



A Comparative Study of Learning Behaviour of Students of Public and Private Universities in Islamabad

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ABSTRACT

Education is now universally recognized to be the prime key to the moral, cultural, political, and socio-economic development of a nation. Every individual has a variety of behaviors, which might be positive or negative, and can vary according to their favorability and unfavorability for various attitudinal objects. The main objectives of the study was to find out learning behaviors, teacher-student relationships, classroom environments, and compare educational quality among students of selected public and private universities in Islamabad, Pakistan. A quantitative, descriptive, and comparative methodology was utilized. A total of 250 students (125 from public schools and 125 from private schools) filled out a 47-item questionnaire in person between June and July 2019. The questions were divided into four categories: learning behavior, teacher-student interaction, classroom environment, and quality of education. The value of Cronbach's alpha for each subscale ranged from 0.69 to 0.88, indicating the instrument's reliability. According to the findings, the students of private universities reported higher levels of educational quality, more supportive teacher-student relationships, better classroom environments, and more positive learning behavior compared to public universities. In the light of constructivist interpretation, the results show that teacher support, institutional resources, and interactive environments all contribute to better learning outcomes. This paper includes a discussion of the real-world significance of teaching methods and higher education policy.

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1. Introduction

Identification of students' learning behavior is vital, particularly because it portrays or recognizes students under this criterion. The relationship between student and teacher has always been an essential curiosity of the educational process. A spacious writing indicates that compacted and strong compassionate relationships between the educators and students are basic to the sound development of all students (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The meaning of behavior is to conduct or transmit oneself or behavior in what we do, particularly in response to freestanding stimuli, anything that an organism does that consists of action and response to inspiration (UNESCO, 1986). Every single individual in the world has a consequence of their behaviors, which is likely to be outstanding or destructive and may vary in line with their favorability and unfavorability for various attitudinal substances. Specialized behavior serves in many valued approaches, and significantly, these behaviors can also serve a great deal (Luthans, 2002). Students' behavior of learning is characterized by psychological enthusiasm to engage in various activities, such as imagination, resourceful thinking, a love for knowledge, high concentration during interpretation, writing, and healthier psychological adjustment in class and the institute. Students' curiosity, determination, and self-control are frequently fostered by teachers who practice open communication, justice, and encouragement (Saxena, 2002).

Conversely, negative teacher attitudes or poorly managed classrooms can discourage participation and reduce motivation (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). The classroom environment also affects how students learn. Deep learning begins with a safe, stimulating environment where students feel valued and have opportunities to participate. Research indicates that elements such as illumination, classroom arrangement, educator presence, and peer engagement affect student focus, contentment, and performance (Christopher, 1998; Walberg, 1994). While worldwide literature has investigated the influence of the environment and teacher-student relationships on learning, there is a small number of empirical studies concentrating on higher education in Pakistan and direct comparisons between public and private institutions. Local research (e.g., Khan (2018) indicate variations in quality assurance and student perceptions across sectors.

There are several different types of institutions in Pakistan's higher education system. While many private institutions emphasize contemporary buildings, lower class numbers, and student-centered services, public universities frequently have longer academic traditions and greater enrollments. These structural variations may result in unique student experiences and learning environments. Policymakers, institutional leaders, and educators who want to improve student outcomes must comprehend the relationship between sectoral inequalities and learning behavior. This study was contrasting four different universities of Islamabad. Quaid-e-Azam University and NUML were public whereas COMSATS and Bahria University were private. This paper investigates disparities on four dimensions as Study & Learning Behavior (SLB), Teacher Student Interaction (TASI), Classroom Environment (CE), and Quality of Education (QE), in Islamabad. The study uses a constructivist perspective to examine how students learning behavior is influenced by their surroundings and interactions.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Learning behavior is establishing one's positive relationship across the elements of self, others, and the curriculum. Students' actions have a significant impact on their success or failure in their initiatives. In educational contexts, there exists a requirement based on outcomes that validates students' learning. Nevertheless, various factors influence their learning behaviors. These factors are evident in their evaluations of themselves, their classmates, and their classroom surroundings. A notable connection was identified between students' learning behaviors, specifically regarding the appreciation of self, others, and the environment, and the aspects of classroom scenarios, which encompassed teachers' actions and teaching methods, instructional resources, and classroom conditions.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between teachers and students in public and private universities.
2. To compare the quality of education of public and private universities.
3. To suggest measures for improvement in public and private universities.

1.3. Hypotheses

H0: There is no significant difference in learning behavior between students of public and private universities.

H1: There is a significant difference in learning behavior between students of public and private universities.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Identification of students' learning behavior is vital, particularly because it portrays or recognizes students under this criterion. The relationship between teacher and student has always been a central interest of the educational process. The main purpose of the study was to examine the learning behavior of the students from public and private universities in Islamabad.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Learning Behavior and Its Determinants

Learning behavior refers to the ways students approach learning tasks, their motivation, concentration, study strategies, and persistence. Schoenfeld (1989) and others have emphasized the link between self-concept and achievement-oriented behaviors; students with strong academic self-concept are more likely to use effective strategies and invest greater effort. Walberg (1994) introduced the distinction between "occupied time" and "productive time,"

emphasizing that not all time in class translates into learning unless instruction is well organized and adapted to learner needs.

2.2. Teacher-Student Relationship

Positive, supportive relationships between teachers and students are repeatedly linked to improved engagement and achievement (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Woolfolk (2006) stated that A tutor assumes various responsibilities to guide, support, instruct, assist, and motivate students within a classroom. Consequently, managing a classroom involves creating an organized and efficient learning space. It also consists of strategies implemented to encourage behavioral changes in students or actions taken to aid students in completing their assignments. Waseer (2008) identified that powerful coaching and powerful scholars gaining knowledge have been an imperative awareness of the lecture room atmosphere in fashionable academia. On interpretation, the lecture room surroundings nowadays are not the same as the lecture room from 10 years ago. The scholars and the troubles are exceptional, yet several classrooms are nevertheless administered via the techniques applied for many years. Classroom needs a supportive and healthy environment that supports scholars' self-actualization, and in the study room, disruptive conduct can be prevented. The study room needs the right facilities that contribute to teaching and knowledge. Midgley, Feldlaufer and Eccles (1989) reported that the methods that educators use to engage with their students and handle classroom dynamics have been recognized as significant factors in fostering student motivation and participation. Senior teachers possess greater experience, enabling them to prioritize tasks and address various essential classroom issues selectively, as well as manage complex challenges more effectively than less experienced teachers. Typically, they are skilled at managing and controlling the most prominent elements of classroom unpredictability. Because of this, their knowledge is quite helpful in enabling new instructors come up with effective methods to run their classrooms.

2.3. Classroom Environment

The ability of students to concentrate and find pleasure in learning is affected by various physical and psycho-social elements in the classroom, including lighting, seating arrangements, noise levels, the presence of the instructor, and social interactions with peers (Christopher, 1998; Waseer, 2008). According to Anderson and Evertson (1978), a well-organized classroom reduces disruptions and maximizes the time allocated for meaningful learning. Furthermore, a positive environment encourages teamwork, which is essential to constructivist approaches.

2.3.1. Institutional Context

Cazden (2001), stated that social bonds formed by university students have a direct connection to their cognitive capacities as members of a community. Gaining knowledge of these connections improves engagement, which is necessary for efficient learning. He stresses how crucial it is to create a learning environment that involves developing close relationships with students. Siperstein and Parker (2008) highlighted that the more advanced elements of the institutional environment have an impact on the social behaviors and intellectual abilities of the scholars. The primary goal of this study is to examine how children with hearing impairments behave in institutional settings. Preceding studies examined unconstructive capabilities in students, important as social segregation and change problems, and no longer tested their development and the impact of the educational machine, which performs because of the enormous element of their optimistic and pessimist behaviors. Khan (2018) found that private universities in Pakistan frequently use more comprehensive quality assurance methods and student feedback systems, which might lead to greater perceived teaching quality. However, public universities may have advantages such as experienced staff and more extensive research options. The net influence on learning behavior is determined by how institutional structures translate into daily classroom practices.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on constructivist learning theory, which views learners as active participants who acquire knowledge via interactions with others and their surroundings. The constructivist theory of education indicates that knowledge is constructed individually by the student that learning occurs in a social environment with experiences that have been carefully constructed by the teacher (Fosnot, 2013). The development of the research tool and the interpretation of the data in this study were impacted by the constructivist methodology. The idea behind the questionnaire items was that students' learning behaviors are influenced by their

experiences with classmates, teachers, and classroom settings. To assess how social engagement, teamwork, and feedback improve learning, for instance, statements on teacher-student interaction and the classroom setting were developed. Public and private universities are compared in the study. Different educational environments are formed to by differences in institutional culture and teaching methods, which could lead to different patterns of student behavior and contribution.

4. Methodology

4.1. Study Locale

The study was conducted in two public and two private universities in Islamabad. The study focused on the students' learning the behavior and their comparative analysis in the public and private sectors.

4.2. Population and Sampling

The population consisted of selected university students from Islamabad's public and private universities. A convenient sampling technique was utilized for the extraction of the sample, and a sample size of 250 respondents was selected among four universities. Seventy respondents from Quaid e Azam University, sixty respondents selected from Bahria University, Comsats University, and NUML University. The students enrolled in the institute, both male and female from different departments, were selected for data collection.

4.3. Instrument

A questionnaire was developed based on the relevant literature. The questionnaire included 47 questions that addressed the students' Study and Learning Behavior (SLB; 13 items), Teacher Student Interaction (TASI; 11 items), Classroom Environment (CE; 9 items), and Quality of Education (Quality; 14 items). Items were scored using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

4.4. Psychometric properties

The questionnaire showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.883$). The subscale alphas were SLB = 0.690, TASI = 0.887, CE = 0.733, and Quality = 0.790.

4.5. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected by the researcher in between June–July 2019 after obtaining informed consent from participants.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

The Researcher followed the moral tenets while collecting data. The researcher first politely took permission for interviews from respondents and kept the confidentiality of the respondents.

4.7. Data Analysis

After the collection of data, it was organized, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted by applying descriptive statistics, i.e., mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics, i.e., independent sample t-test, through Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

5. Results

The Given Table distribute frequencies of means and standard deviations for subscales and the overall scale.

Table 1

Variable	N (Private)	Mean (Public)	SD (Public)	N (Public)	Mean (Private)	SD (Private)
Study & Learning Behavior	125	3.853	0.441	125	3.827	0.440
Teacher–Student Interaction	125	3.834	0.721	125	3.726	0.765
Classroom Environment	125	4.049	0.517	125	3.917	0.561
Perceived Quality of Education	125	3.913	0.631	125	3.716	0.796
Overall Learning Behavior	125	3.904	0.415	125	3.787	0.475

Students of private universities reported positive learning behavior, healthier teacher-student relationship, satisfaction with classroom atmosphere and educational quality compare to public institutions. Independent-samples t-tests showed significant differences ($p < .05$) in all dimensions. These findings contribute support to constructivist concepts, as interactive, resourceful, and supportive environments allow students to actively construct knowledge and engage meaningfully with academic material.

5.1. Discussion

This study's findings align with constructivist theory. Learning is socially constructed within a classroom community, and environments that support interaction, feedback, and active participation promote positive learning behavior (Fosnot, 2013). The present results show more positive responses among private university students across all dimensions that suggest several plausible mechanisms. First, many private universities invest in smaller class sizes, more interactive pedagogies, and clearer mechanisms for formative feedback. Such institutional features directly support constructivist practices, more opportunities for dialogue, quicker feedback cycles, and greater teacher availability for scaffolding. Hattie (2008) emphasized that teacher behavior and feedback are major drivers of student learning features that tend to be more visible in institutions prioritizing student-centered teaching. Second, the classroom environment (physical conditions, resources, and managerial practices) is linked to "productive time" and student engagement (Walberg, 1994). Private institutions often report more flexible classroom resources and incentives for active learning, which can translate into higher perceived classroom support and student engagement. In the Pakistani context, Khan (2018) reported sectoral differences in quality assurance and faculty development that echo these findings: private universities may emphasize student satisfaction and instructional innovation in ways that affect perceptions.

5.2. Implications

In order to address quality concerns, universities should: (a) train teachers in constructivist, student-centered teaching; (b) monitor the atmosphere of the classroom and equitable instructor behavior; and (c) encourage regular student feedback.

5.3. Limitations

The cross-sectional design, self-report measures (response bias), and convenience sample restricts generalizability) are among the limitations. Although Cronbach's alpha was calculated for internal consistency, future study is advised to include further validity evidence (factor analysis).

6. Conclusion

The effects of institutional type (private versus public) on classroom environment, teacher-student relationships, learning behavior, and educational quality were the subject of this comparative study. The analysis found that students at private universities like COMSAT and Bahria had better overall results for all of the variables than students at public universities like Quaid-e-Azam and NUML. The constructivist view that learning takes place most effectively in settings that emphasize contact, mutual respect, and feedback is supported by these findings. Due to their smaller class sizes and more robust feedback mechanisms, private educational institutions appear to foster an environment that encourages active engagement and self-regulated learning. However, the report also demonstrates the potential for public universities to enhance their academic atmosphere by increasing classroom participation and providing opportunities for faculty professional development. In conclusion, the pillars of education system like curriculum development, assessment system, and teacher training should take practical and meaningful steps to inculcate/promote the habits of self-learning, reflection, understanding, inquiry, and investigation among students.

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