

Factors Affecting Enrollment in Early Childhood Education: A Case Study of Punjab

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Abstract

The current research study was aimed to examine the factors affecting enrollment in early childhood education in Punjab, Pakistan. The objectives of the study were, to identify the factors affecting the enrolment of early childhood education. And to find the relationship between factors affecting the enrollment of early childhood education in Punjab. The survey method was used and the three districts were select for the conduct of this research study. There were three categories of the literacy rate highest (49.3% to 71.6%), middle (34.4% to 49%), and lowest (21.7 % to 34%) in Punjab. Stratified random sampling techniques were used and strata were made based on literacy rate. concerning the literacy rate. One district chooses to form each category of the literacy rate. One district was taken from each category. 100 heads were taken as a sample from these three districts. It was found from the result, that three major factors are affecting the enrollment of early childhood education in Punjab. It was concluded, from the finding that, the parents, teachers, and school infrastructure are the keys factors, which affect the enrollment of early childhood education in Punjab. It was also found that there is a relation between these factors and the enrollment at early childhood education in Punjab. It was concluded, that the training is required to train the teachers for the enrollment and motivation of the parents for enrollment for early childhood education. Whereas, the provision of physical facilities in the school, will also enhance enrollment.

Keywords: *early childhood education, school factors, enrollment, parents' factor.*

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Introduction

Education is the only tool that developed a sense of responsibility in the individual and it differentiates, the human being from others. As described by Dahama (2005, p.11) the process of imparting knowledge, through different sort of educational instructions and it will affect the learning process and the learner will achieve the cognitive knowledge. The only power tools are education, which changes the behaviors of the individual. In a country like Pakistan, the education system is expanding day by day. Although after the 18th amendment, education is a provincial subject, still the planning of the curriculum, policy-making, and development of the syllabus is the responsibility of the Federal government.

It is concluded from the above discussion, that the federal government has complete control of the policy-making of education in Pakistan. Globalization, emerged the multiple trends of life, same as the education system is also emerged in the world as well as in Pakistan.

Nowadays, education becomes an enterprise due to the multiple trends of the 21st century. Globalization increased the competition in the different sectors of education. The prosperity of the individual, society, and country is impossible without education. Currently, various disciplines are involved in the rapid growth of society. The social, economic, and civic sense development are the key areas for the growth of any society. This is only possible for the developments in the following areas. Globalization, emerging the different life aspect, so Pakistan is dire needs to grow in all the new sectors of the education for their survival and competition world wise (Chaudhry, 2012).

Three are various stages of educational learning, but all these depend upon the growth of the individual. Aurangzeb (2019) pointed out that, classes of the Kachi or Paki were integrated into the government schools, through the seventh (7th) five-year plan called Awal-adna, and Awal -aala. As the emphasis on early childhood education in the five years, plan. It is to be concluded, from the above discussion that, early childhood education, refers to the education of the child in the early stage. These are very critical stages of learning, where the child is more curious to learn each and everything around there. At the entry in the early classes in the school, they involve in so many mental activities. Hunzai (2009) describes the following, mental skills, as:

- Language Learning
- Enhancement in the vocabulary
- Information about surrounding
- Cooperation
- Attachment
- Likeness

- Sensitiveness
- Motor Skills
- Cognitive Development

The above-mentioned, skills are lifelong skills, for the child. These, are very important skills, which held the child in their mental, social and economic growth in society.

Early Education in a Glance

The study assessed the current factors of early childhood and care education in the largest province of the Punjab of Pakistan. In any of the country various factors, affect early childhood education in Pakistan. There are various factors that, affect early childhood education. The most common factors as described by the Grunewald (2010) areas:

- i. Parents educational level
- ii. Earning of the family
- iii. Numbers of the children in the family
- iv. Accessibility of the study and plying materials
- v. Stability of home life
- vi. Quality of the family life

As described by Iqbal (2000), that early education in the public schools of Pakistan is providing for many of the years. They are providing education in the form of kachi education, but they lack human and physical resources. This lack of facilities affects the dropout of the children at the early childhood level and many of them are not willing to enroll in the school. There is a lack of facilities in the form of reading, study materials, and furniture, etc. All these lacks of facilities are the major factors of the dropout at the early childhood level in Pakistan. Whereas, the Education Policy (2009), that Early Education is an immense area of attention at regional, national, and international levels. There is a dire need to bring a revolutionary change in the early education enrollment till 2015. Unfortunately, the largest province, Punjab was unable to achieve the target of enrolled, due above-cited factors.

It is concluded from the above discussion, the major causes of the low enrollment in Punjab, Pakistan are the parent's background and their family income as well as the lack of infrastructure available in the public sector schools. As per the survey of Pakistan (2017), especially in the Punjab province, almost 69% of the children between the age of 3 to 5 years are availing the facility of early childhood education. The remaining

is out of the school due to the above pointed out factors of the low enrollments and drop out from the schools. The 25 A Article of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, emphasized compulsory and free basic education to every child in the territorial area of Pakistan.

It is summarized from the data presented above, that the state is failed to provide access to free basic education to the children in Punjab. There is the basic responsibility of the Punjab school education department to provide free and compulsory education. As per the vision of the Punjab school education department:

Quaid -e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah “Pakistan is proud of her youth, particularly the students, who are nation builders of tomorrow. They must fully equip themselves by discipline, education, and training for the arduous task lying ahead of them”.

Literature Review

Growth in size is not the development of the child, the growth is belonging to the sense of responsibility in the society, mental growth, and maturity. There is a sequential pattern of the development in the children, in which they grow in society. At an early age, the child needs balanced food for their growth, and the child remained under the influence of their parents. Their parent’s exposure, impact on child's mental development. Early childhood and care education refer to the early learning of the children. This is associated with the all experiences of the child at an early age. In this stage, the child developed physically, mentally, intellectually, and socially. Children learn in both formal and informal ways. It is the time in which children need a high level of care and attention from parents (Dukin, 2003).

As described by Shami (2005) that every individual needs a basic and civic sense for their survival in society. It only possible, due to the education and training which brought a change in the behaviors. The child before entering the educational institutions learned from their parents and society. But, in educational institutions, there are specific levels of the syllabus, for their educational development. This syllabus, developed by the experts, while keeping the needs of the society in the mind. This educational level, trained the individual, for sustaining in the society, properly. While increasing in the level of education, the skills also increased in the child and at least he/she became the perfect individual for society.

This education developed the different attributes in the individual for their retention in the society. These are coordination, adaptability, patience,

innovation, care, and hospitality. These skills make them successful in society (Mustard, 2009).

It is concluded, that basic skills are very important for individual sustainability, in society. There is only one tool, that is education, which developed these skills in individuals.

As pointed out by Khan (2019), that children learn for the purpose behind it as they want to communicate on it. They learned so many basic and advanced skills for their survival in society. They learned good behaviors and manners with the civic sense for their survival and good impression on the society. It is evident from many of the findings that, early development and growth affect the entire life of individuals.

Early Childhood Education in Punjab

As described by Shah (2013), education is the key factor for the true development and foundation of the country. The Punjab government is more focusing on early childhood education and for the said purpose they have taken many of the bold steps. As described by the school education department that the following steps are taking by the Punjab government for early education.

- There is more allocation of the budget and resources for the early childhood education more increased in the budget from 2007 till 2016 in the form of 379% increased.
- The main objective of the Punjab government is to achieve 100% enrollment & retention and to provide not just free, but also quality education.

The government of Punjab has taken the following initiative for the promotion of enrollment:

Initiatives	Overview
Female Stipend program	Monthly stipend of Rs. 1000 for the 460,000 beneficiaries
Brick Kiln Program	Monthly stipend of Rs. 1000 for the 56,000 beneficiaries' students
Punjab Education Endowment Fund (PEEF)	Rs. 16 Billion worth of scholarships,
Provision of free textbooks	Rs. 3.3 billion spend on free books
Smart Monitoring	Real-time monitoring
E-learn Punjab	Digitalization's of books

Source: www.sed.punjab.gov.pk

Currently, the Punjab government is planning to establish 62, 000 schools for early childhood education. The government of Punjab phase out these projects for establishing a new early childhood school with full infrastructure to fulfill the needs of the society. (Source: <http://punjab.GOP.pk/>)

To provide quality and free education to every child of the society is the core responsibility of the state as defined in the 25 A article of the constitution of Pakistan. There are dire needs to provide a child-friendly environment to every child in society. The Directorate of the Staff Development of Punjab is working to establish more schools for early childhood education and DSD will provide the trained qualified staff for the basic compulsory and free education to every child.

A report published (2015) by the DSD under the project of the establishment of the ECE classroom in the 1000 primary schools of Punjab. This was the big initiative, taken by the government of Punjab for the projection of early childhood education. These classrooms were established in the 36 districts of Punjab. The allocation and bifurcation of the classroom were taken 25 from each district for the uniform allocation of resources. All these initiatives were taken to enhance enrollment and retention in the schools. The following measures were taken:

- i. The learning environment makes it more attractive in the existing schools.
- ii. Provision of additional facilities to the ECE, teacher
- iii. Imparting training to the head of the institutions.
- iv. Involvement of school council members for proper utilization of the funds.

A child is more likely to participate in learning opportunities and in advanced cooperative play, such as role-playing with others, playing games with rules, and working with others to accomplish goals. Language development occurs at a rapid pace in children between the ages of one and five years old.

Cognitive Development: Consistency in preschool programed can significantly impact a child's cognitive development. High-quality early childhood development programs that provide developmentally appropriate curricula, enable children to develop specific cognitive skills at the appropriate age.

Conceptual Framework of Early Childhood Education

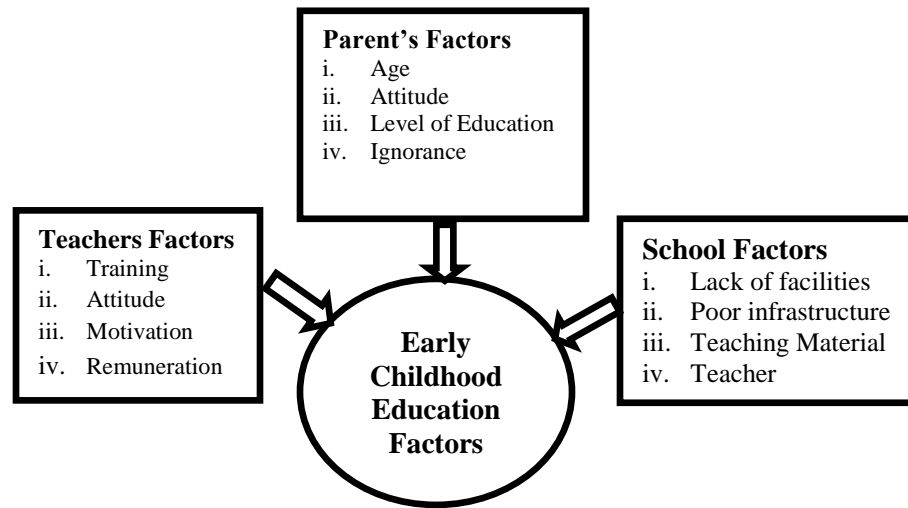


Figure 1: Early Childhood Factors Enrollment Model

Figure (1) shows the conceptual framework of early childhood education and different factors' effect on it. The above model describes the scenarios of different factors that affect the enrollment of early childhood education in Punjab.

Objectives of the Study

This study was designed to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To identify the factors affecting the enrollment of early childhood education.
- ii. To find the relationship between factors affecting the enrollment of early childhood education in Punjab.

Methodology

This research study is descriptive by nature and the survey method was used for the collection of the responses from the respondents.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed with the opinion of the experts in the field of early childhood education on the above said attributes for the collection of the data. As the said study is descriptive and helps to find out the opinion

of the respondents about the factors affecting early childhood education in Punjab. To have an analytical insight into the effect of early childhood education in Punjab.

The Population of the Study

The followings population was used for the collection of the data. The details areas:

- i. Heads of Primary Schools, from the three districts of the province of Punjab.
- ii. 100 Heads of Primary schools of Multan, Vehari, D. G. Khan
(Source: www.sed.Punjab.gov.pk)

Sample of the Study

The stratified random techniques were used for this research study. The district from Punjab was chosen based on their literacy rate. The districts of Punjab were distributed into three categories based on their literacy rates. The researcher takes one district as random from each category. The details of the districts, with categories and sample areas:

Table 1

Categories of Districts Based on Literacy Rate

Category	Literacy Rate	Districts	Sample
i.	49.3% to 71.6%	1. Rawalpindi, 2. Lahore, 3. Jhelum, 4. Multan 5. Gujrat 6-Sialkot, 7. Chakwal, 8-Gujranwala 9. Faisalabad, 10. T.T Sing, 11. Attock, 12. Narowal	Multan
ii.	34.4% to 49 %	1. Sargodha, 2. Sahiwal, 3. Sheikhpura 4. Mianwali, 5-Hafizabad, 6. Khushab 7. Khanewal, 8. Bhakkar, 9. Chinnoat, 10. Okara 11-Jhang, 12-Vehari	Vehari
iii.	21.7% to 34 %	1. Kasur, 2. Bahawalnagar, 3. Bahawalpur 4. Pakpatan, 5. R. Y Khan, 6. D.G. Khan, 7. Lodhran 8. Muzaffargarh, 9. Rajanpur, 10. Nankana Sb 11. M.B.Din, 12. Layyah	Dera Ghazi Khan

Source: www.sed.punjab.gov.pk.

The districts of Punjab distribute, into three categories on the basis of their literacy rates. These categories areas: For the completion and collection of the sample, the province was distributed in three categories.

The details of the category's areas:

- i. Highest literacy rate
- ii. Middle literacy rate
- iii. Lowest literacy rate.

The researcher, take one district from each category as a sample for this study. The selected, districts areas:

- i. Multan.
- ii. Vehari.
- iii. Dera Ghazi Khan.

Results

There were, three major types of factors, that affect enrollment in Punjab. These areas:

Teacher Factors

- i. Training
- ii. Attitude
- iii. Motivation
- iv. Remuneration

Parents Factors

- i. Age
- ii. Attitude
- iii. Level of Education
- iv. Ignorance

School Factors

- i. Lack of facilities
- ii. Poor infrastructure
- iii. Teaching material
- iv. Learning Environment

The questionnaires were distributed to 100 respondents, but few were returned incomplete.

For analysis of the data, all the responses were tabulated concerning their groups and categories analysis of the school head's response, regarding multiple factors of the school enrollment in Punjab.

Table 2
Teachers Factors

	%
Training	45%
Attitude	15%
Motivation	35%
Remuneration	05%

Table 2 describes the teachers’ factors, that affect the enrollment in Punjab at the early childhood level. It was evident from the above discussion, that the training of the teachers is the key factor, which maximum effect the enrollment. The second major attribute of the teacher is motivation, which affects the enrollment at the early childhood level, in Punjab. Whereas, the remuneration and attitude of the teacher also affect the enrollment of the early childhood in Punjab. The graphical presentation of the above enrollment factor is as:

Teachers’ factors

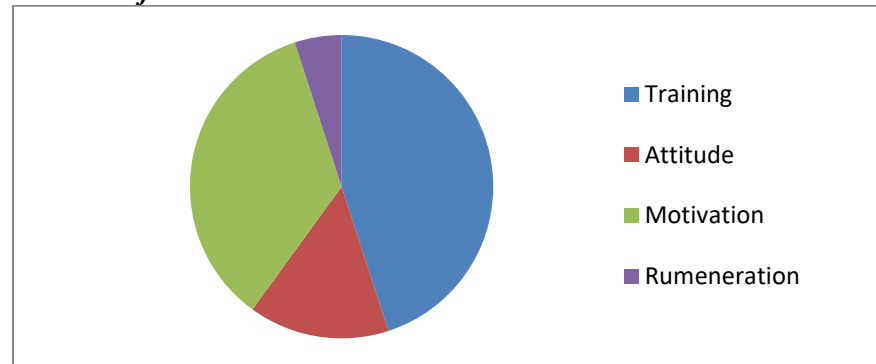


Table 3
Parents factors

Responses	%
Age	14%
Attitude	21%
Level of education	36%
Ignorance	29%

Table 3. describes the sub-factor of the parents that, the education of the parents also affects the enrolment of their children in the schools. Whereas, the age, attitude, and ignorance of the parents also caused the enrolment at early childhood education in the district of Punjab. The above sector also describes as in the pictorial form.

Parent factors

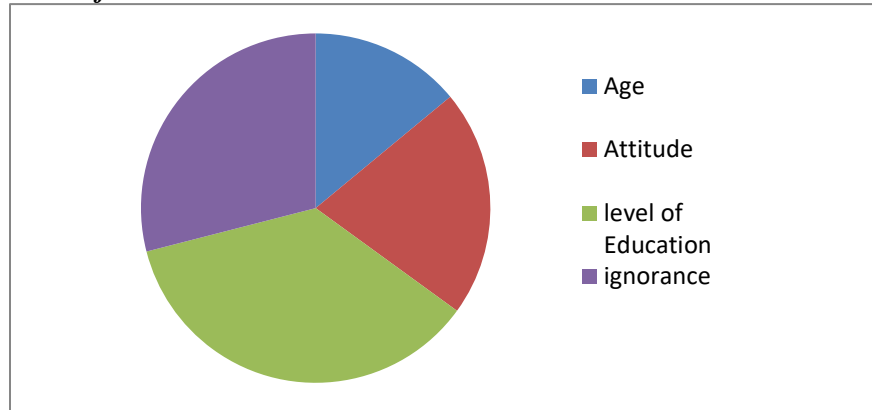


Table 4
School factors

Responses	%
Lack of facility	52%
Poor infrastructure	25%
Teaching	20%
Teachers	13%

Table No 4 describes the sub-factors, that of the school that affects the enrolment at the early childhood level. The major factors at the school level are the lack of facility, that maximum affects the enrolment. Whereas, the poor infrastructure and teaching styles and teacher is also responsible for the low enrolment at early childhood level in Punjab.

School Factors

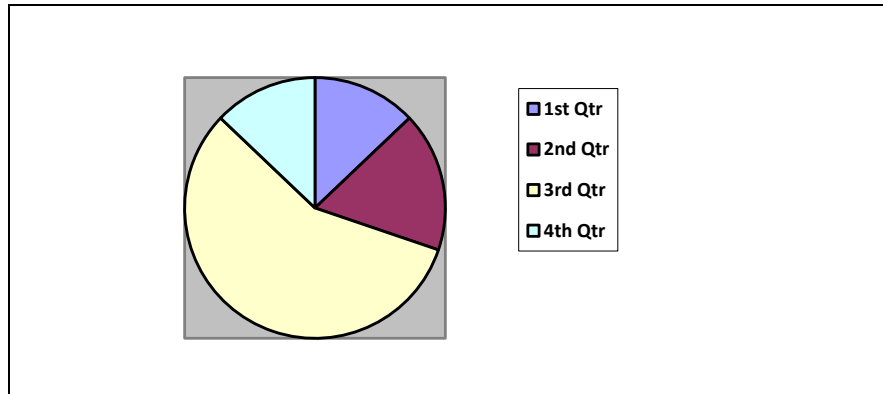
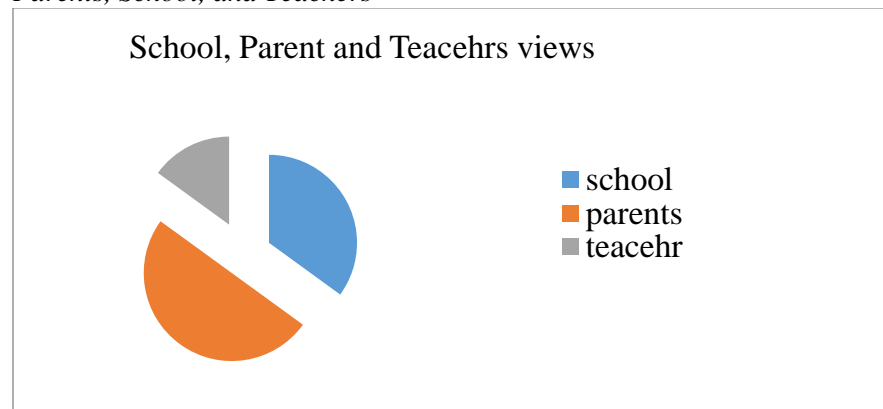


Table 5
Parents, School, and Teachers



The above said pie chart describes the composite description of all three majors' factors, that affect enrollment at the early childhood level in the Punjab province.

Conclusions and Discussion

Following conclusions are found from the findings of the study detailed as:

No single factor can be held responsible for early year children's enrollment, development, and learning, including teachers' professional development training and available learning facilities and administrations

roles. There should be a motivation campaign for the parents and the school infrastructure to be developed. School Physical condition is also responsible for the enrollment. The period of this intervention (establishment of ECE rooms) is almost one academic year. There is expected that the situation may be improved in upcoming years. It is evident from the data that most of the teachers who received training on ECE from DSD, Punjab is not teaching the Kachi/ Awal adna classes in laboratory schools due to being transferred to any other school or retired from service. Teacher's education/professional development, if it is rich and deep and positive, provides a critical foundation that may constructively influence children's enrollment in school and their experiences. Physical facilities required for the ECE resource rooms need improvement. Critical thinking is very important for students of early childhood education. Teachers play an important role in the development of this core skill.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendations based on the finding's areas:

- i. Early childhood education institutions may be facilitated by the government and make sure about the availability of the following resources as reading materials, playing materials, and instructional materials.
- ii. There is a dire need to train the teachers for the motivation of the parents for the enrollment of their child at the early childhood level.
- iii. There is a dire need for the campaign for the promotion of early childhood education in Punjab.
- iv. There is a dire need for the training of the teachers involved in the said early childhood education program.
- v. The educational planner should be provided proper planning and policy regarding the curriculum and other needs for early childhood education.
- vi. The involvement of the parents should be enhanced for the increase of enrollment of students.

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