Bridging the Gap: Analysis of Factors Influencing Students' Performance in Public Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the factors influencing students' performance in public primary schools. A qualitative research approach was employed to collect data from principals and teachers working at public primary schools. Purposive sampling technique was utilized to involve ten principals and ten teachers from public primary schools in Tehsil Multan Saddar. Two semi-structured interview protocols were developed based on a thorough literature review. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, where similar codes were grouped into broader themes. The study identified several key factors impacting students' performance. Most principals highlighted the importance of a positive relationship among staff and a conducive learning environment. Many principals advocated for the importance of a clear school vision and active community engagement, while a significant number emphasized the presence of inclusive education measures as a crucial factor. On the other hand, many teachers pointed out that effective classroom management, different teaching methods, and technology integration in the classroom are the key factors affecting students' performance. They also highlighted the role of parental involvement in education. Regarding socioeconomic status, many teachers noted its significant impact on academic success. However, a smaller group argued that personal motivation and interest in learning are more important for students' success.

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1.   Introduction

The contemporary trends in education emphasizing on creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, communication and technological proficiency to produce high quality students (College of Education Bulacan State University & Santos, 2017). These advanced learning skills are directly linked with the availability of quality education in educational institutions. In a fast-changing world, quality education is a basic human right and an essential part of sustainable development. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) also stressing on quality education and producing lifelong learners (Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, 2020). However, ensuring quality education is a major challenge, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, particularly at the primary school level, where systemic issues often hinder the delivery of good education (Afzal & Qadir, 2022). Additionally, the views of stakeholders such as principals, teachers, parents, and communities play a key role in shaping educational outcomes (Caldas, Gómez, & Ferrara, 2019). Research shows that the quality of education depends on various factors, which in turn affect students' performance

in schools (Afzal & Qadir, 2022) among these factors; leadership and policies, school environment, community involvement, teachers' qualifications, feedback, parental involvement, students' socioeconomic status, technological integration, and the physical environment play a key role (Hong, Liu, & Zhang, 2024; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Wilder, 2014).

Students in public primary schools in Multan are struggling with lower performance due to old practices. These practices include traditional leadership, poor teaching methods, little community involvement, and slow use of technology. The problem is made worse because many principals and teachers don't fully understand what factors affect student success. As a result, student performance keeps getting worse. This research aims to find out the key factors behind this issue by gathering insights from stakeholders involved. This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing student performance in public primary schools. The findings of this study can guide policy changes and teacher training in Pakistan's education system, especially in areas needing improvement. For instance, the research shows that community support and technology can boost student performance. Highlighting these factors could motivate schools to work closely with their communities and use modern tools well. By addressing such areas, we can enhance the quality of education in Multan's public primary schools, benefiting students, teachers, and the broader community. The research questions are as under:

- What are the main factors influencing student performance in public primary schools?
- How do principals view the impact of various factors on student performance in their schools?
- What are teachers' perspectives on the factors influencing student performance in public primary schools?

The objectives will drive this research to identify the factors that influence students' performance in public primary schools and to explore principals' and teachers' perceptions on the factors that affect students' performance in public primary schools.

2.   Literature Review

The main goal of this research is to investigate the factors that affect students' performance, based on the views of principals and teachers working in public primary schools. Before gathering their insights, an in-depth review of the existing literature was conducted to identify these factors and their role in students learning at primary schools. The following are the key factors identified after a thorough review of the literature:

2.1   Leadership and Its Impact on Student Learning

Effective school leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing student achievement (Dutta & Sahney, 2016), and this study further stated that a strong leadership drives improvements in the quality of education by fostering a positive learning environment. Leadership directly impacts students' learning by setting clear academic goals, motivating teachers, and ensuring effective instructional practices (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). As Karadağ et al. (2015) highlighted that leadership shapes the relationships within the school, creating an atmosphere where students are better supported academically and emotionally.

Conducive learning at school motivates students towards learning and better performance. This can be linked to collaboration at schools, the collaboration between school principal and teachers plays a significant role in creating such an environment. In this culture of collaboration everyone work together to achieve school goals and ultimately enhance quality of education which is the prime purpose of school (SAGAYA). Karunakaran, Jusoh and Chinna (2019) suggest that democratic and participatory systems encourage staff involvement, boost morale, and improve instructional guidance, which in turn enhances student performance. This collaboration is not limited to teachers, but principals have to develop collaboration with the community as well. Community and schools' partnership has a strong impact on student achievement and overall school performance. This collaboration also develops a supportive learning environment at school which impact students' performance (Caldas, Gómez, & Ferrara, 2019). Active community involvement at school

helps to address school problems to provide a better learning environment and students' retention at school (Ahmad, Khalid, & Zafar, 2022).

2.2   Relationship between Teachers and Principals

The relationship between school principals and teachers fosters an environment of working and learning. This contributes in students' performance and achievement (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Support from school principals enhances teachers' morale and motivation and overall add in school climate. Teachers feel motivated and satisfied with their jobs and focus better on students' learning at school (Ljubljana & Krasniqi, 2021). Such principals provides opportunities to their teachers for their professional development to implement innovation teaching strategies at school (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020).

2.3   School Climate

A positive school climate enhances trust and respect among colleagues which is imperative for students' performance (Sheras & Bradshaw, 2016). When students feel valued they will happily engage themselves in learning activities (Mousena & Raptis, 2020). In such classrooms, students will be more motivated towards learning and their relationship with their teachers will be strengthened. When teachers have a strong connection with their students, they can engage learners in a variety of activities to achieve their learning outcomes. This will enhance students' understanding, performance, confidence and improve their well-being at school (Forsberg, Chiriac, & Thornberg, 2021). Thus, it is crucial to create a positive school climate to improve students' performance (Abbas, Javed, & Waseem, 2022).

2.4   Classroom Management

The physical and social environment of classroom also plays a vital role in students' learning performance (Arias & Walker, 2004). A well-organized, well-lit, and spacious classroom can boost concentration, fostering an environment where students are more engaged and perform better (Edgerton & McKechnie, 2023). Teachers must learn classroom management skills to create a learning environment in the classroom. Better classroom management provides opportunities for students to focus, collaborate and learn effectively. This also facilitates teachers to use audio-visual aids in a better way and make classroom interactive (Arias & Walker, 2004). Moreover, the role of social environment in classroom cannot be neglected. Social environments maintain discipline, organize students in classroom, follow routine and procedures in a structured way. Thus, the teacher's role in maintaining both physical and social environment in the classroom is inevitable (Kausar, Kiyani, & Suleman, 2017).

2.5   Parental Involvement and Teacher Collaboration

Another key factor in students' performance is parental involvement in school. As mentioned above the relationship between school and school community cannot be ignored. Parents are one of the key stakeholders at school. Parents plays a crucial role in shaping up their child's performance and behavior at school (Wilder, 2014). When schools keep engaging parents in their child's learning, learners stay motivated and active in their learning. This also raised the performance of teachers due to the accountability of their performance. Institución Educativa Técnica El Portachuelo. Boyacá and Tamayo Jiménez (2023) highlighted that parents' expectations from school are always very high. Both school and teachers always strive for their better performance. Ahmad, Khalid and Zafar (2022) highlighted in their research that parents' involvement in school plays a significant role in school improvement.

Authors, O. A. Awofala and O. Lawani (2020) and Contreras (2024) conclude that regular interaction and communication between school and parents develop a strong relationship which leave a positive impact on students' learning and performance. This teamwork increases students' thinking skills and academic success. However, one of the challenges is engaging parents from diverse backgrounds and ensuring consistent involvement. Balancing parental expectations is essential to provide the right support without overwhelming students, thus fostering positive academic experiences that encourage growth and success (Institución Educativa Técnica El Portachuelo. Boyacá & Tamayo Jiménez, 2023).

2.6   Differentiated Instruction (DI)

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a pivotal teaching method that focuses on tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of students. It plays an essential role in improving student engagement and academic performance. He et al. (2019) observed that DI enhances student attention and achievement because it targets different abilities and pace in learning. Nonetheless, it is evident that adopting DI in the context of online learning settings experienced difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic period (Kamarulzaman et al., 2021). Internationally, DI has also been seen to enhance second language acquisition in the case of Turkish students (Yavuz, 2020). DI was more effective than no-DI in boosting students' mathematics achievement; the mean score was higher among students taught mathematics with the help of DI than among students learning mathematics with other approaches (O. A. Awofala & O. Lawani, 2020). These studies show the potential of DI and how it affects learners directly despite the fundamental challenge of how to blend individualization with mass production.

2.7   Effects of Feedback on Students' Performance

Students' outcomes are shaped by the feedback and assessments they receive. Structured assessments help students identify their weak areas, which leads to improved overall performance (Annie, 2011). Peer assessment also improves learning outcomes by promoting active participation (Double, McGrane, & Hopfenbeck, 2020). Research shows that digital feedback boosts student performance by providing timely and detailed guidance (Zimbardi et al., 2017).

2.8   Effects of Socioeconomic Status and on Students' Achievement

Students belong to various backgrounds e.g., the previous education, their vicinity, financial status of their parents and the status of their family members and siblings etc. It plays a vital role in students' academic life. Sometime students belongs to low backgrounds could not focus on their studies due to many factors at home which ultimately effect their performance (Berkowitz et al., 2017). Moreover, parental education also plays a role in students' learning because such parents cannot provide the required support to their children (Fateel, Mukallid, & Arora, 2021). To overcome this challenge, school environment can play a positive role in it by focusing more on such students and by giving extra time and efforts can improve their learning performance at school.

2.9   Inclusive Education and Special Needs Students

The school population is based on a variety of students, normal to special needs, higher to low achievers. It is the responsibility of the teachers to take everyone on board on a learning journey. Many students could have learning difficulties, the teacher's role is to identify such students to pay them special attention and care. This will enhance their motivation and learning (Molina Roldán et al., 2021). The role of the school principal and teachers is crucial to provide support to such students to keep them engaged and to stay at school. School must set up individualized education plans for such students. Moreover, teachers' teaching skills and effective use of classroom strategies also impact students learning.

2.10   Digital Literacy and Technology Integration

It is a proven fact that information and communication technology have a strong impact on students learning (Fakhrudin & . 2023). Technology visualizes learning and keeps students engaging in learning, which ultimately enhances their performance. Such students improve their critical thinking and problem solving skills (Pagani et al., 2015). However, the schools where such infrastructure is weak or lacking cannot provide better learning experiences to their students (Ismail et al., 2019). Compared with other students, it will affect their performance and exposure towards learning. Moreover, if teachers are not equipped with such skills, it will also be a barrier in their teaching because they would be able to integrate technology in their teaching which ultimately affect school performance.

3.   Research Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was adopted to get insights from school principals and teachers. Interviews were conducted with principals and teachers at public primary schools through in-person visits. The interview protocols were developed for both principals and teachers include semi-structured open-ended questions. The data collected was managed manually for analysis. To identify the key findings, thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data, highlighting the main factors that affect student performance

3.1   Population and Sample

The population for this study included all public primary schools in Punjab Province with a specific focus on Tehsil Multan Saddar. Tehsil Multan Saddar consists of 133 schools and 596 teachers (School Information System, 2024). Purposive sampling was used to select schools from Tehsil Saddar, this Tehsil has the largest number of schools. This approach was chosen to gather a larger and more diverse group of respondents, providing a deeper understanding of the factors affecting students' performance. In total, ten principals and ten teachers were selected as a sample for this research. This sample was sufficient to identify the factors affecting students' performance in public schools. Qualitative research usually digs out the deeper perspectives of the phenomenon under study. A smaller sample size allows for more detailed analysis of each participant's responses, which is often more meaningful than broad, superficial insights from a larger sample.

3.2   Interview Protocol

A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted to identify the various factors influencing students' performance in schools, as highlighted by different researchers in diverse settings. This review guided the development of semi-structured interview protocols for both principals and teachers. After taking the background information from the participants, the specific questions were presented about the factors affecting students' performance. For principals, 12 questions were designed including some supportive questions in case to dig out the detail. Following are sample questions from principals' interview protocol: (1) *What steps did you take to create a positive learning atmosphere in the school?* (b) *How do you choose teaching techniques, and how do they meet the needs of your students?*

As to the teachers' interviews, another protocol was developed considering the nature of job and teaching responsibilities. In total, 11 questions were designed along with supportive questions. These questions focused on areas such as classroom management, school and class size, teaching methods, technology use, student engagement, feedback, student backgrounds, and parental involvement. The following are the sample questions: (a) *How do your strategies for managing the classroom influence students' academic success?* (b) *How do you choose teaching techniques, and how do they meet the needs of your students?* Moreover, to get the deep insights following probe questions were asked: *(a) How does this impact student performance? (b) Can you tell me more about that?* Before finalizing the questions, the researcher conducted pilot interviews with three teachers and three principals. After the interviews, small changes were made in questions.

3.3   Data Collection

Initially, consent was obtained from both principals and teachers. Meetings were then scheduled, during which the objectives and purpose of the study were clearly explained to the participants. For the interviews, questions were sent to the principals via WhatsApp ten days in advance. On the day of the interview, the protocols were discussed, and permission was sought to record the interview for analysis purposes. Participants were assured that their identities and all collected data would remain confidential. The same procedures applied to the teachers' interviews. All the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. On average an interview lasted between 10-25 minutes. The average age of respondents was between 25-56 years with a wide range of experiences in their field.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study looked at the factors that affect student performance in public primary schools by taking insights from principals and teachers. To do this, interviews were conducted with both stakeholders. The interviews were originally in Urdu and were carefully translated into English. While translating the interview from Urdu to English, it was ensured that the original message remain accurate and clear. The researcher used thematic analysis to review the data. The interview transcripts were read multiple times to understand the content fully. The data were then coded by highlighting parts that were important to the research questions. Each code was given a number to count how often it appeared. These codes were put into a table to calculate its percentage.

Next, the codes were grouped into larger themes that represented the participants' views. This process was repeated and refined to make sure the themes matched the data. Finally, the main themes were named. These themes showed the factors principals and teachers believe impact student performance in public primary schools. This method turned the interview data into clear findings for the study. To ensure the reliability of the codes, we asked a colleague to independently code the interviews. She was provided with proper guidance on the coding framework and process. After she completed the coding, we compared the matching codes and discussed any differences. Following this discussion, we applied the reliability calculation method by Matthew, et al. (1994). The calculated reliability of the codes was .83, which meets the accepted standard of 80%.

4. Results

The study focused on uncovering the factors that influence student performance in public primary schools, based on the perspective of the principals and teachers. Participants were asked semi-structured open-ended questions to gather their insights into the factors that affect students' performance in public primary schools. To analyze the qualitative data, thematic analysis was conducted. This section outlines the main findings, beginning with the principals' responses, followed by the teachers' perspectives.

4.1 Principals' Responses Regarding Factors Affecting Students' Performance

The following section will present the principals' responses. Though our data was quite rich, and we were able to identify many themes and related responses, however considering the words limit of this paper we will report the following seven themes with supporting occurrence. The details of these key themes are as follows:

4.1.1 Fostering a Positive Learning Environment

One of the key themes identified was the importance of a positive learning environment. When principals were asked about their methods to create this atmosphere, most acknowledged its significance. They explained that to promote a positive environment, they engage with staff in a friendly way, address their concerns, and overlook minor errors. According to most of the principals, maintaining this supportive relationship between school leaders and teachers directly influences students' performance, leading to a constructive impact on their academic progress.

> *"As a head, I maintain a friendly attitude, support my staff, and pay attention to their issues."* (P-05)

Another principal shares a similar opinion:

> *"I have built a supportive environment, so my teachers feel comfortable sharing their problems with me, and they don't see me as bossy."* (P- 08)

4.1.2 Goals for Enhancing Student Learning

Principal's goal for enhancing students learning performance was another key theme of this study. The school principals said that when a principal has a clear goal regarding his institution, it does have a positive effect on students' performance. A clear goal set by a school principal provides direction and focus for both teachers and students, creating a structured learning environment. This helps improve students' performance by aligning everyone's efforts toward common academic and behavioral expectations. In this study, most principals had clear goals, focusing on providing quality education with an emphasis on English and Mathematics. They aimed to ensure that students gain a deep understanding of these subjects. The following interview chunk supports this claim:

> *"My goal is to offer quality education since our school needs to compete with private schools." (P-01)*

Another principal expressed his opinion:

> *"My priority is ensuring students fully grasp the concepts they study and understand the parts of the syllabus they've covered." (P-03)*

4.1.3 Cooperation and Positive Listening

Another prominent theme identified in our study was cooperation and positive listening. Many principals emphasized that their supportive and collaborative relationships with teachers positively influence students' performance. They stated that they foster a team-oriented environment where teachers feel valued and supported. Principals also mentioned that they maintain regular communication, actively listen to any concerns, and provide direct support when needed. These practices help build a strong, cooperative atmosphere that benefits the entire school community. One principal said:

> *"I address my teachers' concerns and whenever required I work with them to create a supportive relationship." (P-06)*

Another principal mentioned:

> *"I frequently observe classes, find areas for improvement, and offer constructive feedback. I also provide mentorship and guidance." (P-03)*

4.1.4 Maintaining Discipline and Professional Standards

Another notable theme identified in this research was "maintaining discipline and professional standards." While this theme appears less frequently, it provides important insights into how some principals prioritize maintaining discipline as a crucial factor in supporting student performance. Some principals mentioned that they enforce strict disciplinary practices while simultaneously cultivating strong relationships with their teachers. They believe that maintaining high professional standards is crucial for creating a focused and respectful learning environment. One principal provided the following example:

> *"I always emphasize on discipline and maintaining code of conduct prescribed by authorities for better functioning of the school." (P-02)*

Another principal stated:

> *"If a classroom lacks discipline, I direct the teacher to fix it because it's the principal's job to keep the school running well." (P-09)*

4.1.5 Enhancing Teachers' Performance

Principals recognize that the performance of teachers directly influences student outcomes. To improve this, many principals take a proactive approach by setting an example. They lead by demonstrating effective teaching methods and behaviors, offering a clear model for their teachers to emulate. Alongside this, they share their personal and professional experiences to guide and inspire, ensuring that teachers feel supported and motivated to excel in their roles. Here's an example from an interview:

> *"If I see a teacher's performance is not up to the mark, I guide them by sharing my experiences and demonstrating how to teach" (P-01)*

Another principal said:

> *"If I observe that a teacher's performance is not satisfactory or they struggle to understand a topic, I pair them with an experienced teacher. This approach enables the teacher to learn through collaboration and discuss challenges with a more knowledgeable colleague." (P-09)*

4.1.6 Engagement of Principals with Community

Engagement of principals with the community emerged as another major theme in this study. Many principals acknowledged that involving the community can greatly impact student performance. To foster this engagement, they focus on maintaining ongoing communication and collaboration with community members. They regularly share updates on student performance and set flexible meeting times to encourage maximum participation. By actively involving the community in school affairs, they create a supportive network that enhances the overall learning environment. Here is an example from an interview:

> *"Our school council meetings have flexible timing; we do not require them to meet at a specific time. I usually call them, ask about their availability, and then schedule the meeting." (P-03)*

Another principal stated:

> *"I involve the stakeholders by holding PTM (Parent Teacher Meeting) and SC (School Council) meetings." (P-08)*

4.1.7 Inclusive Education

Most of the principals noted that the presence of inclusive education positively influences the performance of special students. To support this, they prioritize providing extra facilities, improving infrastructure, and offering personalized resources to address the unique needs of these students. Additionally, principals emphasize the importance of working closely with parents to ensure a nurturing environment both at home and in school, which further contributes to the success of special students. Here is an example from an interview:

> *"In my school, I have constructed a ramp for children with special needs." (P-06)*

Another school principal shared:

> *"When my staff and I notice that a student has special needs, like poor eyesight, we reach out to the parents for support. In some cases, we even help provide glasses for the student ourselves." (P-01)*

4.2 Teachers' Responses Regarding Factors Affecting Students' Performance

The following section will present the teachers' responses.

4.2.1 Appropriate Classroom Management Strategies

Effective classroom management emerged as a crucial theme in this study. Teachers emphasize the importance of using appropriate strategies to enhance students' performance. A large number of teachers highlighted that proper seating arrangements play a significant role in fostering a productive learning environment. These arrangements not only allow teachers to monitor student activities more closely, ensuring better guidance, but also help maintain academic honesty by reducing opportunities for cheating during tests. Additionally, seating students according to their height improves their visibility of the whiteboard, further supporting their learning experience. Here is an example from an interview:

> *"In seating arrangements, I prefer a U-shape because it allows the teacher to see all the students and keep them focused on their tasks, which boosts their performance."* (T-10)

Another chunk from interview:

> *"When I organize group study, I arrange the students in a circle, and for tests, I seat them in rows to prevent copying."* (T- 05)

4.2.2 Selection of Teaching Methods

Selecting the right teaching methods emerged as a significant theme in this study. Teachers emphasized the importance of customizing their approaches based on the specific needs of the subject and the students. Many teachers focus on adapting their teaching methods to fit the current knowledge and learning pace of their students. By tailoring their strategies to the topic at hand, they ensure that each lesson is both accessible and effective, allowing students to engage more deeply with the material. Here is an example from an interview:

> *"My class has students with different needs and levels of understanding, so sometimes I teach by reading aloud, and other times I use the whiteboard to draw"* (T-04)

Another teacher said:

> *"Teaching methods differ depending on the subject. Group activities work well for math, while practical exercises are effective for science."* (T-01)

4.2.3 Integrating Technology

Another important theme of this study was using technology in the classroom. Many teachers use devices like tablets to improve their lessons, especially in reading and math. These tools help students get ready for tests and make learning more fun and interactive. Some teachers even use their Android phones to teach, showing how flexible and easy-to-use technology can be in helping students learn. Here's an example from an interview:

> *"I do use digital tools, especially when preparing students for LND. I let them practice on the tablet and watch educational videos on it."* (T-02)

Another teacher added:

> *"Yes, I use a tablet when teaching LND, and I also let students practice on it. Sometimes, I even use my Android phone for this purpose."* (T-06)

4.2.4 Impact of Feedback

Another key theme in this study was the importance of giving feedback to students. Teachers recognized that constructive feedback is important for students' growth. They stress the need to give clear, useful feedback that helps students learn from their mistakes and improve. By pointing out errors and giving new tasks, teachers make sure the feedback is not only helpful but also motivating, pushing students to do better. Here is an excerpt from an interview as evidence:

> *"After the test, I grade the papers, highlight the mistakes, write the correct answers, and then tell each student individually where they went wrong and how they can fix it." (T-05)*

Another teacher said:

> *"I correct their mistakes and ask them to practice. I always give feedback to my students to make sure they are learning." (T-02)*

4.2.5 Involving Parents in Students' Studies

Involving parents in their children's education is considered a vital factor in enhancing student performance. Teachers use various strategies to keep parents engaged, such as regularly updating them about their child's progress through parent-teacher meetings (PTMs) and encouraging them to participate in their child's academic activities. Here is what some teachers said:

> *"Parent-teachers meeting help to share the performance of students at school, which ultimately bring change in students' behavior and performance." (T-04)*

Another teacher said:

> *"Sometimes, I write a note in the student's notebook and ask them to get their parents' signature." (T-05)*

4.3 Socioeconomic Status Impacts

Socioeconomic status is recognized as a significant factor influencing students' performance, and it stands out as a key theme in this study. Many teachers acknowledge that a student's socioeconomic background can greatly impact their academic success. Those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face numerous challenges, such as a lack of basic resources, emotional and psychological stress, and additional domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, these students may have parents who are unable to provide sufficient educational support due to time constraints or illiteracy. These factors contribute to a negative impact on their academic performance, highlighting the critical role that socioeconomic status plays in shaping educational outcomes. *A teacher explained:*

> *"Often, these students do not even have their own notebooks or pencils, which decline their performance in class." (T-02)*

Another teacher said:

> *"In our school, very few students come from a good socioeconomic background. Most come from low-income families, and this affects their academic performance. When these students go home, instead of being told to study or do their homework, their parents tell them to go to the fields or find work. A student who has to work after school cannot study properly when they return." (T-04)*

On the other hand, a smaller group of teachers holds a different perspective. They believe that socioeconomic status does not significantly affect students' performance. According to these teachers, a student's success is driven more by their personal interest in studying than by their financial background. They argue that even if students lack resources, teachers often step in to provide the necessary materials, ensuring that all students have what they need to succeed. For them, the key factor is the effort and determination of the student, rather than the influence of socioeconomic status. A teacher said:

> *"A student's financial background is not a decisive factor; motivated students will pursue their studies regardless of their family's economic status." (T-06)*

Another teacher said:

> *"When a teacher is teaching, they do not consider the student's socioeconomic status. All students are taught the same, so I do not think SES has an impact. It is true that some students may lack resources, but we can manage that by sharing. (T-08)*

5. Conclusion and Policies

The main goal of this study was to identify the factors affecting students' performance in public primary schools from principals and teachers' perspective. We identified several key factors that positively impact students' performance. For example, a positive relationship between principals and teachers was shown to enhance students' academic outcomes. This finding is supported by the study findings of Kamaruddin et al. (2009) and is consistent with other studies by Back et al. (2016) these studies emphasize the importance of collaborative leadership. Our study found that a positive and supportive school environment greatly boosts students' confidence and motivation, which improves their performance. This aligns with the findings of Abbas, Javed and Waseem (2022). Another important factor was the impact of regular communication between principals and the community. The results suggest that such communication positively affects student performance. The research findings of Ahmad, Khalid and Zafar (2022) are also in line with our study results. The researcher also discovered that providing extra facilities for students with special needs significantly enhances their learning experience. This is consistent with the findings of Molina Roldán et al. (2021) who emphasize the importance of inclusive education. Moreover, this study also found that a clear vision from school leadership positively influences student performance by providing direction and setting academic priorities for the school, and this finding aligns with the work of (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019).

Furthermore, the researcher found that teaching methods that focus on students and match their level of understanding are more effective in improving performance. This finding is in accordance with research results of He et al. (2019) who concluded that student-centered teaching methods improve student engagement and academic outcomes. Efficient classroom management can minimize disruptions and support academic performance. This result is in accordance with the study results of Edgerton and McKechnie (2023) and Suleman (2017). The study also shows that using technology in education positively impacts student performance. Our results align with the findings of Woo and Wang (2022) who highlighted the importance of digital literacy in fostering collaboration and innovation. However, Pagani et al. (2015) offer a different view, suggesting that perceived digital literacy does not always reflect actual performance. Our study findings also show that parental involvement in students' education is an important factor in the perspective of teachers. Parents' involvement in students' education influence a positive effect on students' performance, and this finding is align with finding of Contreras (2024) which stated that active parental support, such as providing basic needs, moral encouragement, and quality time, fosters positive study habits and enhances academic performance in students.

Lastly, our study found that family's socioeconomic status influences the students' academic performance and weak socioeconomic status of family effect the students' performance negatively. This finding is in accordance with the research results of Mukhtar (2024) who found that socioeconomic status influences cognitive and academic performance in primary school students with lower status correlating with poorer outcomes. In conclusion,

our study shares valuable insights from principals and teachers about the key factors affecting students' performance in public primary schools. These perspectives highlight areas in school that influence student success. Focusing on these factors can help schools create a more supportive environment that matches what these stakeholders believe is important for students' performance.

5.1   Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study aimed to identify factors affecting student performance in public primary schools, focusing on the perspectives of principals and teachers. Although the study provided valuable insights, certain limitations suggest directions for future research. One of the main limitations is the reliance on interviews, which might introduce bias since respondents could withhold information. Integrating observations with interviews could offer a more comprehensive view. Additionally, the study only involved principals and teachers, which presents a narrow perspective. Including input from parents and the community in future research could provide a more complete understanding. The study's sampling technique, purposive sampling, might have led to selection bias, making it difficult to generalize the findings to a broader population. Future studies could focus on engaging more respondents to better generalize the study results. This research was also geographically limited to primary schools in Tehsil Saddar, District Multan, which may not represent the entire district. Expanding the study to include other tehsils could yield more detailed information.

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