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**USING BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION FOR ENHANCED EDUCATION:
TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES**

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Abstract

This study explores non-elite private secondary school teachers' and students' perceptions, advantages and disadvantages towards bilingual instruction in Lahore, Pakistan. The goal is an in-depth understanding of these stakeholders' perspectives on bilingual instruction. A quantitative cross-sectional survey method was used, with 60 teachers and 120 students being selected using a convenience sampling approach. The study employed structured close-ended survey questions to gather data on attitudes, perceived benefits, and drawbacks of bilingual instruction. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses revealed that both teachers and students generally held positive perceptions of bilingual education. While there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of attitudes and perceived advantages, a Mann-Whitney U test did identify a significant difference in their views on potential drawbacks. Key benefits highlighted by teachers included enhanced student engagement, language skill development, and improved career prospects. Students reported feeling more comfortable, confident, and motivated in their learning. Based on these findings, the researchers propose implementing targeted language support services, bilingual curriculum resources, inclusive



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classroom practices, and continuous evaluation mechanisms to maximize the effectiveness of bilingual programs. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers regarding the positive impact that bilingual systems can have on improving academic success and fostering inclusive learning environments.

Key words: *Bilingual Instruction, Attitudes, Benefits, Drawbacks*

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, bilingualism and bilingual education are gaining prominence (Çubukçu & Demirtaş, 2021). Bilingual instruction, which involves teaching academic content in two languages, has become a widespread practice in secondary schools (Sehar et al., 2020).

Nurturing language and literacy resources for all other learners also contributes to the development of cognitive skills and shows them to be better prepared for life in a diverse, multicultural society (Proctor, 2012). Also, introducing bilingual classes has problems of its own. Generally, teachers, students, and parents' perspectives play a major role in the effectiveness of all of these programs (Ouellet, 2006). Although some educationists and scholars advocate the merits of bilingualism, others might raise issues on the detrimental aspects, such as detriment to academic accomplishment and difficulties in curriculum development (Bialystok, 2016).

According to Coomans (2022), bilingual instruction shows great potential in promoting Sustainable Development Goal 4, which advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education.

Bilingual education enables students to have more understanding and better perception of the world in which we live. Bilingualism and polylingualism have a well-documented efficacy and a solid theoretical baseline in creating educational opportunities (Shin & King, 2020). Moreover, second-language learning in childhood is beneficial to mental development and nurtures intellectual growth of a child (Benefits of Early Learning, 2009). In fact, there is ample empirical evidence showing that bilingual education has been shown to have significant positive effect on



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student performance (Dulay & Burt, 1979). Bilingual education not only develops linguistic proficiency, but also executive functioning, creativity, problem solving, and memory, in addition to nurturing intercultural understanding and social skills (Xia, 2024). Hence, making bilingual education compulsory is essential for the holistic growth of students.

This article discusses the perspectives of secondary school teachers and students on bilingual instruction, including their attitudes, perceived advantages, and disadvantages. Bilingual education programs can contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4 that promotes inclusive and equitable quality education and studies demonstrate that bilingualism has positive impact on the proficiency of national languages, critical thinking skills, intercultural understanding and also holistic academic performance. Incorporating these multifaceted viewpoints allows for the development of inclusive bilingual education policies and practices that embrace diversity and ensure no child is left behind in the quest for academic success and personal growth (Álvarez, 2018).

Literature Review

Different forms of bilingual instruction for ELLs are possible. One approach is immersion programs, in which students are immersed entirely in the target language, where all instruction and classroom activity is conducted entirely in that language. It focuses on second language development through usage and exposure (Bialystok & Barac, 2011; Buttarro, 2014; Hsueh & Shih, 2020).

Another approach is transitional bilingual education, where students start receiving instruction primarily in their native language with a gradual shift to increased use of the target language over time. This model aims for the students to develop their target language skills, but they are supported by an environment where they can maintain their first language (Buttarro, 2014).

Unlike transitional programs, dual language programs aim to attain proficiency in both the native language and target language. In these programs, students are taught in both languages, typically



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with equal emphasis on each. This promotes biliteracy and bilingualism and fosters appreciation and cross-cultural understanding (Buttaro, 2014)

Bilingualism refers to the ability to proficiently use two languages, while bilingual education involves teaching academic content through the medium of two languages. Some key terms in this context include:

Immersion programs: Instructional models where students are fully immersed in the target language, with all teaching and classroom activities conducted exclusively in that language. This approach aims to develop proficiency in the second language by maximizing exposure and use.

Transitional bilingual education: Instructional models that begin with primary instruction in the student's native language and gradually transition to increased use of the target language over time. The goal is to facilitate the development of target language skills while providing support for maintaining the first language.

Dual language programs: Instructional models that strive for proficiency in both the native language and the target language, with instruction provided in both languages, often with an equal emphasis on each. The aim is to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, as well as to foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Benefits of Bilingual Instruction:

Studies have shown that there are several cognitive benefits to bilingualism. Research suggests that people who speak multiple languages have improved cognitive flexibility, enabling task switching and more creative thinking (Çubukçu & Demirtaş, 2021). Finally, bilingualism has also been associated with enhanced problem-solving abilities and better metalinguistic awareness, the capacity to think about and analyze language itself (Çubukçu & Demirtaş, 2021).

In terms of academia, research suggests that bilingual education can yield positive effects on students' performance throughout multiple subjects (Bialystok, 2016). This process may



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enhance students' understanding of academic concepts, leading to increased college readiness and receptiveness to new ideas by making connections across languages.

Additionally, bilingualism has been credited with providing sociocultural advantages. It can also contribute to cross-cultural understanding, empathy and sense of belonging, as they become more aware of and appreciate different linguistic and cultural perspectives (Buttaro, 2014). Indeed, bilingual education can further motivate students as well as empower relationships between students and their families because it provides them with the necessary tools to build bridges between their home and school environments (Buttaro, 2014).

Challenges and Drawbacks of Bilingual Instruction:

There are many merits of bilingual instruction, but like any other system, it also has its share of challenges and downsides that need to be overcome in order for the system to be more beneficial. The main challenge is proficiency development and language attrition. As individuals grow, there are concerns regarding whether students could develop also maintain competency with both their home language and the language of instruction, making it a risk of them losing their language or the language that is being learnt by them. (Sokip, 2020). It is essential that bilingual programs have a plan on how they intend for their students to be able to achieve and maintain a high proficiency in both languages (Çubukçu & Demirtaş, 2021).

Another big barrier is the training and support of teachers. Successful bilingual instruction cannot occur without qualified, bilingual teachers trained to effectively teach in two languages. They also need access to sufficient resources, like bilingual teaching materials and continuous professional development opportunities, so they can effectively deliver quality bilingual instruction. (Allard et al., 2019)

Bilingual programs also sometimes face the issue of curriculum development. It's a challenging and labor-intensive endeavor, tasked with creating a curriculum that serves the needs of bilingual learners with a spectrum of language proficiencies. Therefore, it is crucial for bilingual



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programs to appropriately calibrate instructional content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies to ensure a safe and welcoming learning atmosphere for all students (Lucido et al., 2024).

In addition, the success of these programs can be greatly influenced by attitudes and perceptions of teachers, students, and parents about bilingual instruction. It is crucial to address concerns and cultivate positive attitudes among all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and community support (Lucido et al., 2024)

Lastly, bilingual teachers are often caught between the needs of the majority language group versus students who may be singletons or learning in a language other than that of the majority. (Allard et al., 2019) One of the great challenges faced by bilingual programs is to develop strategies for supporting all of their learners and creating an inclusive environment. (Charamba, 2023).

Attitudes Toward Bilingual Instruction:

Previous investigations have focused on teachers' views about teaching effectively through a bilingual approach (productive and contextual use of bilingual education) and actual implementation and experience of addressing bilingual learners (Hus & Hegediš, 2018; Liu & Rutledge, 2020; Nirmalasari et al., 2023; Portolés & Arnándiz, 2018). Their findings have highlighted the hard realities teachers experience when trying to teach students through bilingual education and how in turn, students go about learning language in both native and target languages.

Researchers have also explored students' perceptions and experiences with bilingual instruction. These studies addressed ways in which students see the value and benefits of participating in the process of learning in two languages, but also their motivation and agency in the process. Researchers have also investigated students' practice with the use of language in the classroom context e. g. opportunities to practice/use skills in both languages (Çubukçu & Demirtaş, 2021; ElJishi et al., 2022; Sehar et al., 2020; Zhou, 2024).



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Despite the benefits of bilingual instruction, as evidenced by existing studies related to cognitive, academic and sociocultural aspects, there is a scarcity of research about how bilingual instruction is perceived by students and teachers in private secondary schools. In addition, very few studies compare these perspectives side-by-side, even though they play such a crucial role in the success of bilingual programs.

This study thus aims to shed light on the practical benefits and challenges of bilingual education, by exploring teachers' and students' attitudes toward bilingual instruction, and how they see it working in practice. These observations directly guide the aims of the study.

The objectives of this research were to explore the multifaceted dimensions of bilingual instruction within private secondary schools. Specifically, the study aimed to determine students' attitudes toward bilingual instruction and to examine teachers' perspectives on the same. In addition, it sought to investigate the perceived benefits of bilingual instruction from both student and teacher viewpoints, while also identifying any drawbacks experienced by each group. Finally, the research aimed to compare and analyze differences in attitudes, perceived benefits, and potential drawbacks between students and teachers to gain a comprehensive understanding of how bilingual instruction is received and interpreted by these two key stakeholder groups.

Null Hypotheses

- H_0 : Teachers and students differ significantly on their attitudes towards bilingual instruction.
- H_0 : Teachers and students perceived no difference in the benefits of bilingual instruction.
- H_{01} : There is no statistically significant difference between the perceived drawbacks of bilingual instruction reported by teachers compared to those who were reported by the students.

This research employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey approach to investigate the perspectives of secondary school teachers and students on bilingual instruction, including their perceived attitudes, benefits, and drawbacks. The sample comprised 120 students and 60 teachers from 6 non-elite private secondary schools in different areas of Lahore. Data were collected



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through closed-ended questionnaires that addressed the participants' attitudes, perceived benefits, and perceived drawbacks of bilingual instruction at the secondary level. The teacher questionnaire consisted of 20 close-ended items divided into three sections: Section A (9 items), Section B (6 items), and Section C (5 items). The student questionnaire had 17 close-ended items, also divided into three sections: Section A (6 items), Section B (6 items), and Section C (5 items). A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," was used to measure the responses.

A normality test was conducted for the variables of attitudes, perceived benefits, and perceived drawbacks to determine the appropriateness of using parametric tests. The normal distribution of the variables (teachers' attitudes, teachers' perceived benefits, teachers' perceived drawbacks, students' attitudes and students' perceived benefits) showed that the variables were normally distributed. However, students' perception of disadvantages was not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' and Students' Attitudes and Perceived Benefits of Bilingual Instruction

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude	Teachers	60	1.60	.50	.06
	Students	120	1.66	.53	.04
Benefits	Teachers	60	1.70	.57	.07
	Students	120	1.77	.65	.05

Table 1 presents the mean score of teachers' attitudes which was 1.60 and the mean of students' attitude resulted to 1.66. The mean score of benefits gained by teachers was 1.70, while the mean of the benefits achieved by the students was 1.77.



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Table 2: Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Attitudes and Perceived Benefits of Bilingual Instruction

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	.078	.781	-.795	178	.428	-.065	.082	-.229	.097
	Equal variances not assumed			-.806	122.7	.422	-.065	.081	-.227	.095
Benefits	Equal variances assumed	.262	.609	-.629	178	.530	-.062	.099	-.258	.133
	Equal variances not assumed			-.655	131.6	.514	-.062	.095	-.251	.126

Due to normal distribution of parameters, independent sample test was performed for attitudes and benefits of teachers and students (Table 2). Since the value (0.428) is more than 0.05, there is no significant difference in attitudes of teachers and students. Likewise, since the p value (0.530) is higher than 0.05 and does not show a meaningful difference, there is no difference between the perception of the teachers and the students regarding the benefits. Consequently, the null hypotheses (Ho) for attitude and benefits were accepted.



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Table 3: Comparison of Perceived Drawbacks of Bilingual Instruction Between Teachers and Students

Ranks				
	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Drawbacks	Teachers	60	68.90	4134.0
	Students	120	101.30	12156.0
	Total	180		
		Drawbacks		
Mann-Whitney U		2304.0		
Wilcoxon W		4134.0		
Z		-3.9		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		

Table 3 depicts Mann-Whitney Test results that was carried out for drawbacks for both teachers as well as students as this parameter did not possess normal distribution. The value (.000) which is < 0.05 shows that there is a significant difference between the drawbacks felt by teachers and the drawbacks felt by students. This implies that one of those groups viewed bilingual instruction as considerably more disadvantageous than the other. Thus, the null hypothesis for drawbacks (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_3) was retained.

Table 4: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Findings
H_1 (attitudes)	Alternate hypothesis is rejected
H_2 (benefits)	Alternate hypothesis is rejected



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H₃ (drawbacks)

Null hypothesis is rejected

Discussion

Drawing from teachers' perspectives, this study found strong support for bilingual instruction, aligning with earlier findings (Ali, 2020; Ngubane et al., 2020). Most teachers believed that delivering content in both English and Urdu benefits student learning. Similarly, students reported that explanations in Urdu supported their understanding of English-medium instruction, making lessons more accessible. These findings affirm Cummins' (2001) theory that learning concepts in a second language is facilitated when first introduced in the native language.

The study also highlights the positive psychological impact of bilingual education. Teachers observed increased student motivation and self-confidence when both languages were used in class. This aligns with previous research (Wheeler, 2018; Ozfidan, 2017; Çubukçu & Demirtaş, 2021), which found that bilingual learners displayed greater self-assurance and engagement, particularly when encouraged to use their native language in learning.

Beyond emotional and cognitive benefits, bilingual instruction was perceived to offer practical career advantages. Teachers believed that dual-language proficiency enhances future employment opportunities, supporting findings by ElJishi et al. (2022), who noted that educators and parents alike see bilingualism as an asset in the job market.

The students in this study consistently reported improved academic outcomes when taught bilingually. Many believed they scored better in exams with the support of bilingual explanations. This echoes findings by Ali (2021), Badiozaman et al. (2019), and Rasool et al. (2020), who found that bilingual students showed improved test performance and cognitive flexibility. Similarly, Berens et al. (2013) and Burkhauser et al. (2016) reported that students in dual-language programs outperformed their monolingual peers, especially in reading and writing.

A notable finding in this research is the convergence of positive attitudes between students and teachers toward bilingual education. Contrary to assumptions that perspectives may differ, this



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study found no major discrepancies in how benefits were perceived, supporting earlier findings by Oztruk et al. (2023) and Jurado and Garcia (2018), especially in science subjects. While Omidire and Ayob (2020) observed slight variations, both studies confirmed generally favorable views among teachers toward bilingual practices.

However, differences emerged regarding the perceived drawbacks. While students emphasized the usefulness of maintaining their native language, some teachers were less supportive of its preservation in academic contexts. This supports previous findings (Arpacı & Bergil, 2020; ElJishi et al., 2022) indicating that native language maintenance is often seen by educators as a competing rather than complementary goal to English development.

In sum, this study reinforces the consensus across literature that bilingual instruction is positively received by both teachers and students. While some differences in perception remain—especially concerning language maintenance, the overall trend supports expanding bilingual programs in private secondary education.

Conclusion

The present study provides meaningful understanding of how key stakeholders, teachers and learners, perceive bilingual education in Pakistan. In conclusion, bilingual instruction not only facilitates linguistic development, but also encourages critical analysis, allows for inclusiveness, and develops cultural awareness in students. While some concerns were expressed about possible drawbacks, the overall attitudes of both teachers and students were positive. This study adds significant value to the body of research on bilingual instruction in secondary schools by explaining the material and perceptual aspects of bilingual implementation. The implications of this study underscore the importance for educational organizations and policymakers to recognize and embrace the value of bilingual instruction in developing students' academic performance, cultural awareness, and linguistic diversity. Using these positive perceptions, they can continue to



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develop their teaching capabilities to accommodate a range of learners, creating a more inclusive and engaging classroom experience.

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