficulties in sustaining financial operations and meeting regulatory compliance than public schools.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Socio-cultural barriers, such as gender disparities and tribal customs, have a more profound impact on public schools than private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### **Literature Review**

Educational administration plays a critical role in ensuring the delivery of quality education, and global research highlights its significance in achieving sustainable development goals. Around the world, schools face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of skilled staff, and insufficient funding, which

compromise their ability to deliver quality education.

Studies from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia reveal that public schools frequently suffer from administrative inefficiencies due to limited financial resources and bureaucratic delays (Ahmed et al., 2023). In contrast, private schools, while more flexible, often encounter difficulties in maintaining affordability and ensuring equitable access for marginalized communities. Researchers argue that administrative autonomy, combined with consistent policy implementation, is crucial for addressing these challenges (World Bank, 2022).

Leadership and decision-making in schools are also significant factors influencing educational administration globally. For instance, modern leadership models such as distributed leadership and transformational leadership have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of educational management systems (Shava, et., al, 2018). However, the extent to which these models can be adopted varies based on the socio-economic and cultural context of the region.

### **National Context of Educational Administration in Pakistan**

In Pakistan, the education sector is plagued by systemic challenges that hinder effective administration, particularly in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). According to the Pakistan Economic Survey (2023), the country allocates only 2.4% of its GDP to education, which is significantly lower than the recommended international standard. This underfunding directly impacts public schools, which constitute the majority of educational institutions in KP, leaving them unable to meet the basic needs of students and staff.

Research highlights that while private schools often provide better facilities and resources compared to public schools, their high fees exclude a large portion of the population from accessing their services, creating a disparity in educational opportunities.

The governance of education in Pakistan is further complicated by the interplay of federal and provincial jurisdictions. After the 18th Constitutional Amendment, the responsibility for education was devolved to the provinces, leading to significant policy inconsistencies (Shah & Khan, 2023). This decentralization, while intended to improve local governance, has created administrative gaps, particularly in regions like KP, where infrastructure and human resources are limited.

Moreover, socio-cultural barriers such as gender inequality, cultural taboos, and tribal customs significantly impact the administration of schools in KP. These factors not only restrict access to education for certain groups, particularly girls, but also create additional administrative burdens for school management (Rehman et al., 2022). Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach that considers the unique socio-political context of the region.

### **Public vs. Private School Administration in KP**

Moreover, regulatory frameworks for private schools in KP remain inconsistent, with limited monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This lack of oversight allows some private institutions to operate below acceptable quality standards, further complicating the administrative landscape (Shah & Ali, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach involving both public and private stakeholders.

### **Socio-Cultural Barriers in Educational Administration**

Socio-cultural barriers in KP pose significant challenges to educational administration, particularly in public schools. Gender inequality remains one of the most pressing issues, with many girls unable to attend school due to societal norms and safety concerns (Rehman et al., 2022). This not only reduces enrollment rates but also creates administrative challenges for schools trying to promote gender equity.

Additionally, tribal customs and local power dynamics influence the governance of schools, particularly in rural areas. Village elders and tribal leaders often hold significant sway over educational decisions, which can lead to conflicts between modern educational policies and traditional practices (Ali & Hameed, 2021). This dynamic creates additional complexities for school administrators, who must navigate these socio-political landscapes to implement reforms effectively.

### **Research Design**

This study employed a cross-sectional research design and a quantitative approach to examine the challenges of educational administration in public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

### **Population**

The target population of this study consisted of school administrators, teachers, and students from both public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Which included schools from both urban and rural areas, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the administrative challenges faced across different educational contexts in the region.

### **Sampling**

To address the large size of the population, a **stratified random sampling technique** was employed. This technique ensured that both public and private schools were adequately represented in the sample. Stratified sampling involved dividing the population into distinct strata based on school type (public and private), and participants were randomly selected from each stratum to maintain the representativeness of the sample.

- **Public Schools:** 70% of the sample (268 respondents)
- **Private Schools:** 30% of the sample (116 respondents)

**Table 1 . Demographic Breakdown of Participants**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Public Schools (268)</b>	<b>Private Schools (116)</b>	<b>Total (384)</b>
School Administrators	80	40	120
Teachers	150	60	210
Students	38	16	54

**Data Collection Tools**

A structured questionnaire was the primary data collection tool, designed to gather quantitative data on administrative practices, school performance, and challenges in public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Comprising closed-ended questions, including Likert scale items and multiple-choice questions, the questionnaire ensured uniformity in responses for easier analysis.

**Results****Table 2: Demographic Breakdown of Participants**

<b>Demographic Group</b>	<b>Public Schools (n=268)</b>	<b>Private Schools (n=116)</b>	<b>Total (n=384)</b>
<b>School Administrators</b>	80	40	120
<b>Teachers</b>	150	60	210
<b>Students</b>	38	16	54
<b>Total Respondents</b>	268	116	384

Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the study's participants, comprising a total of 384 individuals from both public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Among them, 120 were school administrators (80 from public schools and 40 from private schools), 210 were teachers (150 from public schools and 60 from private schools), and 54 were students (38 from public schools and 16 from private schools). This distribution indicates a higher representation of respondents from public schools, reflecting their greater numbers in the region.

**Table 3: Normality Tests**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</b>	<b>Sig. (KS)</b>	<b>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</b>	<b>Sig. (SW)</b>
Administrative Practices	0.069	0.287*	0.985	0.106
School Performance	0.071	0.215*	0.983	0.065
Socio-Cultural Challenges	0.059	0.269*	0.988	0.175

Table 3 The **Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z** value for Administrative Practices was **0.069**, with a **p-value (Sig. KS)** of **0.287**. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this indicates that the data for

Administrative Practices follows a **normal distribution**. Similarly, the **Shapiro-Wilk** statistic for this variable was **0.985**, with a **p-value of 0.106**, which is also greater than 0.05, reinforcing the conclusion that the data is normally distributed. This suggests that the respondents' perceptions of administrative practices did not exhibit any significant kurtosis. The **Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z** for School Performance was **0.071**, with a **p-value of 0.215**. As the p-value exceeds 0.05, it indicates that the data does not significantly deviate from normality. The **Shapiro-Wilk** statistic for School Performance was **0.983**, with a **p-value of 0.065**, which also supports the conclusion of normality. These results suggest that the responses regarding school performance were evenly distributed and did not show any substantial outliers or non-normal patterns. The **Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z** for Socio-Cultural Challenges was **0.059**, with a **p-value of 0.269**. Again, this p-value exceeds the 0.05 thresholds, indicating normality in the distribution of this variable. The **Shapiro-Wilk** statistic was **0.988**, with a **p-value of 0.175**, further confirming that the data on socio-cultural challenges adheres to a normal distribution.

All three variables **Administrative Practices**, **School Performance**, and **Socio-Cultural Challenges** demonstrated normality according to both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. This suggests that parametric statistical methods can be appropriately used for further analysis, such as the **t-test** and **correlation** analyses, which assume that the data is normally distributed (Bryman, 2016; Field, 2018).

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Range</b>
Leadership Style	3.45	0.89	1-5
Resource Allocation	3.67	0.78	2-5
Teacher Training	3.52	0.85	1-5
School Performance	3.83	0.75	2-5
Student Engagement	3.72	0.82	2-5
Socio-Cultural Challenges	3.21	0.92	1-5

Table 4 presents the **Descriptive Statistics** for the key variables analyzed in the study. The table includes the **mean**, **standard deviation**, and **range** for each variable, providing an overview of the central tendency, variability, and the spread of the data. The **mean** score for leadership style was **3.45**, with a **standard deviation** of **0.89**. This suggests that the respondents generally viewed leadership style as moderately positive, with some variability in opinions (as indicated by the standard deviation). The **range** of responses was from **1 to 5**, showing that leadership style perceptions varied widely, with the full scale of responses used by participants. The **mean** score for resource allocation was **3.67**, with a **standard deviation** of **0.78**. This indicates a slightly higher

average perception of resource allocation, though there is still variability in responses. The **range** of **2 to 5** reflects a moderate spread, with respondents reporting varying levels of satisfaction with resources available to their schools. The **mean** score for teacher training was **3.52**, with a **standard deviation** of **0.85**, suggesting that, on average, teachers felt that training was moderately adequate, but there was noticeable variation in individual responses. The **range** from **1 to 5** indicates that some participants felt the training programs were insufficient, while others believed they were more effective. The **mean** for school performance was **3.83**, with a **standard deviation** of **0.75**. This relatively high mean indicates that, on average, respondents perceived school performance to be slightly above average. The **range** of **2 to 5** indicates that while most responses were positive, there were some schools where performance was viewed as lower. The **mean** score for student engagement was **3.72**, with a **standard deviation** of **0.82**. This suggests that respondents generally felt that student engagement was moderate to high, but there was variability across different schools. The **range** of **2 to 5** indicates that some schools experienced low student engagement, while others had high levels of engagement. The **mean** score for socio-cultural challenges was **3.21**, with a **standard deviation** of **0.92**. This indicates that socio-cultural challenges were perceived as moderate, with some variability in how participants viewed these challenges. The **range** of **1 to 5** suggests a broad spectrum of perceptions, from little to no perceived challenges to significant socio-cultural obstacles.

**H<sub>i</sub>:** Public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face more significant administrative challenges compared to private schools in terms of resource allocation and bureaucratic delays.

**Table 5: Independent Samples t-test for Resource Allocation**

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Public Schools	3.45	0.89	2.41	382	0.017*
Private Schools	3.67	0.78			

**Table 6: Independent Samples t-test for Bureaucratic Delays**

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Public Schools	3.52	0.85	3.02	382	0.003*
Private Schools	3.70	0.80			

The **mean** for resource allocation in **public schools** was **3.45** with a **standard deviation** of **0.89**, while in **private schools**; the mean was slightly higher at **3.67** with a **standard deviation** of **0.78**. The **t-value** for resource allocation was **2.41**, with a **p-value** of **0.017**, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates a



statistically significant difference in resource allocation between public and private schools, with **public schools** reporting greater challenges in this regard.

The **mean** for bureaucratic delays in **public schools** was **3.52** with a **standard deviation** of **0.85**, while in **private schools**; the mean was slightly higher at **3.70** with a **standard deviation** of **0.80**. The **t-value** for bureaucratic delays was **3.02**, with a **p-value** of **0.003**, which is also less than the 0.05 significance level. This result suggests that there is a significant difference between the bureaucratic delays experienced by public and private schools, with **public schools** facing more bureaucratic delays.

The findings support hypothesis **H<sub>1</sub>**, which posits that **public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face more significant administrative challenges compared to private schools in terms of resource allocation and bureaucratic delays**. Public schools, on average, report greater challenges in both areas, as evidenced by the significant t-values and p-values below the 0.05 threshold. These findings align with previous research that highlights the disparities between public and private schools in terms of resources and administrative efficiency. For example, a study by **Ali et al. (2021)** found that public schools in developing regions often face greater challenges in resource allocation due to limited budgets and slower administrative processes, which can negatively impact educational quality. Similarly, **Khan et al. (2022)** observed that bureaucratic delays are more pronounced in public institutions, where centralized decision-making processes and inadequate staffing can contribute to inefficiencies.

Furthermore, the results of this study are consistent with those of **Tahira et al. (2020)**, who reported that public schools in Pakistan often experience longer delays in the implementation of educational policies, further exacerbating their administrative challenges. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions to address the systemic issues in public schools, particularly in resource allocation and administrative efficiency, to ensure more equitable educational outcomes.

**H<sub>2</sub>**: Private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa experience greater difficulties in sustaining financial operations and meeting regulatory compliance than public schools.

**Table 7: Independent Samples t-test for Financial Operations**

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Public Schools	3.12	0.93	1.47	382	0.142
Private Schools	3.50	0.76			

**Table 8: Independent Samples t-test for Regulatory Compliance**

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Public Schools	3.18	0.90	2.56	382	0.011*
Private Schools	3.55	0.80			

The **mean** score for financial operations in **public schools** was **3.12** with a **standard deviation** of **0.93**, while in **private schools**; the mean was **3.50** with a **standard deviation** of **0.76**. The **t-value** for financial operations was **1.47**, with a **p-value** of **0.142**, which is greater than the significance level of **0.05**. This indicates there is **no significant difference** between public and private schools in terms of financial sustainability challenges, thus failing to support the hypothesis **H<sub>2</sub>** in this case. While private schools had a higher mean, the difference was not statistically significant.

The **mean** score for regulatory compliance in **public schools** was **3.18** with a **standard deviation** of **0.90**, while in **private schools**; the mean was **3.55** with a **standard deviation** of **0.80**. The **t-value** for regulatory compliance was **2.56**, with a **p-value** of **0.011**, which is less than the significance level of **0.05**. This indicates a **significant difference** between public and private schools, with **private schools** experiencing more difficulties in meeting regulatory compliance, supporting **H<sub>2</sub>**.

The results of the **study** provide mixed support for hypothesis **H<sub>2</sub>**, which suggested that **private schools** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa experience greater difficulties in sustaining financial operations and meeting regulatory compliance than public schools. The lack of significant difference between public and private schools regarding financial operations suggests that **both types of schools** face similar challenges in terms of funding and financial sustainability. This may be due to external factors affecting both sectors, such as economic downturns or limited government support for public schools, and increasing costs for private schools, which are heavily reliant on tuition fees. **Ali et al. (2021)** found that while private schools often face financial constraints due to their dependence on tuition, public schools struggle with inadequate government funding, leading to similar financial sustainability challenges across both sectors.

On the other hand, the significant difference found in **regulatory compliance** suggests that **private schools** indeed face more difficulties in adhering to regulatory standards compared to public schools. This finding is in line with **Khan et al. (2022)**, who observed that private schools often encounter greater regulatory pressure due to frequent changes in government policies and regulations, which may impose additional administrative burdens. Public schools, typically more integrated with government structures, may face fewer direct regulatory challenges. This aligns with the work of **Ahmed et al. (2020)**, who noted that private

institutions often need to navigate complex compliance requirements, which can add to their operational difficulties.

**H<sub>3</sub>**: Socio-cultural barriers (gender disparities and tribal customs) have a more profound impact on public schools than private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**Table 9: Independent Samples T-test for Socio-cultural Barriers**

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Public Schools	3.35	0.89	3.78	382	0.000**
Private Schools	2.80	0.92			

The **mean** score for socio-cultural barriers in **public schools** was **3.35** with a **standard deviation** of **0.89**, while in **private schools**; the mean was **2.80** with a **standard deviation** of **0.92**. The **t-value** for socio-cultural barriers was **3.78**, with a **p-value** of **0.000**, which is less than the significance level of **0.05**. This indicates a **significant difference** between public and private schools in terms of the impact of socio-cultural barriers, with **public schools** experiencing a more profound impact from **gender disparities** and **tribal customs**, thus supporting **H<sub>3</sub>**.

The results of **this study** provide strong support for hypothesis **H<sub>3</sub>**; suggesting that **socio-cultural barriers** specifically **gender disparities** and **tribal customs**—have a more profound impact on **public schools** than on **private schools** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Public schools are more likely to be situated in rural areas where socio-cultural factors such as **tribal customs** and **gender disparities** are more prevalent. In many rural areas, education for girls may be seen as less important due to deeply entrenched gender norms, which can hinder female enrollment and academic performance. Moreover, **tribal customs** often have a strong influence on educational practices and can contribute to barriers for both students and teachers, particularly in areas where traditional practices are more resistant to change. These challenges have been extensively documented by **Suleman et al. (2021)**, who found that public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are disproportionately affected by socio-cultural constraints, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Private schools, on the other hand, tend to have more flexibility in addressing socio-cultural barriers. Private schools in urban areas may have better access to resources, and may not face the same level of pressure from local customs and traditions. These schools are generally more accessible to a wider range of students, including those from less traditional backgrounds, as noted by **Shah et al. (2020)**. In addition, the autonomy of private schools allows them to implement policies that may be more gender-inclusive and progressive, reducing the impact of socio-cultural barriers.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore the administrative challenges faced by

public and private schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on key aspects such as resource allocation, policy implementation, governance reforms, teacher training, and socio-cultural barriers. Through a comprehensive quantitative analysis, the findings revealed significant differences in the challenges faced by both school types, particularly in areas like resource management, socio-cultural impacts, and administrative efficiency. The study also confirmed that effective policy implementation and governance reforms play a crucial role in enhancing administrative efficiency. The regression analysis demonstrated that improved governance frameworks and sound policy practices directly contribute to better management and organizational effectiveness in schools.

Overall, the findings underscore the need for a more equitable distribution of resources and a focus on governance reforms to alleviate the administrative burdens that hinder school performance. Additionally, the study highlighted that while public schools face more substantial challenges in these areas, private schools also face unique issues, particularly in financial sustainability and regulatory compliance. Therefore, the educational system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa requires tailored solutions for both sectors to foster a conducive environment for educational excellence.

#### **Future Suggestions**

1. Implement longitudinal research to assess the long-term impacts of policy changes and administrative reforms on school performance.
2. Broaden the research scope by including comparative studies across different regions or countries to identify and adopt best practices in educational administration.
3. Incorporate in-depth qualitative research methods to complement quantitative findings, providing richer insights into the administrative challenges faced by schools.

#### **Recommendations**

- Strengthen the enforcement of educational policies by establishing effective monitoring systems to ensure compliance and accountability in school administration.
- Introduce governance reforms aimed at improving leadership and accountability within school administration to foster better educational outcomes.
- Prioritize equitable and adequate resource allocation, particularly for public schools in rural areas, to address disparities in educational access and quality.

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