Secondary Students' Perceptions about Student-Teacher Interaction: A Descriptive Inquiry

Uzma Ata Ullah[1] & Syed Manzar-Abbas[2]

Abstract

The study attempted to find out the level of student-teacher interaction at secondary level. Student-teacher interaction was compared sector-wise (private and public) and gender-wise (male and female). A descriptive inquiry was held to investigate the phenomenon. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used for the selection of 200 students. Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) developed by Fisher (1995) was adopted as research tool and was translated into Urdu. Most of the respondents perceived student-teacher interaction at moderate level. Among eight sub-factors, significant difference between public and private school students' perceptions was found for two factors; uncertain and dissatisfied. Public students perceived their teachers more uncertain than that of private students. Private students perceived their teachers more dissatisfied than that of public students. The male students perceived that their teachers were more strict and demonstrating better leadership behavior than that of girls.

Keywords*:* Students Interaction, Teachers Interaction, Descriptive, Secondary schools, Male and Female

Introduction

In the field of teaching, teachers face many new challenges and opportunities (Nielson & Lorber, 2009). Now teaching involves many new teaching beliefs, behaviors, techniques, and methods in the classroom (Davis, 2003). Student-teacher classroom interaction in both private and public school setting is vital. Student-teacher interaction provides the basis to develop positive or negative motivation among students' behavior towards learning expediencies (Rubio, 2009). Davis (2003) narrated that student-teacher relationship starts when a student enters in a formal setting of school and it helps the students to adapt the academic and social environment. The positive relationship between

[1] PhD Scholar, University of Management and Technology, Lahore

2 Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Lahore Leads University

student and teacher is crucial for the development of students, conversely, the conflict between student and teacher increases drop-out ratio (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Nugents (2009) explained that strong student-teacher relationships provide a healthy chance to exploit school environment and even to build healthy relationships with their class/school mates. Hamre and Pianta (2001) found that students' character is shaped by the teacher in the schools.Students better relationship with teachers give them confidence to solve their academic problems. Nyboke (2015) narrated that student-teacher interaction enhanced the students' achievement, student-teacher cooperation and academic motivation level. Student-teacher interaction decrease negative feelings like as fury, irritation, discontentment, frustration and monotony among the students and also encouraged positive feelings like as self-reliance assurance, social and academic motivation level (Brok & Levy, 2005).

Teacher-student interaction creates classroom organization, emotional and learning support (Lan & Lanthier, 2003). Healthy student-teacher interaction provides a unique chance for students and teachers to develop better teaching and learning environment (Oord & Rossem, 2002). Past research noticed that positive interaction has been found between student-teacher interaction and students' academic motivation (Davis, 2003). Research found that a relationship exists between teachers' beliefs and student- teacher interaction patrons (Hutchison, 2010). Research focused that the quality of classroom environment and positive student-teacher interaction is directly relate to the teachers' behavior (Pianta, & Howes, 2002).

This research study explored the extent of student –teacher interaction in Pakistani public and private school systems in Tehsil Sangla hill district Nankana sahib. This study might fill the gap in this area of student-teacher interaction in Pakistani public and Private

secondary School systems in Tehsil Sangla hill. This research was conducted in public and private secondary school systems of Tehsil Sangla Hill. Tehsil Sangla Hill is situated in the district of Nankana Sahib of the province of the Punjab. Distric Nankana sahib is situated in the central part of the Punjab.

Review of Literature

Nugents, (2009) stated that good teaching builds the positive and supportive relationships in the classroom and transfers knowledge to the students in the healthy and positive environment.

Student-Teacher Interaction

A positive and supportive student-teacher relationship develop safe and healthy environment and provide students confidence to learn without pressure (Nielson, and Lorber, 2009; Koplow, 2002). Hamre and Pianta, (2001) found that good teacher-student relationship is the basis of the healthy learning environment. Howe (1997) viewed that teacher-student relationship is also influenced on the behavior of students' towards academic motivation.

According to Davis (2003) teachers can affect students' social and intellectual abilities such as motivation to learn, development of emotional, behavioral, and academic skills. Teacher- student interaction builds healthy classroom atmosphere. Hadjerrouit, (2015) narrated that good teaching practices provide healthy opportunities to students to take part in the learning activities. McCartney, Dearing, Taylor, (2007) found that healthy chances develop positive interaction among teacher and students relationship and also improve students' academic skills. Allen, Gregory, Mikami, Hamre, and Pianta (2013) suggest that "improving the quality of teacher- student interactions within the classroom depends upon a solid understanding of the nature of effective teaching for adolescents".

Effect of Teacher Related Factors on Student-Teacher Interaction

A good student-teacher interaction contributes to academic development (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004). If subject matter is accurate and compatible to students then they will be more motivated to their learning (Murdoch, 2008). Teachers' skill and teaching method also play a vital role to raise students' academic motivational level (Rubio, 2009). Nielson and Lorber (2009) argued that teachers give importance to every student so that everyone feels him or her special and develop decision power among students so that they make proper decisions for their practical lives.

Hamre and Pianta (2013) argued that if student-teacher relationship is positive, then students behave more confidently towards their problems. Mashburn, Pianta and Hamre, (2008) also had the view that teacher's personality also influences student-teacher relationship. The age, gender and behavior of students also influence the classroom interaction (Jones & Dindia, 2004).

Influence of Classroom Factors on Student-Teacher Interaction

Teaching methods and strategies effect on the learning of the students (Hadjerrouit, 2015). Positive Interaction and communication style of the teacher developed the learning environment of the classroom (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Quality classroom environment enhanced the significant element of learning. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the secondary school students' perceptions about the level of student-teacher interaction.
2. Compare perceived student-teacher interaction between public and private secondary schools.

The following null hypothesis was formulated to drive the investigation. There is no significant difference between the means scores of students'perceptions studying in public and private secondary schools about the level of student-teacher interaction.

Research Methodology

A descriptive inquiry was conducted to investigate the problem. Multi-stage random sampling technique wasused for the selection of subjects of the study.Keeping in view the heterogeneity of the population, at first, the different possible strata were identified using stratified random sampling. The identified strata included sector wise (public and private) distributed groups of the population. From each identified stratum 10 schools were selected using cluster sampling technique. At last, from each sampled cluster 10 students were selected using simple random sampling technique. In this way 200 (100 boys; 100 girls) students were included in the study. Therefore, 50 boys and 50 girls from private schools (Total 100) and 50 boys and 50 girls were sampled from public schools (Total 100). Questionnaire was used to measure student-teacher interaction and wasnamed as Questionnaire on teacher interaction (QTI) in the study (Appendix A).Currently used instrument with 48 items was developed by Fisher and his colleagues in 1995. There are eight sub-factors (four positive and four negative) of QTI. Positive factors are: Leadership, Understanding, Friendly, and accommodating. And negative Factors are Uncertain, Admonishing, Dissatisfied, and Strict. All the eight factors demonstrate teachers' behavior.

Researchers took permission from the District Education Officer (DEO) of District Nankana Shahib for data collection from secondary schools.The researchersdistributed the questionnaire (QTI) to the participants in person.For data analysis,both the descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized. Simple descriptive statics like mean and standard deviation were applied to know the level of student-teacher interaction. To test the hypothesis for the possible difference between mean scores of public and private sector participants, independent sample t-test wasapplied.

Results

The scale of student-teacher interaction had eight factors; leadership, understanding, uncertain, admonishing, friendly, accommodating, dissatisfied, and strict. The results are being described according to the objectives of the study.

Level of student-teacher interaction

The level of student-teacher interaction was determined through mean score and standard deviation. For the sake of analysis, the options of Likert scale were coded as strongly agree 5, agree 4 and in this way strongly disagree 1. For the negative statements coding was reversed. And lastly mean of means was calculated for each of eight factors. Overall the students perceived student-teacher interaction at secondary level at moderate level. The detail of means of each factor is given in Table 1.

Table 1*Perceptions about Eight Factors of Student-Teachers Interaction*

Item	M	S.D.
Leadership	4.24	0.32
Understanding	3.91	0.41
Uncertain	2.49	0.33
Admonishing	2.45	0.33
Friendly	3.32	0.43
Accommodating	2.75	0.40
Dissatisfied	2.57	0.49
Strict	3.35	0.48

The Table 1 reveals that according to students' perceptions, student-teacher interaction was mostly at moderate level (M = 3.14). The mean scores ranged from 4.24 (leadership) to 2.45 (admonishing). At five point rating, this mean shows that mostly the respondents showed uncertainty about student-teacher interaction. But, for teachers' leadership and understanding, students opined that teachers have high level of leadership (M = 4.24) and understanding (M = 3.91) qualities.

For the other six factors among which four (uncertain, admonishing, dissatisfied and strict) represent negative behavior, the students remained neutral. That's important because the students did not disagree. And for the two factors (friendly and accommodating) students did not agree. It is a kind of eye opener not only for the teachers but also high officials and administrators that they should take some practical measures to inculcate the positive behavior and to make teachers avoid negative behavior.

Difference between Public and Private Students' Perceptions

For comparing the students' perceptions about student-teacher interaction between public and private schools, independent sample *t*-test was calculated. The test of difference was run for each factor separately.

Table 2 *Difference between Public and Private Sector Students' Perceptions*

Item	School	M	S.D.	t-value	P
Leadership	Public	4.20	0.35	1.84	.07
	Private	4.28	0.29		
Understanding	Public	3.88	0.39	1.13	.26
	Private	3.94	0.44		
Uncertain	Public	2.41	0.36	3.49*	.001
	Private	2.57	0.28		
Admonishing	Public	2.39	0.36	1.04	.30
	Private	2.45	0.32		
Friendly	Public	3.36	0.42	1.18	.24
	Private	3.29	0.43		
Accommodating	Public	2.79	0.40	1.20	.23
	Private	2.72	0.40		
Dissatisfied	Public	2.69	0.48	3.34*	.001
	Private	2.46	0.49		
Strict	Public	3.32	0.47	1.06	.29
	Private	3.39	0.48		

*significant at alpha level 0.05

The above table illustrates that the public and private students perceived differently only for two factors; uncertain and dissatisfied.

The difference between the perceptions of two groups was marginally significant only for one factor, the leadership. For the other five factors, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of public and private students.

The students studying in private schools (M = 4.28, SD = 0.29) perceived that teachers display high level of leadership than that of private teachers (M = 4.20, SD = 0.35). The difference was marginally significant, t (198) = 1.84; p = 0.07, at alpha level 0.05. The private students (M = 2.57, SD = 0.28) perceived that their teachers are more uncertain than the public school students (M = 2.41, SD = 0.36) perceived about their teachers. The difference between their perceptions was statistically significant, t (198) = 3.49; p = 0.001. The public school teachers (M = 2.69; SD = 0.48) were perceived more dissatisfied by the students than private school teachers (M = 2.46, SD = 0.49). The difference was statistically significant at alpha level 0.05, t (198) = 3.34; p = 0.001.

Discussions

The respondents' perceptions about student-teacher interaction were at moderate level. The teachers at secondary level only focus on completion of course and nothing else. Most of the teachers at this level only use traditional lecture method of teaching. They don't use innovative and reflective strategies of teaching. They may not know even about how to develop and improve student-teacher interaction. Actually the teachers and administrators at this level don't value student-teacher interaction. They just focus on students' good scores in the exams just like students' parents. Davis (2003) narrated that student-teacher relationship starts when a student enters in a formal setting of school and it helps the students to adapt the academic and social environment. The positive relationship between student and teacher is crucial for the development of students, conversely, the

conflict between student and teacher increases drop-out ratio (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

For different factors of student-teacher interaction, the respondents perceived leadership and understanding behavior at high level but for friendly and accommodating behavior of teachers, students' response was at moderate level. These both of the behavior types are critical for building rapport with the students. But in Pakistan, at this level mostly teachers don't have tradition to build a close relation with the students, probably because of our social and cultural norm. At college and university level, the teachers have better relation with the teachers and have friendly behavior and interaction with students. And among the four negative factors, two (dissatisfied and strictness) were not disagreed by the respondents. That is critical finding, because the students should disagree to these behaviors which they didn't. As we know that the Pakistani teachers are not only strict in their attitude but also they give physical punishment to the students. But the dissatisfaction is even more critical because, if teachers are not satisfied how can they concentrate on their core job of teaching and learning.

Another finding of the study was concluded from the comparison of public and private schools. The difference was significant for teachers' perceived uncertain and dissatisfied behavior. The private school teachers were perceived more uncertain than private schools. It is quite understandable because there is no job security in private schools for teachers. The teachers may be terminated at once without giving any notice advance. But the other finding is strange where public school teachers are more dissatisfied than private schools teachers. It needs more investigation that why public schools teachers are dissatisfied. The further studies may be conducted using qualitative approaches to understand the reasons behind this phenomenon.

Conclusions

The study concluded that most of the respondents perceived student-teacher interaction at moderate level.The study further concluded that there was no significant difference between the perceived student-teacher interaction of public and private secondary school teachers except two factors; uncertain and dissatisfied. The private students perceived their teachers more uncertain than the public school students perceived about their teachers. The public school teachers were perceived more dissatisfied by the students than private school teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the perceived student-teacher interaction of public and private schools was accepted except for two factors; uncertain and dissatisfied.

Recommendations

The recommendations were made on the basis of findings and conclusions of the study. The major recommendations were as follows:

1. The training workshops may be developed for enhancing the skills of student-teacher interaction in teachers so that they may develop or improve interaction with students.
2. The government may take some measures to know why teachers are dissatisfied with the profession and then may take some measures to reduce their dissatisfaction especially the boys' public school teachers.
3. The school administrators may arrange some workshops or seminars for the teachers to make them believe that strictness is not helpful for teaching, and they may equip them with new and innovative pedagogies.
4. The teacher education programmes may be developed to inculcate the motivation strategies to student teachers. Some

workshops may also be conducted to equip teachers with motivation strategies.

5. The special workshops may be devised for female teachers so that they may make their lessons more motivational and may inculcate motivation in the girls' students.

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