

Public versus Private Secondary Schools: A Qualitative Comparison

Muhammad Iqbal

Email: dr97pk@yahoo.com

The Present study was conducted to compare qualitatively the public and private secondary schools on different variables such as leader's leadership styles, management practices and physical facilities provided in these schools. Three public and three private schools, were selected as case from Lahore city on the basis of convenience and accessibility. The stakeholders views approach was adopted for case study. The secondary school principals, teachers, students of 9th and 10th classes and their parents were identified as stakeholders of these schools. Interview protocol for each stakeholder, observation and document analysis were used as instruments of data collection. Sixteen interviews were conducted for each case which included the Principal of school, five teachers, five students of 9th and 10th class and five parents of these students. In this way 96 interviews were conducted for these cases including 48 interviews from public school and 48 from private schools. The school management / leadership, practices of heads, implementation of departmental policies, teaching learning environment and discipline in schools, lesson planning, available facilities, co-curricular activities and future developmental plans etc were explored in different interview protocols from each stakeholder. Data were analyzed by using qualitative analysis methods. It was found that, the public schools have better facilities , spacious buildings, highly qualified staff and people oriented management styles as compared to private schools. The heads and teachers of private schools desired to shift in public schools. It is recommended that Government should bound the private sector to provide infrastructure and facilities to the students similar to the public schools.

Keywords: public school, private school stake holders, environment, discipline

Introduction

Education is an important determinant of economic and social development of a nation. Quality of education in a country indicates the quality of its human resource. Expenditure on education is considered as an investment in human resource enrichment. The developed countries spend a lot of money for the provision of education to their people while developing countries also spend money according to their resources to provide education free or at minimal cost to their citizens. Pakistan is spending only 2 % of its GNP on education (Government. of Pakistan 2009). Across the developing countries public schools enroll approximately 90 percent of all primary and 70 percent of all secondary students. Due to fiscal

constraints a trend to rely on private schools is increasing (Jimenez & Lockheed, 1995).

The Public sector alone especially in developing countries cannot meet the needs of quality education for rapidly growing population including Pakistan with a 2.7 % population growth rate (Government. of Pakistan 2010-11), highest in the region. Government alone can't fulfill the responsibility to provide education to fast growing population. So private sector has to share this burden. Therefore, both the public and private sectors are engaged in providing education to the masses. Education system in Pakistan is a legacy of British rule in the sub-continent. At the time of independence (1947) both public and private institutions were providing education at

primary and secondary levels. Burki (1986) classified educational institutions at the time of independence into two categories.

- Public schools and colleges managed by provincial governments or local bodies.
- Private schools managed by charities/missionaries.

All the types of educational institutions continued functioning after creation of Pakistan in 1947. At that time, private sector had an important role in providing education through schools. Private schools were managed either by societies motivated by the cause of promoting education or by individuals making their living through running education institutions. Prior to 1972, privately managed educational institutions constituted a sizable portion of the total educational system. Most of these institutions were operated at the school and college levels. Such institutions were managed by voluntary organizations and, apart from generating their own funds through fees/ attached property and donations, the institutions also received grant-in-aid from the government. Some private educational institutions earned a high reputation for the academic standards they maintained and for the quality of their instruction. In National Education Policy (1972) the Government of Pakistan decided to take over all the privately-managed educational institutions. As a result, in 1974 the 19,432 educational institutions were nationalized. These included 18,926 schools, 346 madrassas, 155 colleges and 5 technical institutions (Government. of Pakistan, 1998).

The need for the involvement of private sector to meet the expanding needs of educational facilities was again realized. The National Educational Policy 1979 reviewed the consequences of nationalization and came to the conclusion that as a result of nationalization of private educational institutions, the responsibility of providing educational facilities for all the children shifted on the shoulders of government alone which was unbearable. So in

the National Education Policy (1979) the need for the involvement of private sector to meet the expanding needs of educational facilities was realized. It was learnt that participation rates at various levels of education were poor and government alone was unable to provide required educational facilities at all levels. It was, therefore, considered necessary to encourage once again the participation of the community in educational development. To do so, the following policy measures were proposed: "Private enterprises will be encouraged to open educational institutions particularly in rural areas, permission to set up educational institutions 'will be granted by the Ministry of Education or the respective Provincial Educational Departments, the existing .legislation on nationalization of privately managed educational institutions will be suitably amended to allow opening of private educational institutions and to ensure that such institutions set up with the permission of government will not be nationalized in future. Regular instructional supervision of these institutions will be undertaken by the education departments and relevant statutory bodies (Government.. of Pakistan, 1979). After the implementation of national education policy 1979, the situation changed in the country. Individuals and non government organizations started opening new schools at all levels.

National Education Policy 1998 observed that as a result of the promulgation of (Promotion and Regulation) Ordinance no. II of 1984, a second wave of community participation in education had been energized. It is estimated that more or less 30,000 private educational institutions at all levels with approximately 3 million students are functioning in the country. Most of these institutions are 'English medium' schools and impart education from play-group to secondary level, for example, Beacon House School System, City School, Aizer Kindergarten and secondary schools.' Some schools have been established on community basis, while the

others are owned by individuals. The concentration of these schools is in urban areas. Heavy fees are charged by these schools (Government. of Pakistan, 1998).

Shami and Hussain reported that there were 81,103 private institutions in the country in 2005. In Punjab 48,541, in Sindh, 12,574 in NWFP 11, 276, in Balochistan 1,750, in ICT 750, in FATA 640, in FANA 2,861 and in AJK 2,711.

It is encouraging to note that private sector institutions are growing rapidly, i.e. from 36,096 institutions in 1999-2000 to 81,103 in 2005 showing thereby an annual average increase of 25 percent. Many research studies have been conducted to compare the various aspects of public and private schools all over the world. Jimenez and Lockheed (1995) have summarized many studies comparing public and private schools and reported conclusion that private schools in USA improved students' performance as measured by standardized test of verbal and mathematical skills. It was also reported that average student performance was better in private than public schools is widespread'.

Abid, Ishfaque and Gondal (1993) compared, the usage of modern teaching aids by the teachers of public and private secondary schools. It was found that teachers of both types of schools are fully aware about the advantages and effectiveness of teaching aids. Both types of school teachers use teaching aids. However, the teachers of private schools use more teaching aids and models comparatively.

Farida and Madeeha (2000) in their comparative study of private and public schools with respect to administrators' role found that heads of government schools performed better in their administrative planning for the whole year and academic activities while the heads of private schools show more concerns about co-curricular activities.

Provision of education up to secondary level is the responsibility of provincial governments in Pakistan. Private sector is also contributing in this respect. Government is also encouraging private sector to take part in expansion of education facilities. Consequently private schools are growing and flourishing rapidly. Therefore, there was a need to compare the effectiveness of both the types of the schools as well as factors influencing the effectiveness. Present study was conducted to compare the public and private secondary schools regarding their functioning and effectiveness.

Mustaqeem (2008) found in her comparative study that majority of parents and teachers of different qualifications, different age groups, different genders and different schools response that staff morale scale is same but they also reported that staff morale of private teachers is higher than that of Government. teachers.

Iqbal (2006) found in her comparative study that teachers in English medium schools use more than one teaching methodologies, English medium schools provide more instructional material for teaching, heavy small class size, arrange more co-curricular activities, art and science exhibition as compared to Urdu medium schools which are mostly public schools.

Liaquat (2009) found in her study that quality of teaching is better in private schools as compared to public schools and the teachers of private schools prepared lesson plans before teaching as compared to public schools.

Shaheen (2008) found in her study that majority of public school teachers behave well, avoid quarreling, getting flair up immediately, blaming others, experiencing anger as compared to private school teachers.

Jaweria (2008) found in her comparative study that male and female teachers of public

and private schools have different qualification but the school culture among the public and private schools are same.

Hafeez (2008) found in her comparative study that majority female teachers are more satisfied as compared to male teachers.

Method

To investigate about the functioning of schools as social institutions and comparing the public and private secondary schools, it was necessary to know the views of headmasters, teachers, students and parents relating to each case. So interview was selected as tool of data collection. The present study included case study approach to study and probe two types of schools.

A case study is the in depth investigation of a "unit" e.g. individual, groups institution, organization, program documents, and so forth. In education, a unit is likely to be a school, college, department, institute, an administrator, a teacher or a student. The case study, in its simplest form, involves an investigator, who makes a details examination of a single subjects or groups or phenomenon. In fact, a case study requires the collection of very extensive data in order to produce an in depth understanding of the entity being studied. Several kinds of case studies can be found in the social science literature. Of these very commonly and widely used is "historical case studies of organizations". These studies trace the development of an organization over time (Borgad Gall 1989 pp.402-403). Khawaja (1985) summarizes the concept by saying that "a case is a written description of an enterprise, an event, an incident and information about its many facets. It generally contains its history in internal and external environment. Cases are generally based on material gathered about real organizations" (Khawaja: 1985, P. i).

Case study is a methodology and relates to

the theoretical framework for the study.... It may be qualitative or quantitative depending on the type of instrument used to generate data. Or it may be both (mixed Methods).

Researcher prepared separate questions for interview of headmasters, teachers, students and parents. The heads were asked about their qualification, teaching and management experience, length of service, planning of daily activities and policies to run the school. The questions about school management, instructions, leadership, superiority of each type of school, prediction about the future of public and private schools, role of department in functioning of schools, etc. were also included in the questionnaire.

Teachers were asked about academic and professional qualification, class size, area of subjects, lesson planning, and home work routines teachers' perceptions about good qualities of their schools, weaknesses, principal's leadership style, different between public and private schools.

Students were asked about parents' qualification, number of students in class and teachers for class, teaching learning environment, usage of AV aids by teachers, physical facilities, science lab, science practical home work, conduction of examinations, marking papers and communication of results to parents and headmasters, inspection routines, extra coaching, co-curricular activities and weaknesses. These all questions aimed to determine the functioning (good or bad) of school and to analyze about the provision of facilities.

Parents were questioned about the perceptions regarding the effective functioning school. It included the questions about teaching-learning environment, students' performance in class. home work

policy, provision of physical facilities to students, conduct of examination, communication of results, school management, and teachers' dealing with students and parents, cleanliness and maintenance of school discipline etc.

It was decided to do six case studies i.e. three from public and three from private secondary schools from Lahore city. It was decided to select the schools on the basis of performance, school enrollment and ease of access.

The researcher personally visited the above mentioned schools one by one and with the consent of school administration, started recording interviews from the principal / headmaster, five teachers and five students from each school and their parents. Interviews of principals, teachers and students were recorded in schools which took three to four days for each case. However, interviews with parents were recorded at their homes after getting time before recording of interviews. It was not possible to record the interview of more than one parent each day because the parents resided at different areas of the city.

The total 96 interviews were recorded from six schools. Questionnaires of interview schedule were also filled by the respondents. It took nearly two months to complete the cases.

- The interviews of respondents of each case study were transcribed as follows:
- The answers of each principal were transcribed as a single case.
- The answers of five teachers, students and parents were transcribed and changed into averages for each case. The opponent opinions of respondents were also highlighted.
- Finally the results/responses of all public and private cases were compiled

separately and then compared, interpreted and presented in the following brief

Opinion of Principals of Public Schools

Public school principals teach arts or science subject when they get time and provide instructional guidance to teachers through personal experience. They plan their daily activities, and make school policies after seeking the suggestions from students, parents and particularly teachers. One head told that not fully but to a certain extent. They encourage their teachers to enhance their professional qualification. They pointed out that lack of financial resources is the main problem. Public school have edge on private school as public school having highly qualified staff, standard building and playground as compared to private schools. Moreover, in public schools syllabus is prepared according to the ideology of Pakistan while private school do not follow this policy strictly. The two heads of schools pointed out that department makes policies for the schools of the province and wants compliance from school heads, so their role is restricted and they have to work accordingly. Heads are not give much autonomy especially in financial matters.

About the future of schools, one principal replied that private schools have bright future as Government want to increase the role of private sector. However when heads were asked to join private schools all heads rejected this idea.

Opinion of Principals of Private Schools

Principals of private schools teach some subject whenever they get time, All of them plan the activities of their school regularly. Two of them told that they provide instructional guidance to their staff but the principal of Adbastan-e- Soophia told that

every newly inducted teacher is assigned a mentor. All the principals encourage the enhancement of qualification of their staff. They all make their policies after getting feedback from parents, teachers and students when it is required. All the principals provide the facilities of co-curricular activities for the personality development of students. Principal of Adbastan-e-Soophia stated in this respect “the working style of public and private school is different. Teachers of public schools are somehow independent whereas private school teachers are bound to do according to the will of management” While the rest of two principal replied the same that private school have reasonable class size so the teachers can teach their students with ease. Whereas public schools have overcrowded classes which create problems for the teachers. All the principals told that future of private schools is bright because Government is promoting private sector. All the heads of private schools told that they will join the public school as head if they get a chance.

Opinion of Teachers of Public Schools

Majority of the teachers of public schools told that they plan lesson on teacher's diary before teaching the class. However, some told that they do not need of lesson planning formally because of their experience. They also use A.V.Aids for teaching. they do assign home work to the class but it is not possible to check it daily due to large number of students. But they do it with the help of group leaders. The teachers of two schools told that future of their school is better than other because of having spacious building, library, playground, basket ball court etc. However, teachers of one girls school have different view because of lack of all above mentioned facilities. The teachers pointed out that number of student is increasing day by day but number of teachers is not increasing accordingly. They

also told that they show better result in spite of deficient building or other facilities. The teachers also told that public schools are providing social service as compared to private schools while private schools are profit earning and business oriented institutions. Teachers of Government Model High School told that they have vast and spacious building, public school have qualified staff, teachers can not pay individual attention to the students because of overcrowded classes. All the teachers like the leadership style of their principals.

Opinion of Teachers of Private Schools

All the teachers of private schools told that they plan their lesson formally and use A.V.Aids and divide the syllabus on weekly or monthly basis and teach their classes accordingly. Teachers of Adbistan-e-Soophia stated that homework is given to the students according to the schedule i.e. twice a week and checked properly. The rest of two schools teachers told that homework is given regularly and checked properly. All the teachers stated deficiencies of their schools that these schools have no play ground, library, science lab small building or residential building (one kanal) shortage of qualified staff and that is why teachers have to teach more periods which effect their performance. No competition of co-curricular activities is held. The teachers of private schools stated the difference of public and private school, they have to work more as compared to public school teachers. They give more individual attention to students because of having reasonable class size as compared to public schools. They also told that selected study is done in private school and short notes are given to students. There is no job security in private schools, pay package is not attractive except that of Adbastan-e-Soophia.

Opinion of Students of Public schools

All the students of public schools told that their teachers are hardworking and polite. They use A.V.Aids whenever it is necessary that is why they understand easily what is taught by teachers. There is no need of more explanation of concept. The students of two boys school stated that their schools have science labs and teachers demonstrate practicals regularly while there is no science lab in girls' school which is housed in a rented building. The students described that homework is assigned to them and checked daily. They also told that their principal visit their classes but not more frequently. The students of both the boys' schools told that school provide them facilities of games and co-curricular activities, particularly students of Government Model H/S Model Town which have a spacious play ground, they have opportunity to take part in many games and sports. However students of Girls school pointed out "our school has no play ground so we cannot take part in games but our teachers arrange literary programs and competition." The students of all schools told that they can see freely the principal when they have a problem.

Opinion of Students of Private schools

The students of private schools also replied that they easily understand what they taught by their teachers. The students also told that that their teachers are hardworking and polite and well mannered, they don't miss any class. The students also replied that they understand teacher's lecture but at the same time they have to take help from a coaching centers/ academy for more clarification. The students stated that the school has well equipped science lab except Bismillah Talent Girls' High School, in this school only the girls branch have science lab. All the students replied that their school provide all the facilities of co-curricular

activities for the personality development. Moreover, all the students stated that they can easily approach their principal whenever they needed.

Opinion of Parents of Public Schools Students

Majority of the parents told that school management is cooperative. Parents indicated that the basic problems of students are, lack of cool drinking water, token system of cycle stand is not good. Some parents indicated that bathrooms are not cleaned properly and library cards and books are not issued to students. Majority of parents told that that behavior of headmaster is often cooperative and discipline of school is according to a standard of high school. . However one father stated that it should be improved.

All the parents are satisfied with the performance of their children. All the parents replied that homework is assigned and checked daily. Moreover they told that their children understand easily but some time they need help for more clarification and they have to join academy or tuition center.

Opinion of Parents of Private Schools Students

All the parents of private schools students told that they are quite satisfied with the performance of their children. They also told that the homework is assign and checked daily by the teachers. They also satisfied with the teaching learning environment and management of school. They were also satisfied with the cleanliness at school. They can easily contact teachers and can easily approach to principal when it is required.

Findings

Public Schools

- Public schools have large, spacious and according to standard school buildings.
- Teachers are permanent, highly qualified and trained. All facilities including building, hall, library, furniture and utilities like electricity, water supply, and gas etc are provided and financed by government.
- Education is totally free up to matriculation level. Public schools enroll the majority of students belonging to middle and lower middle class families. Education is better at secondary level than private schools.
- Public schools have larger class size.
- Maximum public schools heads had people-oriented/ democratic leadership styles. They plan and implement the department policies and monitor the school functions.

Private Schools

- Private schools do not have large spacious buildings with small classrooms.
- Private schools have less qualified or untrained teachers.
- Teachers pay individual attention to students.
- Homework is assigned and checked regularly. Selected study is done in private schools and short notes are given to students.
- Students become more dependent and careless because of more attention of teacher.
- Private schools are profit-earning institutions; SO these provide education to those who have sound financial position.
- Private schools have reasonable class size small.

Maximum private school heads had task-

oriented/authoritative leadership style having all decision-making powers in schools.

Discussion

The findings of case studies showed that public school had better large and spacious buildings as compared to the private schools. Perhaps it was due to the high cost of land and construction of building public schools enjoys these facilities on behalf of the budget allocation by the government of the Punjab: In the same way teaching staff of government schools is highly qualified, trained and working on permanent basis while this factor is lacking in private schools. All physical facilities in government sector are provided by the government itself, while in private sector owners of the school individually cannot provide these facilities up to that extent. It is astonishing that private sector although lagging behind in the area of facilities and staffing but showed better performance as compared to the government school. The main differentiating factor is the better instructional supervision and monitoring system in private sector. Private schools are relatively expensive so majority of the people rush to the public schools and it is the cause of large classes in size which affects the teachers' performance. Despite large classes at secondary level in public schools, they showed good results as compared to the private sector. It may be due to the better facilities in public schools in the form of resources, laboratories and trained teaching staff. I-lead teachers in public schools are highly qualified, experienced and have people-oriented / democratic leadership style. On the other hand most of the head teachers in private sector are less qualified, untrained and inexperienced. They tend to be task oriented and authoritative having all decision making powers in their own hands.

References

- Abid, N, M. Ishfaq, M. & Gondal, M. (1993). *"Private School on our Government. schoolon kay Usatizah mein Vadeed Tadreesi Muawnaat kay Istimal ka Moazna"*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Lahore: IER, University of the Punjab.
- Ahmad, Z., Mirza, M. S. *The financing of privately-managed schools in the Punjab*. Retrieved on 20th June 2012 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000715/071513eo.pdf>
- Borg, W.R. & Gall, M.D. (1989). *Education Research: An Introduction (5th Ed.)* New York: Longman.
- Burki, S. J. (1986). *Pakistan: A Nation in the Making*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Farida & Madiha. (2000). A Comparative Study of Administrators' Role in Public and Private Secondary Schools. Unpublished Master thesis, Institute of Education and Research, University of Punjab, Lahore.
- Farooq, R.A. (1994). *Education System in Pakistan: Issues and Problems*. Islamabad: Asia Society for promotion of Innovation and Reforms in Education (ASPIRE).
- Government of Pakistan. (1979). *National Education Policy and Implementation Programme*. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.
- Government of Pakistan. (1998). *National Education Policy (1998-2010)*. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.
- Government of Pakistan. (1999). *Pakistan Economic Survey (1999-2000)*. Islamabad: Finance Division, Economic Advisor's Wing.
- Government. of Pakistan, Finance Division. (2011-11). *Economic Survey of Pakistan*. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.
- Hoy, W. K., Wayne N. & Richard, B. (1977). Subordinate Loyalty to Superior, Esprit and Aspects of Bureaucratic Structure. *Educational Administration Quarter*(v, 13, 71 –85).
- Jimenez, E. & Lockheed, M. E. (1995). *Public and Private Secondary Education in Developing Countries. Comparative Study*, Washington D.C: World Bank.
- John Level. (1983). *Supervision for Better Schools*, (5th Ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Khawaja, A.M. (1985). *The Case Studies Method*. Islamabad: University Grant Commission.
- Levine, Q~U & Lezotte, L. W. (1990). *Usually Effective Schools: A Review School. Research and Practice*. Madison J WI: National Centre for Effective Schools Research and Development.
- Smith, W.F. & Andres R. (1989). *Instructional Leaders/lip: How Principals make a Difference*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD Press.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The Art Of Case Research*. Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage Publications
- Southworth, G. (1998). *Leading Improving Primary Schools: The Work of /lead Teachers and Deputy Head*. London: Flamer Press.
- Shami, P. A. & Hussain, S. K. (2007). *Education in Pakistan*. Islamabad:

- Ministry of Education: Academy of Educational Planning and Management.
- Hafeez, U. (2008). A Comparative Study of Job Satisfaction in Public and Private School Teachers at secondary School. Unpublished Thesis of master in education. Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.
- Mubin, J. (2008). A Comparative study of school culture of public and private schools in Lahore District. Unpublished Thesis of Master in Education. Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.
- Shaheen, R. (2008). A Comparative Study of Aggressive Behavior of Public and Private School Teachers in Lahore. Unpublished Thesis of Master in Education. Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.
- Liaqat, S. (2009). Comparison of Quality of teaching between Government. and Private schools. Unpublished Thesis of Master in Education. Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.
- Mustaqeem, S. (2008). A comparative study of Saff Morale of Public and Private school in Lahore. Unpublished Thesis of Master in Education. Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore.
- Iqbal, Z, N. (2006). A comparative study of English Medium Schools and Urdu Medium Schools of Sialkot City, Unpublished thesis of master of Philosophy (Education)Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education: Allama Iqbal Open University.
- Government. Of Pakistan. (2009). Educational Policy. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.