



A Comparative Study of Boys' Public Primary School Performance of Male and Female Head Teachers in District Gujrat

Dr. Khalid Saleem¹, Dr. Mobeen Ul Islam², Isbah Nawaz³

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Okara. Email: khalid.saleem@uo.edu.pk

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Gujrat. Email: drmobeen.islam@uog.edu.pk

³ M. Phil Education, Department of Education, University of Okara

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Abstract

The scope of this research was to investigate and compare the general performance of the boys in the public primary schools headed by male and female teachers in District Gujrat. Quantitative research design based on descriptive research design was used. The sample was made up of 160 schools; 80 male head teachers and 80 female head teachers. A school performance observation checklist was used to collect data and a structured questionnaire, which included some of the key indicators of academic achievement, classroom practices, enrollment and retention, co-curricular activities, and school environment. T-tests were determined and means and standard deviations were calculated as descriptive statistics in order to compare the performance of male and female directed schools. These findings showed that female-led schools were slightly higher in the mean score in all indicators but the difference was not significant. On the whole, male and female head teachers showed similar performance in terms of school performance, which makes it apparent that the competencies of a leader, as opposed to gender, are defining success of schools. The policy, leadership development and resource allocation implications of the findings are related to the areas of public primary education.

Keywords: Boys' Public Primary Schools, School Performance, Head Teacher Gender, Academic Achievement, Classroom Practices, Leadership Effectiveness

Background of the Study

It is obvious that school leadership is extremely important in defining quality and effectiveness of learning institutions. Head teachers being the main leaders of schools, has the role of constructing academic, social, and operational climate of the school that affects not only the performance of teachers but also the students of the school (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006). The concept of effective leadership does not just mean administrative management but instructional supervision, teacher support, and creation of a positive school culture. In primary education where children learn the basic skills, the position of the head teachers is more decisive because their skills in leadership influence the academic performance, interest of the students and their general development (Hallinger and Heck, 1998).

The issue of gender plays a significant role that may affect the leadership style, decision-making, and management styles. Research indicates that both male and female head teachers can choose to apply alternative leadership styles, which differ in terms of communication, cooperation and the approaches to solving problems (Eagly and Carli, 2018). The feminine leadership model tends to be viewed as participative and transformational styles, which focus on cooperation, motivation, and support of a teacher, whereas the male leadership model at schools tends to be more directive or transactional (Bush, 2020). Such differences

may affect several areas of the school performance such as academic performance, classroom practices, co-curricular activities, enrollment and retention and the learning environment.

The public primary schools in Pakistan are also very instrumental in availing education to boys, especially in districts like Gujrat. These schools are under the control of the School Education Department and headed by the head teachers who are in charge of the urban and rural schools. Although the role of school leadership is known to be significant, the effects of the gender of the head teachers on the performance of the school are scarcely empirically studied, especially concerning boys schools of a public primary school (Maqbool et al., 2024). The gender of the head teacher is very important in understanding how to design policies, professional development programs, and support mechanisms which may enhance the results of education in various contexts of schools.

Most of the time the performance of boys' public primary schools is measured by several indicators, such as academic performance, classroom activities, school enrolment and retention, co-curricular activities and the school environment and cleanliness. These indicators give a holistic perspective of the level of achievement of schools with regard to their academic and developmental goals. The comparative study of schools with male and female head teachers will assist in determining strengths and weaknesses related to various leadership practices and provide the understanding of how leadership approaches based on gender can affect the performance of schools (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Furthermore, school context variables (urban vs rural school setting) might also act as a cause of the effectiveness of male and female head teachers. The effects of effective leadership are usually supported by better infrastructure, resources and the availability of teachers in urban schools. On the contrary, schools in the countryside are usually associated with various difficulties, including insufficient resources, ineffective facilities, and the lack of teachers, which might impair the performance of the school even with a qualified administration (Khan et al., 2019). A comparative research approach taken into account of these contextual factors is thus critical in creating a comprehensive view about the school performance and leadership behavior. It is in this light that analysis of the performance of boys' primary schools in District Gujrat that have male and female head teachers is timely and relevant. The objective of the study is to give empirical data about the impact of gender of the head teacher on the effectiveness of schools, which shows inconsistencies in the academic, operational, and co-curricular areas. The results can enlighten policy makers, education authorities and school leaders on the importance of gender in school leadership and can be used to formulate interventions that can increase the quality and equity of primary education in the district.

Rationale of the Study

The leadership of a school is very important in dictating the effectiveness and quality of the educational institution. The leadership of Head teachers has great impact on the teaching and performance of students as well as the overall operations of a school and thus their leadership is what makes a school successful. Although the role of school leadership has not been underestimated, little has been done to identify the exact influence of the gender of the head teacher on the performance of the school especially boys' primary schools. The comparative study of male and female head teachers and their different leadership styles and the implications of these on the performance of the schools can be valuable information towards the provision of quality education.

A comparison of representatives of male and female school leadership can assist in determining the strong point, challenges, and areas of improvement to the leadership style. Women head teachers are also thought to be collaborative and participative, and men head teachers may be more directive. An investigation of these disparities in the major performance measures such as academic performance, classroom performance, enrolment and retention, co-curricular activities as well as school climate gives a holistic picture of the impact of gender in leadership in school performance.

The study is meaningful in the sense that it provides empirical data on how gender of the head teacher affects

the performance of boys in various school environments in the public primary schools. The results can inform policymakers, education authorities as well as school administrators on ways of designing professional development programs, resource distribution plans and leadership support measures to increase school effectiveness and lead to fair educational achievements in different settings.

Statement of the Problem

It is a common understanding that school leadership is one of the determinants of the quality of education and student performance. Nevertheless, although the importance of leadership efficiency is gaining momentum, there is a gap in understanding on the role of the gender of head teachers on the performance of boys in the public primary schools. His/her leadership style, approach to decision-making, and management strategy may not be the same even though they both bear similar responsibilities as head teachers and this may affect academic achievement, classroom practices, enrolment and retention, co-curricular activities and school environment as a whole.

Moreover, the differences between schools in various environments, e.g. urban and rural cases, can be interplayed with leadership gender as a factor that affects school performance. The schools in the urban areas have more infrastructure, resources, and qualified teachers, and the schools in the rural areas have some difficulties that can restrict the effectiveness of even good leadership. As it stands, the performance of schools managed by male and female heads is insufficiently empirically evidenced to allow policy makers and administrators to develop strategies to improve the performance of schools in a wide variety of circumstances. Hence, the research aims at comparing and contrasting the performance of a repertoire of male and female head teachers in boys' public primary schools to understand the interaction of the leadership gender factor and the school environment to determine the impact of educational performance.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the extent of performance in schools headed by male teachers in the boys' primary schools.
2. To find the standard of school performance in the boys' primary schools headed at the same time by women leaders.
3. To compare the general performance of boys' primary schools in leadership by male and female head teachers.

Research Questions

1. What is the school performance of boys' public primary schools run by male head-teachers?
2. What is the performance of boys' public primary schools headed by female heads?
3. Do boys public primary schools with male and female head teachers differ significantly in overall performance?

Review of Literature

Leadership in schools has always been identified as one of the driving forces of education quality and school efficiency. Head teachers have the duty of supervising, managing teaching practices, maintaining school discipline, supervising teachers and making sure that the learning environment is conducive. Studies have shown that good school leadership has a positive effect on student performance, teacher performance and the performance of the school (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006). The school leaders can influence the instructional strategy, observe classroom practices, and determine climate that encourages the teachers and the students. At primary schools, where basics are formed, the role of head teachers is also very decisive, with their decisions being directly influencing the learning and performance of the school in general.

The issue of gender of school leaders has been discussed as a condition that could affect the leadership style, decision-making, and school outcomes. Female leaders are related to participative, transformational, and

collaborative leadership styles, which focus on teacher support, motivation, and stakeholder involvement. Male leaders, in their turn, may be more directive or transactional, which is concentrated on the organization of management and the hierarchy of the decision-making process (Eagly and Carli, 2018). Research has proposed that such variances in leadership styles may affect different domains in the school performance such as classroom performance, teacher motivation, educational performance and overall school climate (Saxena, 2024). The role of gender of head teacher thus becomes vital in determining the strategies that should be used in ensuring that school performance is improved and that fair education results are achieved.

A number of studies have recorded comparisons between the effectiveness of male and female school leaders from the perspective of similarities and differences in their influence in school performance. Surveys indicate that female heads of teachers are more likely to emphasize teamwork, inclusivity and participative leadership, which can enhance teacher morale, teaching practices and student engagement. Although male administrators are effective in administrative management, they can be more concerned with operational efficiency and formal accountability systems (Bush, 2018). Comparative research has shown that both female and male head teachers, though able to facilitate high school results, tend to differ in their leadership styles and thus tend to be more or less resourceful, supportive of teachers and involve students.

One of the major indicators of school performance is academic achievement. It has been demonstrated that a good leadership has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and student achievement (Hallinger and Heck, 1998). The use of participative leadership and constant observation of the classroom practices by female head teachers also makes them promote a supportive learning environment that would lead to teacher development and student engagement. Directive leadership may encourage male head teachers to focus on planning lessons in a structured manner, discipline, and curriculum standards enforced consistently. The two methods would result in high academic performance, but the means might be different.

The school administrators also have a great role in controlling student enrollment, retention and co-curricular programs. Having a good leadership means that students are not bored in school and indeed they are part of the holistic developmental activities. Research has shown that female head teachers tend to work on establishing inclusive and supportive cultures that promote attendance and involvement whereas male head teachers tend to emphasize more of the operational factors like record keeping and student responsibility (Hasan, 2021). Co-curricular activities may be emphasized less but are very important in acquiring social, cognitive, and moral skills among primary school students. The combination of academic and co-curricular development approaches in leadership has been found to improve the performance of the school at large.

Contextual factors also dictate the effectiveness of school leadership, such as the presence of an urban or rural school. Urban schools are often in a better situation to have better infrastructure, availability of qualified teachers, and the learning resources, which may impact the effectiveness of effective leadership. A lack of resources, facilities, and shortage of teachers are among the common problems in rural schools that can be a limiting factor despite the high competency of the leader (Khan, 2017). Comparative research points out that the role of head teacher gender in school performance should be carried out in combination with these contextual factors in order to give a holistic view of the effectiveness of school.

Despite the already available literature on the role of leadership and how gender can impact school performance, very few studies have specifically compared the performances of boys primary schools with male and female heads in particular taking the urban and rural settings. The majority of the studies are concentrated on leadership in general or gender impacts without focusing on school performance using several indicators. The given gap prompts the necessity of a comparative study that would assess the levels of academic performance, classroom schools, enrolment and retention, extracurricular activities, and atmosphere at schools with male and female head teachers. This type of research can give empirical evidence to inform a policy, professional development, and leadership support agenda.

Research Methodology

The research was based on a quantitative research methodology with the descriptive research design to investigate the level of school performance in boys primary schools headed by male and female head teachers. The descriptive design was viewed to be suitable because it allowed the researcher to examine the present position of the school performance, discover trends, and present empirical data without controlling the variables.

The study population involved all the public primary schools of boys, which are under the guidance of the School Education Department, and are headed by either a male or a female head teacher. The sample comprised of both male and female headed schools so that differences related to gender of the head teachers and their performance were captured in the study.

There were 160 boys public primary schools that were chosen to participate in the study, comprising of 80 schools with head teachers who were male and 80 schools with female head teachers. A stratified random sampling was used to facilitate a proportional representation of both the schools led by males and those led by females. Such a sampling method promoted the generalizability of the results but ensured that there was fairness in selection between the two types of head teachers (gender).

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this research to gather information on the performance of boy schools of public primary schools managed by both male and female head teachers; a school performance observation checklist and a structured questionnaire. The observation checklist was formulated to give objective evaluation of the school performance in various facets such as academic performance, enrolment and retention, classroom practice, co-curricular activities and school cleanliness and overall learning atmosphere. All aspects were rated in the form of a Likert-type scale where quantification and statistical analysis of the level of performance was possible.

To gain the perception of the head teachers (male and female) and the selected teachers about school leadership, instruction practice, teacher motivation, classroom management and school climate, the structured questionnaire was carried out. The responses were scored using a five-point Likert scale, which fell within strongly disagree to strongly agree. The combination of these two tools allowed the study to receive both objective data collected through direct observation and subjective information provided by school personnel, which gives a complete picture of the school performance under male and female heads of schools.

Data Collection

The data were taken at the public primary schools of the sampled boys headed by male and female teachers following the consent of the School Education Department. The researcher made a visit to every school to study the performance of the school in its academic life, classroom life, school enrolment and retention, co-curricular programs and the general school atmosphere using the observation checklist. Furthermore, structured questionnaire was given to head teachers (both males and females) and randomly chosen teachers in order to collect their views on leadership, classroom management, as well as school climate. This was involved on a voluntary basis, and confidentiality was observed so as to obtain both objective and subjective data on the study.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were compared with descriptive statistics to identify the school performance level in male and female headed elementary-level schools in boys. Each of the performance indicators such as academic achievement, classroom practices, enrollment and retention, co-curricular activities, and school environment had mean scores, standard deviations, and percentages.

Further, the results of schools headed by males and females were compared in order to reveal the differences

in effectiveness of the school across the two gender category. The findings were displayed in tables to offer a vivid description of trends, patterns, and differences in school performance in relation to the gender of head teachers.

Table 1: School Performance of Boys' Public Primary Schools Led by Male Head Teachers (N=80)

Performance Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Academic Achievement	4.01	0.40
Classroom Practices	3.98	0.35
Enrollment & Retention	4.10	0.31
Co-curricular Activities	3.83	0.43
School Environment & Cleanliness	3.98	0.36
Overall Performance	3.98	0.37

Table 1 shows the general results of 80 primary schools which are run by males and they are the head teachers of the schools in the boy's section. The results show that such schools have an average high performance with regard to most indicators. In Enrollment and Retention, the mean score was highest ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.31$), which indicates that student attendance and retention rates are good when the leadership is that of the male. Academic Achievement ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.40$) and Interactions in Classroom ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.35$) were also scored high, which demonstrates the effective teaching strategies and classroom management. School Environment and Cleanliness ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.36$) was as well rated high and this means that these schools have a conducive learning environment. Co-curricular Activities ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.43$) had a little bit lower performance, which implies that rather than not having such activities, there is a chance of improvement. In general, the overall performance score ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.37$) indicates that the public primary school of boys in which the male heads of school are working is functioning well, especially in the areas of core academic and operations, but a little work might be done to enhance the co-curricular interest.

Table 2: School Performance of Boys' Public Primary Schools Led by Female Head Teachers (N=80)

Performance Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Academic Achievement	4.05	0.38
Classroom Practices	4.00	0.34
Enrollment & Retention	4.12	0.30
Co-curricular Activities	3.85	0.41
School Environment & Cleanliness	4.00	0.35
Overall Performance	4.00	0.36

Table 2 shows the general performance of 80 schools of the public primary school headed by girls. The results show that such schools tend to have high level of performance in all the indicators that were measured. The greatest mean score was found in Enrollment & Retention (M = 4.12, SD = 0.30) which indicates that with female head teachers, schools boast of good attendance and retention of students. Classroom Practices (M = 4.00, SD = 0.34) and Academic Achievement (M = 4.05, SD = 0.38) were also high, indicating that there are effective teaching techniques and well-managed classrooms. The School Environment and Cleanliness (M = 4.00, SD = 0.35) was also high which implied that these schools offer a good and favorable learning environment. Co-curricular Activities (M = 3.85, SD = 0.41) were rated a little lower implying that there is some scope of enhancement on extracurricular involvement. All in all, the overall performance (M = 4.00, SD = 0.36) indicates that boys' primary schools headed by female teachers are showing good performance, marginally better than those headed by male teachers, especially in the academic performance as well as school environment indicators.

Table 3: Comparison of Overall School Performance of Boys' Public Primary Schools by Head Teacher Gender

Performance Indicator	Male Head Teachers (N=80)		Female Head Teachers (N=80)		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Academic Achievement	4.01	0.40	4.05	0.38	0.61	0.542
Classroom Practices	3.98	0.35	4.00	0.34	0.33	0.740
Enrollment & Retention	4.10	0.31	4.12	0.30	0.37	0.712
Co-curricular Activities	3.83	0.43	3.85	0.41	0.22	0.825
School Environment & Cleanliness	3.98	0.36	4.00	0.35	0.28	0.781
Overall Performance	3.98	0.37	4.00	0.36	0.32	0.751

Table 3 compares the overall school performance of the boys in the public primary schools headed by boys and girls head teachers. The data indicate that the mean score of schools with female heads of staff is a bit higher in all performance indicators than the schools with male heads of staff. An example is that Academic Achievement means female-led schools 4.05 compared to 4.01 male-led schools, while the overall Performance is 4.00 female-led schools compared to 3.98 male-led schools.

Nevertheless, the t-test statistics demonstrate that all these differences are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$ with each of the indicators). In particular, Academic Achievement ($t = 0.61$, $p = 0.542$), Classroom Practices ($t = 0.33$, $p = 0.740$) and Overall Performance ($t = 0.32$, $p = 0.751$) indicate that the small deviations in means are the result of the random variation and not the effect that the gender of the head teacher has.

This alludes to the fact that male and female head teachers both are equally efficient in running male dominated primary school in the public and that gender does not seem to have a big impact on the performance of the school in terms of academic, operational, and co-curricular performances.

Conclusions

According to the results of this research, it is possible to state that the overall performance of boys primary schools with both male and female head teachers in District Gujrat is high in a variety of indicators including academic outcomes, classroom behaviors, student enrollments, and retention, extracurricular activities, and

school climate. The mean scores of female-headed schools were slightly greater in all indicators than the male-headed schools but no significant difference was observed implying that there is no significant difference in the performance of schools led by male heads.

Another important aspect of the study is that both male and female head teachers could ensure the effective teaching and learning conditions, ensure student retention, and encourage co-curricular activities. Although there are some differences among the schools, they are not strong enough to imply that the effectiveness of leadership in the male primary schools operated by the boys is gender based but rather independent of the individual competences, management abilities and school practices.

Discussion

The results of this research show that there is an overall high performance in both male and female head teachers in the public primary schools of boys in District Gujrat in all indicators measured. Women headed schools got somewhat higher mean scores in academic achievement, classroom practices, enrolment and retention, co-curricular activities and school environment than the male headed schools but this variance was not significant. This indicates that although there is a slight variation, gender of the head teachers is not decisive to determine the performance of the schools.

The excellent Enrollment and Retention performances of both male and female head teachers are in line with the earlier research findings that school leadership plays an important role in ensuring that students are engaged and attend school (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006). Such leadership practices like tracking student performance, motivating teachers and encouraging a good school climate, were probably contributing to the stable student enrolment and retention. Likewise, the good scores in Academic Achievement and Classroom Practices substantiate the results of Hallinger and Heck (1998), who stated that there is an increase in the quality of teaching, classroom management, and learning results by effective school leadership.

Female head teachers demonstrated moderately better mean scores in most indicators although the difference is not statistically significant which can be explained by the fact that the research claims that both male and female school leaders are capable of leading to high school achievement with proper training, resources, and institutional support (Bush, 2018). Women leaders tend to be participative and collaborative leaders and they encourage teacher involvement and positive school cultures (Eagly et al., 2007). Male leaders can be more directive with their leadership as they emphasize on organized management and operational effectiveness. The differences in style notwithstanding, overall effectiveness of school leadership does not seem to be dependent on gender since both leadership styles can yield positive results to be applied in the proper way.

On co-curricular activities, both male and female headed schools were found to have slightly lower mean scores. This implies that, academic and operational performance of schools is under control, but there is room that can be made to increase co-curricular engagement to guarantee wholesome student development. This result is in line with the literature highlighting that though leadership can be strong, it does not necessarily imply that people participate actively in extra-curriculum activities without a clear plan and support (Mooman et al., 2023).

Recommendations

In the results of this research, the head teachers, both male and female, should be granted with constant professional development and leadership training to improve their management competencies and supervision of instructions. Co-curricular programs and innovation in teaching practices should also be embraced in schools in order to have holistic development of students. Education administrators ought to offer sufficient resources and support systems that will help head teachers to ensure that they can uphold high standards in terms of academic performance, classroom instruction and school climate. Also, the policies must be based on selection and leadership competency of merit and not gender because both males and females have proved to be able to effectively operate the boys' public primary schools.

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