
THE EQUITY EQUATION: TEACHER STUDENT SUPPORT AND INSTITUTIONAL KEYS TO ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

This study investigates the combined impact of teacher student relationships and institutional factors on academic success and confidence among university students in Punjab, Pakistan. While individual aptitude is a key contributor, this research highlights how the broader educational environment, including teacher student support, physical infrastructure, curriculum relevance, and Teacher expectations, significantly shapes a student's academic journey. A quantitative study was conducted using an online survey with 300 university students. Descriptive analysis revealed that students generally hold a positive view of Teacher student support and institutional resources, though there is perceived room for improvement, particularly regarding curriculum relevance and the classroom environment. Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between Teacher student support and academic success ($r = 0.61, p < 0.01$), as well as between institutional factors and academic confidence ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$). These findings underscore the crucial role of both Teacher networks and institutional quality in fostering equitable learning environments. The study recommends several strategic interventions to boost student motivation and achievement, including revising the curriculum to ensure relevance, distributing resources more equitably, developing Teacher training programs, organizing structured Teacher student support initiatives.

Keywords: Teacher Support, academic equity, institutional factors, and student confidence

INTRODUCTION:

Academic success is a multifaceted outcome, influenced not only by a student's individual aptitude but also by their Teacher relationships and the quality of their institutional environment. A central theme in the global conversation on education is the increasing emphasis on **equity**—ensuring all students have fair access to opportunities, resources, and supportive learning environments (UNESCO, 2023). Educational equity goes beyond simply treating everyone the same; it requires addressing systemic disparities in participation, support, and infrastructure.

The institutional environment plays a critical role in shaping a student's academic trajectory. Key elements include the physical infrastructure, the relevance of the curriculum, and Teacher expectations. Research consistently shows that high Teacher expectations correlate with improved student performance, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2022). Similarly, a relevant and context-sensitive curriculum has been shown to boost student motivation and their sense of connection to their education (Brookings Institution, 2023). Furthermore, access to educational resources and a comfortable learning environment significantly impact learning outcomes, a fact particularly pronounced in developing nations where infrastructure disparities are more evident (World Bank, 2024).

Simultaneously, there has been a growing focus on the importance of classroom social dynamics and Teacher student support. Positive Teacher interactions, inclusive classroom practices, and emotional support from Teachers have been linked to greater academic resilience, lower dropout rates, and enhanced academic self-confidence (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2022). The learning environment is inherently social, and a sense of belonging and Teacher inclusion can foster the psychological safety and motivation essential for academic success (Gopalan & Rosinger, 2022).

Despite the growing global attention on educational equity, much of the empirical research has examined Teacher dynamics or institutional factors in isolation. The interaction between these two spheres specifically, how Teacher-level elements like social inclusion and emotional support intersect with institutional elements like curriculum, infrastructure, and Teacher expectations remains poorly understood, particularly in developing nations like Pakistan.

While international assessments and national education policies acknowledge the importance of equitable learning environments, there is a lack of localized data from South Asian higher education institutions that measures the combined effect of institutional and social factors on student achievement and confidence (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Existing studies from Western contexts often focus on inclusive pedagogy and social belonging (Gopalan & Rosinger, 2022) but may not adequately address the systemic inequities prevalent in public universities in low- and middle-income countries.

The Teacher student support is a well-studied topic in academic contexts, its specific effects on university students have received less attention. Research in Pakistan often concentrates on Teacher effectiveness and infrastructure (Malik & Jabeen, 2021) while equity-focused research paradigms rarely integrate Teacher relationships, inclusive group dynamics, or student voice. This study aims to address this critical gap by examining the combined impact of these factors.

By offering a thorough, data-driven examination of the ways in which institutional and social dynamics affect academic equity and student trust, this study fills these gaps. The study's focus on university students, a demographic juggling social variety and intense academic pressure, allows it to capture a critical developmental time where support networks have a big impact on future results.

Despite significant investment in higher education infrastructure, the province of Punjab, Pakistan a major educational hub continues to face challenges related to educational equity. This is particularly true for students from low-income, rural, and under-represented backgrounds (Punjab Higher Education Commission, 2022). The region is characterized by stark differences in institutional quality, with well-funded urban universities coexisting with underfunded institutions in semi-urban and rural areas. These disparities are evident in the availability of student support services, Teacher engagement, and access to educational materials. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics Report (2023), students in Punjab's public colleges often contend with systemic issues such as outdated curricula, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of Teacher mentoring or psychosocial support.

Research Gap and Study Rationale

In Punjab, there is a notable scarcity of empirical, data-driven research that comprehensively examines the interplay between Teacher student support and institutional factors on academic equity and student confidence. Most local studies focus narrowly on either curricular changes or Teacher performance, often overlooking the socio-ecological dynamics within the classroom. This study, therefore, is both timely and necessary. It aims to provide context-specific insights that can inform higher education reforms, promoting inclusive pedagogy, Teacher engagement, and equitable access for all students.

Study Objectives

The primary goal of this research is to analyze how institutional factors such as curriculum relevance, Teacher expectations, and university infrastructure along with Teacher student support and classroom social inclusion influence academic equity and student achievement. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To assess the impact of key institutional elements on equitable access to learning opportunities and academic performance.
2. To explore the relationship between Teacher student support, social inclusion, and students' academic confidence and success.
3. Identify effective strategies that integrate institutional reforms and social dynamics to promote educational equity among diverse student populations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Institutional reforms are crucial for addressing systemic disparities and ensuring equitable access to education. As Eden et al. (2024) argue, effective educational strategies must go beyond simple resource allocation to tackle social injustices embedded within educational systems. Their findings confirm that when inclusive policies are implemented, these reform initiatives directly enhance academic performance. Similarly, institutional frameworks must actively address inequities faced by marginalized students. Teacher (2024), for example, found that systemic barriers like inadequate facilities and unconscious biases prevent disadvantaged students from succeeding. In a different study, Adeniyi et al. (2024) showed that specific institutional changes, such as revised curricula and inclusive evaluation methods, led to measurable academic gains for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The importance of Teacher dynamics is highlighted by Wu et al.'s findings, which show that structured Teacher learning environments boost academic achievement and student confidence through collaborative learning. Their study emphasizes that social cohesion mediates these benefits, increasing student engagement and self-efficacy. Flecha (2014) also reinforces this idea, arguing that inclusive educational practices like dialogic learning and interactive groups foster mutual support, build social capital, and improve academic performance, particularly for students in underserved areas. Furthermore, Benabid et al. (2025) demonstrated that when explicit pedagogy is combined with inclusive learning practices, students experience both cognitive and emotional benefits, underscoring the vital role of social inclusion for long-term academic success.

Combining grassroots social initiatives with institutional policies is proving to be a highly effective approach. Oakes & Lipton (2002) contend that educational equity reforms should be seen as social movements, not just administrative changes, to foster stakeholder support and cultural shifts. Chong (2018)'s analysis of Finland's equality model highlights the importance of proactive support systems and strong policy enforcement. This research reveals that early intervention, robust Teacher student support, and community engagement are key to closing achievement gaps. More broadly, Ainscow (2020) demonstrated that inclusive systems that prioritize shared accountability and culturally sensitive teaching are essential for overcoming social disadvantage and expanding access to quality education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study's theoretical foundation is built upon four key frameworks that collectively explain how institutional and social factors interact to influence educational equity and student outcomes.

Critical Pedagogy views education not as a neutral process but as a powerful force for social change. It was developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), who argued that traditional teaching, which he called the "banking concept of education," treats students as passive recipients of information. In contrast, critical pedagogy aims to empower marginalized students by fostering critical thinking and agency. This is achieved through a curriculum that is relevant to students' lives and experiences, and through participatory teaching methods that encourage dialogue and collaborative problem-solving. By centering the experiences of marginalized students, this framework highlights how education can either perpetuate or challenge social injustices, underscoring the importance of an inclusive curriculum for achieving educational equity.

Social Capital Theory, as articulated by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), emphasizes the value of social networks in achieving personal goals, including academic success. It posits that social capital, which consists of the resources gained through social connections, is just as important as economic or cultural capital. In an educational context, this framework highlights the crucial role of Teacher networks and institutional support. When students feel a sense of belonging and trust within their Teacher groups and with faculty, they are more likely to collaborate, share resources, and support each other's academic journeys. This network of relationships, built on shared norms and mutual cooperation, can provide a significant advantage, especially for students who may lack other forms of capital.

Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), provides a comprehensive way to understand how a student's development is influenced by their environment. It conceptualizes a series of nested systems that interact with one another. The microsystem includes the student's immediate surroundings, such as Teacher groups and the classroom. The meso-system involves the interactions between these microsystems—for example, how teacher student support dynamics are influenced by institutional policies. The macro-system represents the broader societal context, including cultural norms and systemic inequalities that shape educational policies and practices. This theory is essential for this study because it highlights that student outcomes are not determined by a single factor but are a result of the complex interplay between individual-level relationships and broader institutional and societal structures.

The Equity Literacy Framework, developed by Paul Gorski (2013), provides a practical tool for educators to move beyond simple diversity initiatives and address systemic injustices. It defines equity literacy as the ability to recognize, respond to, and redress conditions that deny some students access to educational opportunities. This model pushes educators to go beyond surface-level issues and challenge the root causes of inequity, such as biased curriculum, unfair grading practices, or discriminatory school policies. By using this framework, educators can create truly inclusive environments where all students, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, have an equal chance to succeed. It serves as a guiding principle for the study's recommendations, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that directly tackle systemic barriers.

H1: Academic equity is greatly impacted by institutional variables such university infrastructure, curricular relevance, and instructor expectations.

H2: Students' academic confidence and success are positively connected with teacher student support and a classroom that is socially inclusive.

METHODOLOGY:

This study employed a quantitative research methodology to investigate the relationship between Teacher student support, institutional characteristics, and academic equity among university students. The primary objective was to examine how these factors collectively influence student achievement and confidence within an academic context.

A structured questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. This questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on participants' self-reported academic confidence, achievement, experiences with teacher Support, and perceptions of institutional factors. The survey included several sections, starting with demographic information and followed by Likert-scale questions measuring the core constructs. The institutional factors section evaluated items such as curriculum relevance, Teacher expectations, and university infrastructure. The Teacher student support section focused on aspects like group inclusion, academic assistance from Teachers, and social acceptance.

Data were collected exclusively through an online Google Form to facilitate wide distribution and efficient management. A convenience sampling approach was used due to the online nature of data collection and the target population of university students. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen for its practicality and accessibility, allowing for the quick gathering of responses from easily reachable participants within university networks. While acknowledging that convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings, it was considered suitable for this exploratory study to establish initial correlations between the variables.

The Google Form link was shared across campus networks and relevant online platforms, with students invited to participate voluntarily. The initial data collection yielded 513 responses. A rigorous data verification process followed to ensure the quality and completeness of the responses. Incomplete questionnaires were removed from the dataset. After this cleaning process, a final sample of 300 complete and usable responses was retained for analysis using SPSS. This approach ensured that the study's conclusions were based on high-quality data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The aim of scientific study is to acquire generalization and prediction, which cannot be accomplished without these phases. Inferences and generalizations are drawn from the traits and viewpoints of the respondents. Data interpretation and analysis are the two most important components of research.

Distribution of respondents according to socio economic and demographic Variable

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	167	55.7%
	Female	133	44.3%
Grade Level	Undergraduate	180	60.0%
	Post Graduate	112	37.3%
	PhD	8	2.7%
University Type	Public	211	70.3%
	Private	89	29.7%
Socio-economic Background	Low	112	37.3%
	Middle	142	47.3%
	High	46	15.3%

In the Table 1, the study's final sample of 300 participants demonstrated a relatively balanced gender distribution, with a slight male predominance. Of the total respondents, 167 (55.7%) were male and 133 (44.3%) were female. In terms of academic standing, undergraduate students formed the largest group, accounting for 180 participants (60.0%). Post-graduate students made up the second-largest category with 112 participants (37.3%). A significant majority of the participants were affiliated with public universities, with 211 respondents (70.3%) identifying with this sector. In contrast, participants from private universities comprised 89 respondents (29.7%). The socioeconomic background of the respondents was also varied. The largest group, representing 142 respondents (47.3%), was classified as having a moderate socioeconomic background. Participants from a poor socioeconomic background were also well-represented, making up 112 respondents (37.3%) of the sample.

Distribution of respondents according to Institutional Factors (Section B)

Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness
Teachers expect me to do well	3.63	1.24	-0.32
Teachers treat all students fairly	2.94	1.38	0.12
Curriculum reflects real-life situations	2.63	1.37	0.45
Access to textbooks/learning materials	3.57	1.21	-0.28
Classroom is clean and comfortable	2.83	1.32	0.21
University provides adequate facilities	3.51	1.18	-0.18

The study measured participants' perceptions of institutional factors using a 5-point Likert scale. The results reveal a complex picture, indicating both areas of strength and significant room for improvement. Students' perceptions of Teacher expectations (Mean = 3.63, SD = 1.24) and the availability of textbooks/learning resources (Mean = 3.57, SD = 1.21) were generally positive, with a tendency toward agreement. The perceptions of other critical institutional elements were less favorable. The data showed a skew toward disagreement for curriculum relevance and classroom environment. Specifically, students expressed neutral or slightly negative views on whether Teachers treated all students fairly (Mean = 2.94, SD = 1.38), if the curriculum reflected real-life situations (Mean = 2.63, SD = 1.37), and the cleanliness and comfort of their classroom environment (Mean = 2.83, SD = 1.32).

Perceptions of general university facilities were also slightly negative (Mean = 3.51, SD = 1.18). These findings suggest that while some resources are perceived positively, there are systemic weaknesses related to curricular relevance, perceived fairness, and the quality of the learning environment. This finding aligns with research that highlights the positive impact of perceived institutional support on student outcomes. This is consistent with other research from Pakistani higher education institutions, which also found student dissatisfaction with various institutional characteristics like career support and overall facilities (Bukhari, 2018; a study by Journal of Social Sciences Advancement).

Teacher Student Support and Social Inclusion (Section C)

Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness
Feel accepted by classmates	3.80	1.20	-0.45
Classmates help with University work	4.01	1.12	-0.62
Can express ideas freely	3.74	1.19	-0.38
Inclusion of diverse backgrounds in groups	4.10	1.14	-0.70
Confidence in academic success	3.96	1.17	-0.55
Classmates' encouragement motivates	4.14	1.07	-0.75

Participants' perceptions of teacher Support and social inclusion were notably positive, as measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean scores for several key items demonstrated a strong consensus among respondents, indicating a high level of agreement. The highest mean scores were recorded for "Classmates' encouragement motivates" (Mean = 4.14, SD = 1.07) and "Inclusion of diverse backgrounds in groups" (Mean = 4.10, SD = 1.14). Both statements showed considerable negative skewness, signaling a widespread positive sentiment. Similarly, high mean scores were found for "Classmates help with university work" (Mean = 4.01, SD = 1.12) and "Confidence in academic success" (Mean = 3.96, SD = 1.17). These results suggest that students generally feel supported by their Teachers, which in turn boosts their academic confidence. These findings align with prior research that emphasizes the critical role of teacher student support in fostering academic confidence and success (Wang et al., 2021). Positive mean scores were observed for statements like "Can express ideas freely" (Mean = 3.74, SD = 1.19) and "Feel accepted by classmates" (Mean = 3.80, SD = 1.20). Overall, these findings indicate that students perceive their university environment as offering a high degree of social inclusion and teacher support, which significantly enriches their academic experience.

Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Institutional Factors (6 items)	0.78	Acceptable reliability
Teacher Student Support (6 items)	0.85	Good reliability

In conclusion, both measures showed good reliability ($\alpha > 0.7$), indicating that they can be used to evaluate hypotheses (Taber, 2018).

Analyzing correlations and testing hypotheses

The two main hypotheses of this study, which looked at the connections between academic outcomes, Teacher Support, and institutional characteristics, were tested using Pearson's r correlation coefficient. The table below provides a summary of the findings, and then a succinct descriptive analysis follows.

Hypothesis	Key Correlation	p-value	Support?
H1: Institutional Factors → Equity	0.42	<0.01	Supported
H2: Teacher Student Support → Success	0.61	<0.01	Supported

Academic Equity and Institutional Factors

A statistically significant positive correlation was found between a student's academic confidence and the composite Institutional Score ($r=0.42, p<0.01$). This result suggests that students who perceive their institutional environment more favorably tend to report higher levels of academic confidence. This finding is consistent with existing research that underscores the powerful influence of institutional settings on student success. For instance, studies consistently show that high Teacher expectations significantly impact student performance and self-efficacy (TNTP, 2024; Mirza & Jabeen, 2024; Rubie-Davies et al., 2024). These high expectations can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, motivating students to achieve more. Similarly, access to learning resources and a supportive environment are vital for creating an inclusive atmosphere that directly benefits students' confidence and future prospects. These specific institutional components are crucial for promoting academic equity by providing the necessary support structure for student success.

Teacher Student Support and Academic Success

The study also found a robust and statistically significant positive correlation between a student's academic confidence and the composite Teacher student support Score ($r=0.61, p<0.01$). This strong association indicates that as teacher support increases, so does a student's academic confidence. This finding is supported by a growing body of literature that highlights the critical role of teacher relationships in both academic and personal development. Recent studies show that Teacher student support can significantly enhance academic performance, improve learning efficiency, and foster a crucial sense of belonging (Communities In Schools of Jacksonville, 2025). Specifically, teacher Support and group inclusion are recognized as powerful motivators that boost comprehension, engagement, and overall academic confidence (Communities In Schools of Jacksonville, 2025). Furthermore, research has consistently demonstrated a positive impact of Teacher student support on both learning achievement and self-confidence (Index Copernicus, 2024).

Summary and Recommendations

A quantitative study titled "The Equity Equation: teacher student support and Institutional Keys to Achievement" investigated the complex relationship between Teacher dynamics and institutional factors in shaping academic equity and student confidence. Data were collected from 300 university students in Punjab, Pakistan, using a Google Forms questionnaire. The study instruments showed good reliability for teacher student support ($\alpha=0.85$) and Institutional Factors ($\alpha=0.78$) scores. The descriptive data indicated a diverse sample and highlighted both strengths and weaknesses within the institutional environment. While students generally held positive views on Teacher expectations and resource availability, they expressed concerns regarding curricular relevance, perceived fairness, and classroom conditions. In contrast, perceptions of teacher support and social inclusion were overwhelmingly positive, with high ratings for classmate encouragement and group inclusion.

The correlation analysis provided strong support for both hypotheses. A significant positive correlation was found between academic confidence and the Institutional Score ($r=0.42, p<0.01$), with Teacher expectations and resource access being the strongest predictors. An even stronger positive correlation was found between academic confidence and the Teacher Support Score ($r=0.61, p<0.01$), with classmate support and group inclusion being key variables. These findings emphasize that both robust Teacher networks and supportive institutional frameworks are essential for enhancing student motivation, a sense of justice, and academic success.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to advance educational equity and improve student achievement in higher education institutions in Punjab, Pakistan:

- **Invest in Teacher Development:** Universities should fund professional development programs for educators to foster high, objective standards for all students. Training should focus on strategies to reduce unconscious biases and ensure equitable treatment for every student.
- **Enhance and Equalize Access to Resources:** Educational institutions must prioritize fair access to essential resources, including technology, digital tools, and textbooks. This also involves modernizing and maintaining university facilities to create clean, comfortable, and conducive learning environments.
- **Revise Curricula with Stakeholder Input:** Curriculum development should actively involve a diverse group of stakeholders, including students, faculty, and industry experts. This will ensure that course material is relevant to real-life situations and viewed as practical by students.
- **Formalize Teacher Student Support Programs:** Universities should formally integrate teacher student support programs, such as study groups and Teacher mentorship, into their academic and student life frameworks. Fostering conditions that encourage Teacher student support and the inclusion of diverse backgrounds in group activities should be a priority.
- **Promote Inclusive Classroom Environments:** Establish safe and encouraging classroom and campus-wide environments where students can freely express their ideas without fear of judgment. This can be achieved through pedagogical strategies that promote active engagement and respectful discourse.

- **Adopt a Holistic Approach to Reform:** Educational reforms should be planned holistically, combining initiatives that enhance infrastructure and curriculum with policies that build inclusive social settings and strong Teacher networks. This integrated approach will lead to more effective and sustainable improvements in educational equity.

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