Status of Quality Indicators in Boys and Girls Primary Schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

The major purpose of the study was to check the status of quality indicators in both types of public schools of the selected five southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. All the head teachers and teachers of public primary schools of southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituted the population of the study. The sample of the study was consisted of 100 head teachers (50 male and 50 female) and 300 teachers (one hundred & fifty male and one hundred & fifty female). The study was a survey type in nature. To collect the relevant information on the selected quality indicators (quality of learning environment, quality of contents, quality of process, and quality of outcomes) a self-developed questionnaire was used. Statistical tools chi square test of goodness of equal probability and chi square test of independence were used to analyze the data. In the light of conclusions it is recommended that separate staffrooms should be constructed for teachers, sufficient books for learners and supplementary/allied reading materials for teachers should be provided well in time, students should be encouraged to ask relevant questions during the teaching. Furthermore, examination and assessment systems should be impartial and transparent. Therefore examinations conducting bodies/ authorities should be appointed on merit basis, papers or assessment work may be done by expert teachers, supervisory staff may necessarily be nominated on best performance basis, and evaluation process might be administered by skilled personals.

Keywords: Cultural quality education, learning environment, curriculum, evaluation system, primary education.

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Introduction

Primary education holds fundamental place in the entire educational system. The educationists believe that this juncture is a backbone or foundation stone of the whole educational system, while sociologists judge it as an valuable stick of social reforms. It can be alleged that primary education is directly related with informatory and initiative stage of the society (Mirza, 2003).

Primary education is considered to be much urgent and essential element for the encroachment of the countries all over the world. It is the key phase of the whole education system. On one side it provides a literate workforce for the country and on the other side it works like a feeder for the subsequently coming stages of education which directly or indirectly depends upon the quality of primary education which is the preliminary step. Due to which experienced, professional and trained work force will shaped which will work energetically in every walk of life in particular in political, social or economic fields (Brown, 1998).

Quality of primary education has its own significance and importance for all of us. If we give primary education a high-flying place and standing then we can imagine from it that it will absolutely add to our progress and opulence directly or indirectly. In simple words quality of primary education is acting the role of bridge to the entire next coming stages of education. Therefore the progress and progress of our nation depends directly on the quality of primary education. There is no second view, but only quality education can prepare students who can countenance the challenges of international market. Primary education is criticized over many forums that it has no quality and producing students lacking any knowledge and indulgent of basic concepts. Quality of education for all has emerged as one of the most advantageous goals throughout the world. One of the six goals, outlined by the World Education-Dakar- Framework for Action (2000), is linked to the improvement of "all aspects of quality education" in order to accomplish the acknowledged learning outcomes (UNESCO, 1998).

It is hard to define quality of education accurately mainly because of the multifaceted nature of teaching-learning process and huge number of stakeholders mixed up in schooling (Mirza, 2003). Various authors/ researchers have branded different determinants of education quality. Cheng and Cheung, (1997) define quality of education as a set of elements containing input, process and output of education system (Adams, 1993). Framework of quality is consisting of institution' reputation, resources/ input, process, content and outputs/outcomes. According to Santos, (2007) a traditional school quality model is characterized by test scores and various inputs

plus student family background, school characteristics, teacher characteristics and student's intrinsic ability. The indicators of education quality identified by Thaung (2008) include learners, teachers, content, teaching-learning processes, learning environments, and outcomes. As a matter of fact, the value of Thaung's (2008) model is yet to be discussed and analyzed in the academic literature. A variety of factors together with curriculum, delivery of content, learning environment, supervision, and administration of academic facilities contribute to the quality of education (Iqbal, 1996). Another significant model of quality of education has been given by UNICEF, (2000) which comprises five dimensions i.e. quality learners, quality learning environments, quality content, quality processes, and quality outcomes. Some of main quality indicators are briefly discussed below.

a) **Quality of learners:** This is one of basic indicator of quality education. This mainly includes students' good health and nutrition, early childhood psychosocial development experiences, regular attendance, and family support for learning. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities can play vital role in bringing quality education.

b) **Quality of learning environments:** This is one of other basic indicator of quality education. it mainly including of physical elements (e.g. school facilities, class size etc.), psychosocial elements (e.g. safe environment, teachers' behavior, discipline policies, non-violence etc.), and service delivery (e.g. health services).Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities. Safe and calm learning environment is the fundamental need of quality education.

Table 1:
Quality of Learning Environments

S.No	Facets/parameters	f	SA	A	UD	DS	SDA	X^2	P
1	Teaching kits	o	272	102	16	5	2	666.175	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
2	Water facility	o	318	69	8	5	0	659.47	0.00*
		e	90	80	90	80	80		
3	Boundary walls.	o	302	81	9	7	1	823.7	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
4	Toilet facility	o	348	49	3	3	4	526.355	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
5	Furniture	o	245	52	38	62	3	450.325	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
6	School building	o	307	76	12	5	2	601.94	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
7	Class rooms facility	o	256	79	28	34	2	524.82	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
8	Furnishes of classrooms	o	283	90	17	8	2	706.825	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
9	Play ground facility	o	162	116	74	33	15	181.125	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
10	Separate staff room	o	128	42	67	85	78	49.325	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		

o = Observed frequency   e = Expected frequency   *P≤ 0.05

c) **Quality of contents**: Yet another basic indicator of quality education. Student-centered and standard based curriculum, subject materials quality text books international standards, uniqueness of local and national content, focus on literacy, numeracy, and life related skills. Content that reflects in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition is essential for bringing quality education.

Table 2:

Quality of Contents

S.N	Statement	f	SA	A	UD	DS	SDA	X^2	P
1	Curriculum is according to the learner's needs.	o	153	122	72	33	20	162.075	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
2	Existing curriculum match s society needs.	o	142	126	76	43	13	147.925	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
3	Teaching material is adequate and attractive.	o	138	104	103	45	10	132.425	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
4	Curriculum is comprehensive and interesting.	o	122	23	95	46	14	116.875	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
5	Curriculum is well managed.	o	132	95	106	48	19	104.375	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
6	Sufficient books are available in the library.	o	129	75	65	74	57	40.2	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
7	Supplementary materials with text books are available.	o	129	77	63	68	63	39.15	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
8	Course content is according to learners' mental level.	o	149	105	81	39	26	124.8	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
9	Curriculum reflects cultural values.	o	157	112	92	31	8	183.525	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
10	Course content is regularly revised and refined.	o	212	90	67	20	11	325.675	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		

d) **Quality of processes**: This largely including teaching methodology mainly relating to teachers and teaching (e.g. teachers' competence, support for student-centered learning, active participation based teaching methods, teachers' working conditions etc.), supervision and support (e.g. administrative leadership, effective use of technology, diversity of processes and facilities etc.) Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities. Teacher professionalism and command over subject matter is the key for quality education.

Table 3:

Quality of Process

S.No	statements	f	SA	A	UD	DS	SDA	X^2	P
1	Activity based method is used in the classes.	o	150	123	73	45	9	163.3	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
2	A.V.aids are available in the school.	o	197	122	55	21	5	314.8	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
3	Teachers are well trained to use A.V aids.	o	176	86	105	27	6	227.25	0.00
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
4	Teachers are professionally equipped	o	270	97	30	2	1	640.175	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
5	Teachers prepare lesson plan regularly.	o	154	109	105	27	5	192.2	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
6	Refresher courses improve teaching skills.	o	288	85	25	1	1	734.95	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
7	Teacher has command over subject matter.	o	288	94	16	2	2	520.4	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
8	In-service training is provided to the teachers.	o	270	92	31	6	1	629.525	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
9	Questioning is in the class is encouraged.	o	107	84	102	73	34	42.425	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
10	Mother tongue as a medium of instruction is useful.	o	235	93	56	11	5	439.45	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		

e) **Quality of outcomes**: This indicator basically concerned with how effectively teachers used his teaching skills and pedagogy to bring the desired outcomes. This means students' achievement in literacy and numeracy, life skills, health outcomes, outcomes sought by parents, community participation, and learners' confidence are some of outcomes one can expect from the good use of A.V.Aids and specific environment by especial teaching methodology.

Table 4:

Quality of Outcomes

S.N	Statement	f	SA	A	UD	DS	SDA	X^2	P
1	Annual evaluation system is used at primary level.	o	326	70	3	12	1	711.86	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
2	Teachers use assessment procedures to enhance student's learning.	o	312	83	4	10	1	642.5	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
3	Teachers regularly assess performance.	o	276	98	22	3	1	678.25	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
4	Monthly written tests are used to judge the knowledge and skills of the students.	o	273	93	27	6	1	649.3	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
5	Annual evaluation system is transparent.	o	112	69	148	34	37	121.67	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
6	Verbal assessment system is used to increase students reading skills.	o	272	98	27	2	4	654.025	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
7	Assessment system is used to improve writing skills of the students.	o	260	113	25	20	2	409.98	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
8	Evaluations and assessments are used to measure the level of achievement of students in a precise way.	o	237	99	23	2	3	660.9	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
9	Daily class room assessment is done.	o	220	115	47	14	4	400.75	0.00*
		e	80	80	80	80	80		
10	Assessment system promotes the habit of study and discourages the habits of selective study.	o	198	126	59	13	4	334.325	0.00*

Quality of education assumes that survival of adequate physical infrastructure is much urgently needed. It also assumes that such quality infrastructure should not be compromised by any means for the institution. The quality of infrastructure of the internal & external environment is closely related to the quality of education. Investments in the development of the physical facilities of the institution go a long way in improving quality education. Basic facilities like school building, electricity, laboratories drinking water are the basic requirements for education. Without these basic facilities quality education is very difficult and almost impossible. For quality education, these facilities are compulsory and mandatory. Inadequate facilities are one of major challenge and hurdle in the way of quality education. Well organized and fully equipped institutions smoothen the way of quality education (UNESCO, 2000).

Quality of education and research assume that existence of adequate physical infrastructure is much needed. The quality of infrastructure of the internal & external environment is closely related to quality of education. Investments in the development of the physical facilities of the institution go a long way in improving quality education. Without these facilities education is very difficult. For quality education, these facilities are compulsory. Inadequate facilities are one of the challenges in the way of quality education.

As Memon (2003) argues that the above mentioned framework of the quality education given by the UNICEF (2000) appears to be supplementary workable and significant if specific criteria are outlined to assess the quality of education.

Since today at primary level these fundamental qualities are badly missing in majority of the primary level institutions so, we intend to highlight those factors which are responsible for such low quality of education at primary level and make sure how these influencing factors can be achieved within the limited recourses.

This study will also helpful to determine which of the quality factors will be best fit and suitable to help in improving the quality of primary education and what should be taken or put on top priority, or in other words there absentia may causes low quality of primary education.

The findings of this study will help the policy makers, stakeholders and curriculum developers while framing the curriculum for primary level and how to increase literacy rate and maintaining quality. This study will highlight the status of quality indicators (1- Quality of learning environment. 2 – Quality of contents. 3- Quality of process. 4- Quality of outcomes) at primary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and also will explore the status of quality indicators for boys and girls of primary schools separately which will be helpful in making specific decisions to improve the quality in the mentioned weakened areas

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to find out the status of different quality indicators i.e (teaching methodologies, curriculum, physical infrastructure and assessment and evaluation system) in the primary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan and to compare the status of selected quality indicators in government boys and girls primary schools as perceived by the teachers of selected schools of both categories.

Hypotheses of the Study

This study was guided by one main and four sub null hypotheses as follows:

$H_0 1$- There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding the status of selected quality indicators for their schools.

$H_0 1$ (a)-There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding learning environment available in primary schools.

$H_0 1$ (b) -There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding course contents available in primary schools

$H_0 1(c)$-There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding quality of process in primary schools

$H_0 1(d)$-There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding quality of outcomes in primary schools

Table 5:
Sampling Frame

Teacher category	School category	Population	Sample	Total sample
Head teacher	Boys	2283	50	
	Girls	2283	50	100
Teacher	Boys	4310	150	
	Girls	4310	150	300
Total		13168	400	400

Method

The study was descriptive and survey type in nature. All the teachers working in the government primary schools of the five selected southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan constituted the population of the study. The sample of the study was comprised of randomly selected 400 teachers from randomly selected 100

schools of the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa using equal proportion of allocation technique for male and female teachers. For collection of data, researchers developed a questionnaire consisting of 4 facets as identified by UNESCO i.e. (quality of learning environment, quality of contents, and quality of process and quality of outcomes) each one comprising of 10 items. Five point Likert scale i.e (SA= strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, A=Agree and SDA=Strongly Disagree) was used. The validity of the questionnaires was checked by 15 educationists and experts of the related field, while reliability of the questionnaires was obtained through Cronbach alpha having value 0.83 from 40 teachers and head teachers through pilot testing before administering to the sample. The data were entered in SPSS-16. Data collected through the above mentioned research instruments was tabulated, analyzed according to the objectives of the study using chi square test of goodness of equal probability and chi square test of independence. The sampling frame is given in table5.

Findings

The respondents were significantly in favor of all the areas selected regarding the quality of learning environments as an indicator of quality education with different strength of chi square value for all 10 indicators (availability of teaching kits, water facility, boundary walls, toilets, furniture's, school building ,classrooms, play grounds, and separate staffrooms) Obtained frequency is significantly in the favor of the indicators as compare to the expected frequency (80) at 0.5 level of significance (see table 2).

The participant of the study were also significantly in favor of all areas selected regarding quality of content (curriculum) as an indicator of quality education with different strength of chi square value for all 10 indicators (Curriculum is according to the learner's and society needs materials are adequate, comprehensiveness, manageable, sufficiency of books, supplementary materials, course content relationship, cultural needs and revision of curriculum). Obtained frequency is significant in the favor of the indicators as compare to the expected frequency (80) at 0.5 level of significance (see table 3).

It was noteworthy that the participants were significantly in favor of all the areas selected regarding the quality of process (methodology) as an indicator of quality education with different strength of chi square values for all 10 indicators (method usage, A.V.aids, professionalism, lesson plan preparation, refresher courses, command over subject, in-service training, students questioning mother tongue

usage). Obtained frequency is significantly in the favor of the indicators as compare to the expected frequency (80) at 0.5 level of significance (see table 4).

It was also inferred that the respondents were not significantly in favor of all the areas selected regarding the quality of outcomes as an indicator (annual evaluation system, usage of assessment, regularity in assessing procedure, monthly written tests, transparency of evaluation system, verbal assessment system, improving written skills, achievements from assessment, habit of daily classroom assessment, promotion of good habits) of quality education with different strength of chi square values for example about the transparency of evaluator/assessment system used in the schools (see table 5).

Table 6:
Comparison of Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions regarding the Status of selected Quality Indicators

S. N	Quality indicators	Schools	f	SA	A	UD	DS	SDA	X^2	P
1	Quality of Learning Environments	Boys	o	1256	415	160	120	46		
			e	1406	393.2	106.5	79.5	15	18.210	.63
		Girls	o	1475	351	78	86	10		
			e	1246.2	579.8	78	86	10		
2	Quality of Contents	Boys	o	761	571	390	195	83	50.814	.04*
			e	731.5	514.5	410	223.5	120.5		
		Girls	o	657	547	426	255	115		
			e	657	514	426	257.5	145.5		
3	Quality of process	Boys	o	1036	564	264	103	33		
			e	1069	492	298.5	107.5	33.5	23.037	0.34
		Girls	o	1050	445	336	123	46		
			e	1081.5	506	268.5	106	38		
4	Quality of Outcomes	Boys	o	1212	574	210	37	24		
			e	482	482	192.5	36	28.5	41.681	.00*
		Girls	o	1261	482	192.5	39	25.5		
			e	1338	390	175	41	56		

The respondents were also found significantly differing in their views regarding quality of curriculum and assessment/evaluation system as indicators of quality education with different strength of chi square values i.e 0.04 and 0.00 with p values respectively with X^2 values 50.814 and 42.681 respectively. Except these all

male and female respondents looked equally in favor of all the selected areas quality of process and physical infrastructure with 23.037 and 18.210 of X^2 values and 0.34 and 0. 63 of p (see table 6).

Conclusions and Implications

From the results of the study it may be concluded that separate staffrooms were not available for teachers in the primary schools so, it is recommended to make arrangements of separate staffrooms for the teachers so, that they can take some rest in free/leisure times. Moreover, sufficient books for readers and supplementary materials for teachers were not available in the schools, so, it is recommended to establish libraries in the schools for the purpose.

Questioning by the students in the class rooms were not encouraged by teachers. In this regard, supervising authorities should give special attention by holding refresher courses in this context. Furthermore, in the school's annual evaluation and assessment system was used to improve reading and writing skills of the learners but the transparency and impartialness of the examination/evaluation system was not as transparent and impartial as should be. The exam conducting bodies should be appointed on merit basis. Papers setting and marking work should be done by expert teachers and nomination of supervisory staff on performance basis may be helpful in enhancing the quality of primary education in the province.

Suggestions for other Researchers

The results of this present study is not only important for the teachers, parents and further interested researchers only but also very much noteworthy for policy makers, curriculum developers, and stakeholders to keep all these gray areas in mind and give full attention and concentration while framing curriculum, preparing text books inclusions of study materials, drawing syllabus or drawing long term strategic plans especially for primary level of education to increase not only literacy and numeracy but maintain quality as well. The aim of this study and research article is not only to present a clear picture of primary education as it stands in actual, but also to set a clear path of improvement for each school controlling authority to follow. The aim is that primary level of education will no longer demonstrate 'weak' results, and that those already regarded as 'strong' can continue to increase quality standards yet further.

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