

ASSESSING QUALITY OF EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF KATHMANDU

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Abstract

Quality of education determines the quality of human resources of any country making education a cornerstone of societal and personal development. The two educational systems in Nepal- private and government schools have a disparity and the lack of comparative analysis pointing out the indicators of quality education is missing. Government schools in Kathmandu are facing serious challenges that affect the quality of education they provide. This study aims to understand the quality of education in private and government schools focusing through grade 6 to 10 where teaching methods, infrastructures, academic performances and dropout rates are compared. The research used a cross sectional research design to collect data and the data was collected using a mixed method approach to neutralize the limitations where 2 private and 2 government schools of Kathmandu. The analysis of the data revealed that the gap in providing quality education is as significant as people assume it to be. Private schools comparatively are performing better in academic performances where the average score is 0.23 higher in grade 10 than government schools. It was also found that the teaching methods are better in private schools compared to the government. The teachers also felt that focusing on practical learning, integration of technology while the parents are equally involved in their child's education brings better results and impacts the quality of education. The findings suggest that government policies should be stronger for government schools and even provide teacher training frequently in this fast paced world.

Keywords : Quality education, private schools, government schools

1 Introduction

Education is a broad term which at its core is related to transformation of knowledge, learning, teaching and experiences from one generation to another acquiring a new skill set, knowledge, values and attitudes through (Doharey, Verma, Verma, & Yadav, 2023). Emile Durkheim defines education as the socialization of the younger generation and further states that education is a continuous effort to impose on child ways of seeing, feeling and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously.

Access to education was limited to the elite and ruling class until 1950, i.e., the Rana regime (Wood, 1965). A number of initiatives have been taken in Nepal to improve the quality of education after the fall of the Ranaregime in 1951. Nepal's educational landscape has undergone significant transformation and changes since 1950 which led to expansion of both government and private schools (Gautam, 2023). While the private schools are funded by tuition-fees the government schools are state-funded and aim to provide affordable and free education to the

population (MoEST, 2020).

Students in private schools perform better than government school students, one of the reasons being

parents paying for their education and not being funded by the government which creates a pressure to perform better (Barillas, 2009). There is often a significant gap between the quality of education in government and private schools in terms of academic results, student enrollment, teaching strategies/methods, school infrastructure and the instructional materials used in the classroom which has reduced the confidence of people in government schools of Kathmandu.

Private schools typically follow a well-organized and efficient system, whereas government schools tend to have a more passive and less effective approach (Bhattarai, 2015). Concerns over the standard and quality of education in public schools have grown recently, despite a significant expansion in the field of education (Bhatta, 2008; Joshee, 1994; Sharma, 2012; Thapa, 2012)

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2 Research Methods

The research study adopted cross-sectional research design with primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data was collected using a mixed method approach that is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. 4 schools, 2 public and 2 private schools were selected for the survey using purposive method. Teachers and student from grade 6 to 10 were invited to participate in the study through a set of structured questionnaire with open ended questions to assess the quality of education between the two education systems. To analyze the qualitative data, thematic analyses was adopted while quantitative data was collected using Likert scale, multiple choice questions and yes no questions.

3 Results

3.1. Demographic Details

This section presents the demographic details of respondents who participated in the study. 29 students from grade 6 through 10 participated in this study. The age category was between 10 to 16 years. Out of total respondents 10 female and 9 male students participated from private school while 6 female and 4 male students participated from government schools. There were 4 female and 3 male teacher respondents from private schools and 4 male teachers from government schools.

3.2 Academic Performance of the Private and Government School

The comparison between the two education systems illustrated that there are small differences between private and government school students from grade 7 through grade 10. Comparing the average results of grade 7, the difference between private schools and government schools is 0.6. Likewise, for grade 8 the difference is of only 0.14. However, where private school has a slightly higher average grade is in grade 9 and grade 10 with difference being 0.58 and 0.23 respectively.

Table 1: Comparing the average academic grade of private and government schools

	Grade	Private School	Government School
Final results	6	3.79	N/A
	7	3.4	2.8
	8	3.43	3.29
	9	3.7	3.12
	10	3.3	3.07

Comparing Academic Performance in the last five years

The students were asked, “Has your academic performance (GPA/ Percentage) improved, remained the same or degraded over the past 5 years?” 5.3% of

the total private school students sample said that their performance has degraded. 21.1% of students said that their academic performance has remained the same while 73.7% of students mentioned that their performance has improved in the last 5 years.

Following up on this, the students were asked about the factors that influenced their academic performance where they ranged from effective teaching methods to better school infrastructures. The question asked was: “What factors do you believe have influenced your GPA or percentage during this time?” Multiple responses were recorded for this such as:

1. Effective Teaching method
2. Technological Integration
3. Students Effort
4. School Infrastructure and Resources
5. Others

Teacher- Student Interaction

The survey included a ‘yes-or-no’ question to determine whether teachers in private schools were approachable outside the classroom. The results showed that 93.73% of students from private schools agreed that their teachers were available for guidance or extra questions, while 5.26% felt otherwise.

Similarly, a likert scale was included in the survey to assess the satisfaction level of students with the ‘teacher-student’ interaction, where 1 being the lowest satisfaction and 5 being the highest. 5 students out of 19 rated 5 (very satisfied), 10 students rated 4 (satisfied), 3 students gave it a 3 (neutral) and 1 student rated 2 (dissatisfied).

Teacher Feedback on Academic Performance

When teachers provide feedback that highlights students’ strengths, it not only helps students improve their learning but also identifies areas where they need further to grow. This creates an unbreakable bond between feedback and students’ academic success (Al Maharma&Abusa'aleek, 2022). To explore this dynamic, students from both private and government schools were surveyed about the frequency of feedback they receive from their teachers to ensure quality education. In private schools, 63.15% of students reported that they often receive feedback on their academic performance, which helps them stay on track. Additionally, 26.31% of students said they always receive feedback, while 10.52% sometimes do. In governmentschools, only 20% always receive feedback, 30% often, 30% sometimes, 10% rarely, and 10% never. This shows private schools provide more consistent feedback. It is clearly visible that private school teachers focus more on providing students feedback to improve their academic performance while there are few students who do not get feedback in government schools on their

performance illustrating lack of attention and oversight from faculty in government schools of Kathmandu.

Homework and Study Hours

The findings from private schools show that a small proportion of students that is 5.26% spend 31 plus hours studying in a week, the majority of the students which is 31.58% spend 3 to 5 hours studying outside of school in a week which has positively influenced their academic performance.

The findings from government schools illustrated that majority of students, 44.44% in government schools spend 3 to 5 hours per week studying outside of classrooms followed by 33.33% spending 6 to 10 hours. Similarly, 11.11% spend 21 to 30 hours in a week but the other 11.11% studies only 0.5 to 2 hours each which impacts their academic performance.

Comparing the two responses, students in government schools typically study less than those in private schools.

3.3 Drop out

Private school teachers pointed out that that there are quite a few students that drop out but could not provide a specific number. Private schools have an average of 0.67% of dropout rates while the average dropout rate in government school is found to be approximately 3% due to families residing temporarily in the area and parents relocating for work

3.4. Assess Infrastructure Facilities

Table 2: Infrastructures available in private and government schools based on students perspective

S..N	Infrastructure	Private School	Government School
1.	Library	✓	✓
2.	Comfortable desk and chairs	✓	✓
3.	Computers with internet access	✓	✓
4.	Drinking water supply	✓	✓
5.	Science Lab	✓	✓
6.	Projector	✓	
7.	Toilets in good condition	✓	✓

The result depicts that infrastructures like library, desk and chair, computer with internet access, drinking water supply, science lab, projector and toilets in good condition prevail in private schools. While all the other infrastructures tick the box, projector in government schools are not available as they have been switched to smart boards for grade 6 to 10.

Students Rating on Availability of Learning Resources and Infrastructure

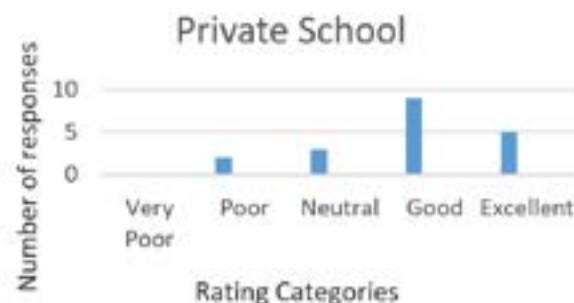


Figure 1: Rating available infrastructure and learning resources for private school (Source: Data collected from survey)

Building, classrooms, laboratories, educational infrastructure are crucial factors that improve student outcomes and reduce dropout rates (Teixeira J., Amoroso J., & Gresham J., 2024). While 2 students rated the available learning resources as 'poor,' 3 students rated 'neutral.' Covering a huge proportion, 9 students, which makes 47.36% of the total private school sample, reported that the infrastructure and learning resources were 'good,' and 5 students, which makes approximately 26.32% of the private school students, reported 'excellent' satisfaction with the resources and infrastructure available in their school.

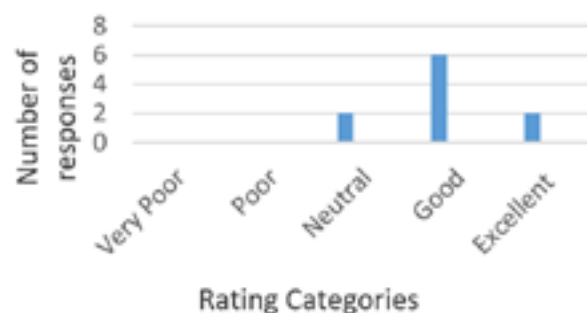


Figure 2: Rating available infrastructure and learning resources for government school (Source: Data collected from survey)

According to the data collected, no students in government schools rated below 'neutral.' 20% of the students rated the availability of the infrastructure as 'good,' while other 20% rated them 'excellent.'

Thus, comparing the ratings of infrastructures between the two education systems, it was revealed that private schools have a mean score of 3.89 with a minimum score of 2 and maximum score of 5 while government schools have a mean score of 4 with minimum score of 3 and maximum score of 5. While there is significantly a smaller difference regarding rating the availability of learning resources and infrastructure in their respective schools, data summarizes the fact that government school students are more satisfied with the available infrastructures and learning resources than private school students.

To Evaluate the Perception of Students and Teachers regarding Quality of Education

Student Perception

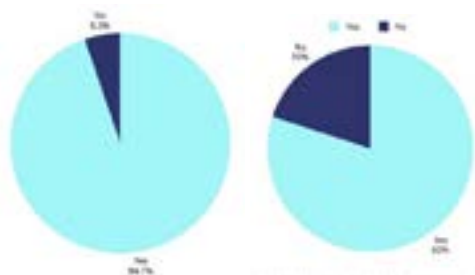


Figure 3: Teachers Approachability in School (Source: Data collected from survey)

The students were asked how approachable and interactive teachers were which produced two sets of data from private and government schools. Figure 3 shows pie chart presenting teachers approachability where 94.7% of students find teachers approachable and interactive outside classrooms while 5.3% don't in private schools.

On the other hand, 80% of students in government schools find teachers approachable and interactive but the other 20% feels differently in government schools.

This shows that the relation and interaction between teachers and students also plays a significant role in providing quality education as students perform better and have interest in studying. This is also validated by scientific literature by Fang Zheng- 'Fostering Students' Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Teacher Interpersonal Behavior and Student-Teacher Relationships.'

Pedagogical Method

"Does your school focus on practical learning and use real life examples?" was a survey question for the students which revealed that all students in private school voted 'yes' while 1 student (10%) from government school voted 'no'.

The students further mentioned that some teachers still prefer traditional methods of teaching and learning where they heavily rely on textbooks, reading them out loud and giving notes for students to write.

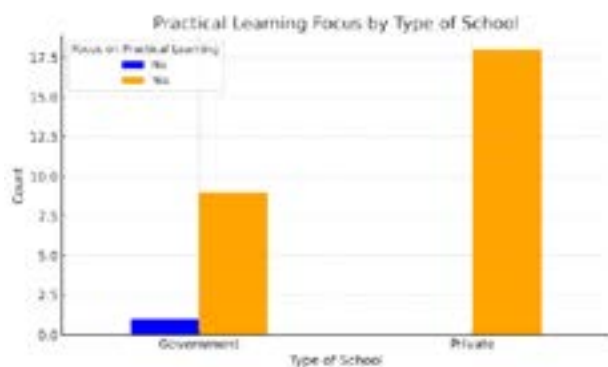


Figure 4: School focusing on practical and real life examples

Student Satisfaction

The research examined the student satisfaction rate where 3 students (15.79%) of the total private school students sample rated the teaching method as very satisfied, 8 students (42.1%) are satisfied, the other 8 students (42.1%) remain neutral and nobody rated the teaching method as dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Comparing the results with government schools, 2 students (20%) of the total student sample in government school rated the teaching method as very satisfied. 7 students (70%) are satisfied while 1 student (10%) is dissatisfied.

Extracurricular activities

The research also examined extracurricular activities, where the students were asked "How important do you think extracurricular activities are for your overall education?" The responses are compared below:

Table 3: Statistical Analysis on importance of extracurricular activities

Statistics	Private School	Government School
Mean	4.32	3.60
Standard Deviation	0.67	0.97

Table 3 shows the higher mean rating of 4.32 is seen for private schools compared to government schools which is 3.60. This means students in private schools feel extracurricular activities like dance, art, music, yoga, book clubs, quiz help in the overall quality of education. The Standard Deviation of 0.67 in private schools is seen while 0.97 in government school indicates a more diverse set of opinions regarding the importance of extracurricular activities for overall education.

While private school students mentioned their school offers a range of extracurricular activities which isn't just limited to sports, because they do not face resource constraints and do not have a tight budget. But on the other hand, government school students pointed out that they have a very limited range of extracurricular activities which mostly just involves sports like basketball, badminton, kabaddi and volleyball. Due to the broader opportunities and diverse extracurricular activities in private school, students believe that extracurricular is important for overall education but only few students in government school share this feeling.

Teachers' Perception

Table 4: Teaching methods that teachers find effective

Applied Practices	Private School	Government School
Group/Peer Discussion	✓	✓
Practical Learning Method	✓	✓
Field Visits	✓	
Presentation Method		✓
Visual Learning		✓
Revision Method	✓	

Private School: One of the respondents mentioned that children today have attention issues to which simple techniques like doing a quick revision at the end of the class reduces the pressure on them to go and study again at home. So, interactive, practical lessons “Learning through play” initiatives seem to be effective for students. Similarly, using 3D models, videos, diagrams and presentation methods also grasps the students’ attention.

Government School: Incorporating practical learning methods such as showing objects, physical models were one of the methods used in government schools of Kathmandu. Followed by another highly effective method- discussion method which also involves storytelling, as teachers feel it is a two-way interaction which engages students.

3.5 Factors affecting Quality of Education

The pedagogical skills of teachers are one of the pivotal characteristics of a quality teacher which is one the major factors contributing to the quality of education (Nabi, M., Iqbal, M. J., Mand, R., & Butt, I. H., 2018). The third objective seeks to evaluate the perception of teachers in quality education. The teachers were asked “In your opinion, what factors most significantly impact the quality of education in your school?” The responses are categorized and written below:

Private School teacher responses:

1. Qualified teachers: The factors affecting quality lie in the ability of an educational institution to foster a climate of learning and shared knowledge where establishing a teaching license and developing a proper training program, use of artificial intelligence to encourage an environment to equip students is essential.

Another respondent also stated that teachers using student centric and practical oriented learning also significantly impacts the quality of education.

2. Parents involvement: Frequent communication with parents, while they are also responsible for building a child's foundation, and parents actively being involved contributes to quality of education

Government School teacher responses-

1. Dynamic of teacher, student and parents: One of the respondents mentioned that teachers, students and parents form an interconnected triangle where each element influences each other. The qualification of teachers impacts learners' outcomes while learners' capacity to learn is further shaped by the home environment and economic condition of their parents.

Similarly, parents' involvement in children's education also acts as a factor for quality education.

2. Government intervention: Balanced and effective education must be ensured for ‘quality education’ which

government intervention can come in and address critical gaps like appointing additional teachers in response to the growing student population and implementing stronger, more efficient policies as Nepal Government is unreliable and very slow.

3. Better and sufficient resources: Infrastructures like proper teaching aid/ qualified teachers, enough computers with internet access, keeping students according to the class size, providing individualized assistance acts as factors of quality education.

4 Discussion

This study aimed to assess the quality of education by comparing private and government schools in Kathmandu. The findings indicated that there are no significant differences between the two types of schools in terms of infrastructure, academic performance, dropout rates, and teaching methods, as per the students and teachers.

Specifically, the academic performance gap between private and government schools in grade 10 is relatively small, with an average difference of only 0.23. This suggests while private schools have certain advantage, government schools are performing comparably in academic outcomes. The slight difference observed can be attributed to factors such as innovative teaching strategies, stronger teacher-student interactions, better infrastructure availability and high parental involvement in private schools. The students have integrated the use of technology and rigorous study habits in private schools while the same is lacking for government schools due to the financial status of their families.

The study's findings also explicitly indicated that the dropout rates have significantly dropped in government schools however, the dropout rates are still persistent are grade 1 to 8 primarily due to parents relocating and migrating districts or countries. This finding underscores the impact of external socioeconomic factors on school retention, particularly in government schools.

5 Conclusion

In the final analysis, this research explored and analyzed various aspects of quality education in private and government schools of Kathmandu through the lens of teachers and students. The findings of this research shows that there is no vast difference between private and government schools of Kathmandu like people assume it to be. But even those smaller differences create a huge impact on students' lives.

Analyzing the collected data, it was evident that minor differences existed in terms of academic performances, infrastructures and available resources, teaching method and dropout rates. Private schools surely outperform government schools in terms of academic performance but government schools have been giving a tough

competition as the average difference in academic performance was not significant. The findings from this research open avenues to further research and look into reducing the gaps in terms of consistent teacher training, infrastructure and resources and academic performances to ensure quality of education.

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