

CAUSES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS OF DETERIORATION OF  
EDUCATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL: PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

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Abstract

This study was conducted to find out the “Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration of Education at Secondary Level: Perceptions of Stakeholders”. The objectives of the study were: To find out the causes of the Deterioration of Education and decline in educational quality at the secondary school level, to analyze the perception of teachers regarding the Deterioration of Education at the secondary school level and to analyze the perception of students about the causes of Deterioration of education at secondary school level. To ascertain the difference between Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration opinions on the base of demographics, i.e., gender, designation, and qualification. All 611 male and female teachers (318 male and 293 female) from teachers ‘of district Multan. A 38-item self-structured questionnaire was used to investigate the “Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration of Education at Secondary Level: Perceptions of Stakeholders” by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Keywords:** Causes and Potential, Deterioration, Secondary Level

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## INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a cornerstone for individual development, economic progress, and social transformation. In Pakistan, a country with a rich history and diverse cultural tapestry, the value of education is deeply ingrained. However, the secondary level of education in Pakistan grapples with a multifaceted crisis. This introduction will explore the intricate web of factors that contribute to the deterioration of secondary education, a challenge that holds profound implications for individuals, communities, and the nation at large Ahmad, F., Jamil, M., & Azam, N. (2025).

Secondary education has been recognized as the most crucial stage of students' life. It leads to the development of different characteristics and attributes to the personalities of the students so that they perform productively as useful members of the society. It has assumed the role of an industry, which employs large segment of population that contributes to the productivity of the country. It is the qualitative aspect of education that is related to the holistic development of the personality of a student. It plays a fundamental role in preparing the youth for higher studies and employment. The effectiveness of a national system of education depends upon the quality of its education at the secondary level Teichler, U. (2019).

An issue central to the deterioration of secondary education in Pakistan is the question of curriculum. The curriculum should evolve to meet the dynamic needs of students, but it has faced criticism for being outdated and ineffective, impacting both student engagement and the development of practical skills. The quality of educators in secondary schools is a linchpin in determining educational outcomes. Issues such as teacher recruitment, training, and motivation have consequences for teaching methods and the overall learning experience Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Goodwin, A. L., Hammerness, K., Low, E. L., & Zeichner, K. (2017).

Secondary education, as the bridge between primary and higher education, plays a pivotal role in individual development and national progress Pakistan, with a history of educational aspirations and challenges, has been striving to ensure quality education for its youth, especially at the secondary level. Access and enrollment challenges are among the primary factors contributing to the deterioration of secondary education in Pakistan Sain, Z. H. (2023).

Gender disparities, rural-urban divides, and economic inequalities result in unequal access and hinder the goal of universal education. The relevance and effectiveness of the secondary education curriculum are frequently questioned. An outdated curriculum can lead to disengagement among students and limit their acquisition of practical skills for the modern world Walker, J., Pearce, C., Boe, K., & Lawson, M. (2019).

Teacher quality and training are critical determinants of educational success. Inadequate teacher training, low motivation, and recruitment issues contribute to poor teaching methods and hinder student learning. Socioeconomic disparities pose a substantial challenge to the quality of secondary education in Pakistan. Students from lower-income backgrounds often lack access to quality educational resources, while those from more affluent families have greater opportunities for private education Giertz, K. (2016). The country's governance and policy challenges impact the education system. Frequent policy changes, lack of adequate funding, and inconsistent leadership have hindered educational progress, resulting in deteriorating quality. Inadequate educational infrastructure, including insufficient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and technological resources, hampers effective teaching and learning Ullah, A., & Khan, M. (2023).

A lack of proper facilities contributes to the deterioration of education. The examination system in Pakistan places significant stress on students, with an emphasis on rote memorization. This approach often stifles critical thinking and the development of essential skills. Javed, M., Ahmad, S. M., & Iqbal, M. (2016)

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Secondary education in Pakistan is confronted with a multifaceted crisis that has persisted for several years, contributing to a noticeable deterioration in the quality and effectiveness of the system. Despite the government's efforts to expand access to education, numerous challenges have hampered the progression of secondary education, creating an urgent and critical issue that warrants in-depth investigation. It is being criticized for its failure as it has not delivered according to the expectations and aspirations of the people of Pakistan as envisaged in several National Education Policies, launched in Pakistan, since the independence of the country in 1947. There are a number of causes, which obstruct Secondary Education in contributing to quality education. The identification of the problem and causes of deterioration of educational quality at the secondary level (classes 9 to 10) is imperative because research is scarce in this area.

This required a systematic study to find out causes of the deteriorating standard of quality in secondary education and suggest possible solutions of this problem. Keeping in view the importance of quality in education at the secondary level, the current study was undertaken to dig out research based real causes of deterioration in secondary school education, duly supported by the opinions of the major stakeholders such as school heads, teachers and students.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to be;

- 1 To find out the causes of Deterioration of Education decline in educational quality at the secondary school level.
- 2 To analyze the perception of teachers regarding Deterioration of Education at secondary school level.
- 3 To analyze the perception of students about the causes of Deterioration of education at secondary school level.
- 4 To make implementable recommendations for improvement of educational quality at the secondary education level in Punjab province of Pakistan.
- 5 To find out the comparison between teachers and students' perception about the causes of Deterioration at secondary school.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following key questions were framed:

1. What are the causes of deterioration of educational quality at the secondary school level?
2. What are the indicators of quality education in relevant literature?
3. What viable recommendations this study could make for improvement of educational quality at the secondary school level in the province?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Explain the importance of understanding the causes of educational deterioration in Pakistan. The significance of your research study on the causes of deterioration in education at the secondary level in Pakistan lies in its potential to address a critical issue with far-reaching implications. Educational Improvement: Understanding and addressing the causes of deterioration in secondary education in Pakistan can lead to

tangible improvements in the quality of education. This is not only beneficial for students but also for the nation's human capital development. Economic Development: A better-educated workforce is crucial for economic development. Improving secondary education can enhance the skills and employability of Pakistan's youth, ultimately contributing to economic growth.

By identifying and rectifying disparities in access to quality secondary education, your study can contribute to greater social equity, reducing inequalities based on gender, socioeconomic status, and geographical location.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of this investigation was quantitative. The study was a correlational kind, and its survey research methodology served as its foundation. Descriptive research is a kind of analysis that focuses on outlining the features of the population or issue under study. This technique emphasizes the "what" of the study topic more so than the "why" of the topic. (Bhat, 2019).

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population is the group of persons on whom research findings are extrapolated. The group of individuals from whom the sample might be chosen is known as the target population. Study participants were teachers and students of secondary schools of district Multan.

Tehsil	School/Teachers						Students					
	Public			Teachers			Public 9 <sup>th</sup> Class			Public 10 <sup>th</sup> Class		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
City	44	47	91	352	320	672	5971	7183	13156	5269	6762	12033
Saddar	56	28	84	198	117	315	2867	1872	4741	2965	1603	4569
Shujaabad	33	09	42	109	53	162	1662	975	2637	1674	949	2625
Jalalpur	24	07	31	70	27	97	763	275	1038	673	266	940
Total	157	91	248	729	517	1246	11263	10305	21568	10581	9580	20161

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Sample of the study was selected 611 secondary school teachers and students of district Multan were randomly selected as the sample of this study. The group was further categorized on gender, designation, teaching experience, and qualification.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH TOOLS

Two self-structured questionnaire (one for teachers and other for students) were designed to conduct the research. Typically, it consists of a set of written questions that the respondents must answer. Both questionnaires used a five-point Likert scale with the following response options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data was collected with the constructed questionnaire and the collected data was tabulated for the further results on SPSS 26 for the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of literature review is to know what other researchers did in similar type of studies and further to fit the problem of the current study in the general framework of research. Education has been differently defined in the context of its concept, role and need. In addition to its role for holistic development of the personality of the learner, it provides basis for social and economic development and enhances the productive capacities of individuals for improvement of the political, economic and scientific

institutions of societies. Education has no value unless it is beneficial to mankind in terms of quality and relevance.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

The study on the deterioration of quality of education has to be placed under the theoretical framework to see what has warranted the improvement of quality education. The Human Capital Theory and Modernization Theory form the theoretical framework of the study. The two theories emphasize the importance of quality education in national development.

## **HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY**

Human capital is a stock of resources which include knowledge, personality traits, skills, wisdom and creative thinking to perform the task which has economic value. These resources represent a form of wealth, which is utilized to accomplish national goals and objectives. The advocates of human capital theory consider education as a kind of investment in people to increase their economic productivity. They stress the significance of quality education and training as the key to participation in national development and global economy. Tan, E. (2014).

Quality education has positive impact on economic growth of a country. Individuals bear the cost of education because they expect from it future stream of benefits in the form of higher productivity and handsome wages. Moreover, quality education also influences the distribution of income among masses and plays pivotal role in alleviating poverty from society. The Human Capital Theory postulates that the economic growth and advancement of a nation depends on the quality of education received by its youth. It is argued that the cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty can be broken only through education Darling-Hammond, L. (2015).

Besides economic benefits of education, human capital theory also recognizes non-monetary benefits, which consist of positive behavioral change, longer life expectancy, national cohesion and holistic development of personality. It is a universally acknowledged fact that education is one of those investments, which bestow upon human beings countless blessings at local and national levels. In fact, quality education plays significant role in the socio-economic development of a nation Bashir, S., Sadiq, W., Zafar, H., Murtaza, A., & Naseer, P. (2022).

Education is central to human flourishing. Quality education opens the mind to further horizons and helps in acquiring valuable capabilities. Without education, people fall victim to abuses by most powerful elements in society. Low quality of education confines them to menial jobs that do not fulfill their requirements. Moreover, without education, the oppressed and marginalized segment of society does not have courage and other resources to denounce the atrocities and injustices it suffers at the hands of exploiters. Education is a motivating force, which brings change in society. It brings empowerment and develops the capabilities of individuals to enhance their economic productivity Batliwala, S. (2015).

## **MODERNIZATION THEORY**

Modernization Theory, as a socio-economic plan, underlines the important role played by the developed countries in modernizing and facilitating the sustainable economic growth in the under-developed countries through financial aid and modern knowledge of science and technology. The admirers of the theory attribute the reasons of poverty across the world to the lack of modern scientific knowledge, traditional methods of farming and manufacturing and economic backwardness due to absence of capital investment in



industry Greenwald, B., & Stiglitz, J. E. (2013)

A five stage model of development, which included traditional society, economic growth, take off stage, drive to maturity and high mass consumption. The traditional society stage is associated with those countries, which are underdeveloped and majority of the people are involved in subsistence agriculture. Lack of quality education and backward frame of minds are mentioned as major barriers to economic prosperity in the underdeveloped countries. Economic growth is the second stage of development, which is based on the shift from agrarian to industrial society. Investment opportunities and other commercial activities are broadened to reach international markets. The third stage, the take off stage of development, is characterized by dynamic economic growth, which is resulted due to increase in industrialization Rostow, W. W. (2013).

Drive to Maturity is the fourth stage that refers to the period of time when a country develops its education system and applies modern technology to its reservoir of resources for the well-being of masses. The fifth stage is that of high mass consumption, which is characterized by an increase in per capita income, high output levels and higher employment opportunities. The analysis of what was stated in the foregoing paragraphs indicates that quality education plays significant role at all the five stages of economic growth in order to bring about the desired development in society. In the traditional society, education is fundamental to improve old methods of farming in order to increase agricultural products. In the second stage, education helps people to develop their understanding about international market in order to increase the investment levels. Likewise, education plays critical role in the take off stage where it enables the people to have access to modern scientific knowledge to promote industrial sector Bellwood, P. (2022).

The role of education at the maturity stage of development becomes more crucial because the knowledge and skills of technology have to be transferred to every sector of society through educated work force. In fact, education makes people aware of their rights and opportunities in the society. These stages of economic development are very important for socio-economic revolution in the world Kim, J., & Park, C. Y. (2020).

## **CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION**

Education is defined as the deliberate transmission of accumulated knowledge, skills, culture and value of a society from one generation to another. Education as harmonious development of the physical, mental, moral (spiritual), and social faculties of a person, which constitute four dimensions of life, for dedicated service. He considered cognitive and psychomotor development of personality as the focal point of education Ravi, S. S. (2022)

## **QUALITY EDUCATION**

Quality refers to the level of improvement in the learning of skills and behavior acceptable to the society, which is influenced by certain factors and inputs that the government attempts to increase. Quality also refers to the pupil's performance or standards of attainment in different school subjects. The complaint about a downfall in educational quality in Pakistan indicates that standards of attainment are believed to have fallen to the average level of achievement as established through examination results; or other norms of scholastic achievements are thought to have gone down. Educational quality is the extent to which educational system meets Kenyon, G. N., & Sen, K. C. (2015).

The analysis of what has been stated above, is based in local and global review of literature which indicated that overcrowded classrooms in government schools in Pakistan, in general, and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in particular, have proved to be a serious

hurdle in imparting quality education to the youth. Over crowdedness affects classroom activities and instructional process adversely Alam, J., Ashraf, M. A., Tsegay, S. M., & Shabnam, N. (2022).

The teachers hardly cover the prescribed syllabus without giving any explanation of difficult topics in classrooms and also find it impossible to do practical work in science laboratories. It takes a lot of time of a teacher to ensure that all the students have textbooks to look at and get their assignments checked. Furthermore, the teachers also find it difficult to explore students' hidden potential and capabilities. The student-teacher ratio should be 30:1 at the most for improving teaching learning process in classrooms Oduwan, J., & Francis, A. (2023).

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data is the focus of this chapter, which is divided into five sections. In the first part, researcher examines the demographic data collected from the participants and provides a descriptive analysis.

ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

TABLE 4.1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	318	31.25%
	Female	293	74.86%
	Total	611	100%
Designation	PST	184	30.00%
	EST	210	34.00%
	SST	217	35.00%
	Total	611	100%
Experience	0-5 years	120	19.00%
	6-10 years	248	40.0%
	11-15 years	157	25.00%
	Above 15 years	86	14.00%
	Total	611	100%
Qualification	Masters(M.A/M.Sc)	306	49.00%
	M.Phil/M.S	305	50.00%
	Total	611	100.00%

It was being observed that 31.25% of the respondents were male while 74.86% of the respondents were female. However, 23.9% of the respondents were PST, 30% of the respondents were EST, and 34% of the respondents were SST. As far as the teaching experience is concerned, 35 % of the respondents had 0-5 years of teaching experience, 19.0% of the respondents had 6-10 years of teaching experience, 40.0% of the respondents had 11-15 years of teaching experience 25.0% of the respondents had above years of teaching experience. It was seen that 49.0% of the teachers had done Masters while 50% of the teachers had done M.Phil.

TABLE 4.2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR CAUSES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS OF DETERIORATION OF EDUCATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENT

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CP	15.76	5.445	611
SD	16.99	4.924	611

**TABLE 4.3: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CAUSES AND POTENTIAL (CP) AND SOLUTION OF DETERIORATION (SD)**

CP	Pearson Correlation	1	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	611	611
SD	Pearson Correlation	.730**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	611	611

**TABLE 4.4: GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION**

Variables	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. Value
Causes and Potential	Male	318	65.32	1.34			
	Female	293	62.57	2.82	611	0.66	0.012
Variables	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. Value
Causes and Potential	Male	318	65.32	3.21			
	Female	293	62.57	2.13	0.11	0.32	0.029

The following table shows the results of an independent samples t-test that was used to compare the perceived mean scores of male and female participants on emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. For both measures causes and potential (CP) and solution of deterioration (SD), there was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants' perceived mean scores ( $t = 0.88$ ,  $p = 0.378$  and  $t = 0.44$ ,  $p = 0.661$ ). The fact that there is practically no difference in the means of the two groups further supports this conclusion. It was concluded that the two groups' perceptions of each other's between causes and potential (CP) and solution of deterioration (SD), were not statistically different. This data reveals that there is little difference in how each group is seen depending on their gender.

**TABLE 4.5: DESIGNATION-BASED DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION**

Variables	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. Value
Causes and Potential	Masters	306	78.75	2.87			
	M.Phil	305	78.67	3.01	611	0.25	0.800
Variables	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. Value
Causes and Potential	Masters	306	63.83	3.16			
	Female	305	63.90	3.33	611	0.19	0.8500

Independent samples t-test findings comparing mean scores on causes and potential and solution of deterioration between Master and M.phil teachers shown in thisTable. When comparing the perceived mean scores of Masters and M.Phil. teacher, the results demonstrate no statistically significant difference ( $t = 0.25$ ,  $p = 0.800$  for causes and potential  $t = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.850$  for solution of deterioration ). The fact that there is practically no difference in the means of the two groups further supports this conclusion. Therefore, it was concluded that there was no statistically significant difference in how each sample group rated their own causes and potential and solution of deterioration for secondary level. This finding implies that the two groups are seen similarly depending on their designations.



## FINDINGS

The following findings were made based on data analyses:

It was found that 318 (52.13%) respondents were male and 293 (47.86%) of respondents were female.

As regards designation, it was found that 184 (30%) of our respondents are PST, 210 (34.0%) of our respondents are ESRs and 217 (35%) of our respondents are SSTs

As regards experience It was found, 120 (19%) of our/ respondents have experience of 0-5 years, while 248 (40%) of our respondents are with 6-10 years experience and 157 (25%) of our respondents was with 11-15 years experience and 86 (14%) of our respondents have above 15 years experience.

It was found that the mean values for the teacher's views about their perceived emotions on all the twelve items ranged between 1.22 to 3.13

It was found that the lower most mean value (34) was for a negative scale item (reverse coded) number eleven i.e., "Hard to understand the non-verbal messages" has the mean value of 2.61 which is the highest among all the ten items of this subscale.

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in which shows that the sig value (2-tailed) is 0.000. The data show that there is a statistically significant connection between Causes and Potential (CP) and Solutions of Deterioration (SD), at the 0.05 level of significance. The study also demonstrates that causes and Potential (CP) can be used as a reference to predict the outcome.

The following table shows the results of an independent samples t-test that was used to compare the perceived mean scores of male and female participants on Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration of Education For both measures (Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration), there was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants' perceived mean scores ( $t = 0.88$ ,  $p = 0.378$  and  $t = 0.44$ ,  $p = 0.661$ ).

The fact that there is practically no difference in the means of the two groups further supports this conclusion. It was concluded that the two groups' perceptions of each other's Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration were not statistically different. This data reveals that there is little difference in how each group is seen depending on their gender.

Independent samples t-test findings comparing mean scores on Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration of Education between teachers and students are shown in Table 4.11. When comparing the perceived mean scores of Master and M.Phil. students, the results demonstrate no statistically significant difference ( $t = 0.25$ ,  $p = 0.800$  for emotional intelligence and  $t = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.850$  for Solutions of Deterioration). The fact that there is practically no difference in the means of the two groups further supports this conclusion. Therefore, it was concluded that there was no statistically significant difference in how each sample group rated their own Causes and Potential at secondary level. This finding implies that the two groups are seen similarly depending on their designations.

## DISCUSSION

The deterioration of education at the secondary level is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors, as perceived by stakeholders including educators, parents, students, and policymakers. One significant cause is the inadequate funding and resources allocated to secondary schools, which leads to overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching materials, and poorly maintained facilities. Additionally, the quality of teaching is often compromised due to low teacher salaries, lack of professional development opportunities, and high teacher turnover rates. Stakeholders also point to the outdated curriculum that fails to engage students or equip them with relevant skills for the modern world. Socio-economic

disparities further exacerbate the problem, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds often face additional challenges such as lack of parental support and access to extracurricular activities. Potential solutions proposed by stakeholders include increased investment in education to ensure adequate resources and infrastructure, enhanced teacher training and support to improve instructional quality, and curriculum reforms that align with contemporary educational and career demands. Moreover, implementing policies that address socio-economic inequalities, such as providing additional support.

## CONCLUSION

It was concluded that the overall mean value of three point ten also exhibits that respondents have a positive perception about all the strategies related to managing their own emotions included in the second sub-scale of Causes and Potential. It was concluded that participants believed with a high consensus that the teacher should treat the students politely.

It was concluded that participants believed with a high level of consensus that they are contributing to the achievement of the goals of this school. It was concluded that participants believed with a high level of consensus that they believe there is a positive relationship between Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration of Education. It was concluded The overall mean value of 3.10 also exhibits that respondents have positive perception about the Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration of Education.

It was concluded that teachers' perception regarding organizational commitment, with a high level of consensus that their Causes and Potential is highly effective. It was concluded that Descriptive Statistics for between Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration are;  $M = 16.99$  and  $SD = 4.934$ . It was concluded that there exists a statistically significant difference between the views of male and female both measures (Causes and Potential Solutions of Deterioration), there was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants perceived mean scores ( $t = 0.88$ ,  $p = 0.378$  and  $t = 0.44$ ,  $p = 0.661$ ).

It was concluded that, when comparing the perceived mean scores of Master and M.Phil. teachers, the results demonstrate no statistically significant difference ( $t = 0.25$ ,  $p = 0.800$  for Causes and Potential and  $t = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.850$  for Deterioration of Education)

## RECOMMENDATION

Addressing the deterioration of education at the secondary level requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach based on the insights and perceptions of key stakeholders. Increasing funding for secondary education is critical to provide adequate resources, modern facilities, and smaller class sizes.

This should be accompanied by efforts to raise teacher salaries and offer continuous professional development, ensuring that educators are well- equipped and motivated to deliver high-quality instruction. Updating the curriculum to make it more engaging and relevant to current and future job markets is also essential. To tackle socio-economic disparities, schools should implement targeted support programs for disadvantaged students, such as tutoring, mentorship, and access to extracurricular activities. Fostering strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities can create a supportive environment that enhances student learning and well- being. Policymakers must prioritize education reforms and ensure that all stakeholders are actively involved in the decision-making process, creating a more inclusive and effective educational system at the secondary level.

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