

Security Measures, Challenges, and Realities: Head Teachers' Contribution to Provide Safe
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**Security Measures, Challenges, and Realities: Head Teachers'
Contribution to Provide Safe Learning Environment**

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate the security measures, challenges, and realities in public and private schools, and head teachers' contribution to providing a safe learning environment. A descriptive survey study design was used to collect the data from 200 school head teachers. A self-reported questionnaire and observational check checklist were developed by the researchers. The main finding of this study revealed that significant mean difference was found between male and female head teachers' contribution to providing safe learning and security measures. Female head teachers faced more challenges than male head teachers (public & private). Headship in the private sector is found more challenging than the public sector. Most of the schools (public) faced unavailability of resources, lack of utilizing physical and environmental security measures, lack of latest electronic/technological equipment, and unprofessional security management. It is the responsibility of district administration to not only support school administration through adequate funds but also encourage private and public sector collaboration in sharing to utilize resources and experiences.

Keywords: Learning environment, security measures, challenges

Introduction

Education is greatly affected by the insecure environment. The nature of school challenges in terms of security measures included strikes, terror and militants' attacks, threats, and destruction of buildings. These human-made catastrophes undesirably continue and damage the education system. Around the world, every country and its national security management

system actively respond to eradicate these mishaps (Munyiri et al., 2020). Pakistan is one of the major countries that is affected worst after the USA led war on terror in Afghanistan. The dimensions of national policy and planning shifted from traditional recommendations. In Pakistan, schools are targeted by militants and terrorists more than any other country in the world (Basit, 2019; Marsh, 2015). In the recent past, this phenomenon of school security created a mega concern in educational institutes (Ali & Fatima, 2016; Schmid, 2016). Pakistan had recorded 69% of global terror attacks. Out of which 88% of attacks were attempted on educational institutes (Zakaria, 2015). Pakistan is a frontline warrior in the war against terror. Schools are usually unprotected, unsaved, or easy to target, it is very easy for a terrorist to attack schools and destroy the institute because terrorists believe that if they want to weaken a society then education must be inaccessible for them (Basit, 2020). Headteachers are the main dependent to implement policy and action plans in schools. They are expected to do frantic efforts to minimize the catastrophic reaction. The implementation of the action plan for school safety and measurements is highly dependent on proper resources and baseline (Munyiri et al., 2020). The sensitivity and escalation of an unsafe environment badly affect the performance of the head teachers. Now, all the head teachers share the responsibility of learning environment, staff training and development, managing and organizing schools' elements, and providing a safe learning environment in schools.

Despite all, educational institutes are still under continuous threats. Including all measures, the educational sector is facing threats and surviving infusing terrorism. (Ali, 2015). Society demands more safety measures for school-going students, especially after Army Public School (APS) attack in 2014 (Ali & Fatima, 2016). APS incident challenged the national security department. School security has become the priority for the administration. Training programs are launched for head teachers, teachers, and students to deal with the unwanted situation (Usman, 2016).

The administration put more pressure on head teachers' performance. A monitoring cell has been developed to keep an eye on schools' efficiency and activities (Manabete et al., 2016). But the schools' security is a great challenge for them, because this condition added more pressure on the management, especially on heads of the schools (Atieno&Simatwa, 2012). The First National Internal Security Policy (NISP) was made in 2014 by the Minister of Education regarding critical security issues. The Ministry of Education (2009) and NDMA

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policy (2008) collectively defined the need for security and safety for people and its right for children to learn in safe conditions without any fear (Ali & Fatima, 2016).

The present study

The security of schools is now a major concern within the other elements of education. It is the center of attention to make a safe and peaceful environment for learning. The head teachers are playing various roles to manage, organize, monitor, and operate schools. Nowadays, school heads not only check and monitor the learning process inside the school but maximize security measures to protect innocent lives. Concrete initiatives have been taken up by the government at different levels such as national and provisional. The guiding principles have been fully executed by educational organizations in its true sense. Yet, after two decades, Pakistan is still a land of threats and attacks (Basit, 2020; Nasir, 2017). The focal objective of this research study was to analyze the current situation of school measures, and what challenges head teachers are facing to securitize schools? This study explores the realities of precautionary capacities, and the contribution of head teachers to perform well in providing a safe learning environment. The researchers have formulated the following hypotheses to achieve these objectives:

H₁: There is a gender wise significant mean difference in the perceptions of head teachers regarding security challenges and safe-learning environment.

H₂: There is a sector wise significant mean difference in terms of schools' security challenges and safe-learning environment.

H₃: There is no sector wise significant difference between available security measures in schools.

Research Method

The application of the quantitative research method led to this study. Researchers adopted a descriptive survey study design to test research hypotheses (Creswell, 2012). A questionnaire, and observational checklist accumulated data collection. The population of this research study is made up of head teachers associated with public and private schools in Faisalabad.

Sampling

A stratified sampling technique was employed in this study. The researcher divided the targeted population into two groups based on public and private sectors. Only higher secondary schools were randomly selected for this study. There were 50 boys and 50 girls in public schools. Similarly, there were 50 boys and 50 girls in private schools. A total of 100 (50% male, & 50% female) head teachers from public schools, and 100 head teachers (50% male, & 50% female) were selected from private schools (N = 200). The range of age fell from 25 years to above 50. The average ages of head teachers were 44.8 (public), and 41.1 (private). The experience of head teachers in public schools was 1 to 5 years (42%), 6 to 10 years (31%), and more than 10 years (26.5%).

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used to gather data from participants. The researchers developed a questionnaire regarding the challenges faced by head teachers in securing schools. There were 50 statements based on 12 factors (table 1) including challenges related to:

- Administration
- Financial matters
- Rules of school
- Management priorities
- Action plan in an emergency
- Environment
- Relations with community
- Collaboration with staff
- Stress of management
- Support of the government
- Security
- Problems of personal

The responses were arranged on Likert type five-point rating scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1

Internal Reliability of Questionnaire

Sr#.	Factors	items	α
1.	Administrative Challenges	6	.76

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2.	Inadequate Allocation of Funds	4	.74
3.	School Rules and Regulations	3	.78
4.	Priorities of School Management	3	.77
5.	Emergency Action Plan	5	.81
6.	School Environment	3	.79
7.	Cooperation with Society	3	.85
8.	Staff Collaboration	6	.74
9.	Management Stress	3	.82
10.	Government Support	3	.83
11.	Security Measurement Challenges	6	.83
12.	Personal Problems of Head Teachers	5	.74
Cumulative		50	.87

The researchers naturally observed fields using a checklist. All the consequences as, head teachers' behavior, managing situation, available resources, lack of resources, and implementation of a predetermined plan. A quantitative form of observation was adopted. The major aim of observation was to gather information aligned with the checklist and focus on numeric analysis. The responses of head teachers regarding challenges, practicing, and utilization of resources, approaches of governments to facilitate head teachers, and level of involvement. A checklist was developed in support of observation. This checklist was categorized into five dimensions. Each category has a sub-dimension that indicated standard operating procedures (SOPs) in schools. These categories were: security measures (4 dimensions), school premises exterior (5 dimensions), school building-interior (2 dimensions), and action plan (2 dimensions). The detail is presented in table 2. In sum, this checklist was comprised of 48 items. The checklist was rated on 3 points Yes, No, and Not Applicable.

Table 2

Internal Reliability of Checklist

Factors	Sub-factors	Items	α
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Measures of Security	Environmental and Physical Measures of Security	6	.72
	Measures for Security of Humans	4	.73
	Measures for Technological/Electronic Security	6	.83
	Policies and Processes	2	.73
School Premises Exterior	Fencing	5	.78
	Lighting	3	.80
	Obstruction to Visibility	3	.81
	Access Control	5	.88
	Exterior Doors and Windows	3	.77
School Building Interior	Alarms	3	.83
	Intruder Bars for Windows and Doors	2	.70
Plan of Action	Plans for Emergency	4	.85
	Training of Staff	3	.78
	Cumulative	48	.79

Validity and Reliability

The convergent validity of the questionnaire was verified through correlation. A positive and strong relationship was found among the factors ($r > .6, p < .05$). Content validity of the research instruments was certified through experts (Assistant Professors of Education). Both tools of research were finalized as per the suggestions of experts. The research instruments (questionnaire & checklist) were found reliable through Cronbach alpha greater than 0.7 .The other detail of reliability is given in table 1 and 2.

Results

The collected data were analyzed and tabulated using SPSS (V. 20). Statistical techniques independent samples t-tests for mean comparison and simple percentage method were employed. The findings of present study are given on the following pages.

Table 3

Gender-Wise Comparison of Head Teachers' Perception about Security Measure, Challenges, and Safe-Learning Environment

Factors	Gender	Public			Private		
		M	SD	t*	M	SD	t*
Administrative Challenges	Male	4.35	.09	.923	4.11	.29	1.740
	Female	3.27	.39		4.43	.31	
Inadequate Allocation of Funds	Male	4.58	.14	2.522	3.05	.51	1.015

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	Female	3.79	.45		3.97	.54	
Rules and Regulations of School	Male	4.98	.08	2.052	4.29	.70	2.052
	Female	3.65	.27		4.06	.82	
School Management Priorities	Male	4.03	.84	-.723	4.32	.48	-.588
	Female	3.77	.65		4.35	.46	
Action Plan of Emergency	Male	4.48	.49	.622	4.94	.64	.415
	Female	3.85	.16		4.90	.51	
Environment of School	Male	4.19	.43	-.345	4.01	.94	-.476
	Female	3.77	.20		4.07	.62	
Community Relationship	Male	3.92	.68	-1.12	4.77	.96	-1.014
	Female	3.06	.39		4.91	.83	
Staff Cooperation	Male	3.97	.61	.213	4.96	.46	.012
	Female	3.08	.85		4.96	.48	
Stress by Management	Male	4.15	.40	.511	3.91	.64	2.206
	Female	4.99	.26		4.69	.72	
Government Support	Male	3.01	.94	0.934	2.37	.49	0.97
	Female	2.69	.60		2.36	.46	
Security Management	Male	3.98	.70	-.388	4.69	.57	-.329
	Female	3.24	.45		4.72	.54	
Personal Problems	Male	4.44	.64	.750	4.08	.56	.550
	Female	3.66	.18		4.03	.61	

* $p < .05$

To test H1, researchers applied independent samples t-tests based on gender (Table 3). There are significant differences between mean scores of male and female head teachers (public) regarding security measures, challenges, and a safe-learning environment. The mean scores of male head teachers are greater than female head teachers on 11 factors out of 12. While there are minor differences between mean scores of head teachers' perception (private). In common, the mean scores of female head teachers from public ($M = 4.99$, $SD = .26$), and private schools ($M = 4.69$, $SD = .72$) greater than that of male head teachers (public, $M = 4.15$, $SD = .40$; private, $M = 3.91$, $SD = .64$). It means that female head teachers (public & private) found it more stressful to manage school security and learning environment in comparison to male head teachers (public & private). Collectively, male and female head teachers (private) are found more confident about their performance on security measures, challenges, and safe-learning environment than male and female head teachers public sector

except for government support. The hypothesis (H1) is accepted in terms of the public sector as the results indicate that there are significant mean differences between male and female head teachers' perceptions. In private sectors, there are minor significant mean differences between male and female head teachers' perception about private schools' security challenges and safe-learning environment.

Table 4

Sector-Wise Comparison of Headteachers' Views about Security Measure, Challenges, and Safe-Learning Environment

		Mean	SD	t
Administrative Challenges	Public	3.99	.545	
	Private	3.93	.523	.52*
Inadequate Funds Allocation	Public	4.15	.796	
	Private	4.16	.787	-.09*
School Rules and Regulations	Public	4.26	.379	
	Private	4.82	.477	-2.55*
School Management Priorities	Public	4.15	.585	
	Private	4.19	.549	-1.62*
Action Plan of Emergency	Public	3.91	.816	
	Private	4.19	.673	-2.65*
School Environment	Public	3.67	.974	
	Private	4.05	.757	-3.08*
Community Relationship	Public	3.01	.453	-1.60
	Private	4.02	.491	
Staff Cooperation	Public	3.00	.778	-1.59*
	Private	3.86	.607	
Stress by Management	Public	4.28	.462	-2.84*
	Private	4.46	.467	
Support of Government	Public	3.96	.590	1.31**
	Private	2.76	.512	
Security Management	Public	3.93	.546	-2.89**
	Private	4.17	.624	
Problems of Personal	Public	4.33	.287	-3.46*
	Private	4.38	.197	

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

To verify this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was applied to compare public and private challenges in school security and safe learning. Table 4 demonstrate that there are minor significant differences in mean scores of head teachers' responses about

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Administrative Challenges (MD = .7, $t = -.529$), Inadequate Funds Allocation (MD = .1, $t = -.089$), Priorities of School Management (MD = .4, $t = -1.682$), and Personal Problems (MD = .5, $t = -3.469$). This indicates that the head teachers of both sectors (public and private) face the challenges of administration, funding, balancing school management, and personal problems equally. Whereas, there are significant mean differences between public and private sector in dealing School Rules and Regulations (MD = -.56, $t = -2.55$), Emergency Action Plan (MD = -.28, $t = -.2.65$), School Environment (MD = -.38, $t = -3.08$), Community Relationship (MD = -1.1, $t = -1.60$), Staff Collaboration (MD = -.86, $t = -1.59$), Management Stress (MD = -.18, $t = -2.84$), and Security Management (MD = -.24, $t = -2.89$). The mean score of public head teachers' perception is higher regarding Government Support (MD = 1.2, $t = 1.31$, $p < .01$). As, public schools receive direct support from government than private. The inverse t values in table 4 exhibit that headship in private sector is more challenging than that of public organization.

Table 5

Available Measures for School Securities in Public and Private Sector Schools (in Percent)

Factors	Sub-factors	Public		Private	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Security Measures	Physical and Environmental Security Measures	64	36	78	22
	Human Security Measures	63	37	71	29
	Electronic/Technological Security Measures	37	63	63	37
	Policies and Procedures	84	16	77	23
	Cumulative Average	62	38	72.3	27.8
Exterior School Premises	Fence	92	8	87	13
	Lights	41	59	68	32
	Obstacle to Visibility	61	39	59	41
	Control of Access	47	53	67	33
	Exterior Windows and Doors	42	58	98	2
	Cumulative Average	56.6	43.4	75.8	24.2
School Building Interior	Alarms	68	32	84	16
	Burglar Bars for Doors and Windows	62	38	78	22
	Cumulative Average	65	35	81	19
Action Plan	Emergency Plans	76	24	85	15

Staff Training	82	18	68	32
Cumulative Average	79	21	76.5	23.5

A simple percentage method was employed to analyze the check. It can be clearly seen that private sector schools are equipped with security measures more than public schools. The average sum of scores is greater in private sectors than in public sectors. The cumulative percentage of available resources in private schools is greater than the public schools regarding Security Measures (72.3%), School Premises Exterior (75.8%), and School Building (81%). While public schools have better Interior Action Plan (79%) in comparison to private schools (76.5%). 43.4% of public schools are observed with a lack of Exterior School Premises (fencing, lighting, obstacle to visibility, control of access, exterior windows and doors,). School premises exterior is one of the major measures to deal with disaster, troubles, assault, and terrorism.

Discussion

In the last two decades, Pakistan is suffering from recorded terrorist attacks, militants' threats and assaults, and alert warnings. Pakistan is among the top five countries that are worst affected in the world (Basit, 2020; Jamal, 2017; Marsh, 2015). The government of Pakistan has taken many initiatives to provide a safe environment. Thousands of personnel including head teachers have been deployed on routine security of exterior and interior of schools. They inspect and report activities to the school security officials. Numerous measures have been taken in public and private schools as mock pieces of training, security equipment, emergency plans, human shield, and other monitoring devices. Security measures and resources influence planning and policy (Munyiri et al., 2020). The responsibilities of head teachers increased to make the school environment safer and sounder for progressive learning (Ali & Fozia, 2016). The school heads are confronting more challenges to implement the directives on safety of school beside managing and administrating schools. The main purpose of the current research was to investigate the security measures, challenges, and realities in public and private schools, and head teachers' contribution to providing a safe learning environment. The first hypothesis (H1) of this study is verified through independent samples t-test on the gender-based comparison (Table 3). It is found that female head teachers face more stress and challenges to manage school security and learning environment in comparison to male head teachers. The results indicate that there are significant mean

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differences between male and female head teachers' perceptions. Gender can affect the role of leadership and management in schools directly or indirectly (Afaqi, 2016; Masheija&Mugizi, 2019; Shamsuddin Elias, 2013). To test the second hypothesis (H2), the sector-wise comparison was analyzed through an independent samples t-test (Table 4). There is a significant mean difference between public and private sector response towards security challenges and safe-learning environment in schools. Headship in the private sector is more challenging than that of public organizations. The private sector is based on entrepreneurship with self-funding, self-financing, and mostly dependent on their legislation (Hussain, 2003; Imran, 2010; Khaliq, 2000; Shah, 2007). While public schools run their system through government dependence and resources. Pakistan is a developing country and there is a lack of availability of the resource (Khan, 2017; Jamal, 2017; Wichenje et al., 2012).

We hypothesized (H3) that there is no sector wise significant difference available in security measures of schools. The researchers analyzed the checklist and observation to testify availability of resources in schools. The results testified that private sector schools were more equipped with the latest security measures than public schools. The use of technology and human shield is greater in private sectors than public sectors (Khan, 2016; Wazir, 2016; Azy, 2016; Ozmen, Dur, &Akgul, 2010; Andrabi, Das,&Khwaja, 2010; Abbasi, 2016; Saeed & Wain, 2011). Majority head teachers from public sectors responded in favor of that they do not fit doors with safety gate, trees and bushes hide the school building, manuals/crisis preparedness plans, backup power supply, plans and arrangements for tackling crises situation (like shooting threats and bombing threats) in comparison with the private sector. The availability and proper utilization of funds is a significant reason in the success of the school (Hussain, Hamid, and Malik, 2015). Schools around the world, have long experience with disasters, attacks, and mishaps (Munyiri et al., 2020). Schools managers are central personnel to implement national policies and plans, execute measures, and contribute to a safe learning environment. In this regard role of the school, the head teacher is crucial and significant to influence the learning environment (Afaqi, 2016; Bipath, 2017; Munyiri et al., 2020; Ozmen et al., 2010; Shamsuddin Elias, 2013; Wichenje et al., 2012). The current study reveals that head teachers contribute to providing a safe learning environment but face lots of challenges with limited resources. Moreover, their extra responsibility brings stress that affects their performance.

Conclusions

The researchers hypothesized that there is a gender wise significant mean difference in the perceptions of head teachers regarding security challenges and safe-learning environment.

It is concluded that this hypothesis is accepted because there is a significant difference between the male and female head teachers in terms of facing security challenges and measures. Female head teachers faced more challenges than male head teachers. The differences in mean scores of male and female head teachers' perceptions are higher in public schools in comparison to the private sector. A hypothesis that there is a sector wise significant mean difference in terms of schools' security challenges and safe-learning environment, has been tested. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between mean scores of perceptions given by head teachers (public & private) concerning the challenges regarding safety and security in schools. The private sector head teachers faced more challenges than public schools head teachers. In addition, it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference between available security measures in public & private sector schools. The majority of schools are found with limited resources, lack of utilizing physical and environmental security measures, lack of latest electronic/technological equipment, power supply for technological devices, and unprofessional and unqualified security management. The null hypothesis is rejected based on shreds of evidence that there is a difference between the availability of resources in public and private. However, the results through the data of questionnaire, observation, and checklist indicate that there are outdated and faulty measures in most schools (private and public), especially in the public sector. Most of the schools are operating security management without a proper baseline, trained and qualified guards, security management training for head teachers, the latest technology, and power supply to run school machinery.

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