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Analysis of Parents' Attitudes towards Education of their Children in Multan

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the attitude of parents towards the education of their children. The data was collected by administering an agree-disagree type questionnaire through the personal visits to two hundred and forty parents, selected through multistage sampling from Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran and Vehari districts of Multan division. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS 20 software. Factor analysis with Varimax rotation yielded five factors: 1-Parents' preferences for the education of their sons and daughters 2-access of education to both the genders 3-Parental problems for the children's education 4-quality and type of educational institutions parents wished for the education of their children 5-sociocultural motives for the education of children. All the five factors explain 37.855% of common variance. Cronbach Alpha reliability of all the factors was no less than .7 acceptable range. Moreover, the data set satisfied Bartlett Test of Sphericity and Kayser Mayer Sampling Adequacy Tests showing the suitability of the data set for factorization. Frequency, percentages, mean scores, standard deviation, independent t test, paired sample t test were calculated from the data. It was found the vast majority of the parents (more than 90%) have positive attitude towards the education of their children. Socioeconomic and cultural factors have adverse effect on the parents' attitude regarding the education of their children. It is recommended that the government should support the parents for the education of their children.

INTRODUCTION

It is an admitted fact that education contributes a lot in the socioeconomic development of the countries. UNESCO report 2020 indicates that education reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment related issues particularly at developing societies like Pakistan (UNESCO, 2020). Children learn beliefs, feelings and behaviors mainly from their parents (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Educational attitudes of parents



usually develop under the system of beliefs, values and practices. Educational background, socioeconomic status and cultural beliefs are the major determinants of the educational background of parents (Fan & Chen, 2001). Researchers noted that educated parents are normally concerned with school attendance, academic progress, parent- teachers' meetings and education friendly environment (Hill & Tyson, 2009). On the other hand, uneducated ones provide limited access to the educational opportunities to their children (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011) limiting their academic achievement (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

The study conducted by Butt and Park (2024) concluded that collaboration of socioeconomic, cultural, and demographic factors are the major contributors of the educational attitudes of parents in Pakistan. Parents belonging to higher income and well-paying profession have positive approach towards schooling in terms of spending on tuition fees, books, uniforms, and transportation facilities of their children's education. Educational background of parents also has positive correlation with their educational attitudes. Usually well qualified parents have shown keen interest in the learning activities of their young ones (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011). On the other hand, education appears as financial burden rather than a source of long-term investment for the parents from low-income and poor educational background (Tilak, 2002). The economic utility of education dominates over personal or intellectual development of children in the country (Kabeer, 2003). Moreover, gender of children also influences parents' decisions about the education of their education. Although there is a significant positive change in the attitudes toward the education of female children boys' education is still occupying top position in the priority list of many parents. This is due to financial benefits and social norms of the community (Kabeer, 2003).

These attitudes also depend on their place of residence, family size and their parental age. Parents from urban areas shows positive attitudes toward education as compared to their rural counterparts. These differences usually depend on the level of awareness of the benefits of education (UNESCO, 2020). In general, profession of parents, their access to resources, family size, place of residence and belief system are important in developing attitudes towards education (Bourdieu, 1986).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parents, being the source of inspiration for the children always remained helpful for reaching the goals by supporting home, peers, school, profession related learning as well as development (Fan & Chen, 2001; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Socioeconomic, cultural and regional factors appear as the major contributory factors in this regard (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011; Kabeer, 2003).

Types of Parental Educational Attitudes

There are two major categories of educational attitudes of parents 1- positive 2- negative depending on the level of support parents extend toward the education of their children. It has been demonstrated through research that parental attitudes emerge as a powerful force for manipulating students' motivation, involvement in educational activities and reaching the outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

1 Positive Attitudes

This type of parents consider education as the basic tool for uplifting personal growth, social wellbeing and fiscal security of the children through the creation of the conducive learning environment at all the levels (Eccles and Wigfield,2002 and Fan & Chen, 2001, Hill and Tyson 2009). Such type of situation provides opportunities for frank constructive discussion between parents and children regarding their academic achievement and future plans.

2 Negative Attitudes of Parents

Parents with negative attitude develop low educational expectations, provide limited emotional support, and show nominal involvement in the academic life of children. This group mainly belong to low-income and marginalized communities (Tilak, 2002).

Theoretical Framework



The theoretical framework consisted of Eagly & Chaiken, (1993) theory of Attitude, parental involvement model of Epstein (2001) and expectancy-value theory of Eccles & Wigfield, (2002).

1 Eagly and Chaiken's (1993) Theory of Attitude

According to this theory attitudes is a blend of cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects. Parents' expectations and support for educating young ones principally depends on their perception about the purpose and importance of education and confidence over the capabilities of their children (Fan & Chen, 2001). Parental perception and emotional commitment with education i.e., praise for the good work of children and assurance of being with them even in difficult conditions come under the umbrella of affective component. The actions which can be easily verified through observation such as the involvement in homework, being in touch with teachers and ensuring the provision of resources are the major components of behavioral aspect (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011). Hence the theoretical ground of the study emerges from the complex display of the attitude and giving roots to the parental beliefs, feelings, and actions of the parents generally affecting the learning experiences of children.

2 Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement

Epstein's (2001) model of parental involvement provides further support to Eagly and Chaiken's theory. This model describes the mechanism for the transformation of values and beliefs into observable actions. It involves the parental ways of communication, their involvement in children learning, making appropriate decisions and choices for the access and quality of learning and collaboration with various agencies of education. This model explains relationship between parental attitudes and children education (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

3 Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy Value theory of Eccles and Wigfield (2002) examines the impacts of beliefs and expectations of parents on the motivation for learning and achievement of children. The hope for the success and the importance of educational chore are essential drivers for its accomplishment (Shah and Shaikh, 2014). Parental attitudes, hopes and gestures indicate their level of involvement in the education of children. There is a direct relationship between the parental expectations and emphasis on the importance of education with the success and achievement of children (Fan and Chen, 2001). According to Expectancy-Value theory the value of education and the parents' objectives for future status of children largely affects the motivation and achievement of children (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). High value of education in the eyes of parents conveys positive messages about the better learning and high achievement of children and vice versa (Bourdieu, 1986).

4 Integration of Theories

The above-mentioned theories provide a comprehensive framework for this piece of research. The parental beliefs, values and behaviors regarding children's education were extracted from the Attitude theory. In order to develop observable behaviors from the attitudes and home related activities Epstein's model was used. The impacts of parental attitudes and involvement on children's aspirations and achievements were evolved through Expectancy-value theory. The interaction of all these theories enables the study to relate parental attitudes as both a psychological construct and a behavioral phenomenon with the educational outcomes. The further support to this framework was provided by the work of Tilak, 2002; Kabeer, 2003 explaining the impacts of socioeconomic status, cultural norms, gender expectations, and regional disparities on children's achievements.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study emerges from the classic theories of psychology. These theories describe attitude as a composite construct consisting of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). According to the theory of Ajzan (2001) beliefs and emotions are essential for developing educational outcomes. The further support to this multidimensional nature of attitude can be provided from Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) Expectancy-Value Theory. This theory describes the relationship between parental attitudes and expectations with importance of education. After extensive

research Fan and Chen (2001) concluded that combination of beliefs, expectations, and affective orientations are essential for the academic achievement of children. The above discussion provides a comprehensive picture of parental involvement in children education by considering all the foresaid dimensions of attitude (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Multan Division comprises rural and urban areas of Multan, Vehari, Khanewal and Lodhran districts. Despite of wide diversity of educational facilities rural-urban and gender disparities cannot be completely eliminated. Various factors such as poverty, socioeconomic status and gender roles are important considerations for making educational choices of children education (Kabeer, 2003). Hence, it is necessary to examine the viewpoint of parents as a principal stakeholders of children education in this regard.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study followed a quantitative survey research design. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2018) the survey research collects enough data within short span of time. The parents' attitudes towards their children's education were measured through an agree-disagree type four points Likert scale along with the demographic details of the participants.

Sample and Sampling

The researchers need to collect the data from the parents of the children currently enrolled either at government or private schools of the locality Multan division. There are four districts i.e., Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran and Vehari in this division. The population of the study comprised of the parents whose children were studying during the course of this study. Multistage sampling techniques were employed to draw a representative sample from the population. Initially the stratified random sampling technique was exercised to identify the strata of parents from each district of the division. Purposive sampling technique was practiced to reach the groups of parents whose children were persuading the course of study that time. Eventually, convenient sampling technique resulted a representative group of 60 parents from each district. Hence a representative sample of 240 parents was used to collect the data.

Questionnaire

The researchers identified the relevant research tools through an extensive literature review. These research tools were downloaded from the various data bases. A pool of the items was generated by extracting the items from the available research tools. Four points Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was attached with each item for collecting responses. The language and difficulty level of each item was made suitable for the target population. A copy of the draft tool was shared with the five experts of the field for assessing the face as well as content validity of the items. The researchers excluded inappropriate items from the pool and made changes in the remaining items as per instructions of the experts. Two experts of the language translated this questionnaire into Urdu and English again for ensuring the content validity. A four points Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was attached with each item for collecting the responses. A demographic section was attached at the beginning of the research tool. The questionnaire opens with an introductory paragraph comprising the major objective of the study and description of the way for responding the tool.

Pilot Testing

The researcher administered this tool to a small sample of 50 parents of Lodhran. A copy of the questionnaire was given to each respondent for receiving the responses. Enough time was given to complete it. The language and content the vague and inappropriate items were reviewed. The final version of the research tool was used to collect the data.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

The researcher entered the responses into the SPSS data sheet after assigning codes to the variables by assigning 1 to strongly disagree, 2 to disagree 3 to agree and 4 to strongly agree. The data set was reviewed for inconsistencies, missing values and outliers. Mean, Standard deviation and Cronbach Alpha were calculated. The calculated value of the Cronbach Alpha was .723.

Validity of the Questionnaire

Principle Component Analysis with Varimax rotation yielded five factors. Cronbach Alpha value for each factor was found above .7. The loading of the items on the factors and correlations between the items were used to calculate the construct validity. The loading of items over the constructs provided evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of each factor and the overall scale.

Collection of Data

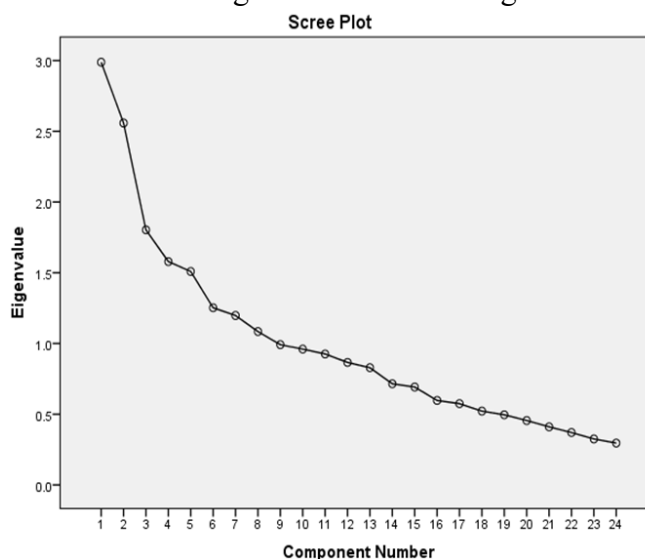
The researcher collected data by administering this tool to the participants. The participants enjoyed full freedom for leaving the sample. They were assured about the full secrecy of the provided information and anonymize the data before analysis. The researcher personally visited each of the respondent with a copy of the questionnaire. They were given enough time to complete the questionnaire. The response rate was 87%.

Data Analysis

The researcher designed a SPSS sheet for entering the data. A coding scheme was prepared by assigning 1 to strongly disagree, 2 to disagree, 3 to agree and 4 to strongly agree. Data was cleaned from unusual entries, duplicate and missing values. Two persons independently entered the data into the data sheets for cross checking the information for accuracy. A summary of the responses was prepared by calculating frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation yielded five factors. The frequency on each item of the factor along with percentages of responses and total frequency, percentage of the items and factors were worked out. Agreed and strongly agreed sets of responses were merged together to give rise a set of agree responses. Likewise, the merger of strongly disagree and disagree groups resulted disagree group of responses. Paired Sample t test was applied to this pair of responses. Furthermore, Independent sample t test was used to calculate the impact of demographic variables on each of the emerged factors. Only the significant results were interpreted and reported. The details are as follows:

Factor Matrix

The significant value of Bartlet Test of Sphericity and Kayser Mayer Olkin's Measures of Sampling Adequacy Tests exhibited that the data is suitable for factorization. Five factors resulted from the Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation were: 1-Parents' choices of institutions for the education of their children (4 item) 2- Importance of gender for the education of children (3 items) 3- Parents' problems for educating children (4 items) 4-Parents' affordability of their children education (3 items) 5-Parents' access to educational facilities 4 items). The five factors explained 37.855% common variance. Cronbach Alpha reliability of all the factors was lies between .7 and .8. Scree plot also confirmed the extraction of the factors from the data set. The details are given in the following lines.



RESULTS

Table 1: Parents Preferences for the Education of their Sons and Daughters

Items	Factor Loadings	Agree Frequency	Agree %	Disagree Frequency	Disagree %	Total Frequency
You prefer the education of son over daughter.	.753	233	97.08	07	2.91	240
You do not prefer the education of daughter over son	.553	236	98.33	04	1.66	240
According to Islam education is compulsory for all children	.644	238	99.16	02	0.83	240
Education of a son is as essential as daughter	.591	235	97.91	05	2.08	240
		942	98.12	18	7.48	960
Disagree Mean=4.5000 Disagree Standard Deviation=2.08167 Agree-Disagree Mean=4.5000 Agree-Disagree Standard Deviation =2.08167 Std Error=1.04083 t =1.040 df =2 Sig=.000						

Table 1 reveals that more than 97% parents are aware of the importance of education of their children but they do not prefer the education of daughter over son. They have positive believes for the importance of education for both their sons and daughters as per Islamic Philosophy but prefer the education of son over their daughters. There is a significant difference between agree and disagree sets of responses in favor of agree side regarding the parents’ preferences of their sons’ education over daughter.

Table 2: Parents Perception on the Access of Education to both the Genders

Items	Factor Loadings	Agree Frequency	Agree %	Disagree Frequency	Disagree %	Total Frequency
The higher education of your daughter will be helpful for improving your socioeconomic status	.753	234	97.88	06	2.12	240
As a parent, you make every possible effort to provide resources for the education of your children.	.724	235	97.91	05	2.09	240
As a parent, you put education of your children at the top among your priority list	.794	233	97.0	07	3.0	240
		470	97.91	10	2.08	720
Disagree Mean=97.59 Disagree Standard Deviation=.516						



Agree-Disagree Mean=136.40
 Disagree Standard Deviation =.597
 Std Error Mean=.0000
 t =395.284
 df =2
 Sig=.0000

Education occupies top position in the priority list of more than 97% parents as depicted from the above table. These parents are eager to make educational facilities accessible both for their sons and daughters. According to them the higher education of their daughters may help to improve their socioeconomic status. In total more than 97% parents are willing to make their children educate. There exists a significant difference between agree and disagree types of responses in agree side in this regard.

Table 3: Problems Faced by Parents for Educating their Children

Items	Factor Loadings	Agree Frequency	Agree %	Disagree Frequency	Disagree %	Total Frequency
Domestic problems are the major barrier for the education of your son.	.471	191	79.58	49	20.41	240
Due to domestic problems, you have to stop your daughter’s education.	.685	204	85	36	14.58	240
Your financial conditions affect the education of your children	.738	144	60	96	40	240
You face serious cultural problems for not providing good education to your daughters	.485	220	91.66	20	8.33	240
		759	79.06	201	20.93	960

Disagree Mean=50.25 Disagree Deviation=32.72
 Agree-Disagree Mean=50.25
 Disagree Standard Deviation =32.72
 Std Error Mean=16.36
 t =4.26
 df =3
 Sig=.024

79% parents face sociocultural and financial problems are the major hurdles in the for education of the children of 79% parents. This reveal is indicated in table 2. Domestic problems are the major impediment in the the education of the daughters of the 85% parents. The children 60% parents cannot access the educational due to the shortage of financial resources. More than 91% parents cannot send their daughters to the high-quality education institutions because of serious social problems. On the whole more than more than 79% parents cannot make educate their children due to the sociocultural and financial reasons.

A significant difference appears between agree and disagree groups of responses tilting towards agree side.

Table 4: Quality and Type of Educational Institutions Parents' Wished for Educating their Children

Items	Factor Loadings	Agree Frequency	Agree %	Disagree Frequency	Disagree %	Total Frequency
You wish the higher education of your daughters from the Universities having Co-education	.649	100	41.66	140	58.33	240
You wish the higher education of your daughters from the Women Universities	.715	143	59.58	97	40.41	240
Despite of all limitations you wish the best institution for the education of your children	.660	227	94.58	13	5.41	240
		470	65.27	250	34.71	720
Disagree Mean=83.33, Disagree Deviation=64.59 Agree-Disagree Mean=83.33 Agree-Disagree Standard Deviation =64.59 Std Error Mean=74.58 t=.983 df =2, Sig=.429						

Table 4 indicated that more than 41% parents are in favor of the higher education of their daughters from the co-education institutions whereas more than 59% prefer women universities for their higher qualification. Despite of all these factors more than 94% parents wish the education of their children from the high-quality educational institutions. On the whole 65% parents prefer well reputed high quality educational institutions for the education of their children. There is no significant difference exists between agree and disagree groups of responses.

Table 5: Parents Perception on the Sociocultural Motives for the Education of Children

Items	Factor Loadings	Agree Frequency	Agree %	Disagree Frequency	Disagree %	Total Frequency
There are cultural barriers for the higher education of daughters in our society.	.387	118	49.16	122	50.83	240
You want to educate both son and daughter	.512	233	97.08	07	2.91	240
You have the social pressure of your close relatives for the education of daughters	.336	207	86.25	33	13.75	240
The higher education of your son will be helpful	.755	230	95.83	10	4.16	240

for improving your socioeconomic status.						
		788	82.08	172	17.91	960
Disagree Mean=43.00 Disagree Deviation=53.93 Agree-Disagree Mean=43.00 Agree-Disagree Standard Deviation =53.93 Std Error Mean=53.93 t=2.855 df=3 Sig=.065						

Table 5 reveals that 82% parents feel socioeconomic influences over the education of their children. They are equally divided in the opposition and favor of the cultural barriers regarding the education of their children. About 97% parents want to educate their children despite of their gender. More than 86% parents have pressure from the close relative side particularly for educating their daughters. In more than 95% cases parents are convinced for the higher education of their sons due to rise in their socioeconomic status. On the whole 82% parents feel the impact of sociocultural factors on the education of their children. This factor also shows no significant difference between agree and disagree sides of respondents.

Table 6: Parents’ Attitude towards the Education of their Children

Factor #	Components of Parents’ Attitude	Agree Frequency	Agree %	Disagree Frequency	Disagree %	Total Frequency
1	Educational Preferences	942	98.12	18	1.88	960
2	Educational Barriers	942	98.12	18	1.88	960
3	Access of Education	470	65.27	250	34.73	720
4	Quality of Education	470	65.27	250	34.73	720
5	Socioeconomic Motives	788	82.08	172	17.92	960
Parental Attitude		3612	83.61	708	16.38	4320
Agree Mean=722.4 Agree Standard Deviation=238.832		Disagree Mean=141.6 Disagree Deviation=52.430 Agree-Disagree Mean=580.800 Agree-Disagree Standard Deviation =352.549 Std Error Mean=157.664 t=3.684 df=4 Sig=.021				

Table 6 reveals that more than 83% parents have positive attitude towards the education of their children. They are aware of the importance of education. However, in some cases they prefer the education of sons over daughters. They want to make their children educate from the well reputed high-quality institutions. However, they cannot fulfil this wish due to financial as well as sociocultural impediments. In general, more than 80% parents are in favor of the education of their children. There is a significant difference between agree and disagree sets of responses towards agree side.

Demographic Effects

The effect of the demographic variables was analyzed to find out the significant impact of these on the research/conceptual variables. Inferential statistical techniques i.e., Independent Samples t test and One Way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni as Post Hoc test were applied to calculate the impacts. Only the results of the significant differences were reported. It was noted that there were no significant differences among the various categories of the variables. The situation remained the same in all the cases.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions were drawn from the analysis of data set collected from the 240 parents whose children were currently enrolled in educational institutions of Multan division. Majority of the participants were from business, agriculture and labor professions falling in the income bracket of Rs 15000-45000. In general, they showed positive attitude towards the education of their children due to their awareness with the importance of education. They wanted to get their children educate from the high quality privately

managed educational institutions. For this purpose, they seemed ready to sacrifice their rest of the demands as they consider their children education as the only way for raising their socioeconomic status in future. However, in most of the cases they prefer the education of sons over daughters. Though they have pressure from the closest friends and family for the education of their daughters but seems unable to provide good quality education to them. Socioeconomic as well cultural barriers appeared as the major hurdles in this regard. They have to stop the education of their daughters due to the domestic problems as well. The financial conditions of the two third majority of parents creates hurdles for providing educational facilities to their children. In more than 91% cases parents face serious social problems for not being able to provide high quality education to their daughters.

Generally, it is concluded that the vast majority of parents have positive attitude towards the education of their children and are aware about the importance of education for their children but they do not give equal importance to the education of their sons and daughters. Their attitude is more inclined towards sons as compared to daughters' education.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the government should enhance the educational facilities for the education of masses and provide financial incentives to the parents for sending their children to the educational institutions. The arrangements should also be made for motivating parents for the education of their children. Parents should also be convinced for the education of their daughters.

Limitations and the Propositions for Further Research

Parents are the important stakeholder of teaching-learning process. Their keen interest in the education is of paramount importance for improving quality and quantity of education. This study conducted domestic survey of parents in the Multan division by using questionnaire as a data collection tool overlooking children interest. Such type of researches should also be conducted in the other regions of the country. Further studies should also use interview as a research tool by including children and more parents in the sample.

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