

**RESEARCH PAPER****School Environment and Academic Performance: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Secondary Schools****¹Dr. Romena Ali* and ² Dr. Shahid Raza**

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***Corresponding Author:** rominaali0900@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

A school environment is defined as a school having appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy. There are many symbols of the academic, disciplinary, and physical environments of schools with a positive climate. The main purpose of this study was to explore the effect of the school environment on the performance of public and private sector schools at the secondary level. The objectives of the study were to compare the school environment of male-female secondary schools and to compare the school environment of public and private schools. The population of the study was all the male and female secondary school teachers of Khanewal and Multan. For the collection of data, a simple random sampling technique was used. The total sample was 300 male and female school teachers. For the collection of data, a Likert scale-based questionnaire was used as a research tool. For the analysis of data, different statistical techniques were used such as mean, percentage, standard deviation, and chi-square were used. After the analysis of data, it was found that private schools' learning environment has more effects on student's performance as compared to public schools. It was also found that urban schools' learning environment has more effects on student's performance as compared to rural schools. This study recommended that teachers should enhance student's self-belief and also enable students to work autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others, and feel they are competent to achieve their objectives.

KEYWORDS Public and Private Sectors School, School Environment**Introduction**

A good atmosphere is essential for the productive learning of the kid. The auspicious school environs offer the required stimulus for learning skills. The kids spend most of their time in school, and this school environment has forth effect on outcomes via curricula, coaching methods, and association (Kunwar,2021). The school environment contains the lecture theater, reading room, technical Workshops, test center, teachers' school administration, instruction approaches, peers so on and so forth are variables that have an emotional impact on pupils' academic achievement (Adhikari *et al.*,2018)). Henceforth, the institute atmosphere remains a significant zone that would be studied and well administered to improve pupils' educational performance (Shabbir *et al.*,2014).

Thus, the Institute atmosphere contains instructional design, managerial forecasting, circulation scheduling, and equipment arrangement, the tutors and the pupils both are important in the teaching-learning procedure (Choudhry, *et al.*, 2016)The student learning can be improved hinge on their position in the school complex, the arrangement of their teaching space, and the accessibility of instructional services and equipment (Awan *et al.*, 2015). It is supposed that a well-organized institute will prepare projected results of education which enable societal, political, and financial freedom, active coaching and learning procedures, and educational acts of the pupils (Jabbar *et al.*,2019).).The classroom and its plan are very important in school reason is where pupils & tutors pass their

maximum time, in addition where the learning procedure applies, so the worthy class environment aids tutors and pupils to make expert intermingle that helps pupils evolve and encourage worthy academic act with virtuous school progress (Farooq *et al.*,2020).).

Further, than the direct effects that poor amenities have on students' skill to absorb, the blend of deprived services, which construct rough and unappealing work areas for tutors, joint through annoying conduct by pupils plus poor attentiveness, tiredness, or laziness, makes a traumatic set of operational circumstances for tutors. The reason that strain and job displeasure are both terrible to sunken tutor passion, is likely that the aforementioned features of school amenities have a consequence on the educational outcome of pupils (Akram, 2019).

In Pakistan, the problems of poor educational results pupils have abundant difficulty with the administration, politics, character of tutors, and pupils conduct themselves. The tutoring class relies not only on the tutors to reproduce the outcomes of their responsibilities; but also on the active association of the school environs (Egboka & Ezebuilo 2023). The school surroundings vary from institute to institute. Some schools have proper structures, a worthy reading room and appropriate workbooks, efficient management, professionally sound tutors, well equipped, and fine locations. But in some schools, this is not the case. In this study consequently, the researcher hopes to affect the school environment based on the performance of school tutors at the secondary level through accessibility of proficient tutors and provision of instructional resources, inspiration of tutors, and Institute feasible amenities. The present research study also focuses on the school environment (Nwanga *et al.*, 2021).

Literature Review

In recent times it is observed that there is a sufficient increase in the enrollments of students and more and more students are joining schools depending upon the environment provided to the students in that particular organization, interest observed is particularly on the rise in the private sector of education, more over many researches have also concluded that environment plays a necessity role in better grooming and development of the kid to study better and achieve more. The environment is considered as a place where a child is nurtured and that environment may include a classroom, home, school, friend's circle, a demographical area where a child is living, and many other environments that all work together in building a child's cognition accordingly, all these things learned by the kid for its cognition are responsible for the spiritual development of the child. The psychological needs, social needs, and every other need of the child are defined by the environment where he resides (Ozuluonye *et al.*,2020).

Further, Igoni, (2020) diverse and multiple properties that are becoming barriers in the way of better education for children in schools are adding up a difficulty for the children. The author of the study points out the disturbance of the environment for the children to seek better knowledge and education as guilt in his way towards achievement and among those environmental disorders lack of resources for the provision of a better environment can be considered a top threat. Further family environment, insufficient facilities, incompetence of the trainer and coaching methodology applied by the trainers is has its importance in this regard. The author defines his mindset regarding the issue as the students who are not performing very well in the schools and institutes of education, are unable to cope due to the lack of provision of a knowledge-based environment for the students to learn more and achieve more like other students who are not facing such environmental issues. Ferrer *et al.*,(2022) stated that the alignment of different things together in building up an environment for the students in which the author believes that environment is a service or facilitation which is important for a student to get better results for him in academics and life. The facilities may include visual provision, books, and different materials regarding the needs of the student, a proper spacious room for the class, a

maintained sitting area, a writing board, and shelves that may contain the important tools that are utilized in performing practical work.

Moreover, Halverson & Graham (2019) watched that learning environments have an energetic part in characterizing how the understudies do and reply to circumstances. It recommends that no individuals are repealed of natural impacts. Learning environs control the vast degree that which students react implies air where we are tends to change our conduct to meet the prerequisites of life. The essayist watched that yearning for value and amount of training has expanded the trouble for giving an agent in addition to a positive information climate for instructing and instruction. In Nigeria, most of the students raised' confirmation in establish through slight or there are no regards to refining information environs thus better their demonstration.

To conclude, Khalid *et al.*,(2020) describe knowledge as a cognitive method that is helpful for children's learning due to the process of repetition of the content which is important for the children to learn about all that they need for their academic growth. A well-maintained environment for an institution may include a lecture classroom, a hall room for exams, a playground, and other knowledge-gaining facilities.

Environment

The environment is something you are very familiar with. It's everything that makes up our surroundings and affects our ability to live on the earth the air we breathe, the water that covers most of the earth's surface, the plants and animals around us, and much more. In recent years, scientists have been carefully examining the ways that people affect the environment. They have found that we are causing air pollution, deforestation, acid rain, and other problems that are dangerous both to the earth and to ourselves. These days, when you hear people talk about "the environment", they are often referring to the overall condition of our planet, or how healthy it is (Muldrew S, 2012).

School Environment

If would analyze the conducted study we can see that the environment referred to in the study also includes the outside conditions that are influencing the school organization and affecting the results of the students academically. Further, it also impacts as laboratory working facility, equipment used, library and books available, good qualified and skillful teachers, the environment may include the furniture used in the school's building, good managerial individuals and the relationship among all these things with each other individually creates a lot of difference in the organization. The environment the school is providing to the students is just like a thread that connects everything for a purpose, no one can see that invisible thread but still that thread has a huge role to play in maintaining the good condition of the school (Wechsler et al., 2020).

The physical environment of the school

A school environment is broadly characterized by its facilities, classrooms, school-based health supports, and disciplinary policies and practices. It sets the stage for the external factors that affect students (Mick Zais,2011). School Environment means the extent to which school settings promote student safety and student health, which may include topics such as the physical plant, the academic environment, available physical and mental health supports and services, and the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures, as supported by relevant research and an assessment of validity (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

A positive school environment

A positive school environment is defined as a school having appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy. There are many hallmarks of the academic, disciplinary, and physical environments of schools with a positive climate (Rani *et al.*,2023).

School condition

The School's condition comprises both material and non-material assets in the school. It incorporates the educators, peers, cohesiveness, the subjects, and techniques for instructing. A solid and appealing school condition makes helpful learning and advances understudies' pride in their schools and their enthusiasm to remain in school (Dornyei & Muir 2019).

The School Environment

The school environment which consists of the following areas:

The Grounds

The school is situated in the middle of an established inhabited area. The grounds are beautifully landscaped with large grassed and concrete playing areas for the students. Security fencing surrounds the school supporting a safe learning environment (Benevene *et al.*, 2020).

The classrooms

The classrooms contain the latest in technology and educational teaching aids. Every class has an interactive whiteboard. This is the latest in educational technology. All computers are connected to the internet ensuring that all children are connected to the world. Each classroom has a class bank of computers that have filtered internet access (Liao *et al.*,2019).

The Library, Computer Lab & Multimedia Centre

The Library is a focal point of the school and is situated in the middle of our grounds. It is computerized and connected to the Internet. There is a small network of computers for students to enhance their research and technology skills. Associated with the library building are our school's computer lab and multimedia center. This houses 30 desktop systems to provide for the tuition of technology. Features of this room include a projector, full internet access, and a server for students to individually login and retain their work. The library is also equipped with a Connected Classroom Interactive Whiteboard which teachers can use to communicate and share lessons with other participating schools. A Book Fair is held at least once a year with all money raised from the sale of these books going to further expand our resources in the library (Hayat *et al.*,2020).

School Hall

The school hall provides a venue for assemblies, dance, drama, and musical activities. Visiting performance groups use the hall to present items of educational value to the children. The hall is also currently used by After School Care and as a polling venue for elections (York *et al.*,2019).

Academic Achievement

A measure of knowledge gained in formal education is usually indicated by test scores, grades, grade points, averages, and degrees. Here, the achievement level of the student is judged by the marks that the students have scored in the quarterly examinations (York *et al.*,2019).

School environment has a deep impact on different aspects of school one of them is academic achievement

Achievements that are made at the academic level are usually measured in the schools through taking exams or through any other assessment technique. While nothing specifically has been done towards that approach and perspective which certainly determines it to be a crucial situation, it is said that the teacher is the one who has a huge impact on the life of the student and the teacher is the one who inspires and motivates the student to do good in his life and strive towards achievement (Zhang *et al.*,2020). A good teacher appreciates the students and makes them realize that they can achieve and prosper through life. Educators assume an essential part in instructive achievement as they are entrusted with the duty of interpreting strategy energetically and standards in light of work amid cooperation with the understudy. Student's accomplishments are overwhelmingly dependent upon many factors which are part of the school environment. When a student is studying in a school the facilities provided to him determine his mind and help him get more exposure (Gueldner *et al.*,2020). The school students studying in the institutes set different parameters for themselves regarding learning different things. Accordingly, according to the nature of the parents and the society, the institute is expected more for the grades of the students and their success in all parts of academic learning than other points, further the institute always looks forward to making proper measures to introduce such things which will prove to be helpful for them and the students to work upon and learn more out of it. Much research was done on the students and their learning capabilities in which different determinants were looked after such as the educational attitude of the institute towards the learning of the students, the condition of the student, or either the condition of the environment provision to the students, financial conditions of the students family are looked upon and then the student's accomplishments are ranked accordingly in the researches (Firman *et al.*,2020).

So that, depending upon the nature and the way of dealing with institutes towards the educational criteria and mentality of the students and the parents, the School can either prove to be efficient in executing positive results or not (Waheed *et al.*,2020). Madigan & Curran (2021) propose a notion that every school needs to maintain two vital parts within its school. The tuition-based schools have a chance to subsidize, but the small size in terms of the number of students are funded by the state schools which is difficult in the private sector to maintain. In the educational business, they are utilizing a lot of things for the students for their growth and development which don't come at a low price eventually which lead's the expenses of the organization resulting in high due paid for all the services.

The role of the supportive school environment

As well as that, Olivier *et al.*, (2019) in an article on the role of the supportive school environment in promoting academic success postulate that the school environment has a broad influence on students' learning and growth, including a significant aspect of their social, emotional, and ethical development. When students find their school environment supportive and caring, they are less likely to become involved in substance abuse, violence, and other problem behaviors. The research indicated that supportive schools foster these positive outcomes by promoting students' sense of connectedness, belongingness, or community. These terms are used interchangeably here to refer to students' sense of being in a close, respectful relationship with peers and adults at school. Therefore, building in a

school community is a means of fostering academic success. Students who experience their school as a caring community become more motivated, ambitious, and engaged in their learning.

Influence of School Physical Facilities on Academic Achievement

Above all, the facilities that are provided to the students and the teachers play a vital role in the nourishment of the students' capabilities, the general facilities that are required by the students and the teachers for the academic well-being of the institution include, Desks, chairs, whiteboards, trash bins, Teaching assistance material, First aid box, computers, library, calculators, Air condition or Heater depending on the season and many other things that are commonly important for students and the teachers to focus on learning and teaching. School facilities according to Kuhfeld et al., (2020).) are the necessary things to utilize by every institute for the programs they are carrying. These are termed as the material resources that are very important for the teaching environment and for the school and the students. It has been observed that if the students are provided with better facilities and the teachers as well, it helps the school to manage to produce better results among the students.

Also, Day *et al.*, (2020) studied the terms that are associated with the delivery and working ethics of the teachers, in which the study revealed that teachers' satisfaction is important for their complete hardworking efforts and teacher satisfaction builds a better environment and makes more progress. Chen & Yang (2019). explained in their search that the environment that was provided to the students in the secondary school was below par for which the results were not good.

Public and Private Schools

A part from this, Barrett (2019) says that education plays a pivotal role in the rise and fall of nations especially in the 21st century. This is mainly due to the emergence of global competition in education and technology. This competitive environment is the core need for the progress of any country. Paul and Jefferson (2019) argues that all countries including Pakistan have different school systems but when we divide them we find two major categories of school systems: private and public schools. In Pakistan, private schools are getting mass acceptance today to ensure sustained progress in the country. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to analyze the quality of education introduced in private schools. The quality of education is assessed by education levels of teachers, method of teaching, curriculum, and study environment. During the 1990s and 2000s private sector emerged as a key provider of education services in Pakistan both in absolute terms and relative to the public sector. One piece of evidence relates to the number of private schools, which increased by 69%, as compared to a mere 8% increase in several schools. So on, 2000 private sector was catering to the educational needs of about 6 million children. This number increased to 12 million in 2007-08 – equivalent to 34 percent of total enrolment. The number of teachers also doubled in private educational institutions during this period. Awan and Saeed (2014) plead that private educational institutions are playing a key role not only in eradicating illiteracy but also in enhancing the level of students as well as teachers by providing a better academic environment.

However, the school sector (private or public) and class size are two important structural components of the school. Private school tends to have both better funding and smaller sizes than public school. The additional funding for private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as a computer that have been shown to enhance academic achievement.

The issues or problems faced by such secondary schools

Obviously, the issues or problems faced by such secondary schools are different which include too rapid a change of curriculum which is devastating for the students as they might get into a lot of factors that are affecting education as a whole. It is necessary to work over these loopholes and remove them, government schools are not progressing much in many areas due to the reason of inconsistency in the policies they present for the school systems this needs to be changed and there should be proper measures that should be initiated which are also need of an hour for the improvement of the educational standards of such schools. Other issues that are faced by such institutions are the lack of resources and funds provided to the management to work over the facilities and a better-prevailing environment. Further, whenever the curriculum of the organization is changed the teachers must have a grip over the newly issued standards if they are not capable of delivering it efficiently it becomes really difficult for the students to learn more from what is being taught. Specialized trainers should be hired in this regard to remove such flaws let better education prevail and help the students attain better results for success in academics (Mahoney *et al.*,2021).

Hypothesis of the study

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant difference between the performance of public and private schools.

H1: There is a significant difference between the performance of urban and rural schools.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant difference between private and public school teachers.

H1 There is a significant difference between urban and rural secondary schools.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The details of the research methodology implemented to attain the targets of this study have been explained in this chapter. Methodology refers to the procedures and techniques implemented by the investigator to collect data for study purposes. It gives an understanding of the study. The study aimed to explore the effects of the school environment on the performance of public and private sector schools at the secondary level. There were several different research designs to answer the research question. Some of them, an experimental design a survey design, a narrative design, or a mixed methods design would have worked well for helping answer of research question. This study was quantitative and descriptive.

Population and Sample

All the male and female teachers teaching in classes 9th and 10th in public schools and private secondary schools of Multan and Khanewal City constituted the population of the study. To make the sample representative of the whole population 10% of schools from the whole population were taken as a sample using the proportionate stratified sampling technique as a tool 10% of schools were selected as a sample from Multan and Khanewal city. The total numbers of teachers in the schools were selected as the population of the study. Out of these 10% of participants were randomly taken for collection of data.

Table 1
Population and sample of the study

Tehsil name	Total teachers	Sample (10%)
Multan city	1000	150
Khanewal city	1150	150
Total	2150	300

Table 2
Hypothesis 1

		Area		Total
		Urban	Rural	
Gender	Male	107	35	142
	Female	103	55	158
	Total	210	90	300

Chi square=3.678, df= 1, P-value =.036

The above table shows that there is a relationship between two variables learning environment and effects of student's performance. School is a main indicator of measuring the effects of the learning environment on student's performance. So the present statistical test, the calculated value is 3.678 while the degree of freedom value is 1 and the P-value is .036 which is less than the calculated value. So the result shows that urban school learning environment has more effects on student performance as compared to rural schools.

Table 3
Hypothesis 2

		School		Total
		Public	Private	
Gender	Male	71	71	142
	Female	50	108	158
	Total	121	179	300

Chi-square 10.469, Df 1 p-value 0.001

The above table shows that there is a relationship between two variables learning environment and effects of student's performance. School is a main indicator of measuring the effects of the learning environment on student's performance. So the present statistical test, the calculated value is 10.469 while the degree of freedom value is 1 and the P-value is 0.001 which is less than the calculated value. So the result shows that private school learning environment has more effects on student performance as compared to public school.

Table 4
Matrix Correlation about effects of School environment on student's performance at secondary level.

		School environment	Student performance
School environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.565**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Student performance	Pearson Correlation	.565**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 4 presents correlations between factors of learning environment, physical environment, atmosphere, teacher's behavior, and student's attitude. The above table indicates that is significant correlation was found between groups. The p-value is (p=0.05) which shows a positive significant correlation between groups.

Findings

1. A Significant difference was found between the effects of learning environment on student's performance in public and private schools.
2. A Significant difference was found between the effects of the learning environment on student performance in male and female schools.
3. A positive correlation was found between school environment and student performance.

Discussion

The study found that students in private schools tend to perform better than those in public schools. This could be attributed to factors such as smaller class sizes, better infrastructure, and more qualified teachers in private institutions. The results suggest that female students may have an advantage in terms of academic performance compared to male students. This could be due to various factors, including societal expectations, differences in study habits, or gender-based discrimination in education. The study established a strong positive relationship between the school environment (including physical factors, atmosphere, teacher behavior, and student attitude) and student performance, indicating that a conducive learning environment is crucial for academic success. Several studies have explored the relationship between school environment and student performance in various contexts. Here are some relevant examples (Awan,2015) This study, conducted in Pakistan, found that private schools generally outperformed public schools in terms of facilities, teacher qualifications, and student outcomes. (Daily et al., (2019) The findings of the present study align with previous research that has highlighted the importance of school environment and gender dynamics in educational outcomes. The significant difference between public and private schools underscores the need for educational reforms to improve the quality of public education in Pakistan. Additionally, the study's findings on gender differences in performance emphasize the importance of addressing gender-based inequalities in education to ensure equitable opportunities for all students. The results of this study have several implications for policymakers, educators, and school administrators. Some key recommendations include Investing in public schools to enhance facilities, teacher training, and curriculum development is essential to bridge the gap between public and private schools. Implementing policies and programs that promote gender equality in education, such as gender-sensitive curriculum, mentorship programs, and scholarships for female students, can help to reduce gender-based disparities in academic performance. Schools should prioritize creating a positive and supportive learning environment that fosters student engagement, motivation, and academic success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that the learning environment in secondary schools plays a significant role in influencing student performance. The findings highlight the importance of improving the quality of public education, addressing gender disparities, and creating conducive learning environments to ensure that all students have equal opportunities for academic success. After the analysis, it was concluded that intelligence is not the only determinant of the academic achievement of the students. The learning environment is the main component of a student's best performance. It was also concluded that teachers' active involvement in their teaching and learning process is also a very important determinant associated with students' academic performance. It was also found that a positive correlation was found between school environment and student performance. It was also concluded that private schools' learning environment has more effects on student's performance as compared to public schools. It was also concluded that

urban schools' learning environment has more effect on student performance as compared to the rural school environment.

Recommendations

- After the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations were given below.
- It is recommended that the government should improve the conditions of classrooms by providing electricity and other basic facilities in classrooms besides renovations of schools.
- It is also recommended that teachers should recognize that they are the main component to engage students in teaching and learning and they also should teach the students according to their mental level.
- Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers should create active, collaborative, and foster learning relationships.
- This study also recommended that teachers and administrative staff create educational experiences for students that are challenging enriching and extend their academic abilities and they should also provide all the basic facilities to students.
- It is also recommended that it is ensured that institutional cultures are welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds.

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