



Communication barriers in creating an ideal learning environment: A study of Public Sector Schools of Punjab, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Quality education is the new destination of secondary school education in Pakistan and especially of Punjab province. Quality education is impossible without creating an ideal learning environment. Success is always a joint adventure. So, communication barriers or gaps are the major hurdles for creating an ideal learning environment. Major goal of this study is to highlight those communication barriers which are hurdles in creating an ideal learning environment at public secondary schools of Punjab province. Management, teachers and learners are three major stakeholders who create an ideal learning environment in an institution. Management and teachers are core parts of learning environment. Descriptive research design was used to complete this study. Management and teachers are the target sample of the study. Two different questionnaires, each for school manager and school teachers were prepared which are based on five (05) point Likert Scale. Study was delimited to Multan District of Punjab province only. Interesting findings and suggestions based on findings are the part of the study.



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1. Introduction

It is accepted fact according to international understanding about successful school that it shows good academic results. In Pakistan matriculation grade scores of students provide data on students' outcome at secondary level (Javed, Nawaz, & Qurat-UI-Ain, 2015; Nawaz, Basheer, & Afridi, 2019). Unfortunately, in Low-performing schools of Pakistan one of major issue is that cultures of schools are not supportive for students' learning and blame is easily shifted to other issues of our society as poverty, child labor etc. No doubt these issues affect learning of students, but despite these issues the best schools work to find out ways to help students' learning. There are many successful schools working in high-poverty areas and we can expect improved outcomes of disadvantaged students if school culture is established carefully according to community needs and school leader plays vital role in developing culture through effective communication (Abbas, Kharal, & Shahzadi, 2021; Ahmad, Hashmi, Shehzadi, & Nawaz, 2021; Jamil, Farooq, Sajid, & Shehzadi, 2021). It was hypothesized that communication gap between Principals' and teachers will display depression in school climate resulting in low achievement of students (Shehzadi, 2018a). The main focus of study was to find out barriers that hinder in developing a relation between school outcomes and school communications.

Leithwood, Sun, and Pollock (2017) opined that effective schools are the product of responsible leaders who completely dedicate themselves for prompting teaching and learning. Same is discussed by Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) that effective leadership establishes learning culture to effectively engage learners and staff leading towards high achievement of students in value added measures whether results of examinations or national level tests. A. Walker et al. (2000) described that school leaders design programs to promote coherence in whole curriculum and get a common ground among the content learning and teaching. Day et al. (2016) described that Principal as head of school is significant figure for shaping school culture and can enhance cooperation, trust, and positive learning environment to welcome the input from staff.

Saleem, Naseem, Ibrahim, Hussain, and Azeem (2012) studied dependence of school effectiveness in relation to its outcomes and processes than on its intake. They described 17 determinants for school effectiveness and environment is among main factors. They stressed the network of coordination among students, teachers and heads of institutes to make the schools effective. Successful leaders find a way to provide opportunity which can engage the teachers actively reflecting in culture of that school (Khan & Nawaz, 2010). The leading role rendered by a principal directly influences the culture of school that will impact students' achievements (Prokopchuk, 2016). In the study by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005); Sebastian, Allensworth, and Huang (2016) influential principals are those who created vision, sharing climate and collegiate teachers inside the school certainly influencing students' achievements. How leadership is perceived depends on the way of his communication and his ability of adjustment (Kowalski, Petersen, & Fusarelli, 2007; Tsai, 2011). Abdullah, Bakar, and Mahbob (2012) stated that cooperative culture of school can be made through generating patterns of participatory environment. Daily routines of administrators' and decisions show the permanent interest and process of the school practices (K. Walker, Kutsyuruba, & Noonan, 2011).

Secondary education in Pakistan starts from 9th grade and ends in 4 years of schooling. In Pakistan matriculation grade scores of students provide data on students' outcome at secondary level. Our educational objectives are vast encircling social and democratic values besides the academic objectives. Schools' performance can be compared in view of administrative procedures.

Arlestig (2008) examined issues about learning, teaching and Principals' role as pedagogical leaders. The findings show in successful schools principals' classroom visits are more frequent and school communication is related to learning and teaching. Principals are giving frequent feedback on instructional skills. Tornsen (2009) examined successful leadership and defined that outcomes of school are the outcomes of leadership. Important findings show that students' outcomes are responsibility of teachers and principals. Price (2012) studied effective school climate and favorable attitudes of teachers and principals towards learning environment. All of these results support hypothesis that effective communication between principal and teachers enriches learning environment. So reduction of all potential barriers of communication in way to create an ideal learning environment is the need of the time.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Low performance of secondary classes is a major issue and this study investigated which factors impede relationship between principals' and teachers' frequent communication in developing a hospitable learning environment as milestone of students' success.

1.2. Aim of Research & Research Questions

This study examined the barriers of communication in developing an ideal learning environment and effects of communication on students' achievements. Main Question was: What are the results according to teachers and Principals' perception that their regular communication has on students' achievements and what difficulties they feel in developing effective communication?

2. Methods

The target population of study was all Secondary schools for Boys and Girls of District Multan and accessible population comprised of (64 Schools) Government High Schools of Boys and Girls with high and low achievement (16 schools in each category high and low achievement). Four Tehsils of district Multan were approached and subjects of study were selected from urban, sub-urban and rural schools. A group of 64 Principals and 320 teachers of high schools were selected with purposive sampling technique. All teachers were at present teaching secondary classes since 3 years.

2.1. Research Instrument

Official data was collected from Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Multan for deciding sampling population and two Questionnaires based on Likert Scale were developed to collect data from Principals and teachers of secondary classes.

3. Data Analysis

A multiple approach was used for data analysis, data was organized and response rate was computed for every question in two ways; response rate of high achiever and low achiever schools then response rate according to teachers' job experience to evaluate alternate explanations

4. Results and Discussion

The results of survey are accumulated in two tables. In Principals' questionnaire questions were asked whether teachers are aware of healthy competition in school environment their ability to share with Principal about everyday activities , concern about the school development and clear vision regarding school's objectives. All Principals responded 100% in support of questions. So, Teachers' questionnaire is analyzed in 2 sections to get clear idea of school environment, administrative style, learning opportunities for students.

Table 1

Principals' frequent communication towards teachers , their involvement in students' learning activities and teachers' participation in school policies

Achievement	Very Much	Some What	Neutral	Not Very Much	Not At All	Total
Low Achievers	412	519	924	500	176	2531
High Achievers	1812	1424	645	433	195	4509
Total	2224	1943	1569	933	371	7040

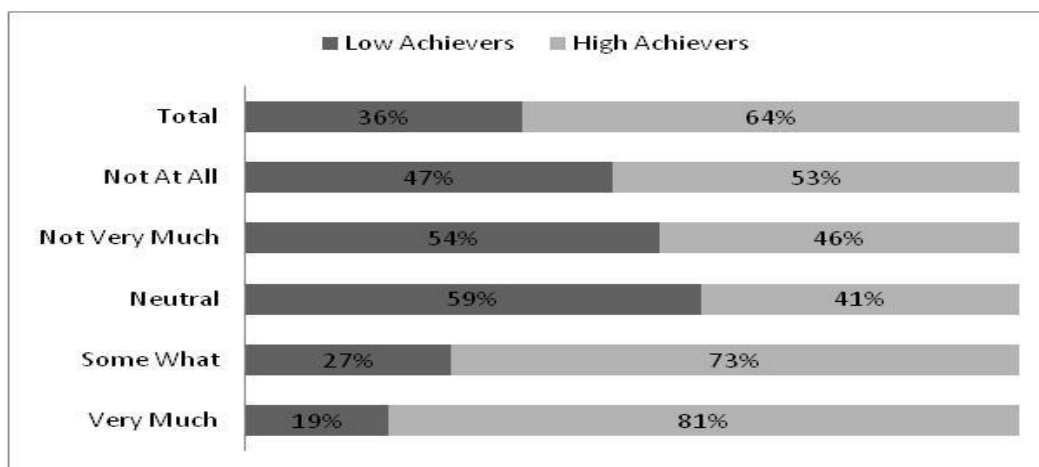


Figure 1: Principals' frequent communication towards teachers , their involvement in students' learning activities and teachers' participation in school policies

Total 7040 responses are counted at likert-scale questionnaire and 81% respondents agreed to very much option and 73% teachers agreed that somewhat Principal communication is related to teaching and learning while in low achievers 19% opted very much and 27% agreed to option somewhat.

Table 2
Analysis of data according to teachers working experience

Working Experience	Very Much	Some What	Neutral	ot very Much	Not at All	Total
1-5	929	653	426	338	166	2512
6-10	526	564	849	260	93	2292
11-15	414	627	243	290	91	1665
Above	355	99	51	45	21	571
Total	2224	1943	1569	933	371	7040

Table 2 presents analysis of data according to working experience of teachers. 2224 responses were in strong favor from all categories that teachers have clear information from principal, teachers opinions are taken and considered in school matters, principal is supportive and directive when required urges changes and teachers have no anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2021; Shehzadi, 2018b) in presence of Principal.

The fundamental reason for present study is to determine factors that affect school results and school correspondences. How communication barriers influence School's environment is center of study. A compelling head utilizes the initiative style that impacts emphatically to class limit and at last expands learning norms of students. Where Principals think they are superiors and show too busy to take input from their teachers there students' achievement is low. The subject of this writing audit is the examination of the relationship between correspondence of school, school, potential, learning environment and achievement of students. In high achievers schools mostly team work, job satisfaction and positive communication was reported. The exercises of school pioneers influence school capacity and can increment or decrease school outcome. The school head must build up the capacity to work with staff to create educational modules structure and high achievement of students. An educator's mastery, aptitudes will bolster learning of students, as they learn adequately when they start recognition or investigation.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Correspondence has extraordinary worth for people in every aspect of social life. Table 1 proves research hypothesis positively that communication gap between Principals' and teachers displays a higher level of depression in school culture resulting in low achievement of students. Figure 1 presents the percentage of whole analyses and a comparative report about views of High achievers and low achievers schools about communication barriers and its impact.

In data analysis in accordance to teachers work experience 929 responses was in strong favor from teachers with 1-5 years job experience i.e 36% of this category. In 2nd category of work experience only 22% supported that their school administration is creating positive learning environment and they are satisfied with their social identity. In 3rd category of work experience, teachers with 11-15 years of job supported 24 % only and 4th category of work experience responded 19% in favor of all statements. The results indicated following main barriers of communication in creating ideal learning environment

- Supremacy of Principal
- Lack of inter-group communication
- Principal's disinterest in teaching learning activities
- Issues of social identity in school
- Conflicts and competition in workplace
- Irregular assessments of students
- Non flexible school programs
- Lack of teachers active participation in school programs
- Unprofessional attitude of teachers

5.1. Suggestions

The principal must encourage changes in school, leading to a better school atmosphere; should discuss school-related problems with teachers, seeking their opinions in school matters and must work actively and regularly in observations and assessment of classroom instruction, including teaching strategies and students' learning.

Two-way correspondence is required; one-way correspondence interferes with students' movement and teachers must choose right channels to report all matters to Principal.

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