THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS IN PROVIDING SECONDARY TRANSITION SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: EVIDENCE FROM MULTAN DIVISION, PAKISTAN

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to prove the role of school administrators in providing secondary transition services to the visual impaired students in the Multan Division Pakistan. Secondary transition services also play a key role in preparing students with disabilities to go forth and live their lives after school, in terms of higher education, employment, and their own independent living. Based on a census sample where 16 leaders and 48 teaching professionals in state-owned special education institutions were selected, the study took the form of a quantitative survey, using a standardized instrument based on Parrish (2006). Descriptive statistics, independent economic t test, and ANOVA were used to determine the perception, the current practice about the provisions of services, and the effect of the demographic characteristics on service provisions among administrators. The results show that the administrators are by and large aware of their responsibilities in referring, carrying out requisite assessments and coordinating with external agencies. However, the areas of interagency coordination, access to vocational training, and professional development of the staff members were found to be vastly inadequate. The study highlights the necessity of specific policy changes and enhancements to administrative training routines as well as allotment of more resources towards proper transition planning of the youth with visual impairments. These contributions provide the current background of research in the sphere of inclusive education leadership and provide viable recommendations to implement such concepts in Pakistan and other developing countries.
Key Words: *Administrators, Secondary Transition Services, Students with Visual Impairment*

INTRODUCTION
Leaving secondary school and entering adulthood is a critical period of the life of learners with disabilities and requires very well-organized support networks across educational, vocational, and social arenas. However, students with visual impairments (VI) are also facing specific challenges during this transition in the form of assistive technologies they require, orientation and mobility training, and equitable access to opportunities outside school (Douglas et al., 2023; McLinden & Pavey, 2022). Beyond words in state laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), quality transition planning is critical to ensuring long-term positive results in domains of learning, employment, and independent living.

Administrators of schools play a crucial role of ensuring that these services are implemented well. They are involved in initiating referrals and coordination of evaluations as well as promotion of interagency collaboration and staff preparedness. In other countries such as Pakistan, the future of transition services can be supported by an effective administrator due to the under-resourced

infrastructure and inconsistency in policy enforcement (Rafiq et al., 2024; Qureshi & Khalid, 2023).

Although inclusive education is getting more recognition worldwide, the role played by the administrators concerning the transition planning of students with visual impairments in South Asia lacks research. Some of the available literature is on the views of educators or general transition practice without identification of the type of disability (Shah et al., 2023; Ahmed & Malik, 2024). Realizing this gap, it is the objective of the researcher to examine how administrators work in the government-run special education institutions in the Multan Division. By examining such factors as gender, educational background, and geographic location and their impact on the participants role in planning transitions, the study can offer recommendations to educators, policymakers, and practitioners in the field of working with students with visual impairments to improve their transitions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The transition between secondary education and the adult life is an important point in the life of any student with disabilities, especially with visual impairments (VI), because of the formation of future conditions of higher education, working and independent life development. At the global stage, the importance and significance of transition services in the functioning of students with VI and their independence are part of international recognition (Douglas et al., 2023). Such services normally include the provision of the assistive technologies, O&M training, vocational counseling, and development of life skills (McLinden & Pavey, 2022). In the United States, for example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) requires that such planning begin by age 16, emphasizing a collaborative model involving educators, families, and community-based organizations. However, in countries like Pakistan, which face development and resource constraints, these services are often limited in scope and implementation varies widely.

In the Pakistani context, the Punjab Special Education Department oversees educational institutions that cater to children with various disabilities, including visual impairment. Although the number of such institutions has grown significantly exceeding 240 centers the provision of personalized and effective transition support remains limited (Government of Punjab, 2023). Existing literature suggests that while national policies are in place, their execution is frequently hampered by resource shortages, lack of trained personnel, and weak inter-agency coordination (Rafiq et al., 2024). Access to assistive devices, which are vital for academic success and daily living, also differs across regions. A study from Multan Division, for instance, reported that although assistive tools greatly benefit students with VI, their availability largely depends on how administrators allocate budgets and prioritize needs (Ahmed & Malik, 2024).

A key role in the provision of these services is played by administrators. It is the role of a transition coordinator to make sure that the policies are implemented, resources are organised, the staff is supported, and the transition offered to families is seamless (Shah et al., 2023). Findings by Qureshi and Khalid (2023) show that a majority of the administrators in special education institutions in the state of Punjab experience hindrances due to lack of training in transition practices and undefined roles. The research underlines the significance of the administrative leadership in the building relationships with outside agencies to enhance student results at the transitional phase.

Studies on international best practice always emphasise the degree of collaborative strategies in transition planning. Deft administration and adherence have also been linked to successful transition models, with research in Botswana concluding that successful interventions on the road to alignment with global standards were due to effective administration of the school (Morwane et

al., 2021). As McDonnall et al. (2020) note, team-based approaches to transition planning are quite beneficial, and administrators should be one of the key agents in encouraging communication and coordination between stakeholders. Nevertheless, such views are underspecified in south Asia and more so in Pakistan. Limited research has been done in the area that is site-specific to the experience, the research that does take place has generalised transition issues or has even centred mainly on the teachers with little reflection on what the different aspects are on disability-specific and administrator-based perspectives (Ahmed & Malik, 2024).

Besides, there are gender issues, academic qualifications as well as the geographical location that can drive the way administrators implement transition planning. Rafiq et al. (2024) also found that an administrator with higher education level was more active in the realization of a student-centered approach to transition. On the same note, urban institutions were also inclined to provide more structured services as they had access to additional funding, professional networks and training opportunities. Conversely, the rural areas usually faced difficulties because of low staffing, and insufficient cooperation between the region and providers of services, being unable to implement successful programs of transition.

Despite the improvements that have been identified e.g. slow integration of O&M training in school curriculums, these services continue to be unequally available in the country. Additionally, the level of assistance by administrators to make these offerings is however not well known. This underscores the necessity of concentrated research, especially those in jurisdiction of Mirpur Division so as to ascertain the impact of different institutional and personal factors on the administrators in facilitating visually impaired students through transition process.

International literature justifies the centrality of the role of school administrators in coordination and maintenance of transition services of students with disabilities; however, there is no direct research on the role in the Pakistani context. Knowledge of the perceptions of the administrators and implementation of their roles and the problems they encounter can assist in the creation of better policies and practices. Such study is needed to better the transition results and to foster inclusive education of students with visual impairments in Pakistan.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is based on the method of a quantitative, descriptive survey since it is aimed to investigate the way administrators can help students with visual impairment in achieving secondary transition services. This method made it possible to systematically gather and examine administrators' attitudes, behaviors, and demographic differences in service delivery.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The target population included 16 head teachers and 48 teachers from Government Special Education Centers for Visually Impaired Students in Multan Division, Punjab, Pakistan. Due to the modest population number, census sampling was used to ensure complete coverage. The final sample included 64 respondents (33 males and 31 females) from four districts: Multan, Khanewal, Vehari, and Lodharan.

INSTRUMENTATION

Data were collected by a structured questionnaire adapted from Parrish (2006), with items matched to the five areas of Kohler's Transition Taxonomy 2.0: student-focused planning, student growth, interagency collaboration, family engagement, and program structure. Responses were scored using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Four special education specialists reviewed and approved the content and face validity. A pilot test with 27 instructors from outside the study area demonstrated clarity and acceptability. Cronbach's alpha was .78, showing acceptable internal consistency.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEEDURE

Data were acquired between May and June 2021, obtaining institutional permission. The participants provided explicit permission and completed the questionnaire either physically in person or through digital platforms. Participation was optional and anonymous.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were employed to provide a comprehensive summary of participants' responses. To determine significant differences across demographic variables such as gender, academic qualification, and locality, inferential statistical techniques were applied, specifically independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA."

RESULTS

Overall Perceptions of Administrators' Roles

Respondents reported **high agreement** on administrators' responsibilities in initiating referrals (M = 4.03, SD = 0.85) and identifying assessments (M = 3.39, SD = 1.13). However, lower ratings were recorded for facilitating interagency meetings and ensuring consistent vocational training.

Table 1

Administrators' Roles in Transition Services (Descriptive Statistics)

Item	Mean	SD
Initiating referrals for transition services	4.03	0.85
Identifying assessment needs	3.39	1.13
Coordinating with external agencies	3.12	1.21
Facilitating vocational training	2.98	1.14

The findings demonstrate clear differences in the competencies reported by respondents across the examined domains. The highest level of proficiency was observed in *initiating referrals for transition services* (M = 4.03, SD = 0.85), reflecting a stronger ability in this area. In comparison, lower mean scores were obtained for *identifying assessment needs* (M = 3.39, SD = 1.13), *coordinating with external agencies* (M = 3.12, SD = 1.21), and *facilitating vocational training* (M = 2.98, SD = 1.14). These outcomes indicate that, although participants are more confident in managing referral processes, their competencies appear less developed in assessment practices, external collaboration, and vocational training support.

Demographic Differences

Table 2

T-test Results for Administrators' Roles by Gender

Variable	Male (M ± SD)	Female (M ± SD)	t	p
Total role score	3.45 ± 0.56	3.49 ± 0.51	-0.28	0.78

The comparison of total role scores between male and female respondents indicated no statistically significant difference. Male participants reported a mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.56), while female participants reported a mean score of 3.49 (SD = 0.51). The independent-samples *t*-test revealed

that this difference was not significant ($t = -0.28$, $p = 0.78$). These findings suggest that gender does not appear to influence the total role score within the sample.

Table 3

ANOVA Results by Qualification

Qualification	Mean	SD	F	p
Bachelor's	3.32	0.48	3.54	0.04*
Master's	3.51	0.54		
M.Phil./Ph.D.	3.65	0.50		

*Significant at p < .05

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in total role scores across respondents with varying levels of qualification. As shown in Table X, the mean score for participants holding a Bachelor's degree was 3.32

Table 4

ANOVA Results by Locality

Locality	Mean	SD	F	P
Urban	3.58	0.52	4.21	0.03*
Rural	3.34	0.49		

*Significant at p < .05

Table 4 presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether locality was associated with differences in mean scores. The results indicate that participants from urban areas reported a higher mean score (M = 3.58, SD = 0.52) compared to those from rural areas (M = 3.34, SD = 0.49). The difference between the two groups was found to be statistically significant ($F = 4.21$, $p = 0.03$), suggesting that locality has a meaningful effect on the measured variable.

Mapping Findings to Transition Taxonomy 2.0

Table 5

Mapping of Multan Division Empirical Themes to Transition Taxonomy 2.0 Domains

Taxonomy Domain	Key Components	Empirical Themes from Dataset	Illustrative Evidence
Student-Focused Planning	Transition assessment, measurable goals, student IEP involvement	Limited individualization; inconsistent assessment use	Goals often generic; reliance on informal observation
Student Development	Vocational skills, independent living, self-determination	Gaps in vocational exposure, life-skills training	Limited work-based learning, mobility training
Interagency Collaboration	Coordination with VR agencies, employers, community	Weak links; no formal agreements	Difficulty engaging agencies; no standing MOUs

Taxonomy Domain	Key Components	Empirical Themes from Dataset	Illustrative Evidence
Family Engagement	Parent participation, training, communication	Ad hoc involvement; minimal training	Parents engaged but no structured workshops
Program Structure	Policies, staffing, scheduling, data systems	No dedicated coordinators; limited training	Transition duties dispersed; external NGO reliance

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

The study highlights the central role of administrators in supporting transition outcomes for students with visual impairment, while also exposing systemic weaknesses in current practices within the Multan Division. Referral and assessment processes were found to lack systematic implementation, with transition goals often shaped by compliance rather than evidence-based planning. Limited vocational and independent living training restricts students' preparedness for post-school life, reflecting missed opportunities for partnerships with businesses and NGOs. Poor collaboration between the agencies with minimal or no agreements, also contributes to poor sustainability of services and parental involvement is still low as they are mostly trained informally. In addition, the lack of coordinators and clarity on the role of staff and whether it is enough to support professional development also lead to broken cycles of service provision. Taken together, these findings indicate that transition practices need to be moved away ad hoc and compliance-based to structured, coordinated and resource-intensive systems and consistent with international best examples.

CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the critical role of administrators regarding the planning and results of transition of students with visual impairment in the Multan Division. Although administrators have shown awareness of their roles, current practices are still fragmented in regard to the lack of utilization of formal assessment instruments, unreliable vocational preparation, poor interagency cooperation, lack of parental support, and failure to establish coherent program framework. The cornerstones to successful and sustainable development of individualized transition service, goal oriented, and sustainable transition services are lacking due to the gaps in the systems. The findings indicate an overall need to shift compliance based practices to be more structured, evidence-based and collaborative and move towards international standards of best practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen Assessment and Planning** – Integrate standardized transition assessment tools into all individualized education programs (IEPs) and ensure that measurable post-school goals are systematically developed and monitored.
2. **Enhance Vocational and Life Skills Training** – Establish partnerships with local businesses, vocational institutes, and NGOs to provide authentic work-based learning opportunities, independent mobility training, and daily living skills development.
3. **Formalize Interagency Collaboration** – Develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and establish regular coordination platforms with vocational rehabilitation services, employers, and disability service providers to ensure continuity of support.

4. **Support Family Engagement** – Organize structured workshops and training programs to build parents' capacity for advocacy, planning, and active involvement in their children's transition processes.
5. **Strengthen Program Structure and Staffing** – Appoint dedicated transition coordinators, clarify staff roles, and implement regular professional development programs supported by adequate resources to institutionalize transition practices.

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