

Freedom of expression as a child right: Comparison of public and private schools

Muhammad Basharat^{1*}, Munazza Ambreen²

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, AIOU, Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract: Children are among our most valuable population. According to Yamasaki (2002), access to basic education is the basic right of every child and it must be addressed on priority basis. Human rights that are considered basic child rights are education, equality in education, religious education, freedom of expression and selection of subjects of choice. The basic purpose of this study was to focus on freedom of expression as a right of child at school. The population of the study was 20 public schools and 20 private schools. Cluster and stratified random sampling design was used and the sample consisted of 40 head teachers, 80 elementary school teachers, 240 students of elementary level (three students taught by each sample teachers). The head teachers, teachers and students were classified into subgroups public and private to ensure the proper representation of relevant groups. Three kinds of questionnaires were developed on five point rating scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never), one for students, one for elementary school teachers, and one for head teachers. The reliability of all the questionnaires was greater than 0.90 (students 0.90, teachers 0.94, head teachers 0.91). The data was interpreted by using simple statistical techniques of percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test through SPSS version 21. The study concluded that private schools are found comparatively better than public schools regarding freedom of expression of students at school. It is recommended that ministry of education & training and federal directorate of education should work in collaboration to promote freedom of expression among students in public schools.

Key words: *Child right; Freedom of expression; School; Public; Private*

1. Introduction

According to UN Human right Handbook (2005), Human rights are all rights that an individual has. These are actually the sum of all individual and collective rights of a human being which are set in local and international laws.

According to Children Rights Information Network (2005), Child rights are defined as the right of an individual child and also the creation of the conditions in which all children grow up to their full potential.

Houwer (2013), describe learning as a modification in behavior and this is no doubt the basic purpose of our education. Reshaping a child's personality to a desirable form to make him suitable for a society is the basic aim of an education system. The process that continues till the end of life and it revolves around a child so his/her basic right must be well protected.

Lansdown G. (2011), stated that UN convention article 12 clearly states that every child has a right to express freely or the right to be heard. It imposes a responsibility on all governments, policy makers to ensure and to assist in all such steps which enable a child to express freely. Children who belong to minorities, who have disabilities must also be given the same right. Such groups need help to express

their mode which is necessary to support the expression. Article 12 states that Children must be heard as individuals in decision making, in legislation, in judicial matters etc. freedom of expression have many benefits such as improved decision making, democratic engagement and personal development. Bellamy (2003), states that children have ideas and insights that can enhance adult understanding.

Child Rights Education Toolkit (2014), encourages the participation of children in near environment (school, home, community). It also facilitates such participation. It demands that their decisions and opinions can be taken into account, these can be acknowledged also. CRE helps children to understand broader environments like natural and global and act at the same level.

Article 13 of convention on child rights describes that to get information and to share information is the basic right of a child. However, they can exercise this right only and if it is not harmful for them and for others. Children have to be careful that they have to share the responsibilities of respecting the right of expression of others. This right also gives a child freedom to choose the medium of expression for him. It can be drawing, writing or talking.

Child Right Convention (2006), states that keeping in view the maturity and age of child his/her views must be respected, and his/her opinion must be given weight. A child can participate in a

* Corresponding Author.

discussion and he must be considered however the degree of participation varies within and between societies.

Awan (2014), describes that education in twenty first century has gained much more important role in raise and fall of nations. It is because a global competition has emerged in 21st century in the field of education and technology. This competition is much needed for the development of a country. Awan (2011), also argues that Pakistan like all other countries have different types of school systems. If categorized, there are two basic systems private and public.

Although parents are responsible at home for giving children their right of freedom of expression. At school the main responsibility of protection of freedom of expression as child right rests with head teachers and teachers. The major objective of this study was to compare public and private schools regarding freedom of expression as a child right at school.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample

The target population included Islamabad Model Schools and different local community private schools were randomly selected. In order to make a representative sample of public and private schools, a sample of the study comprised of 20 public schools and 20 private schools. Cluster random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The sample consisted of 40 Head teachers, 80 Elementary school Teachers through cluster random technique, 240 Students of elementary level (three students taught by each sample teachers). The students were classified into subgroups public and private to ensure the proper representation of relevant groups.

2.2. Design of the study

It was a survey type study; questionnaires were used as tools of research to collect the data. Three kinds of questionnaires were developed on five point rating scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never) one for students, one for elementary school teachers and one for head teachers. The head teachers, elementary school teachers and students were classified into subgroups public and private to ensure the proper representation of relevant groups. Data was collected from students, teachers and head teachers. In order to get reliable information, schools were personally visited.

2.3. Null hypothesis

A null hypothesis (H_0) was developed for the current study as "There is no significant difference in public and private schools regarding freedom of expression as a child right at school".

2.4. Statistical procedure

Pilot testing was conducted in ten percent schools (Excluding sample size) of the target population and after it the reliability was checked by applying Cornbach Alpha and Factor Analysis on SPSS Programme respectively. The reliability of all the questionnaires are greater than 0.90 (students 0.90, teachers 0.94, head teachers 0.91).

The data has been analyzed by applying percentage, mean score, and t-test. To calculate Mean Score, following scale was used.

Always	: 5 points
Often	: 4 points
Sometimes	: 3 points
Rarely	: 2 points
Never	: 1 point

The Mean Score was calculated as following:

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{F_A \times 5 + F_O \times 4 + F_S \times 3 + F_R \times 2 + F_N \times 1}{N}$$

where

- F_A =Frequency of always responses
- F_O =Frequency of often responses
- F_S =Frequency of sometimes responses
- F_R =Frequency of rarely responses
- F_N =Frequency of never responses

The Percentage Score was calculated as following:

$$\text{Percentage Score} = \frac{\text{No.of responses}}{\text{Total No.of responses}} \times 100$$

The Standard Deviation was calculated as following:

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(X - \bar{X})^2}{n - 1}}$$

The Independent t-test was calculated as following:

$$t = \frac{M_x - M_y}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{\left(\sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N_x} \right) + \left(\sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{N_y} \right)}{N_x + N_y - 2} \right] - \left[\frac{1}{N_x} - \frac{1}{N_y} \right]}}$$

\sum = sum the following scores

M_x = mean for Group 1

M_y = mean for Group 2

X = score in Group 1

Y = score in Group 2

N_x = number of scores in Group 1

N_y = number of scores in Group 2.

3. Result and discussion

3.1. Result interpretation of student responses

Table 1 indicates that there is a significant difference between public and private students in freedom of expression as a child right school. Figures

show that private school students have more right of freedom of expression as compare to public school students (M=16.95, SD=2.83 and M=17.84, SD=2.12). The mean difference between students of public and private school students towards freedom of expression is 0.89 which is statistically significant as $p < .05$ with standard errors of difference 0.17.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation and t-value for significance difference between opinion scores of students of public and private schools on freedom of expression as a child right at school

Respondents	N	M	SD	t	Mean Difference	SE _D	p
Public	120	16.95	2.83	-5.72	-0.89	0.17	<.05
Private	120	17.84	2.12				

(M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SE_D= Standard Error Difference) N=240, df=238, p=.000

3.2. Result interpretation of teacher responses

Table 2 indicates that there is a significant difference between public and private students regarding freedom of expression as a child right at school. Figures show that teachers are of the view that private school students have more right of freedom of expression as compare to public school

students (M=16.98, SD=1.86 and M=18.75, SD=1.43). The mean difference between responses of public and private school teachers towards freedom of expression is 1.76 which is statistically significant as $p < .05$ with standard errors of difference 0.17.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and t-value for significance difference between opinion scores of teachers of public and private Schools on freedom of expression as a child right at school

Respondents	N	M	SD	t	Mean Difference	SE _D	p
Public	40	16.98	1.86	-10.03	-1.77	0.17	<.05
Private	40	18.75	1.43				

(M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SE_D= Standard Error Difference) N=80, df=78, p=.000

3.3. Result interpretation of head teacher responses

Table 3 indicates that there is no significant difference between public and private students regarding freedom of expression as a child right at school. Figures show that head teachers are of the view that public school students have more right of freedom of expression as compare to private schools

(M=5.66, SD=1.01 and M=5.43, SD=0.78). The mean difference between responses of public and private school head teachers towards freedom of expression is 0.24 which is statistically significant as $p < .05$ with standard errors of difference 0.12.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviation and t-value for significance difference between opinion scores of head teachers of public and private schools on freedom of expression as a child right at school

Respondents	N	M	SD	t	Mean Difference	SE _D	P
Public	20	5.66	1.01	2.02	0.23	0.12	<.05
Private	20	5.43	0.78				

(M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SE_D= Standard Error Difference) N= 40, d.f.=38, p=.041

4. Conclusion

Freedom of expression in the current study was related to teaching learning process at school. Questionnaire dealt with freedom of expression of students in the class for asking questions related to lectures, other learning activities and their free association with friends during the break time. When child right to express freely is compared results of the responses from students relate with the results obtained from responses of teachers, both have declared that private school better give the right of freedom expression. Responses of head teachers have a different result. Their responses show that

there is no difference between private and public schools regarding freedom of expression. On the average it can be conclude that private schools give more freedom to their students to express themselves.

5. Recommendation

It has been observed that teacher student ratio in majority of public sector school located in urban areas is very large. With such ratio freedom of expression as a child right is difficult to deal. It is recommended that CA&DD (Capital Administration Development Division) and federal directorate of

education should work in collaboration to promote freedom of expression among students as a basic right of child in public sector educational institutions.

References

- Awan, A.G. (2011). Changing world Economic and Financial Scenario. *Asian Accounting and Auditing Advancement*, Vol1, No.1 pp 148-173.
- Awan, A.G. and Kashif, S. (2014). Intellectual Capital and Research Performance of Universities in Southern Punjab-Pakistan. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, Vol.2 No.6 pp 21-39.
- Bellamy, C. (2003). *The State of the World's Children*, UNICEF
- Child Rights Education Toolkit (2014), *Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools*, UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP), Geneva.
- Children Rights Information Network (2005). *Save the Children*. UK 1 St. John's Lane London EC1M 4AR United Kingdom
- CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) (2006). Retrieved on February 25, 2016 from: http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30168.html
- Houwer, D.J. et al. (2013). What is learning? On the nature and merits of a functional definition of learning, *Psychon Bull Rev* DOI 10.3758/s13423-013-0386-3.
- Lansdown, G. (2011). *Every child's right to be heard*. Save the Children UK 1 St John's Lane London EC1M 4AR UK
- UN Human right Handbook (2005), Courand et Associés ISBN 978-92-9142-657-7 (IPU).
- Yamasaki, M (2002). *Human Rights Education: An Elementary School Level: Case Study*. Twin cities, USA. University of Minnesota - Education Policy and Administration / Comparative and International Development Education.