

Comparison Between Public and Private Schools Quality of Early Childhood Education in Context of Assessment Process in Bannu Division

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Abstract

The study aimed to compare quality of early childhood education in context of assessment process in public and private schools of Bannu Division. All public and private schools of Bannu Division constituted the population of the study. The sample of the study was consisted of 360 selected schools. Learning Environment Observational Checklist was used as a research tool for data collection. All ECE classroom were observed during data collection. Statistical tool such as mean standard deviation, and independent sample t test were used. Findings suggested that teachers in private schools were more consistent in meeting parents or communicating students' progress through reports compared to teachers in public schools. It was found that both public and private schools display nearly similar practices in preparing checklists to track children's learning progress, though private schools show a marginally better trend. The study revealed a significant difference in the overall assessment process between private and public schools. It was also observed that overall assessment process in private schools was more effective. It was recommended that public schools' assessment process needs to improve to facilitate the children Public schools should be consistent in meeting parents and communicate students' progress with parents Implement comprehensive assessment practices to monitor children's developmental progress in a structured manner.

Keywords: Assessment Process comparison, ECE Quality, Public Private Schools, KP

Introduction

Pre-primary, Katchi, Paki, pre-nursery, nursery, KG-1, KG-2, and prep are some of the names for early childhood education, which includes the time before class one. Every educational policy in Pakistan has stressed the value of education with the goal of achieving a 100% literacy rate. The "Katchi" class was promoted as informal education in the early years following Pakistan's independence. In the 1970s, ECE was organized in educational sectors. For kids ages three to six, public schools offered "Katchi" classes. The government of that era neglected ECE practices in the 1980s. The ECE was once more acknowledged nationally as the Katchi class in the 1992 educational policy. However, fully represented ECE does not adequately promote ECD (Situation Analysis of Children in Pakistan, 2017). After the National Education Policy (NEP-2009) was passed, preschool was formally acknowledged as formal education in public schools. This policy states that ECE should be provided to children ages three to five, go hand in hand with private schools, train teachers, and provide curriculum resources (Arshad & Zamir, 2018; MoE, 2009). The most progressive measure was the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Curriculum (2017). Since the 18th Amendment, ECE has been given national and provisional priority. The Education Sector Reforms Action Plan (ESR 2001-2005) has made sure that resource allocation is implemented across the country. Additionally, in this research ECE is referred to the services of children having age three to five years. This is focused on overall

development of children. Sometimes covering age range 3 to 5 years of education pre-primary education is used by UNESCO.

Bowman, et al (2001) suggest that a comprehensive picture of children's behavior, thought processes, and learning is usually the aim of assessment as it is applied in early childhood education and care. This kind of image is focused on the individual's learning, is accumulated over time, and provides evidence of learning in a variety of settings. In regards to its importance, they argue that: Assessment plays a crucial role in revealing a child's past knowledge, conceptual development, and ways of interacting with and understanding the world. This information helps teachers select a pedagogical approach and curriculum materials that will support the child's continued learning and development. Three groups can be conceptually distinguished in the assessment practices used in early childhood education.

Best Practices of Assessment in Early Childhood

According to Lungu, S. (2021). , assessment procedures should follow these four guidelines in order to benefit young children, their families, and us as educators:

Standards should specify the significant and developmentally appropriate results we hope to achieve for the kids in our care. There should be processes in place for developing and assessing the standards as well as our techniques for assessing children using them. Since young children work and play in our settings, evaluation methods need to be appropriate for them and morally sound. We need to communicate the standards and the observation and assessment techniques we use to teachers, families, and other relevant professionals. Early childhood teaching is a special area in the field of education that is focused on the child. A whole child approach to early childhood teaching facilitates children's development in all areas: physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic. Early childhood teachers recognize that children develop at their own pace and with their own unique developmental profile including special needs (Hooper & Umansky, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Early Childhood Education (ECE) establishes the groundwork for cognitive development, social adjustment, and lifetime learning. It is revealed through the research that limited budget deficit adequate spacing, learning materials, and training of teachers (Mahmud, M 2014, Sayeed, A. 2011), which contributes less attractiveness and ineffectiveness in ECE (Ghuman, 2015). It is recognized by The National Plan of Action (2001–2015) that there is a dire need of certain rooms, instructors, AV aids and learning materials (Sham 2012). Moreover, the limitations which becoming obstacles in delivering of standardized services of ECE has been emphasized by the National Education Policy (National Education Policy (2017–2025). The department of education failed to meet the requirement of early childhood education regarding teaching–learning aids in most of the provinces of Pakistan. Even training in the form of both pre-service and in-service failed to have harmony ECE learning needs because there is a lack of training task handled by primary school teachers in which hinder the provision playful and attractive methods of instruction of young learners (Zada, K. 2014). As a result, it is essential to assess and contrast the ECE quality in the Bannu Division's public and private schools, paying special attention to the way assessment procedures are carried out. Recognizing this element would make it easier to pinpoint areas in both sectors that require improvement as well as gaps and strengths that currently exist. Therefore, there is a dire need to conduct a study on the Quality of Early Childhood Education in Context of assessment process in Public and Private Schools of Bannu Division.

Objectives of the study

1. To compare assessment process conducted in public and private schools of to improve early childhood education in public and private schools of Bannu division.
2. To give recommendations for enhancing the quality of the assessment process in Early Childhood Education across public and private schools of the Bannu Division.

Null Hypothesis H₀1

There is no significant difference between public and private schools' assessment process of ECE of Bannu division.

Research Question

1. What are the recommendations for enhancing the quality of the assessment process in Early Childhood Education across public and private schools of the Bannu Division.

Significance of Study

The phase of Early Childhood (EC) reflects students' direction in how to utilize their precious time by following teachers' instruction. Such activities enable them to perform and organized their assessment process. As Denham and Brown (2010), asserts that cognitive development begins from the pre-natal phase. It is important to enhance individual abilities; learning skills and expression of emotion, to train and individual interaction as highlighted by The Ministry of Federal Education of Pakistan (2017). The study would help teachers to organize children learning schedule and assessment in such a way that they may uplift children development and prepare them to be accustomed with relevant evaluation process. The study would a bridge the gap which is found in the unsatisfactory assessment processes which is integral part of early childhood education. It is hoped that findings of the study would help in recommending supplementary actions regarding ECE development in Bannu division particularly and in KP province generally.

Delimitation of the Study

Only public and private school's children who read in Play/Nursery/KG groups, aged 3-5 at the primary school level were included. The study was also restricted to the assessment process practiced at public and private schools.

Literature Review

This part of the study includes review of previous studies conducted by professionals and researchers in the field of ECE education and some of the important eras. The foundation for students' academic success is laid by assessment processes, as evidenced by their performance on written or oral exams. In addition to showcasing their academic abilities, it motivates students to seek higher education. (Dylan W. et al, 2004). Enhancing instruction for both teachers and students is the aim of classroom assessment practices. Teachers can learn about their students' comprehension levels, goals, and areas of strength and weakness from the results of these practices.

Similarly, tests are used to measure students' learning progress before, during, and after the teaching process. (Popham, & James W, 2003) The teacher can modify the lesson plan based on the assessment, which is done before instruction, which provides information about the students' true needs and status. Enhancing the quality of instruction, student engagement, their participation in the learning process, and hands-on classroom activities are the main goals of assessments carried out during the teaching process. Nonetheless, the evaluation processes—which comprise written, oral, and performance exams—occur at the end of the teaching process and are intended to grade students' performances and determine their level of comprehension of the subject matter that will be utilized to inform particular instructional decisions (Dylan W. et al 2004).

Rehman (2006) cited Bertam and Pascal (2002) utters that child first eight years have been recognized in developing the learning experiences of individuals. In this decisive period individuals feeling and consciousness is also built. It is base for the child dexterity and responsibility to be happened in future life. The growing early childhood education is focused on literacy and numeracy skills in recent era and promotes a formal pedagogy leading the adults. Beth Lewis mentioned the early childhood education as project based instruction and processes to be planned for up to eight age children. This is the most significant and dependent period of individuals times.

Importance of Early Childhood Education

It is a right and good job to invest on children. It is argued by the experts that for the development of a country, ECE should be kept prior in its agenda as it has observed by many evidences. The Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) specified that it smashes the poverty cycle (Naudeau et al., 2011: xiv; UNESCO, 2011a: 29). When a child enters into the classroom, learning process take place and it can bear positive and negative impacts on child next coming life. In this period child have greater possibility to be grown and developed, however children at this stage are at weaker position and the possibility to be left behind if proper nourishment was not provided. In this case the poorest country and deprived social group are suffered. It is also investigated that four out of ten chances of survival of a child in poorest countries and the same case is inflexibly persist in the many developed nations (UNESCO 2007: 12). Children belong to the deprived group have beneficial from ECE and many other lose when excluded. So Early Childhood Education (ECE) laid the foundation of child personal and social development whereas the improvement of social skills, interaction with peers, teachers, family members and community develop. Emotional and language skills are also developed. Similarly, the development of Early Childhood Education (ECE) provides healthy environment and health safety, so the chances of survival, improvement in nutrition and hygiene are possible. Proper provision of Early Childhood Education (ECE) enhances progress and performance to a satisfactory level. It maximizes enrolment rate at primary level and minimize chances of repetition in a class. The reduction of dropout rate and better performance in the next class is due to proper imparting Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Assessment of Young Children

A structured examination system could not be used to evaluate the abilities of young children. ECE students experience anxiety when taking formal tests and exams, which hinders their ability to respond appropriately to their skills and abilities. It is important to regularly assess children's performance by contrasting it with that of their peers. Their findings can be used to plan how to address their deficiencies (National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, 2007). The following techniques are recommended by the 2007 National ECE curriculum for assessing the performance of young children:

- Checklist of children performance.
- Portfolio of children's work.
- Progress report for parents.

Nonetheless, the three approaches mentioned above for assessing the development of young children are supported by ECE teacher training manuals. It emphasizes the importance of teachers keeping an eye on each student's activities. Because there is no pointlessness in the everyday lives of children. The ECE Teachers Training Guidebook includes a progress report card that is based on the following sections: personal and social development (self-recognition, forming relationships among his peers, and sense of rights and duties); language and literacy (listening and speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills); basic mathematical concepts; the world around me; health and hygiene; and creative art. letters, understanding the Urdu alphabet, spotting patterns, counting, identifying colors, animals, and their progeny, whether dot-to-do activities and weather conditions (windy, rainy, cloudy, snowy, tornado, rainbow, moon, lightning, and star) are displayed on a weather chart.

Assessment Practices in ECE

Due to the significant changes in ECE assessment practices, teachers are now compelled to adopt strategies and tactics that assess students' academic growth and development from a broad standpoint. In order to gather information on students' academic learning and development, teachers in ECE centers employ a range of formative and summative methods and techniques, which are the subject of the current study (MESVTEE, 2013). The assessment practices discussion will distinguish between the two forms of assessment in order to understand their discrepancies. Earl (2003) asserts that knowing which assessment you are using and why is always essential to using it effectively and

sensibly.

Assessment of Learning

Although Neaum (2016) believes that "assessment in Early Years settings needs to be predominantly formative, not summative," assessment of learning, also known as summative assessment (Earl, 2003), is the most common type of assessment in schools. In order to make informed decisions about students, summative assessments of learning are used to measure, certify, and report on students' learning levels (Earl, 2013).

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning is also known as formative assessment (Earl, 2013). Regier (2012) defines formative assessment as a process that uses informal assessment methods to gather information on student learning. Black and Wiliam (1998) state that an evaluation is considered formative if it has an impact on future learning. As a result, they suggest that formative assessment is not a tool or an event, but rather a collection of practices that have a common trait and produce an action that improves learning.

Methodology

This part of the study is consisted of research design, population sample, instrumentation, tool's validity and reliability, data collection procedure and data analysis;

Research Design

The major purpose of this comparative study was to highlight the quality of Early Childhood Education in context of assessment process in Public and Private Schools of Bannu Division. The study was descriptive in nature.

Population

All Prep /Pakki /Nursery/ Kachi classes of Primary public and private schools of Bannu Division constituted the population of the study. The jurisdiction of Bannu Division comprised of Bannu, Lakki Marwat and North Waziristan districts. There is total 3529 public primary and private schools (public primary=2799 and private=730) in Bannu Division, in which probably a class from each ECE / Play group/ Nursery/Kachi/ Prep/Pakki/ kindergarten schools' level in public and private schools of the Bannu Division was taken.

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 360 ECE / Play group/ Nursery/Kachi/ Prep/Pakki/ kindergarten and private schools of Bannu Division. For the selection of schools (public and private) first stratified sampling method was used., in which sample of 286 and 74 public primary and private school were respectively selected. Then simple Random sample technique was used. The researcher followed Gill et al, (2010) as a source for determination of sample size.

Data Collection Tool

Self-developed Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC) was used. To find out the answer of null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between public and private schools' assessment process of ECE in Bannu division? The facet assessment process was developed in LEOC, which was consisted of three statements.

The following table shows range and scale used for LEOC.

WEIGHT	SCALE	MEAN RANGE
1	N- Not at all	1.00 to 1.50
2	V= Very little	1.51 to 2.50
3	SW = Some What	2.51 to 3.50
4	TS = To some extent	3.51 to 4.50
5	TG =To great extent	4.51 to 5.00

Table 1 Scale and Range used for LEOC

Validity of Tool

Before administering the research tool, the validity of the LEOC, was checked. Keeping in view the objectives of the research the validity of the tool (LEOC) regarding learning environment was confirmed by 8 experts and university experts.

Reliability of Tool

For the purpose of the reliability, LEOC was administered for 30 selected schools, the researcher personally visited the schools and met the children of Prep/Nursery classes and observed the available environment and marked the relevant columns. The alpha value of LEOC was found 0.73.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through field surveys using self-developed LEOC. The selected public and private schools at ECE/Play group/Nursery/prep/kindergartens classes for LEOC were observed. Keeping in view the objectives of the research tool LEOC concerning assessment process, the researcher visited the ECE classrooms and observed assessment process. In order to judge well, the researcher would ask certain questions stated in the LEOC and marked () in the relevant columns.

Data Analysis

To answer the first and second objectives descriptive statistics such as mean and, standard deviation and inferential statistics such independent sampled t test were used answer the third objective.

Analyses and Interpretation of Data

This portion deals with the analysis, tabulation, and interpretation of the collected data. The analyzed data were tabulated and interpreted in light of the objectives of the study.

Null Hypothesis H₀:

There is no significant difference between public and private schools' assessment process of ECE of Bannu division

S. NO	STATEMENT	SCHOOL TYPE	M	SD	T	P
1	The teachers meet parents in school to discuss the child's progress in class or send the progress report home.	Public	2.89	1.08	2.23	0.03
		private	3.68	0.91		
2	Checklists of Children's Progress are prepared	Public	2.78	1.15	1.33	0.19
		private	3.25	1.11		
3	Teachers maintain each child's artwork, literacy, and numeracy-related worksheets in their individual folders.	Public	2.39	0.89	1.09	0.28
		private	2.82	1.33		

Table 2 Assessment Process between Public and Private Schools

Mean score (M=3.68) and respective standard deviation (SD=0.91) regarding private schools is notably higher than that of public schools (M=2.89, SD = 1.08). However, t-value 2.23 and p-value (0.03) indicate a significant difference at the 0.05 level. Mean score (M=3.25) and respective standard deviation (SD=1.11) regarding private schools, is slightly higher than mean score (M=2.78) and respective standard deviation (SD=1.15) of public schools. However, the t-value is reported 1.33 and higher p-value 0.19 show that this difference is not statistically significant. Public schools scored (M = 2.39) and standard deviation (SD=0.89) while private schools scored (M = 2.82) and respective standard deviation (SD=1.33). However, t-value is 1.09 and p-value 0.28 again indicate no significant difference between the two groups.

S. NO.	PARAMETER	SCHOOL TYPE	M	SD	T	P
1	Assessment process	Public	2.69	0.60	-4.89	0.00
		Private	3.23	0.92		

Table 3 School Type Based Comparison of Overall Assessment Process

Table 3 shows that the overall mean score of both public and private schools denote “somewhat” (2.51-3.50) about the facet “Assessment process.” (M=2.69, M=3.23) respectively. However lesser p value (0.00) indicates that there is significant difference regarding assessment process conducted by private and public and schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Private schools have more organized assessment process as denoted by higher mean value than public schools.

Results

Findings suggested that teachers in private schools were more consistent in meeting parents or communicating students’ progress through reports compared to teachers in public schools. Therefore, the finding highlighted stronger home–school collaboration in private institutions. Overall, the assessment process in public schools was somewhat seen, suggesting, that it was not fully implemented. It was found that both public and private schools display nearly similar practices in preparing checklists to track children’s learning progress, though private schools show a marginally better trend. Both types of schools maintain children’s work to some extent, but private schools perform slightly better, reflecting a modest effort in record-keeping. The study revealed a significant difference in the overall assessment process between private and public schools. It was also observed that overall assessment process in private schools was more effective.

Discussion

The present study indicates in the same way research conducted by Asif Malik (2010) supported the present study by finding out that children aging 4-6 years interested in group activities and willingly participate group activities. It was also seen that teachers meet parents in school to discuss the child’s progress in class or send the progress report home up to “Somewhat” and maintained “very little” each child’s art work, literacy and numeracy related worksheets in their individual folders.

Conclusion

It was concluded that public schools setting was limited, where some assessment processes were somewhat implemented, they displayed a moderate level of effectiveness, indicating the quality enhancement of ECE settings. Overall, the results underscored the necessity for enhancements in the assessment practices within public schools to the developmental requirements of young children.

It was concluded that the ECE learning environment in private schools was characterized in which assessment processes were carried out, there remained a significant need for improvement to adequately support the developmental needs in public schools for young children. Overall, the results highlighted the necessity for enhancement in the assessment practices in private schools to create a more conducive setting for young learners.

Recommendations

The recommendations were drawn as follows.

- Public schools' assessment process needs to improve to facilitate the children
- Public schools should be consistent in meeting parents and communicating students' progress with parents
- Implement comprehensive assessment practices to monitor children's developmental progress in a structured manner.

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