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Challenges and Perceptions: Investigating the Effects of Inadequate Educational Infrastructure on Parental Views in Rural Areas of Multan, Pakistan

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Abstract

The intricate link between constrained access to educational resources and parental perspectives about daughters receiving an education in the rural region of Multan, Pakistan, forms the focus of this investigation. The Multan region has long been a pocket of underdevelopment, with significant portions of its population struggling to make ends meet in a mostly subsistence economy. This study investigates the pathway from educational resource constraints to parental attitudes and ultimately to girls' life chances—using systems theory, feminist theory, and social constructivism. This research used a quantitative methodology and SPSS for data analysis. The data come from 275 parents in the rural region who had either withdrawn their daughters from school or had chosen not to enroll them. The research shows that the decision by parents not to educate their daughters is primarily influenced by three core factors: poverty, an entrenched bias against educating girls, and the various cultural norms that shape a person's decision-making process. The research process was conducted ethically and with integrity. These findings demonstrate the critical need for specific interventions to address these obstacles and promote educational gender parity. They also provide useful insights for policymakers and educators that can help achieve this equality.

Keyword: Educational Resources, Parental Attitude, Girls' Schooling, Quantitative Analysis, Educational Inequality.



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Introduction

The right to education is universal; it is the individual's ticket to personal and collective advancement. This is especially true for girls, for whom the educational uplift is an almost magical incantation, a sure means to raise the health, wealth, and social power of the next generation. Despite the global and historical trend toward relegating females to domesticity, the path of the girl to the doorway of the school is now generally unblocked. Yet an unsolvable conundrum arises for the 132 million girls worldwide who are not in school. Poor families everywhere have poor attitudes toward girls' education.

Plenty of research shows that the availability of sufficient resources is followed by the appearance of parental support for girls' education. This was highlighted in a 2005 UNESCO report. It stated that educational facilities, financial support, and a nurturing infrastructure are vital for persuading parents to have a positive attitude toward their daughter's education. When such resources are available, parents are far more likely to perceive that sending their daughters to school is both a possible and worthwhile investment (Smith et al., 2018). On the other hand, when the opposite is the case—when educational resources are sparse—it seems that parental support does not show up (Johnson & Williams, 2020).

The existing literature on parental attitudes toward the education of girls has richly explored a constellation of factors influencing these perceptions—everything from longstanding cultural norms to something as simple as the presence or absence of educational opportunities (Aikman, 2012; Chaudhry & Parveen, 2017; Sabates et al., 2010). Yet, surprisingly, no one seems to have asked the pertinent question of whether limited access to educational resources—in this case, schools—affects how parents feel about sending their daughters to those schools. Do attitudes change when resources are scarce? Or when resources are barely sufficient to educate the boys who would ordinarily be expected to attend school (Hannum & Buchmann, 2005; Molla & Lassibille, 2017).

This study addresses a gap in the research by exploring the influence that limited resources have on parental attitudes toward daughters' education. Conducted in the rural region of Multan, Pakistan, which has received little attention in prior educational research, this work examines how the relationship between familial resources and parental perspectives is expressed in the form of decisions about daughters pursuing an education. Up until now, the directionality of this relationship has been poorly understood. This study aims to understand it better by investigating not just the parental attitudes but also the resources that lie behind them.

The overarching aim of this research is to contribute to the much larger discussion of educational equity. This is a discussion that can be traced back centuries and is pertinent to all societies. It aspires, at its core, to ensure that the potential of all individuals is fully realized. And one cannot have that unless educational opportunities are equally available to all. A fundamental input into any education system is resources, and it is here that our research narrows its focus to investigate how the availability of resources shapes parents' attitudes, especially regarding their daughters' potential to receive an education.

Review of literature

The current academic conversation clarifies how much restricted access to educational resources colors parental attitudes toward girls' schooling. When access is severely constrained—by the actual scarcity of educational facilities, by the kind of resources that make a difference, and by just plain inadequate teaching—those parental attitudes tilt much more strongly against the idea of sending daughters to school (Smith & Jones, 2018; Takyi & Addai, 2002). Aina (2014) Illustrates

how the obstacles of distance, poverty, and poor infrastructure keep girls from fully participating in the education system. These barriers exist because of deep-seated socioeconomic conditions that are hard to change and affect certain groups much more than others. They widen both the appearance and the substance of the prospect that we are all equal in terms of access to education (Paterson, 2008; Khan et al., 2014).

According to Basson et al. (2019), rural schools struggle with many problems, and this extensive report delineates the multitude of challenges they confront. At the most basic level and most obviously, rural schools often lack the necessary physical resources. Indeed, it is astonishing that in today's world, some rural schools do not even have enough textbooks to go around, let alone the kinds of laboratory equipment and instructional aids that make for a modern and effective education (Rafiq et al., 2024). The report also takes an unfettered look at the woefully inadequate curriculum many rural schools have to work with. It fails to resonate with the lived experience of rural students and consequently serves to alienate them. And as if those problems weren't enough, the report lays bare the critical issue of not having enough well-trained teachers to staff those rural schools an issue that inflates the sensation of reading this report (Rafiq et al., 2024).

In their inquiry into parental attitudes in the Jahangirabad (Bhopal) region, Jan and Sharma (2019) mentioned the local people suffer from serious socioeconomic problems, with numerous families living in or close to poverty in these families, a traditional gender division of labor is found, with wives and mothers mostly taking care of the home and children while husbands and fathers do demanding work outside the home. Still, there is an impressive, albeit aspirational, allegiance among these couples to the education of their daughters. They hope that it will help their girls find meaningful employment that will lift them out of poverty. But too often, the difficult economic situation makes it all but impossible for these families to realize their educational aspirations. According to Paterson (2008), parental views on their daughters' education are intricately interwoven with the fabric of our collective sociocultural norms and with the nearly invisible threads of individual belief systems and family economic conditions. They are a clear reflection of the kind of society we are when it comes to the educational endeavors of our daughters. Are we supportive? Do we have a preference for public schooling? Are we surprisingly communicative with teachers? On the other hand, are we surprisingly supportive when times are hard, and are we surprisingly talkative with teachers (Paul et al., 2021)? Khan et al. (2014) said that these indicators suggest a set of attitudes interlaced with gender roles, cultural traditions, and family values that supposedly signify something about us as a society when it comes to valuing girls' education.

According to Huisman, Rani, and Smits (2010), and also maintained by Evangelista de Carvalho Filho (2008), the most influential determinants of primary school enrolment are household-level factors related to the family's socioeconomic status. These authors highlight the importance of these kinds of indicators. They argue that parental education, occupation, and income do more than anything else to predict whether children will be enrolled in school. At the same time, the literature also covers the family as an educational institution. It emphasizes that family involvement in the child's education is a robust predictor of child outcomes. Schule, Aravkin, and ifad (2012) go further. They argue not only that these are important determinants but also that they go a long way toward explaining the kinds of disparities in enrolment that we have seen (and continue to see) across different societies (NRC, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

In their study, Paul et al. (2021) go further than most and delineate, quite nicely, how cultural and societal factors impinge on parental attitudes toward the education of their daughters. They reveal, through a review of literature and some of their research, that in many cultures there exists a strong belief that, even when given the chance, girls will not and should not pursue an education, since their place is in the home, and not in an academic environment (Rafiq et al., 2022). This belief, of

course, is reinforced by practices like early marriage and our kinds of pregnancies, not to mention the 'safe and unsafe' issues that are extremely pertinent to parental decisions about whether or not to send a daughter to school (Global Education, 2006; Paul et al., 2021; Suleman et al., 2015).

This research investigates the complicated relationship between inadequate educational resources and parental attitudes toward girls' education (Smith & Jones, 2018). Our understanding of the problem begins with the premise that limited access to educational resources engenders a certain mindset, or set of attitudes, that can negatively impact the educational opportunities available to girls (Takyi & Addai 2002). We operationalized the access problem, beginning with the assumption that access in today's world requires a kind of knowledge that wasn't necessary in the past when our parents were growing up. The know-how isn't just about the kind of intelligent, fearless, off-the-beaten-path seeking that can yield a scholarship (Aina, 2014).

On the other hand, the way parents feel about their daughters' schooling reflects a much larger collective orientation and disposition among families concerning the way they look at female education in general (Paterson, 2008). A family's attitude toward female education is indeed a very potent first filter that girls' formal educational paths must first pass through to ensure that enrolment happens. We have no hesitation in arguing that female educational enrolment is a first-order priority that requires no less than an argument of universal reason. When we talk about a path that has to be passed through, we mean *très en passant*. We are not suggesting that any families will be happy about the kind of proposition we put forward (Khan et al., 2014).

This study has combed through the existing literature and has identified several indicators that are associated with limited access to educational resources. These indicators fall into two broad categories. The first relates to the kind of access families have to educational resources and the second relates to access that is experienced by girls at a particular stage of life. Both sets of indicators speak to the overall phenomenon of limited access to educational resources. One more thing to note; the patterns that are associated with these indicators manifest themselves to a considerable degree among families with a low income. Although not discussed in the study, this low-income family situation is an important part of the picture.

The review explains the relationship between insufficient educational resources and parental perspectives on girls' education or the lack thereof (Rafiq et al., 2024). The review ties together the insufficient resources, negative parental attitudes, and the inequitable provision of education for girls in the Multan region. It takes a resource-oriented perspective, pairing it with some aspects of a parental attitude framework. The review does offer some new insights, particularly on the relationship among resources, attitudes, and girls' education. But in seeking these insights, the review also raises more questions than it answers, particularly about the nature of the parental attitude framework. And in this raising of questions, the review undermines its reliability as a research product with the provision of new insights.

Theoretical Framework

Three critical theoretical frameworks informed this research: Microsystems Theory, Feminist Theory, and Social Constructivism Theory. Each of these frameworks offers deep insights into the complex dynamics that form parental attitudes toward the education of their daughters, especially in contexts where access to resources is limited. The theory of Microsystems, as conceived by Bronfenbrenner (1979), is a central way of looking at the environments that influence people. It holds that contexts nearest and dearest to a person—like their family, school, and community—are the most powerful shapers of a person's behavior and mindset. Within the framework of this study, this theory helps make clear how a lack of money and stuff within these contexts directly explains the way parents think about sending their daughters to school.

When parents in these households cannot meet the educational financial demands placed upon them, such as direct payment for tuition and supplemental costs like transportation, their choice becomes stark. Do we invest in an educational future for our daughters (which may well be just as, if not more, necessary than an immediate surface-level investment), or do we prioritize making it to the next month without something vital being cut from our budget? This situation plays out in varying ways across several households, but the underlying economic impetus for the choice is universal across these scenarios. Consequently, the theory of microsystems is a building block of any adequate intellectual structure for understanding the ecological effects of resource scarcity on the values of parents—particularly their values concerning the education of their daughters.

Feminist theory highlights the crucial part that women's education plays in significant societal progression (Hooks, 1984). It brings to light the intersection of gender with other social structures and argues that educational opportunities are allocated differently across the genders, which reflects and reinforces the persistent male dominance in our society. As we turn to the realm of this study's relevance, feminist theory provides a solid lens for understanding the parental attitudes that lead to the differential valuing of boys' and girls' educations.

Even though education is widely recognized as being crucial to women's empowerment and societal progress, many parents in patriarchal societies still prioritize the traditional gender roles that relegate women to the domestic sphere when they are making decisions about whom to educate. This research uses feminist theory to dig into the deep, dark places where educational inequity hides. It brings to light the limited access to financial resources and the almost nonexistent access to information that poor families and communities have, and it links these with the gendered disparities in educational attainment that we see both in the domestic sphere and in public life.

Therefore, the theory stresses the importance of breaking down economic and cultural structural barriers to guarantee that girls have the same chance as boys to receive an education. It holds that a "transformative approach" is needed, one that does not stop at merely securing "education for all," but rather pushes on to achieve the larger aim of gender equity in education.

The theory of social constructivism—articulated by Bandura (1986)—enriches this analysis by emphasizing culture's role in forming individual attitudes and behaviors. This theory posits that knowledge and perception are socially constructed through interactions within a cultural context. When societies with long-standing gender-role traditions construct perceptions of their knowledge, the privileged norms often favor the education of boys over girls.

Parents are the main agents of socialization. They internalize and transmit our cultural norms. They shape our attitudes, especially our attitudes toward something as important as the educational sphere. The Parenting Attitude School Enrolment Model is a way of understanding how and why something like parental attitude even exists in the first place. Why do parents hold the attitudes they do toward something as foundational as their children's access to education? What's at the root of this parental attitude? And how might we change it?

The attitudes parents have toward their daughters' education are formed in a complex set of ways. They are partly a function of their limited access to resources and are also significantly influenced by the gendered norms that pervade their cultures. If we want to truly understand the dynamics that shape the parental attitudes we see today, and that contribute to the ongoing educational disparities our societies continue to witness, we have to consider these three theoretical frameworks—Microsystems Theory, Feminist Theory, and Social Constructivism Theory—together.

Research Design

A quantitative research method was used in this study to scrutinize, in a direct way, the relationship between the attitudes of parents and the restricted accessibility of their daughters to educational resources. Following the methodological framework of Creswell (2018), the survey instrument for the study was closed-ended and pre-determined. The "forced-choice" nature of the instrument ensured that the study remained firmly within the constraints of the quantitative tradition and maximized the statistical power of the analysis. The target population was the parents of unmarried girls who were either out of school or who had not been enrolled in school.

The research method was based on a quantitative approach intended to investigate the relationship between parents' attitudes toward their daughters' enrollment in school and the restricted access to educational resources. The study uses a cross-sectional survey design that adheres to positivist principles and systematically gathers empirical data. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, which focused on parents who make decisions regarding the education of their daughters. This was an effective means of collecting data that could be easily quantified and statistically analyzed. It was a good way to achieve the objective of examining the relationship between parental attitudes and limited access to educational resources.

This study used the Krejcie and Morgan Table to determine the sample size. The population from which the sample was drawn includes 4,594 males, 4,578 females, and 5,176 individuals over eighteen years living in Multan. The sample consists of 301 parents, both fathers and mothers, who have daughters who either dropped out of school or were never enrolled. This sampling strategy ensured a representative cross-section of the population, enabling the study's findings to be generalizable to the context of rural Multan.

Ethical Considerations

We complied fully with all relevant ethical principles and standards during the study. The study maintained integrity in all aspects, with a straight-up strong emphasis on confidentiality and privatizing the participants' identities. All of the data and information was handled with an almost farcical level of discretion to ensure that participants remained anonymous. The researchers communicated the study's aims and objectives to informants during the primary data-gathering stage, which involved sitting down with respondents for in-depth, face-to-face interviews.

In addition, the data collection instrument was put through several tests to ascertain its reliability and validity. Working with knowledgeable scholars and specialists in quantitative research was immensely helpful. Their feedback and suggestions were invaluable in revising and improving the research instrument. This study is rigorously designed, following all applicable ethical guidelines and standards, to ensure that the dignity, confidentiality, and welfare of all research participants are upheld. These high research standards yield findings that can be believed and trusted.

Demographic Analysis

The individual variables or characteristics within a data set are the focus of demographic analyses. In this research context, our untouched exploratory univariate analyses of each demographic variable (e.g., age, education, family income) allowed us a first look at the specific, on-the-surface, not-well-known-to-us-for-our-sample demographic makeup of our study respondents. This initial analysis did more than give us a first impression. It set the stage for the more in-depth analyses that followed and helped ensure that our data inferences were on solid ground, flagging any potential demographic patterns or trends as we went.

Parents	Frequency	Percentage
Parents (Females)	154	52.0%
Parents (Males)	127	48.0%
Age (Female Parents)		
29-39	70	52.0%
40-49	64	47.0%
50-59	5	1.1%
Age (Male Parents)		
29-39	29	33.0%
40-49	63	50.0%
50-59	20	17.0%
Educational Status (Male Parents)		
Elementary	45	38.0%
Secondary	20	20.0%
Higher Secondary	8	10.0%
Illiterate	42	32.0%
Educational Status (Female Parents)		
Elementary	80	51.6%
Secondary	8	5.0%
Higher Secondary	5	2.4%
Illiterate	55	42.0%
Respondents' Family System		
Combined	88	30.9%
Individual	200	69.1%
Occupation (Male Parents)		
Daily Wages	195	64.4%
Jobs (Private)	102	36.6%
Number of Kids	Respondents	%
3-5 Kids	179	60.0%
6-8 Kids	93	38.0%
9-10 Kids	7	2.0%
Enrollment of Daughters in School	Respondents	%
0-3	269	90.0%

4-6	12	10.0%
Drop out	Number of Respondents	Percentage
0-2	168	49.0%
3-4	85	40.0%
5 or more	18	11.0%
Family Income		
15,000-25,000	184	54.0%
26000-35,000	80	40.0%
36000-45,000	15	6.0%
Respondents' Area		
Taunsa	44	17.9%
Layya	33	14.3%
Khaniwal	33	10.6%
Ali Pur	38	15.9%
Shuja Abad	58	22.6%
Muzzafar Garh	24	11.3%
Vehari	8	3.3%
Kabir Wala	10	4.0%

The table provides a demographic and socioeconomic profile of parents involved in a study. It highlights a nearly balanced gender distribution, with 52% being female and 48% male. Female parents are predominantly aged between 29–49 years, with only 1.1% aged 50–59. Male parents show a broader age distribution, with 33% aged 29–39, 50% aged 40–49, and 17% aged 50–59. In terms of education, male parents are predominantly elementary-educated (38%) or illiterate (32%), while 51.6% of female parents have elementary education, and 42% are illiterate. Most families (69.1%) operate as individual family units rather than combined ones. Male parents are largely engaged in daily wage labor (64.4%), with 36.6% in private jobs. The majority of families have 3–5 children (60%), and school enrollment for daughters is high, with 90% having 0–3 daughters enrolled. However, dropout rates are notable, as 49% report 0–2 dropouts, and 40% report 3–4. Family income predominantly falls between 15,000–25,000 (54%), with fewer families earning higher brackets. Geographically, families are spread across regions, with the highest representation in Shuja Abad (22.6%), followed by Taunsa (17.9%) and Ali Pur (15.9%). This data collectively offers insights into the socioeconomic and educational dynamics of the studied population.

Descriptive Analysis of Limited Access to Educational Resources

The analysis section attempts to show the intricate ties that bind together the limited access to educational resources for girls, on the one hand, and parental attitudes toward their daughters' schooling, on the other. Descriptive and bivariate results work together in telling this aspect of the story. The independent variable (IV) investigates limited access to educational resources, while the dependent variable (DV) attests to the presence—or absence—of positive parental attitudes toward girls' schooling.

Table 1: *Frequency Distribution of Respondents Regarding Limited Access to Educational Resources. (N= 301).*

Limited Access to Educational Resources	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mean	Sd
The condition of my finances influenced my choice to send my daughter to school.	205 (68.8%)	12 (3.3)	1 (0.3)	81 (27.6)	3.13	1.34
I struggle to pay for essential educational supplies. I cannot come up with the money needed to cover school fees, books, and other necessary items, like the uniforms my children should wear to school.	211 (70.8)	4 (2.0)	4 (0.7)	70 (26.6)	3.17	1.32
Frequently, my lack of funds forced me to withdraw my daughter from both primary and secondary schools.	204 (68.4)	3 (1.0)	2 (0.7)	80 (29.9)	3.08	1.37
My daughters' education is affected by the shortage of both primary and secondary schools in my area.	228 (76.4)	7 (2.3)	6 (2.0)	56 (19.3)	3.36	1.20
Our village has a shortage of competent educators, and this affects my daughter's educational experience.	150 (50.5)	8 (2.7)	17 (6.3)	120 (40.5)	2.63	1.44
I feel that the deficiency in educational infrastructure—like adequate school buildings and facilities—holds back my daughter's education at the secondary level.	185 (62.1)	6 (2.7)	10 (2.7)	96 (32.4)	2.94	1.40
Girls' access to education is hampered by insufficient transportation.	200 (67.1)	5 (2.0)	10 (3.0)	82 (27.9)	3.08	1.35
My daughter has limited access to education because the tuition and fees are so high.	186 (62.5)	5 (2.0)	7 (2.0)	100 (33.6)	2.93	1.41

The data highlights significant barriers to educational access for girls, with financial constraints playing a pivotal role. Most respondents (68.8%) strongly agreed that their financial situation influenced their decision to send their daughters to school, and 70.8% struggled to afford essential supplies like fees, books, and uniforms. Financial hardship frequently led to the withdrawal of girls from schools, with 68.4% acknowledging this challenge. Geographic and infrastructural deficits also emerged as critical issues; 76.4% strongly agreed that a lack of primary and secondary schools in their area affected education, while 62.1% pointed to inadequate infrastructure as a barrier. Additionally, half of the respondents (50.5%) indicated that a shortage of competent educators

negatively impacted the quality of education. Transportation was another recurring obstacle, with 67.1% strongly agreeing that insufficient transportation hampered access. High tuition and fees were another limiting factor, as 62.5% strongly agreed that these costs restricted their daughters' education. Collectively, these findings underscore the multifaceted challenges families face in ensuring consistent and quality education for girls.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents Regarding Girls' Schooling. (N=301)

Parental Attitude towards Girls Schooling (DV)	SA F (%)	A	D	SD	Mean	Sd
I have enrolled the daughters of my two sons in school.	96 (32.6)	5 (2.0)	12 (3.7)	185 (61.8)	2.05	1.39
I have only enrolled my sons in school.	209 (69.8)	20 (6.3)	15 (5.3)	55 (18.6)	3.27	1.19
Because of my lower income, I prefer a public school for my daughter.	106 (35.4)	6 (2.3)	9 (2.7)	175 (59.5)	2.16	1.51
I have a lower income, yet I persist in funding my daughter's education.	252 (84.1)	10 (3.0)	2 (1.0)	35 (12.0)	3.59	0.991
I have regular communication with the teachers of my daughters.	73 (24.6)	2 (1.0)	27 (8.6)	199 (65.8)	1.84	1.28
My daughters' future is as bright as the education they receive.	220 (73.4)	11 (4.0)	2 (0.3)	68 (22.3)	3.29	1.25
I create an environment for my daughters that is conducive to studying.	221 (73.1)	12 (3.7)	2 (1.0)	68 (22.3)	3.28	1.25
A career can be built by my daughter through education.	225 (75.1)	12 (3.7)	1 (0.7)	63 (20.6)	3.33	1.21
At home, I enforce traditional gender roles that restrict my daughter from fully participating in school.	213 (71%)	9 (2.7%)	9 (3.3%)	67 (22.9%)	3.22	1.27

The table provides insights into parental attitudes toward girls' education. A significant portion of parents demonstrate mixed support for gender-inclusive schooling. For example, only 32.6% strongly agree they have enrolled their sons' daughters in school, whereas 69.8% strongly agree they have prioritized sons' enrollment. Financial considerations heavily influence schooling decisions, with 35.4% preferring public schools for daughters due to low income. Despite this,

84.1% of parents strongly agree they persist in funding daughters' education despite limited income. Communication with teachers is less common, as only 24.6% strongly agree they maintain regular contact. Parents express optimistic views on their daughters' potential, with 73.4% strongly agreeing that their daughters' futures are shaped by education, and 75.1% strongly agreeing that education can enable career opportunities. Moreover, 73.1% strongly agree they create a study-conducive environment at home. However, traditional gender roles remain a constraint for 71% of parents, who strongly agree they enforce these roles at home, potentially hindering full participation in school. Overall, the data highlights a blend of encouragement and challenges stemming from financial limitations and entrenched gender norms.

Association Between Limited Access and Parental Attitude

Hypothesis: There is an association between limited access to educational resources and parental attitude toward girls' schooling.

Table 3: *Correlation between Limited Access to Resources and Parental Attitude towards Girls Schooling*

Correlations		
	Limited Access	Parental Attitude
Pearson Corel.	1	0.72
Limited Access Sig. (2-tailed)		0.01
N	299	297
Pearson Corel.	0.73	1
Parental Attitude Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	
N	297	297

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table presents a correlation analysis between "Limited Access" to educational resources and "Parental Attitude" toward girls' education. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables, with a value of 0.72. This suggests that as limitations in access to educational resources increase, parental attitudes are likely to be less favorable or supportive.

The significance level (p-value) of **0.01** confirms that the correlation is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. This means the observed relationship is unlikely to be due to random chance. Both variables were measured with nearly identical sample sizes (N = 297–299), ensuring the robustness of the findings.

Overall, the analysis underscores the significant impact of limited access to educational resources on parental attitudes, potentially shaping decisions regarding girls' education.

Key Findings

Educational materials and resources are definitely a part of the equation. They are not sufficient in themselves, but they are necessary. And what's absolutely clear—this comes out in all the focus groups and interviews and in all the research—is that having these resources available does shape parents' attitudes in a positive direction. And when I talk about having resources, I'm talking about sufficient facilities, I'm talking about transportation, and I'm talking about not just sufficiency but also the community's perception of what education can do, particularly for girls at the primary level.

While the existing literature has long and extensively explored the factors that influence parental attitudes (e.g., cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and gender roles), there is a gap concerning the direct relationship between limited resources and parental attitudes towards girls' education. Previous research has examined parental influence at the conceptual level but has not sufficiently delved into the meaningful and direct relationship between having or not having educational resources and the kind of educational attitude parents in resource-constrained contexts hold. Limited resources, when coupled with significant parental influence, inevitably create a specific kind of atmosphere when it comes to girls' education; this study aims to investigate that atmosphere, specifically in the rural parental context of Murree, Pakistan.

The study hones in on a localized context and unique circumstances to understand better how limited resources shape parents' decisions about their daughters' education. This is an uncommon angle to approach this research. It underscores the pivotal role that resources—or, in this case, the lack of them—play in influencing whether or not a household supports a daughter's decision to pursue an education.

These results reinforce earlier conclusions and also expand our understanding of the impacts of limited resources on parental support and, by extension, the kinds of educational opportunities that girls have. We know a good deal about the kinds of things that facilitate or inhibit parental involvement in their children's education. Still, we don't have nearly enough data on how resource access affects the kinds of attitudes and actions that are consequential for ensuring that girls have the same.

Conclusion

The research explores the relationship between parental attitudes about girls' education and rural Murree, Pakistan's restricted access to educational resources. It combines theoretical frameworks with empirical data to yield a detailed portrayal of the context and conditions that affect educational decisions. The research findings show that when parents hold a favorable attitude about girls' education, and when there are no environment-related constraints, such as poor infrastructure or financial difficulties, resources for educational decisions positively shape parental attitudes. However, when environmental constraints affect resource availability, parental attitudes can be negatively influenced by the inadequacy of resources in their immediate surroundings. These findings are interpreted within the context of Bronfenbrenner's (M. H. Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) microsystems theory.

Feminist theory emphasizes the influence of gender biases and cultural norms on educational decisions. It presents a lens through which to analyze the space in which gender biases, cultural norms, and class intersect. The research clearly illustrates the urgent, pressing need to attend to these biases and to understand that they have a systemic basis. They don't just exist individually; they exist in our society collectively. And the unfortunate outcome of their existence is that they're detrimental to girls' education. These cultural norms and biases are deeply held, and as much as

we like to think we're "beyond" that, we're not. The research trivializes (in a positive way) these biases when it names them and points to the individual and collective harm they do. The study's contribution lies in its focus on the unique context of rural Murree, contrasting with broader research that often centers on more urban or less marginalized areas.

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