

Quality Indicators for Special Education Schools A Case Study of Gujranwala Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

There are many indicators that contribute to the academic performance of special students and increase the fame and reputation of the Special Education Schools. The study was conducted to identify the quality indicators for special education schools. The objectives were to identify, integrate, and rank the special education school quality indicators according to frequency and intensity. This research was delimited to the government special education schools of District Gujranwala. The sample comprised of twenty-five special education schools, 125 teachers, and 250 students. Three questionnaires, first for the principals, second for the teachers and third for the students were developed on five-point Likert scales. Chi-Square and percentage were applied to analyzing the collected data. There were found twelve indicators. The study found that physical facility, school environment, expectations, examination system, parents' role and school management were the top six indicators of high academic performance of students. It was found that strong management, competent teachers, and strong internal examination system result in the high academic performance of the students. It was concluded that the conducive environment, provision of physical facilities, the incentive for teachers and full day schooling were also very influential for the high academic performance of the students. Recommendations included that reward for the teachers and students, in-service training and participation of the parents are necessary for the high academic performance of students.

KEYWORD: teacher quality, teaching practices, school management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the backbone of the development of country. The quality of education is closely related to many indicators like qualification of teachers, curriculum, educational material, teaching methodologies, equipment and physical facilities such as well-designed and well-equipped classrooms and laboratories, availability of libraries, furniture, playgrounds, portable water, electricity, gas, boundary walls, textbooks and teaching aids (Tahir, 2010) [23].

It has become a custom in the education field that a school is known and regarded for its reputation got through its quality education. The quality of schooling is linked with the qualification of teachers, curriculum, educational materials, teaching methodologies, equipment and physical facilities such as well designed and well equipped classrooms and laboratories, availability of libraries, furniture, playgrounds, portable water, electricity, gas, boundary walls, textbooks and teaching aids (Government of Pakistan, 2009) [11].

With the establishment of a school, it carries certain goals. Every school has got its aims and hence specific grounds are laid to carry on. Goals have lots of influence on the learning strategies employed in any given task (Pintrich, Conley & Kempler, 2004) [19].

2. Statement of the Problem

The academic performance of students is affected by several indicators like school management, teacher competency, school environment, assessment system and physical facilities. It is the demand of every stakeholder; that school must ensure these indicators in school culture so that top positions may be gained. For this purpose, the researcher intends to study those indicators that influence the overall process in school. Therefore, the research has focused to identify quality indicators at the secondary level.

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3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as under:

1. To rank the special education schools quality indicators in the light of the views of principals, teachers, and students.
2. To integrate the views of principals, teachers and students about the Special Education School quality indicators
3. To rank the school quality indicators according to frequency and intensity.

4. Research Questions

The research questions were as under:

1. What are the Special Education schools quality indicators?
2. Which indicators are responsible for the high academic performance of students?
3. Which indicators which were more frequent as compared to others?

5. Delimitation

The study was delimited to:

- The Gujranwala district.
- The students of secondary classes

Significance of the Study

The process of education carries in it numerous categories of people. The study would be extremely fruitful for all of them. The heads of the institutions can plan their academic procedure accordingly. Here can be provided role models for the teachers to work. They can benefit from it in planning their lessons and assessments. Furthermore, the teachers will get inspiration to work with zeal and in the highly professional way.

6. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The study was conducted to identify the special education schools quality indicators at the secondary level. The school needs to be well-equipped with all the physical facilities to support the students enhance in studies. The most important indicator if considered is the assessment system (Adeyemi 2008).[1] Assessment makes the students work hard and maintain certain criteria that would consequently benefit them for better future. In this context, the researcher has tried to identify and integrate all those indicators that contribute to the academic performance of students at secondary school level (Bibi 2005).[2] So the task of the researcher is to investigate the school quality indicators at high school level.

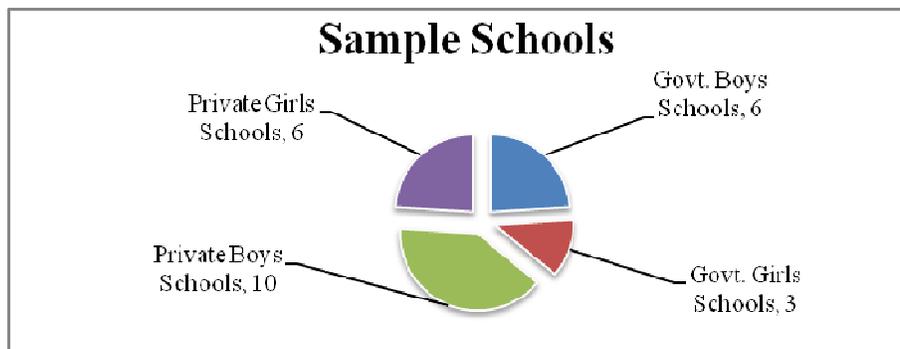
Dalin (2005)[5] argued that whatever the nature of their judgments, the quality of Special Education has for many years been a matter of concern to most parents, some of whom put their child's name down for 'a good school' even before their child is born. Furthermore, every parent wants his/her child to have 'a good education,' and that is often equated with sending him/her to a 'good' school (MacBeath, 2004).[17] Ediger and Rao (2005) [6] stated that a school is effective when it surpasses the predictions success of its pupils. It is hard to see how any school could be called effective without broader measures of achievement such as improved attitudes, motivation and challenging- to- measure skills such as learning.

According to the MacBeath (2004), [17] there were several properties of a good school like values and accurate judgments of students, proper physical facilities, safe, classroom environment..

Hopkins and Reyanolds (2001),[15] discussed the effectiveness of schools. They said that the first decision to be made in effectiveness research is the outcome on which school will be measured. The selection is not a nature activity. A tendency to choose the 'measurable' leads to focus on examination and test results; the implication of this is that we all agree that the school's main task is to get many children through examinations as possible. Contrast to this, Nayak (2002) [18] stated that the other possible goals of the school related to citizenship, workplace preparation, family life preparation, political awareness, self-esteem, social responsibilities, caring for others, solidarity and cooperation, lifelong learning, even happiness – are implicitly secondary to competitive testing. From the above list,, it is clear that it is harder to evaluate such longer-term effects, which is why they are discarded as outcomes to be measured (Chapman 2005) [4]

Salfi and Seed (2007) [21] reported the empirical base to be over 60 studies, with a review to be found in), Fuller (1987)[9], traces the in three generations - 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, - evidencing increasing sophistication in statistical technique and more lately, and multi-level modeling. And the proportion of studies that confirm its importance in student achievement.

7. **Research Methodology**
The study was descriptive in nature, and the survey was conducted to collect data. The research was quantitative in nature.
8. **Population of the Study**
The population of the study consisted of all heads, teachers, and students of special education schools.
9. **Sample of the Study**
Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample Special education schools. Principals of top twenty-five secondary Special education schools were taken as a sample. From each school five teachers and ten students from the 10th class were randomly selected. Total four hundred respondents were taken as a sample.



10. **Research Instrument**
Three questionnaires were used to collect the data for teachers, students and parents. The questionnaires consisted of different indicators.
11. **Pilot-testing of the Questionnaire**
For the present study, questionnaires were subjected to a pilot run for its reliability and validity.
Validity: Content validity of the questionnaires was judged by the experts.
Reliability: Cronbach alpha technique was used to find out the reliability of the questionnaires. Its value was 0.78.
12. **Data Collection**
Data were collected through personal visits to all the sample Special education schools. The questionnaires were distributed to the principals, teachers, and students with the permission of the administration of the Special Education schools. The researcher made frequent visits to the sample Special education schools to collect the filled questionnaires from the principals, teachers, and students.
13. **Data Analysis**
The collected data were tabulated and analyzed by using the mean score to rank the school quality indicators.

School Quality Indicators

Quality is one of the major concern of all type of stakeholders. Gronlund (2002) stated that it is commonly observed that there are so many indicators that are affecting the academic performance of students in general and teaching quality in specific. There are many other types of researches like Warwick, & Rimers, 1992; Tamunodienye 2012; Yaqub 2004; Racino 1999; and Harry 1992 list different quality indicators. From the jungle of quality indicators, following ten were adopted as main indicators of quality. These were ranked according to principals, teachers and students preferences

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Indicator 1 | School Management |
| Indicator 2 | Teachers' Competency |
| Indicator 3 | Assessment Systems |
| Indicator 4 | School Environment |
| Indicator 5 | Physical Facilities |
| Indicator 6 | Classroom Language |

Indicator 7	Rewards and Punishment
Indicator 8	Peers Relationship
Indicator 9	Expectations
Indicator 10	Homework

These indicators considered as most important by Principals, teachers, and students. Below is the ranking followed by overall ranking

Ranking of the Indicators

Table 1: Ranking of the Indicators According to the **Principals' Views**

Sr. No	Indicators	Mean Value	Rank
	Assessment Systems	4.60	1
	Physical Facilities	4.53	2
	School Management	4.52	3.5
	School Environment	4.52	3.5
	Expectations	4.48	5
	Homework	3.97	6
	Classroom Language	3.96	7.5
	Rewards and Punishment	3.96	7.5
	Peers Relationship	3.92	9
	Teachers' Competency	3.87	10

Table 2: Ranking the Indicators According to the **Teachers' Views**

Sr. No	Indicators	Mean Value	Rank
	Physical Facilities	4.69	1
	Assessment Systems	4.51	2
	Expectations	4.50	3
	School Environment	4.43	4
	Rewards and Punishment	4.13	6
	School Management	4.11	7
	Peers Relationship	4.10	8.5
	Homework	4.10	8.5
	Teachers' Competency	4.08	9
	Classroom Language	3.93	10

Table 3: Ranking the Indicators According to the **Students' views**

Sr. No	Indicators	Mean Value	Rank
	School Environment	4.67	1
	Expectations	4.52	2
	Physical Facilities	4.44	3
	Assessment Systems	4.29	4
	Peers Relationship	4.18	5
	Homework	4.01	6
	Rewards and Punishment	4.00	7
	School Management	3.85	8
	Teachers' Competency	3.83	9
	Classroom Language	3.74	10

14. Integration of Indicators ranked by principals, teachers and students about the Special Education School quality indicators.

The second objective was about the Integration of Indicators ranked by principals, teachers and students about the Special Education school quality indicators. In this regard, a table was developed to give the integrated picture of the indicators which was as under:

Table 4: The mean values of the indicators according to **the principals, teachers and students' view are given in column (a), (b) & (c) respectively.**

Sr. No	Indicators	Rank (a) Principals	Rank (b) Teachers	Rank(c) Students
	School Management	3.5	6	8
	Teachers' Competency	10	9	9
	Assessment Systems	1	2	4
	School Environment	3.5	4	1
	Physical Facilities	2	1	3
	Classroom Language	7.5	10	10
	Rewards and Punishment	7.5	5	7
	Peers Relationship	9	7.5	5
	Expectations	5	3	2
	Homework	6	7.5	6

15. Overall Indicators' Ranking

Table 5: Ranking of the indicators based on the average value of the mean value provided by **the principals, teachers, and students**

Sr. No	Indicators	Respondents	Mean Value	Average Value	Rank
	Physical Facilities	Principals	4.53	4.553	1
		Teachers	4.69		
		Students	4.44		
2	School Environment	Principals	4.52	4.541	2
		Teachers	4.43		
		Students	4.67		
3	Expectations	Principals	4.48	4.498	3
		Teachers	4.50		
		Students	4.52		
4	Assessment Systems	Principals	4.60	4.467	4
		Teachers	4.51		
		Students	4.29		
1.	School Management	Principals	4.15	4.161	5
		Teachers	4.34		
		Students	4.52		
2.	Peers Relationship	Principals	4.11	4.068	6
		Teachers	3.85		
		Students	3.92		
3.	Homework	Principals	4.10	4.028	7
		Teachers	4.18		
		Students	3.97		
5	Rewards and Punishment	Principals	4.10	4.024	8
		Teachers	4.01		
		Students	3.96		
6	Teachers' Competency	Principals	4.11	3.933	9
		Teachers	4.00		
		Students	3.87		
7	Classroom Language	Principals	4.08	3.878	10
		Teachers	3.85		
		Students	3.96		
		Principals	3.93		
		Teachers	3.74		
		Students	2.80		
			3.15		

16. Findings

By data analysis, the results of the research were as under:

1. The first effective school quality indicator was the management. There was no significant difference among the principals, teacher and students' view.
2. Teachers competency was at second level. Teachers competency include many things like teaching skills, planning and management, assessment skills and communication. It was found that there was no significant difference among the principals, teachers' and students' view. However, the use of audio-visual aids was rejected, as there was a significant difference among the principals' view. However, there was no significant difference between the teachers and students' view.
3. Assessment system was at the third. There was no significant difference among the principals, teacher and students' view.
4. Assessment system was followed by school environment which included working relationship of principals, teachers, and students. There was no significant difference among the principals', teachers' and students' view.
5. Physical facilities plays a vital role in converting a school to quality school There was no significant difference among the principals, teacher and students' view.
6. Regarding use of language, it was found that. The statement was accepted, as there was no significant difference among the principals, teachers and students'
7. It was also found that there was no significant difference among the principals, teachers' and students' views about the rewards.
8. Furthermore, it was also found that working relation with peers also shows the impact on students. There was no significant difference among the principals', teachers' and students' views that the students liked to work in groups and gave tough competition.
9. High expectation and home work also played an important role There was no significant difference among the principals, teachers and students' view that the teachers and students would get a position in the board exam and
10. Lastly, was the homework which included assigning and checking homework by teachers and principals. There was no significant difference among the teachers' and students' views about the assigning and checking homework by teachers.

17. Discussion

The discussion on these factors as under

1. School Management

It is widely recognized that one of the key indicator influencing school effectiveness is the nature and quality of the leadership and management provided by school administrators (Racino 1999) [20]. The successful Special Education Special education schools had been at it for several years, and were learning and gradually putting in place the elements of effective school-based management and educational improvement. Principals learned new ways of influencing and leading and began to see themselves as managers of change (Goel, 2005).[10]

2. Teachers' Competency

There was no significant difference among the principals', teachers' and students' view about teachers competency . This in-line with the argument place by Warwick, and Rimers (1991),[27] who stressed for combine efforts and technical expertise of all stakeholders. However, the use audio-visual aids were rejected, as there was a significant difference among the principals' view. On the other hand, there was no significant difference found between the teachers and students' view which supports to Gronlund 2002 [12] view. Good teacher was paramount for the academic performance of students, but it was impossible to measure input from specific teachers. A competent teacher has a command on the subject matter and gets training on new initiatives in educations. Continuous professional development has polished the abilities of the teacher (Tahir et al., 2011). [23]

3. Assessment Systems

Tomlinson (1992) [26] and Tamunodienye (2012) [25] were in the view the assessment system was the key indicator of any institution. A proper test system was concerning answering written or oral questions with no or limited access to textbooks. A set of questions or exercises were evaluating skill, knowledge, and attitude of any nations. Proper assessment system gives the right direction and shows the intellectual level of the nation (Aijaz 2002).[2]. Through assessment system, the teacher must have success to know that the factual memory; skills mastery,

applications in real-life settings, use tests or competitions, etc. to assess understandings and recognize misconceptions then clear them up (Goel 2005,[10] Tahir 2010 [24]) stressed that it is the need of the day and stated that “So the need of the hours was establishing a strong the examination system, a separate paper setting and marking mechanism and the most important the record keeping of all these things” (Tahir, 2010 p 243).[24]

4. School Environment

Fuller (1987) [9] while discussing school rising factors, put the environment at the top of factors. He argued that the school environment be the total of all external conditions and influences affecting the organism. It is the totally unplanned of what we live in, natural, human-made machines, scientific appliances, equipment and natural conditions such as air, water, and land that directly and indirectly affect human beings (

According to Nayak (2002), [18] School Environment is totally of the natural and social factor events, phenomenon and occurrence that directly affect the students’ achievements. The school is a central source of formal education. It is an institution that fulfills tie needs and requirements of the society. However, school and home is equally impartment for the achievement of the academic performance of the students. According to the MacBeath, (2004) [17] learning is as much like home, and community matter as a school matter, and how children learn outside school should be as critical a focus of evaluation as what they learn inside the classroom. According to Clarke how we create an information rich school environment is one of the big challenges. This was also supported Chapmn (2005) [4] by stating that data richness has long been found to be a critical component of efficient and improving Special education schools in studies. Being data rich means that data can be turned into information used as a basis for school and classroom decision-making.

5. Physical Facilities

Physical facilities are one of the important aspect of special Education Schools. (Nayak 2002).[18]. Some researcher argued that in Special Education schools are in many cases in the state of material poverty. None of the Special Education schools could expect financial contributions from parents and pupils for equipment or materials (Harris, Gunraj, James, Clarke, & Harris, 2006). The school size, classroom size, and utilization of the space were an important indicator of the success of any institution. The success of the school depended on the student teacher ratio. The institution must provide the proper student's teacher ratio through rationalization process (Tahir, 2010).[23]

6. Classroom Language

Language is the identification of any nation and way of expressing of its inner feeling. So L-1 is used for this purpose. However, communication with other countries, trade, and business the L-2 is also needed. English is an international language and necessary for competition in a globalized world order. Urdu is our national language that connects people all across Pakistan and is a symbol of national cohesion and integration. In addition to this, there are mother tongues / local vernaculars in the country that are makes of ethnic and cultural richness and diversity. The challenge is that a child can carry forward the cultural assets and be at the same time, able to compete nationally and internationally (GoP, 2009). [11]

7. Rewards and Punishment

Hargreaves and Hopkins (2001) [13] stated the characteristics of effective schools in their famous work on management of empowered schools, opined that rewarding effort is as problematic in schools. This can be applied to special education schools also. Many Special Education schools recognized efforts with thank you note, mentions in school newsletters and other acknowledgments. However, several principals said they preferred to de-emphasize the idea of winner and losers to create a sense of community achievement. Some Special education schools scheduled year-end function and parties. Few financial rewards were used in Special education schools (Goel, 2005). Many teachers and trainers do not use punishments, and that is a good thing. Most educate rs and trainers use rewards, like small presents or gold stars and most people like receiving them. Usually, we see desirable behavior when rewards are on offer (Taylor, 2006). It is commonly observed that reward was a motivator and used as school quality indicator.

8. Peers Relationship

According to the Goel (2005), [10] working relation with peers is also an important indicator to measure the quality of any school. Educational diversity as reflected specifically in the composition of students of the different characteristic within Special education schools can easily be observed. As a general term, these compositional aspects are called peer effects. Student features that may be relevant are general; socioeconomic status or family income; race; religion; learning needs or interests; language; culture; and political affiliation Espin (1998) [7]; Sanja (2009) [22]. An analytical approach would focus on how peers influence each other in generating educational outcomes. It is increasingly clear that peers or fellow students have a significant influence on student aspirations, values, and learning. Thus strong peer sorting will polarize students according to academic achievement and outcome (Goel, 2005) [10].

9. Expectations

Expectation also played a vital role in the performance of the school and improving quality. (Jorgensen, and Tashie, 2000). [16] There was no significant difference among the principals, teachers and students' view about the teachers and students aiming at getting a position in the board exam. This finding was supported by a good school might be found to have high expectations of students; but those high expectations might be a result of having a good students' intake for some years that were likely to produce excellent results (Hargreaves & Davies, 2005) [13]. As these and other studies have demonstrated, teachers' perceptions and actions are influenced by what they believe, as well as by their knowledge. Teachers' understanding of expectations is not always clear. In a small study of one secondary school with mixed catchments, encompassing and area of significant deprivation well as pupils from more advantaged homes, questions to several staff members revealed a very narrow interpretation (Bibi 2005) [3].

10. Homework

Home work is one of the most important element in developing quality schools (Ediger and Rao 2005) [6]. The home homework is also a key indicator to achieving the performance of the school. The success or otherwise, of homework and home study could be put down to some key factors: Three of them related to the school i.e. in school and out of school. There are several different kinds of homework for example practice tasks, to build on what was learned in school; preparation tasks for what will be attended to subsequently in school; extension activities to work undertaken in class; private study for individual work, e.g. personal projects exploratory inquiry. Homework is a powerful means for relating school knowledge to everyday life.

18. Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the research:

1. The management was ranked as a top quality indicator (Finding 1).
2. It was also concluded that appointing competent teachers is another factor that improve quality. Competent teachers are the asset of any institution (Finding 2).
3. Improve assessment system is another factor that improve the quality not only of students but teachers also. An accurate assessment system enables school to provide quality education (Finding 3).
4. Conducive learning environment was the fourth factor for quality education. A good learning environment always improve the quality of education (Finding 4).
5. Physical facilities are not only important for teachers and students but also for parents. Good physical facilities like water, washrooms, sitting areas and other always helps in improving school quality. (Finding 5).
6. Accurate and in time reward also increase the quality of education Finding 7).
7. The peers did influence one another. Moreover, they were of same competency and performance (Finding 8).
8. The students and the teachers had high expectations. The teachers needed to remind their students of what they and their parents expected from them (Finding 9).
9. The teachers assigned and checked the homework, but principals did not check it (Finding 10).

19. Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings, review of related literature and observations made by the researcher during this study; these may be helpful to get the high academic performance of students.

1. The variety of teaching skills may be useful for having the school performance of students. The teacher may use audio-visual aids, and intensive study may motivate the students. It is possible if the teachers are skillful and have got effective methodology. Another important indicator is internal assessment system of the Special Education schools. The test may be arranged weekly, monthly and chapter wise. Test record may be maintained. Papers may be prepared by a committee of subject teachers. Papers may be marked by subject teachers and re-checked by the committee.

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