Effect of School Library on Students' Learning Attitude

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to unfold the perceptions of school teachers about the importance of school libraries in developing academic attitude among students. It is an attempt to know the opinion of teachers, what they perceive about the effect of the sue of libraries. For this purpose, 560 school teachers (male= 280 and female=280) were selected randomly from 70 public sector boys (35) and girls (35) high schools of Lahore district, Pakistan. An opinionnaire consisting of 16 items based on five point Likert Scale was developed and pilot tested on 70 school teachers. The reliability coefficient value was α=0.9154. Finally, the data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and t-test to compare the means at $p<0.05$ level of significance. The results indicated that male teachers are more in favor (mean= 66.64) than female teachers (mean= 63.91) about the fact that library has a significant role in developing learning attitude among students. They were selected because the teachers self fulfilling prophecy contributes a lot for the development of the child. Generally this area of consideration is almost neglected in Pakistani research circles. The focus of this study was to explore the facts in a novel way. What sort of differences are there in the opinion of male and female teachers regarding the library were also the questions to be answered in this study.

KEY WORDS: School library, academic attitude; learning attitude, effect of library, teachers' perception about library.

The role of libraries in societal development is very important. Libraries have always been playing a key role in the transmission of the cultural norms and beliefs of any nation. In Pakistan, different institutes, schools, colleges, universities, firms, establishments, research organizations and community center

have their own libraries. The goals and domains are adjusted according to the status and nature of the department (Poll, 2005; Evans, 2007). Usually library is a place which enables the students for self development and gives new orientation to their sense of imagination (Blair, 1998). School library, not only effects the achievements of students but their families also. The thinking of school about its library is its reflection towards education (The Association of Librarians and Information Managers, 2000; Baughman, 2000).

The primary goal of any school is to provide formal cordial environment for learning. As effective teaching and learning theory has shifted from a teacher-centered to a student-centered perspective, the school library media program has adapted and become more important than ever in achieving the school's goal (American Association of School Librarians, 1998). In this age of information technology, every one wants to be information literate by having skills and commitment for solving the problems. Communication skills are needed in a variety of ways. Libraries, resource centers, media and curriculum meet individual's needs and demands for a successful life (Finkle, Osborn, Heinis, Ryor, Lewis & Turner, 2000). Students need a learning environment that is free from threats and disturbances. Thus the library serves their purpose. School library provides a special learning environment, based on the school educational climate. They can work on their assignments individually as well as in group in this environment (Saetre & Willars, 2002; Lombello, 2003).

Attitude is considered as a learned temperament of an individual which he shows towards objects, happenings, events and fellow beings positively or negatively. This disposition is developed with the passage of time through formal and informal learning. The basic training of teachers and schools to student effects a lot in the coming years of life of a child. This early training of confidence building of student serves as an asset in higher levels (Akey, 2006). This sense of confidence enables them to be good learners and better performers. School library creates in them courage for accomplishment of life long tasks and enthusiasm for leaning the nature and nurture. School library extends a taste for learning and love for knowledge and books. Students become passionate and confident about their self and capabilities. Their feelings and imaginations are broadened. Saetre & Willars also suggested that "information literate students should be competent independent learners, aware of their information needs and actively engage in the world of ideas, display confidence in their ability to solve problems and know what is relevant information, flexible and able to function both individually and in groups" (Saetre & Willars, 2002:20).

Students are empowered by the libraries not only in learning but also to fix and enjoy a variety of choices. School Library helps a child in his all sorts of developments. It broadens his vision about the nature and functions. It creates a sense of discipline and cooperation in them (Association for Librarians and Information Managers, 2000). New technological resources are helpful in shaping the behavior of the child. Children are provided ample opportunities for working

in groups. This skill helps them to work independently and cooperatively (IASL, 2003). People from diverse socio backgrounds work together for common goals. Researches indicated that the school library makes an important contribution to students' personal development by providing them with skills which can be applied both by them in and out of school, expands all students' horizons and interests, acts as a promoter of reading in the broadest sense.

The role of the library, in promoting positive self-esteem and conceptual attitude is very crucial (Hopkins, 1989). It is rightly said that powerful libraries indeed, make powerful learners (Lance, Curry, Rodney & Pannell, 2005). The staff of the libraries also helps the learners for developing skills in locating resources and how to use the library services. They perform their job as consultants and counselors (Lowe, 2000; Saetre & Willars, 2002). Each and every child has the right to get opportunities. The library is considered as heart of the institute or education system. Much of these school experiences are learned and achieved through library. Baughman in 2000 after different studies, was of the opinion that there is a link between use of school libraries and the student's achievement. Students who have the opportunity of use of library, get exposure from the new media and materials which influence their sense of reading, learning, thinking and scholarly enjoyment. "Such types of stimulations create the feelings of self-directed learning, investigation, positive self-concept, independence, confidence, group work etc. which are all considered as the part of their attitude towards learning" (Baughman, 2000:8).

Method and Procedure

In order to gather opinion of school teachers about the effect of library in developing learning attitude among students a survey was considered as the most feasible method.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was comprised of all the male and female teachers of public sector boys and girls schools of District Lahore, Pakistan. Lahore is the capital of Punjab province. Sample of the study comprised of 580 male and female teachers were selected randomly from 70 randomly selected public sector boys and girls high school. 280 Male and 280 female teachers were selected from 35 boys high schools and 35 girls high schools. From each school, eight teachers were selected randomly.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was an opinionnaire consisting of 16 statements. It was developed on the basis of five point Likert scale. This instrument was pilot tested upon a sample of 70 teachers. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS and the value of reliability coefficient was α= 0.9154. The items of this opinionnaire were related to the effects of use of library on students' learning attitude. Through this opinionnaire, the data was collected from the sample subjects.

Results

Table 1: Effect of library on students' learning attitude

S. No	Statements	Mean	Stand. Deviation
1	Library provides feeling of positive and welcoming learning environment.	4.28	.74
2	Library encourages students towards lifelong learning.	4.23	.80
3	Library creates love for learning among students.	4.22	.85
4	Library gives students a sense of confidence in doing school work.	4.15	.85
5	Use of library enhances the learning skills and competencies.	4.13	.81
6	Library effects positively on study habits of students.	4.11	.86
7	Library motivates students for further readings.	4.10	.80
8	Library helps in arousing self-directed learning among students.	4.10	.80
9	Library provides basis for accepting challenges in learning environment.	4.09	.82
10	Library encourages positive attitude towards studies.	4.03	.91
11	Library develops a feeling of responsibility for learning.	4.03	.91
12	Library promotes positive self concept in students.	4.00	.84
13	Library gives aesthetic experience and appreciation of knowledge.	3.99	.81
14	Library gives a boost to students' general understanding of facts.	3.95	.89

15	Library provides students an experience for learning social and democratic living.	3.95	.91
16	Library gives an orientation to students for searching new realities.	3.92	.90

(Note: Strongly disagreed=1, Disagreed=2, Undecided=3, Agreed=4, Strongly agreed=5)

Table 1, indicates the variation in opinion of school teachers about the library's effect on academic and learning attitude of students. Most of the school teachers perceive that use of library has an impact in the area of providing the students with a feeling of positive and welcoming learning environment (Mean= 4.28; Std Dev= 0.724) followed by the areas encouragement towards lifelong learning (Mean= 4.23; Std Dev= 0.80), in developing love for learning (Mean= 4.22; Std Dev= 0.85) and in doing school work confidently (Mean= 4.15; Std Dev= 0.85). Whereas orientation to students for searching new realities (Mean= 3.92; Std Dev= 0.90) is least affected area followed by the areas experiencing social and democratic living (Mean= 3.95; Std Dev= 0.91) and boost for general understanding (Mean= 3.95; Std Dev= 0.89). Mean score calculated for all areas is ranged from 3.92 to 4.28. Rest of the areas like motivation for further reading (Mean= 4.10; Std Dev= 0.80), 'accepting challenges in learning environment (Mean= 4.09; Std Dev= 0.82), 'positive attitude towards learning' (Mean= 4.00; Std Dev= 0.84) and aesthetic experience and appreciation of knowledge' (Mean= 3.99; Std Dev= 0.81) stretch out between this range. The mean values for all the statements which are greater than 03 indicate that teachers are in favor of all the factors contributing towards positive learning attitude. Therefore, it is concluded on the basis of teachers' opinions that library is very important for developing positive learning attitudes in students. Due to use of library positive learning attitude among students is developed which further leads towards the improvement in their academic achievement.

Table 2: Difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers about effects of using library on students' learning attitude

Gender	N	Mean	t-value
Male	280	66.64	3.354*
Female	280	63.93	

*p < 0.05 level of significance, df = 558.

Table 2 indicates that t-value (3.376) is significant at p<0.05 level of significance. There is also a difference between mean value for male teachers and mean value for female teachers. It is obvious from the results that male teachers (66.64) are more in favor than female teachers (63.91) about the fact that library

has a positive impact on students learning attitude. It is therefore concluded that male and female teachers have different perceptions about effect of library on students' learning attitude and behavior.

Conclusion

The basic aim of this study was to gain the perceptions of school teachers about the importance of libraries and also the effects of using these libraries on the academic and learning attitude of students. The results of this study show that teachers have favorable opinion about the benefits of use of library in developing positive attitude among students towards their academics. This study also revealed that male and female teachers differ in their perceptions about the effects of libraries on students' learning attitude. Male teachers perceived the use of school library more favorably than female teachers for students academic behaviour and attitude. This study also leads to the significance and need of detailed studies in this area which can be an initiative for developing libraries at institutional and public levels. The culture for use of library should be promoted from the early years of schooling. This will enable our young generation them for purposeful living in this technological era by equipping them with reading habits. There is a need of teachers' training in the context of importance of use of materials and latest technologies for effective learning.

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