

Original Article

Determining the Role of Government and Administration in Influencing Student's Satisfaction: A Perspective of Teachers from Public and Private Sector Colleges

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ABSTRACT

Background: The quality of education in higher institutions is a crucial factor influencing student satisfaction, with the role of government and administration being particularly significant. In Pakistan, the differing impacts of these factors in public and private sector colleges raise important questions regarding their effectiveness in enhancing student satisfaction.

Objective: This study aims to analyze the role of government and administration in developing student satisfaction in private and public sector medical colleges in Pakistan, providing insights into the dynamics between government policies, administrative practices, and student satisfaction.

Methods: A qualitative research design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with five teachers from both private (n=3) and public (n=2) sector medical colleges in Pakistan. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data, focusing on the relationship between government and administration roles and student satisfaction.

Results: The findings reveal a complex relationship between government initiatives, administrative efficiency, and student satisfaction. In public colleges, the lack of efficient administrative follow-up hinders the effective implementation of government policies, adversely affecting student satisfaction. In contrast, private colleges demonstrate a more effective alignment between government policies and administrative execution, leading to enhanced student satisfaction.

Conclusion: The study highlights the need for improved administrative practices in public colleges to effectively translate government policies into positive student experiences. It underscores the importance of a synergistic approach where government initiatives and administrative efficiency work hand in hand to enhance student satisfaction in both public and private sector colleges.

Keywords: Student Satisfaction, Government Role, Administration, Public Sector Colleges, Private Sector Colleges, Pakistan, Educational Quality.

INTRODUCTION

The exploration of student satisfaction in the context of higher education reveals it as a multifaceted construct, deeply interwoven with the quality of educational experiences. This satisfaction is not only a critical indicator of educational quality but also a reflection of the cumulative impact of various factors, including facilities and experiences within educational centers (2). A pivotal aspect in this regard is the role of administration and government, particularly in ensuring service quality, which has a noted correlation with student satisfaction (3). The administrative structures at colleges and universities are fundamental in upholding the service quality standards, thereby directly influencing student satisfaction (4).

In Pakistan, the government's efforts to enhance the educational infrastructure, through financial contributions and personal training, underscore its commitment to improving education quality (5). However, despite these initiatives, there is an apparent gap in educational planning for sustainable development in higher education institutes, indicating a need for more targeted strategies (6). This scenario raises critical questions about the efficacy of government and administrative actions in fostering student satisfaction, particularly in public and private sector colleges.

A literature review reveals a lack of direct evidence regarding the influence of government and administration on student satisfaction at the college level. However, at the university level, particularly concerning PhD students, the academic qualifications of supervisors, though essential, do not significantly impact satisfaction. Instead, factors such as departmental support and academic attributes are more indicative of student satisfaction, suggesting the need for better collaboration between departments and PhD supervisors to enhance satisfaction levels (7).

In Pakistan, educational challenges are often attributed to inadequate governance and management, emphasizing the necessity of effective leadership styles in educational institutions. These leadership styles must be adaptable to global educational standards and capable of implementing necessary process reforms and restructuring in education (8). Further, student satisfaction has been linked with various factors like the quality of academic staff, university facilities, degree programs, administrative staff, university location, and university image, with each of these elements contributing to the overall satisfaction levels (9).

The role of government is not limited to direct interventions but also extends to indirect influences such as emphasizing teacher satisfaction. Enhancing teacher satisfaction can lead to more positive attitudes towards students and, consequently, higher levels of student satisfaction. This can be achieved through initiatives like teacher workshops and training programs, which also aid in improving course curriculums and teaching quality (10).

Despite these insights, there remains a gap in directly linking government and administrative actions to student satisfaction within colleges. This gap is highlighted by the moderate level of student satisfaction and Internal Quality Assurance Programs in Higher Education Institutes, as assessed by top managers and student representatives. A favorable correlation between student contentment and these programs was observed, suggesting that enhanced internal quality assurance could be a key factor in improving student satisfaction (11). This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of student satisfaction and the need for a nuanced understanding of the roles played by government and administration in shaping this crucial aspect of higher education.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methodology employed for this study was grounded in a qualitative research design, chosen for its effectiveness in exploring complex phenomena by gathering in-depth insights, particularly in educational settings (12). This approach was deemed most suitable for understanding the nuanced roles of government and administration in shaping student satisfaction within medical colleges in Pakistan, a context where qualitative insights are pivotal (13).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers from both private and public sector medical colleges. The sample comprised five teachers, with three selected from private colleges and two from public institutions. This sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation in qualitative research, where the number of participants is less critical than the depth of information they provide (13). However, it is acknowledged that this small, purposefully chosen sample may limit the generalizability of the study's findings. To mitigate this, a non-probability sampling technique was employed, specifically chosen for its cost-effectiveness and efficiency in contexts where a controlled selection is not feasible (14).

The semi-structured interview format included a series of open-ended questions, developed through an extensive review of relevant literature and pilot tested for clarity and relevance (15). These interviews aimed to elicit detailed responses about the participants' perceptions and experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was conducted in a comfortable setting to ensure candid responses.

Data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that facilitates the identification of patterns or themes within qualitative data (15). This involved a systematic process of coding the data and identifying themes that emerged. To enhance the reliability and validity of the analysis, a combination of manual coding and software-assisted analysis was employed, using NVivo for data organization and initial coding (16).

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were also assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. Measures were implemented to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participant responses, addressing potential concerns regarding the sensitivity of providing feedback about government and administrative practices (17).

The study's methodology, while robust in its approach to capturing qualitative data, was not without limitations. The subjective nature of qualitative analysis and the potential for researcher bias were acknowledged and addressed through strategies such as reflexive journaling and peer debriefing (18). Moreover, the findings' applicability to other contexts may be limited due to the specific focus on medical colleges in Pakistan and the small, non-randomly selected sample.

RESULTS

The thematic analysis of the interviews conducted with teachers from both public and private medical colleges in Pakistan yielded insightful findings on the relationship between student satisfaction and the role of government and administration.

Theme 1: Student Satisfaction and its Relationship with Government and Administration

A teacher from a private college highlighted the implicit connection between student satisfaction and governmental or administrative roles, stating: "Yeah, there exists a relationship between student satisfaction and the government or administration. It might not be highlighted upfront, but majorly the background operations and standards are the ultimate result of these aspects. The government provides the basic orientation regarding the development of better services for the students and it supports enhanced student satisfaction." This perspective underscores the indirect yet significant impact that government policies and standards have on student satisfaction within private colleges (16).

Impact of Government Initiatives and Administrative Practices on Student Satisfaction

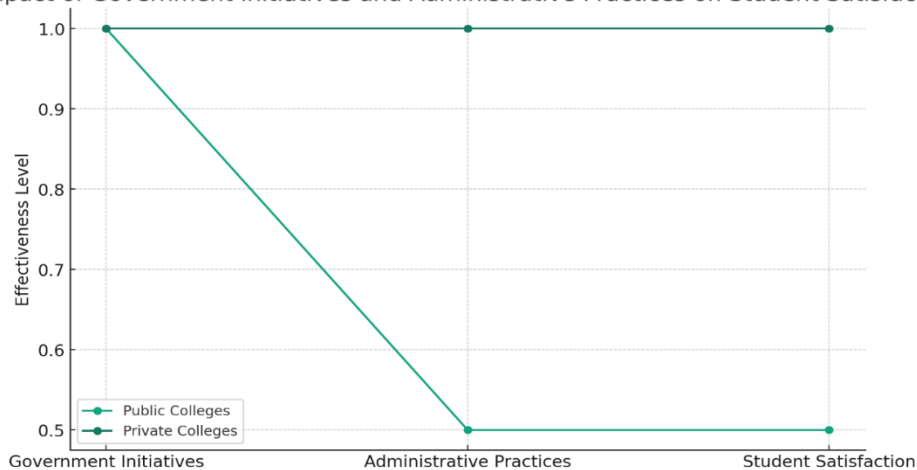


Figure 1 Schematic Representation of Themes

Conversely, a teacher from a public sector college pointed out the direct relationship between government actions and student satisfaction: "I am quite sure that these are interrelated, as the students get registered to the government through the college, and the government tries to take care of these students in different ways. The students get the feasibility of quality education and other aspects. But here, the administration of these policies and standards lacks efficient follow-up." This view reflects the notion that while government initiatives aim to improve student satisfaction, the administrative execution often falls short, thereby impacting the effectiveness of these measures in public colleges (16).

Theme 2: Factors Related to Government and Administration for Maintaining Student Satisfaction

Regarding the actions of government in private colleges, a teacher noted: "It works in multiple ways, but for the private ones, the main includes setting standards for education and then monitoring them. The monitoring aspect includes the major aspect of making routine tours to colleges and applies penalties in case of any mistake from the side of colleges." This response highlights the government's role in establishing educational standards and ensuring compliance through monitoring and enforcement (17).

In the context of public colleges, another teacher remarked: "The power and authority here make the difference, government work for the development of different possibilities and feasibilities to support the students, but in that way of reaching those facilities to students, the facilities get parted in different sections. Sometimes the student gets free books and other stuff, and sometimes they don't. Moreover, the administration is lacking so, on few occasions, staff issues are also developed." This comment sheds light on the inconsistencies and administrative challenges in the implementation of government policies in public colleges, affecting student satisfaction (17).

These findings reveal a nuanced understanding of how government and administration influence student satisfaction in both private and public medical colleges. The government's role is perceived as more indirect yet foundational in private colleges, setting standards and policies. In contrast, in public colleges, the government's direct initiatives often suffer from administrative inefficiencies, leading to uneven implementation and impact on student satisfaction. These insights contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting student satisfaction in the context of higher education in Pakistan.

DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis reveals a complex interplay between government actions, administrative efficacy, and student satisfaction within both public and private sector colleges in Pakistan. Government involvement, while crucial, manifests differently in these two sectors, primarily influenced by administrative practices.

In public colleges, government oversight is a significant factor in determining student satisfaction. However, the effectiveness of government initiatives often gets undermined by administrative shortcomings. The lack of efficient follow-up and implementation of government-sponsored services is a critical issue in these institutions, directly impacting student satisfaction (18). This suggests that while the government's role in policy-making and provision of services is essential, the ultimate impact on student satisfaction hinges on the administrative machinery's ability to effectively manage and deliver these services.

Conversely, in the private sector, the government's role is more focused on setting background standards and policies. Here, the administration seems to play a more effective role in aligning these standards with operational specifications, leading to improved student satisfaction (19). This indicates a more robust administrative framework within private institutions, which aligns well with government policies and contributes positively to student satisfaction.

The study underscores the pivotal role of both government and administration in shaping student satisfaction. While the government lays down the policies and standards, their successful implementation largely depends on the administrative bodies within the colleges. For public sector colleges, improving administrative practices is crucial for translating government initiatives into tangible student benefits. In contrast, private sector colleges demonstrate a more effective alignment between government policies and administrative execution, leading to better student satisfaction outcomes.

The findings highlight the need for a cohesive approach where government policies are complemented by efficient administrative practices. This dual focus is imperative for enhancing the quality of education and student satisfaction in both public and private sector colleges in Pakistan. The study suggests that while government involvement is necessary, its impact is maximized only when coupled with competent and effective administration, particularly in the public sector. Therefore, recommendations are directed towards improving the infrastructure for monitoring and implementing educational policies effectively across both sectors (20-22).

CONCLUSION

The study conclusively establishes the critical role of government and administration in shaping student satisfaction in both public and private sector colleges in Pakistan. It underscores the necessity of efficient administrative practices as pivotal for the effective translation of government policies into enhanced student experiences and satisfaction. While government initiatives set the framework for quality education, their success is intimately tied to the administrative machinery's ability to implement these policies effectively. This interdependency calls for a strategic focus on strengthening administrative capacities, particularly in public colleges, to ensure that governmental efforts yield the desired outcomes in student satisfaction. The findings carry significant implications for policy makers and educational administrators, advocating for a synergistic approach where government initiatives are supported by robust and efficient administrative structures to foster an environment conducive to student satisfaction and educational excellence.

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