

CRITICAL CAPABILITY CONCERNS OF SCHOOL ENTREPRENEURS IN PAKISTAN

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PURPOSE
WE aim to explore critical capability concerns or the success factors of privately owned small and medium level educational institutes operating in Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad cities of Pakistan.

Methodology: *The mixed method approach (qualitative and quantitative) is used employing two studies. In study-1, the qualitative data was collected through face to face interviews involving 38 school owners. Analysis of qualitative responses provided 18 organizational capability factors that were believed pivotal for entrepreneurial success in school education. In study-2, we aim to assess the relationship between organizational capabilities (independent variable) with school performance (dependent variable). Organizational capabilities were measured using 18 items comprising of capability factors determined in study-1. School performance was measured using 8 items instrument adapted from existing literature. All items were rated on a 5 point Likert scale using a sample of 186 individual teachers, managers, and owners of schools. Stepwise regression analysis was used for the purpose of data analysis.*

Findings: *Results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between organizational capability and the school performance. Financial resources, working environment, and energy crises are the critical capability concerns which if addressed well could contribute to the entrepreneurial success and school performance.*

Limitations: *The study is conducted only in three cities of Pakistan. The sample size for the questionnaire is limited to 186 respondents and interview to 38 respondents only. Cross-section design is used because of the time and resource limitations.*

Implications: *The study has important implications for school entrepreneurs, teachers, academicians, researchers, and policy makers. The capability concerns or the success factors validated here can be used effectively to improve the students' learning and the school performance. Policymakers need to consider these important elements while devising policies. Researchers may undertake further research with large samples and diverse cultures to validate the effectiveness of these variables. Longitudinal and experimental designs may also be employed. Teachers may consider the importance of teaching quality, work environment, and other elements tested here to improve the school performance and learning for students.*

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Originality: *The combination of independent variables or the capability concerns for school success used here have rarely been used to the best of our knowledge. The study is conducted in three cities of Pakistan – a developing country; so the cultural context is really important, especially when the country is largely impacted by shortage of electricity which has unique impacts on school performance.*

Key Words: *School Entrepreneurs, School Performance, Private Educational Institutions, Energy Crisis, Financial Resources, Work Environment, Pakistan.*

Introduction

In determining the economic and social development of nations, education has the key role. The quality of education provided in a society indicates the quality of human resources in that society, (Iqbal, 2012). The best investment if someone can make is spending on education and enrichment of knowledge, as the return of this investment is much larger than any other form of investment. All the advanced countries of world spend adequate amount of funds on the education of their citizens, and empower them with the strength of knowledge. There are many countries which have achieved 100% literacy rate many years ago, because of their value towards education, dedication, and commitment to create a sophisticated society. “Education has large, consistent returns in terms of income and counters widening inequality, but this potential is too often unrealized due to alarmingly low learning levels. Providing all children with quality education that teaches them skills for work is critical to end poverty by 2030” (World Bank, 2017).

Like many under developed countries, Pakistan seems to have less concern and budget investments on education of general public. As per the Economic Survey of Pakistan (2016-17), current expenditure on education was observed to be 2.83% of GDP. As per World Bank (2017), Pakistan spent about 13% of the total government expenditure on education. The feeble conditions of public sector institutions are the examples of government’s ignorance. Additionally, Pakistan has the annual population growth rate of 2% in the year 2016 as compared to world average of 1.182% in the same year (World Bank 2017). In this scenario, government alone cannot afford to fulfill the educational needs of such a growing nation, especially not the quality education. This gap provides a first-rate opportunity to the private sector to fill the vacuum and share the burden with government. And this is the reason of increasing number of private educational institutes within the country. According to Ali & Naviwala (2017), about 40 percent of the students in Pakistan go to private schools. Jimenez & Lockheed (1995) indicated that due to fiscal and population constraints, the trend to depend upon private institutes is increasing.

Private educational institutes have several edges over the public institutes, and that is why they are gaining fame and momentum around. Private educational institutes are highly modern, well equipped, and facilitated as compared to the public ones; they have funds, large investments, are more focussed on quality and sustaining standards, prolific discipline, better learning and working environment, and more importantly, have a vision and aspiration to improve. Viewing these differences, parents sacrifice the cost factor, and prefer to educate their children in private sector in order to secure a bright future for them.

Literature Review

In Pakistan, Small and Medium Enterprises Authority (SMEDA) (2007) has elaborated that the enterprises having an employment size of up to 250 employees, paid up capital not exceeding to 25 million (Pak rupees) and having annual sales less than 250 million (Pak rupees) are categorized as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Most of the schools in Pakistan do fall in the criteria mentioned above for SMEs. The owners or founders can hence, be termed as school entrepreneurs.

Although the importance of small enterprises has prodigious value and meaning, yet they are facing numerous problems in developing countries like, Pakistan. There are some factors which halt these enterprises from a speedy growth, depending upon the nature, location, process or regulations of their business. The major factors include low technology base, lack of access to finance, lack of market

information, limited skill development opportunities, regulatory hurdles, low value addition, energy crises, political instability, and some other reasons.

Rastogi & Das (2002) conducted a study on re-engineering of educational institutions through smart cards to access the impact of the same on administrative efficiency. According to Solanki (2004) TQM in educational institutions is the need of the hour. It must be tried in colleges and universities for maximum performance of the students and the employees. It has become all the more necessary with the entry of the private sector in education in a big way. Mishra & Mishra (2004) suggested that, we need to see privatisation as supplementary and complementary to the state-run public educational systems. Today the responses to the economy and society have changed the outlook of the country due to its education policy development recognizing the importance of knowledge revolution. If we want a high performance economy, we have to work now to improve strength, depth and adaptability of the colleges and universities (Singh, Nagy, Villanyi, & Kaposzta, 2008). In education services, consumer satisfaction has gradually become of central importance. Satisfied customers mean both short and long-term competitive edge for service-providers.

The Schooling Business in Pakistan

There is no question that education serves as the backbone in development of nations. Countries having an effective, need-based, and modern education system deliver leaders, scientists, and managers to the world. Quality education can turn the burden of population into productive human resource. It is evident that education has been found as the most effective medium to increase the social, moral, and economic conditions of nations. In Pakistan, there is a dire need to develop and improve the education system at all levels. Be it primary, secondary or tertiary, improvement in the quality and outreach is highly required. During the last 70 years since independence in 1947, the nation has been given several educational policies and action plans in every setup of government, however, still there is a long way to achieve the success in educating masses as per international standards of quality education. Besides lack of educational policies and government's less interest, other factors like increasing population, low income, poverty, insufficient teachers, and social immobility are also liable for the current feeble situation.

On the other hand, despite the above discussed state of education in Pakistan, the business of education with private schools has flourished in Pakistan. Education has become more commercialized in the recent times (Akareem & Hossain, 2016). According to Pakistan Education Statistics Report (2015-16), the total number of primary schools in the country is 145,829. 86% of these primary schools, or 1255673 (in number) are owned and run by the public sector, whereas, 14% of the primary schools in the country, or 20,256 (in number) are being run by the private sector. The primary level of education in the country enrolls 18.751 million students/learners. 61% or 11.461 million of the students enrolled in the primary schooling are being catered by the public sector. The private sector facilitates 39% of the total primary level enrollment i.e. 7.290 million students are admitted to the private sector for their primary education needs. The enrollment of boys account for 10.471 million (55%) whereas girl's enrollment is 8.280 million (45%). The report further describes that there are 422,797 primary level teachers in Pakistan. 77% of these teachers are employed by the public sector. Whereas, the private sector teachers account to 23% of the total number of primary school teachers in Pakistan. This is a fact that, most of the parents want to send their children to school and to get good quality standard in education, irrespective of their income and affordability level. It was very easy for the private educational enterprisers to fulfill the vacuum, and the demand of people as a substitute to state-owned schools. From the last three decades, private education system has excavated its roots in the field, and also has succeeded to attract general masses towards themselves, which includes majority of working class, white-collar people, mediocre, and well-off cluster of the society. While, this wave of commercialization brings materialistic approach in education, however, in a developing country like Pakistan, it is essential because the public institutions alone do not have the capability to enroll the children. According to

Thapa (2013), the competition by private schools has a positive impact on the performance of public sector schools as well.

Determinants of School Performance

Whenever parents or students intend to choose an institute among the available options in their surroundings; they have some measuring factors in their minds on the basis of which they select one among many. These days there exists a commercialization aspect in majority of the people's behavior. It is almost understood that spending on education is the best investment for an individual; therefore, everyone is willing to spend an adequate amount of money for learning purpose and getting valuable education. And in return, they desire to receive the best out of it. Thus, it creates a perfect competition situation in the market, empowering the parents and students as the deciding authority. The educational institutes on the other hand, have to be among the best available options, and meet the demands and expectations of the public around them.

Educational institutes are usually indulged in a very diverse field. While working, they have to deal with many operational affairs and undertakings. As there are large number of institutes in the market, they face an intense rivalry with each other. Among them, some of them become the market leaders and pioneers; some are placed in a lucrative zone, whereas some keep on struggling to remain in the market anyhow. There ought to be some criteria which differentiates all of these from each other and position them in a list. No educational institute can have a special core competence in every aspect of business. Each of them would have a winning card which clenches them successful and affluent. Therefore, it is imperative for every educational institute to recognize the value of their self-developed, inventiveness (Bowondor & Rao, 2004). Khan (2005) also documented that, although comparing the system and quality of education is still very difficult and tricky in nature; however, a few common factors among them can be identified on the basis of which they can be compared for analysis purpose. According to McEwan (2015), the impact on learning detected by the use of technology or computers, is termed as critical capability concern in the school infrastructure. He further argues that, teacher training, school management and administration, and size of the class do also impact on a child's learning outcomes. Some of the important critical capability concerns or factors are highlighted as following:

1) Finances: Schools having sufficient funds and spending have better achievements. They are in position to equip their school with plenty of facilities and modern technologies. Verstegen & King (1998) have mentioned that resource inputs can and do make a difference in student's educational outcomes. Financial disbursements in making high quality laboratories, huge library, smart classrooms, space for extra-curricular activities, and state-of-the-art campus makes the institute unique and eye catching for parents and students. As a result, the intake integer increases and strengthens the institute both physically and financially.

2) Teacher Quality: Good and experienced teachers are assets to the institute and their importance in the system is not a secret. Among many independent factors, the quality of teachers in establishing good quality of education is the most important one (Lewin, Keith, & Stuart, 2003). Educational institutes are always in search of well qualified, skilled, and experienced teachers, and willing to bring them to their channel because they know that the success of students and their institute is dependent on them. Researches have proved that a teacher's influence on a student's learning is more effective than student's ethnicity, family background, income, or mindset. Thus teacher is a spiritual leader for the students.

3) Infrastructure: State of the art campus and facilities provided by the institute has an influence on its success. Edwards (2006) in England examined that, the quality of classrooms and facilitated environment result in reducing stress among the students and lead them towards success. Studies conducted on the effectiveness of school and the improvement researches often pay less attention to the contextual factors. Various other studies rely on narrow measures of outcomes and disregard the importance of infrastructure or the physical learning environment (Moos, Krejseir, & Kofod,

2008; Thrupp & Lupton, 2006; Bickford & Wright, 2006). Bullock (2007) validated positive association between the presence of new and renovated buildings (infrastructure) and the results in academic examinations of students in Virginia.

4) Work Environment: Work environment is a place, condition, situation, or a surrounding in which people carry out an activity with the purpose to earn livelihood. Working environment can be called a broader area which ties the personal and professional dimensions of people. A large portion of man's daily life is spent in workplace, and its environment has an impact upon his/her personality, attitude, and lifestyle. The educational institutes also need a positive work environment, and they build it upon many small identities like good gatherings, cooperative staff, security validation, caring relations, teachers-students relationship, students-students relationship, parents-administration relationship, developing appreciations incentives and rewards concepts, and a sense of belongingness to everyone on board. With the essence of these aspects, institutes can establish a pleasant climate for all stakeholders.

The school's working environment is vitally important. The environment reflects the teacher-student and staff relations. A conducive working environment is one of the important elements in the success of schools. Schools with better working environments are able to attract more students and build a good image. A conducive, supportive, and friendly environment helps in learning for the students and it adds value to the school's business. Mutual respect between the teachers, students, and parents is reflected in the working environment. Students and parents like to be associated with the image of school having an environment that inspires (Rudd, Reed, & Smith, 2008; Kumar, O'Malley, & Johnston, 2008; Flutter, 2006).

5) Class Size: The average number of students in a class is known as class size (Adeyemi, 2008), or the average number of students per teacher in a class is considered as class size (Hoffman, 1976). It is an educational tool which helps in analyzing the performance of an educational system. It has been found from experiments and researches that low student/teacher ratio gives productive results and is positively related to better achievements. Mosteller (1995) argued that smaller class size allows the teacher to pay individual attention to each student, it lowers the disruptions, and enhances learning. Educational institutes having small class sizes intend to focus on quality learning and concentrate to enhance the individual attention of students. Therefore, it is one of the main factors which determines their rating and reputable position in the market.

6) Evaluation Methods: The term evaluation means the methods and tools used by educational institutes to measure the learning of students in a specific period of time. The purpose of evaluation is also to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual students, and to position them in a hierarchy of knowledge which they received during a phase. Beside students, the administration, parents, and employers all are interested to know about the learning level.

Academic testing or assessment is really important. It enables to gauge the students' performance. It does also allow to compare the school performance with other schools (Rowntree, 2015). Educational institutes having strict examination system have the intention to promote healthy competition among the students and provide a transparent feedback according to their learning during the session. Lingard, Martino, & Rashti (2013) argue that global and national testing and academic assessments do also impact the school performance. The schools have to comply with national testing policies and also modernize with global trends. Strong assessment sessions create sharp and proficient students, and these students develop as the representatives of the institute. So evaluation methods are helping hand in creating and maintaining quality education.

Methodology

The problem stated in the beginning of this study research was scrutinized with the help of thorough literature and empirical investigation. The main focus was to identify the critical success factors of

small, privately owned educational institutes and to find the feedback of the stakeholders in this business streamline. For this purpose, the data was collected in two phases:

In the first study, a structured interview with both open-ended and close-ended questions was designed and interviews were conducted from the owners and administrators of various small privately owned educational institutes in the cities of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar of Pakistan on convenient sampling technique. These institutes included montessori, schools at all levels, colleges, coaching academies, and affiliated institutes. 38 people agreed to respond gladly and shared their views, experiences, and information, while 4 to 5 people refused to provide any kind of information about their business and routines on the basis of confidential matters.

In the second study, a semi structured questionnaire was developed on the basis of results derived from the interviews conducted in first study.

200 questionnaires were distributed among the faculty members and administrative staff members of the same educational institutes, and were asked to rate the success/failure factors derived by owners/administrators who were interviewed previously in the first study. 186 out 200 questionnaires were properly filled and received, while 14 were either wrongly filled or could not be received. The overall outcome was 93%.

Results Analysis

Respondent's Profile

Interviews were conducted for 38 school entrepreneurs and administrators. For the questionnaire survey, sample data for this research was collected form 186 respondents who were living with in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar. Of these total respondents, 82% were teaching staff in various schools while 18% were from management side. Gender of respondents show a mix of male (61%) and female (39%). Around 76% of the respondents had master's level degree whereas as much as 68% had professional experience of 1-5 years. Most of the respondents (62%) were of age ranging between 31-40 years. Following is the description of respondent's profiles in charts, shown in figure no. 1, 2, and 3 respectively:

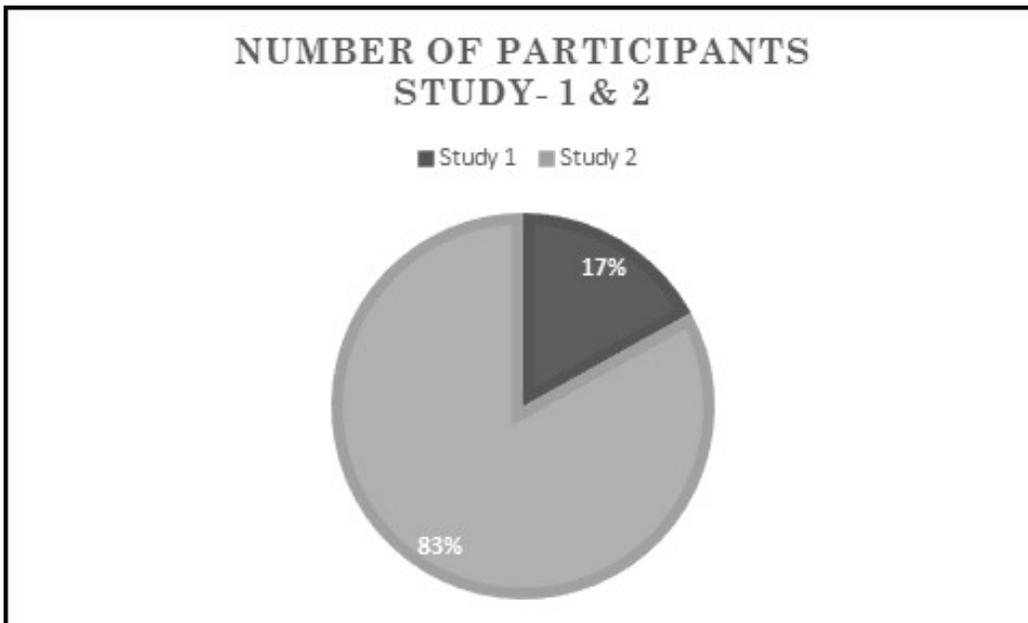


Figure No. 1: Total Number of Respondents in 1st and 2nd Study

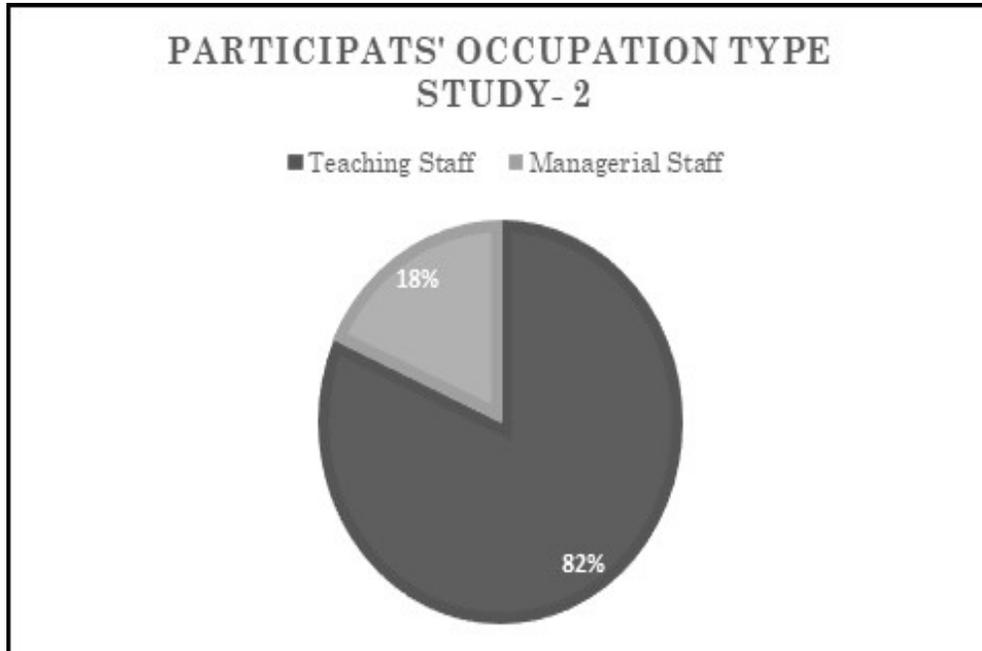


Figure No. 2: Participates' Type of Occupation in 2nd Study

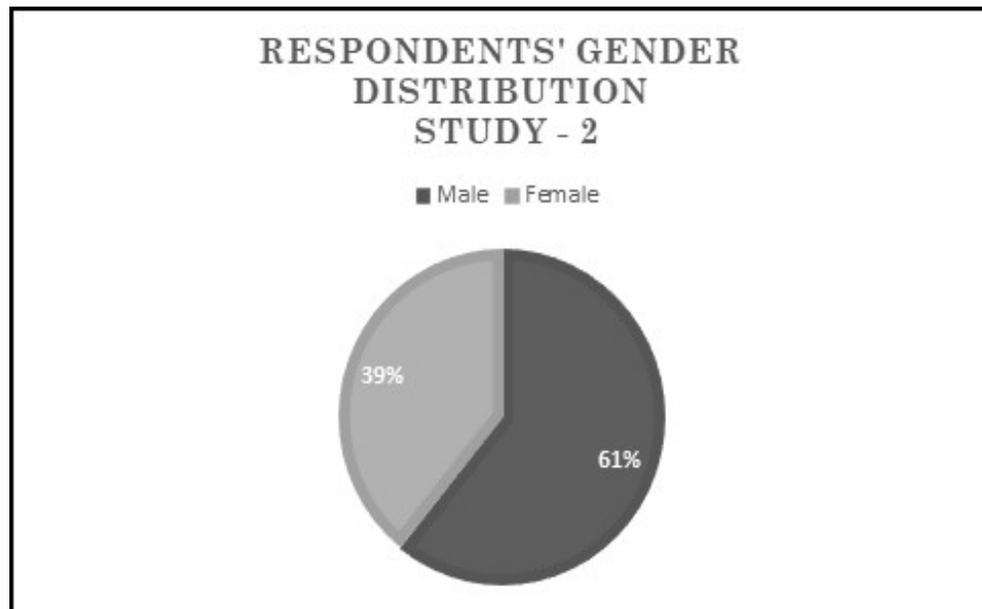


Figure No. 3: Respondents' Gender Distribution in 2nd Study

Reliability of Instrument

A questionnaire with 5-point Likert Scale was developed to collect data on factors affecting the performance of schools within areas under investigation. The internal consistency of the instrument was checked through Cronbach' Alpha, whose value improved from initial (0.666 based on 18 items) to final (0.776 based on 10 items) after the removal of less coherent items in the instrument.

Factor Analysis

Information collected through questionnaire has been statistically analyzed to find out significant factors (success/failure) having bearings on performance of schools. In wake of this, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been used to sort out the communalities. Pre-requisite for the PCA have been completed by conducting Kaider-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity of the sample. Sample adequacy for Factor Analysis has been checked by Kaider-Meyer-Olkin measure whose value if greater than 0.6 (as in our case) ratifies sample as adequate. Significance value (0.000) rejects the null hypothesis of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity, which suggests that correlation matrix is an identity matrix. This allows for the usage of PCA on the sample under analysis. Communalities show the proportion of variance that is explainable by PCA. Extraction values of all nine factors included in analysis are well explained by PCA. Keeping Eigen value at 1, around 73.22% of the total variance has been explained by PCA.

Regression analysis of the factors extracted through PCA has been done by using step wise linear regression technique. As shown in table no. 1, there is significant improvement in measure statistics. As from Model 1 to Model 4, the correlation coefficient ‘R’ has improved from 37.8% to 53.2%, explanation of variation in school performance through independent factors. ‘R²’ has improved from 14.3% to 28.3%, standard errors in estimation has reduced from 0.317 to 0.292. All four models are statistically significant since (F-value < α-value). Model 4, the best fit model, has Durbin Watson value within desirable range.

As shown in table no. 2, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show that although all four models are statistically significant but Model 4 has greater explanation for variation in performance of school due to the factors extracted via PCA since sum of square increased as desired while mean square error suppressed as desired.

Table No. 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F	
1	0.378 ^a	0.143	0.138	0.31714	0.143	30.662	1	184	0.000	
2	0.465 ^b	0.216	0.208	0.30404	0.074	17.205	1	183	0.000	
3	0.514 ^c	0.264	0.252	0.29548	0.048	11.757	1	182	0.001	
4	0.532 ^d	0.283	0.267	0.29250	0.019	4.723	1	181	0.031	1.476

Dependent Variable: School Performance

Regression Equation

As shown in table no. 3, following is the regression equation:

$$SP = \alpha + \beta_1 (FR) + \beta_3 (ES) + \varepsilon$$

$$SP = 1.76 + 0.157 (FR) + 0.080 (ES) + \varepsilon$$

Here,

SP: School Performance

FR: Financial Resources

ES: Electricity Shortage (energy Crisis)

Table No. 2: ANOVA

Model	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.084	1	3.084	30.662	0.000
	Residual	18.507	184	0.101		
	Total	21.591	185			
2	Regression	4.674	2	2.337	25.283	0.000
	Residual	16.916	183	0.092		
	Total	21.591	185			
3	Regression	5.701	3	1.900	21.765	0.000
	Residual	15.890	182	0.087		
	Total	21.591	185			
4	Regression	6.105	4	1.526	17.839	0.000
	Residual	15.486	181	0.086		
	Total	21.591	185			

a. Dependent Variable: School Performance

In table no. 3, regression results show that out of all factors for which information regarding school performance were collected via questionnaire; only work environment, financial resources, and electricity shortage (energy crisis) have statistically significant impact on performance of school. Regression equation show that:

School Performance = 1.76 + 0.157 x (Financial Resources), 1.76 + 0.124 x (Work Environment) and 1.76 + 0.080 x (Electricity Shortage).

Table No. 3: Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for β	
	β	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.764	0.209		8.441	0.000	1.351	2.176
Work Environment	0.124	0.039	0.225	3.193	0.002	0.047	0.200
Financial Resources	0.157	0.042	0.255	3.752	0.000	0.074	0.240
Electricity Shortage	0.080	0.025	0.202	3.172	0.002	0.030	0.129

a. Dependent Variable: School Performance

Discussions and Conclusions

The school performance is an important research issue. The entrepreneurial success for the school entrepreneurs depends upon many factors. We have studied here the six capability concerns or the predictors of school success: finance, teacher quality, infrastructure, work environment, class size, and evaluation methods. Our results show that work environment, financial resources, and the electricity shortage do significantly impact the school performance.

Working environment is an important factor, because if the working conditions are not appropriate and the environment has disturbances and it is not conducive for the learning then it hampers the learning abilities leading to decrease in the performance. Availability of adequate financial resources is one of the major tangible factors. It enables the school management to provide the appropriate level of infrastructure, reading materials, qualified and good quality instructors. Availability of all these essentials is vital for the learning and school performance. Electricity shortage is a critical factor in the developing countries like Pakistan. In Pakistan, because of the energy crises, electricity load is managed in such a way that the provision of electricity is not for the twenty-four hours. Rather after every 3, 4, 5, or 6 hours the electricity is shut down for 1, 2, 3, or more hours depending upon the shortage. This factor has much impact on the school performance as during the school hours, electricity is shut down for several times and the multi-media or audio-visual aids cannot be used. Not only this, in severe weather conditions like winter or summer, the heating and cooling equipment cannot be used which makes it miserable for the students, teachers, and staff. Therefore, it impacts the school performance negatively.

Our study has limitations of the sample size and location. More generalized studies can be conducted by employing large samples from all over the country. Comparative studies are also needed in the future to empirically validate the differences in school performance and the predictors of performance between the developed and developing nations. More predictors of the school performance can also be explored. Longitudinal studies using the experimental design in future, may also be conducted for more sophisticated results.

The reforms required to apprise the educational sector of Pakistan is not the sole responsibility of government, i.e. both the public and private educational sectors have to put their hands together for the great cause. An upright regulatory system for the refinement of education in private and public schools should be established. Both sectors have an obligation to work together to certify that educational needs are meeting the required standards, to make every child a professional well-learned and well-groomed personnel.

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