

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Private schools are owned by non government organizations, individuals or groups. Public schools are owned by government. This study is designed with a purpose to find the basic difference between private schools and public schools. The literature has been reviewed with two main themes and nine categorical variables. The data were collected from students, teachers, officers and parents. A sample of 2000 students, 1500 teachers, 1500 parents and 150 officers was randomly selected. The questionnaires were developed and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. It was found that the most of parents desire private schools for their children on account of students' performance, strict quality teaching, appropriateness of text books, strict check and balance, effective facilities and English being the medium of instruction.

INTRODUCTION

The term school refers an educational organization where teaching learning takes place, where teachers teach some particular planned curriculum to students. It is an educational building where learners get planned education from teachers under the supervision of administrators. The main goal of school is to literate the people. There are several types of schools but the most important types are private schools and public schools.

The private school are established, run and maintained by individuals, community or non-governmental agencies. Such schools do not get money from government for day-to-day activities. They do not give free education to students. They collect money by charging tuition fees and other costs. The parents of students are liable to pay monthly, annual, admission and such other fees.

The public schools are established, run and maintained by government. Such institutions get money from government. They give free education. The parents do not pay any fees to such schools. Government takes tax from public and provides free education through public schools.

Usually, the people mostly like the school which imparts quality education – be it private or public. It enables students to achieve full potential. The teachers of such school are interested to give proper instruction and guidance to their students. The head teachers feel responsibility for maintaining discipline and ensuring smooth running of schools. The students feel comfortable, safe and secure. If they face any problem they can get it solved by sharing with teachers or head teachers. This paper investigates various parameters of high schools in the public and private sectors.

CHOICE BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It is one of the most important questions, the parents often ask, how and where to educate the children, whether in private or public schools. The parents never wish to take an extra burden of the expenses of private schools unless they benefit their children. Many public schools do an excellent job of educating students. They do not have tuition costs as private schools do have. Despite of the cost benefit of public schools, most of parents prefer to send their children to private schools because the benefits of a private education can still far outweigh the costs depending on the local options parents may face. Students who attend private schools can be more academically challenged, exposed to clearer value systems, given greater access to teachers and may simply feel safer than local public school options (<http://www.publicschoolreview.com/articles/1>).

Parents can never compromise on the education of their children. They always look out for the best school for their children. They often think that the future success of their children lies in the best education. When the choice of schooling comes, parents often think genuinely whether to keep them in private school or send their children to public school. There is no overall right or wrong answer regarding whether private or public school education is best for children. The best thing to do when making

this decision is to consider the factors and weigh which ones are important to the child.

There is no guarantee of the choice between private and public that children's early years will be fruitful. Parents should always keep close watch on the performance of children. They have to be active participants in the education of their children. Still, if parents have to choose keeping in mind the benefits of children, possibly private school can be an attractive option. Private schools can reduce worries about safety, increase a child's exposure to discipline, offer reduced class sizes and offer a good environment for high academic achievement. There are many benefits of private schools. There the child will have to face the challenge of higher academic education. Private schools are imparting education comparatively better than public schools. The private school students are kept bound to work hard. There the students have to achieve and maintain certain criteria to keep up their grades. Private schools students have to complete more course work than public school students. Private school students are supposed to be better in terms of quality of education, common sense, aptitude and activeness. In some schools, what would normally be considered extracurricular activities, are prerequisites for graduation, which ultimately round out students' high school experience. The push to meet this higher standard often results in a greater level of student performance. In one of a recent report it was found that students who attended nonpublic schools had higher average writing scores than students who attended public schools. In general, a student given the opportunity to attend a private school will most likely reach a higher level of academic achievement (<http://www.publicschoolreview.com/articles/1>).

METHOD AND INSTRUMENTS

The data were collected through survey method and observation, questionnaire and focal group discussion.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

All the private and public high schools comprising on teachers, students, parents and officers of the four provinces constituted the population of study.

The process of sampling was random stratified sampling. For this study a sample of 2000 students, 1500 teachers, 1500 parents and 150 officers was brought under study. Thirty districts were selected randomly from 113 districts in the four provinces of Pakistan. Sixty one high schools (private and public male) and thirty high schools (private and public female) were randomly selected from each district. Four questionnaires were developed and administered on the sample of teachers, students, parents and officers. Focal group discussion was also held for the collection of data.

Categorical Variables

1. Parent's desire of private or public schools
2. Performance of students in private or public schools
3. Check and balance of schools
4. Performance of teachers
5. Quality of textbooks
6. Facilities
7. Class size
8. English medium of instruction
9. School building

FINDINGS

Table-1

PARENT'S DESIRE OF PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sample	Parent's desire	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	95	5
Teachers	88	12
Students	99	1
Officers	72	28

Table-2

PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sample	Performance of students	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	98	2
Teachers	55	45
Students	98	2
Officers	52	48

Table-3

CHECK AND BALANCE OF SCHOOLS

Sample	Check and balance of schools	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	77	23
Teachers	88	12
Students	89	11
Officers	55	45

Table-4

PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS

Sample	Performance of teachers	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	76	24
Teachers	66	34
Students	95	5
Officers	60	40

Table-5

QUALITY OF TEXTBOOKS

Sample	Quality of textbooks	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	92	8
Teachers	60	40
Students	85	15
Officers	51	49

Table-6
FACILITIES

Sample	Facilities	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	23	77
Teachers	22	78
Students	33	67
Officers	23	77

Table-7
CLASS SIZE

Sample	Class size	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	34	66
Teachers	9	91
Students	5	95
Officers	12	88

Table-8
ENGLISH MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Sample	English medium of instruction	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	99	1
Teachers	98	2
Students	99	1
Officers	89	11

Table-9
SCHOOL BUILDING

Sample	School building	
	Private schools (%)	Public schools (%)
Parents	33	77
Teachers	48	52
Students	45	55
Officers	12	88

DISCUSSIONS

Parent's Desire of Private or Public Schools: Most of parents desire private schools. The idea was supported by 95% parents, 88% teachers, 99% students and 72% officers. Parents argued that they want better education for their children which is found only in private schools. Teachers, students and officers equally favored the statement of parents.

Performance of Students in Private or Public Schools: Most of stake holders mutually expressed that performance of students is better in private schools than public schools. The idea was supported by 98% parents, 55% teachers, 98% students and 52% officers. Parents argued that teaching learning process is better in private schools. Teachers argued that due to strict check and balance in private schools the better educational atmosphere is created. Students expressed that performance of students in private schools is better because teachers in private schools are regular and punctual and are forced to take interest in the education of students but in public schools teachers do not take interest in the education of students. Officers told that private school teachers do not have job security. Their job is secure till the performance of students is better. But, the case of public schools teachers is reverse. Moreover, private schools select the bright students only but public schools have to give admission to all. Private schools conduct a test and the students who pass their test are given education while others are rejected. But the case of public school is reverse. They do not conduct any test. They have to give admission to each and every child, which affects on the performance of intelligent students.

Check and Balance of Schools: The check and balance is better in private schools than public schools. The statement was supported by 77% parents, 88% teachers, 89% students and 55% officers. The parents argued that the reason of better check and balance in private schools is that the earning of private schools goes in the pockets of owners. For more and more earning they make the school attractive and disciplined. Teachers argued that due to fear of hire and fire the teachers are regular and punctual. In public schools teachers do not have such fear. Officers stated that

in private schools there is political interference. The owners run schools as they like. They hire good teachers and fire lazy teachers. But the case of public schools is very complex. Here hire and fire is not in the hands of officer who are accountable for check and balance. Such officers are not even free to take action against any teacher. They even cannot transfer a teacher from one school to other school.

Performance of Teachers: Performance of teachers is better in private schools than public schools. The idea was supported by 76% parents, 66% teachers, 95% students and 60% officers. Teachers argued that the salary and qualification of private school teachers is comparatively low but performance is better. Now the question raises that why and how teachers with less salary and qualification produce better results than public school teachers. The secret of such performance lies in better check and balance. Parents argued that teachers of private schools always remain afraid of job insecurity. They cannot afford losing job. Officers once again repeated that check and balance is poor in public school due to political interference. They further argued that if officers are given free hand to improve the overall education, they assured that within few days the performance of public schools will be better than private schools.

Quality of Textbooks: The quality of text books is better in private schools than public schools. The statement was supported by 92% parents, 60% teachers, 85% students and 51% officers. The parents expressed that private schools are free to choose books. They select the best and latest books. They can change any book that is less interesting to students. They select the books that are written in story form and children like the stories very much. The books are easily available on shops. The students can buy books in advance and make early preparation. But public school books are not easily available. These books are not available on shops. Officers argued that every school should be given a right to select any book for the students. The books in public schools remained unchanged for the long time and become outdated. Such books are not beneficial for children. Teachers expressed that books play a vital role in the education of students. Unfortunately

public school books are not updated. These books are not in short story form. Teachers and public schools can not select the book they like. While private schools are free to select any book. The students argued that books of private school are comparatively more interesting and charming. They like the books of private schools very much.

Facilities: The facilities are found more in public schools. The statement was supported by 77% parents, 78% teachers, 67% students and 77% officers. A parent expressed that budget of public schools is comparatively more than private schools. The school building, furniture, equipment is more in public schools. Public schools do not charge any tuition or any other fee. The books are given in free there. The salary of teachers is higher than private school teachers. The teachers argued that there is no financial crisis in public schools. Financial crisis is often observed in most of the private schools. They generate money by charging students. The funds are found insufficient for meeting day to day activities in private schools. Officers stated that private schools mostly run on commercial basis. The profit of the schools goes to owners. The most of the schools remained deprived of the basic facilities. Students told that they can manage in the limited facilities. They cannot compromise on education. Though facilities are insufficient but standard of education is much better there.

Class Size: The class size of private schools is smaller than public schools. The statement was supported by 66% parents, 91% teachers, 95% students and 88% officers. The parents, teachers and officers mutually agreed that student-teacher ratio is smaller in private school. There are less than 20 students in a class of private schools. But in public schools the number of students is more than 20 students per class. In some classes the number of students is greater than 50 students. In such classes, it is very difficult for a teacher, to pay attention individually to each student.

English as a Medium of Instruction: The medium of instruction in private schools is English while in public schools, it is local or national language. The statement was supported by 99% parents, 98% teachers, 99% students and 89% officers. The parents

argued that performance of students in private schools is better than public schools because of English medium of instruction. The teachers told that our system is totally complex. The medium of instruction up to matriculation is optional but in intermediate classes all the science subjects are in English. So the students who study in English medium schools from class one know the English better than the public school students where medium of instruction is not English. Fluency in English supports the students to have easy grip on other English medium subjects. Officers and students equally agreed that students in private schools get education in English medium from class one while students in public schools get education in English medium after completing elementary education. This dual policy of government has created a class structure in education system. The students who get education from private schools feel superior and students getting education from public schools feel inferior.

School Building: The public schools have better building. The idea was supported by 98% parents, 55% teachers, 98% students and 52% officers. They are of the opinion that school building of public school is better than private schools. Government has more funds than individuals. Parents argued that they have seen the public school building very attractive. Teachers and students argued that in most of the public schools have vast play ground which they could not find in private schools. Officers expressed that public schools buildings are preplanned but private school building are not preplanned. Many private schools are running in a building made only for residency. They do not have even play grounds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It has been found that parents desire private school for their children. Though they agree that public schools have comparatively more qualified teachers, free education, better school building and more other facilities but their choice of private school is not surprising. They are fully aware that in public schools there is no proper check and balance and standard of education is not as is found in private schools. It was pointed out that due to political and other undue influence

officers and head teachers are not free to have proper check and balance. Government should keep the education at top priority and remove any type of political or other undue interference.

- It has been found that the medium of instruction creates the sense of superiority and inferiority. The students who get education from private schools with English as a medium of instruction feel superior and students who secure education from public schools with local language as a medium of instruction feel inferior. It is also found that the students who have got education from English medium schools have comparatively more fluency in English. Government should take the notice of the feelings of students and should ensure the same medium of instruction in all the schools either private or public schools.
- Government should consider the case of teachers in private and public schools. Private school teachers teach more but their salary is very low. Moreover, they do not have job security. On the other hand public school teachers get high salary and they also have job security but they are not regular and punctual. They do not teach properly. Government should take the notice of such status of teachers. The public school teachers should be kept regular and punctual. Private school teachers should be provided handsome salary and job security.
- There is lot of difference in check and balance between private and public schools. There is undue political interference in public schools. Government should strictly ban such type of interference and allow the officers to take decision necessary for the proper check and balance as is in private schools.
- Class size, school building, facilities and quality of textbooks are not the same in public schools and private schools. Government should take the notice of such difference and ensure the proper class size and textbooks for both public and private schools.

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