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School Effectiveness in Pakistan: A Gender Perspective

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In this School Effectiveness study, the researcher will explore the perception of male and female school teachers, administrators and curriculum experts about the school effectiveness. The objectives of this study were to investigate into the term school effectiveness and explore gender differences in school effectiveness. Research Questions were related with the preferences and gender differences in the perception of school effectiveness. Sample was selected from all the districts of Punjab (N=36). A total number of 18 districts, with high literacy rate (N=9) and low literacy rate (N=9) were selected for the study. The participants of this study consisted of administrators, teachers, and curriculum experts (N=800). Research Design was survey method. Research tool was a questionnaire developed by the researchers, based on items related with school effectiveness. Results showed participants' preferences and gender differences in school effectiveness. 'Professionalism' was the top priority factor for school effectiveness. Gender differences were found in the perception of SE. Implications was made for researchers and policy makers to improve the schools. The findings of this study will initiate future researches in the field of school improvement.

Keywords: school effectiveness, professionalism, school improvement

School Effectiveness in Pakistan: A Gender Perspective

The purpose of this research is to identify the perception of male and female teachers and educationists about school effectiveness in Pakistan. School effectiveness means that whether schools are achieving their goals regarding students' academic output, competencies, skills and behavior. In this technology driven age, education is a big concern for developing countries and Pakistan is one of them. Illiteracy is a major issue in Pakistan which spends only 2 % of its budget on Education. Schools and school effectiveness can never be studied apart from the educational context of a country.

In Western countries a lot of research has been done on school effectiveness. The early seminal work (Coleman, et al, 1966; Jencks, et al, 1971) showed a widespread dissatisfaction with education and public belief that 'schools make no difference'. They said that the factors other than school play important role in the achievement of students such as socio economic status. These influential studies reported by Coleman and Jencks in the USA provided evidence that schools and teachers are not effective in enhancing achievement. Coleman reported that only 9% of the variation in school achievement is due to school effects. Reynold, Hargreaves and Blackstone (1980), concluded that ethnic and family-socioeconomic background constituted the dominant determinants of students' outcomes. In reaction to the Coleman studies, Brookover (1979), Edmonds (1979), Rutter (1979) studies identified that effective schools are characterized by a 'culture' oriented towards learning expressed in term of high standards and expectation from students, an emphases on basic skills, a high level of involvement in decision making and professionalism in teachers, cohesiveness, clear policies on matters such as homework and students' behavior and so on. Moreover effective schools are characterized by outstanding educational leadership. Edmonds (1979) was the first to summarize these features into what has become 'Five factors model' of school effectiveness, namely:

- Purposeful educational leadership;
- Challenging teaching and high expectations of students' achievement;
- Involvement of and consistency among teachers;
- Positive and orderly environment
- Frequently evaluation of student progress

This five factor model is the base of what might be termed the optimistic account of school effectiveness research. School effectiveness research has also suggested theoretical linkage between teacher evaluation, staff development, teacher improvement and school improvement (Teddle, Stringfield & Burdett, 2003). Reynold (2007) said that effective schools need to adopt specific strategies that ensure the school remains a moving school that continues to enhance pupil performance. This is done through exposure to new ideas and practices and collaboration with support group. Teachers are given intellectual space to experiment with novel form of curriculum, teaching and learning. The 'audit' of schools to see its effectiveness can be done in term of: Multiple levels of school (teachers, parents etc.), behavioral variables (exiting behavior of students and teachers), cognitive variable (educational understanding that individual exhibits), attitudinal variables (feelings and emotions), contextual variables (stipend or monetary incentives), and relational variables (professional associations). Rosenholtz (1989) studied the social organization of a sample of schools in Tennessee and generated a typology of types of school, the one called 'moving' or learning enriched, and the other 'stuck' or learning impoverished.

Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) noted that in their ineffective schools, selected on the basis of poor levels of value-added academic achievement over time, expectations of pupils' achievements were lower and principals were more involved in activities peripheral to the attainment of the major academic goals. Other researchers have outlined what the characteristics of ineffective schools seem to be (Reynolds & Packer, 1992; Reynolds, 1996a). They argued that ineffective schools possess numerous characteristics such as the widespread belief that change is for other people, that the school should stick to its past methods of operation, the reluctance of staff to attempt new things, fearing that they may fail, the blaming of factors external to the school by the staff for the failure of the school, the absence of any understanding among the majority of the staff about possible alternative policies, the belief among the staff that outsiders have little to contribute to turning the school around and the presence of numerous personality clashes within the staff group.

Marshall (2007) gave six essential components for fostering school effectiveness to improve standards of student achievement and the level of student well-being. These are: The exercise of bold leadership, a focus on achievement, build capacity through interdependence, create a thirst for learning, create conditions for innovations and build sustainability.

Moos and Huber's (2007) research in western countries has shown that leadership is a central factor in school quality. Pioneer researches also highlighted the role of leadership in enhancing school effectiveness (Reynold, 1976, Teddlie & Stringfield 1993). The results of these researches showed that schools classified as successful have competent and sound leadership. In most of the list of key factors that SE research has complied 'Leadership" makes a difference (Huber, 1997). Moos said that neither top-down measures alone nor bottom-up approaches have the desired effect. Instead, a combination of both has proved most effective. Regarding gender differences, Eagly, Karau and Makhijani (2009) presented a synthesis of research on the relative effectiveness of women and men who occupy leadership and managerial roles. Consistent with the assumption that the congruence of leadership roles with leaders' gender enhances effectiveness, men were more effective than women in roles that were defined in more masculine terms, and women were more effective than men in roles that were defined in less masculine terms. These findings are in line with the social-role theory of sex differences in social behavior.

Day and leitch (2007) argued that continuous professional development (CPD) consisted of all natural learning experiences and those planned activities which were intended to be of benefit to the student and contributed to the quality of education in classroom and enhanced School effectiveness. They

said that CPD serves 3 purposes: 1) the development of system (policy, school) 2) the individual (teacher) and through these 3) the pupil. The first was meeting to competencies related to teaching, school role and other system accountability demands. The second was effectiveness of teacher related to acquiring and updating content and pedagogical knowledge, understanding student learning needs and planning for and monitoring and assessing these. The third was effectiveness for student: related to the ways in which the pupils' motivation, attitudes, behavior, and attainment were affected by what the teacher has learnt through CPD.

Creemer (2007) devised a comprehensive frame work for effective school improvement based on the results of an International Best Practice Case Studies. This comprehensive framework showed that an improving school was firmly embedded in the educational context of a country which included external pressures to improve, availability of resources and educational goals and local support. The framework also included school factors that were school level process, (teachers' efforts to bring change), improvement process (five stage; assessment of improve needs, diagnosis and setting of goals, planning of improve activities, implementation, evaluation and reflection) and improvement outcomes (in term of teachers attitude, and students output). This frame work is applicable in different settings and countries. It is useful for practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

School effectiveness research developed many models of educational attainment which attempted to demonstrate the nature and direction of links between particular school processes and student outcomes. The basic structure of models of school effectiveness has been outlined by Creemers and Sheerens (1994) which tried to explain the multilevel structure and linkages between levels of the CONTEXT-INPUT-PROCESS-OUTPUT chain.

Among educational effectiveness models, developed from theories about how students learn, Creemers (1994) stresses the impact of three key concepts: quality, time for learning and opportunity. The model of School effectiveness by Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore (1996) suggests that congruence between factors operating at different levels (school, department and classroom) is an important feature of academically effective schools. In particular, academic emphasis and high expectations are mirrored at the school, department and class levels, while consistency, shared vision and goals and a student–centered approach are mirrored at two levels i.e senior and middle management. Both can be seen to influence academic effectiveness through leadership of the head teacher and the functioning of the SMT at school level and leadership by HODs at the department level. In contrast to other factors, schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged intakes differed markedly in staff views of the extent of parental interest and support. A safe, orderly school environment and a clear and consistently applied school policy appeared to be necessary conditions for academic effectiveness. Classroom processes can be seen to exert a direct impact on students' learning and motivation which in turn, affects academic outcomes. Behavior and attendance, however, may be influenced by both school and classroom processes. Behavior, motivation and attendance can also influence student learning directly. Teacher qualifications and experience can be viewed as INPUTS to the educational process which can directly influence the quality of teaching at the classroom level. However, high level of staff absence and difficulties in recruitment/retention of good teachers may also be a symptom as well as a cause of academic ineffectiveness, being influenced by staff morale and by school and departmental leadership.

The literature review on school effectiveness and school improvement will help us to review our school education. A through look at the educational system of Pakistan will help to identify the factors that hinder school improvement in our country.

Education system in Pakistan

Pakistan is suffering from many ups and downs now-a-days. The unstable political circumstances, the threatening geopolitical situations, ever increasing poverty ranking Pakistan among the 43 countries most exposed to poverty risks, low resources and high expenditure of the country are making people insecure and disheartened to manage their daily lives. The literacy rate of Pakistan is 54% (Govt. of Pakistan, 2009). People are under extreme fear, uncertainty and shock due to the unstable

political circumstances. The circumstances are taking them towards deterioration in each sphere of life especially in education. Along with environmental stressors natural calamities (National Disaster Management Authority, 2006) such as floods, earth quakes and recently dengue virus have affected the education of millions of people in the country (Khan & Khan, 2008).

In the historical context, the aims and objectives of education in Pakistan indicate that all the policy documents emphasized a commonality of core themes, which among others include, a) ideological base, b) national unity, c) individual development, d) societal development, e) economic progress, f) equality of education, g) quality of education. Later, the National Education Policy (1998) emphasized on setting up realistic goals, public-private collaboration, administrative reforms and the development of skills. The general aim of all policies and reports has also been to improve the literacy rate in the country. Despite all these measures, it has been generally observed that the academic standards at all levels are low (World Bank Report, 1990).

Burki (2000) points out the major indicators of crisis in the education sector in Pakistan as : 1) illiteracy, 2) the rising incidence of poverty; 3) the nationalization of private owned educational institutions in 1970, and the politicization of college and university campuses in the 1980s ; 4) the misuse of funds by international agencies during (1990s); 5) the sharp division in the educational system in Pakistan. Baluch (1990) suggests a revolutionary approach, radical changes in the scheme of studies and methods of teaching and the entire framework of schooling right from primary to postgraduate level, as a means of improvement in society. There are gender differences in education like enrollment, provision of more facilities to boys than girls and parents' positive attitude towards boys' education as compared to girls' education. Many other issues such as drop-out rate, curriculum and examination system, teacher training, text book development, management and supervision and Physical facilities need immediate remedies to make the schools effective.

Rationale of the study

Improving the quality of education is an appropriate priority, especially considering the strong evidence that how economic development in less-developed countries depends on education (World Bank 1995)**.** In this school effectiveness study, the researcher will explore the perception of male and female school teachers and administrators about the school effectiveness. The study would provide an interesting contribution to the education sector by focusing on the field experts' perceptions and priorities of what contributes to school effectiveness. The findings will have implications for policy makers and administrators at both the school and the high officials' level. It will help for schools involved in the process of self-evaluation and concerned with school improvement. The findings of this study may initiate future research in the field of school improvement.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed at exploring the perception of school effectiveness among male and female teachers, head teachers and administrators in the education sector of Punjab.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study were to:

1 Investigate into the term school effectiveness.
2 Explore how teachers and administrators perceive school effectiveness.
3 Explore the gender differences in the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding school effectiveness in Pakistan.

Research Questions

Following research questions were formulated and addressed**:**

What is the perception of teachers and administrators about school effectiveness in Pakistan?

What are the preferences of teachers and administrators about school effectiveness?

Are there gender differences in the perception of school effectiveness?

Method

Population

Policy planners, implementers and teachers concerning secondary education in the Punjab were the population of the study.

Sample

Sample was selected from all the districts of Punjab (N=36). Districts were divided into two Strata i.e. Low / High Literacy rated areas. A total number of 18 districts, with high literacy rate (N=9) and low literacy rate (N=9) were selected for the study. The participants of this study consisted of administrators, teachers, and curriculum experts. From each district urban (N=4) and rural (N=4) boys and girls schools were randomly selected. From each school 10 teachers, 1 headmaster, 1 headmistress were selected. Executive District Officer (N=1), and Assistant Education Officer (N=4) from each district were selected as sample. Director Public Instructions, Additional Director Public Instructions, all experts of Curriculum wing, Punjab Text Book Board, Lahore, and all teacher trainers from University of Education, Bank Road Lahore, were taken as a sample.

The sample was consisted of 452 (56.5%) males and 348 (43.5%) females with a total number of 800 participants. The minimum age of 34 (4.3%) respondents was 20; whereas, 174 (21.8%) respondents were above 50, rest of the respondents ranged between these limits. The minimum academic qualification of the respondents was B.A , only 44 (5.5%) respondents fall in this category, whereas most of the respondents (530, 66.3%) were MA/MSc. B.Ed was most common professional qualification among respondents.

Research Design

Survey method was used in this research.

Tool

A quantitative approach was used for gathering data. A questionnaire was designed using 5 point Likert Scale for the purpose. The statements were carefully drawn from literature review, discussion with teachers and educational experts. Questions were generally based on investigation about school effectiveness regarding school goals, curriculum, classroom instructions and management, evaluation, leadership, environment, community involvement, motivation of students, home environment and physical facilities.

Procedure

A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 240 teachers and administrators in education department of Punjab to see the appropriateness of the items, clarity of instructions and to establish the reliability and validity of the instrument. For main study questionnaires were sent by post through Director Public Instruction Punjab, for data collection. A follow-up plan was implemented, and reminders were issued. All questionnaires had cover letters to make request for the cooperation, and assured that their information would be used only for research purpose and kept strictly confidential. Researcher received positive response by getting almost 80 % questionnaires back.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed to see the perception of school effectiveness among male and female participants. To test the research questions, mean responses on different statements were derived to see the preferences of the participants on school effectiveness questionnaire. t-test was performed to see the gender differences on school effectiveness. Table 1 shows the priority of school effectiveness indicators as perceived by the participants.

Priority of School Effectiveness Factors

Table 1: List of school effectiveness indicators according to the preferences of the participants

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation
Professionalism	3.99	0.77
Coordination	3.97	0.64
Safe Environment	3.89	0.94
Professional Development of Teachers	3.78	1.00
Community Involvement	3.77	0.95
High Expectations	3.76	0.82
Orderly Environment	3.76	0.78
Quality Assurance	3.71	0.89
Students Motivation	3.71	0.78
Social Skills	3.70	0.94
Evaluation	3.69	0.87
Leadership	3.68	0.81
School Goals	3.68	0.98
Classroom Management	3.67	0.77
Home Environment	3.65	1.02
Instruction	3.61	0.81
Curriculum	3.56	0.91

Table 1 shows list of School Effectiveness Indicators with their mean scores and standard deviations of opinions of all participants regarding school effectiveness. These results are essence of the study that how do our teachers, head teacher, curriculum experts and administrators rank the school effectiveness indicators. In other words, which indicators are most important regarding school effectiveness. Although all the school effectiveness indicators have high means that ranged from 3.99 to 3.56. Results showed that the factors 'professionalism' and 'co-ordination' needed to be addressed on top priority while the curriculum and instructions are at the end of the continuum for the improvement of school effectiveness in our country.

Table 2: Gender Differences on School Effectiveness Indicators

School Effectiveness Indicators	Male		Female		Sign. Level
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
School Goals	3.36	1.01	3.94	0.88	p<.001
Curriculum	3.25	0.94	3.82	0.81	p<.001
Instruction	3.36	0.74	3.82	0.80	p<.001
Evaluation	3.46	0.90	3.88	0.80	p<.001
Classroom Management	3.51	0.68	3.81	0.81	p<.001
Leadership	3.48	0.72	3.85	0.84	p<.001
Safe Environment	3.73	0.92	4.02	0.93	p<.001
Orderly Environment	3.58	0.73	3.90	0.79	p<.001
Professionalism	3.90	0.73	4.06	0.79	p<.01
Community Involvement	3.70	0.92	3.83	0.97	n.s
Students Motivation	3.63	0.69	3.77	0.83	p<.05

Home Environment	3.45	1.09	3.82	0.93	p<.001
High Expectations	3.60	0.81	3.89	0.81	p<.001
Prof. Development of Teachers	3.62	0.94	3.91	1.03	p<.01
Social Skills	3.54	0.87	3.82	0.98	n.s
Quality Assurance	3.54	0.88	3.85	0.87	p<.05
Coordination	4.04	0.55	3.92	0.70	p<.01

Table 2 shows the gender differences in perception about school effectiveness indicators. To compare the opinions of male and female participants independent samples t-test was conducted. In majority indicators there was statistically significant difference between males and females. Females gave more importance to all the indicators as compared to males. The range of difference was from 0.1 to 0.6. The largest difference was on school goals and curriculum. The least statistically significant difference was on students' motivation. For two indicators there was harmony between males and females e.g. social skill and community involvement. Males gave more importance to coordination as compared to females.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the indicators that increase school effectiveness with a gender perspective in Pakistan. An effective school is one that promotes the progress of its students in a broad range of intellectual, social and emotional outcomes. Three research questions were asked in this study: 1) What is the perception of teachers and administrators about school effectiveness in Pakistan? 2) What are the preferences of teachers and administrators about school effectiveness? 3) Are there gender differences in the perception of school effectiveness? In response to the first research question, all the statements of the questionnaire were perceived important for the school effectiveness. Regarding second research question, participants' preferences on the statements of the questionnaire about school effectiveness were different. The factor of 'Professionalism' got highest mean value of 3.99 (SD=.77). The participants' responses on the 'professionalism' remained at the top priority for enhancing school effectiveness in term of good performance, respect for hierarchy and mutual cooperation. Professionalism means to be committed and focused on your work without wasting time on workplace. Pakistani educationists and teachers also believe that professionalism in teaching increases school effectiveness. These results were consistent with the findings of Brookover (1979), Edmonds (1979), Rutter (1979) s' research who reported a high level of professionalism in teachers for the improvement of school effectiveness. The second priority of the participants was 'Coordination' between heads and teachers and teachers and students to enhance school effectiveness. The networking between the teachers and students and teachers and heads help to solve problems encountered by the students ultimately enhance teaching and learning.

Participants responses were high on the statement 'Safe Environment' with a mean of 3.89 (SD =.94). Safe environment meant equipped labs, safe physical structure of school, appropriate furniture and lightings. In a developing country like Pakistan, where education budget is 2% and the facilities provided in schools are scarce, the participants' priority for safe school environment makes sense. Professional Development of the teachers was the fourth priority of the participants regarding school effectiveness. It meant for providing opportunities for staff development and exposure to technology and innovations. Our results are supported by Day and leitch' findings (2007) who said that continuous professional development serves three purposes to enhance school effectiveness: the development of system (policy, school), the individual (teacher), and through these 3) the pupil.

Participants preferred 'Community Involvement' in educational process. In a low literacy country like Pakistan 'Community Involvement' in term of teacher- parent meetings, conferences and seminars are rare in the schools. The reason is that poverty keeps parents involved in earning and they do not give significance to, and spare time for their

children's education. 'High Expectations' from the students in term of self-esteem and accepting challenges was also on the upper half of the priority list. These results were consistent with the conclusions from Brookover (1979), Edmonds (1979), Rutter's (1979) studies which identified that school effectiveness are characterized by a 'culture' oriented towards learning expressed in term of high standard and expectation from students. Other factors like 'Orderly Environment' in term of clear rules and discipline, 'Quality Assurance', 'Students Motivation', in term of encouragement, 'Social Skills', 'Evaluation' in term of continuous assessment, higher order thinking were preferred respectively. In the present study 'Leadership' in term of support, rigorous recruitment of staff and assigning work according to the caliber of employee was given much importance. These finding were in line with Moos and Huber's research who reported (2007) that leadership was a central factor in school quality.

Gender differences about school effectiveness were explored through our third research question "Are there gender differences in the perception of school effectiveness"? It was found that in majority factors there was statistically significant difference between males and females. The mean values for females on most items of the questionnaire were high as compared to males' mean scores. The largest difference was on 'School goals' and 'Curriculum' with a mean of 3.36 and 3.25 for males and 3.94 and 3.82 ($p, <.001$ & $p, <.001$) for females respectively. The least statistically significant difference was on students' motivation. On the factors of 'Social Skill' and 'Community Involvement' there were no significant gender differences. It was interesting that the male participants gave more importance to 'Coordination' as compared to female participants. It is similar with Kruger's findings who (1996) reported that female heads were more oriented towards internal teaching process in schools while their male counterparts showed greater interest in external tasks. Gender differences have been reported by Eagly, Karau and Makhijani that (2009) men were more effective than women in leadership roles that were defined in more masculine terms and women were more effective than men in roles that were defined in less masculine terms. These findings are in line with the social-role theory of sex differences in social behavior. The differences in the perception of school effectiveness between male and female participants may be due to important national and cultural differences in shaping gender (Korpi, 2000). Females take the problems at micro level that is why they perceived each SE factor more seriously than the males.

In the present research male and female participants' opinion about school effectiveness has implications for researchers, policy makers and leaders in education. Townsend (2007) said that there are many issues, social, cultural, financial, technological and environmental that influences the school effectiveness so while developing policies all these issues should be kept in mind.

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