

FAIR AND INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION: A STUDY OF GAP BETWEEN TEACHERS-STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP

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Article History: Received on 18th January, 2021, Revised on 25th March 2021, Published on 29th April 2021

Abstract

Purpose of the study: The current study was conducted to examine the cognitive and motivational variables believed in inculcating the maturity of the teacher-student relationship and, in turn, school success.

Methodology: The survey and observation method was utilized, and the sample was a random sample of 248 teachers and 566 students of grades 9 and 10 from four sample districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The Chi-Square Test was applied to scrutinize the contrast between fair and inclusive secondary school education and the teacher-student relationship.

Main Findings: The results suggested that it is essential for teachers to transfer their positive and motivational attitude, sincerity, and emotional stability to students according to settings in order to develop fair and inclusive secondary school education.

Applications of the study: The current study is useful for KPESE because it focuses on improving the present status of secondary school education; for this reason, they allocate resources and set up an IMU system for staff and school success.

Novelty/Originality of the study: For the first time, the current research was conducted to clarify the bond between fair and inclusive secondary school education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, with healthy, positive, strong teacher-student relationships.

Keywords: Fair, Inclusive, Secondary School Education, Teachers-Students Relationship, Motivational Variables.

INTRODUCTION

Fair secondary education refers to the provision of educational opportunities without any biases of gender, race, and socioeconomic background, whereas inclusion means every secondary school student gets a basic minimum standard of knowledge, i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic which are necessary to work in society (Simon, Małgorzata, & Beatriz, 2007). Prosperous high school education is a setup where 'the immense part of students have a chance to achieve high-level skills' (OECD, 2012), and the teacher-student relationship is a back-bone of student's growth and school triumph (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2008). It is the need of the present era to earn students' trust from the very first day of the academic session. A gullible classroom with reciprocated respect is a flourishing classroom that competes with alive, appealing learning chances. Some teachers are more alive at generating positive relationships with their learners than others (Meador, 2019). But, it is not true all the time, specifically in developing countries like Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). In the last few decades, KP has faced many obstacles in this case like; political involvement in the teachers' recruitment process, a shortage of quality teachers regarding successful teaching, punctuality, sincerity, discipline, and challenge of content (Hussain, 2015).

In the present decade, it is supplementary above all for KP educators to institute and retain comprehensible limits with their learners (Drew, 2021). Successful teaching emerges when teachers, as well as students, converse in and out of the classroom. This interaction directly impacts the excellence of the teaching-learning process. Through this communication, teachers can build strong relationships with their students. This process is not only instrumental to the socio-emotional development of the learner, and the learner can utilize 'inter-and intrapersonal strategies (Sliver, Measelle, Armstrong, & Essex, 2005) that provide burly support in the growth of communal and emotional skills (Baker, 2006). All will happen successfully when KP teachers see themselves through their students' eyes (Brookfield, 1995). A positive and influential teacher-student relationship adds to the optimistic outlook of the learners regarding their instructive progression. It enhances the fair and inclusive secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. In the 21st century, the teacher-student relationship was characterized as "cat and mouse," where the teacher as an 'authoritarian' and the student as an 'obedient follower', now encompasses "democratic, interactive and learning together" (Bao, 2003; Jiang, 2007)

Enormous research findings indicated that a happy relationship of teachers with students results in improved educational achievement, cognitive and social development, motivation, self-esteem, and prosaically behavior (Davis, 2003; Hamre & Pianta, 2008). The current research aims to clarify the bond between fair and inclusive secondary school education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, with healthy, positive, strong teacher-student relationships.

Role of Teacher in Fair and Inclusive School Environment

The role of the teacher in creating a fair and inclusive secondary school environment in KP become more crucial than before. The demanding characteristics of today's teachers of KP are democracy, interest, communicator, facilitator, guide, motivator, and leader. The excellent teacher has the ability to maximize the learning potential of individual students in class. They knew how to unlock the door of trust, respect, and value for their students. Great teachers took the initiative because they knew that students were paramount in fostering academic success ([Meador, 2019](#)).

[Cacciatore \(2021\)](#) cited Marcus' experiences as guidance for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa educators; he stated that only a caregiver relationship could really change the mind's expansion, cure trauma, and endorse the learning process. Educators have the latent to apply this skill. Generally, many do it in nature through logically forming locked relationships. But KP teachers could do so much more if they were operational with the potential and self-wakefulness to methodically do this work. When KP teachers identify and understand the situation of their classrooms, like how they and their students recognize and respond to the interaction of different situations, they will be able to create conducive and self-worth improvement ([Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011](#); [Hashim, Ullah, and Khan, 2017](#)). In present years the recruitment process of KP teachers is much improved, but results will attain only when they will "serve as a fantastic mentor for students during school" ([Drew, 2021](#)). Dealing with a different group of students is a milestone for KP teachers, which is essential to tackle in classroom learning. It needs a developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) philosophy because when teachers can focus on high school students, they will be more practical in what they sermonize. The teacher's community having squat expertise needs properly designed educational experiences that can help them to strengthen their theoretical beliefs in practical form ([Fives & Gill, 2015](#)). By changing the theoretical beliefs of tomorrow's teachers' the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department (KPESE) 'will get maximum read towards meaningful reforms in a culturally diverse society' ([Easter, Shultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1999](#)). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa focuses on providing resources and a wide system of Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) but, the present position of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa secondary schools still is alarming because their high school teachers have a quantity of theoretical as well as practical beliefs regarding cultural assortment; and certainly, they are multifaceted, confusing, and even intimidating. To achieve fair and inclusive secondary school education and excellence for students from dissimilar racial, ethnic, and upbringing backgrounds, the KP teachers' theoretical and practical beliefs about cultural diversity should be the main aim of inspection and conversion ([Fives & Gill, 2015](#)).

Fair and Inclusive Education and Voice of Students

When we face the hard discussion regarding fair and inclusive secondary school education; the two things cannot be ignored to judge the impact of students' success, i.e., the value of the teacher-student relationship ([Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011](#)) and overall climate of school relationship ([Dulay & Karadag, 2017](#)). When inculcating discussion arranged on fair and inclusive secondary school education regarding examination of the teacher-student relationship, the voice of students should be heard. In fact, the high school students of KP had a great indenture to say about their school experience ([Barksdale & Triplett, 2010](#)). In the current study, they detailed their doubts and sentiments of being disengaged from the teachers, lack of teachers' interest, and their keenness to be heard. These aspects are valuable for the sack of school success. The KP high school students need teachers who will go the extra mile to ensure that they are successful ([Meador, 2019](#)). They think that their teachers want to teach them mechanically, without bonding to their needs and interests; as a result, they participate less in classroom learning ([Wallace, Wallace, Ye, & Chhuon, 2012](#)). The prime role of students in the learning community is to inquire about questions, pretense problems, and utilize a variety of strategies to justify answers ([Firmender, Gavin, & McCoach, 2014](#); [Prummer, Amador, & Wallin, 2016](#)), whereas; such situation required the involvement and teaching of 'well trained' and 'well qualified' teachers to engage them in classroom learning ([Albrecht, Johns, & Olorunda, 2009](#)). Practically the KP high schools are facing a serious shortage of teachers, specifically in science subjects, in the peak time of tracking, when students need touching the fact of instruction which has burly sway on the academic growth of students and school ([Cushman & Cowan, 2010](#)).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is part of the researcher's Doctor of Philosophy dissertation. During the survey phase, the scholar faced the attrition face of the teachers-student relationship, especially with students' emotional and behavioral chaos ([Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013](#)). It raised the need to highlight this burning issue which is the main constraint in fair and inclusive secondary school education. The study survey depicted that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa high school face two main facets: first, the kind of practices that students want to practice; and second, the specific actions that teacher should take to perk up students' involvement in learning activities ([Goos, 2004](#)). This burly situation needs a positive and strong teacher-student relationship. As mentioned above, KPESE is focusing on improving the present status of secondary school education; for this reason, they allocate resources and set up an IMU system for staff and school success, but unless and until the in-out-school practices are ignored, all efforts will be in vain.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In light of the above discussion, teachers-students relationships are the most important aspect of fair and inclusive secondary school education. This research is required to investigate the gap between teachers' and students' relationships, students' perceptions, and teachers' experiences.

The layout of Connecting Research objectives & Research Questions with Research Methods & Research Tools

Objectives	Questions	Methods	Tools
i. Examining the present status of teachers and students regarding fair and inclusive education.	i. Whether secondary school teachers are well aware of the sensitivity of teacher-student relationships?	Quantitative phase (survey & Observation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey comprised ten items from secondary school teachers. The survey consisted of 10 questions from secondary school students. Observation comprised two open-ended items concerning teachers' attention and treatment of a different group of students.
ii. To investigate the teachers and students' perceptions and experiences during classroom learning in respect of fair and inclusive education.	ii. To what extent do the present high school children perceive their teachers' attention during classroom learning?		
	iii. Are teachers capable to work out on students' cognitive and emotional behavior in respect of the teacher-student relationship?		
iii. To suggest some remedial measures to improve teachers-students relationships for the sack of fair and inclusive secondary school education.	iv. What are the necessary measures required to improve the relationship between teachers and students?		

METHOD

Mixed-method approach, i.e., quantitative (survey) and qualitative (Observation), was utilized to collect the data from high school teachers and students in grades 9 and 10. The sample was selected from four sample districts, i.e., Peshawar, Haripur, Hangu, and Karak of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, on random sample techniques because all teachers and students had homogeneous characteristics. The sample of 273 teachers from 5398 population (5%) was selected, whereas; the sample of 617 students from 123842 populations (1%) was selected as a curly sample size rule of thumb (Yount, 2006). The response rate was satisfactory; out of 273 teachers, 248 teachers participated in the study whilst, out of 617 students, 566 participated in the study.

Acquiring clear crustal information, the principal author took a survey of selected high schools and administered the questionnaire personally to secondary school teachers and students in respect of students' academic and behavioral development and teachers' self-esteem, positive attitude, sincerity, emotional stability, and motivation. Two questionnaires were developed; one for teachers and other for students comprising three sections in each. Section one consisted of personal information regarding their age, gender, work experience, academic and professional qualification for teacher and age, gender and class from student. Whilst the section two consisted of 10 items comprising of teachers' attention and their treatment of different group of students with regard to teachers-students relationships with special reference to fair and inclusive secondary school education. A Chi-square test was applied to judge the association and linkage between teachers' experiences and students' perceptions (Best, Kahn, & Jha, 2017; Robson, 2002). Section three comprised two open-ended questions of the teachers and students' Observation regarding teachers' attention and treatment of different group of students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study findings portrayed a positive and strong relationship between teachers and students regarding fair and inclusive secondary school education. The results depicted a gap between teachers' and students' perceptions with reference to their classroom practices. Teachers claimed that they were just and fair in giving attention to and dealing with a different group of students during their classroom learning, whilst students' views were contrary to teachers' opinions. The complaint regarding teachers' favoritism and exact attention to all, i.e., hardworking and weak students, is contrary to fair and inclusive secondary school education. Moreover, the finding represented that teachers favor belonging to their family

friends or rich families, ignoring the weak students during instructions. The result depicted that a large number of students were demanding honor, trust, and friendly relationships from teachers, which are the basics of fair and inclusive in-out-classroom practices. Similarly, teachers need to create a fair and inclusive classroom environment where students' individual weaknesses may be improved, honor students' opinions, and give preferential treatment to weak students. KPESE should arrange capacity-building workshops for teachers with reference to creating a bond association with their students.

Table 1: Status of Fair and Inclusive Secondary School Education: The Responses of Secondary School Teachers Regarding Teachers-Students Relationship

S.NO.	ITEMS	SDA	DA	UD	A	SA	Chi-square	P-Value
1.	Give respect to students of rich parents.	36.1	43.5	2.0	16.1	1.6	187.20	.000
2.	Treat students' better by belonging to friends and family.	15.7	56.0	2.0	15.7	10.5	217.00	.000
3.	Treat the hardworking pupils better.	00	32.3	00	48.8	19.0	33.25	.000
4.	Weak students get preferential treatment.	8.5	30.5	1.2	48.0	12.1	178.12	.000
5.	Teachers pay the same attention to all students.	5.6	4.0	00	51.6	38.7	169.67	.000
6.	The ablest students deserve more attention.	16.9	3.2	0.8	71.0	8.1	421.51	.000
7.	The poor students are ignored sometimes.	11.7	50.4	00	36.3	1.6	148.48	.000
8.	Honor students' opinions.	00	23.4	1.2	61.3	14.1	198.80	.000
9.	Focus on improving individual weaknesses.	00	1.2	6.5	88.3	4.0	531.45	.000
10.	Teachers are friendly with students in sharing problems.	8.5	4.0	1.2	73.0	13.3	445.54	.000

Level of significance = 0.05

Table 1 depicts the status of secondary school teachers' views regarding fair and inclusive secondary school education. A large number of teachers (79%) claimed that they treated all the students equally without any biases of socioeconomic background. A large majority (86%) were of the view that they were fair and inclusive relationships with their students during classroom learning and also admitted that they preferred individual-based teaching where hardworking and weak students were getting partiality during instruction. A large majority of teachers (89%) depicted that they pay the same and equal attention to all students during teaching, while 79% of teachers also admitted that most able students deserved more attention by giving good results. They stated that they honored students' opinions during instruction and did not ignore the poor students during classroom teaching. A large number of teachers (92% and 86%) were portrayed that they adopted fair and just teaching strategies that improve the individual weaknesses of individual students and perform friendly attitude in sharing students' problems during instruction.

So, keeping in view the above interpretation, it is summarized that the overall results are significant. According to secondary school teachers, the fair and inclusive teachers-student relationship was being achieved in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa high schools. High school teachers pay equitable attention to students without any biases.

Table 2: Status of Fair and Inclusive Secondary School Education: The Responses of Secondary School Teachers Regarding Teachers-Students Relationship

S.NO.	ITEMS	SDA	DA	UD	A	SA	Chi-square	P-Value
1.	Teachers have some favorite students in class	23.1	24.4	0	36.0	16.4	45.10	.000
2.	They treat students better who belong to friends and family.	46.8	8.7	0	23.9	20.7	172.80	.000
3.	They treat the hardworking pupils better.	20.0	24.4	0	30.6	25.1	12.84	.005
4.	Weak students get preferential treatment.	2.5	2.7	0	55.5	39.4	485.82	.000
5.	They pay more attention to the ablest students.	7.4	0	0	53.2	39.4	187.15	.000
6.	The ablest students deserve more attention.	14.7	40.8	0	23.7	20.8	85.09	.000
7.	The poor students are not attended properly	39.0	5.5	0	17.5	38.0	181.90	.000
8.	They honor students' opinions.	16.3	0	4.8	48.6	30.4	242.50	.000
9.	They focus on improving individual	28.1	22.6	0	26.0	23.3	4.30	.230

weaknesses.								
10. They are friendly with students in sharing problems.	3.4	10.8	4.9	58.1	22.8	580.18	.000	

Level of significance = 0.05

Table 2 describes the status of secondary school students' views regarding fair and inclusive secondary school education. A substantial number of students (52%) reported that their teachers treated all of them unequally with the biasness of favoritism. On the other side, the same number of students established that they gave preference to belonging to their family and friends during classroom learning which is contrary to fair and inclusive education. 56% of participants claimed that their teachers focused the brilliant and hardworking students during instructions while a large majority (95%) of pupils have grievances from teachers about unfair and exclusive treatment with weak students. A large majority of students (92%) admitted that weak students need individual base teaching while, in reality, the teachers made a strong bond with brilliant students during classroom instructions. A substantial number of students (44%) admitted that the shining and bright students deserved more attention from the teachers so, so teachers should focus on them, but weak and average students need more dynamic teaching while our teachers lack such skills during the teaching process. A satisfactory number (56%) of research contributors complained that, in general, the teacher community had no special strategies to deal with poor students during classroom management because these students had no moral and financial support from their families. 79% of participants added that most of our teachers dishonor the students' opinions during the teaching-learning process. At the same time, a majority of research members (81%) depicted that their teachers ignored the individual base treatment of their students and performed an unfriendly attitude in sharing students' problems during instruction.

Considering the above interpretation, most secondary school students had a contrary view about their teachers regarding fair and inclusive teachers-student relationships during classroom instruction. The weak and belonging to low-income families students were treated the same as shining and brilliant students, disregarding their abilities. The teachers ignored their individual needs; this situation supported the level of equality in secondary school education but was contrary to the fair and inclusive teacher-student relationship.

Status of Fair and Inclusive Secondary School Education: The Observation of Secondary School Teachers Regarding Teachers-Students Relationship

The present portion of the current study deals with the observations of secondary school teachers. The detailed responses of teachers' views are as under;

Teachers-students relationship is an essential and fundamental characteristic of fair and inclusive secondary school education. By asking the question regarding favoritism during classroom instruction, a group of district Peshawar male teachers stated that,

We deal with all students equally, disregarding favoritism; some students are favorites because of their attitude, they give us respect, and they are always obedient. But we always treat them equally during the teaching-learning process.

Sharing their view and experiences regarding the treatment of friends, family members, and wards' children, a bunch of female teachers depicted;

[Ans]..... It is a natural phenomenon when you have a student(s) belonging to such categories, you will treat them specially, but a good teacher always puts him/herself in a fair position while dealing with such student(s); we also do justice in this regard.

Exchanging the views regarding the treatment of weak and brilliant students separately, male teachers of district Haripur portrayed that;

We always face a mixture of average, weak, and bright students in class. By changing seats, pairing one good and one average student' solved the maximum issues, but often the good students have their own company. They rarely follow this technique, and weak students also have their own community. *If we adopt empathy, sympathy, and skills to understand students' problems, the basic cause of the problems, and find techniques to deal with the issues, we will cope with the weaknesses of students* (Parvathy & Praseeda, 2014).

Another group of teachers of district Karak enhanced the discussion as;

When we have a positive relationship with our high school students, we will feel about the level of their knowledge, it will certainly impact the students' attention to studies, and they will focus and work hard. Therefore, we will achieve the goal of academic achievement (Soares, 2015).

Discussing the friendly relations of teacher-student relationships, a cluster of male teachers of district Peshawar shared that where their teacher-student relationships are friendly and satisfactory, the students showed higher academic achievement in examination in case of conflictual relationships, lower examination scores are observed (Ang, Ong, & Li, 2020), it is

summarized that teachers knew the status and benefits of strong and positive relationship with their students. Acquiring a fair and inclusive secondary school education needs a positive and robust teacher-student relationship.

Status of Fair and Inclusive Secondary School Education: The Observation of Secondary School Students Regarding Teachers-Students Relationship

In the present study, the secondary school students shared their Observations regarding teachers' self-esteem, positive attitude, sincerity, emotional stability, and motivation related to the teacher-student relationship.

Fair and inclusive secondary school education needs a strong relationship between teachers and students, but it is a dilemma that the majority of teachers do not follow the theory. By asking the question regarding favoritism during classroom instruction, a group of district Peshawar high school boys stated the contrary remarks of their teachers;

Most of our teachers favor the students belonging to their family and friends or belonging to the wealthy family during classroom instruction and in test exams. They did not treat students justly and fairly. When someone objects, they ignore or make lame excuses.

To enhance the same discussion, another group of girl students of district Haripur added that;

Classroom situations became burning when our teachers favored a group of students in the teaching-learning process. It damaged the classroom environment and also students' personalities. We found such conditions in our class and felt very scratchy.

The district Hangu high school boys also stated their contrasting views against their teachers; opinions;

We did not like such teachers who favored a number of students in class. Our English and general science teachers are just like that; these classes become a burden for us. We did not enjoy teaching in these classes.

In asking the question regarding the value of a friendly relationship between teachers and students, a bunch of boys of district Haripur stated their views as;

A teacher who adopts the practice of listening to the student's ideas and preparing them to justify their ideas using challenging thinking (Walshaw & Anthony, 2008) is always successful. The students worked with full enthusiasm and motivation, which made them active learners. It is possible when they have a friendly attitude towards their followers.

Brilliant and weak students are the two main pillars of an ordinary classroom. If these two columns are settled according to their need, they give satisfactory results, in case of vice versa, making a jumble situation. Swapping the views regarding the treatment of weak and brilliant students separately, high school boys of district Haripur portrayed that;

Our teachers usually focus on brilliant students, which is the bone of contention. They ignore the weak students, this situation discourages them, and the students feel rival relationships with teachers as well as their peer group. It makes the classroom environment unhealthy.

Another group of high school girls of district Peshawar portrayed that;

Teachers centered the brilliant students in every stage of schooling, like morning assembly presentations, co-curricular activities, or classroom instructions; they ignored the average and weak students. Such a situation is very ablaze for us; we are de-motivated and do not want to give up this stigma.

Hence the above opinions of students regarding the teacher-student relationship; it is summarized that the contrary statements of teachers and students' observations demanded a fair and inclusive secondary school environment.

CONCLUSION

This study provides essential information for KPESE, which wants to upgrade the existing scenario of secondary school education. Though the results and disagreements of the present study reflected that the KPESE focuses on improving the present status of secondary school education by providing infrastructure, the main pillar of secondary school education i.e. teacher-student relationship is disregarded. 'When students are satisfied, a positive climate is established within the school' (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013) According to (Mahler, Grossschedl, & Harms, 2018) knowledge and motivation are two essential unchallenged characteristics for successful school education. The teachers without these pivotal are disabled. The current study reflected that students are very sensitive, they have self-esteem and feel the teachers' attitude, sincerity, emotional stability, and motivation. The contrary discussion mirrored that teachers claimed for a fair and inclusive teachers-student relationship, while students had some reservations. They portrayed that teachers focused the brilliant students during instructions, though the weak and average students were discounted all the time, specifically, in core subjects. The teachers admitted, '*it is time consuming and challenging and need mastery skill*', *few teachers are natural at sustaining and constructing positive relationship with their students* (Agrawal, 2019) but not all.

The students unwillingly added that most of secondary school teachers had lacking the friendly attitude and favored their friends and family's wards not only in classroom learning but also in assessment and evaluation. The students denied the professed of teachers by stated that they did not focus to improve the need of individual students, they applied a uniform strategy during instruction. This state of affairs satisfied the mode of equality but did not achieve the demand for fair and inclusive secondary school education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. It is in the best interest of KPESE to keep the strong and influential 'Teacher-Student' relationship as a part of in-service capacity building sessions on regular basis.
- II. The school administration (Head/Principal) supplies a compassionate environment to nurture the expansion of successful teachers who are able to transport positive and effective services to their students.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Dr. Tahira Roohi developed the idea and worked on most sections of the article and was responsible for correspondence with the journal, and contributed in large. Dr. Rukhshanda and Dr. Shahida Habib Alizai developed the Introduction and Abstract. Seemab Abid and Amir Ali contributed to the Conclusion section and wrote the theoretical framing of the article. Zahid Khan analyzed the data, and Dr. TahiraRoohi reviewed the complete article

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