

## Assessing the Dynamics of Mushroom Growth of Private Schools: A Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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**Abstract:** *The prime objective of the study is to explore the dynamics of mushroom growth of private sector schools and how innovative course curricula and homework and assignments of the private schools motivate parents towards private sector schools. The nature of the study is quantitative, whereas the schools are selected through a simple random sampling technique. A total of 277 sample sizes are selected. The data were collected through interview schedules from the students (Boys & Girls), teachers of the concerned classes and parents of the students. The collected data were analyzed through a statistical package for social sciences and were presented in Uni variate and Bi variate analysis, by applying the chi-square formula. For the sake of equal representation of all segments and genders, the researcher takes primary, middle and high schools as well as included both male and female schools. The results of the study show that it is an innovative curriculum which improves the student's academic performance and parental demand, which leads to mushroom growth of the private sector schools. Similarly, homework and assignments are the factors which motivate students and parents towards private sector schools and lead to the mushroom growth of private sector schools. The study recommended uniformity needed in the curriculum of private and public schools for the sake of good results for both kinds of schools. It is also recommended that teacher training programs be needed in private schools for the best results and outcomes for the students.*

### Introduction

One of the fundamental institutions in any society on the planet is education. Numerous educational systems exist worldwide that offer pupils high-quality education. The two most well-known of them are government and private, which are accepted by all (Adamson, Astrand, & Darling-Hammond, 2016 and Sahlberg, 2016). Private education systems are created when the public education system fails to meet citizen demands for education or when the public education system is not up to grade. In our nation, the idea of private schooling is not new. The state pledged to provide universal elementary education upon gaining independence in 1947 (Farooq, Feroze & Kai, 2017 and Sultana et al., 2012).

It was challenging for a newly formed state to offer top-notch educational facilities to everyone because of a shortage of funding. Additional governmental actors take part in the form of private schools based on necessity. Since then, there have been several private educational options, including madrassahs, missionary schools, non-governmental organization schools, and schools

owned by businesspeople (Iqbal, 2012). In Pakistan, private schools became the top providers of educational services in the 1990s. Six million children were receiving their education from private schools in the 2000s; by 2007–08, that figure had risen to twelve million (Awan, 2011). By offering an educated environment for study and grooming, private schools are not only reducing the percentage of illiteracy but also elevating both teachers and pupils (Nabi, Farooq & Nazir, 2019 and Awan & Saeed, 2014).

In our nation, the private education sector has grown like wildfire due to the high caliber of instruction provided. The variables that contribute to the expansion of remote schools are teacher accountability and punctuality. Private schools' appraisal systems are what improve the efficacy of their teaching and learning strategies. Furthermore, teachers' salaries in private schools are entirely based on the performance of their charges. Teachers will feel more secure than others if there are more pupils and the teaching methods are in line with what the parents want (Jani, 2017). Because their work is transient, private school teachers are doing everything they can to provide the greatest results. Teachers at public schools don't care for the best results because their positions are permanent. Private schools, on the other hand, offer superior administration and oversight. The management committee of private schools is in charge of evaluating teachers and pupils and resolving issues (Awan, 2015). New approaches to teaching and learning are also essential to the expansion of private schools. Teachers in private schools employ diverse pedagogical approaches, offer a greater variety of teaching resources, plan a more extensive curriculum, host science and art exhibitions, host parent's day events, and so on. All of these activities are primarily meant to motivate children for future results (Iqbal, 2006).

Pakistan has seen a remarkable rise in the number of private schools over the past 30 years, especially in the country's rural areas. Instead of sending their kids to public schools, parents in both rural and urban areas are sending them to private ones. There exists a positive correlation between the expansion and acceptance of private schools and the underperformance of the public education system. Public school infrastructure is of extremely low quality (Andrabi et al., 2006). Public sector schools have a high student-teacher ratio, a high rate of teacher absenteeism, and several dilapidated and decaying school buildings. These factors make these schools unappealing to parents who want better education for their kids. In government schools, there is a high teacher-to-student ratio and a class size of at least 70 students. As a result, teachers are unable to provide each student with the proper attention, and students also find it difficult to communicate with teachers. However, in private schools, classes consist of thirty or more kids, resulting in a significantly better student-teacher ratio and a teacher who gives each student the attention they deserve (Awan, 2015).

Factors connected to education, such as classroom size, attendance, student-teacher ratio, textbook availability, assignments, and homework, can significantly impact students' performance and are readily available in private schools. Private schools are more effective than public schools due to the aforementioned features that set them apart from each other (Bedi et al., 1999). According to Arif et al. (1999), schools may also differ in terms of their physical infrastructure, environment, and management styles. These variations may have an impact on the academic results. The fact that there were only 3300 private schools nationwide in 1983 (Jimenez & Tan, 1987) illustrates the explosive rise of private education. By 2000, there were roughly 36,000 private schools nationwide. Over 36,000 private schools enrolled 3.6 million students in 2000, indicating a sharp increase in the number of private schools. In contrast, the number of private sector schools grew by 25% annually to 81,103 in 2005 (Iqbal, 2012).

Education is a major factor in the rise and fall of nations, especially in the modern era. It is mostly caused by the advent of global rivalry and technological advancement. The foundation of advancement and development is this competitive atmosphere. Education is how nations cultivate an awareness of the individuals that comprise them. According to a broad definition, education is an institution that gives citizens of the nation mental, social, ideological, physical, and moral training so they can fully acknowledge their goals and motivations in life and be prepared to succeed for those reasons. It is not just public instruction. Not only does education instill moral values in young people's personalities, but it also helps them become socially adept. Education primarily aims to

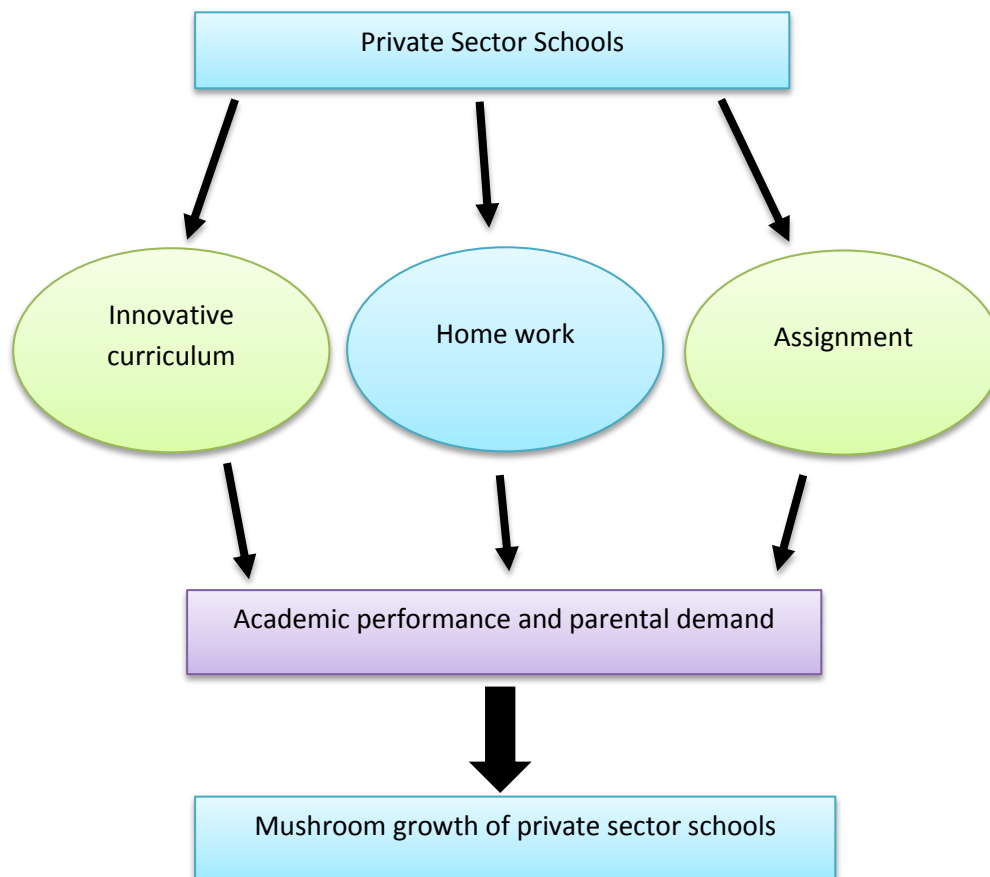
train people intellectually and morally, which helps to develop and polish their potential and capacities and pass on to the next generation the culture of the society that they live in (Awan, 2015).

Private education is becoming more and more recognized worldwide, in both developed and developing countries. Establishments manage and oversee numerous government schools in the United States. One topic that the majority of private schools are willing to discuss is managing with development, according to the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (Fennell, 2013). A school can declare itself to be fulfilling its mission and meeting its academic goals if enrollment is increasing and the waiting list is getting longer. Private school attendance in Canada has increased over the past few decades from 1.9% of all students to 5.6% in 2006. The country's population chooses private schools due to the higher quality of education and facilities offered compared to public schools. Other reasons for choosing private schools include dissatisfaction with the public education system, the commitment of teachers, concerns about morality and values, religion, family, and character development, as well as individualized attention and an inspiring, stable, and sustaining instructional environment that instills certainty and autonomy in the students (Ball, 2007).

People in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are also shown a greater interest in attending private schools. The province's three biggest urban centers are Mardan, Nowshera, and Peshawar. The area has a vast network of educational institutions that serve the general population. The government sector cannot provide all citizens with free or inexpensive education on its own due to population pressure. As a result, private schools are fulfilling their obligation to educate the general population. Private schools charge a monthly, semestral, or annual fee and are owned by an individual or organization. The private education system operates globally, but private schools are always required to abide by the bare minimum of laws and regulations that are currently in effect in that nation.

Every nation has a unique set of educational systems. Similar to other nations, Pakistan offers a variety of educational systems, the most prevalent and significant of which are the private and public-school systems. The number of private schools in our nation is increasing daily. There are several reasons why private schools are expanding. The quality of education provided by private schools is superior to that of public schools. Teachers at private schools use a variety of instructional strategies to help students learn. Private school development is influenced by various school elements, including classroom size, student population, textbooks, English as the primary language of instruction, teacher and student attendance, assignments, and homework. Private sector school enrollment has skyrocketed due to aspects that drive growth, such as a clean and well-maintained environment, psychological support, behavior management, and other amenities. However, the lack of hygienic amenities in public schools, as well as their unfavorable classroom and environment, has caused the number of private schools lead to the Mushroom growth of private sector schools. The objectives of the current study was to examine the dynamics of the private schools as an accelerating factor in the study area and to pin point the role of innovative curriculum and homework & assignment as motivating factors of Mushroom growth of private sector schools in the study area

**Conceptual Framework**



**Methodology**

A researcher can describe their intended study approach by using research methodology. It's a methodical, logical strategy to address a research issue (Patel & Patel, 2019, Davidavičienė, 2018; Goundar, 2012; Choy, 2014; Kothari, 2004). For this research activity, the researcher used a quantitative research method. The researcher takes approval from the supervisor for data collection in district Nowshera. Further, the researcher visited the Board of Intermediate and Education Mardan (BISE) and got approval for the data collection as well as take the number of primary, middle, and high schools of district Nowshera. The researcher then randomly selected high schools from the mentioned schools. the researcher selected four high schools through simple random sampling and then selected sample size from these three schools through the Krejci and Morgan sample size determination table. For the sake of good response, the researcher collected data from the 10th-class students as they have a proper understanding of the topic as well as they have spent two years in school and they know about the quality of the education of the school.

According to the BISE Mardan, the total number of high schools in district Nowshera is 370, among 139 are high schools, 119 are middle schools and 112 are primary schools. for the equal representation of all segments and genders, the researcher selected four schools from primary, four from middle and four from high schools. Furthermore, the researcher selected two male schools from each segment and two female schools from each segment. The total targeted population is 970, and the researchers selected 270 sample size from the total targeted population through the Krejci and Morgan sample size determination table. For the sake of equal representations from all segment and all genders the researcher used proportional allocation formula.

**Sample Frame of the Study**

Sample frame of the high schools, middle schools and primary schools are as under;

**High Schools Sample Frame**

Specification	Targeted population		Sample size
Class 10 <sup>th</sup> students	Boys	50	15
	Girls	77	23
Teachers	Male	08	03
	Female	15	04
Parents	Male	50	15
	Female	77	23

**Middle School's Sample Frame**

Specification	Targeted population		Sample size
Class 8 <sup>th</sup> students	Boys	162	48
	Girls	37	11
Teachers	Male	17	05
	Female	15	04
Parents	Male	162	48
	Female	37	11

**Primary School's Sample Frame**

Specification	Targeted population		Sample size
Class 5 <sup>th</sup> students	Boys	45	13
	Girls	44	13
Teachers	Male	10	04
	Female	12	04
Parents	Male	45	13
	Female	44	13

**Data Analysis**

The researcher collected relevant information from the students, teachers, and their parents through an interview schedule. The interview schedule was developed on the Likert scale. The collected data were then analyzed through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and were analyzed through Uni variate and Bi Variate analysis by applying chi-square to know the association between dependent and independent variables.

**Results and Discussions**

**Innovative Course Curriculum of the Private Schools Leads to Mushroom Growth of Private Sector Schools (N=270)**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Statistics
Private curriculum increases mushroom growth in private schools	90.7%	5.7%	3.7%	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =303.180
The private sector school's course curriculum is according to the needs of parents	88.8%	4.9%	7.3%	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =311.435
The government checks properly the curriculum of private schools	49.2%	24%	26.8%	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =220.394
The innovative course curriculum is according to the understanding of students	86.2%	10.2%	3.6%	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =210.388
English as a medium of instruction attracts parents	86.2%	5.7%	8.1%	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =311.153
Marketability of English medium of instruction leads to mushroom growth of private schools	81.7%	8.5%	9.8%	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =210.092

The above table shows data regarding the innovative course curriculum of private schools and how it leads to the mushroom growth of the private sector's schools. There are certain factors of mushroom growth of private sector schools, among innovative courses, curriculum are the most important indicators. In this regard, the question was asked that whether private school's curriculum leads to the mushroom growth of private sector schools. The majority of the respondents i.e. 90.7% agreed with the statement that the innovative curriculum of the private schools leads to mushroom growth of the private schools, 5.7% of the respondents did not agree with the statement, and 3.7% of the respondents were found neutral. The association value of the statement is  $P=0.000$ , which is highly significant with the dependent variable.

Then, the question was asked whether the private sector school's course curriculum is according to the parental demands, which attracts parents and leads to the mushroom growth of the private sector schools. In this regard, 88.8% of the respondents recorded their responses in favor of the statement, 4.9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 7.3% of the respondents opined in favor of don't know. The same idea is supported by the work of Bukhari, P., & Randall, (2009) that the course and curriculum of the private schools are new and updated and prepare students for market-based jobs, which leads to mushroom growth of the private schools. Similarly, the study shows that it is parental demands that the course and curriculum should be updated, new, and innovative. Due to these mentioned characteristics, the parents are interested in the curriculum of the private schools, which ultimately leads to the mushroom growth of the private sector schools. Further, the statement was found to have a high significant value of  $P=0.000$  with the dependent variable. Proper check and balance of the curriculum is the responsibility of the government and attracts parents as well as enhances the quality of the existing curricula. In this regard, 49.2% of the respondents were of the view that the government is properly checking the course curriculum of the private schools, which leads to the mushroom growth of the private schools, and 24% of the respondents disagreed with the statement as they were of the opinion that government doesn't have proper check and balance mechanism for curriculum, 26.8% of the respondents were of the view that they don't know regarding such mechanism for curricula check and balance. Similarly, a high significant value of  $P=0.000$  was found between the statement and the dependent variable.

The majority of respondents—86.2%—agree that students can understand the course material; 10.2% disagree, and 3.7% are unsure. The significant value of the statement was found a high significant value of  $P=0.000$ . The analyzed data is supported by the work of Supriani et al., (2022) that the private school curriculum is new, updated, and according to the market demands as well as it is understandable for the students. Further, the students are taking interest as it is innovative and updated, such characteristics of the course curriculum lead to mushroom growth of the private schools in the study area. Additionally, 86.2% of respondents stated that using English as the medium of instruction sparks students' curiosity and encourages the expansion of private education. 8.1% of people are unaware, while the remaining 5.7% disagree. 81.7% of respondents concur that the expansion of private education is facilitated by the marketability of English as a language of teaching; 8.5% disagree and 9.8% are undecided. Further, the statement was found to have a high significant value of  $P=0.000$  with the dependent variable. The same idea is supported by the work of Coleman, (2010) that the medium of the private school is English, which motivates parents to enroll their students in private schools and ultimately leads to mushroom growth of private sector schools. The study also shows that marketability of the English as a medium of instruction is the factor that motivates parents towards private sector education and improves the academic performance of the students, which ultimately leads to mushroom growth of private sector schools.

**Homework and Assignments of the Private Schools Lead to Mushroom Growth of Private Sector Schools (N=270)**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Statistics
Homework and assignments lead to mushroom growth	82.1	5.3	12.6	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =146.739
Homework and assignments improve student's mental level	90.2	5.3	4.5	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =114.232
Homework and assignments are checked properly	82.9	12.6	4.5	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =187.448
Homework and assignments are included in the marks	68.3	8.5	23.2	P=0.000 X <sup>2</sup> =189.806
Homework and assignments make the students busy at home	22.8	63.4	13.8	P=0.017 X <sup>2</sup> =12.12
Homework and assignments are an extra burden on students	6.9	64.6	28.5	P=0.004 X <sup>2</sup> =23.404

The above table depicts data regarding homework and assignments of private schools and how homework and assignments are the factors that lead to the mushroom growth of the private sector schools in the study area. In this regard, respondents were asked a variety of questions; in response, 82.1% of them agreed that assignments and homework lead to mushroom growth of the private sector schools, whereas 5.3% disagreed and 12.6% said they were unsure. The significant value of the statement is P=0.000, which is highly significant. The same idea is supported by Buell, (2008) that it is homework and assignment that improve the learning of the students and ultimately lead to mushroom growth of private sector schools. Furthermore, it is homework and assignments that minimize the student dropout ratio and engage students at home, which leads to the mushroom growth of the private sector schools. The analyzed data is also supported by the work of Marzano, (2003) that homework and assignments improve the mental health of the students as students are aware that accomplishment of such task will improve their overall results and leads to high grades and ultimately leads to mushroom growth of private sector schools. Further, 90.2% of respondents believed that assignments and homework help students' mental health; such mental health and levels lead to the mushroom growth of private schools. 5.3% disagreed, and 4.5% were unaware of the statement. Additionally, 82.9% of respondents agreed that homework should be done appropriately, 12.6% disagreed, and 4.5% said they were unsure. Similarly, the chi square results show a high significant value of P=0.000. When it came to the next question, which questioned if homework and assignments were included in all scores, 68.3% of respondents said they were, 8.5% disagreed, and 23.2% said they were unsure. The analyzed statement shows a high significant value of P=0.000. The primary data is supported by the work of Trautwein et al., (2009) that homework and assignment marks contributed to the overall results as these marks are included in the terminal exams and improve student's academic performance. Such academic performance of the students motivates parents towards private schools and leads to mushroom growth of private schools. The study also shows that students are trying their best while doing assignments and homework due to the fear of failure, which leads to academic performance and mushroom growth of the private sector schools.

Additionally, according to 22.8% of respondents, homework and assignments are meant to keep students busy at home. However, 63.4% of respondents disagreed, and 13.8 percent said they were unsure. The statement shows no significant association of P=0.017. It shows that assignments and home work are not for the sake to make students busy at home rather they are for the academic improvement of the students and for their good results. The final question concerned whether homework and assignments were given for students' academic improvement or if they were an additional burden. Of the respondents, 6.9% thought that homework and assignments were

an additional burden, while 64.6% disagreed and 28.5% said they were unsure. The results of the chi square test show a less significant association of  $P=0.004$ . In this regard, the study of Sidhu et al., (2010) indicates, that students consider the homework and assignment burden sometimes as students at the primary level are not aware of the importance of the homework and assignments directly. However, students at secondary level and middle level the students don't think so, rather they are happy with homework and assignments as it improves the student's academics as well as improves their personality. The study also shows that parents are happy and don't consider homework a burden on the students as it is involved in the overall score/results of the students, which improves students' academic performance and leads to mushroom growth of private sector schools. Moreover, Awan, (2015) opined that homework and assignments are parental demands at it improve the students' academic performance and enhances their capabilities, which leads to mushroom growth of private sector schools.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of the present study was to assess the various dimensions of the rapid growth of private schools responsible for quality education and the incentives for parents to enroll their children in private schools, particularly in Noshera district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study parameters were developed based on the data generated. The research focuses on the rapid growth of private schools due to innovative curriculum in private schools. English as the medium of instruction, the marketability of English and whether the curriculum meets the needs of parents were all key indicators that were well represented in data analysis, and were favored by the majority of respondents. Likewise, monthly tests/exams and final term exams have also become attractive to private schools, leading to rapid growth of private schools. Preliminary data suggests that competition among students is driven by homework and assignments. The study recommends that government should play its role to bring uniformity in the curriculum of public and private schools and arrange trainings for private and public school teachers.

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