



RESEARCH PAPER

State of Access to Quality Education among Female Learners at Secondary Education Level in District Okara

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to assess the state of quality education for female students at Secondary school level in District Okara. This study was mix method in nature and 450 female students and 30 heads of the secondary schools from both public and private sectors were selected for data collection in three tehsils of District Okara through multistage sampling technique. The results showed that females from both sectors was agreed that curriculum was not updated, A.V aids was not frequently used in both sectors. The Heads of schools highlighted the issues and challenges such as lack of resources, outdated curriculum, and lack of professional development for teachers, alarming female dropout females, insufficient budget allocation and policy implementation. This study concluded that effective pedagogical techniques, improved infrastructural facilities, positive learning environment, parent's involvement, updated curriculum and availability of technology and instructional materials may contribute to quality education.

KEYWORDS Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Quality Education, Secondary School

Introduction

Education is pondered as the key to success. Education not only helps to bring up awareness, producing opportunities, explore the world, but also helps to empower as successful citizen. It is also true that knowledge is not defined by what a person learns from books but what is gained from nature and education. (King and Winthrop, 2015). However, education determines the right way to interpret knowledge about the environment and nature, which can improve and provide knowledge that can ultimately be applied in all areas of life. Education drives systems, economies, and people. The quality of education is inadequate in developing and developing countries. The government can help improve the quality of education for boys and girls by setting some quality standards. Typically, these standards may be to support students, improve student achievement, implement different strategies, and evaluate student achievement. In addition, teachers should be equipped with good knowledge, skills and teaching aids.

Moreover, Access to education for girls is still requiring in the whole. Although it is important role in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its process to get quality of education, goal no. 04 to ensure inclusive and equity education to learning opportunities for both male and females. Recently, a research report by United Nation Secretary General on the work of SDGs goals stated that 262 million students were out of the schools and 750 million illiterate girls. In addition, there are also many challenges and issues besides quality of education such as, structural large structural imbalances, high ratio of literacy, frequent drop outs, political instabilities, and poor structure of buildings in rural areas (Ashraf et al., 2020).

UNICEF (2010) presented a content model for quality education, which includes five dimensions, namely: quality students, quality learning environments, quality content, quality processes and quality outcomes. Some of the key quality indicators are briefly discussed below.

Quality of students: This is one of the important indicators of the quality of education. This indicator of quality of education includes student's good health and nutrition, their psychological condition, parents support and learning. Students which are having good health, family support and motivating learning, are playing important role in society.

Quality of Environment: Physical elements such as, building, boundary walls, class size, classroom, toilets etc. are also very important for building quality environment in schools. It is the basic need to give healthy and gender responsive environment for females.

Content quality: Curriculum and content are also very important indicator in quality of education. Another basic indicator of the quality of education. In teaching learning there is more emphasis on methods of teaching, content structure, curricula materials and possession of skills.

Quality of the process: This quality indicator deals with teacher professionalism, teacher competences, active participation of students, use of technology, and transparent condition of assessments.

Quality of results: This quality indicator focused on outcomes, students learning, health outcomes, skills outcomes, and achievement in reduction in literacy.

Access to quality education is valuable for both men and women, and the responsibility for ensuring equal access lies with the state. It is a fact that the destiny of a nation is shaped in the classroom. This means that education is the main source of progress and development. It is safe to say that education is the main responsibility for the future of Pakistan. Through education, the process of nation-building of future citizens of the country is carried out. The sooner education forms students, the country will be formed. From this point of view, a great responsibility lies with the educator and the quality of education. Therefore, education must be of high quality so that students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to carry out their duties effectively. It is in this context that quality education becomes an essential component of improving the quality of life in any country. It is worth asking some questions about this and thinking about its solution. So, this study examined quality indicators of education for females from secondary schools in Okara.

Review of Literature

Pakistan has had a problem with not enough good schools and teachers since it became independent in 1947. Because of this, there have been difficulties in being able to get a good education and having high-quality education. The lack of enough schools and not enough good teachers makes it hard for people to get a good education. To solve educational problems, several rules and guidelines were created. Different policies were introduced at various times, under different regimes, and in various policy documents. They were different in how big they were, what they wanted to do, and how serious they were. The current education system in Pakistan is not meeting the need for good education. The teaching and learning setup has many different problems and worries (Amir et al., 2020). There are many reasons why students drop out of school in different countries. Some of these reasons include financial problems, parents not wanting their children to go to school, schools being too far away or not having enough resources, schools not providing a good education, classrooms being too crowded, teachers not being attentive, and girls feeling unsafe at school. This study also investigates how students leaving school early impact the economy (Latif et al,2015). Pakistan, a country that is still growing has had big issues with

education since it started. Because of this, the education system has not met the hopes of the people. There are many things that caused this situation (Ahmad et al., 2014). The research showed that the province is taking a long time to carry out fiscal decentralization. As a result, there has been little progress in moving education responsibilities to local authorities. The local governments have a hard time managing how much money is spent on schools, which results in less money being used for education. Right now, the popular movement towards decentralization in education is mostly focused on politics and how things are run. This means that the regional governments can still decide and distribute money for education (Amin et al, 2021). Pakistan's education system has longstanding issues in terms of accessibility to schools, quality of education, and providing equal opportunities for learning at all levels including primary and secondary schools, college, and job training. Even though there have been some good changes, like more private schools and better opportunities for higher education, it is still difficult to make significant improvements to the entire education system. The government not making changes has caused big problems for Pakistan's economy and society (Aziz et al., 2014).

In Pakistan, especially in rural and sub-urban areas, women are not as educated as men. In the past, people believed that women should stay at home and take care of the household, while men should work and earn money for the family. In this situation, education can help women improve their position so that they are equal to men. It also helps women find jobs in formal workplaces. Education can make a big difference in women's lives. It can make them feel more confident and important in their families and communities (Noreen & Awan 2011). The test shows that there are different interests and factors that have made it difficult to achieve high-quality education for everyone in Pakistan. This study shows that getting everyone an education has been stopped by a few things working together. These things include: lots of people being born and boys and girls not being treated the same, not enough money and too much cheating in the system, not focusing on democracy in education, and more people following extreme religious ideas (Roof 2015). The education system in Pakistan is considered one of the worst in the world when it comes to teaching and learning. Many different reasons can be blamed for this situation. Teachers are not very motivated to work as teachers because their jobs, transfers, placements, and promotions are chosen based on favoritism, corruption, and political connections instead of their skills and qualifications. Often, teachers are sent to faraway places where they have difficulties finding a place to live and getting around. The research also discovered that teachers have too many classes because there aren't enough staff members in schools. Additionally, teachers don't have enough resources for teaching and learning in schools (Saeed et al, 2013). Education is very important for a country to have stability in politics and to grow economically and socially. There are many different types of education systems that lead to a system where education is unequally distributed. Education plays a role in creating stability in politics. It does this by helping people understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. When people are aware of these things, it leads to a peaceful and cooperative society. Education helps to shape people's personalities so they can contribute to society. Education is a very important tool to give power and equal opportunities to people, regardless of their gender. Education helps people find jobs and succeed in their careers (Zafar & Ali 2018).

Material and Methods

This current study was conducted through a mix method. Its emphasis on qualitative and quantitative data analysis in research.

Research Design

In this research explanatory research was used for collected the data. Explanatory research mainly focuses on the in-depth knowledge of a problem which was not provided better results. The purpose to use Quantitative research 1st is that the researcher wants to

know about the standards of quality of education. Because when the researcher knows what the indicator or standards of quality of education are then he or she may be able to understand the quality to education and can access the quality of education for female. Furthermore, to know the causes behind quality of education the researcher needs to use another method that is qualitative method. Through this method the researcher may be able to know the issues and challenges of low quality of education and seek their situations about their performance during head of school and get very in-depth information about these indicators.

Population

The population of this study was:

- All heads of schools in District Okara
- All public and private Secondary schools for girls in District Okara
- All students at Secondary schools for girls in District Okara

Sampling Technique

By using systematic random sampling technique researcher selects respondents for questionnaires and for semi-structure interview.

Sample Size

Four hundred fifty female students from public and private secondary schools were sample of this study. The proportion of the public and private students was equal. Researcher selected Seventy-five public sector female students from every tehsil and equally selected from private sector schools. All heads of schools were the sample of this study.

Data collection tool

In this study, researcher constructed one questionnaire and one interview guide after going through conceptual framework of quality of education, books, internet sources and help of supervisor.

1. Questionnaire for Students of Secondary Public and Private girls Schools
2. Interview guide for heads.

Questionnaire

Researcher construct self-developed questionnaire for students. It consists 24 statements. Questionnaire for students, researcher used self-developed questionnaire consist of 24 statements and 4 quality indicators i-e Quality of Learning Environments, Quality of contents, Quality of processes and Quality of outcomes. Five-point Likert scale i.e. (SA= strongly Agree, A=Agree, N= Neutral, A=Agree and SDA=Strongly Disagree) were used.

Interview Guide: Researcher studied relevant literature for design interview guide for heads of schools. The main objective of this study was access quality of education in girls' school in public and private sector. It also emphasis on suggestions for improving quality of education among girls.

Result and Discussion

Table 1
Frequency Distribution by availability of facilities in Public & Private Schools

Statement	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
Water Facility in the School	33	74	27	61	40	90	0	0	0	0
Boundary Wall of School	73	164	27	61	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toilet facility in School	54	121	20	45	20	45	6	14	0	0
Proper Furniture in classroom	47	106	40	90	13	29	0	0	0	0
Furnished Class Room	67	151	33	74	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playground in School	73	164	13	29	7	16	0	0	0	0
Availability of sufficient books in Library	20	45	13	29	33	76	21	46	13	29
Is supplementary material with textbooks available in library?	13	29	13	29	13	29	41	93	20	45
Is your teacher prepare lesson plan regularly	20	45	47	106	7	13	20	45	6	16

Table no. 1 shows that water facility in public and private sector schools. Out of total respondents (N=225) in public schools, 33% students are strongly agree, 27 % students are agree and 40% students are neutral under this statement, while in private schools, 33% students are strongly agree, 47% students are agree and only 20% students are neutral under this statement. Under the statement of "Do you have boundary wall in your school?", 73% students are strongly agree and 27 % students are agree that they have boundary wall in public schools while 60% strongly agree and 40 % students are agree with this statement in private schools. Under the statement of "Do you have toilet facility in your school?" from total respondents (N=225), 54% respondents are strongly agree, 20% students are agree, 20% neutral and 6% students are disagree with this statement in public schools. Whereas, out of total respondents (N=225) from private schools, 53% students are agree, 40% students are strongly agree and only 7 % students neutral under this statement. It shows that out of total respondents (N=225) from public schools, 73% students are strongly agree, 13% agree and 7% neutral about this statement. Whereas, in private schools, out of total respondents (N=225), 62% students are agree, 53% strongly agree, 13% neutral and 7% students are disagree about playground facility in schools. "Do you have tests on daily basis?" It shows that out of total respondents (N=225) in public schools, 47% students are strongly agree, 33% students are neutral, 13% students are agree and 7% students are disagree under this statement. Whereas, out of total respondent (N=225) in private schools, 53% students are strongly agree and 47% students are agree under this statement. "Is preparation of annual examination according to Board examination?" It shows that out of total respondents (N=225) 46% students are strongly agree, 27% students are agree and 27% students are neutral under this statement. Whereas, out of total respondent (N=225), 67% students are agree, 26% students are strongly agree and 7% students are neutral under this statement. statement" Is result of classroom assessment transparent?" Out of total respondents (N==225) in public schools, it shows that 46% students are agree, 34% students are strongly agree, 14% students are neutral, and 6% students are disagree under this statement. Whereas, out of total respondents (N=225) in private schools, 60% students are agree and 40% students are strongly agree under this statement.

Table No. 2
Comparison of facilities in Public and Private Schools

Variables		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Curriculum	Equal variances assumed	3.652	.057	2.097	448	.037	.14667	.06994	.00921	.28412
	Equal variances not assumed			2.097	444.638	.037	.14667	.06994	.00921	.28413
Daily test	Equal variances assumed	215.446	.000	6.784	448	.000	.52000	.07666	.36935	.67065
	Equal variances not assumed			6.784	323.390	.000	.52000	.07666	.36919	.67081
Lecture language	Equal variances assumed	24.303	.000	-2.504	448	.013	-.23556	.09405	-.42040	-.05071
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.504	410.808	.013	-.23556	.09405	-.42044	-.05067
Assessment transparent	Equal variances assumed	13.600	.000	4.956	448	.000	.37778	.07623	.22796	.52759
	Equal variances not assumed			4.956	318.154	.000	.37778	.07623	.22780	.52776
Lesson plan	Equal variances assumed	140.791	.000	4.446	448	.000	.40000	.08997	.22318	.57682
	Equal variances not assumed			4.446	329.982	.000	.40000	.08997	.22301	.57699
Teaching Material	Equal variances assumed	8.183	.004	3.712	448	.000	.27111	.07304	.12757	.41465
	Equal variances not assumed			3.712	436.757	.000	.27111	.07304	.12756	.41466
Course comprehensive	Equal variances assumed	2.141	.144	3.786	448	.000	.27111	.07161	.13037	.41185
	Equal variances not assumed			3.786	436.720	.000	.27111	.07161	.13036	.41186

The table no 2 shows the outcomes of statistical analyses aimed at comparing means and variances for different variables. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was utilized to examine whether the variances among different groups or variables were equal. The results of this test indicate that the assumption of equal variances was violated for the variables Curriculum, daily Test, lecture language, assessment transparent, Lesson plan and teaching. Material, and Course. Comprehensive, as all their associated p-values were less than the significance level of 0.05. Subsequently, the t-test for Equality of Means was conducted to assess the mean differences between two groups within each variable. For the variables where equal variances were assumed (Curriculum, daily test, assessment transparent, Lesson plan, Teaching Material, and Course comprehensive), the t-tests demonstrated statistically significant differences between the means of the two groups, as indicated by p-values less than 0.05. Interestingly, for the variable lecture language, where equal variances were not assumed, the t-test also revealed a significant difference in means.

Table 3

Thematic Analysis				
Themes	Sector	Description	Percentage	
Learning environment	Public School Heads	Satisfied with Facilities (Building, water facility, playground, Boundary walls, toilet facility)	87%	
		Private School Heads	Buildings are not available according to need.	61%
	Public School Heads	Majority of heads are not regular heads they are acting heads	71%	
		Polices are not implemented well	66%	
		Teachers pay structure is low	54%	
		Curricula is not updated regularly.	67%	
		Teachers' student's ratio is high, and no. of pupils is much	71%	
		Students are not admitted according to merit.	67%	
		Teacher Salary is low	77%	
		Teacher job security is uncertain.	61%	
		Affiliation procedure with board is complex	65%	
		Private School Heads	Government attention towards private institutions is not proper	76%
		Issues and Challenges		

Quality of Learning Environment in education: Quality of education is most burning issue now a days. Administration is the most important element of any organization, for it serves heads of schools as assets for educational institutions. Many heads of schools said that to measure quality of education is difficult because it has different standards or parameters. Quality of education is directly related to infrastructure of schools and facilities provided by Government and school management. Some public schools' heads said that standards of quality education are not match the grassroots level. They pointed out that lack of financial resources is the main problem. They don't have much financial resources to give proper facilities to students.

Issues and Challenges regarding quality of education for female students: Problems in education starts from grassroots level. Rural communities and their education have not changed yet. There are less students from rural areas, so it is necessary to work on rural areas and give quality of education to them.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to access quality of education for females at Secondary level in both sectors (Public and Private) in Pakistan. Respondents from both sectors agreed that they had quality facilities like boundary walls, playgrounds, toilets facilities, clean water etc. Somehow, public schools have edge over private schools in terms of buildings, staff, and playgrounds.

The quality of education also obliged to the curriculum and content. It was concluded that females from both sectors was agreed that curriculum was not updated, revised regularly, and fulfilling emerging needs of society. In the new updated world of technological changes and advancements, teaching methods have also updated and changed in education. There are different technological advancement has source of delivering

lecture. Further, this study concluded that availability of AV aids was not frequently use in public and private schools.

Teachers are central characters in education system in any country. This study concluded that teachers were qualified and having command on lectures in both sectors. In private school teachers was more motivating who encouraged the student questioning to enhance learning among students, whereas public school teachers found lacking in this matter. Administration is considered to be most important element of any organization. This study revealed that heads of public and private sectors were not satisfied with government policies. Heads of schools involved in decision making. Leading team and carry tasks for betterment quality of education. Public sectors schools' heads highlighted issues and challenges such as lack of resources, outdated curriculum, lack of professional development of teachers, alarming female dropout ratio, examination system, political instability insufficient budget allocation and policy implantation. Whereas private schools' administration has drawn attention to one curriculum of all sectors. Moreover, they pointed out there should be some financial grants for private sector schools for improving quality of education. So, it can be concluded that there are different challenges but there are also available methods of improving quality of education for females. A strong accountably structure, educational polices and research culture might all help to ameliorate the problem.

Recommendations

1. Stakeholders should make policies to address the lack of resources, outdated curriculum, lack of professional development of teachers, alarming female dropout ratio, examination system
2. There should be professional trainings/courses for teachers to further enhance their capability for the provision of quality education
3. The awareness programs should be conducted in schools for need of female education for their parents and society to address the dropout ratio.

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