

## **Does Workplace Environment Matter in the High and Low Performance of Secondary Schools: A Comparative Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

Every type of organization takes good care of its employees and it is often done by creating a conducive working environment because it has direct relation with employees' performance whereas an unfavorable workplace environment leads to work stress. The present study was initiated to examine the workplace environment of high and low performance of secondary schools. All the teachers met the devised criteria for high and low performing secondary schools were the population of this study. Based on the result of secondary school certificate declared by BISE Sargodha in 2020, 53 schools were purposively identified as low performing schools, and same numbers of schools were randomly selected to equate the sample. From each school four secondary school teachers were conveniently taken. A self-developed questionnaire was used for the collection of data and was analyzed by applying independent sample t-test. It was revealed that workplace environment of schools whose results in the Secondary School Certificate was more than 70% was found better as compared to those schools have had result less than 50%. Furthermore, colleagues support, balanced workload, teachers' empowerment, appreciation to teachers, and classroom learning conditions are the determinants of high performance.

**Keywords:** Workplace environment, High and Low Performance, Secondary Schools

### **INTRODUCTION**

Every organization either may be called educational, business, or technical but does not consider an isolated island. There is interactions of external and internal factors that are part of its environment. The environment is comprised of external and internal factors surrounding an organization that hampers or facilitates the organization's access to resources. Moreover, while these resources are

valuable for the organization, they are also scarce (Riggio, 2018). The organizational environment can also be defined as the interconnected characteristics which indicate the nature of the organization and directly or indirectly can influence the internal organization's behavior in terms of working behavior, work attitude, and motivation of the employees.

The workplace environment has a significant role in the performance of employees and the organizational performance itself (Chandrasekar, 2001). In an organization, the workplace environment is the surrounding condition in which the workforce gets things done. The workplace environment is comprised of physical as well as social conditions. Physical conditions are referred to as lighting, temperature, equipment, design, etc. whereas, teamwork, safety, motivation, interpersonal relationship, job satisfaction, sympathetic behavior, and performance of the workforce are called social conditions. These environmental conditions are closely associated with the workplace environment of the organization, and it can create a negative and positive impact on employee productivity, its morale, and engagement with the task (Patil and Kulkarni, 2017). Opperman (2002) stated that "workplace environment means those processes, systems, structures, tools or conditions in the workplace that impact favorably, or unfavorably individual performance and individual performance has a positive impact on the organizational performance".

A school as a learning organization has the function to provide knowledge, skills, and attitude to students and develop an ability to make and maintain social relations in society. In educational institutions teachers are to be considered essential component, as they are the workforce that plays important role in the entire learning process and has a positive effect on student learning through delivering content. Therefore, they are expected to have good skills in pedagogy, interpersonal skills, teaching aptitude, professional commitment, and communication skills to do so (Linda, 2010). A good institution is one who takes good care of his teachers and this can be done through the provision of pleasant workplace environment.

For quality teaching largely depends upon the workplace environment because the workplace environment is not only important for students learning but also for teachers to create a conducive learning environment. Noble (2009) stated that "school workplace environment means teaching-learning processes, the physical structure of the classroom, learning aids in the workplace that impact favorably or unfavorably teachers' performance and teachers' performance has a positive impact on the school performance".

Therefore, a good school takes care of its teachers. This is often done by paying attention to their workplace environment. This is because the teachers spend a substantial part of time of their lives at the workplace while carrying out their teaching. Hence, the workplace environment influences teachers' cognitive and emotional states, concentration, behavior, actions, and abilities. The workplace environment plays an important role in the employees' engagement as well as in their performance (Vischer, 2007). Boles et al (2004) expressed that an adequate workplace environment help to reduce absenteeism and, as a result, increase efficiency in a competitive and dynamic educational world. The teacher's morale, efficiency, and commitment affect positively and negatively because of the workplace environment of schools. (Chandrasekhar, 2011).

Tripathi (2014) explains that the workplace environment is defined as the environment in which people work, including the physical environment, culture, and work profile. Productivity and over all

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work are affected and every aspect is interrelated. The teacher's workplace environment has the greatest impact on their motivation. This is a very broad category that includes the physical environment, for example, heat or equipment, and the characteristics of the job itself for example difficulty of task and workload. He explains that it also includes more general organizational characteristics for example history or culture and even aspects of the external organizational environment for example work-life balance and labor market. Oswald (2012) defines a workplace environment as a location of a physical environment for example an office includes some factors like personnel welfare, noise level, and air quality.

Teachers can teach more effectively and increase their loyalty in a supportive and efficient workplace to promote the effectiveness of the overall job. To maintain excellent teaching and accomplish their best work with pupils, good teachers require employments that support their efforts in a variety of ways. Teacher efficacy is determined not just by their knowledge, skills, or experiences but also by the settings in which teachers work. Jackson (2014) stated that instructors can be more or less effective as a contextual function of school workplace environment that transfers resources of human into efficiency and successful teaching techniques for teachers." Working conditions for teachers have a significant impact on schools' ability to provide high-quality education. Schools that provide a secure, pleasant, and supportive environment for their teachers may recruit and retain talented instructors, as well as inspire them to achieve their best. In general, this includes a variety of factors and problems, from working hours to security to payments, and the physical and mental conditions that exist in schools.

The workplace environment is a significant factor that might influence teacher job satisfaction. "An inspired workplace motivates the workers and brings attention to the importance of workplace environment, quality or infrastructure" (obineli, 2013). Environmental factors like humidity, ventilation, proper lighting, temperature, cleanliness, and appropriate equipment (such as sound systems, computers, instructional aids, and good offices) increase the performance of teachers. A good workplace environment provides teachers with better physical comfort and boosts their morale, whereas a bad workplace environment generates unhappiness and therefore high level of discontent. Okonkwo and Obineli (2011) stress that low salaries and bad working conditions lead many teachers at public schools towards lack of motivation and job satisfaction. This is, due to the workplace environment with basic facilities is the beginning of employee job satisfaction. When paid well, high school teachers can work harder to ensure they have a stimulating workplace environment for the project. A workplace environment is a collection of settings in which groups of individuals and a person works and performs their duties. The workplace environment might include the human environment or the physical environment, including interactions with coworkers or administrators of the workplace environment.

Plethora of study examines that the workplace environment can influence the effectiveness of secondary school teachers. Given the research impact, it should be noted that the effectiveness of teachers in secondary schools is increasing and that this increase in results has a positive effect on school management, teachers, students, and parents. Work is an integral part of human life and is usually considered a major task for the development of the adult stage of human life. The individual is converted into professional and professional life, as well as the adult stage. With the help of this transition, the people continue to do work for many years and get retired (Kuzu, 2009). Work has

become a necessity that cannot be passed by people. The concept of work, in addition to the economic benefits of learning to survive, as well as individuals, completes the development to preserve one's life, gain respect in the community, contribute to society, and get a certain status in terms of ensuring fulfillment and happiness of individuals, who have an important place in life of individuals (Demir, 2003).

Work-life affects the economic life of individuals as well as social and cultural life. In addition, social structure and technology have a direct impact on politics concerning individual work life. The term "workplace environment" refer to broad elements such as organizational and managerial features and variables that are related to individual personnel. Job stress is connected with physical environment and duties (Sveinsdóttir et al., 2006). There has recently been an interest in understanding the role of school contexts in the professional development of teachers (Steinberg and Garrett, 2016).

The workplace environment can cause a decrease in teachers' performance if there is no suitable workplace environment. To sustain successful teaching and perform their best work with students, teachers require a good workplace environment that supports their efforts in a variety of ways. Therefore, school performance is determined not just by teacher's experience, knowledge, and abilities, but also by the environment in which they operate (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson 2006; Leithwood, 2006; Perie, 1997).

The workplace environment of the classroom is important for teacher performance, student achievement, and school success. Furthermore, this element of the workplace environment is adaptable and dynamic in a rich and professional environment that promotes teacher's productivity. Teachers are more resilient and successful in their profession when schools provide a variety of classroom support measures as part of a positive workplace environment. In past, research studies into the educational organizational environment have focused on features like uncertainty, complexity, and the availability or scarcity of physical and human resources. However, to date, no pragmatic research study has been seen in the Pakistani context which is based on all types of characteristics of an educational organizational environment with teachers' attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study to ascertain the workplace environment of high and low-performing secondary schools. The following hypotheses were formulated for examining the phenomenon.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the workplace environment of high and low performing secondary schools.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female teachers about the workplace environment of high and low performing secondary schools.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this research was to explore the workplace environment is contributing in high and low performance of secondary schools. A quantitative method that is descriptive design was used for this study, and data were collected through technique.

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## Participants

According to the results of all Boards of Intermediates and Secondary Educations of Punjab in 2020, all the teachers of high and low performing secondary schools during the session 2018-2020 were the population of this study. The criteria of high and low-performing schools were formulated such that the schools having results 75% & above were categorized as high performing and below 50% as low performing. Based on the secondary school certificate (SSC) results of session 2018-2020 declared by the Board of Intermediates and Secondary Educations Sargodha, Punjab in 2020, only 53 low performing schools were identified (Result < 50%) and for the sack to equate the sample size same number of secondary schools were randomly selected as high performing (result >70%). For the selection of respondents using the raw method 4 secondary school teachers were invited to fill in the research tool and in this way the sample size was 424.

Table 1

### Sample Description

| Type of School  | Boards Result | No of Schools | 4 Teachers from each school | Sample Size |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| High Performing | 75% & above   | 53            | 212                         |             |
| Low Performing  | 50% & below   | 53            | 212                         | 424         |

A total of 424 questionnaires were administered through self-visits, resource persons and mailed. 353 were received back and out of which 33 were not counted because of incompleteness. Hence, data of 320 questionnaires were used to analyze through SPSS.

## Data Collection Tool

After extensive review of the related literature and related research eight factors were identified that explicitly contributing towards the high and low performance of teachers, these are head-teacher support, support of colleagues, workload, empowerment, physical workplace environment, facilities and resources, appreciation, learning conditions, and head-teachers, administrative style. Keeping these factors focused, a questionnaire was developed to measure the workplace environment of secondary schools. It was comprised of 48 items constructed using a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (SDA), disagree (DA), undecided (UD), agree (A), and strongly agree (SDA) and weightage was given from 1 to 5 respectively. The validity and reliability of the tool was measured and, in this connection, the tool was shown to the experts of the related discipline for face and content validity. Initially, the questionnaire was comprised of 65 items and after gone through the process 17 items were discarded due to poor structure and irrelevancy. After that 48 items were finalized and reliability through Cronbach Alpha was calculated to check the internal consistency of the instrument. The overall value of Cronbach Alpha was found to be 0.82, which showed significantly good reliability of the research tool (Mohamad et al., 2015).

Table 2

Values of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

| <b>Performance Indicators</b>  | <b>No of Items</b> | <b>Values of Cronbach's Alpha</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Head Teachers' Support         | 7                  | 0.841                             |
| Colleagues' Support            | 7                  | 0.838                             |
| Teachers' Workload             | 6                  | 0.832                             |
| Teachers' Empowerment          | 6                  | 0.802                             |
| Physical Workplace environment | 5                  | 0.823                             |
| Learning Resources             | 6                  | 0.832                             |
| Appreciation                   | 5                  | 0.846                             |
| Classroom Learning Environment | 6                  | 0.793                             |
| Overall                        | 48                 |                                   |

## FINDINGS

Data were collected from the teachers of secondary schools and analyzed through the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22). Frequencies, Mean score and Standard Deviation, and t-test were used to find out the comparison between high-performing and low-performing Secondary Schools. In this part, results were presented and discussed.

Table 3

Gender wise sample distribution

| <b>School Category</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Frequency(f)</b> | <b>Percent (%)</b> |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| High performing        | Male          | 43                  | 13.43              |
|                        | Female        | 117                 | 36.56              |
| Low performing         | Male          | 125                 | 39.06              |
|                        | Female        | 35                  | 10.93              |
| Total                  |               | 320                 | 100                |

Table 3 depicts that 26.9 % were male respondents from high-performing schools and 73.1% respondents were female respondents from high-performing secondary schools. Whereas 78.1 % were male respondents from low-performing schools and 21.9% respondents were female respondents from low-performing secondary schools.

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Table 4

Factor wise independent sample t-test

| Performance Determinants          | Schools Category | Mean  | SD    | t       | Sig   |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1. Head Teachers' Support         | High Performing  | 33.01 | 7.728 | 11.241  | 0.075 |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 24.01 | 7.336 |         |       |
| 2. Colleagues' Support            | High Performing  | 21.48 | 5.741 | 12.475  | .005* |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 19.19 | 4.662 |         |       |
| 3. Teachers' Workload             | High Performing  | 18.76 | 5.271 | -11.465 | .000* |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 19.43 | 2.362 |         |       |
| 4. Teachers' Empowerment          | High Performing  | 22.59 | 4.234 | 13.146  | .003* |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 20.9  | 5.302 |         |       |
| 5. Physical Workplace environment | High Performing  | 20.44 | 3.009 | 12.249  | 0.068 |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 19.78 | 2.197 |         |       |
| 6. Learning Resources             | High Performing  | 13.66 | 4.65  | 11.261  | 0.118 |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 11.88 | 4.543 |         |       |
| 7. Appreciation                   | High Performing  | 14.44 | 3.188 | 16.291  | .004* |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 12.35 | 2.75  |         |       |
| 8. Classroom Learning Environment | High Performing  | 32.48 | 7.606 | 13.335  | .001* |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 25.24 | 7.46  |         |       |
|                                   | Low Performing   | 25.24 | 4.246 |         |       |

Table 4 depicted that there is no significant difference between high and low performing schools with respect to head teacher support ( $t = 11.24$ ,  $df = 318$  and  $p\text{-value} = .075 > 0.05$ ), physical workplace environment ( $t = 12.24$ ,  $df = 318$  and  $p\text{-value} = .068 > 0.05$ ), and learning resources ( $t = 11.26$ ,  $df = 318$  and  $p\text{-value} = .118 > 0.05$ ). However, the significant difference was there in remaining determinants.

Table 5

Independent sample t-test regarding the overall workplace environment

| Schools Category | Mean   | SD     | t      | df  | Sig  |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----|------|
| High performing  | 181.86 | 29.313 | 11.518 | 318 | .004 |
| Low performing   | 177.31 | 29.051 |        |     |      |

The data presented in above table 5 indicated that t value is 11.518 with  $df = 318$  and  $p\text{-value} = .004 < 0.05$ , which showed a significant difference in the workplace environment of high and low-performing secondary schools.

Table 6

Comparing the views of male and female teachers of high &amp; low performing schools

| Gender | Categories      | N   | Mean   | SD    | t      | df  | Sig  |
|--------|-----------------|-----|--------|-------|--------|-----|------|
| Male   | High performing | 39  | 170.33 | 34.47 | -3.242 | 141 | .007 |
| Female | High performing | 104 | 188.11 | 27.01 |        |     |      |
| Male   | Low performing  | 122 | 272.73 | 46.02 | -.965  | 154 | .004 |
| Female | Low performing  | 34  | 262.00 | 60.57 |        |     |      |

Table 6 demonstrated that there is a significant difference between the views of male and female high-performing as well as low performing secondary school teachers. Among the high performing schools, the workplace environment was good ( $M_{\text{male}} 170.33 < M_{\text{female}} 188.11$ ). Whereas, among the low performing high schools the workplace environment of male secondary schools was good to some extent ( $M_{\text{male}} 272.73 < M_{\text{female}} 262.00$ ). Hence the hypothesis was rejected and significant difference was found.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was concerned with the comparison workplace environment of high and low-performing secondary schools. Statistically, no significant difference was found between high and low-performing schools in regards to the workplace environment. Therefore, it was concluded that the workplace environment of schools whose results in the Secondary School Certificate session 2018-20 declared by Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Sargodha in 2020 was more than 70% was found better as compared to those schools have had result less than 50%. Hence, we can say workplace environment does matter and plays significant role in performance of schools. From the factor-wise point of view, no significant difference between high and low-performing schools concerning head-teacher support, physical workplace environment, and learning resources was determined. However, a significant difference was observed in remaining factors including colleagues' support, workload, teachers' empowerment, appreciation, classroom learning, and leadership styles. It can be inferred that in secondary schools whose result is above than 70% teachers have good working relationships with each. They were cooperative in reducing the workplace stress, making the classroom environment healthy for learning, making teaching methods relevant to the topic, and motivate each other for productive work that leads to raising morale. Based on data, it can be said that in high-performing schools teaching staff is sufficient in numbers that's why the workload was balanced and the concentration of teachers towards completing and revising the course is significantly high and time-bounded. Similar findings were reported in a research study by Yunus & Pang (2015). This study also reported that teachers were empowered in terms of organizing weekly or monthly tests; they have the freedom to use any technique for teaching relevant to the topic and develop a candid relation with parents for getting feedback and discussing students' progress and their problems. Teachers were happily teaching extra classes and zero periods for weak students. Head-teachers made use appreciative words frequently and encourage teachers Moraa (2019) study is supporting these findings. Therefore, it can be concluded that colleagues support, balanced workload, teachers' empowerment, appreciation to teachers, and classroom learning conditions are the determinants of high performance. Findings were supported by many studies (e.g.,



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Ladd, 2011 and Ye, 2016). For getting better results, head-teachers should ensure a good working relationship with teachers and teachers themselves. Moreover, teachers should have freedom in planning and implementing courses according to their own will. To balance the workload among teachers, the administration should ensure enough teachers. The study may recommend further investigation to explore the other factors that may also contribute to better performance with a larger sample size, and may also investigate the impact of workplace environment on emotional state abilities and actions of teachers.

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