Perceptions Of School Heads Regarding Learning Environment At Secondary Level In Pakistan

Aftab Ahmad[1], Mudassir Hussain[1*], Mati Ullah[1], Irfan Ullah Khan[1], Shafqat Ullah[2], Hashim Ali[3]

[1]Department of Education & Research, University of Lakki Marwat, KP, Pakistan
[2]Department of Education and Psychology, KUST Kohat, KP, Pakistan
[3] School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China
 (Correspondence: mudassir@ulm.edu.pk)

Abstract

A learning environment Means an environment where students are physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally safe and satisfied by utilizing the required resources during the learning process. The population of the study comprised all public and private Secondary Schools in district Lakki Marwat while the target population of the study consisted of all School heads, teachers, and 10th Class boys. The number of (n = 71 public and 63 private school heads along with 395 public and 220 private school teachers as well as 2658 public and 2029 private school 10th class boys) were taken as samples of the study through a simple random sampling technique. Data were gathered via separate self-developed questionnaires on a 5-Points Likert scale with options Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The key purpose of the study was to compare perceptions of Public and Private Secondary School heads regarding the learning environment in Pakistan. The study was delimited to Lakki Marwat. The gathered data were statistically analyzed through SPSS by using t-test and One Way ANOVA to compare the two categories of institutions (Public and Private Secondary schools), and the responses of School Heads, Teachers, and students. The Results and conclusions were drawn regarding the perceptions of public and private secondary school heads by narrating that public schools had attractive buildings, adequate classrooms, and teaching equipment whereas private schools had attractive furniture, etc. Recommendations were suggested regarding further improvement of the learning environment in schools to compete in the modern world.

Keywords: Learning, Environment, Secondary Schools Heads, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Acton (2018) asserted that creating a learning environment is more essential and significant than focusing on a physical classroom where the learning environment doesn't take place. Asino and Pulay (2019) found that it is not too important to make the physical classroom more open and wide but it's very significant to provide such classrooms and spaces for students where they feel safety, happiness, satisfaction, and acquisition of knowledge transparently without any hesitation. Arkoudis et al., (2019) revealed that school administrators are ought to maintain different learning environments for students to ensure quality education such as learner-centred, community-centred, knowledge-centred, assessment-centred learning environments, etc. Baeten et al., (2016) highlighted that an effective learning environment is an environment in which the attention of students is focused on their learning experiences and their critical ideas as well as expertise that are helpful for their motivation and encouragement towards quality learning and academic achievements.

Figure 1: Effective Learning Environment

Figure 1 depicts the effective learning environment where all students are satisfied, happy and ready to learn in the classroom.

Childers, Williams, and Kemp (2014) stated that teachers having leadership qualities create a learning environment by fulfilling the needs of their students, they always remain positive in the classroom and provide feedback to students with satisfaction and safety. French, Imms, and Mahat (2019) explained that building a positive association between students and teachers via polite communication is very effective in developing a proper learning environment in the school. McNeil and Borg (2018) investigated that a better learning environment can be created by engaging, supporting, and connecting students with one another for learning purposes in the classroom. Ravelli (2018) described that authentic, transparent, and persistent assessment is very helpful in making the classroom environment effective for learning and academic achievement. Ramsay, Guo, and Pursel (2017) found that students' efforts are recognized and shared on a priority basis, for learning purposes in a good learning environment.

Literature Review

Mishra, Fahnoe, and Henriksen (2013) explained that acquaintance with culture, contexts, and diverse physical locations are also important for the creation of an effective learning environment. Day (2009) illustrated that the learning environment, directly and indirectly, affects motivation towards learning, safety, academic achievement, and an innovative approach to education. Stefanou et al., (2013) and Dorman (2014) described that the learning environment may be online and outdoor; it may be in physical surroundings and culture created by disciples and teachers. Physical surroundings include halls, classrooms, studios as well as indoor facilities for sports, etc. learning environment of any institution/school can be improved and developed through better management and assessment processes under supportive and talented teachers along with cooperative parents to promote the quality of learning environment in the school. Illeris (2009) pointed out that outstanding organizational culture including satisfactory working, praising behaviour and ways of creative thinking are all those factors that enhance the exemplary learning environment in any educational institution where leaders, scholars,

philosophers, doctors, professors, lawyers, and engineers are produced.

Thomas (2010) stated that teachers' action, behaviours, and indoor and outdoor dealings with students all play a significant role in the environment which support socio-emotional and academic learning. Bi (2015) probed that a learning environment can be developed and promoted if the psychological, instructional, and physical atmospheres in the classrooms are already existed and developed for ensuring a quality teaching-learning process and better schooling of students. Stichter et al., (2009) asserted that the concept of a learning environment was first originated by U.S researcher Dorothy Thomas in the 1920s which was later improved by another researcher Kurt Lewin in 1936 by narrating that creation of a learning environment is very essential for promoting quality education at all educational levels throughout the world. Talebi, Davodi, and Khoshroo (2015) pointed out that a positive learning environment includes a space that is well organized, bright, safe, and clean. Physical and emotional safety of students and teachers, students' encouragement towards learning, using different models for learning, availability of all teaching and learning resources, transparent quizzes, assessments, assignments, and presentations, regularity and promotion of both teachers and students, etc.

Leonard et al., (2017) explained that traditional learning classrooms are not appreciated in this modern era. Both teachers and students try to utilize the Internet, Multimedia, Skype, Facebook, Whatsapp, IMO, all Emails, Google Classroom and Google Zoom as well as other technological resources to enhance the teaching-learning process. Dorman and Fraser (2009) asserted that teachers and students of the day favour technological learning environments in schools rather than traditional and non-digital learning environments.
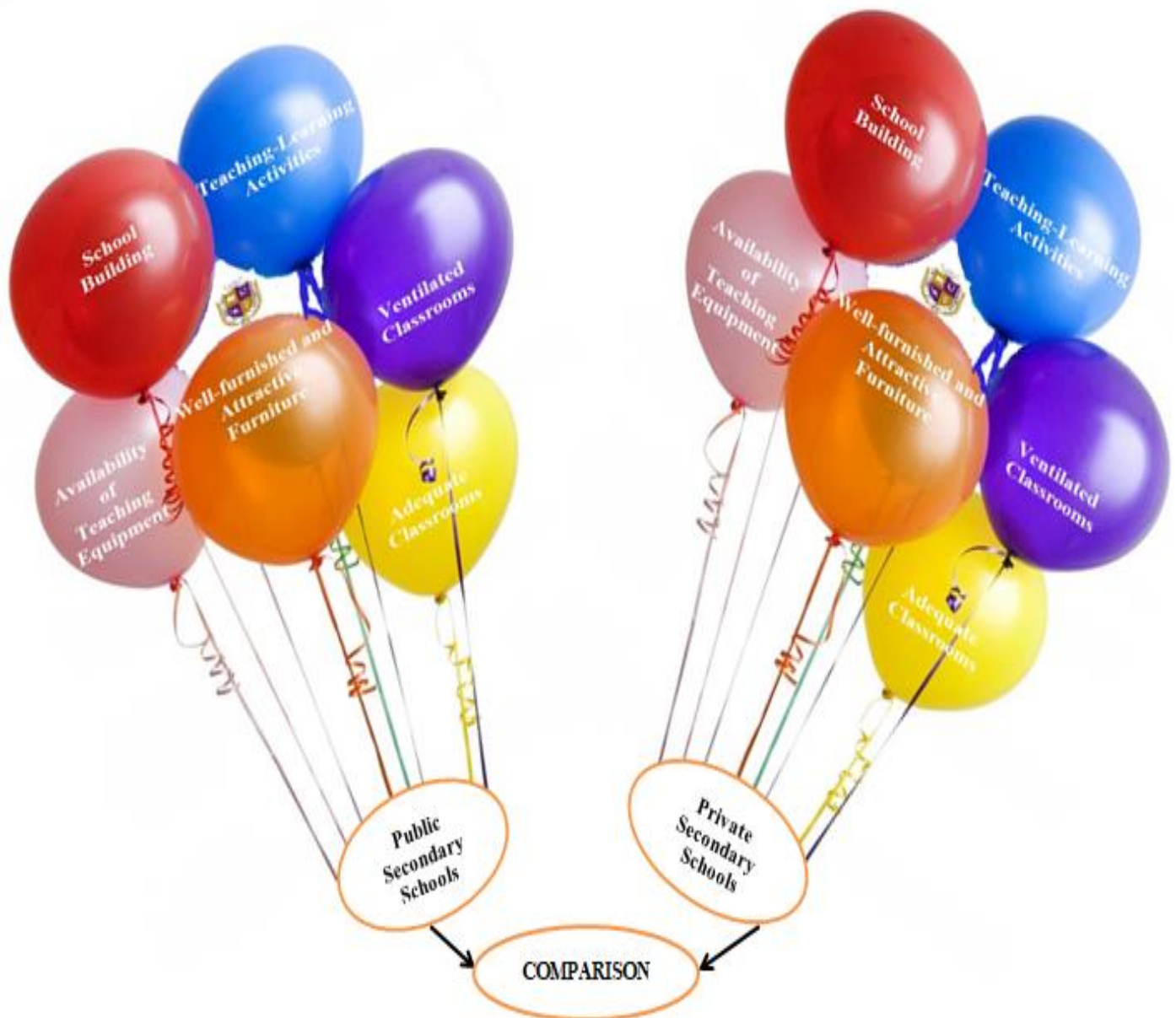
Conceptual Framework

Figure 2: Figure 2 indicates conceptual framework in which learning environment of Public and Private Secondary Schools have been compared from learning environment point of view.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:
1. To know the perceptions of public secondary school heads regarding the learning environment in Pakistan.
2. To know the perception of private secondary school heads learning environment in Pakistan.
3. To compare the perceptions of public and private secondary school heads regarding the learning environment in Pakistan.

Hypotheses of the Study

H_0: There was no significant difference between the perceptions of public and private secondary school heads regarding the learning environment in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

Design of the Study

The study was descriptive (Survey) type in nature.

The population of the Study
The population of the study consisted of all boys in public and private secondary schools in the district Lakki Marwat.

Target Population of the Study
The target population of the study comprised all school heads, teachers, and students (10th-class boys). The detail of the target population is shown in the table below:

Table 1

Target Population of the Study

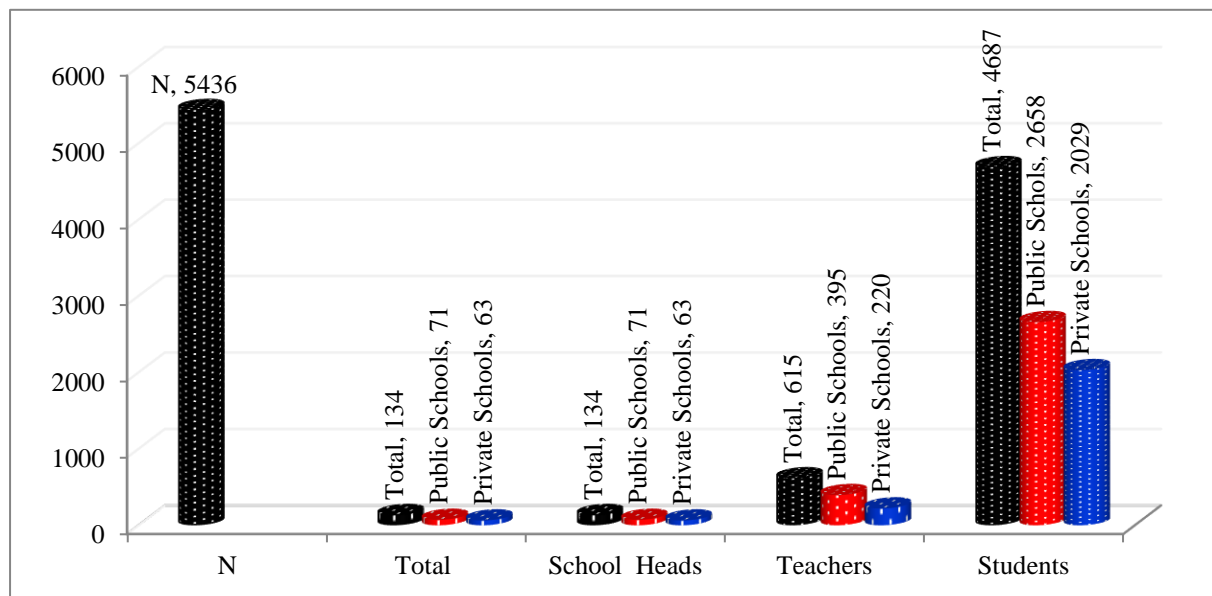| S. No	Schools	No of School	School Heads	Teachers	Students	N
1	Public School	71	71	395	2658	
2	Private School	63	63	220	2029	5436
3	Total	134	134	615	4687	

Figure 1: Source, District Education Office (Male) 2020 Lakki Marwat

Sample of the Study
The total number of (n = 309) respondents in which 13 school heads (7 public and 6 private school heads), 66 teachers (40 public and 22 private school teachers), and 234 students (133 public and 101 private school students) were taken as samples of the study through John Curry (1984) sample size rule of thumb by using a simple random sampling technique. The detail is shown in the table below:

Table 2: Sample of the Study

S. No	School Heads	Teachers	Students	N
1	7	40	133	
2	6	22	101	309
Total 13		62	234	
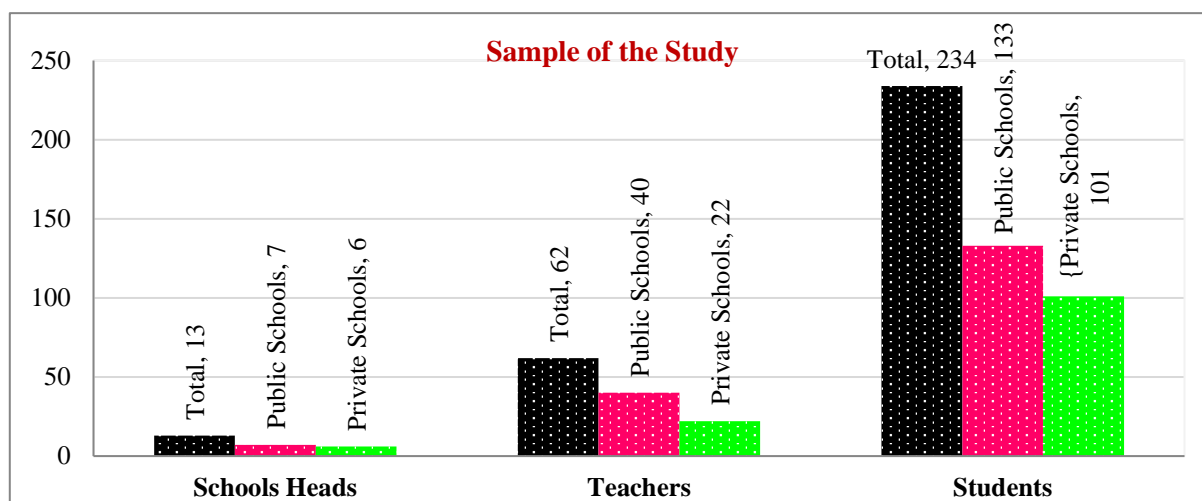
Figure 2: Sample of the Study

John Curry Sample Size Rule of Thumb

Size of Population	Sampling Percent
01-100	100%
101-1,000	10%
1,001-5,000	5%
5,000-10,000	3%
10,000 plus	1%

Results

Table 3: Learning Environment of Public and Private Secondary Schools in Pakistan

| S .No	Items	Schools	N	Mean	SD	df	p-value
1.	Attractive school building	Public	7	3.91	.908	208.94	.975
		Private	6	3.66	1.125		
2.	Well-ventilated classrooms	Public	7	3.84	.987	212.27	.506
		Private	6	3.84	.914		
3.	Attractive furniture	Public	7	3.77	1.014	188.52	.073
		Private	6	3.91	.850		
4.	Adequate classrooms	Public	7	4.04	.908	224.06	.996
		Private	6	3.79	.952		
5.	Availability of teaching	Public	7	3.86	.998	229.72	.239
	equipment	Private	6	3.84	.999		
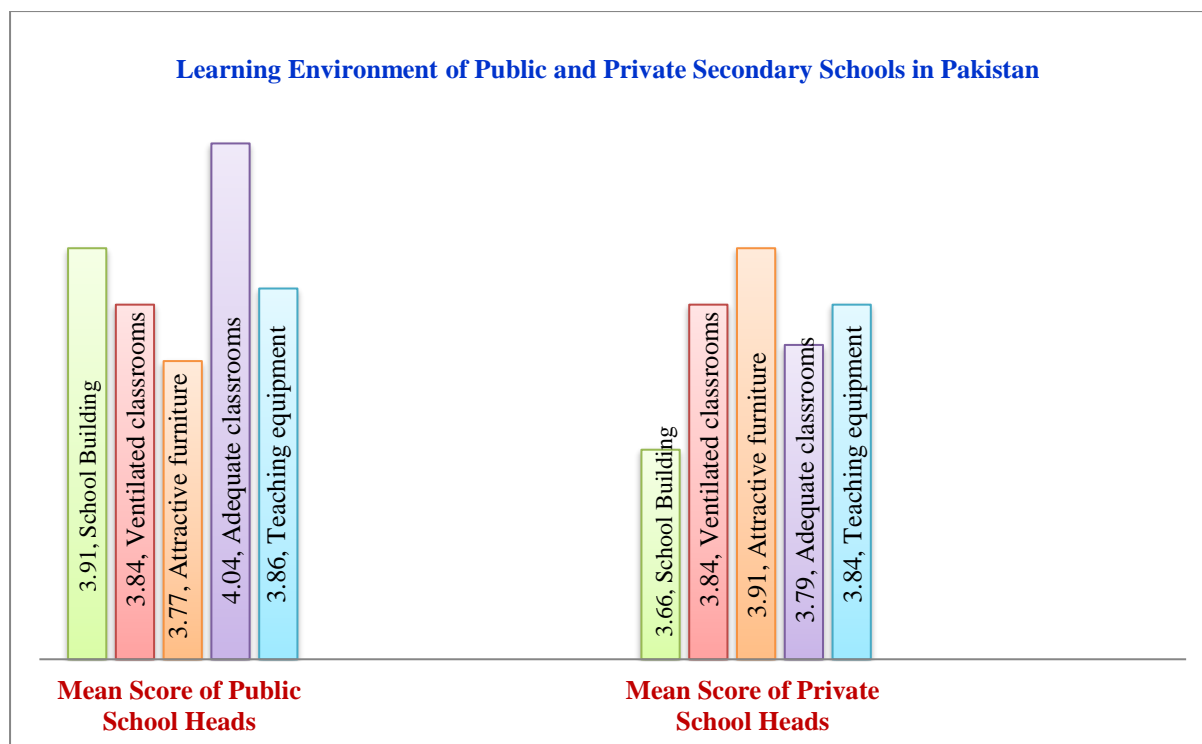
Figure 3: Mean Score of Public and Private Secondary Schools regarding Learning Environment

Table 3 along with the figure showed that the Public school's Mean score was "3.91", S.D ".908" and the private school's Mean score was "3.66", S.D "1.125" with df "208.94" and "p" value as .975 showing that significant difference between public and private secondary schools was found about attractive school building for teaching-learning process" by rejecting the null hypothesis. Likewise, the public school's Mean score was "3.84", S.D ".999" and the private school's Mean score was "3.84", S.D ".914" with df "212.27" and "p" value of .506 indicating a significant difference between public and private secondary schools regarding "well-ventilated classrooms". So null hypothesis was rejected. Public school Mean value was "3.77", S.D "1.014" and private school Mean value was "3.91", S.D ".850" with df "188.52" and "p" value .073 revealing a significant difference between public and private secondary schools about "attractive furniture". Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. .Public schools Mean score was "4.04", S.D ".908" and private school Mean score was "3.79", S.D ".952" with df "224.06" and "p" value was .996 representing the significant difference between public and private secondary schools about adequate classrooms" rejecting the null hypothesis. Public school's Mean value was "3.86", S.D ".998" and private school's Mean value was "3.84", S.D ".987" with df "229.72" and "p" value was .239 showing a significant difference between public and private secondary schools regarding availability of teaching equipment". Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The result of the current study indicates that public school buildings were found more attractive than private schools with a greater Mean value of public schools (3.91) than the Mean value of Private schools (3.66). Likewise, the statistical results of the current study indicated that the classrooms of both public and private schools were equally noted as well-ventilated having the same Mean score (3.84); the furniture was found better in private schools having (Mean value of 3.91) rather than public schools with (Mean value = 3.77). Similarly, public schools had adequate classrooms as

compared to private schools due to the higher Mean Score (4.04) of public schools while the Mean value of private schools was (3.79) n this regard. Furthermore, the results revealed that teaching equipment were more available in public schools than in private schools due to a greater Mean value that was (3.86) as compared to the Mean value of private schools (3.84). It was clarified in the light of the result of the study that the learning environment in public schools were noted better as compared to private schools as most of the requirements and needs of the public secondary schools were found more fulfilled and completed than in private secondary schools in Pakistan including the availability of adequate classrooms and teaching-learning resources etc.

According to previous studies by Dorman, Fraser, and McRobbie (1997), a positive relationship between teachers and students in the learning environment is very important where students feel safe and comfortable. In such an environment, teachers develop interest and provide them with an atmosphere which is free of depression, stress, anxiety, conflicts, and frustrations. The most important dimensions affecting students' learning experiences are their pedagogical, psychological, and physical directions due to which students can achieve their desired objectives in a specific period. Alemu (2014) revealed that Maintenance of strict rules and regulations of the institution i.e. taking strict exams by avoiding and discouraging cheating at all angles, in-time course completion, quality teaching, and other educational formalities such as assignments, presentations, quizzes, and test are all crucial and vital for promoting positive classroom environment in the school. Dorman, Fisher, and Waldrip (2006) stated that creating classroom culture and community is another crucial and vital aspect of promoting a safe and peaceful learning environment in the school in general and in the classroom in particular. The learning environment can be further enhanced and developed by introducing the use of the latest technology from an education perspective.

Students getting awareness and acquaintance with the latest technology in the educational system like teaching-learning through Multi-Media, Skype, Google Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Whatsapp, Facebook, Google Cloud, Email, and Internet, etc. is very important for developing quality and effective environment. Chris and Watkins (2007) highlighted that motivating students towards such a learning environment is based on determined and firm rules and regulations to maintain a positive environment and discipline to attain the desired goals. For this purpose, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are very important. Students learning environment will be highly promoted by utilizing all technological resources for their better learning and educational purposes in a short period. Furthermore, teachers, support is quite essential and effective in creating a positive learning environment for students in the school. Teachers can easily make students' learning environment far better and more attractive by resolving their language and communication barriers due to which their learning environment is badly affected.

Conclusions

The researcher concluded by keeping in view the objectives and results of the study that school heads were of the view that public schools had attractive buildings and adequate classrooms. The researcher further revealed that school heads thought that teaching equipment were more available in public schools as compared to private secondary schools. The researcher narrated that according to school heads, the school furniture of private schools were found better and more attractive as compared to public secondary schools. The researcher overall concluded that the learning environment of public schools were noted as better than private schools due to its attractive and facilitated buildings with adequate well-ventilated classrooms and other facilities that are needed and helpful in the teaching-learning process compared to private schools.

The researcher cited that teachers and students are ought to establish a learning culture in the school by fulfilling all the needs of students that are mandatory and helpful in creating an effective learning environment in the school or classroom. The researcher concluded that the provision of positive feedback, safety, and staying connected to promoting the best and quality teaching-learning environment is also highly essential so that better results and academic achievements may be ensured from all perspectives.

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