

HEAD TEACHER'S BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ABOUT EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Received: 04 March, 2024

Revised: 09 March, 2024

Accepted: 15 March, 2024

Published: 22 March, 2024

ABSTRACT

Leadership is a leader's action towards specific goals. Effective school leadership is crucial to a school's success. The head teacher requires integrative quality education management skills and the vitality of teachers, students, and parents to achieve shared educational goals. The basic purpose of the current study was to investigate head teachers' beliefs and practices about effective learning environments at the secondary level. They used a quantitative research approach and descriptive study in nature. A survey research design was employed. The population of the study was all the head teachers at secondary schools in Punjab in which 120 head teachers were selected from four districts through simple random sampling. For the collection of data, a questionnaire was used having two portions one for measuring their beliefs and a second for measuring head teacher practices about effective learning environment. Data was analyzed through SPSS by deploying multiple tests. The result shows that no difference exists between head teachers' beliefs and practices on gender bases and experiences, but a significant difference existed in their beliefs and practices on district bases. It was concluded that head teachers believed as well as practicing for an effective learning environment, but more efforts are required on district basis.

Keywords: Head Teachers, Effective Learning Environment, Beliefs, Practices

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a leader's action towards specific goals. Education quality is impacted by bad leadership and administration, teacher credentials and training, remuneration, current methodology, research culture, overcrowding, and inadequate methods and materials. Improving education quality can lead to better products, boosting economic growth and industry (Khan, 2016). Effective school leadership is crucial to a school's success. The head teacher requires integrative quality education management skills and the vitality of teachers, students, and parents to achieve shared educational goals (Adhikari, 2020). They are responsible for ensuring high-quality education in their area. A head teacher plays an important influence in boosting academic activities. Head teachers support instructors by providing necessary curricula, textbooks, and reference materials for effective teaching in the classroom (Bourke, 2022). School administration, particularly related to teaching and

learning, remains underexplored in many developing nations, including Pakistan (Khan, 2012). In our country, many children are not studying effectively, and head teachers perform poorly in providing top-notch instruction at the school level (Atuhurra et al., 2018).

Teaching is an innovative method that is difficult to define. Teaching can be both more and less effective, depending on the professional competency of the teachers and the accessible learning environment. To be more effective, teachers must engage in constant professional development. The school environment must also be continuously improved to facilitate successful teaching and learning. Changes in technology have prompted constant improvement in instructors' professional competencies and learning environments. The process of instruction and learning cannot occur in a vacuum.

Despite the availability of learning tools geared for staff technical development and modification of knowledge and abilities. This demonstrates the inclusive dominance of teaching-learning focused on self-determination. Formal education involves classroom contact. In the classroom, parts of the teaching-learning process include the teacher, students, material, learning process, and learning scenario. The learning context or environment refers to the settings under which learning takes place. The physical component of a classroom includes tangible elements such as a blackboard, chairs, lighting, a projector, books, and computers. The human component consists of teachers and pupils. This refers to the interactions between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves. This interaction pattern creates a learning environment (Malik & Rizvi, 2018). Head teachers face rigorous and complex tasks related to educational progress and institutional effectiveness. Every day brings new experiences and chances for creative thinking and problem-solving. Head teachers must consult with staff and student representatives to identify and address concerns. This act aims to promote cooperative behaviour among staff and learners (Quality, 2010).

The concept of learning environment and its importance was highlighted by Randhawa and Lewis (1976) which was associated with life space. The term "life space" refers to the psychological environment and the factors that attract and repel individuals within it. The life space encompasses both conscious and unconscious influences, both past and present. It includes the behavioral and psychobiological environment, as well as both beneficial goals and barriers to achieving objectives (Trickett & Moos, 1995). Individuals' life spaces are largely influenced by their physical and social surroundings. The individual's experiences may include locations, events, emotions, TV shows, books, imagination, and ambitions. A child's life space includes both conscious and unconscious factors, as well as accepted beliefs that may not be real (Lindzey & Aronson, 1977). In the Organizational environment, there are different studies in the Pakistani context (Sajid et. al, 2022; Sajid et.al, 2022b)

The environmental press concept was introduced by Murray (1938). According to him, the learning environment is influenced by both personal needs and external factors. Personal requirements refer to

an individual's motivations and aspirations, whereas 'press' can refer to stimuli, treatments, or process variables. When examining the classroom learning environment, it's important to include both personal and environmental factors. The idea of alpha and beta presses was created to provide greater clarification (Murray, 1938).

Objectives

The basic objectives of the study were to:

- Find out the head teachers' beliefs about effective learning environments at the secondary level.
- Find out the head teachers practices about the effective learning environment at the secondary level.

1. Literature review

Learning involves classroom activities and interactions between professors and students. The learning environment includes tools, resources, methodologies, and a global viewpoint. The approach includes human communication and artistic proportions, as well as dynamic character reactions during learning. It also involves observing and rethinking the techniques used by students and teachers in the classroom, as well as encouraging creativity in teaching (MacGregor, 2007). Geographic factors have a significant impact on learning outcomes. It also refers to a situation where objectives and plans are not always clear, with certain components being discharged by regulators and others unintentionally. The term "environment" encompasses a diverse range of contributions, including managers of various plans and jobs, visitor specialists, Liberians, information technology operators, educational inventors, learning theorists, and investigators. Reactions to effects can start outside or inside. It distinguishes between the complexity of logic and sound effects (Warger & EduServe, 2009). Teachers' teaching is not limited to the classroom; they also play a leadership role in leading students, communicating their experiences with coworkers, decisions about how to improve the educational setting, and playing a vital part in curriculum development as well as administrative tasks. Head teachers' jobs are challenging, particularly in terms of educational progress and institutional performance. Every day brings new experiences and chances for innovative thinking and problem-solving. Head teachers are required to

involve other members of the staff as well as student representatives to seek and provide solutions to difficulties. This action will shape the styles and behavior of staff members and students to work harmoniously. To meet the problems of the digital age in education systems, educators must develop innovative learning methodologies that are relevant to today's generation. Traditional methods are insufficient (Arhin & Cormier, 2007).

A study was conducted on the duty of head teachers to recognize information regarding positive and productive associations as a means of working together among coworkers of an organization to strengthen the setting for teaching and learning practiced by learners, as a result of increasing assignment among students, inspiration, learning procedure and output, and their attainment levels. The basic goal of the research focused on excellent learning and student engagement. Whereas, the social factor involves the learning environment, which appears to have a consistent association with students' cognitive and effective outcomes (Ashby et al., 2011). The actual educational setting in a school setting consists of the spatial layout of furniture, walls, ceiling, blackboard, lighting, fittings, decorative elements, and all other physical facilitators of teaching and learning. A suitable physical setting is a source of intellectual interest and an important aspect of the child's educational development. The factors that impact the achievement of the learning procedure include the setting of the school, the teacher's attitude, and the qualities of the students (Ukeje et al., 1992).

It has been established that students' academic achievement is dependent on numerous in-school elements (Jamil et al, 2024), parents' role (Shah et al., 2021), such as access to instructional material, the number of trained teachers, and the level of professionalism of the school administration. Except for school administration, a slew of empirical studies on the aforementioned criteria have arisen from underdeveloped nations, including Pakistan. As a result, numerous areas of school administration, particularly those connected to the classroom; remain unexplored in Pakistan's educational landscape (Khan, 2012).

Developed as well as developing nations recognize that the efficacy of school administrators influences the academic achievement of children (Bush, 2008). However, school principals in developing nations, such as Pakistan, frequently play

a restricted responsibility concerning education and instruction. Researchers ascribe the inactivity of school administrators in underdeveloped nations to the schools' organizational culture (Rizvi, 2008). Head Teachers view the school, not as a separate entity. They aim to improve school results and enhance the school's reputation in the community or society. Teachers, principals, and parents can all contribute to fostering a positive learning environment. Collaboration among members of SMCS can improve student learning standards and foster cooperation. In the Pakistani context, different studies have been conducted regarding headship at different levels (Arif et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2021; Jamil et al., 2024).

Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference between the mean score of head teachers' beliefs and practices about learning environments on gender bases.
- There is no significant difference among the mean score of head teachers' beliefs and practices about the learning environment on an experience basis.
- There is no significant difference among the mean score of head teachers' beliefs and practices about the learning environment on district basis.

2. Methodology

It was descriptive research in nature and the researcher deployed a survey research design. The population of the study was all the head teachers of secondary schools in Punjab in which 120 head teachers were selected from four districts through simple random sampling. For the collection of data, a questionnaire was used having two portions one for measuring their beliefs and the second for measuring head teacher practices about the learning environment. Beliefs Instrument has 21 items, and 30 items were related to measure practices. The questionnaire was self-developed. The validity of the tool was determined through expert opinions whereas the Cronbach alpha of the head teacher's beliefs questionnaire was .876 and the reliability of the head teacher practices was .748. Pearson correlation was used to measure the relationship between head teachers' beliefs and practices. Correlation analysis is a statistical approach for determining the strength of a linear relationship

between two variables and computing their association. Simply defined, correlation analysis determines the degree to which one variable changes as a result of another. A correlation indicates the intensity and/or direction of a relationship between two or more variables. A correlation might be positive or negative (Bhandari, 2023). whereas for measuring the difference between the mean score of head teacher beliefs and practices based on gender t-test was employed. The t-test is a statistical hypothesis test that determines statistical significance by combining the t-statistic, t-distribution values, and degrees of freedom. It examines the mean values of both sets of data to discover if they were obtained from the same population. (HAYES, 2023). Moreover, one-way ANOVA was used to measure the difference on experience and district basis. It is a strategy for detecting differences or correlations in the impact of independent factors on a dependent variable. It examines not only the differences, but also the degree of variance, or distinction among them, in variable means. It's a method of determining the statistical

significance of variables. ANOVA analysis can be considered to have been more precise than t-testing since it is more adaptable and requires fewer measurements. It is also more appropriate for application in more sophisticated studies than those that may be assessed by testing. (Kenton, 2021).

3. Findings of the Study

Table No 1: Correlation between head teacher beliefs and practices

Variables	1	2
Beliefs	1	-
Practices	.409	1

Pearson correlation shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between head teachers' beliefs and practices for enabling learning environment as the above value is greater than 0.01 so it is concluded that there is a strong and positive relationship between head teachers' beliefs and practices for enabling learning environment.

Table 2: Comparison between head teachers beliefs and practices on gender bases

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig
Head Teachers' Beliefs About LE	Male	69	4.40	.412	.330	.742
	Female	51	4.38	.457		
Head Teachers' Practices About LE	Male	69	4.58	.285	.558	.578
	Female	51	4.55	.303		

The above table results revealed p value for responses of head teachers between different genders was not significant beyond 0.05 level of significance for the total sample. The null hypothesis was rejected that there is no significant difference between male

and female head teachers' beliefs and practices about the learning environment. So it is concluded that they have the same beliefs and practices about the learning environment.

Table 3: Comparison of head teachers' beliefs & practices for learning environment on an experience basis

Beliefs about LE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.229	5	.246	1.345	.251
Within Groups	20.831	114	.183		
Total	22.060	119			
Between Groups	.565	5	.113	1.339	.253
Within Groups	9.621	114	.084		
Total	10.186	119			

The above table results revealed p-value for responses of head teachers among different experiences was not significant beyond 0.05 level of significance for the total sample. The null hypothesis

was rejected that there is no significant difference in head teachers' beliefs and practices about the learning environment on an experience basis. So it is

concluded that they have the same beliefs and practices about the learning environment.

Table 4: Comparison of head teacher’s beliefs for learning environment on district basis

Beliefs about LE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.160	3	3.053	27.455	.000
Within Groups	12.900	116	.111		
Total	22.060	119			

We reject the null hypothesis, $F(3,116) = 27.455$, $p < 0.01 < 0.05$. So, we concluded that there is a significant difference among the mean scores of

districts according to their beliefs. Head teachers’ beliefs are significantly different at different district levels.

Post Hoc

(I)District	(J)District	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Lahore	MZG	.67778*	.08845	.000
	Okara	.45054*	.07820	.000
	Kasur	.01389	.08462	.870
Muzafergarh	LHR	-.67778*	.08845	.000
	Okara	-.22724*	.09425	.017
	Kasur	-.66389*	.09965	.000
Okara	LHR	-.45054*	.07820	.000
	MZG	.22724*	.09425	.017
	Kasur	-.43665*	.09067	.000
Kasur	LHR	-.01389	.08462	.870
	MZG	.66389*	.09965	.000
	Okara	.43665*	.09067	.000

Post hoc comparison using the LSD test shows that the mean difference of Lahore head teachers' beliefs is significantly different than the beliefs of Muzafergarh and Okara at the level of significance mean difference of Okara head teacher’s beliefs are significantly different than the head teachers’ beliefs

of Muzafergarh at 0.05 level of significance. The mean difference of Kasur head teachers' beliefs is significantly different than the head teachers' beliefs of Muzafergarh and Okara at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 5: Comparison of head teachers' practices for learning environment on district basis

Practices for LE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.366	3	.789	11.701	.000
Within Groups	7.820	116	.067		
Total	10.186	119			

We reject the null hypothesis, $F(3,116) = 11.701$, $p < 0.01 < 0.05$. So we concluded that there is a significant difference among the mean scores of districts according to their practices. Head teachers' practices are significantly different at different district levels.

Post Hoc

(I) District	(J) District	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
LHR	MZG	.40004*	.06886	.000
	Okara	.14756*	.06088	.017
	Kasur	.06887	.06589	.298
Muzaferghar	LHR	-.40004*	.06886	.000
	Okara	-.25248*	.07338	.001
	Kasur	-.33117*	.07758	.000
Okara	LHR	-.14756*	.06088	.017
	MZG	.25248*	.07338	.001
	Kasur	-.07869	.07059	.267
Kasur	LHR	-.06887	.06589	.298
	MZG	.33117*	.07758	.000
	Okara	.07869	.07059	.267

Post hoc comparison using the LSD test shows that the mean difference of Lahore head teachers' practices is significantly different than the practices of Muzafergarh and Okara at the level of significance mean difference of Okara head teacher's practices are significantly different than the head teachers practices of Muzafergarh at 0.05 level of significance. The mean difference of Kasur head teachers' practices are significantly different than head teachers' practices of Muzafergarh and Okara at 0.05 level of significance.

4.1 Discussions

For many years, education has been thought to serve a functional purpose in training each student to be beneficial to society while contributing effectively to national progress. Learning involves a proactive driver of change that empowers students to generate information, establish attitudes, and develop the necessary skills for life (Bada, 2015). A school learning environment is created by the interaction of several aspects such as academic activities, safety, community, and institutional environments, all of which have an impact on students' cognitive, behavioral, and psychological development. Thus, the school environment, whatever it is constructed, has a direct as well as an indirect impact on children's outcomes in school, including academic achievement (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011). A school's physical environment consists of buildings, school furniture, equipment, teaching materials, laboratories, libraries, and playgrounds (Ene-Obong, Ibeanu, Onuoha, & Ejekwu, 2012).

The physical setting also includes equipment, attractive artifacts, aquatic facilities, audio-visual tools, and playfields. The physical environment encompasses a building's location, structures, furnishings, infrastructure, space, and equipment required for efficient teaching and learning (McKay, 1964). The classroom, school, and surrounding environment all have an impact on students' achievement. The quality of the educational setting has a significant impact on how well children perform in a variety of academic outcomes. The physical, emotional, and aesthetic qualities of the classroom environment have been shown to improve students' attitudes toward learning (AsiyaI, 2011).

A proper learning environment is vital for safety, active learning, and development. She insisted that such an environment is beneficial and effective for functional training of the head, heart, and hands. All students and youth are entitled to a safe, respectful, caring, and productive learning environment. The learning environment should develop a sense of belonging, boost the joy of learning, honor diversity, and promote respectful, responsible, and caring relationships. The most important factor influencing pupils' learning and academic achievement is their educational environment (Baafi, 2020). The educational environment must be designed to help each student increase his or her sentiments of happiness, belonging, identity, and achievement in current and future settings. One of the aspects that have contributed to building good educational schools is an organized but not repressive educational setting and an educational setting favorable to the instructional process (Davis-Langston, 2012).

Acoustics, light, color, temperature, and seat arrangement can all have an impact on students' academic performance in the classroom (Apter, 2014). The most important aspects influencing how well students learn are disturbances, temperature, and seat arrangement. Furthermore, there is no existing agreement on how certain physical aspects of classrooms influence learning results. Furthermore, the study would be required to reach more trustworthy conclusions. (Lewinski, 2015). The research was to inform education policymakers, curriculum developers, educator coaches, staff members, examining bodies, and teachers on the significance of classroom learning environments and the elements that impact them.

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that the head teacher is responsible for supervising academic personnel and overseeing efforts in public secondary schools to promote student academic performance and an effective learning environment. Moreover, it was concluded that there is a strong and positive relationship between head teachers' beliefs and practices regarding effective learning environments. Both male and female head teachers had the same beliefs and practices for an effective learning environment. By experience head teachers had the same beliefs and practices but by districts, the mean differences of Lahore head teacher's beliefs and practices were significantly different than the mean score of Muzafgarh and Okara at 0.05 level of significance. The mean difference of Okara district was significantly different than the mean score of Muzafgarh. The mean difference of Kasur head teachers' beliefs and practices about an effective learning environment is more significantly different than Okara and Muzafgarh. So based on the results it was concluded that head teachers believed as well in practice for an effective learning environment, but more effort is required on a district basis.

5.1 Suggestion

The study suggests that creating an effective learning environment in a school can improve learner achievements and the productivity of the organization. Faculty, staff, administrators, and policymakers should be aware of what makes a perfect educational environment, including free space, moveable furniture, and walls that are soundproof to limit noise transmission. Having fixed wall tools, such as black and whiteboards, ceiling projectors, storage cabinets for dusters, chalk, board markers, and flip charts, ensure teachers have access to these resources as needed. Teachers can foster a conducive learning environment in their classrooms through psychological, physiological, and cognitive factors.

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