



Analysis Regarding the Social Justice Model in Respect to Democracy at Secondary School Level



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Abstract

This paper examines how the social justice model is perceived by the stakeholders in reference to the democracy in the secondary schools in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Under the descriptive design, data was sampled by using a stratified sampling of principals, teachers, and students using 7-point Likert scale questionnaire. Descriptive statistics analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA were conducted to compare the results across gender, locality and stakeholder groups. The results indicate a wide urban-rural gap: urban stakeholders had much more positive views of social justice and teacher involvement than the rural ones. There were no statistically significant effects with gender and no significant differences raised between the three stakeholder groups according to professional roles. The geographical location has become the most important factor, not gender or professional title, to form the perceptions. The rural stakeholders continued to give low mean scores, which reflected their dissatisfaction with teacher involvement and democratic education in their schools. Such outcomes indicate that context-specific education policies that cover structural inequalities between urban and rural communities are necessary. The recommendations will be based on equal distributions of resources, professional development targeted to rural educators, and interventions to address the unique issues facing communities in the rural schools in the area.

Key Words

Social Justice Model, Democracy, Secondary Schools, Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Introduction

The concept of social justice in teacher education has been conceived through many great scholars that contributed to the contemporary concept of social justice. Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) by Paulo Freire launched the application of critical pedagogies to empower students to struggle against social injustice, and culturally relevant pedagogy by Gloria Ladson-Billings, which focused on equity and inclusivity in multi-ethnic classrooms, became popular (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These contributions created social justice as a central aspect of teacher preparation by seeking to provide teachers with theoretical and practical knowledge to find and resolve systemic inequities in schools through multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching (Hackman, 2024).

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The pressure to incorporate social justice in teacher training programs has been growing over the past few years. Darling-Hammond, (2007) suggests that training teachers should not just be focused on pedagogical philosophies but should go further to train them on how to teach students of varied backgrounds with different cultural and socioeconomic statuses. Two studies have affirmed that these types of training would enable teachers to create classrooms that are fair, especially among the marginalized students (García-Carmona et al., 2017). Nonetheless, there exist very serious obstacles on the way to the practice of these ideals. Gorski, (2000) argues that social justice education is commonly not action but rhetoric because there is inappropriate systematic training and support of the curriculum. The theory-practice gap also increases hindrance to implementation as teachers cannot always use social justice principles without sustained guidance, resources and institutions (Cohen, 2010).

Social justice-oriented teacher education is a direct product of theoretical foundations of democracy in the educational field. The concept of pedagogic rights by Basil Bernstein (2000) is a very strong way of perceiving the work of democracy in schools. Bernstein suggested three rights that have a mutual connection in the form of democratic educational experiences, i.e.: enhancement (the right to critical understanding and new possibilities), inclusion (the right to be fully included without losing autonomy and difference) and participation (the right to participate in building and changing the educational order). These rights provide the environment of true freedom in learning institutions. Current literature attests that pedagogic rights are the necessary precondition of socially fair and democratically disposed education, and, however, the latter are not adequately distributed, especially in marginalized settings (Cochran-Smith, (2023).

Social justice-oriented teacher education (SJTE) has developed as an institutionalized intellectual practice that acknowledges both the social and political circumstances of teaching and education. In addition to dealing with diversity, SJTE purposely examines systemic inequity (Hyttén & Bettez, 2011). This view differentiates between the notion of a thin equity that assumes individuals schools to end the inequality in education and instead of taking into account the structural limitations, the strategies that consider systemic impediments (Mills and Ballantyne, 2016). Successful SJTE initiatives do not make teachers as agents of change only as enforcers of the curriculum but as agents who can recognize and solve inequities at the inside and outside of the classroom. These programs focus on exposing structural inequalities, questioning unfair centers of power, and focusing on marginalized voices (Pantić & Florian, 2015).

Democratic education is beginning to gain academic popularity in Pakistan. A qualitative study in the Sahiwal division of Punjab has shown the poor situation towards inculcation of democratic values among secondary students in schools, and teachers reported that there were many limitations of instilled democratic literacy (Akhtar & Shah, 2024). Themes that were emerging were views of the democratic values, instilling democratic values practices, school democratic culture, and multifaceted challenges of democratic education. These results indicate the hard work that teachers have to face to develop democratic dispositions in an institutional setting that might not be favorable to such purposes.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa education is further raised on the socio-political context that is a stakes of democratic and freedom in teacher preparation. Liquidation of education and access to education by marginalized groups are significant issues that are expressed in recent protests by teachers and students against education policies by the government (Khan et al., 2025). Such protests focus on education as one of the main rights and the necessity of teacher education that would make educators recognize the principles of democracy and their influence on the development of the educational situation.

The model, based on equity, cultural responsiveness, and critical consciousness, is a social justice-oriented model of teacher education that seeks to equip teachers to break the systems of oppression and build inclusive learning communities (Darling-Hammond, 2021). The given model is especially relevant to the southern districts

of Pakistan (D.I. Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Karak, Tank), where the inequity of resources, the cultural diversity, and the socio-political tensions require a strong and socially fair teacher education model (Durrani & Halai, 2018).

Statement Problem

Adverse but uninvestigated factors restrict the realization of a democratic and socially just education system in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. Despite the idea that social justice-based teacher education attends to equity, inclusion, and democratic participation, the perception of the three values, as perceived by the major stakeholders, such as secondary school principals, teachers, and students, is still unknown. This distance is especially decisive in the area where geographic marginalization, unequal allocation of resources, and the socio-political intricacies are observed. An increasingly body of evidence suggests a strong urban-rural gap in such perceptions, but the nature and the consequences of democratic schooling is not examined. This paper, accordingly, reviews the image of the social justice model among stakeholders against the backdrop of democracy, a goal that will reveal the perceptual gaps depending on the place and position and provide regional policy and practice insights.

Research Objectives

1. To know about the Stakeholders' perceptions regarding the social justice model in respect to democracy.
2. To compare the Stakeholders' perceptions regarding the social justice model in respect to democracy.

Research Questions

1. To know about the Stakeholders' perceptions regarding the social justice model in respect to democracy?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is a significant difference among the Stakeholders' perceptions regarding the social justice model in respect to democracy.

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was descriptive research design since the perception of the stakeholders was being studied systematically by answering what, where, when, and how questions without trying to identify cause and effect. It involved the population of all secondary schools principals, teachers and students in the southern areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Stratified sampling method was adopted and the size of the sample calculated using Krejcie and Morgan formula to make sure the subgroups are well represented. A questionnaire with a question scale of 7 points Likert scale was utilized to collect data as was desired because it is more accurate and more detailed in terms of measuring the intensity of feelings by respondents.

Results and Data Analysis

The analysis of the research has been conducted through descriptive analysis, i.e., using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. In addition, T-tests and ANOVA are used for analyzing the research data with the objective of ascertaining whether a difference exists between the gender and groups, i.e., between principals, teachers, and students.

Table 1

Comparison in Perspective of Social Justice with Respect to Democracy (Inline Objective)

Stake holders	Locality	Gender	Teacher Participation			Comparison.					
			N	Mean	S. D	Gender			Locality		
						t _{cal}	t _{tab}	P-value	t _{cal}	t _{tab}	P-value
Principals	Urban	M	09	6.66	0.55	0.6085	±2.0211	0.6874	8.1232	±1.9776	2.454e-13
		F	33	6.30	0.85						
	Rural	M	57	4.10	1.73	0.0796	±1.9855	0.9367			
		F	39	4.12	1.93						
Teachers	Urban	M	50	6.08	1.07	0.2021	±1.9908	0.8404	7.755	±1.9656	6.595e-14
		F	30	6.04	1.09						
	Rural	M	240	4.49	1.81	0.3372	±1.9669	0.7362			
		F	107	4.43	1.73						
Students	Urban	M	47	6.0	0.83	0.0477	±1.9913	0.9621	7.2294	±1.9665	2.878e-12
		F	32	6.02	0.89						
	Rural	M	190	4.57	1.74	0.1817	±1.9683	0.8559			
		F	97	4.61	1.82						

Principals

From the main views, it is evident that there is no difference between male and female principals. All values of t, which are 0.6085 (urban) and 0.0796 (rural), are below the table values, with P-values being higher than 0.05. There is, therefore, no effect of gender. There is, however, a major difference between those from the countryside and those from urban areas. The value of t is 8.1232, which is far beyond the table value of ±1.9776. Moreover, it is evident that locality is an important factor because of the very small probability value of 2.454e-13. It is evident from the means that urban principals' views are positive (6.66, 6.30), while those of rural principals are negative (4.10, 4.12), with means around neutrality.

Teachers

Just like principals, there is no difference between male and female teachers. The values of t are 0.2021 (urban) and 0.3372 (rural), which are far below the table values. Moreover, it is evident that gender is of no consequence because of the high probability values. There is, however, a marked difference between those from urban and those from rural areas. It is evident from the value of t being 7.755, which is far beyond the table value of ±1.9656. Moreover, it is evident that locality is of great importance because of the very small probability value of 6.595e-14.

Students

Just like the other groups, students' views do not differ by gender. It is evident from the values of t being 0.0477 (urban) and 0.1817 (rural), which are far below the table values. Moreover, it is evident that gender is of no consequence because of the high probability values. There is, however, a marked difference between those from urban and those from rural areas. It is evident from the value of t being far beyond the table value of ±1.9665 because of the very small probability value of 2.878e-12. This further validates that location is an essential factor that determines how students view a particular aspect. The urban students generally rate between 6.0, which indicates agreement, while the rural students are significantly lower, rating at approximately 4.6, which indicates a more negative view of teacher participation.

Table 2

Mean Differences of Principals, Teachers and Students in Perspective of Social Justice (Inline objective)

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F _{Cal}	F _{Tab}	α	P-Value
Between Groups	3.91	2	1.955				
Within Groups	2779.84	928	2.995	0.653	3.00	0.05	0.521
Total	2783.75	930	--				

The table above illustrates a one-way ANOVA test that checks if there are any differences between the mean scores. The test has found that the Between Groups variation, as calculated by the Sum of Squares, is 3.91. This is very low when compared with the high Within Groups variation, as calculated by the Sum of Squares, which is 2779.84. The first important figure that can be derived from the table is that the calculated F value, denoted as F_{Cal}, is 0.653. The critical value from the table, denoted as F_{Tab}, is 3.00. The P value is 0.521.

Therefore, the result cannot be considered statistically significant because F_{Cal} is lower than F_{Tab} and the calculated P-value is higher than the alpha level. This means that it cannot be conclusively stated that the means of the three groups are different. The slight variations in the means of the groups are just random.

Discussions

The dramatic urban-rural difference in the vision of social justice is consistent with Baharuddin (2025) who found that urban teachers enjoy more opportunities, better access to resources and professional opportunities that help them feel more confident in their ability to implement fair practices. On the other hand, the discontent of the rural stakeholders is consistent with the results of Wang et al., (2025), who claim that teachers in the rural setting experience overly many non-teaching assignments, inadequate parental assistance, and professional hierarchy dissatisfaction, which predetermine the development of widespread sentiments of unfairness in their school fraternity.

Geographical position was found to be more conclusive than the gender in shaping the social justice perception of teacher participation. Baharuddin (2025) also discovered that the Indonesian rural teachers were still faced with the consistent issues that were associated with the availability of resources and the lack of clarity on the policy direction, yet the urban teachers were equipped with the training and teaching material (Azam et al., 2025). Here, it is important to note that there are radically different perceptual paradigms that are defined by place and not by gender, which require equal distribution of resources in training and the support of teachers in rural schools (Hargreaves et al., 2009).

Additional evidence in this regard would be that Varas Santafé et al., (2025) revealed in their multivariate analysis that the education inclusion in the geographical location significantly differs. The urban and rural environments had significant structural differences and commitment among teachers which directly impacted on the perceptions of inclusion among the students. These results support the advocacy of context-specific policies to deal with urban-rural educational inequalities.

The outcome of the ANOVA showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of social justice between the principals and teachers and students ($F = 0.653, p = 0.521$). The between-group variance was low (3.91) relative to the large within-group variance (2779.84) which means that individual characteristics of the people in terms of personal experiences and location play a bigger role in perception shaping as opposed to the professional roles. This conforms with Arshad and Ahmad (2025) and Rahman et al. (2024) who reported that in South Asian education environments within-group variance was always higher than between-group variance. These results imply that common ecological and geographical conditions have a stronger impact on the perception

of educational justice than the professional titles. Interventions therefore should be aimed at the wider contextual conditions; they should emphasize on the urban-rural divide instead of individual positions or duties.

Conclusion of the Study

There is a significant urban/rural divide in all of the stakeholders. The urban teachers and school principals are confident in the fair participation of teachers in the school environment. The rural teachers and school stakeholders express a clear discontent and a sense of injustice in the participation of teachers in the school environment.

Geographic location and not gender is the main factor in the perception of social justice in teacher participation. The statistical analysis found no significant gender variance among the groups. There was a significant urban/rural variance, however. The urban participants averaged above 6.0, whereas the rural participants averaged between 4.1 and 4.6.

The nature of the stakeholder, whether principal, teacher, or student, does not lead to any differences in perceptions of social justice in teacher participation. The ANOVA results did not reveal any differences between groups; rather, differences within each group are significantly larger than differences between groups, suggesting that individual and contextual factors are more important than professional roles.

Recommendations

Informed by the basic findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The urban-rural divide can be addressed by promoting equity in resource allocation, improving infrastructure, and implementing special support programs for rural schools so that all stakeholders' experience justice in teacher participation.
2. Policies and interventions can be designed with location as the primary factor that affects perceptions, with special emphasis on rural stakeholders while maintaining gender-sensitive practices.
3. Interventions can be designed with contextual factors and conditions at the school level, as opposed to roles, as they do not influence perceptions of justice.

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