



RESEARCH PAPER

A Comparative Study of Written Communication Skills of 8th Grade Students of Public, Private and Missionary Schools

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ABSTRACT

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In this research paper, writing skills of students in Public, Private and Missionary schools have been compared as these three categories of schools are hypothesized to have different approach to communication skills especially written form. A sample of 60 students from 8th grade, comprising of 20 students from each category of school, participated in this study. Equal ratio of boys and girls was chosen while the site of the research was the city of Lahore. Specialized rubrics were used to assess the written communication skills of the participants and to score the written data collected from the sample. Research method that was used in obtaining data was a "test" of creative writing in which students were asked to write an essay. Results revealed that the writing skills of students of Missionary schools were better than Private schools and Public schools. In some aspects of written communication, students of Private schools and Missionary schools did not differ much but overall, students of Missionary schools were far better in performance than other schools. The higher score of missionary school students implicate that the private and public schools must also employ the teaching methodologies adopted by missionary schools in order to equip their students better in written communication

Introduction

In order to determine the proficiency level, writing skills play a major role. To master a language, writing skill is as important as speaking and listening. Writing can be of many types. Some of the types are creative writing, persuasive writing, scientific writing and expository writing. Amongst all these, the focus of the current research is the creative writing of the learners. It is generally observed that the writing skills of Missionary schools differ from Private schools and Public

schools so there is a significant difference of English language proficiency level in written communication skills among the students of Missionary schools, Private schools and Public schools. There are a lot of reasons for this difference because Missionary schools arrange special teacher training sessions for their teachers but not the Private and Public schools, so teachers of Missionary schools teach according to the new methodology in a better way (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Writing is generally used as a medium of communication used by humans. Writing comprises of many elements like grammar, semantics and vocabulary. Text is the result of writing. Writing is instrumental in securing the history of anything. Writing styles can be taught to students to improve their skills regarding writing. Choice of appropriate words along with the correct order improves the skills. For good writing, the writing must adhere to the conventions of sentence structure, paragraphs, and use of punctuation marks, correct spellings and proper organization. (Hourani, 2008)

Better the writing style, better the opportunities the students will receive to polish themselves. In order to be a good writer, one must practice writing skills. As it is said that practice makes a man perfect so doing drills and exercises are beneficial for students to perform in a better way. Writing is an art and that art could be made glossy by hard work and implementation. Greater the focus, greater would be the output. Writing makes a career lustrous. Writing is used as an aid to language learning, and if the reader forgets that how he started the sentence he could look back to the start in order to seek help. It has been generally observed that students' proficiency in written communication skills is better in private and missionary schools rather than public schools due to various reasons. This study will try to explore this myth by comparing the written communication skills of grade 8 students in Public, Private and Missionary schools. The objectives of the study are to determine English language proficiency level in written communication skills of students in Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools, to compare English language proficiency level in written communication skills of students in Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools and to give suggestions to teachers to improve their English language proficiency level in written communication skills.

Literature Review

Language is an easy way of communication and collection of sounds by which feelings, thoughts and sentiments are conveyed to human beings (Hadley, 2000). We can observe that with the increasing demand of English in our society and environment, English has been taken a step forward towards success and a lot of opportunities are being created in the field of English. Society is in demand of this subject. It is mere people who give importance to a certain subject or thing or polish a phenomenon. It highly demands the attention and interest of people who let you do the work and raise the importance of a specific thing. It is assumed that utilizing multiple types of composing skills fundamentally backed powerful person (Hand. Hoenshell, Prain, 2007). Unequivocal direction book for science composing

might have been exceptionally successful also to moving forward the students' Taking in methodology and accomplishment over science. This has a tendency on help those considerations that the ability and numeracy secretariat may be providing for will verifiable composing.

Equally, there may be a strong relationship between writing frequency and intellectual capacities. (Gay, 2002) contended that organizational, critical thinking, logic and reasoning skills are fostered in writing exercises and these skills tend to pour over into other areas of problem solving or creativity. Writing has also been linked with critical thinking, particularly journal writing has been associated with promoting students' critical thinking and learning skills and writing is in need of practice. To correct the mistakes, it is suggested that write and rewrite the thing until it becomes flawless or the mistakes are removed. In the present world, writing is an important key to success. Writing is a way of communication and communication should be strong enough to convey the meaning. At scale, writing is known as leadership. Writing is basically a way to learn. Writing is a way to call your brain to get up and explore on the paper what's sounding in the head.

Most of the "private school versus government school" research deals with private schools that are devoid of essential characteristics (Merrifield, 2008), and some deals with government schools that face the genuine hitch of choosing a large school. Difficulties rise up, however, in the checking of what comprises of adequate certificate of misspecification of model to warn the exclusion of a study. The level of performance depends upon the family background and the educational status of peers and elders too. When the opportunities are provided in best way, student is moved and started learning the things more efficiently and keenly observes all what is happening around him. He pays ear to the lectures delivered in the classroom and the environment is comfortable and suitable for learning, there are more chances of learning. Facilities provided by the institute and the parents play role in learning. When the student is free of anxieties and worries, he can learn well. The environment matters in learning. Learning environment is provided by the Catholic schools as compared to the government schools so the students studying in Catholic schools learn in a better way than those of government schools. They are committed to bring out the best values and skills in their students. They have an amazing scale of educating the students who are in minority. Catholic schools helps person to accept challenge and to make future and the next day better than the previous one. They emphasise all students to participate in each activity. The high grades of the college represents that the students who studied in Catholic schools are more self-motivated.

Cobbold (2014) studied that it is the higher socioeconomic status of the private school students that helps them in achieving high grades in education and it's not about the school that they have attended. Socioeconomic rank matters a lot when defining the academic results of the student. The selection of the school is always done by keeping in view the financial status of the family by parents. Students of the private schools belong to rich families mostly and the public school

students cannot afford the expense of Private schools provide a better room for learning depending upon the facilities provided by the school. Political scientists (Chubb and Moe, 1990) found evidence that the private school advantage was a function of less bureaucratic phenomenon and the greater part of being political Limited English Proficient (LEP). 11 percent students studying in public schools in grade 4 were regarded as LEP and only 4 percent in private schools. Individualized Education Program (IEP), fourteen percent of the public school 4th graders were said to have an IEP, while only 4 percent of 4th grade students in private schools had one. In 8th grade, the percentages were 14 for public schools and 3 for the private ones.

One other recent study has made use of longitudinal data that can address these issues. In a 2005 study, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) compared public and private. High schools using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988-2000. NELS includes data not only on student achievement in high school, but also on educational outcomes after college, including civic-mindedness, job satisfaction, and educational attainment. The NAIS study found that the average private school student outperformed public school students on all of these measures.

Writing could be divided into some sub-skills, for example expository and narrative writing skills (Wilcox, 2002) while writing style is naturally affected by the position or rank of the writer's age, experience and basic profession. Elmaksoud (2014) arranged sub-skills of writing as descriptive skill (description of people, things and places), narrative skill (narrating incidents, stories, events with right sequence and in order), expository skill (writing with aim to justify things). Students should focus on the construction of sentences by using correct grammatical structure and not merely the spellings. Now at this stage, the person who is learning should view words as the body of grammar and to focus on the changes required in construction of sentences. The meaning is just to create a sentence that is correct grammar wise and the reader should understand it easily. In real life, tasks of communicative writing are to write letter, filling a form, report writing etc. These writing skills are not generally practiced in the language class.

Shaheen (2008) concluded that most of the government school teachers behave in a good manner and they avoid using language that is bad for students and disturb the environment of classroom. They were not found to blame other persons of society but when considered the private schools, the ratio is more over there as they are in a sense of competition and try to lead always. The teachers of private schools were found to blame the other persons of the society as well as disturbing the class with the use of poor language.

Iqbal (2006) claimed in a comparative study that teachers in English medium schools use more than one teaching methodologies, English medium schools provide more instructional material for teaching, heavy small class size, arrange more co-curricular activities, art and science exhibition as compared to Urdu

medium schools which are mostly public schools. Majority of parents and teachers of different qualifications, different age groups, different genders and different schools response that staff morale scale is same but they also reported that staff morale of private teachers is higher than that of government teachers. It was found that teachers of both types of schools are fully aware about the advantages and effectiveness of teaching aids. Both types of school teachers use teaching aids. However, the teachers of private schools use more teaching aids and models comparatively.

The negative experiences of government schools have instigated parents to shift children from government to private schools. Michael Barber (2010) in his paper points out towards the unfortunate experiences the parents have regarding poor facilities, locations and learning outcomes which reduces parents' enthusiasm for government schools. Furthermore, numerous other studies illustrate the cost effectiveness of the private schools as compared to the government schools in providing decent education facilities and better quality of learning levels. The Learning and Education Achievements in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) study was conducted to evaluate the education sector of the Pakistan using a detailed Punjab's data set. The study conducted from 2003 to 2007, found a significant and rising role of low fee private schools, especially in the rural areas of Pakistan. In spite of government school teachers receiving higher salaries and government schools using twice the resources to operate as compared to private schools, the learning levels of children in private schools continued to be significantly better than public sector schools. (Andrabi, 2006) in his paper highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the rural model adopted by the private institutes in the rural areas. The strength of these schools is the locally available, moderately educated female teachers who have little or no prospects outside their villages. They are hired at low salaries to minimize the fee structures, while at the same time, promising better learning outcomes as compared to the government schools. On the other hand, these characteristics required in the teachers may also act as constraint towards achieving higher education outcomes. In an absence of the specifically required pool of teachers, the low cost private schools might not be established in the villages. Alderman (2001) also emphasized in their paper that private schools no longer remain an urban or elite phenomena, but rather poor households also use these facilities to a large extent, due to their better locations, low fees, teachers' presence and better quality learning, especially in the fields of mathematics and language. Even though private schools started off as an urban phenomenon, more recently they have mushroomed in rural areas as well. Ghani&Rubab (2014) conducted a research by doing the needs analysis of social sciences learners of The Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan and suggested a need oriented course to meet up the academic needs. Shrigneshan (2017) carried out a study to improve the writing skills of the university students through literary texts.

Material and Methods

A Descriptive-Comparative research design was used to conduct the current research with the purpose to compare the English language proficiency level in written communication skills of 8th grade students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools. All grade 8 students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools of Lahore were included in the population of this research. The sample of the current research was collected from 2 Public schools, 2 Private schools and 2 Missionary schools while 20 students from each type of school were tested in which 10 were boys and 10 were girls so the gender representation was equal. English Language Proficiency Test in writing skills was the tool used for this research. Test was distributed among students of different schools and they were directed to write an essay on the topic "Your favorite TV. Programme" (100 -150 words). Sub skills of writing were assessed and compared with the help of test. The skills which were assessed are 1) Cohesion and Coherence, 2) Vocabulary, 3) Spelling and Punctuation, 4) Grammar and 5) Organization. The collected data was analyzed by using a combination of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the current research was to compare the written proficiency of students from private, public and missionary schools. This section of the article describes the data analysis conducted on the data collected from a sample of 60 students with equal representation of gender in sample. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics in form of mean score and standard deviation of the students on the construct of written communication within the framework given in the methodology section.

Table 1
Mean score and Standard Deviation on Written Communication scored by
Students of Public, Private and Missionary Schools

	Private School		Public School		Missionary School	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Cohesion and Coherence	6.15	1.631	4.60	1.046	7.05	1.276
Vocabulary	6.30	1.780	4.20	0.768	6.70	1.261
Spelling and Punctuation	5.95	1.731	4.10	.852	6.55	1.432
Grammar	5.65	1.843	4.45	1.146	6.70	1.302
Organization	5.95	1.791	4.30	0.733	6.90	1.334
Overall	29.55		21.70		34.20	

Table 1 shows that mean score and standard deviation of missionary school students in writing skills is greater than that of students of Private and Public schools. Table also shows mean and standard deviation of the scores of public-school students on written proficiency test of English. The maximum possible score

for each category was 10 and the students were assessed by using specialized rubrics. In students of public school, mean of Cohesion and Coherence was 4.60 while standard deviation was 1.046; mean score of vocabulary is 4.20 while standard deviation was 0.768; mean score of spelling and punctuation was 4.10 and standard deviation was 0.852; mean score of grammar was 4.45 and standard deviation was 1.146 while mean score on organization was 4.30 and standard deviation was 0.733. The overall mean score on the construct of written communication was found to be 21.70 for the students of public schools.

With reference to the performance of students by private schools, mean score and standard deviation of the scores for cohesion and coherence were 6.15 and 1.631 respectively; mean score and standard deviation were 6.30 and 1.780; mean score and standard deviation for the aspect of spelling and punctuation were 5.95 and 1.731 respectively; mean score and standard deviation for grammar were 5.65 and 1.843 respectively while mean score and standard deviation for organization were 5.95 and 1.791 respectively. The above table shows that the overall score of the students of private schools was found to be 29.55.

The above table shows the mean score and standard deviation for each dimension of the constructed as scored by students of missionary schools. The students from missionary schools score 7.05 mean score on the aspect of cohesion and coherence with the standard deviation 1.276; mean score and standard deviation on vocabulary were 6.70 and 1.261 respectively; mean score and standard deviation on the dimension of spelling and punctuation were 6.55 and 1.432; mean score and standard deviation for grammar were 6.90 and 1.302 respectively while mean score and standard deviation for organization were 6.90 and 1.334. The overall score on the construct of written communication was found to be 29.55 for the students of missionary schools.

In order to study the significance of the difference between the three groups selected for the current study, the test of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Table 2 shows the inferential statistics of ANOVA applied on the overall score on the base of the type of schools.

Table 2
ANOVA on Overall score of Students in Public, Private and Missionary Schools

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cohesion and Coherence	Between Groups	61.433	2	30.717	17.115	.000
	Within Groups	102.300	57	1.795		
	Total	163.733	59			
Vocabulary	Between Groups	72.133	2	36.067	20.234	.000
	Within Groups	101.600	57	1.782		
	Total	173.733	59			
Spelling and	Between Groups	65.233	2	32.617	16.948	.000

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Punctuation	Within Groups	109.700	57	1.925		
	Total	174.933	59			
Grammar	Between Groups	50.700	2	25.350	11.873	.000
	Within Groups	121.700	57	2.135		
Organization	Total	172.400	59			
	Between Groups	69.233	2	34.617	18.801	.000
Total Marks	Within Groups	104.950	57	1.841		
	Total	174.183	59			
Total Marks	Between Groups	1596.633	2	798.317	21.122	.000
	Within Groups	2154.350	57	37.796		
Total Marks	Total	3750.983	59			

Table 2 shows the results of ANOVA for differences in language proficiency on the basis of the kind of school. The hypothesis formulated for ANOVA was "There is no significant difference in English language proficiency level in written communication skills of 8th grade students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools" was rejected. The results showed that there existed significant difference in English language proficiency level in written communication skills of overall grade 8 students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools since the p value was found to be 0.00 which is less than 0.05. The p value on the basis of kind of school was found to be significant ($p < 0.05$). There was a significant difference in cohesion and coherence in written communication skills of overall score of grade 8 students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools as the p value was found to be 0.00 which is less than 0.05. There existed significant difference in vocabulary in written communication skills of overall students of grade 8 of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools as the p value was found to be 0.00 which is less than 0.05. There was again significant difference recorded in spellings and punctuation in written communication skills of overall score of grade 8 students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools as the p value was found to be 0.00 which is less than 0.05. In grammar, there was significant difference in written communication skills of overall score of grade 8 students of Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools as the p value was found to be 0.00 which is less than 0.05. There existed significant difference in organization in written communication skills of overall score of grade 8 students in Public schools, Private schools and Missionary schools as the p value was found to be 0.00 which is less than 0.05.

Conclusion

It is concluded that there is a significant difference in English language proficiency level in written communication skills of grade 8 students of Public, Private and Missionary schools. Writing skills of Missionary schools are better than Private and Public schools while writing skills of Private schools are better than Public schools. After comparing the entire set of sub skills included in the research, it is concluded that students of Missionary school are better in Cohesion and

Coherence, Vocabulary, Spelling and Punctuation, Grammar and Organization of the text. Students of Public School are weak in all the five sub skills included in the research and the students of Private school are average in their performance. Students of Public schools secured less than fifty percent marks in English language proficiency test; the students of Private and Missionary school obtained more than 50 percent marks in the English language proficiency test and those of Missionary school are even better than private schools. The mean and standard deviation of Missionary school students is greater than those of both the Private and Public school. At some points in this study, not much difference is noted between the students of Private and Missionary schools, but a great difference is present among the students of Public school when compared with students of private or missionary school. So, it's concluded that the students of Missionary school are better in writing skills than students of Private and Public schools and writing skills of students of Private schools are better than students of Public schools. The higher score of missionary school students implicate that the private and public schools must also employ the teaching methodologies adopted by missionary schools in order to equip their students better in written communication.

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