



## Journal of Education & Humanities Research (JEHR)

Institute of Education & Research (IER), University of Balochistan, Quetta-Pakistan

Volume: 15, Issue-I, 2023; ISSN:2415-2366 (Print) 2710-2971 (Online)

Email: [jehr@um.uob.edu.pk](mailto:jehr@um.uob.edu.pk)

URL: <http://web.uob.edu.pk/uob/Journals/jehr/jehr.php>

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### “Relationship between Environment and Organizational Structure: An Analytical Case Study of Allied Schools”

Muhammad Waqas <sup>1</sup>:

*Allied Schools' National Educational Network Private Limited*

Ajmal Waheed <sup>2</sup>:

*Faculty of Management Sciences, Foundation University, Islamabad*

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Received: June 3, 2023

Accepted: June 25, 2023

Published: June 30, 2023

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#### KEY WORDS

**Organizational Structure, Task Environment, Coordinating mechanisms**

#### ABSTRACT

*The study is an evaluation of relationship in between organization's task environment and its structure. The task environment tends to affect organizational structure and business strategies in multiple ways, however, the relationship is not constant and the magnitude may differ from case to case. To understand the dynamics of relationship, Mintzberg Model has been applied. This is qualitative research based on case study approach that provides a comprehensive analysis of Organizational Structure of Allied Schools in relationship to its task environment. All dimensions of environment, decision-making roles, key parts, coordinating mechanism, power and authorities, have been thoroughly discussed in context of Allied Schools. For data collection, only executives of higher echelon were engaged in discussions. The hypothesis testing provides mix trend in estimates of (Mis) Fit in between environment and structure of Allied Schools. The findings of the case study predict that decision making regarding Organizations Structure is not entirely dependent on its environment. There are other factors that make difference and it requires further probe and investigation.*

## Relationship between Environment and Organizational Structure: An Analytical Case Study of Allied Schools

Allied Schools is School Franchising and Educational Services Project of National Educational Network Private Limited (NENPL), which is an Educational Services Providing Company. The Company has been established in February 2010 under Companies ordinance 1984. Soon after its inception, the Company has launched its Project for School Franchise System under Brand Name & Logo Allied Schools. The basic purpose of Allied Schools is to fill in the gap in between demand and supply of premium Educational Services at School level at affordable rates while proving itself to be a valuable alternative to Public Sector Schools and other Competitors. The prime focus of Allied Schools is to focus on scholastic development, personal growth, and ethical enrichment of students. Within 10 years, the concept of School Franchising has not only filled in the gap of demand and supply of educational services but it has also generated thousands of self-employment, small scale business and job opportunities for public in general and females in particular. Allied Schools has amassed 841 campuses across Pakistan and it has been able to cater needs of a student body of more than 250,000 students every year. The Organization has earned market goodwill and reputation due to its Franchised Network of Schools under Brand Name and logo of Allied Schools. It is Head Quartered in Gulberg III- Lahore with 14 Regional Offices, which have been strategically placed to handle growing operations across the country (Allied Schools, 2023).

Allied Schools is a Project of NENPL, which holds status of Private limited Company that has been registered under Companies Ordinance 1984. The Company functions under patronage and ownership of the Chairman. Board of Directors (BOD) is the advisory body that reviews organizational performance and profitability. The Chairman has vested trust and delegated powers and authority to the Executive Director who is Strategic as well as administrative Head of the Organization and all of its projects being run under its

umbrella including Project Allied Schools (Idrees, D., Personal Communication, May 01, 2023).

## Authorities and Status of Allied Schools within NENPL

The Executive Authority for NENPL and Allied Schools is the Executive Director, which is free from any encumbrances pertaining to decision power. The Executive Director is the authority that approves, disapproves, sanctions, bars and confirms finality of any proposed strategic and policy level decisions related to business operations. BOD is consisted of Members including Project Director, Director Finance, Legal Advisor and other Senior Directors. The BOD have only advisory role in the Company and have no direct oversight on the Executive Director, it can only propose, advise and suggest and recommend in relevant matter, whereas, it is upon discretion of the Executive Director whether to consider the proposition or not, thus, all decisions are subject to approval of the Executive Director. Therefore, the Executive Director is at the core and upper tier of the Strategic Apex of the Organization as whole.

Project Allied Schools holds subsidiary status to the Company; therefore, in aide to the Executive Director, there exists Project Director, which is heading overall affairs of the Project Allied Schools. It is the sole authority to run, manage and take decisions in Project Operations. The Project Director is also vital Executive Authority that proposes strategic moves, policy interventions, while keeping in view market requirements, project life cycle and brand goodwill sustainability. Any decision pertaining to the Policy and strategic change is subject to recommendations of the Project Director. Furthermore, in emergent situations, the Project Director is also authorized to make decisions in anticipation to the approval of the Executive Director, requiring strategic and policy level changes on immediate basis. However, the same is to be subsequently vet by the Executive Director. Therefore, within the level of Project Allied Schools, the Position of the Project Director is at the strategic apex. Project Director is responsible for all successes and failures in the Project. However, there is well-defined relationship

and coordination in between the Company and Project Authorities.

### Literature Review

The organizational environment is the most crucial factor that affects its structure. Currently organizations function in more dynamic and complex environment due to multiple challenges that demand very quick and high-quality response. In the given conditions, the organizations are constrained to adapt new business models facilitated with relevant structures and strategies. These rapid changes include need for innovation, digitalization, information and communication technology and knowledge upgradation that restricts that applicability of classic business models and organizational structures. The organizations have to match their internal controls and structure according to its capability to deal with external forces in order to ensure survival in the market. (Jovanoviĳ, 2021).

The organization's ability to analyze the challenges, opportunities in the environment and upgrading itself according to new market trends is a vital condition for growth, development and survival of modern companies, regardless of their size and type of activity. Islam (2020) conducted research on how management redesigned its organizational structure during the COVID-19 to cope with the business crisis. Alves et al. (2020) conducted an in- depth study of service sector organizations. They have concluded that organization needs an adequate structure that increases its ability to respond to the changes in environment and responsiveness to the customers; reduces its number of operational processes, repetitive steps, procedures and non-essential costs; ensures efficient utilization of resources and right use of technology in order to ensure survival and success.

Sladana et. al. (2022) also reported that the characteristics of environment keep on changing with the passage of time. In today's modern times, the frequent changes in Technology and progress in scientific achievements play instrumental role in changing the environment. The presence of these two factors require acquisition of right intellectual and knowledge capital through consistency based learning. The

knowledge and techniques that are relevant in one moment becomes out dated in the very next, therefore, such ever-changing environment had the greatest influence on reshaping the organizational structure of the company.

The business environment of an organization undergo instability continuously. However, when the level of turbulence goes higher it becomes threatening for the organization. Such turbulence also becomes limitation and obstacle for the normal functioning of the Organization. The organization needs to maintain adequate pace of evolution in terms of adaptability towards use modern ways of doing business. This enables organizations to achieve positive business results and a competitive edge in the market. The external forces in the environment are increasingly informed and demanding, in nature, whereas, the response of the organizations in bringing changes may differ from case to case. These Changes are not limited to single segment, but it affects whole organization. (Yervida, et. al., 2016).

### Methodology, Model and Framework

This is a case study research, which is based on theoretical model and framework introduced by Mintzberg (1979) that provides key concepts and multiple dimensions of the task environment and structural arrangement that may exist in an organization. The reasons for using this model is that it carries both comprehensibility and generalizability in its nature. Furthermore, it does not limit the scope of analysis rather provides a domain wherein conclusion can be drawn based on given information. The model defines Task environment, structural arrangements, coordinating mechanisms, other related key concepts and sub concepts, which have been used in the case of All schools.

The study further provides estimation, analysis and status of (Mis) Fit in between relationship of task environment of Allied Schools and its organizational structure. The data and qualitative information has been acquired while conducting discussions and unstructured interviews based on dimensions of Mintzberg (1979) model, with officials having managerial role within organization.

## Results, Analysis and Discussions

The section includes reporting of findings regarding relevant concepts of Model that have been found applicable in context of Allied Schools. In this section, the findings at every stage are followed up by analytical reasoning and detailed discussion that supports and builds up final opinion of the author.

### Dimensions of the environment

The external set of forces that exist in the surrounding of an organization is known as its environment. These set of forces may hinder or ease out the way towards organizational goals. The environment can influence access to resources, creates opportunities and offer threats for an organization. Environment is composed of micro and macro elements that affect the performance of organization i.e Technology, economy, climate, Competition, Suppliers and government by laws. Therefore, anything, which is external to the organization, is called its environment (Robbins, 1987). Mintzberg (1979) has explained that an organizational environment can have variety of characteristics including stable, dynamic, simple, complex, integrated and diverse markets, munificent and hostile. The details of application and relevance of each characteristic pertaining to the environment of Allied Schools are given below.

### Environment can range from stable to dynamic:

The environment of Allied schools remain stable most of the time. The Educational Services of Allied Schools are ranging from preschool- to secondary. The target market is majority of the lower middle and middle class, who look forward to have affordable quality education. The demand of the customer regarding service delivery is same over the period of 14 years, that is provision of Educational Services. Moreover, the academic schedules, practices, assessments, syllabus, Course Books, extracurricular and co- curricular activities are pre-determined, well defined and these are taken place at the same time throughout the year across all franchised Schools. The Monitoring, compliance standards for

franchises, financial management policies, fee structures training programs and operational procedures are also well defined and followed as it is without any external interference. The Nature of work processes, customer expectation, Nature of complaints, lapses and countermeasures to be taken are well known and taken care off within the system. Hence, all these facts represents functioning within stable environment. However, since inception, the Allied Schools, has witnessed hostility, turbulence, drastic change due to Government led policy intervention. In recent Past, as a result of policy decision by the Government during pandemic Covid-19 in 2020, the imposition of Compulsive lock down, promulgation of several Health and safety standards, social distancing, shift from class room teaching to online education have created a highly challenging situation for the organization. Likewise, the promulgation of Single National Curriculum (SNC) in 2021 made all Curriculum, books, academic content and course material irrelevant. It was made compulsory for the private publishers to adhere the guidelines of SNC and seek No objection Certificate (NOC) from the National and Provincial Curriculum Councils. Initially it became impossible for the Private Publishing Companies to complete the formalities.

Therefore, the only choice left with all educational Institution was making use of SNC Compliant Books, which were only available with the Government owned entities including Punjab Text Book board and National Book Foundation. Such Policy intervention also instigated hostility for a shorter period in the Environment hence challenged the distinction of all Private Schools and Premium Educational Franchised Networks. However, despite aforementioned policy intervention, it had no impact on Organization's internal environment and Structure. Rather, the Organization had foreseen the requirements well before the time, so while utilizing its vital resources both intellectual and technological, it managed to deal market with solutions, whether it was an early launch of most systematic Online Educational System or adhering with the SNC based Coded Books and Course



Material. Furthermore, Allied Schools within the structure of NENPL has not faced any turbulence since its beginning as no change has been observed in the Top management, which could have impact on the Project Operations. The Environment remains highly stable within the organization as well. Therefore, holistically, in spite of few externalities, it can be concluded that the Environment of Allied Schools remain more stable, highly predictable with low dynamic

### **Environment can range from simple to complex:**

The Allied Schools Functions in complex environment. The Organizational Operations are decentralized keeping in view the spread of its Network of 1075 franchises located in 200 cities. The management and control of franchise is highly challenging as there are multiple functions ranging from hiring of faculty, training and development of staff, system compliance, Preparation of academic and assessment schedules for all regions, addressing Parent Complaints, design and implementation of Curriculum according to geographical and regional Community needs and in accordance with by laws of the relevant Government Bodies of the provinces and federal government as the case may be. These all functions are highly integrated and synchronized with one another, hence demand simultaneous performance. Such critical requirement represent high complexity in the Environment. Moreover, the operating core, which is faculty, is working at franchises, which are remotely located; therefore, due to such complexity in the task environment, the compliance of quality control measures in service delivery and standardization of work procedures and output becomes a highly demanding task to accomplish.

Furthermore, within the structure of NENPL, the Allied Schools as a Project has dependency on Finance Department for issuance of funds. The Project Decisions and its execution are subject to issuance of funds well in time. The delay in issuance of funds due to any observation at the end of finance can affect the whole functioning of the Project. This

dependency also reflects a high complexity in itself.

### **The Markets of an Organization can range from integrated to diverse**

The Allied Schools has a highly integrated market in a sense as it is providing readymade educational services and uniform solution to children from age group 3 to 15 across the Pakistan.

Moreover, the organization is aiming for offering affordable solutions and services to the Target Markets include Lower Middle and Middle class population across Pakistan. The Learning outcomes are pre-determined and designed according to age group of students and their school level, which is ranging from Pre School to Secondary Level. Academic and Compliance Policies, curriculum, syllabus, books and course material to be followed, Fee structure, assessments, co-curricular activities, procedures, standards and schedules are also pre-determined. All these represent uniformity and applicable for every School Franchise bearing brand name of Allied Schools, no matter, wherever, it is located across the Pakistan. The Company also has a supply chain Department through which relevant book packs for each class, stationery, promotional material, necessary demonstrating tools and kits are supplied to every school. All these examples represent high level of integration.

The market of Allied School is slightly diverse in a sense that it has spread of Network in different Geographical Regions of Pakistan. There is Slight diversity in the market due to cultural differences and Climatic conditions in Northern Areas. The diversification is not based on demand for provision of different service. However, it requires changes of Schedule and academic Year Progression, It can be concluded that the markets of Allied Schools are highly integrated with slight diversity.

### **Environment can range from Munificent to Hostility**

Allied schools operate in environment, which is mostly munificent and considerably hostile. The organization have convenient access to resources, which are

necessary for the smooth running of its core operations. The demand for service provision remains same and the relationship is well defined and stable from the strategic apex until the operating core. However, at the same time it has considerable level of hostility, due to high level of competition in the market. Allied Schools has multiple competitors, which are offering same service to the target market. These Competitors also attract the experienced teaching faculty employed, which has been employed by the organization. Furthermore, high level of responsiveness and feedback from franchises is collected all the time through a sophisticated mechanism, which is taken care off by the Departments including Customer Relationship Management and Parent Satisfaction. However, the degree of intensity of hostility has never equated or surpassed the Munificence and remained low in its comparison. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is higher degree of munificence with considerable hostility in the task environment of Allied Schools. Moreover, within the Structure of NENPL, the Environment is more munificent and occasionally hostile. There is strong coordination in between the authorities that ensure the smooth decision making and functioning. However, a situation of an occasional and limited hostility arrives when any decision of the Project Operations, is withheld due to observation on issuance of funds by the Finance Department.

**Power**

Allied School a subsidiary project of NENPL the Power is concentrated with the Executive authorities, which in particular case of Allied Schools is Project Director and Executive Director in general. However, the project operations demand, limited vertical decentralization with formalization. There are 14 Regional Offices, which are placed at different places due to geographically diverse markets. The power and authority is delegated to the Regional offices, which is backed by embedding of authority into guidelines, policies, backstops, checks, and controls. Such vertical decentralization is limited in several ways. First, it is confined to the scope of the decision making of the Executive Authorities of Allied Schools and

NENPL. Second, decision-making authority that has been granted can be later revoked. Sometime decisions taken can be overruled in case of disagreement or as it may be deemed as fit by the Executive Authorities. There are Formal Policies, procedures and SOPs for compliance, which are made by the organization itself and the same are followed throughout its Network of Franchises. The organization is bureaucratic to the extent that it follows hierarchy and formal communication. Moreover, Allied schools is financially dependent on Centralized Finance Department of NENPL. The Project is not free to take financial decisions.

However, the Executive Director is ultimate Authority over Finance Department that approves/disapproves sanctioning of funds to the Project. Except financial dependency, there is no other external intervention, interference in the Project Operations by any other Authority. Furthermore, influence outside the organization is out of question. The financial dependency is great external control that also constraints application of high decentralization in the Project and generate need to adopt formal Procedures, Standardization of Processes, Formal Communication and Limited Vertical decentralization of Power, wherein, authority in actual remains with Top of the Line Position. Below mentioned Table provides summary of task environment of Allied Schools:

**Table 1**  
*Dimensions of Task Environment of Allied Schools*

| Range of Dimensions            | Degree  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| From Stable to Dynamic         | Sufficiently Stable and Highly Predictable with Low dynamic |
| From Simple to Complex         | Highly Complex  |
| From integrated to diversified | Highly Integrated with Slight Diversity                     |
| From munificent to hostile     | Mostly Munificent with considerable hostility               |

### Structural analysis of Allied Schools

An organizational structure represents a system that outlines as how various activities are directed in order to achieve the organizational goals. These activities include rules, roles, and responsibilities. The Structure facilitate coordination and synchronization of several activities, which may be different in nature. According to Mintzberg (1979), the structure of organization is aggregate or sum total of ways in which it divides its labor into distinctive tasks and then achieves coordination among them.

### Position of Allied Schools within Structure of NENPL

Below mentioned are the details representing positioning of Allied schools and its Project team within the structure of NENPL.

#### Strategic Apex

Executive Director is at the Strategic Apex of NENPL. All Top managers, directors, departmental & Project Head operating under NENPL are reporting to the Executive Director. He is overall and ultimate executive authority for all matters concerned.

#### Middle Line

Allied Schools is the prime project of educational franchising and services, which is run and controlled by NENPL. Therefore, if we talk about placement of Allied Schools within the structure of NENPL, it starts with the Middle line managers, executives, operational and line authorities. The Project Director, who is directly reporting to Executive Director of NENPL, heads the middle line management. He is responsible for progress, success and failures of the Project. In aide to the Project Director, there comes Regional offices, their heads and staff, who are part of middle line structure but they are reporting to the Project Director in a formalized hierarchical system. The Hierarchy and authority of the Project Operations flows down through the position of the Project Director.

### Operating Core

The Prime Operating core is majorly consisted of Principals, Administrators and the faculty who are working directly at franchises and nationwide campuses of Allied Schools. The operating core is working under control and influence remotely and locally exercised by the Regional Offices.

### Techno Structure

There is also well-defined Techno structure of the NENPL that is external to the Allied Schools when it is taken only as a Project. It is consisted of Centralized Finance and planning and Purchase Departments. These departments are under direct supervision and reporting to the Executive Director.

### Support and staff

Furthermore, the support staff structure also exists including, Legal Department, administration and Transport Department that extends facilitation to the Project Operations. The main power and control is concentrated in the middle line, which is consisted of Project operations team that exercises all relevant necessary authority to maintain control over Project operations. No other Department External to the Project Team has direct Control over operations.

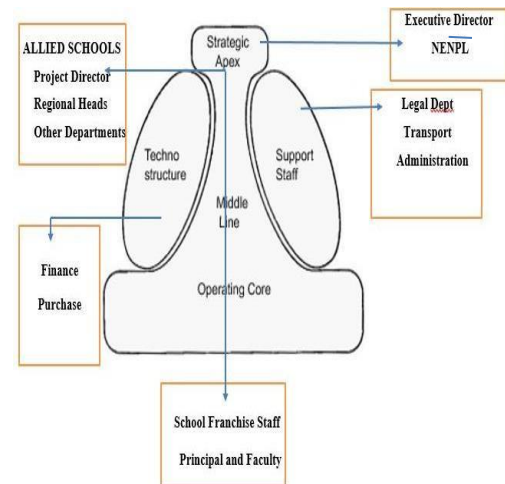


Figure 1. Position of Allied Schools within Structure of NENPL adapted from Structuring of Organizations (p.20), by Mintzberg, H. 1979, New Jersey, Prentice

## Hall.Organizational Structure of Allied Schools

Below mentioned are the details of the organizational structure of Allied Schools:

### Strategic Apex

Project Director, Allied Schools has been empowered to exercise authority to control operations and for taking relevant strategic decisions. He is responsible for overall success and failures in the Organization.

### Middle Line

Allied Schools has 14 Regional Offices, which are located in areas across Pakistan in order to cultivate and deal with geographically diversified markets and dispersed Network of Franchises. The Regional Heads are the middle line managers who are directly reporting to the Project Director. Regional Heads are responsible for implementation of decisions monitoring and control of performance associated with Project Operations.

Prime Departmental functions include campus relationship management, Compliance and Financial Recovery and Regional sales, which are dealt through their respective departmental and Regional teams. Operating Core

The Operating core of the Allied Schools are the Principals and School Faculty member who directly working at franchises and schools which are located across Pakistan. The Operating core is under influence and control of Regional Offices who manage to exercise power and authority through their locally located Regional Teams

### Techno-structure

The Project has well defined techno structure, which is consisted of various Departments including of Human Resource (HR), Training and Capacity Building Department (TT & CB), Operations and Sales Department. Teams of these departments work under direct influence of the Project Director. These Departments affect the Organization Structure and affect the functioning of Regional Offices through standardization of the work processes, procedures, which are to be followed by the

middle line and the operating core. These departments do not have direct control over the business operations; instead, they affect operations through standardization of processes. Support staff There are also multiple departments that are extending indirect support to the core functions of the organization. These department include Information and Communication technology (ICT), academics, supply chain management (SCM), Central Record & Registry (CR & R), Project Procurement and Education Media (E. Media). There are also other staff performing support roles, which include Security staff, receptionist, dispatchers and Call operators.

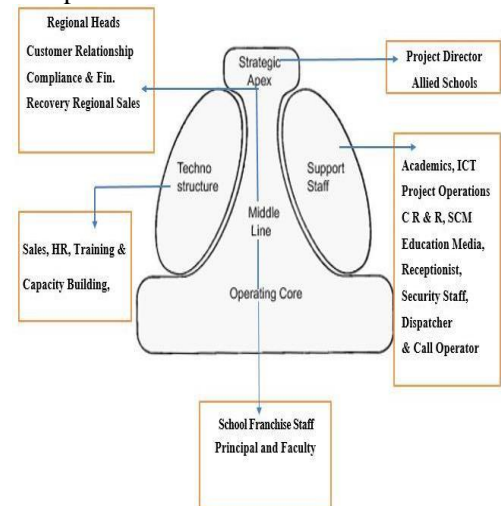


Figure 2. Organizational Position of Allied Schools adapted from *Structuring of Organizations*, p. 20, by Mintzberg, H, 1979, New Jersey, Prentice Hall. Prime Coordinating Mechanisms

Allied Schools have a mix of coordinating mechanisms that exists within its structure. Below mentioned are application of five coordinating mechanisms in the structure of Allied Schools.

### Direct Supervision

There is no direct supervision of top management up to the level of the operating core. Since the organization has, middle line managers to deal with geographically dispersed operations, therefore, middle line management at Regional offices are empowered to supervise and coordinate with the Operating core and report their progress



to the Top management. Regional Heads have been given discretionary rights under the rules and regulation to take decisions there and then in the operational matters. However, a limited version of direct supervision exists wherein, Regional Heads, Departmental Head report directly to the Project Director who is at the strategic apex. The authorities are exercised at multiple levels in the hierarchy.

### ***Mutual Adjustments***

The activities are also coordinated through mutual adjustments at the lower level of Middle Management and the Operating Core. The departmental staff at Regional Offices coordinate, communicate and help each other and often work as substitute to their colleagues. The mutual adjustments exist within the Regional Office. However, there is no mutual adjustments for work in between two or more Regional Teams and it applies in the case of different departments too. Moreover, coordinating through mutual adjustments is also done within school faculty, Coordinators and Principals. They are part of Operating core who are directly working at the School Franchises. Facilitation, work substitutions and accommodating each other with mutual consent are the frequently followed practices that represent mutual adjustments.

### ***Standardization of Work Processes***

All routine processes and activities performed by middle line management and operating core are standardized in Allied Schools. All departments have well defined procedures, rules and regulations, which are followed for day-to-day conduct of business operations including Customer Relations Management, Complaints Handling, dealing with Sales Queries, Compliance and Financial Recovery etc. Standardization has been helpful in bringing role clarity and the expected performance. It is further helpful in bringing symmetry and reducing the complexity of work that occurs due to geographical diversification. Furthermore,

The Principal and teaching faculty exactly know about, syllabus, fee structure, daily lesson planning, and conduct of assessments and examinations, which are standardized and followed in every franchise School, which is part of Allied Schools. Thus, all notified, disseminated and standardized procedures are followed by all Company Officials/faculty working in departments, Regional Offices and franchises. The standardization is helpful maintaining symmetry in operations, ensuring quality control and make it easier to gauge the performance at the end of the day.

### ***Standardization of Skills***

The Standardization of Skills also exists in the Allied Schools. The teaching faculty is hired at every franchise, which belongs to different areas of subject specialization and fields. These faculty member, when join franchises lack awareness regarding prevailing system, curriculum, syllabus, Lesson planning and assessments to be followed and overall academic activities.

Therefore, in order to equip them with relevant skills, different formal training programs, which are conducted in the beginning of every year. Training programme includes, Montessori programme, content-based training, subject training for secondary teachers, project based learning, robotics and artificial intelligence program. Moreover, there is also informal learning of skills, which becomes possible through socialization and continuous interaction. This also happens in the case of employees who join organization as they learn and acquire relevant skills both through formal and informal ways.

### ***Standardization of Output***

The final output in case of Allied Schools are Students. Despite of use of all standardized work processes, skills that are directed towards quality of output, the learning levels vary from individual to individual even within same class group or within same school. The reason is the human factor that moderates the relationship and affect results. Moreover, such difference also occurs due to lapses in implementation of standardized procedures and frequent

turnover of teaching staff, which also varies from one franchise to another. Therefore, standardization of output is neither applicable nor exists.

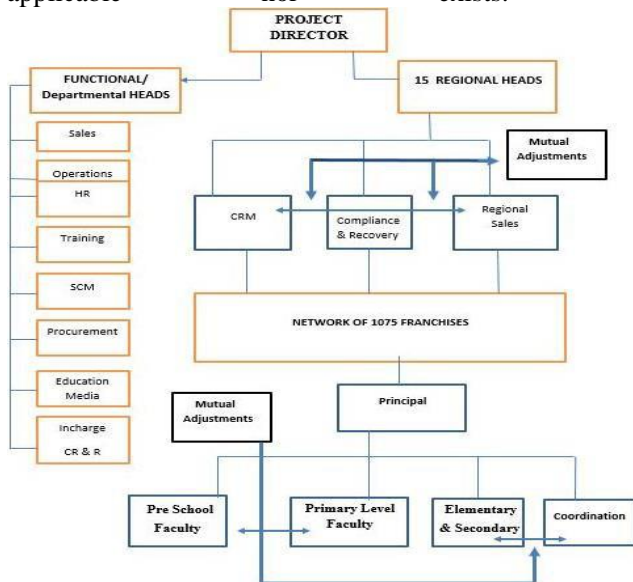


Figure 3. Mutual Adjustment in Allied Schools Structure Key Part of the Organization:

The key part of the organization Structure of Allied Schools is middle line management. The organization is mainly dependent on its Regional Offices in order to handle geographically dispersed operations. The Regional Offices are placed in multiple cities keeping in view the geostrategic importance and to ensure command and control of the nationwide network of School Franchises. The Regional Offices and their staff are the middle line management in the organization structure of Allied Schools. The Regional Heads have discretionary powers to take decisions in operational, compliance and sales related matters. The discretionary powers also include hiring of principals, regional staff and financial decisions pertaining to day-to-day operations of Office. Furthermore, the Regional Head has liberty to plan and execute required decision in operations provided it serves Company’s Strategic Goals and Objectives.

## Job Specification

Below mentioned are the details of Job Specification, its dimensions and their applicability in context of Allied Schools. Job Enlargement (Horizontal Loading):

Job Enlargement includes increasing work of breadth horizontally by adding more function and responsibilities to the current role. In case of Allied Schools, horizontal loading exists as additional task duties and responsibilities are assigned to the Middle line management who are officials of Regional Offices in addition to their regular functions, which they are supposed to perform simultaneously. For instance, at Regional Offices, the Staff of Customer Relationship Management (CRM Department) also perform additional tasks including campus audits, dealing with parent complaints, organizing Capacity building trainings sessions for School faculty, Providing Training for System orientation to School Administrative Staff and organizing co-curricular activities for students throughout the year. Likewise, the Operating core also perform multiple functions in addition to their regular duties.

Teaching faculty deliver lectures in case of absence of their colleagues on regular basis. Some of them also have to perform coordination role, organizing of school events and parent - teacher meeting, preparing timetables and schedules. Job Enrichment (Vertical Loading)

Job enrichment includes enhancement of depth and increasing decision power of given job role through vertical loading. The concept of vertical loading exists in the Allied Schools both at middle line and at the level of operating core. At the middle line management level, the Officials of Regional Offices are empowered to decide and deal complex financial non-compliance matters of campuses, tie up payment plans as deemed fit, deal complaints in any way that leads to resolution of problem, devise and enforce sales strategy for the Region and make desired changes according to circumstances in the given schedules of the yearly planned activities.

Moreover, the operating core at school level also have margin to exercise authority in order to make slight changes in

the given schedule for conduct of assessments, start of academic session and course progression, admitting and expulsion of any student and devising discipline policies. The Principal of the School also has some authority to take decisions according to need and circumstances. All above-mentioned practices represent job enrichment through vertical loading. However, all actions of Officials at Middle line and operating core are closely monitored and reported to the Higher Management through chain of hierarchy. Any deviation, if occurs beyond tolerable level is intervened by the Higher management.

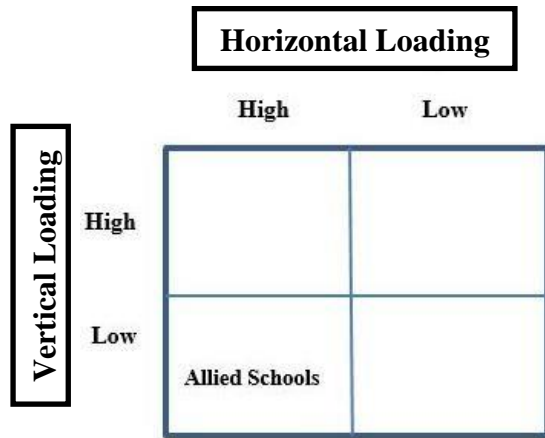


Figure 4. Job Specification in Allied Schools

**Unit Grouping:**

At organizational level, the Unit grouping in Allied Schools is mainly based on Geographical diversified client and markets.

There are 14 regional offices, which are located in different districts and cities in order to cultivate the target market and facilitating geographically dispersed Network of Franchises with provision of local solutions. Moreover, within the Regional Offices and School Franchises, which are part of Middle Line management and Operating core respectively, there exists unit grouping by function. There is departmentalization based on functions within the Regional Offices for instance, Customer Relationship, Sales, Compliance and Recovery etc. These departments are distinguished based on their functions. Moreover, at school franchises, there is availability of specialized faculty coming

from different areas of subject knowledge and bearing relevant degree. These faculty members have unit grouping by function, which is based on their subject areas and they are made responsible for teaching in their relevant subject area. So a mix of unit groupings can be observed at multiple levels of the organization.

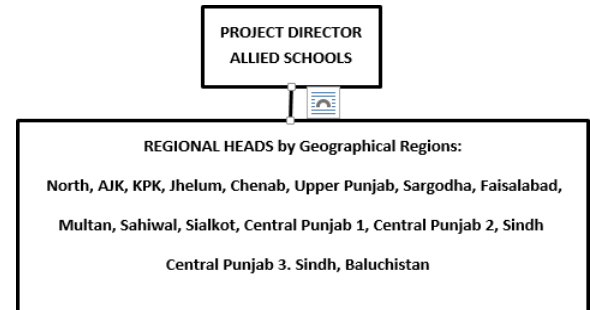


Figure 5. Unit Grouping By Geography in Allied Schools.

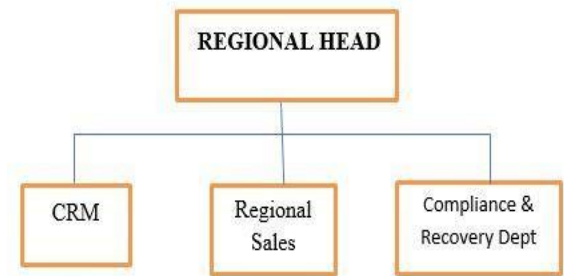


Figure 6. Unit Grouping by Function at Regional Offices.

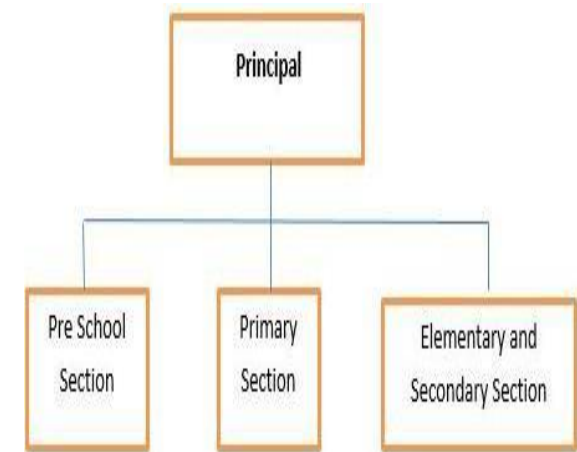


Figure 7. Unit Grouping by Function at Allied Schools Franchise

Table 2  
Structural Analysis of Allied Schools

| Dimension                               | Related Concepts at Allied Schools                              |
|---|---|
| Prime Coordinating Mechanism Key Part   | 4 out of 5 mechanisms exist except Standardization of Output    |
| Job Specialization                      | Middle-line Management  |
|   | High Horizontal and Low Vertical loading                        |
| Unit Grouping                           | Organization: by geography, market Middle line: by function     |
|   | Operating Core: by function                                     |
| Unit Size                               | Multiple tiers with large unit size and Divisional Structure    |
| (De)Centralization                      | Limited Vertical Decentralization                               |
| Strategic Apex                          | Project Director  |
| Middle Line                             | Regional teams at Regional Offices                              |
| Operating Core                          | Principal and Teachers  |
| Techno-Structure                        | Centralized Techno-Structure: HR, Sales, TT & CB and Operations |
| Support Staff                           | Academics, SCM, CR & R, Edu., Media and Procurement,            |
| Flow of Authority                       | Top to Down   |
| Position of Allied Schools within NENPL | Middle Line until Operating core                                |

### Allied Schools environment and its structure; Hypothesis testing and estimates of (MIS) FIT

Mintzberg (1979) has provided several boundary conditions and developed directional hypothesis regarding relationship of Organizational environment and its structure. Below mentioned are the estimation of seven hypothesis tested for the Allied Schools with a given context of relationship in between its environment and organizational structure in order to gauge status of its applicability as "(MIS) FIT":

#### The More dynamic the environment, the more organic the structure

Allied Schools is large organization, which deals with highly dispersed Network of School Franchises across the Pakistan. The Organization functions in an environment, which is stable and predictable most of the time. The reason is the demand for same services over the period by the clients. However, it is complex at the same time due to geographically dispersed operations, Change of Culture from one area to another, requirement of faculty with different skills and subject knowledge and dealing with students coming with different learning

abilities and backgrounds. This organization has divisional structure, which is decentralized, standardized and formalized to maintain same level of service delivery to the customers and clients through School franchises. The environment is neither highly dynamic nor the organization has organic structure; therefore, hypothesis is (Mis) fit in case of Allied Schools.

#### The more complex the environment the more decentralized the structure:

The Organization has high complexity in operations due to Geographical disperse of School Franchises, requirements of specialized talent with multiple skill and subject knowledge, dealing students with different learning levels and background. Thus, the organizational Structure is also based on decentralization with middle line management as its key part. The authority and powers are delegated to the middle line management, which are deputed at the Regional Offices and to the limited extent few discretionary powers also given to the operating core. However, the degree of decentralization is not limit less. The power and authority delegated to the lower tiers are embedded in the rules, regulations, and the Top Management through a channelized and hierarchical reporting system monitors all decisions pertaining to operations taken by the Middle line management. This represents concept of limited vertical decentralization, which is sufficient to deal with the day-to-day matters that emerge in complex environment. There is also mutual adjustments being used as coordinating mechanism with no direct supervision of the operating core by the Top Management. All these conditions fit in with the complex environment and decentralized structure. Therefore, the Hypothesis fits in the case of Allied Schools.

#### The more diversified the organization's market, the greater the propensity to split it into market-based units

The Market of Allied Schools has divisional structure, which is decentralized based on geographical diversity and dispersion of client and potential markets. However, the market of Allied Schools is highly integrated as it gives comprehensive command and control program to manage all



relevant functions and services, plan for supply of resources, material and financial models to be followed in a standardized way. The Organization controls and synchronizes all inputs and processes in a standardized way to generate quality output. The market of the organization is slightly diverse at the same time. The basis of diversification is disperse of existing School Franchises in different geographical areas. There are 15 Regional Offices, which are placed to provide convenient services to the existing clientele and to cultivate potential new markets across the country. As the project operations are expanding, the organization is planning to place regional offices based potential markets and accessibility of the clients. Therefore, the hypothesis fits in case of the Allied Schools.

### **Extreme Hostility in environment drives any organization to centralize its structure temporarily**

The environment of Allied Schools is stable and munificent most of the time, which allows it to have decentralized structure to run operations. However, there is same degree and equal chances of hostility, as feedback mechanism requires highly quick responses. However, even in the cases of hostility, it is not possible to adopt centralized structure due to high complexity of work and geographical dispersion of school franchises. Centralization is certainly not a possibility in case of Allied Schools in any situation. Therefore, the hypothesis (Mis) fits in the case of Allied Schools.

### **Disparities in the environment encourage the organization to decentralize selectively to differentiate work constellation**

Most of the time, there is stability in the task environment of the Allied Schools. It has higher degree of munificence and at the same time, it has a considerable intensity of hostility in its task environment. There is also a blend of integrated market with geographical diversification. There is also stability most of the time with rare and low dynamic. The organization has decentralized structure with middle management as its key part. Decentralized structure enables organization to deal with disparities that

exists in its environment due to large scale and geographically dispersed operations. The Hypothesis fits to the extent that disparities in the environment has led to decentralization of the structure in case of Allied Schools.

### **The greater the external control of the organization, the more centralized and formalized its structure**

In case of Allied Schools, there is higher degree of internal control, the Organization designs, plans and implements its own policies and procedures and do not get affected by any direct control, which exists in the market or any other place/entity, which is external to the organization. The task environment stays stable yet it is has higher degree of complexity. However, sometimes, due to government intervention due to policy change, the external control compels organization to adhere itself to the New policies. Despite the fact, the organizational structure is decentralized but formalized. The nationwide spread of schools franchises, geographically placed Regional Offices do not allow organization to adopt more centralized structure. There exists limited vertical decentralization. Furthermore, if we talk about Allied schools within structure of NENPL, since company's Centralized Techno-structure also exercise external influence on Allied School Project. Yet it does not affect its decentralization in structure. Therefore, the hypothesis stands (Mis)Fit in case of Allied Schools as it has great internal control most of the time and even if the external control increases occasionally at any level, it does not affect the existing decentralized structure.

### **The Power needs of the members tend to generate structures that are excessively centralized**

The Allied schools has decentralized structure which is based on geographical units, wherein, power is not concentrated at only at one level. The Middle line is the key part, which has been empowered and authorized to take decisions. However, it is lacking horizontal decentralization. There is only limited Vertical Decentralization in the organizational structure. Conflict arises due to difference of opinion. The middle line management requires horizontal

decentralization of authority, as they are the key part who actually run the operations. Currently there is only limited vertical decentralization, wherein conflict arises, when decisions based on circumstances taken by the middle line management are revoked by the Top management. That often leads to resentment in between middle line management. However, in all cases, the power is decentralized not concentrated at one level. Therefore, the hypothesis is not applicable and (Mis) fits in case of Allied Schools.

### Key findings

Mintzberg Model of Organizational Structure is reckoned one of the most comprehensive model, which has sustained over decades. Organization's build their strategies and chose structures that serves their interests in a best way. The study is vital effort to find evidence of relevance, applicability, change and evolution of today's organization. The study has provided sound evidence and reasoning in connection to the various dimensions of environment and organizational structure. The findings have elaborated that how a Private organization like Allied Schools deal with multiple disparities that exist in between its task environment and structure. The Finding provides that Allied Schools have stable yet complex and predictable task environment however, at the same time; it does have likelihood of having task environment with low dynamic and hostility. It further affirms that the organization's Market can be highly integrated and diversified at the same time. The findings also reveal that the external control has sometimes no influence on internal structure of the organization. It is evident from the structure of Allied Schools that it remains decentralized and divisionalised, no matter, if an external control increases or not. The findings also provided key information that four out of five coordinating mechanism are used in the Allied Schools. It has been found that Allied Schools use standardization of work Processes and Skills at various levels to maintain symmetry in operations across the country. The study explained various roles and departments, that exist at different levels of Allied schools organizational structure

including Strategic apex, middle line managers as key part, Centralized Techno-structure, support staff and operating core.

Further findings reveal that Allied Schools Top management controls and monitors its nationwide dispersed operations and adopt a limited vertical decentralization of authority.

**Table 3:**  
*Estimates of (Mis)Fit Between Environment and Organizational Structure in case of Allied Schools*

| Environment              | (Mis) Fit | Structure   |
|--------------------------|-----------|---|
| Stability                | (Mis) Fit | Limited Vertical Decentralization                     |
| Complexity               | Fit       | Decentralized and Formalized                          |
| Complexity               | Fit       | Mutual Adjustment                                     |
| Integrated               | Fit       | Functional Groups at Regional Offices                 |
| Diversified              | Fit       | Geographical and Market based.                        |
| Munificent               | Fit       | Diversification Decentralization                      |
| Low Hostility            | (Mis) Fit | Decentralization                                      |
| Multilayered Disparities | Fit       | Decentralization, Geographical and market-based Units |
| External Control         | Mis (Fit) | Privately owned Project with low interference and     |

### Conclusion and Future work

Allied Schools is a privately owned and governed Project that enjoys sufficient degree of liberty to conduct day-to-day operations and to take business decisions independently. The Current organizational structure enables organization to manage geographically diversified operations, helping it to ensure coordination among multiple layers of management for continuous monitoring, control and in time decision making. The structure is already decentralized, and middle line has been its key part that frequently takes operational decisions, which is very much needed and matched with its business circumstances. However, the degree of decision-making authority given to the middle line is low in comparison to the given responsibilities.

Moreover, the decisions taken by

middle line can be revoked any time by the higher management. Project Operations requires bold decisions making to; curb non-compliance matters, pertaining to such phenomena abstains middle line to involve themselves into bold decision making which is very much required to match the demanding and challenging pace of the task environment. The evaluation through prescribed model tells us that there are certain conditions in which the structure seems fit according to the organizational external environment. However, on the other hand, it also reveals considerable, noticeable and crucial differences wherein, there are disparities within organizational external environment and its structure. Having aforesaid in view, it is also worthy to be mentioned here that the organization's performance is not being affected due to discrepancies in between its structure and environment since the structure and business strategy of Allied Schools is complimenting each other, hence generating performance. The detailed analysis through Mintzberg model reveals that the organization needs to delegate more authority to middle line management while adopting horizontal decentralization. So that the authority may match with responsibilities. However, since the organization is comfortably working with its current structure despite having mismatches in between structure and its environment and no considerable difference have been witnessed in its performance.

This gives indication that the matter needs investigation to encompass the remaining beams of the spectrum, which is possible only through further probe and future work to investigate relationship in between strategy, structure and organizational performance in order to ascertain the finality of core facts.

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