

7-1-2016

Strategic shift towards knowledge based educational management in Pakistan

Ahmad Raza
University of Management and Technology, Lahore

Ejaz Ahmad
Govt. Science College, Lahore

Muhammad Ali
National College of Business Administration, Lahore

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.iba.edu.pk/businessreview>



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

Recommended Citation

Raza, A., Ahmad, E., & Ali, M. (2016). Strategic shift towards knowledge based educational management in Pakistan. *Business Review*, 11(2), 33-40. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.54784/1990-6587.1066>

This article is brought to you by *iRepository* for open access under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](#) and is available at <https://ir.iba.edu.pk/businessreview/vol11/iss2/3>. For more information, please contact irepository@iba.edu.pk.

ARTICLE

Strategic Shift towards Knowledge-Based Educational Management in Pakistan

Ahmad Raza

University of Management and Technology, Lahore

Ejaz Ahmad

Govt. Science College, Lahore

Muhammad Ali

National College of Business Administration, Lahore

Abstract

Three approaches characterize the management of education in Pakistan: historical-traditional; colonial administrative; and modern western. A deficiency common to all three approaches is that a cultural mindset legitimizes their respective structures and hierarchies, leaving no room for the growth of human capital and thereby stifling creativity, innovation and adaptation to the emerging needs of society. Knowledge Economy considerations suggest that we take a different approach to education management to meet the challenges of the new millennium and transform Pakistan into a knowledge democracy.

Key Words: Knowledge-based management, education, cultural mindset, knowledge era.

Introduction

The educational management has been left far behind, particularly in the context of Pakistani society, to meet the challenges of the emerging global social, economic and technological changes. The resource-based economies and societies are rapidly moving towards the knowledge-based economies and societies, wherein human ability to create and innovate new technologies as well as systems to utilize them have assumed a manifest competitive advantage (Faris, 2004). In these changing global scenario, concepts such as lifelong learning, social capital, intellectual capital, knowledge creation etc have taken people and organizations by storm (Faris, 2004; Stewart, 1997; Nonaka, 1995). Nations like Canada, Australia, US, European Union, Japan, Korea are quickly shifting towards knowledge-based educational management in order to respond to the creative challenges of the knowledge-based economy. The organizations like UNESCO have also initiated debate and discussion on for example the nature of lifelong learning and how it can be incorporated into the existing socio-economic systems of the world societies for enhancing their human capital index. Some of the key concepts of UNESCO's strategy for learning for life are:

- a) Throughout life cycle a person continues to learn. He/she improves upon the past learning according to new environmental challenges.
- b) A person also interacts with a wide range of social settings in life. The new social contexts necessitate new forms of learnings. This learning might range from home, community, school and workplace to broader societal contexts. These contexts might include public administration, economic policy, public education and voluntary and civil society.

- c) Then leaning take place in formalized and non-formalized sectors. Certified and non-certified educational qualification and trainings are included in these two categories of learning.
- d) Bothe organizational and individual learning needs to be brought in line with the comprehensive plans for social, cultural and economic objectives. (Faris, 2004).

We, in Pakistan need to integrate UNESCO's strategic outlines for knowledge based educational management in order to cater to the need of the knowledge-based economy and society. We still lack a comprehensive national strategy to transform our country into a knowledge-based educational country, where human capital is harnessed and prepared to contribute effectively towards the development of a true knowledge-based economy and society. In what follows we have partially attempted to respond to this pressing need.

Systems of Educational Management in Pakistan

Currently, three systems of educational management are in vogue in Pakistan. These are as follows:

- a) Historical-Traditional system of educational management
- b) Colonial-Administrative System of educational management
- c) Modern Western System of educational management

Each system of educational management has its virtues and vices. We discuss hereunder some of the salient characteristics of each one of these and demonstrate that they are suffering from a cultural mindset, which each one's practitioners' believe of the intrinsic superiority of their educational system over their rivals and, is hard to break away, thus crippling the national social system to move forward and meet the challenges of the globalization and technological innovations.

Historical-Traditional System of Educational Management

The historical traditional system of educational management in Pakistan is the cultural legacy of Islamic Mughal rule in the sub-continent. It is also known as the Madrasah system. This system teaches mostly traditional Islamic sciences, primarily focusing on the teaching and commentary of Quran and Hadis. Certain auxiliary sciences such as arithmetic, logic, history, philosophy, calligraphy, literature and stylistics are also part of the curriculum, so long as they help in advancing the understanding of the core sciences of the Quran and Hadis. Much of this 17th& 18th century curriculum, called Dars-i-Nazami remains unchanged except for few specialties which are carried out by each madrasah according to its theological school. The educational management of the madrasah system has enjoyed relative freedom and autonomy outside the control of the Government even after Independence in 1947. However, recent political and social developments have inspired the GOP to bring these Madrasahs into the mainstream national educational administration. This would not only broaden the scope of the Madrasah education but enable them to interact and respond the contemporary global societies in a rational way. There is vast human capital lying at the disposal of these Madrasah, which needs to be cultivated, mobilized and integrated into the national development objectives of the Pakistani society. This would not only end the cultural isolation of the madrasah educational system, but enable them to contribute towards a healthier and tolerant society, where diversity instead of conformity is the desired moral norm.

Colonial-Administrative System of Educational Management

This system is the cultural legacy of British Raj in the sub-continent and still represents the dominant paradigm of educational management in Pakistan. It is characterized

by the large scale educational bureaucracies, controlling, planning and administering the educational system both in the provinces and the Federal levels, without having any realistic assessment of the needs and aspirations of the local communities. Ironically, the idea of a community participation in educational management as well as curriculum design has hardly been given a due consideration in Pakistani society, which partially explains the disarray in which we find our educational system, today. The Public education, its administration and design, right from the primary schools up to the university levels remained under the tight bureaucratic control of a centralized authority which has a very little contact with the local communities and their aspirations. This has caused serious structural dysfunction in the system of public education in Pakistan. Some of these problems are absentee teachers, ghost schools, political interference in postings and transfers of the teachers, *sifarish* and corruption culture in educational evaluation and assessment etc. This has greatly impacted the credibility of diplomas and degrees obtained from the public sector educational institutions. The curriculum and pedagogical skill needed to meet the challenges of the Knowledge era are totally ignored in these public sector schools and colleges. Learning strategies practiced in these institutions are largely teacher centered and downplay the changing socio-economic realities of a free and democratic world, which demand that learners are duly placed at the center of knowledge activities, giving them room for self-expression, creativity and innovation; values which are more in consonance with the spirit of globalization. The bureaucratization of the educational management has led, eventually to the deterioration of social and economic lot of the people, thus creating gross resource inequalities in different regions of the country. At the moment, GOP, through Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, is trying to bring some standards of excellence both in teaching and administration of educational system in Public sector institutions, but it needs to be seen as to how their efforts bear fruition, given the bureaucratic mindset of these institutions.

Modern Western Educational Management

This system of educational management is practiced in most of the private sector schools, with the exception of some public sector schools in Pakistan. The schools and colleges run by this system are totally following the Western pedagogical and administrative practices, both in function and structure. They are affiliated with the British and American universities and examination boards, (e.g. GCE, O/A Levels, or American High school diplomas) where local students receive secondary and post secondary qualification. In some cases external degree programmes are also offered by these institutions. The teaching, curriculum and administration of these private schools is organized around the Western educational management practices, which are liberal, secular in outlook and emphasize freedom and autonomy for the learners. Mostly people from wealthy /elite classes benefit from this educational system. The system however lacks cultural relevance, as most people being Orthodox Muslims have serious reservations about its secular worldview, and perceive it as a symbol of continued Western domination of the national educational, social and cultural life.

Having discussed all the prevalent educational management systems, currently in vogue, we would like to underscore the common malady, which is symptomatic of all of these three educational cultures, viz; lack of communication borne out of a cultural mindset rooted in suspicion, hatred, and claim to moral superiority over the rivals systems. We propose that, it is high time that this cultural mindset of parochialism is set aside, and all of these educational systems come hand in hand and contribute towards the overall national human capital development in their own right. Hereunder we, propose a national strategy to shift the focus of our educational management system from institution-based (which heavily relies on educational infrastructure, such as large bureaucratic set up, buildings, books etc) to knowledge-based one(which emphasize the creative integration of communications and technological innovations, and human intangible knowledge for continuous improvement,

through networked learning as well as administration of educational system). At this juncture of our national history, technology offers us a great hope and a promising future.

Strategies for Knowledge-Based Educational Management in Pakistan

We earnestly need to reconstruct our educational management, in order to prepare our human capital to meet the ever unfolding challenges of Knowledge Era and globalization. This can only be achieved in a civic culture of participation, collaboration and tolerance, and not that of social privileges, hegemonies and bureaucratization. The seamless transformation of our bureaucratic educational management to one based on knowledge, requires a change in ‘mindset’ and ‘philosophy’ of our people (Senge, 1994; Deming, 1986). Although, our founding fathers, Jinnah and Iqbal created the state on the remarkable principles of Islamic republicanism, inherited through the glorious historical tradition, established by none else but the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) himself, the successive generations of leaders as well as people have failed to actualize this principle in reality. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) was a profound advocate of knowledge and conceived the social, political, economic, moral and cultural organization of the Muslim society on the principle of knowledge and critical intellectual engagement (Iqbal, 1983). He exhorted everyone to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. Several contemporary Muslim social scientists have also spoken that Muslim society is essentially a knowledge society (Sardar, 1993; Alfaruqi, 1986). Now in an age of communication and technological innovations; history has afforded us an opportunity to restructure our society on the principle of knowledge.

Mr. Freire (1972), in his book, “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed” several years ago wrote that, “many political and educational plans failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal view of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their actions), the men-in-situation toward whom their programme was ostensibly directed” (cit. in Moore, 2003). We need to heed to this advice very seriously. Men-in-situation are the people in ordinary communities, living ordinary lives. Their social lives should be the focus of our new knowledge-based educational management system in Pakistan. Human communities at the gross root levels, both in cities and rural areas, have never been at the center of our educational management. We need to integrate communities at the local levels and make them focus of a networked knowledge-based educational system. In order to carry out an effective restructuring of our educational management, we propose the following strategies.

- a) Lifelong learning through learning networks at the community levels.
- b) Social capital development
- c) Learning networks of formal and non-formal institutions from community to national level.

In the following sub-section we discuss Lifelong Learning and Social Capital development as two most effective strategies for making our educational management a knowledge-based one.

Lifelong Learning

R.H Dave has defined lifelong learning as:

“A comprehensive concept which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning extended throughout the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and professional life. It seeks to view education in its totality and includes learning that occurs in the home, school, community, and workplace, and through the mass media and other situations and structures for acquiring and enhancing enlightenment” (Himmelstrup, 1981). This theme of lifelong learning needs to be integrated at all levels of

our social system. This can be done by initiating a process of social change in the basic way our local communities define and perform their role in creating a knowledge society. We have got to bring down the centralized notions of educational management to face the realities of Knowledge economy and respond to the challenges posed by the technological revolution. Unless communities at the grass root levels are not sufficiently, mobilized towards, what Peter Senge (1994) termed as ‘shared vision’ of learning to unlearn the culture of status quo and its reactions to growth and development, relearning to do and manage our education in an innovative and responsible manner, applying technological innovations and scientific inventions in aid to teaching and management of education, the concept of launching the knowledge-based educational management would sound out of place. Traditional bureaucratic view of educational management, where powerful lay down rules to govern the politics of education have to be brought in synchronization to the aspirations and needs of, what Freire (1970) referred to as the ‘men-in-situation’—ordinary folks at the community levels. The strategy of lifelong learning must unfurl itself from the center of community social organization and move outward in spirals of learning networks, linking communities, after communities from local to national levels. These communities should develop their own cable, radio, television networks through either internet or wireless technologies—in short create an information-communications base, which would then enable these communities to transform themselves into micro islets of knowledge, coming in contact with knowledge islets of other communities and thus linking themselves into learning regions in broader socio-economic zones of the nation. Now this also explains the reasons behind the failures of much of our mass literacy programs either through formal, distance or informal methods, due to their overlook of the focal role of communities and emphasis on centralization and bureaucratization of institutions and organizations engaged in spreading mass education. The needs of educational management in a knowledge based society and economy are entirely different and must incorporate continuous and lifelong learning to prepare our human capital for leadership roles in the global arena. In order to achieve the objective of a knowledge-based educational system in Pakistan, we must strategize for, “building on four pillars that are the foundation of education, learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together” (Delors report,1996).

Social Capital Development

“Social capital refers to the values and beliefs that citizens share in their everyday dealings and which give meaning and provide design for all sorts of rules. The word ‘capital’ implies that we are dealing with an asset. The word ‘social’ tell us that it is an asset attained through membership of a community. Social capital is accumulated within the community through processes of interaction and learning” (Maskell, 2000).

“The creation of human capital is by its nature a social, and not an individual process. Human skills only grow if one generation teaches the next what it has learned so that the second generation can devote itself expanding existing knowledge and acquiring new skills rather than to rediscovering and relearning what the previous generation has already mastered”. (Thurow,2000).

According to Putnam (2000), Hanifan, an American state supervisor of rural schools underscored the significance of participation and engagement of community for growing and developing schools. L.J.Hanifan, way back in 1916 for the first time coined the term “social capital.” The link between social capital and education is historic one (Faris, 2004).

The concept of human capital has now become firmly established in literature of economics, having global implications for performance and productivity, although some of its conceptual details are still being contested; however great care is being applied to clarify its definition and different tangible metrics. (Rubenson, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Cavaye, 2004).

The sustainable economic and social development of a society largely depends upon the effective integration of its social and human capital. We in Pakistan urgently need to harness our social as well as human capital both in life-span and life-wide dimensions. In this regards Organization of European Cooperation and Development (OECD) has prepared a seminal report (2001) which discusses the significance of social and human capital in the overall socio-economic development of the future societies and communities. In order to achieve, sustainable social and economic development, the report has, emphasized the roles of human and social capital in the development philosophy and strategy. (OECD2001).

Faris (2004) has discussed that acquisition of knowledge and learning of new skills continues during the entire life cycle of an individual. One keeps on learning, both lifelong and life-wide contexts. It happens from schools to broader institutions of social and civil trainings. Adult education, distance and correspondence education, online and e-learning, all are different aspects of lifelong learning process. When we look at the human capital, we observe that it is developed in the contexts of following social settings:

- a. Early childcare and family settings.
- b. Adult education, labor market trainings, early childhood, school-based compulsory education, vocational training and education, secondary and post-secondary education as well as tertiary and higher education.
- c. Learning by participation through professional networks such as research and innovation teams. Workplace assumes a very significant core in this informal mode of learning and training.
- d. On the job daily living and civic activities and learning of the individual. (Faris, 2004).

The OECD report has defined the human capital as, “the knowledge, skills, competencies and attribute embodied in the individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” The report also underscores that social capital consists of “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within theory among groups”. On the relationship of social and human capital, Ron Faris (2004) has made the following comments:

“It distinguishes social from both human and physical capital in that it is relational rather than the exclusive property on an individual; is a public good shared by a group; is produced by societal investments of time and effort albeit in a less direct manner than human or physical capital; and is a product of inherited culture and norms of behavior”. Three types of social capital have been identified by Faris as follows:

- a. Life-wide bonds of family, ethnic and community groups are characterized as bonding capital.
- b. Horizontal social connections across community and family boundaries can constitute the bridging capital. Though weaker in stature but is very expansive in implications.
- c. Vertical ties and social connections between political elites and general public, and individuals from different social classes come to form the linking capital. Power and social status plays a very crucial role in the formation of the linking capital.

We need to adopt strategies which facilitate the integration of vast social and human capital embedded in the formal and informal sectors of the educational system as well as civil society organizations. The role of communities has been missing in our national strategy on educational planning and management. This can be accomplished by placing communities at the foci of the knowledge-based educational management in the knowledge era to respond

creatively to the challenges posed by the globalization of economies and technological innovations, thereby preparing our human resources for the leadership roles in the new knowledge economy and society. The inevitable linkage of education with the development of social and human capital have been stressed by several researchers and we must clearly assess implication for such unfolding scenarios of competitiveness and performance (Putnam, 2000; Balatti & Falk, 2001). We can achieve a strategic advantage over rival economies of the region in particular and the world at large, by an expanding utilization of our social and human capital by devising a knowledge-based educational management system. This can be done by linking them (all of the three educational systems practiced in Pakistan) and bringing in non-formal and informal sectors of education and learning such as NGOs, civil society organizations, distance learning institutions such as Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University into a socially coherent and accessible system of learning networks. Both knowledge and access to knowledge must be available to all citizens of the state, in a true republican spirit on which the nation was created, allowing free spirit of inquiry and cultural diversity present in our society to blossom and grow, and in turn contribute towards the national goals of socio-economic development for the common good of the maximum people. Knowledge-based educational management offers us both challenge and an opportunity for the new millennia and the only way out for the realization of mass social development, such as literacy and poverty alleviation.

Suggestions and Policy Recommendations

Some of the useful practices are described hereunder for implementation by the GOP for reconstructing our current educational management towards a knowledge-based educational management in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan can establish a National Knowledge Organization (NKO) to implement and execute the following policy recommendations:

1. Establishment of local community learning networks (CLN) by using modern technological tools of communications, such as radio, TV, internet, and wireless (this technology can be particularly useful in rural and less developed areas of the country).
2. Creation of Communities Learning Networks(CLN)
3. Integration of CLN into Learning Region Networks at the Tehsil and District Levels
4. Development of National Networked Educational& Learning System(NNELS) pooling and linking social, human and physical capital of the different vertical and horizontal ladders of learning in the country and bringing together all,formal,non-formal, informal and distance educational institutions in a synergistic way.
5. Social Capital Development Centers (at the community levels)
6. Digitization of all public and private sector university libraries (National Knowledge Database Organization), making books, journals and research work accessible to every citizen of the state

References

- Alfaruqi, Ismail. 1986. *Islaimzation of Knolwdge*. New York. Macmillan Press.
- Balatti & Falk. 2000. *Building Communities: ACE, Lifelong Learning and Social Capital*, Center for Research and learning in Regional Australia, Melbourne: Adult, Community and Further and education Board.

Cavaye, J.2004.*Social Capital: a Commentary on Issues, Understanding and Measurement*, Melbourne: Observatory Pascal-Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions

Faris, Ron.2004. Lifelong Learning, Social Capital, and Place Management in Learning Communities and Regions: *a Rubic's Cube or a Kaleidoscope*.

Himmelstrip, P.1981. 'Introduction' Strategies for Lifelong Learning: A Symposium of Views from Europe and the USA edited by Himmelstripetal: University Centre of South Jutland and the association for Recurrent Education, UK.

Iqbal, Muhammad.1983. The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. Lahore: Sh.Muhammad Ashraf Publishers.

Moore, M.G.2003 Handbook of Distance Education. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Maskell, P.2000.'Social Capital, Innovation, and Competitiveness', in *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives* edited by S.Baron, J.Field and T.Schuller, pp111-123.New York: Oxford University Press.

Nonaka, I & Takeuchi, H.T 1995. The Knowledge Creating Company, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

OECD, 2001, The Well-being of Nations: the role of Human and Social Capital, Paris: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

Putnam, R.2000.Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon &Schuster.

Rubenson, K.2001. *Lifelong Learning for All: Challenges and Limitations of Public Policy*, The Swedish Ministry of Education and Science European Conference: Adult Lifelong Learning in a Europe of Knowledge, Eskilstuna, March 23-25.

Thurow, L.2000.*Building Wealth: The New Rules for Individuals, Companies, and Nations in a Knowledge-Based Economy*. New York: Harper Business.

Sardar, Zia-ud-din 1986. Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come.London: The Macmillan Press.

Senge, P.1994. *The Fifth Discipline; The Art and Practice of Learning Organizations*. New York: Doubleday Inc.

Stewart, A. Thomas.1997. Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations.