

Obstacles to Students in Learning and Academic Achievements at University of Peshawar

By

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Abstract

The study focused on “Obstacles to students in learning and academic achievements in University of Peshawar”. A sample size 60 (30 male & 30 female) respondents were interviewed for this study. The main obstacles were no aptitude test, guidance and career Counseling services at school and college level. No participatory approach in learning-teaching, harsh attitude of teachers, Negative effects of Co-education and extra-curricular activities, friendly relations and ignorance of parents / guardians from students activities.

Keywords: *Obstacles, Learning, aptitude test, guidance & Counseling, harsh attitude of teachers, coeducation, extra-curricular activities, friendly relations and ignorance of parents / guardians.*

1. Introduction

Learning is the process by which an activity originates in or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation, provided that the characteristics of change in activity cannot be explained on basis of native response tendencies, maturation, are temporary states of organism. According to Aristotle “Learning is a process of associating to things together and formulate a number of laws of association.” (John: 1989)

Co-education

The supporter of co-education puts forward the argument that co-education is better for promoting feasible for reducing the cost of providing education and further argue that there is no difference is mental and intellectual capabilities of a great extent. More over they say that women should go shoulder to shoulder in all walks with man, therefore they must be trained under the same institution. (Baligh: 2004).

Teaching

The teaching by its definitions is the organization of learning. It applies to all of kinds and varieties and of all degree of excellence from very good to very bad. The basic and fundamental task of the teachers is to impart education that is textbooks and other relevant literature, with full zeal and enthusiasm to imbibe in human mind the sense of better preparation. In advance countries education is given to the students through modern instruments, as in America most of the educations are imported through V.C.R., movies and other pictures. But it is an irony, that we still stick to the old and traditional mode of teaching, In this modern and technological mode era, when every thing is judged by modern instruments, we still using that traditional method for teaching. So, the method of notes and notarization is still in practice. Teachers instead of discussion, working out problems, practicing skills, explaining of complicated problems, using short cut method give notes and force the students to tantalization. These have not only destroyed the zeal, initiative and potentialities of our students, but also spoiled the feelings and thoughts of them in regard to their teachers. (Murad: 1998).

Objectives

1. To know the existence of aptitude test and need of guidance and counseling services for the students on various levels.
2. To study the interest of students in learning and the regularity of students/teachers in classes.
3. To assess role of proper teaching methodology and practical demonstration of students for creating interest in learning among students.
4. To know the impact of harsh attitude of teachers, co-education system and extra curricular activities on learning and academic achievements of students.

2. Literature Review

Learning by Trial and Error

Thorndike said that learning is a blind process devoid of intelligent or conscious determination. According to this kind of learning animal, children and some times adults learn things without using his thinking power. In the initial trial, there are a large number of errors, but as trials are repeated, the numbers of errors is reduced. Finally, there is no error and the result is a success, that is, the individual gets his goal after making so many errors. This type is also known as “learning by selection of the successful variant”, and, less accurately, as “trial-and-error” learning. (Thorndike, E.L: 1913).

Learning by Conditioned Reflex

A famous Russian scientist Pavlov presented the theory of conditioned reflex. He said that every action has a response. Not only the stimulus but also the artificial stimulus is responsible for a response. When an action is related to an artificial stimulus, it is called conditioned. Pavlov made several experiments on his dog and saw that he mouth of dog watered by secreting saliva when he saw meal. He rang the bell before giving the meal and repeated it again and again. At last the mouth of dog began watering on only ringing the bell. He named it as conditioned reflex. So, he concluded that learning took place by the constant repetitions of stimulus. This is known as learning by conditioned reflex. (Pavlov, I.P. :1927)

Learning by Insight

Some time an individual uses his insight and wisdom to learn a thing. This is learning by insight. Kohlar made experiments on his type of learning. He kept a monkey in a cage and kept meal out side the cage. The monkey knew that his hands could not reach the meal, therefore, it bided so many sticks and with the help of those sticks it reached the meal. Kohlar conclude that monkey got the meal with the help of its insight. an, especially, learn with the help of insight. (Ernest R. Hilgard, Gordon H. Bwers:1904)

Learning By Observation, And Imitation:

Observation is another name for perception characterized by attention. To observe is to attend, and perception is enriched by such attention. Perception can also be enriched by multiple sense appeal. The educational application is that learning should begin with object, or representations of objects, rather than with symbols. Insight is often referred to as the end process of observational activity which may or may not be preceded by so-called” verbal rehearsal, “or mental trial-and-success. Observation means attention to pertinent relations; insight signifies that success has attended this process of mental research. The mental integration by which a problem is more or less suddenly seen in all its relations constitutes insight. Imitation, according to some psychologists, is merely uniformity of response of similar organisms to observation. Other psychologists confine it to the blind performance of an activity because one has observed another doing it the activity already being to some extent within the capacity of imitator. Imitator is always the reproduction of a movement with a configuration involving understanding and aim, though imitation of movements as such, without conscious aim, may be approximated in drill, when mere uniformity of motion is desired. Less technically, imitation defined as the tendency to repeat the observed actions of others. Imitation is therefore, an important moral, intellectual, and social agent in formal education and throughout life. Some times an individual sees other people doing a work and only by the

imitation of that work, he learns that work. This is known as learning by imitation. For example, most of the children learn many things only through the imitation of their parents. (Harris. D. and Bell's:1990)

Methods of Teaching

1. **Lecture Method:** This is the traditional method of teaching and still prevails in most of our institutions. In this method of instruction, the teacher delivers the lectures and students lesson to him silently. Students do not participate with the teacher. This is a spoon –feeding method in which children do not develop their various physical and mental abilities.
2. **Lecture demonstration Method:** Lecture demonstration method is special type of lecture method. In this method the lecturer, demonstrate the thing about which he is giving lecture. The teacher shows his pupils the various parts of thing or various aspects of the subject he is teaching in the class. This method is applied in the teaching of those subjects where only lecture method is not sufficient such as skill developing lessons etc.
3. **Assignment Method:** The word “Assignment” refers to the task or duty given to some one to be done, in the past, the teacher used to assign some task to his pupils as homework. The purpose of teacher was just to make his pupils busy. Such assignment had no specific goals. However, it does not mean that this method is ineffective. It is one of the most important methods of instruction. It should have some specific goals. The teacher should be aware important principles of assignment. For example, he should be very careful in the selection of an activity for assignment. He should point out the important points of assignment. Then the assignment will be a useful one. (John. J. Ryan: 1989).

Teaching Techniques

1. **Questioning:** The problem, which is created during teacher’s guidance or form students personal observation, is called question. The technique of questioning means the method or way in which question is carried on. The best way of questioning depends on the following three elements
 - i. Teacher’s Question
 - ii. Students Answer
 - iii. Students Questions
2. **Discussion:** Literally “Discussion” means debate, controversy or conversation. In education, discussion is a good kind of technique for learning a thing comprehensively. Students are given a task, for instance an issue, to discuss. Students participate in conversation. The participants try to express their own points of view. Thus, the topics are discussed and explain by all most all participants. The conclusion of the discussion should also be noted at the end. (Murad: 1998).

Co-education

According to chamber’s Encyclopaedia co-education is defined as “the system of educating pupils of both sexes in the same class, school, college, department or institution under the same instruction”.

This is based upon the assumption that there is no division of sexes in consequently; they should be given precisely the same education. The more accepted interpretation is that there is difference in their physical and mental capacity and needs, but because of their fundamental similarities as being human, they should be educated together. (Baligh: 2004).

Psychological problems in co-education:

Professor Wilton points out in his book “the psychology of education” (1950) that man lives by reason, woman, out look is moulded and shaped by feeling. Institution is a special quality of women, and therefore she does not care for abstract thought. Man therefore analyses and applies principles deductive, these mental and intellectual differences, says Wilton are sadly ignored by the advocate and promoters of equal education to the sexes. He is therefore opposed to co-education full of so many problems and issue,

which in advance in age retard each other's progress. So, different institution for the sexes with different curricula would seem to give the best intellectual results. (Wilton: 1950)

Co-Education Creates Sense Responsible Citizenship, Socialization And Team Spirit In The Both Sexes:

Professor Rafiullah Shahab in his book "Muslim in Political Power 1993" comments that co-education contributes to make our young man and young woman responsible citizens. It creates a sense of socialization. In this respect, they refer to co-education in some of the prestigious institution like Government College Lahore, which is giving positive result. Co-education creates a sense of collaboration and team spirit in sexes.

In Pakistan Co-Education is Much More Economical, Less Problematic for Woman, their Parents, Administration And The Nation As A Whole:

Islam is progressive religion. It does not demand to shut the woman in their houses, Islam only demands modest from the both sexes when they go out of their homes. (Rafiullah Shahab: 1993)

In Pakistan like backward and poor country, co-education is much more economical. As separate University, require the expenditure of crores of rupees. It is so capital intensive that even faculties for education of males have remained restricted due to a cost financial stringency. Female education has therefore, suffered from an abysmally low level of coverage. Which resulted in low illiteracy and ignorance among the female massed which hindered the pace of national development pointed out by Professor Dr. Muhammad Amin in his book "Perspective of Education and Contemporary Social Issues 2000" In co-education administration confronts no hurdles, parents can meet any time with their daughters without hesitation. They have free access to these institutions. (Baligh: 2004).

4. Method and Procedure

Total 60 respondents were taken from the Management, social Sciences and Arts & Humanities faculties of Peshawar University. Out of these 60 respondents, 30 were male and 30 were female. These 60 respondents were selected out of 1400 using proportion allocation sampling method i.e. $n_i = N_i/N \times n$ (A.L.Bowley: 1926)

Interview Schedule was used as a tool of data collection.

5. Data Presentation, Result and Discussion

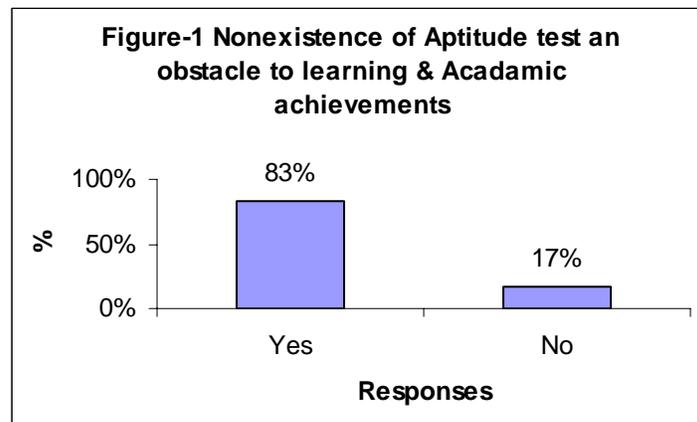


Figure-1 indicates nonexistence of aptitude test an obstacle to learning and academic achievements. 83% of the respondents specified positively, while 17% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: The figure indicates the need and requirement of the aptitude test. In all advanced countries an aptitude test is taken in primary school level to see the aptitude and inclination of the child for career formation, by virtue of that they are professional strong.

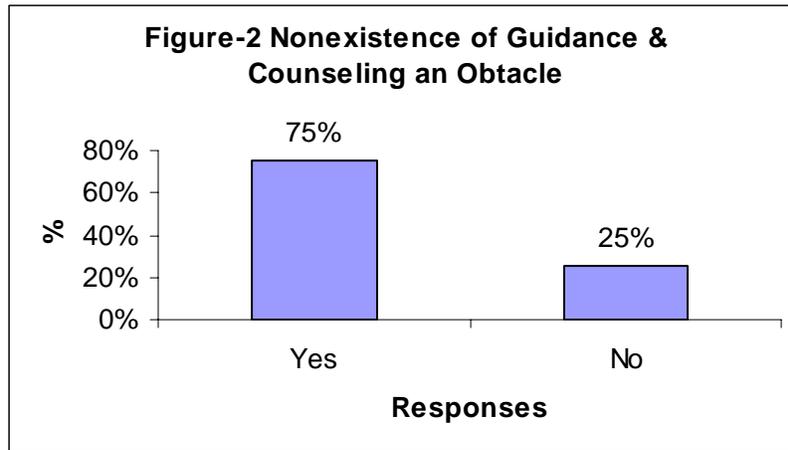


Figure-2 highlights nonexistence of guidance & counseling an obstacle to learning and academic achievements. 75% of the respondents specified positively, while 25% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: The data indicates the significance of guidance and counseling services particularly in school and collage level. This is an obstacle to proper learning and academic achievement. If Guidance and counseling services are available students will be able to get proper direction in leering as well as in career formation.

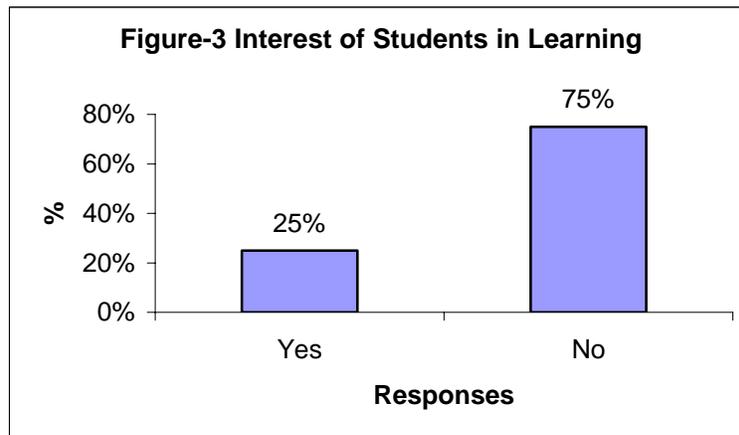


Figure-3 shows interest of students in learning. 25% of the respondents specified positively, while 75% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: The interest of the learners is based on the teacher's personality, his / her teaching skills and teaching methodology. The environment of the institute and ability of student in getting and picking the teachers views. Interest of the student is the basic requirement in learning as various scholars have mentioned in the literature.

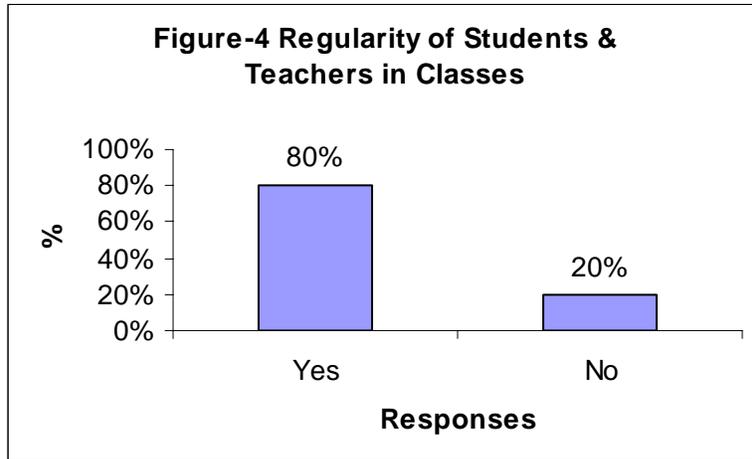


Figure-4 indicates regularity of students and teachers in classes. 80% of the respondents specified positively, while 20% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: Regularity of students and teachers definitely effecting teaching learning positively. Punctuality in service is giving us positive results, which was found in this case.

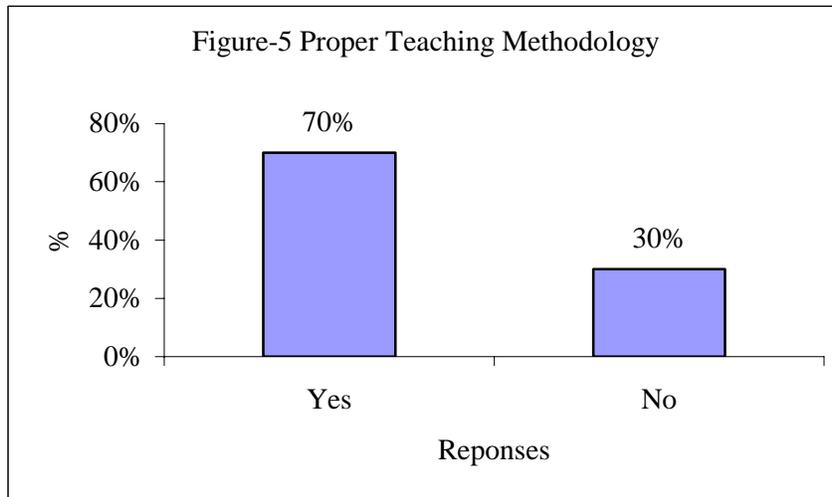


Figure-5 depicts proper teaching methodology. 70% of the respondents specified positively, while 30% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: Proper teaching methodology not only creates interest of the students it also creates up gradation in teachers and future planning. Dewey mentioned in literature that teaching methodology is an instrument to learning and academic achievement in students.

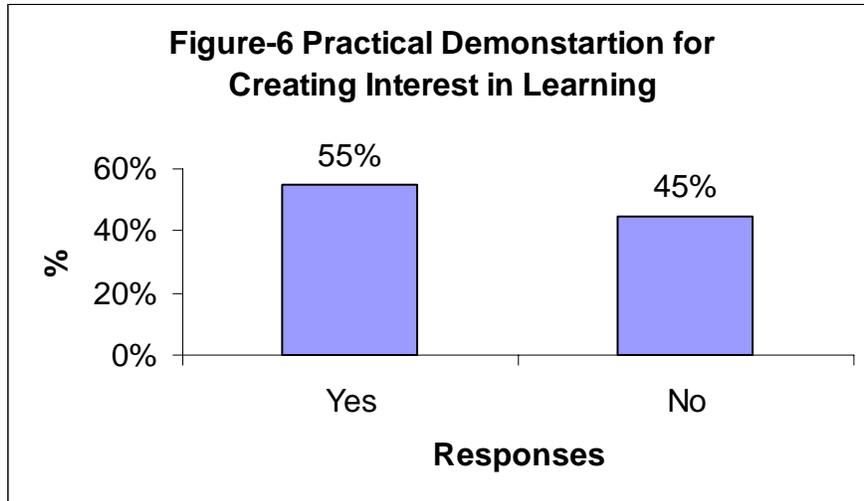


Figure-6 indicates practical demonstration for creating interest in learning. 55% of the respondents specified positively, while 45% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: Indeed practical demonstration play a vital role in creating interest in learning.

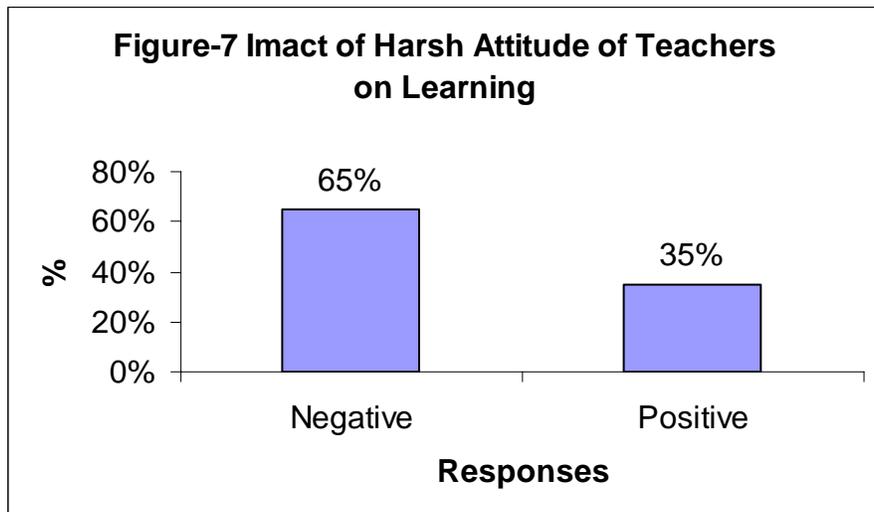


Figure-7 shows impact of harsh attitude of teachers on learning. 65% of the respondents specified for negative impact of harsh attitude of teachers on learning, while 35% specified for positive impact on learning.

Discussion: Attitude of teachers is significantly effecting the learning environment. If the attitude of teacher is positive and polite the students are taking interest in learning and vice versa.

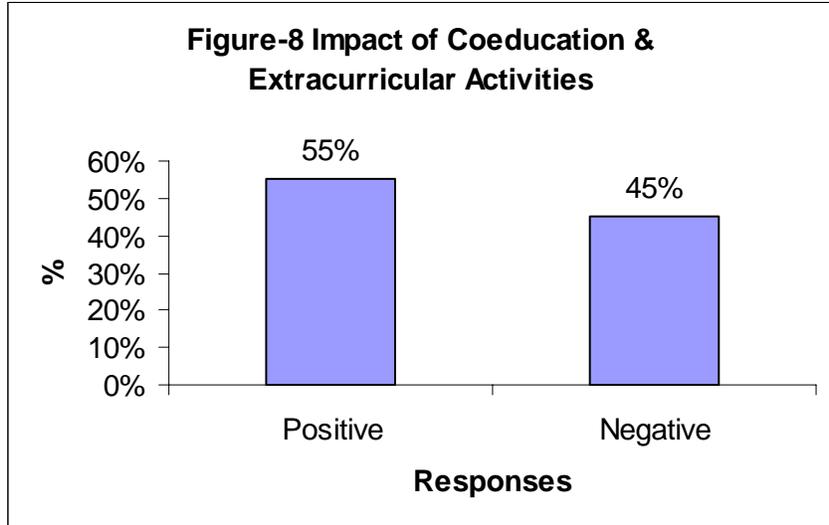


Figure-8 highlights impact of coeducation and extracurricular activities on learning and academic achievements of students. 55% of the respondents specified for positive impact of coeducation and extracurricular activities on learning and academic achievements of students, while 45% specified for negative impact of coeducation and extracurricular activities on learning and academic achievements of students.

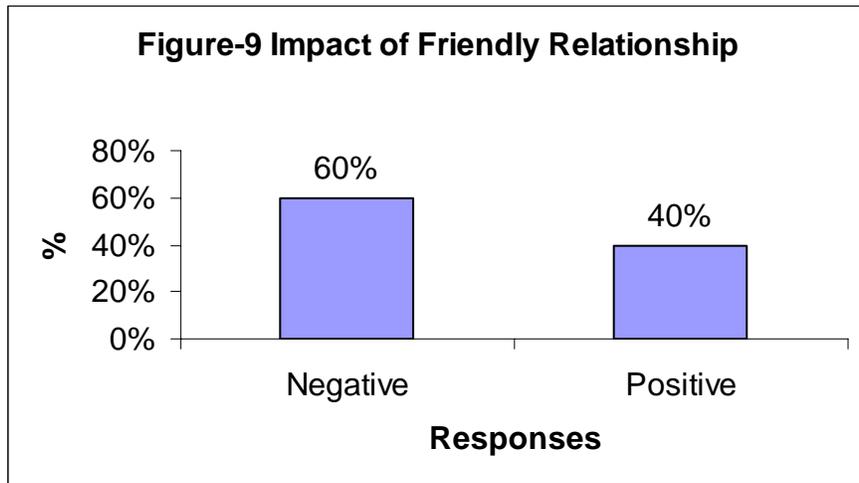


Figure-9 depicts impact of friendly relationship on learning and academic achievements of students in University. 60% of the respondents specified for negative impact friendly relationship on learning and academic achievements of students in University, while 40% specified for positive impact of friendly relationship on learning and academic achievements of students in University.

Discussion: If relationships of the students is academic oriented it will definitely fruitful if otherwise it will effect the academic achievement negatively.

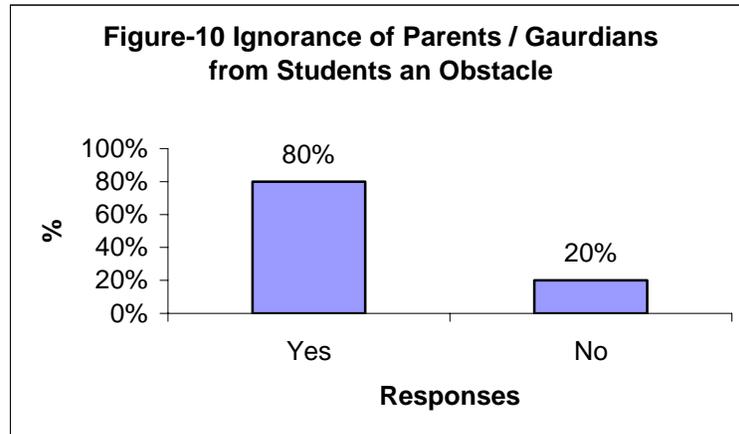


Figure-10 indicates ignorance of parents / guardians from students an obstacle to learning and academic achievements. 80% of the respondents specified positively, while 20% replied negatively in this regard.

Discussion: Parents teachers and students relationship play a vital role in learning and academic achievements. Since parents are not contacting their children and teachers of their children in the university therefore it effect the learning of student negatively.

6. Conclusion:

On the basis of data analysis and personal observation it is concluded that there is no aptitude test at school and college level which is needed to create proper professional direction. There is no guidance and career Counseling services in educational institutions, these services are needed and also affective in career formation. Majority of respondents were taking interest in classroom activities for good result and those who were not taking interest are because of no proper teaching. Majority of respondents understand their teacher's methodology, and their teacher's teaching methodology is lecture, and said that their teachers have command over the subject and medium of instruction/official language. Majority of the students were satisfied from teachers and were of the opinion that their teachers posses teaching skills and they create conducive environment in classroom and also giving them practical demonstration which is effective in learning. Majority of respondents were taking classes regularly, their teachers are also punctual, and they were of the opinion that the regularity of teachers and students is effective in learning and academic achievement. Majority of respondents pointed out that their teachers attitude is moderate and also were of the opinion that harsh attitude of the teachers negatively affect the learning and academic achievement. Majority of respondents were in favour of co-education and extra curricular activities. According to them co-education build up confidence and extra curricular activities refresh mind and are also good for health.

7. Suggestions:

The researchers offer the following suggestions to improve learning environment and to overcome the obstacles in learning and academic achievements in the Peshawar University.

1. Aptitude test on school and college level should be made necessary.
2. The course and curriculum of both science and humanity groups should be interlinked from primary level to the higher level in order to keep the students on their desired line.
3. Proper guidance and Counseling services at various levels in educational institutions should be provided.
4. Classroom environment should be made such as that students may take interest in learning.

5. Such teaching methodologies should be used which easily understandable or according to the needs of students.
6. Teachers should have full command on the medium of instruction/ official language.
7. Teachers should create conducive environment in classrooms.
8. Practical demonstration should be made necessary.
9. Teachers and students regular presence/participation in the classroom should be made.
10. Relationship between students and teachers should be friendly.
11. Tutorial groups, seminars and debates should be introduced, which help in harmonizing the students' teachers' relationship and also among the students.
12. All kinds of facilities such as educational and recreational should be provided to the students. This will create in them the sense of healthy and constructive thinking.
13. Syllabus must be strictly followed.
14. The University authorities should make the environment of university friendly and peaceful for all students without any sex discrimination.
15. At least one sociologist should be recruited at School College & University level, because sociologists who study society know the problems of students and also have capability of solution to their problems.

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