

# **Comparative Analysis of the Early Childhood Education in Public and Private Sector Schools**

Nadia Nazir<sup>\*</sup>

Fauzia Khurshid<sup>\*\*</sup>

## **Abstract**

This study was designed to compare the situation of Early Childhood Education (ECE), provided in public and private sector schools. The major objectives of the study were to evaluate the learning abilities of the students who were receiving early childhood education, to study demographic variations of students in relation with their learning ability and to study availability of physical facilities in the public and private sector schools for early childhood education. In this study, data of 100 respondents was collected from two distinct groups; students enrolled in ECE and teachers teaching to ECE level. Among them 60 students and 40 teachers were included. Data was collected from the schools located at Rawalpindi and Islamabad. In order to make a comparison between public and private sector schools quantitative approaches was used. For the measurement of students' learning ability data was collected with the help of a standardized tool developed by ASER (2014) for English, Urdu, Math, General Knowledge and for the measurement of teachers' perception regarding availability of physical facilities in public and private sector schools a separate research tool was developed by the researchers. Findings revealed that learning level of students who were enrolled in the private schools was higher than the students enrolled in public sector schools and girl's studying in private schools have high learning level than boys in public school. Results also revealed that overall there was a lack of physical facilities for pre primary children in both sector schools. Findings of the study would be helpful for public and private sector schools and agencies those are working in early childhood education. Study would be helpful in creating awareness

---

<sup>\*</sup> M. Phil Scholar, National University of Modern Language, Islamabad

<sup>\*\*</sup> Department of Education, National University Modern Language, Islamabad

among teachers and administrators about the importance of ECE in relation with learning abilities of students.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education, Learning abilities and Physical Facilities.

## **Introduction**

The early period of human life (first eight years) is important for cognitive, emotional growth and physical development of child. During these early years environment is considered to be a potent factor that determines how the brain actually grows, whatever a child is taught and whatever he/she learns from surroundings, shape personality grows accordingly. Therefore, there is a need to make a strong foundation at the beginning (during early years) for better growth and development of cognitions, emotions and body because if foundation is strong enough only then a sustainable building can be constructed.

The concept of early education was given to the world by legendary lady doctor of Italy Maria Montessori; her idea was based on extensive research while handling mentally disabled children. Since then, her concept has been taken over the traditional system of teaching for effective teaching to preschoolers.

In our country, early childhood grooming yet to take roots in our system of education, due to certain causes that are causing delays and hindrances. The first and foremost cause is lack of funds because budgeting and expenditure available to education remains inefficient, opaque, and largely unresponsive to the needs of institutions providing education to preschoolers. The next leading cause is lack of awareness about the importance of early childhood education, in public sector schools, management, teachers and even parents do not know about the usefulness of early childhood education for children. Moreover, at Government level, no action has been taken ever to implement early childhood education suggested by Maria Montessori. People in our country still have perception in their minds that sending children at such a tender age to school causes their brains to slow down and thus, slows their development overall.

Learning is a lifelong process which instigates from birth, children learns primary skills in their early years, along with this they also develop linguistic, cognitive and self control skills. Corresponding to International Encyclopedia of Education (1985, p.1477), term early childhood education has been used to refer group setting from three to six years old children which are purposefully

intend to developed their mental, emotional, physical, social and language development. Educationalist, psychologist and policy makers have been called it by different names such as preschool education, kindergarten education, nursery education, pre-primary education etc.

According to the definition of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), pre-primary education programs offers structured and purposeful learning activities in school children at least for 3 to 6 years old children. ISCED further defines those more academic elements of ECE are nursery education, preschool education, kindergarten or early childhood education. Children continue their education at primary level after completion of these programs.

Recent studies on quality early childhood education programs have found that investing in young children has many vital advantages for children, their families and society. Especially evaluation of ECE programs have established that children who are not enrolled in good quality programs are less successful in life as compared to the children who are enrolled or participate in such programs. Research confirms ECE helps in reducing dropout rates, makes bridge between gap of achievement and increase social steadiness.

Famous philosopher, John Locke highlighted the significance of early years in his theory. He explained education as integrity, understanding, developing and learning. Learning being the least important of the above said four elements in his book "Some Thought about Education" (1963), he emphasized that learning initiates with simple experiences building to complex thoughts in a spiraling form (Curtis and Hagan, 2003, p.39) .

Rousseau's Emile (1762) gave importance to ECE According to him sense perception is the base of human knowledge. He organized a way of thinking such as Pestalozzi and Froebel possessed about young child that considered educational practices. These educational practices provide an environment in which children can become independent and self-regulating. Piaget's development stages supports Rousseau's thinking about the importance of natural development.

Alderman, et.al (2002) argues that in Balochistan private schools located in Urban areas are more effective when compared with rural areas. In another study Aslam (2005) analyzed that in Pakistan private's schools gives better quality education than the public sector schools.

In our country the concept of early childhood education has been largely confined to Katchi, Pukki, or one Class. Although the Government announced last year the policy to "formalize" Katchi and introduce an ECE curriculum starting from the 2002 school year in practice, Katchi class has existed since the beginning of the public school system in Pakistan.

Traditionally, the “informal” Katchi class that has catered for children as young as 3 and 4 of age, but also has been used by the primary school teachers to place children of 5 or 6 years of age that appear to not be ready for a proper class 1 curriculum (so in most cases, one would find children from ages 3 all the way up to 5 or 6 in a typical Katchi class).

Although “Katchi” class has existed in practice, but without specific curriculum keeping in mind the special needs of that age group. There is a need of adequate research and development in this area (indigenous research appropriately reflect the developmental needs of our children). Generally in the public sector schools trained teachers for Katchi classes are not recruited (hiring as primary school teachers) teachers hired for primary education usually teach to Katchi classes (Sofia, 2002).

No doubt early years are important in the life of child and leave lasting impact therefore, present study designed to make a comparative analysis of the early childhood education in the public and private sector schools keeping in view the learning abilities of the students and facilities available in the private and public sectors schools.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem under investigation was to compare the learning abilities of the students studying in class 1 of in public and the private sectors schools; it further aims to investigate the perception of teachers regarding physical facilities available in the public and private schools for early childhood education.

### **Objectives**

The study was designed to achieve the following objectives.

1. To assess the learning abilities of the students those who are receiving education in the public and the private sector schools in relation to their demographic variation of sector, gender and age.
2. To study the perception of private and public sector teachers regarding the availability of physical facilities for early childhood education.

## **Hypothesis**

The following hypotheses were formulated on the basis of objectives of the study.

- H<sub>1</sub> Students who are studying in the private sector schools have higher learning ability than the students who are studying in the public sector schools.
- H<sub>2</sub> Girls studying in private schools have higher learning abilities than the boys studying in public or private sector schools.
- H<sub>3</sub> Students belong to age group under 6+ studying in private sector schools have good learning abilities than students belong to age group 5 studying in public sector schools.
- H<sub>4</sub> Students those are taught by teachers who are having more work experience have better learning abilities than students those are taught by teachers with less work experience.
- H<sub>5</sub> Students those are taught by teachers who are having Montessori diploma have better learning abilities than students those are taught by teachers who are not having Montessori diploma.
- H<sub>6</sub> There is a significant difference in the public and the private schools in relation to the existence of physical facilities for ECE.

## **Methodology**

Present study was descriptive in nature, which was designed for comparative analysis of early childhood education in the context of the public and private sector schools. Data was collected with the help of two research tools. For the measurement of students learning abilities in various subjects a standardized tool developed by ASER (2014) was used. It was consisted of learning observation sheets for English, Urdu, math and General Knowledge. For the measurement of teachers' perception about the availability of physical facilities in public and private sector schools tools was used physical facilities for preprimary students include trained teaching staff, well equipped classroom, IT facilities, AV aids and educational toys.

**Table 1**  
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of the Scales

Name of Research Tool	No. of Items	Cronbach' Alpha
Observation Sheets for the Measurement of Students Learning Abilities	10	.766
Existence of Physical Facility Questionnaire for the measurement of Teachers Perception	15	.884

Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of the research tools, from this table it can be seen that Observation Sheets for the measurement of Students Learning Abilities has alpha coefficient of .766 and Existence of Physical Facility Questionnaire (For the measurement of Teachers perception teachers) has alpha coefficient of .884.

### **Sample**

Sample of this study consisted of two distinct group such as students study at preschool level and teachers teaching schools level. A stratified random sample of 100 respondents was collected from 10 public and private sector schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Among them 60 students (30 from public sector and 30 from private sector schools )and 40 teachers (20 from public sector and 20 from private sector schools ) were included in it. Students' age ranged from 5 to six years.

Respondents were contacted at the respective schools during working hours; data was collected after getting permission from school administrations and consents of respective class teachers. Observation sheets were used by the researchers in classroom setting for the evaluations of learning abilities in Urdu, English, Math and General Knowledge.

For the measurement of teachers' perception about the availability of physical facilities in public and private sector teachers, Existence of Physical Facility Questionnaire was given used and respondents were asked to fill this research tool in one setting keeping in view physical facilities available for early childhood education in their schools.

## Results

**Table 2**  
Mean and SD of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets (N=60)

Observation Sheets	Students of Public Sector		Students of Private Sector	
	M	SD	M	SD
Subjects				
English	7.1	2.1	9.3	1.2
Urdu	7.1	2.7	7.7	2.5
Math	10.0	1.2	12.8	0.9
G.K	3.1	1.4	6.1	0.3
Total	30.3	7.4	35.9	5.3

Table 2 presented learning abilities of the students of class 1 studying in various private and public sector schools. From this table it appears that student who are studying in the private schools have higher scores on almost all observations sheets as compared to the students studying in the public sector schools.

**Table 3**  
T-test of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets (N=60)

Variable		N	t-value	df	Sig
Educational Sector	Public	30	45.702	59	.000
	Private	30			

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference between the scores of students on various observation sheets in relation to their learning abilities for the variable education sector.

**Table 4**  
Mean and SD of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets for the Variable Gender (N=60)

Observation Sheet	Public Sector Students				Private Sector Students			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
Subjects	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
English	7.5	1.8	7.0	2.3	9.5	1.4	9.8	1.2
Urdu	7.6	1.6	6.9	3.1	7.3	2.8	8.8	1.2
Math	10.7	1.4	9.7	1.1	10.3	0.3	12.0	1.3
G.K	3.1	0.3	3.0	0.4	3.2	0.4	3.0	1.4
Total	28.9	5.1	26.6	6.9	30.0	5.0	33.6	5.1

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation of public and private sector school ECE students for the variable gender. Table reveals that girls and boys studying in the private sector schools have better learning abilities as compared to the boys and girls of public sector schools.

Table 5

T-test of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets for the Variable Gender (N=60)

Variable		N	t-value	df	Sig
Gender	Male	27	23.939	59	.000
	Female	33			

Table 5 shows significant difference between the scores of boys and girls on observation sheets for the measurement of learning abilities.

Table 6

Mean and SD of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets for the Variable Age (N=60)

Observation Sheet	Public Sector				Private Sector			
	Under 5-Years		6-Years & Above		Under 5-Years		6-Years & Above	
Subjects	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
English	6.5	2.1	8.9	2.2	9.6	1.6	9.5	1.6
Urdu	7.0	1.4	8.2	2.5	7.3	1.6	7.8	2.7
Math	10.0	0.6	10.1	1.7	11.3	1.2	10.5	0.4
G.K	3.0	1.2	4.5	0.3	3.0	1.0	5.6	1.0
Total	27.0	5.3	31.7	6.6	31.2	5.4	33.4	5.7

Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation of public and private sector school students for the variable age on various observation sheets. Table reveals that students age of six years and above score higher in the context of private and public sector schools; while comparing both sectors, private sector students performed better on nearly all observations sheets.

Table 7

Mean and SD of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets for the variable Teachers' Experience (N=60)

Observation Sheets	Less than 3-Years		3-Years & Above	
	M	SD	M	SD
English	8.2	1.3	11.3	1.2
Urdu	8.3	1.5	7.0	2.4

Math	10.3	1.3	12.6	1.3
G.K	3.6	0.2	5.3	1.3
Total	30.4	4.3	35.2	5.9

Table 7 shows the mean and standard deviation of students' scores on observation sheets in relation to variable teachers' experience. It shows that students who are taught by more experienced teachers scored higher on almost all observations as compared to the students who are taught by teachers with less work experience.

Table 8

Mean and SD of Private and Public Sector Schools Students Learning Abilities on Observation Sheets for the variable Montessori Diploma (N=60)

Observation Sheets	Teacher not having Montessori Diploma		Teachers having Montessori Diploma	
	M	SD	M	SD
English	7.1	2.1	11.3	1.2
Urdu	7.6	2.7	9.3	2.5
Math	10.3	1.2	12.6	1.3
G.K	3.0	1.4	5.3	1.5
Total	28.0	5.4	39.5	5.5

Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation of students' scores on observation sheets for the variable teachers holding Montessori Diploma. It indicates that students who were taught by the teachers who are holding Montessori diploma performed well as compared to the students who were taught by the teachers who are not having Montessori diploma.

Table 9

Public and Private Sector schools Teachers' Perception of the Availability of Physical Facilities for ECE (N=40)

Variable	Teachers' Perception of Facilities Public		Teachers' Perception of Facilities Private	
	M	SD	M	SD
Educational Sector	16.85	4.1	20.75	5.5

Table 9 revealed that private schools have higher mean score as compared to public school. According to results availability of physical facilities in

private schools is greater than public school. This table also shows that there is significant difference between both public and private school.

Table 10  
T-test of Private and Public Sector Schools Teachers' Perception of the Availability of Physical Facilities for ECE (N=40)

Variable	N	t-value	df	Sig	
Sector	Teachers of Public Sector	20	183.94	39	.000
	Teachers of Private Sector	20			

Table 10 shows that there is a significant difference between the scores of teachers teaching to ECE in private and public sector perception of the availability of availability physical facilities for ECE.

### Discussion

Some people may have reservations regarding the significance of ECE but research in this area revealed that students enrolled in ECE programs get more profit by receiving formal education before class one. It is common observation that, students those are enrolled in various program followed by ECE sprit are well mannered and also possessed higher IQ scores upon enrolling in next grades than their peers without formal ECE education. Students taught at an early age generally get benefit in the subsequent manners; they are having much polished social skills, better results, no need for special education instruction during upcoming school years and more attention span.

Objectives of the study include to assess the learning abilities of the students those who are receiving education in the public and the private sector schools in relation to their demographic variation of sector, gender and age and to measure the perception of private and public sector teachers regarding the availability of physical facilities for early childhood education.

In order to measure the objective various hypotheses were also formulated. The first hypothesis of the present study was that students who are studying in private schools have higher learning abilities than the students who are studying in the public sector schools. Results of the present study confirmed this hypothesis. The result revealed that learning abilities of private schools students are higher than students studying in public sector schools. This may be due to the reason that in the private sector physical facilities for early childhood education are far better than facilities provided in the public sector schools.

Second hypothesis was that girls studying in private schools have higher learning abilities as compared with the boys studying in public sector or private sector schools and results revealed that girls studying in private schools possessed have higher learning abilities on tested on various observation sheets.

Third hypothesis was that students belong to age group 6+ have good learning abilities than students belong to age group 5 or less. The result showed that students of 6+ ages have higher scores on observation sheets as compared to students of 5 years or less.

Fourth hypothesis was that students those are taught by teachers who are having more work experience have better learning abilities than students those are taught by teachers with less work experience. Results of the study confirmed this hypothesis.

Fifth hypothesis was that students those are taught by teachers who are having Montessori diploma have better learning abilities than students those are taught by teachers who are not having Montessori diploma. Results also confirm this hypothesis.

Sixth hypothesis was that there is a significant difference in the public and the private schools in relation to the existence of physical facilities for ECE. Results of this variable revealed that teachers who are serving in private sector are more satisfied with the facilities available for early childhood education in their schools.

### **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended for early childhood education experienced teachers may be deputed who possessed desired abilities to implement the curriculum in its spirit.
2. It is recommended that while teaching to young children, teachers may focused more on boys because they distracted easily as compared to young girls.
3. It is recommended that while teaching to students at ECE level teachers may focus more on those children who are 5 or less than 5 years. They need more care affection and teacher attention while getting educational instructions.
4. The result of study revealed that public schools have lack of physical facilities for preprimary students like trained teaching staff, well equipped classroom, IT facilities, AV aids and educational toys. It is therefore, recommended that government provide these facilities in the public schools. It is recommended the in the public sector schools trained teachers may be hired specifically with the background of Montessori diploma.

## References

- Alderman, H., Orazem, P. F., and Paterno, E. M. (2002). *School Quality, School Cost, and the Public/Private School Choices of Low-Income Households in Pakistan*. Retrieved on Jan 8, 2015, from <http://www2.econ.iastate.edu/faculty/orazem/lahore.pdf>
- Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan. (2014). Lahore, South Asian Forum for Education Development (SAFED)
- Aslam, M. (2002). *The Quality of School Provision in Pakistan: Are Girls Worse off?* Retrieved on Jan 8, 2015, from <http://www.gprg.org/pubs/workingpapers/pdfs/gprg-wps-066.pdf>
- Curtis, A.O. and Hagan, M. (2003). *Care And Education In Early Childhood, A Student's Guide To Theory And Practice*, London: Rout ledge Falmer.
- International Encyclopedia of Education by Torsten Husen. (1985). *Early Childhood Education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- International Standard Classification of Education ISCED. (2011). UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Canada. Retrieved September 14, 2015 from <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>
- Sofia Shakil. (2002). *An Overview of Early Childhood Care and Education in Pakistan*, Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan.
- <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/lpritch/Education/docs/ED/Gov/action/Ideology/and/Private/Schooling.pdf>

---

*Received on: February 12, 2016*

*Revised on: May 17, 2016*

*Accepted on: June 05, 2016*