

# A Comparative Study of the Classroom Environment of Public and Private Universities

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## Abstract

Classroom environment refers to physical, psychological and academic impressions which inspire students' learning within a specified enclosure. The aim of this study was to explore and compare the classroom environment of public and private universities. A survey questionnaire on five point Likert scale comprising five factors; physical, behavioral, social, motivational and academic environment was prepared by the researchers for this purpose. Population of the study was both public and private sector universities of District Lahore. The sample was consisted of 300 students from two public and two private sector universities selected randomly. Results of the analysis revealed that classrooms of private sector universities were significantly better in physical environment than that of public sector but in behavioral, social, academic and motivational classroom environment, private sector was slightly better than that of public sector but there was not a significant difference. Cumulative mean declared that both of the sectors needed improvement in all aspects of classroom environment.

*Key words:* Classroom environment, public and private universities

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## **Introduction**

Environmental factors in a classroom can make an important difference to both teachers and students in a number of ways. There are a number of factors which can influence the educational achievements of students in the classroom. These may be physical, behavioral, social, academic or motivational. Overall classroom should have conducive environment for strengthening students' abilities (Trimborn, 2013).

Many services come together to generate a classroom's educational environment. This environment could be positive or negative, efficient or inefficient. Teacher behavior, teacher characteristics, student behavior, student characteristics, curriculum, classroom setup, time, institutional policies and community characteristics are the major factors influencing the learning environment of students (Kelly, 2013).

Young, (2013) suggested that classroom is a "home away from home" for teachers and students so that students may feel safe, cared and comfortable in a positive learning environment. Effective classroom environment provides students with opportunities to learn excitingly and confidently .It involves protective regulations and attractive information

## **Physical classroom environment**

Well managed and well-arranged classrooms is based on the display of furniture and all physical resources as well as independency of students, the pleasant appearance and placement of boards as well as the placement of equipment and materials form the physical environment of classroom (Linda, 2013)

Other essential features of the classroom environment such as the temperature, light, sound level and ventilation play vital role in students' learning. These factors also affect students in different ways and are directly associated to learning styles of students (Trimborn, 2013).

## **Behavioral classroom environment**

Teachers set the tone for the classroom situation. If as a teacher they struggle hard to be calm and light with their students and are unbiased in rule enforcement then they will have place a high standard for the classroom. From the many factors of classroom environment the teacher behavior is the one important factor that can be controllable (Kelly, 2013).

### **Social classroom environment**

A good relationship between students and teachers makes an impression of conducive classroom. Academic achievement and students' attitudes are influenced by the interaction and value of interaction between students and teachers (Thomas, 2000).

### **Academic classroom environment**

The most important aspect of classroom environment is strong academic support given by the instructors to the students. Accurate, precise, comprehensible and extendable information given by the instructors, relevant to the daily problems of students and presented in a friendly atmosphere is always influential. Teachers must also facilitate the students and show that they believe in their abilities. They need to tell their pupils that they know that they can attain what has been taught, show them their concentration and then reinforce this by admiring reliable achievements (Kellay, 2013).

### **Motivational classroom environment**

Teaching is a dominant service to change the humanity and mainly higher education expand an idea, open new perspectives and discover the doors of knowledge.

Universities are the major source of higher education in Pakistan (Ahmad, Tauod: Ali, 2011)

There are 73 public and 60 private universities in Pakistan. The private university provide to claim to provide maximum facilities to their students (Ahmad, Jawad & Ali, 2011). The element of classroom environment cannot be ignored for investigation and empirical evidence to find out its provision or unavailability at different education sectors at Higher Education (Terry Heick, 2017).

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- i) To investigate the physical classroom environment of Public and Private Universities
- ii) To find out the behavioral environment of Public and Private Universities
- iii) To investigate the social environment of Public and Private Universities
- iv) To find out the academic environment of Public and Private Universities

- v) To determine the motivational environment of Public and Private Universities
- vi) To compare the classroom environment of Public and Private Universities.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

**Ho:** There is no significance difference between classroom environment of public and private sector universities.

### **Delimitations of the study**

The study was delimited to:

1. The universities of Lahore District only.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey research was designed to find out and compare classroom environment at public and private universities of District Lahore, Punjab.

### **Research design**

The study in hand was descriptive survey by nature. It was a comparative study to identify differences in classroom environment of public and private universities of the said district.

### **Population**

The population of the study was all the public and private universities of Lahore District.

### **Sample**

Total three hundred participants were selected randomly from six universities of Lahore district of which three universities were public and three universities were private. One hundred and fifty graduate and post graduate, male, female students were selected from each sector. The University of Punjab, Lahore College for Women University, University of Management and Technology, Beacon House National University, The University of Lahore and University of Education were included in the sample. Fifty students from each university were selected through simple random sampling. Preparation of the research tool

For collecting students' opinion about their classroom environment, a questionnaire was prepared by the researchers. The researchers covered five basic factors of classroom environment of universities in the questionnaire and used five point likert scales.

### Pilot testing:

The validity and reliability of the instrument was determined through pilot testing. The researchers applied the questionnaire to the 10% of the sample, i.e. 30 students of different universities before starting the original data collection. The statements were refined and corrected in the light of objections and suggestions given by the respondents. The reliability was calculated by split- half method on SPSS and the Cronbach Alpha value for 30 respondents was obtained as  $\alpha = 68.089$ .

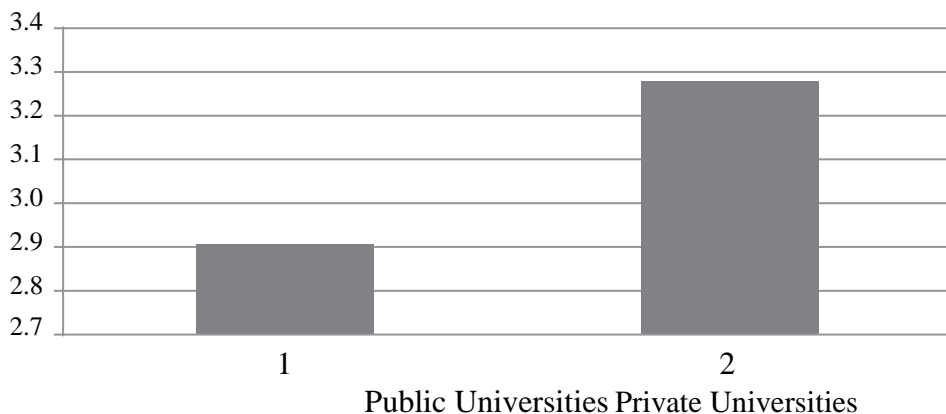
### Results

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for getting numerical results. Mean and standard deviation was calculated to find out the status of classroom environmental factors in both sectors and were presented by bar graphs. T-test for independent sample was used to compare the means of two groups (public and private) significantly and were presented in tables below. Following are the tables and graphs showing results of the study:

#### Physical Classroom Environment

**Graph No. 1**

Graph showing the physical classroom environment of public and private universities



The graph above shows the physical classroom environment of public and private universities. The values of physical classroom environment of public universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=2.90$ ,  $SD=.75$  and the values in private universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=.75$ . The mean difference between these two universities depicts that the physical classroom environment of private universities is better than the physical classroom environment of public universities.

**Table No. 1: T-test for Comparison of Physical environment**

The table above shows that, “there was a significant difference in the scores of physical

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference
Physical classroom environment	Equal variances Assumed	.100	.752	4.195	298.000	.000	.36621
	Equal variances not assumed			4.195	298.000	.000	.36621

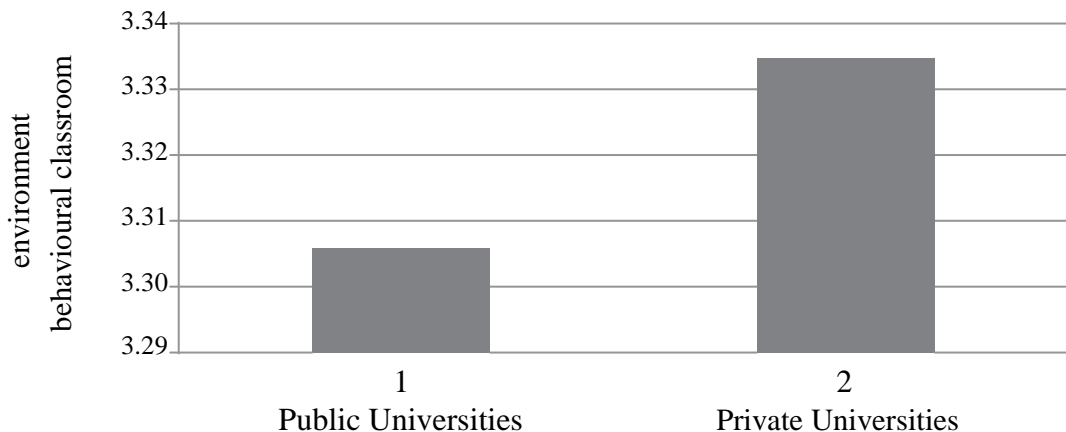
*Environment of public universities (M=2.9098, SD= .75576) and physical environment of private universities (M=3.2760, SD=.75610),  $t(298) = 4.195, p = .000$ . The computed p-value is less than alpha 0.05 and it rejects null hypothesis. It was concluded that there was a significant difference between the physical classroom environment of public and private universities.*

### Behavioral classroom environment

The factor behavioral classroom environment had 19 statements to measure the behavioral environment of classroom of public and private universities. This graph shows the mean difference of the behavioral environment of classroom.

**Graph No. 2.**

Graph showing the behavioural classroom environment of public and private universities



The graph above shows the behavioural classroom environment of public and private universities. The values of behavioural classroom environment of private universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=.617$  and the values in public universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.420$ . There was a mean difference between these two universities. It declared that the behavioural classroom environment of private universities was slightly better than the behavioural classroom environment of public universities.

**Table No. 2: T-test for behavioural classroom environment of public and private sector universities**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference
Behavioural lassroom environment	Equal variances assumed	11.618	.001	1.151	298	.250	.070
	Equal variances not assumed			1.151	262.826	.251	.070

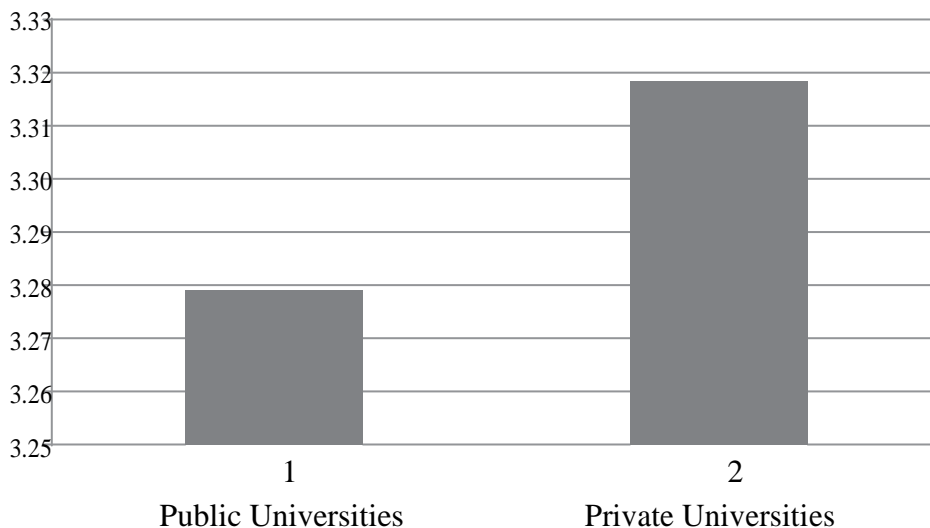
The above mentioned table shows that, “there was no significant difference in the scores of behavioural environment of public universities ( $M=3.28$ ,  $SD= .420$ ) and behavioural environment of private universities ( $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=.617$ );  $t(298) = 1.151$  ,  $p= .25$ . The computed p-value was greater than alpha 0.05 and lies between 0.05 to .5. It meant there was a difference but not significant and null hypothesis was selected. So, it was concluded that there was a difference but not significant between the behavioural classroom environment of public and private universities. It meant it could be improved. Social classroom environment

The factor social classroom environment had 12 statements that measured the social environment of classroom of public and private universities.

### Graph No.3

Graph showing the social classroom environment of public and private universities

Graph showing the social classroom environment of public and private universities



The graph above shows the social classroom environment of public and private universities. The values of social classroom environment of public universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.51$  and the values in private universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=.60$ . There was a significant mean difference between these two universities. It revealed that the social classroom environment of private universities was better than the social classroom environment of public universities to some extent.

**Table No. 3: T-test for social classroom environment of public and private sector universities**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Social classroom environment	Equal variances assumed	2.021	.156	.825	293	.410	.054
	Equal variances not assumed			.824	284.969	.410	.054

The above table shows that, "there was no significant difference in the scores of social environment of public universities ( $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.515$ ) and social environment of private universities ( $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=.606$ );  $t(293) = .825$ ,  $p = .410$ . The computed p-value was greater

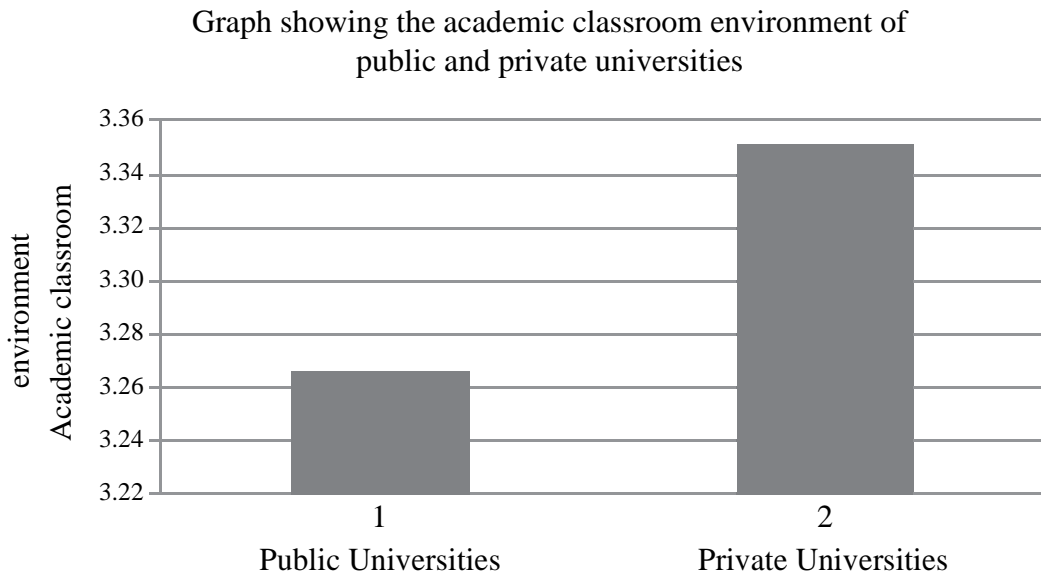


than alpha 0.05 and it rejected null hypothesis and declared that there was no significant difference between the social classroom environment of public and private universities.

### Academic classroom environment

The factor academic classroom environment had 17 statements to measure the academic environment of classroom of public and private universities.

#### Graph No.4



The graph above shows the academic classroom environment of public and private universities. The values of academic classroom environment of public universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.93$  and the values in private universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=.622$ . There was slight mean difference between these two universities.

**Table No. 4: T-test for academic classroom environment of public and private sector universities**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Social classroom environment	Equal variances assumed	22.528	.000	.759	294	.448	.07
	Equal variances not assumed			.759	255.554	.449	.07

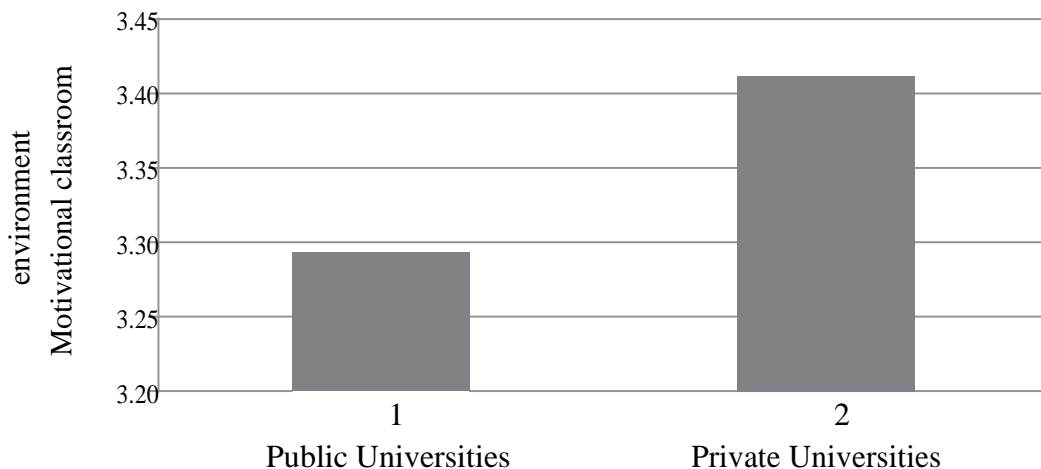
The table shows that, “there was no significant difference in the scores of academic environment of public universities ( $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.93$ ) and academic environment of private universities ( $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=.62$ );  $t(294)=.759$ ,  $p=.448$ . The computed p-value was greater than alpha 0.05 and it selected null hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the academic classroom environment of public and private universities.

### **Motivational classroom environment**

The factor Motivational classroom environment has 18 statements to measure the Motivational environment of classroom of public and private universities.

**Graph No. 5**

Graph showing the motivational classroom environment of public and private universities



The graph above shows the motivational classroom environment of public and private universities. The values of motivational classroom environment of public universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.685$  and the values in private universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=.629$ . There was a mean difference between these two universities. It depicted that the motivational classroom environment of private universities is better than the motivational classroom environment of public universities.

**Table No. 5: T-test for motivational classroom environment of public and private sector universities**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
motivational classroom environment	Equal variances Assumed	1.245	.265	1.415	291	.158	.109
	Equal variances not assumed			1.416	289.769	.158	.109

The above mentioned table shows that, “there was no significant difference in the scores of motivational environment of public universities ( $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.685$ ) and motivational environment of private universities ( $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=.62$ );  $t(291) = 1.415$ ,  $p = .158$ . The computed  $p$ -value =  $.158$  was greater than alpha  $0.05$  and null hypothesis was selected. It was concluded that there was no significant difference between the motivational classroom environment of public and private universities.

The graph above shows the cumulative classroom environment of public and private universities. The values of classroom environment of public universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.194$ ,  $SD=.44$  and the values in private universities were  $N=150$ ,  $M=3.3400$ ,  $SD=.50784$ . It declared that the overall classroom environment of private universities was better than the classroom environment of public universities.

**Table No. 6: T-test for cumulative classroom environment of public and private sector universities**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
motivational classroom environment	Equal variances Assumed	0.565	.453	2.650	298	.008	.14602
	Equal variances not assumed			2.650	292.828	.008	.14602

The above mentioned table shows that, “there was a significant difference in the scores of classroom environment of public universities ( $M=3.194$ ,  $SD=.44$ ) and the classroom environment of private universities ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=.50$ ),  $t(298)=2.650$ ,  $p=.008$ . The computed  $p$ -value is less than alpha value  $0.05$  and it rejected null hypothesis. So, it was concluded that there was a significant difference between the classroom environment of public and private universities.

## Conclusion and discussion

The research revealed interesting facts that the infrastructure, arrangement of classes and provision of equipment and furniture was substantially better in quality and quantity in private universities including computer and practical laboratories, multimedia & sound system. But human aspects at both sectors were approximately same or slightly different. However, some specific opinions came from students that behavioral problems were not sorted out at public universities and there was lack of stability in quality at public sector. The social environment of classrooms at public sector was better than that of private sector. Academics was emphasized at both sectors equally and teachers were competent. Motivational techniques used in the classroom, student teacher interaction and classroom management techniques were almost same in both sectors. However, teachers at private sector were more friendly, clear in instruction and well prepared. Cumulatively private sector was providing better classroom environment to students than public sector. It was suggested by the researchers that university teachers should develop an optimistic behaviour and show trust and positive intentions in their actions in both sectors. They should give freedom to all students for discussions, expressing new ideas and raising questions in classroom. Student's behavioural problems should be managed in public sector universities.

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