

## Parents Perception about O-level and A-level Education System in Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

Education is known as process of living through an unremitting re-enactment of experience. Basically it's expansion of all competencies present in human being that enables one to overcome his surroundings and accomplishes possibility. The fundamental purpose of education is transforming the actions of pupil and forms her/ his individuality in a wanted shape. The aim of education is to make an individual socially competent. The key purpose of the study to examine the parent's perception about the British A and O level system of education in Pakistan. All the parents of students studying in A and O levels schools in Pakistan were taken as population for the study. The sample of the study consisted of randomly selected 45 schools and 450 parents of students studying in those schools. The sample was drawn from Rawalpindi, Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar. Questionnaire was developed and structured interview was designed for the parents of O and A levels' students. ChiSquare and percentages has been used for the purpose of data analysis. The conclusion showed that parents perceived O and A level system of education is best and unique education system in Pakistan. The main reason for its popularity among parents was due to advance and updated curriculum, informative and comprehensive courses, better conducive environment, teacher expertise, status icon for his/ her family, international recognition of programme, easy admission in foreign university, knowledge based system of education, better professional career and dynamic future for their children.

**KEY WORDS:** British A and O level education, Pakistan, Parents perception

### 1 INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to define the word education because it has many dimension, meanings and objectives which change various times according to one's requirement. The great Philosophers and thinkers Dewy and Socrates have described the term education according to the philosophy of life with the result they provide different definition and ideas of education. The term education is generally perceived as like a diamond, when we see from different angles it gives us different colors (Sadiq, 1981).

The role of parent's perception in their children education matters a lot with respect to their performance and career choices. Parents perceived that different factors like income level, living standards, social norms, status and trends usually influence the children attitude towards education.

The formal education system in Pakistan comprises of elementary, secondary and higher levels. There are two parallel education system at secondary level One is known as Pakistani local education system ( matriculation system ) and other is English education system ( GCE " O " Level Education System) again at HSSC level two parallel of education system exist one is HSSC and other is GCE A Level Education System. There is huge difference in these two main streams with respect to their syllabus, facilities, pay scale of staff and financial status of students (Zaman, 2002).

**Literature of Review:** The (GCE) has been offered at 2 basis level i.e. (i) (O level) (ii) (A level) in the UK since 1951. At Islamic Republic of Pakistan GCE A and O level education system is being existing since 1959. Lot of institutions/ schools are offering O and A level education to students. At GCE O Level three main choices are given to the students they can join.

1. Business group
2. Pre medical Group
3. Pre engineering group

"O"Level students are too young to take such decision about their career. That's why they consult their parents for right decision (Kashif, 2004).

An “O” level is basically considered as a standard education usually taken at the age of 15 or 16. It is equivalent to the matriculation system of Pakistan. Student has to get equivalence certificate from inter Board committee of chairman (IBCC). An “A” level is taken as an advance level and pre university requirement. A level exam is conducted after the two year education of A level study. A level curriculum has broader range of subject. Student takes the subject of his own interest and parents also guide them which subject is most useful and beneficial for them according to global and national trends. GCE examination is not provided to the pupil in London but students especially from Asian countries are still able to study for this qualification through two examining boards

1. (EILE)
2. (UCLES)

There are several institutions in Pakistan that offer O and A level education to pupil however recognize institution from British Council is three thirty five (Younas, 2004).

Parents prefer to send their son/ Daughter to O and A level institutions because basic amenities which are available in this institution are hardly present in local / public institutes in Pakistan. Local Pakistani school systems are lacking in Physical facilities such as well designed and well equipped class rooms and labs. Un trained teacher and non professional attitude of administration (Ahmed, 1986)

Parents are attracted to O and A level system of education because of unique fusion of modern plus religious system of instruction. It is a great opportunity to get both of them under one roof. Islamic study is necessary for all students in all O and A level Pakistani schools (Sabir, 2002).

The children’s academic achievement is strongly effected by the parent’s educational expectation from their children. Parents expectation about the academic performance of their children positively correlate with the grades of children (Mancillas, 2001).

Total learning of children is highly related to parent’s involvement. More involvement of parents will be resulted positively in academic achievement of their son / daughter (Samir, 2002).

Along with parents the educational institutions and their teachers also play an important role by giving future direction to the children. Institutional forces have also significant the future path of students (Menon, 1998).

Most parents send their children to expensive schools system for the high income gain in future after the competitions of study of their child (Steven, 2002).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Population:** All A and O level institutions, Parents of student studying in these institutions constituted as study’s population.

**Sample:** Forty Five O and A level institutions were taken as sample of study. These schools were selected from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Rawalpindi. 10 parents of students studying in sample’s schools were selected from each school. Questionnaire was administered and structured interview were conducted.

**Research Instrument:** Questionnaire was prepared by researcher using five point likert scale.

**Collection of Data:** Researcher collected the data through questionnaire and interviews

**Analysis of Data:** Chi- square and percentage used by the researcher to analyze the data

### Analysis and Interpretation

Item 1	O and A level education is perceived as worthwhile education						Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
	SA	A	N	D	SD					
Parents	63	29	3	2	3	Parents/Teachers	39.9	2	< 0.001	
Teachers	52	22	11	10	5	Teachers/Students	7.9	3	< 0.05	
Students	53	27	11	3	6	Parents/Students	25.2	2	< 0.001	

Parents hold a much more positive view than either teachers or students. This is consistent with the unhappiness with the O and A level system in England with teachers and students.

Item 2	O and A level education system is related to our national ideology.						Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
	SA	A	N	D	SD					
Parents	38	29	10	15	7	Parents/Teachers	0.4	4	n.s.	
Teachers	40	28	10	14	7	Teachers/Students	5.8	4	n.s.	
Students	36	32	12	10	10	Parents/Students	8.2	4	n.s.	

All groups seem happy that the system is compatible with the national ideology.

Item 3 O and A level education enhance the Communication Skill of students.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	47	29	5	12	8	Parents/Teachers	43.3	4	< 0.001
Teachers	43	22	21	7	8	Teachers/Students	24.5	4	< 0.001
Students	36	38	12	5	9	Parents/Students	36.0	4	< 0.001

Parents are most positive, that the O and A level system offers great opportunity for benefits for listening and speaking skills.

Item 4 Amenities provided by the institutions of O and A levels are satisfactory.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	Df	P
Parents	45	38	2	8	7	Parents/Teachers	13.6	3	< 0.01
Teachers	42	30	10	10	8	Teachers/Students	11.1	4	< 0.05
Students	33	41	12	10	5	Parents/Students	27.0	3	< 0.001

The parents are most confident with the students least sure. The parents have chosen the schools for the students and will feel they have to justify their choices. However, the students are those who will benefit for the education and they are the most critical of the three groups.

Item 5 There is a social prestige of O and A level education system.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	42	41	8	6	3	Parents/Teachers	24.9	3	< 0.001
Teachers	44	26	10	12	8				

Parents and teachers both have positive view which means there is social prestige of O and A level education in Pakistan. It shows parents like to send their children in O and A level education institutions.

Item 6 Sporting and co-curricular activities help the development of the student's mental and physical abilities.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	65	17	5	7	7	Parents/Teachers	73.6	4	< 0.001
Teachers	31	36	12	10	11				

Both parents and teachers believe that sporting and co-curricular activities help the development of the student's mental and physical abilities. It shows that parents and teachers encourage the sporting and co-curricular activities.

Item 7 O and A level education system prepare students for professional career.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	40	37	10	6	8	Parents/Teachers	32.9	4	< 0.001
Teachers	60	19	7	8	7				

Parents and teachers have same positive point of view regarding professional career of the students. They believe that O and A level education system prepare students for their professional career.

Item 8 The O and A level examination is conducted fairly and transparently.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	36	40	5	8	11	Parents/Teachers	30.8	3	< 0.001
Teachers	44	25	15	4	13	Teachers/Students	26.5	3	< 0.001
Students	43	40	10	3	4	Parents/Students	35.0	3	< 0.001

Although, all groups have highly positive views but comparatively parents have the most positive views. All groups are verifying that the O and A level examinations are conducted fairly and transparently.

Item 9 Syllabus of O and A level is revised according to global trends.									
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	47	33	3	10	7	Parents/Teachers	1.7	3	n.s.
Teachers	51	31	6	8	5				

Both parents and teachers of O and A level have strongly positive views regarding revision of syllabus. It shows that O and A level syllabus are revised according to global trends in Pakistan.

Item 10	O and A level education system is knowledge based.								
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	47	32	14	3	4	Parents/Teachers	21.3	3	< 0.001
Teachers	41	44	5	4	6	Teachers/Students	21.9	4	< 0.001
Students	43	32	16	4	6	Parents/Students	4.7	4	n.s.

All the groups are positive but the teachers are most confident and students are less confident. Perhaps, the teachers are most sure that the O and A level education system is knowledge based. Parents also have strong positive point of view regarding O and A level education. It shows parents analyze and choose better education system for their children.

Item 11	Religious Ethics are maintained at the O and A level institutions.								
	SA	A	N	D	SD	Comparisons	$\chi^2$	df	P
Parents	41	29	10	17	4	Parents/Teachers	8.2	3	< 0.05
Teachers	43	36	10	5	7	Teachers/Students	7.5	4	n.s.
Students	34	38	12	9	7	Parents/Students	12.4	3	< 0.01

Almost all groups hold positive views but the parents' views are less positive as compare to others. Teachers and students hold similar views. It is clear that religious ethics are maintained at the O and A level institutions.

**Conclusions:** After the careful analysis of data following results are drawn

1. In the opinion of parents the O and A Level education system in Pakistan is that the students are superior to other ones studying Pakistani local system of education due to excellent communication skills, confidence level, knowledge and vision.
2. It is found that students studying in A and O level education's institution are symbol of pride and status for their parents
3. It was found that only affluent parents can send their children to these prestigious institutions and poor or lower middle class parents cannot send their children in these expensive institutions
4. In the view of parents the assessment method used by the Edexcel and Cambridge Board is better than other local examining Board in Pakistan. They thought that local educational boards are promoting the rote learning while "O" and "A" level examining boards are emphasizing on creativity and understanding of the concept in their students.
5. Majority of parents responded that this education system prepare students for better career.
6. In the view of parents the course contents of O and A Level is up to date and designed according to global trends and needs

### Recommendations

1. According the parents of O and A level learners the fee expense is very high as compare to other local system of education in Pakistan. That's why the only beneficiaries of this system is elite class. Fee should be revised so that common men get admission in these institutions easily
2. Parents complained that students studying under this system do not pay respect to their elders. That's why the O and A level institution should emphasize on character building and moral values of students.

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