

Linking Academic Performance of Children with Neighbourhood Services: A Gender Based Analysis

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ABSTRACT This research investigated the effects of neighbourhood services on academic performance of secondary schools students and how different are these effects on the basis of students' gender. A multistage stratified sampling technique was adopted to portray information from a sample of 448 students. An interview schedule was used as the data collection tool. Chi square and Kendall's Tau-c tests were used to determine the level and direction of association among variables. The results showed that schools' quality ($P=0.000$, $\text{Tau-c}=0.122$), health facilities ($P=0.027$, $\text{Tau-c}=0.080$), playground ($P=0.000$, $\text{Tau-c}=0.162$), and arrangements of sports events ($P=0.000$, $\text{Tau-c}=0.257$) in the neighbourhood was significantly and positively associated with academic performance. Moreover, student gender explained variation in academic performance in association with neighbourhood services. It was concluded from the study's results that availability of services in neighbourhood positively contributed to better academic performance in children. In addition, female students with satisfaction from neighbourhood services were more liable to score high grades.

INTRODUCTION

According to a well-known African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child", child development is not only the responsibility of parents and family but of the whole community (Donna 2012). The process of child socialisation and development is affected by various factors surrounding the child, and ranges from child's personal life to family, school and neighbourhood factors. Mangal (2010) reported that the influence of school, home and neighbourhood environment is significant on the academic performance of children. Similarly, numerous research studies have identified multiple determinants of children academic performance like students attitude towards learning, educational facilities at schools and teachers skills and abilities (Maina 2010), parenting style (Ahmed et al. 2019), family socioeconomic status (Hanes 2008; Pruitt et al. 2019), classroom learning environment, peer group, students motivation and encouragement, home environment and

parental involvement in children education (Kudari 2016), neighbourhood characteristics (Rothstein 2013; Nicholas-Omoregbe et al. 2017), student gender (Mccoy 2005; Gustavsen 2018) and access to services in the neighbourhood (Caro 2009; Altschul 2012).

Children spend plenty of time in their local surroundings called neighbourhood that plays a crucial role in their child development (Leventhal and Brook-Gunn 2000). Children's educational performance is in connection with neighbourhood structure, residents' ethnic background, social relationships among neighbours and educational opportunities in the neighbourhood (Cheshire 2012; Van Ham et al. 2012, 2013; Jaap and Pieter 2016). Based on access to services, the neighbourhood is divided into two broad categories, that is, advantaged and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The advantaged neighbourhood is linked with the blessings of having easy access to facilities like schools, libraries, teachers and leisure activities, and easy access to these services have a formative effect on child wellbeing and personality development. Children that grow up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are more prone to dropout from schools (Rendon 2014), less likely achieve higher education (Wodtke et

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al. 2011) and perform poorer in schools (Monique 2016). It was concluded that in low-income neighbourhoods the rate of higher educated persons is very low compared to higher income neighbourhoods (Rothstein 2013). Children who live in safe, affluent and cohesive neighbourhoods characterised with a relationship of trust, cooperation and having availability of development services performing higher than their counterparts (Wadley 2018).

Higher academic performance is considered to be one of the main elements of development in life. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), neighbourhood is one of the micro level systems that directly influence academic performance of children. A recent meta-analysis illustrated that only in developed nations the relation of children's academic performance is explained by the neighbourhood characteristics such as, neighbourhood poverty, learning environment in the neighbourhood, population trends and social disorganisation (Nieuwenhuis and Hooimeijer 2016). However, in less developed and developing countries less attention is paid to this important aspect of child development specifically in the study area of District Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. Furthermore, there is negligible amount of research that could distinguish gender-based variations in academic performance of children due to their available neighbourhood facilities both in developed and in developing nations. Therefore, in the current study, for the first time, an attempt was made to highlight the association of children's academic performance with neighbourhood services and portrayed the influence of student gender in the association between neighbourhood services and children academic performance.

Research Objectives

The basic purpose of this study was to investigate the association of children's academic performance with neighbourhood services and to assess the effects of children gender on the association of children academic performance with neighbourhood services.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design, Sampling and Sample Size

The research study design was a cross-sectional or one short study on the basis of its time horizon (Babie 1989). The study was carried out in District Malakand during the years 2018-2019. For selecting a representative sample, a multistage stratified random sampling technique was adopted. At first level the study area was divided into two tehsils, and then the tehsils were further divided into union councils and segregated into rural and urban union councils. There are a total of 28 union councils including 5 urban and 23 rural with a ratio of 1.5. So on the ground, two urban and ten rural union councils were randomly selected. Total of 36 secondary level schools were randomly selected from these 12 Union Councils including one government boys' school, one government girls' school and one private school from each Union Council. Total number of students in 9th and 10th class in the selected 36 schools are 7,952 including 3,959 girls and 3,993 boys as given in Table 1. The required sample size for these 7,952 students is 448 according to Equation 1 (Chaudhry 2009). The mentioned calculation was proportionally allocated to each school and class according to enrolled students by applying Equation 2.

Table 1: Allocation of required sample to selected schools

| <i>School type</i> | <i>Location wise number of selected schools</i> | | <i>Enrolment</i> | | <i>Total number of students</i> | <i>Sample size</i> |
|--------------------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| | <i>Urban</i> | <i>Rural</i> | <i>9th class</i> | <i>10th class</i> | | |
| Government boys | 2 | 10 | 1805 | 1435 | 3240 | 183 |
| Government girls | 2 | 10 | 1799 | 1662 | 3461 | 195 |
| Private | 2 | 10 | 693 | 558 | 1251 | 70 |
| Sub total | 6 | 30 | 4297 | 3655 | 7952 | 448 |

$$n = \frac{N\hat{p}\hat{q}Z^2}{\hat{p}\hat{q}Z^2 + Ne^2 - e^2} \quad \text{(Equation 1)}$$

$$n_h = (N_h / N)^* n \quad \text{(Equation 2)}$$

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study comprises two independent variable (neighbourhood services and children gender) and one dependent variable (children academic performance) as given in Table 2.

Table 2: Conceptual framework of the study

| <i>Independent variables</i> | <i>Dependent variable</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Gender Neighborhood services | Children academic performance |

Measurement of Variables

For measurement of neighbourhood services, Santos et al. (2013) (ELSA-Brasil), scale guided the assessment of students. The neighbourhood services scale consists of 7 items. Positive response on 4 or more items on neighbourhood services was considered as satisfactory neighbourhood services. Attributes for measurement of respondents’ response over independent variable (neighbourhood services) were “Yes” and “No”. For measurement of students’ academic performance, divisions secured by the students (based on percent marks) in the last exam were considered. Attributes for measurement of respondents response over dependent variable, that is, academic performance were A-1 Grade, 1st Division, 2nd Division and 3rd Division and below, and respondents’ gender was measured at two levels (that is, male and female).

Indexation

For measuring the association between the independent and dependent variables at the bi-variate level, the dependent variable was cross-tabulated with the independent variable. Moreover, at a multivariate level, the independent variable showing Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value of more than 0.7, was indexed and cross-tabulated with the dependent variable to find out that variations in children’s academic performance are

caused exclusively by neighbourhood services or affected by control variables too.

Data Analysis

For measuring the association and direction of the association between independent and dependent variables, the Chi-square test and tau-c test were applied at bi-variate and multi-variate analysis. At bi-variate analysis association between neighbourhood services and children’s academic performance was analyzed and at multi-variate level analysis respondents’ gender was kept as control variables to find the association.

RESULTS

Neighbourhood Services and Children’s Academic Performance

Results in Table 3 highlights the association between neighbourhood services and children’s academic performance. The results showed that for those students who secured A-1 grade, 85.7 percent admitted that their neighbourhood has good school facilities, compared to 35.0 percent of those securing 1st Division, 35.4 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 38.6 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. Association of neighbourhood’s good school facilities was found highly significant (P=0.000) and positive (Tau-c=0.122) with students’ academic performance. Furthermore, the results show that for all those students who secure A-1 grade, 80.0 percent agreed that schools can be easily reached on foot, compared to 58.1 percent of those securing 1st Division, 63.1 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 46.6 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. The results of schools can be easily reached on foot and students’ academic performance was found significant and negative (P=0.006, Tau-c=-0.122). Innate capacity of children and their proper socialisation to increase their interest in education was considered as another reason for the academic performance of children. However, a series of research studies have found additional facilitative factors to improve the educational performance of children, including easy access to the quality educational institution. A quality education is liable to inculcate the zeal and interest and creativity in chil-

Table 3: Association between neighbourhood services and children academic performance

| Attributes | Attitude | Children academic performance | | | | | Statistics |
|--|----------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|------------|---|
| | | A-1 Grade | 1 st Division | 2 nd Division | 3 rd Division and below | Total | |
| Your neighborhood has good school facilities | Yes | 30 (85.7) | 91 (35.0) | 23 (35.4) | 34 (38.6) | 178 (39.7) | $\chi^2=33.893$ (0.000) Tau-c=0.122 |
| | No | 5 (14.3) | 169 (65.0) | 42 (64.6) | 54 (61.4) | 270 (60.3) | |
| Schools can be easily reached on foot | Yes | 28 (80.0) | 151 (58.1) | 41 (63.1) | 41 (46.6) | 261 (58.3) | $\chi^2=12.354$ (0.006) Tau-c=-0.122 |
| | No | 7 (20.0) | 109 (41.9) | 24 (36.9) | 47 (53.4) | 187 (41.7) | |
| Are you satisfied with the health services in the nearby hospital | Yes | 12 (34.3) | 131 (50.4) | 27 (41.5) | 30 (34.1) | 200 (44.6) | $\chi^2= 9.206$ (0.027) Tau-c=0.080 |
| | No | 23 (65.7) | 129 (49.6) | 38 (58.5) | 58 (65.9) | 248 (55.4) | |
| In your neighborhood play grounds or parks are available for boys | Yes | 23 (65.7) | 131 (50.4) | 33 (50.8) | 29 (33.0) | 216 (48.2) | $\chi^2=13.161$ (0.004) Tau-c=0.153 |
| | No | 12 (34.3) | 129 (49.6) | 32 (49.2) | 59 (67.0) | 232 (51.8) | |
| In your neighborhood play grounds or parks are available for girls | Yes | 22 (62.9) | 42 (16.2) | 6 (9.2) | 13 (14.8) | 83 (18.5) | $\chi^2=51.080$ (0.000) Tau-c=0.162 |
| | No | 13 (37.1) | 218 (83.8) | 59 (90.8) | 75 (85.2) | 365 (81.5) | |
| Sports events take place in your neighborhood for children | Yes | 22 (62.9) | 181 (69.6) | 36 (55.4) | 28 (31.8) | 267 (59.6) | $\chi^2=39.673$ (0.000) Tau-c=0.257 |
| | No | 13 (37.1) | 79 (30.4) | 29 (44.6) | 60 (68.2) | 181 (40.4) | |
| Activities performed in community centers/hujra for children | Yes | 18 (51.4) | 67 (25.8) | 9 (13.8) | 22 (25.0) | 116 (25.9) | $\chi^2=16.848$ (0.001) Tau-c=0.111 |
| | No | 17 (48.6) | 193 (74.2) | 66 (86.2) | 66 (75.0) | 332 (74.1) | |

dren through proper education. However, if such quality educational institutions are in easy reach, most of the energies and a huge amount of time on approaching the school are saved. The saved time and energies are more likely to be utilised by such educational institutions in positive behavioural activities, including improving the learning process that results in heightened academic performance in children. The above test results also pertain to the significance of these important variables in improving the academic performance of children.

Moreover, 34.3 percent of the students who secured A-1 grade reported that they were satisfied with the health services in the nearby hospital, compared to 50.4 percent of those securing 1st Division, 41.5 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 34.1 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. Furthermore, a significant ($P=0.027$) and positive ($\text{Tau-c}=0.080$) association was detected between satisfaction with the health

services in the nearby hospital and students' academic performance. Health, being an important basic facility of human life, is the top policy priority of the government. However, the health centres in the study area were sparse and were provided with limited facilities in terms of health staff, equipment and medicines. Therefore, access to health facilities and availing these facilities for diseases was not up to the satisfaction of the majority of the respondents. However, those who were satisfied with these services were more likely to achieve better grades in their educational endeavours as evident from the highly significant and positive association of variables. Scientists believed that it is a healthy mind, as part of the healthy body that is ensuring improved learning and positive contribution to societal endeavours including education.

Furthermore, the results show that for all those students who secured A-1 grade, 65.7 percent agreed that in their neighbourhood playgrounds

or parks are available for boys, compared to 50.4 percent of those securing 1st Division, 50.8 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 33.0 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. The results of neighbourhood playgrounds or parks availability for boys and students' academic performance were found significant and positive ($P=0.004$, $Tau-c=0.153$). Moreover, the results show that for all those students who secured A-1 grade, 62.9 percent agreed that in their neighbourhood play grounds or parks are available for girls, compared to 16.2 percent of those securing 1st Division, 9.2 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 14.8 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below.

The results of neighbourhood playgrounds or parks' availability for girls and students' academic performance were found highly significant and positive ($P=0.000$, $Tau-c=0.162$). Recreation through sports activities is another indicator of child wellbeing. Sports and leisure activities are a source of psychological relief to the children and provide them the required physical strength for a healthy life. Governments all over the world, therefore, plan residential areas to have sufficient spaces and facilities for sports and recreation while taking into consideration the requirements of each gender for this important need. In rural areas of Pakistan, like the study area, such recreational parks and sport grounds are not properly planned and children are found playing in fields or in streets. Furthermore, provision of sports grounds is unequal on the basis of gender, as the boys are found to avail outdoor sports activities and girls are restricted to indoor games due to prevailing cultural values. It is evident from these results that although leisure and sports facilities in the shape of parks and grounds were scarcely present in the study area, still those children with better access to these recreational facilities were found academically in the fore front.

In addition, 62.9 percent of the students who secured A-1 grade, reported that sports events take place in their neighbourhood for children, compared to 69.6 percent of those securing 1st Division, 55.4 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 31.8 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. Furthermore, a highly significant ($P=0.000$) and positive ($Tau-c=0.257$) association was detected between sports events taking place in neighbourhood for children and students' aca-

ademic performance. In addition, the results show that for all those students who secured A-1 grade, 51.4 percent agreed that in their neighbourhood various social activities were performed in community centres or *Hujra* for children socialisation, compared to 25.8 percent of those securing 1st Division, 13.8 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 25 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. The results of activities performed in community centres or *Hujra* for children socialisation and students' academic performance was found significant and positive ($P=0.001$, $Tau-c=0.111$). Being important in socialisation and personality building of children, sports, recreation, and other social welfare activities are intentionally arranged at the community level, as sports is important for the physical wellbeing of children. In addition, it is a source of releasing psychological emotions in sports grounds in a positive way. Rural traditions of the study area support sports and other child wellbeing related activities in the neighbourhood. Various sports tournaments especially football, cricket, wrestling (*Kabaddi*) and volleyball are organised by the youth and admired by society. In addition, the nomenclature of "*Hujra*" is the major social institution of rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This is not only the cultural decision-making institution for communities, but it also provides opportunities for the socialisation of children. Children are encouraged to come to *Hujra* and participate in social, cultural and community related events to familiarise themselves with the prevailing norms and know about the operating community system and mechanism of control. *Hujra* also create positive competition among the children as every member child tries to actively participate in *Hujra* to be praised and admired by the elders. Opportunities for physical and psychological wellbeing, as the positive test result shows, are a source of improvement of the academic performance of the children.

Neighbourhood Services and Children's Academic Performance (Controlling Gender of the Respondents)

Results in Table 4 disclosed that for all those male students who secured A-1 grade, 58.3 percent were highly satisfied from neighbourhood services, compared to 37.2 percent of those se-

Table 4: Association between neighbourhood services and children academic performance (Controlling gender of the respondents)

| Gender | Satisfaction from neighbourhood services | A-1 st Grade | 2 nd Division | 3 rd Division | Total Division and below | Statistics | χ^2 (P-Value) Tau-c | Level of significance for entire table |
|--------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|---|---|
| Male | High satisfaction | 7 (58.3) | 45 (37.2) | 13(33.3) | 15 (28.3) | 80 (35.6) | $\chi^2=4.159$ (0.245) Tau-c=0.116 | $\chi^2=28.381$ (0.000) Tau-c=0.222 |
| | Low satisfaction | 5 (41.7) | 76 (62.8) | 26(66.7) | 38 (71.7) | 145 (64.4) | | |
| | Total | 12(100) | 121 (100) | 39(100) | 53 (100) | 225 (100) | | |
| Female | High satisfaction | 19 (82.6) | 59 (42.4) | 6(23.1) | 7 (20) | 91 (40.8) | $\chi^2=26.450$ (0.000) Tau-c=0.319 | |
| | Low satisfaction | 4 (17.4) | 80 (57.6) | 20(76.9) | 28 (80) | 132 (59.2) | | |
| | Total | 23 (100) | 139 (100) | 26(100) | 35 (100) | 223 (100) | | |

curing 1st Division, 33.2 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 28.3 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. Likewise, for all those female students who secured A-1 grade, 82.6 percent were highly satisfied from neighbourhood services, compared to 42.4 percent of those securing 1st Division, 23.1 percent of those securing 2nd Division and 20 percent of those securing 3rd Division and below. The influence of neighbourhood services on academic performance of children in context of respondents' gender showed a positive (Tau-c=0.116) and non-significant association (P=0.245) in above mentioned variables for males. The association of the above said variables was also positive (Tau-c=0.319) and highly significant (P=0.000) for female respondents. Value of level of significance and Tau-c for entire table shows highly significant and positive (P=0.000 and Tau-c=0.222) association between satisfaction from neighbourhood services and academic performance for both genders. The differences in both chi square significance values and Tau-c test results for both male and female respondents exhibit spuriousness of the relationship between neighbourhood services and academic performance of children on the basis of their gender. It was illustrated by the study results that in a patriarchal society like that in the study area, male children are preferred over female and also male children have full access to all available benefits, resources and facilities, however, females have limited access. Therefore, under such a system, female children therefore, best efficiently and proactively utilise the available resources and facilities including health, educational, recreational with profound effects on their educational outcomes as compared to male children.

DISCUSSION

Neighbourhood educational, recreational and health facilities are essential for child wellbeing. Satisfactory and sufficient provision of these facilities in accessible reach of children has positive physical, psychological, social and educational outcomes, especially to children. Furthermore, cultural support to child welfare through their involvement in sports and other social activities at the community level helped prepare these children to acquire and smoothly transit their future responsibilities and creates more responsible behaviour in them towards their education. Living in poor rural neighbourhood has several disadvantages in terms of access to basic services. Children satisfied from these important aspects of life in their neighbourhood are more likely to concentrate on their education with some profound outcomes.

Living in the poor rural neighbourhood has several disadvantages in terms of access to basic services. Although the government has increased spending in basic education and health, yet these expenditures are far from the satisfactory level to meet the basic needs of the locality, as explained in the above results. Access to basic services is necessary for a satisfactory living in a certain area. Children satisfied with these important aspects of life in their neighbourhood are more likely to concentrate on their education with some profound outcomes. International researches on the issue also supported these results as Johnston et al. (2014) explained variation in the academic performance of children on the basis of neighbourhood characteristics and school quality. The author reported that children who grow up in dis-

advantaged neighbourhoods and attended low quality schools academically perform poorer (Perry and McConney 2010; Warren 2014). Gordon and Monastiriotis (2007) emphasise on proper choices of location selection for the priority is given to the establishment of quality schools at the neighbourhood, so as to save time and energies of the child's that are spent on traveling to distant schools. Moreover, provision of transport facilities for taking children to schools at distance posed additional economic burdens on parents and is still a source of time wastage in the way (Allen 2007). Furthermore, healthy children have fewer school problems as compared to unhealthy children. Healthy children were found to concentrate more concentrated in their studies, retained what they learned, and were regular and performed better in exams (Matingwina 2018). Access to health services in schools such as health education, counselling, healthy environment, recreational opportunities and nutrition services are linked with higher academic performance in children (Rasberry et al. 2015).

The study area, like all the rural areas in rest of the country, is patriarchal in nature with clear cut gender based segregation in gender roles, preferences by the division of labour in such patriarchal societies, a male is believed to be an asset for the family and ranks high on the social ladder than females. Males experience preferred treatment in all spheres of life than females, including sports activities. During the early age gender socialisation, the males are allocated the male gender tasks. Females have little or no access to these activities. Males, generally are involved in outdoor sports activities, therefore, playgrounds for male children although not sufficient in number, can be witnessed in rural areas. Sports activities for female are mostly indoors and to a little extent in the premises of their streets. By reaching puberty the female outdoor activities are strictly restricted, therefore, finding of a playground for females in rural areas is a black swan. The results mentioned above validate these facts that access to playground is limited for male respondents and rare for female respondents. Sports facilities, being the important recreational need of a child, if ignored in terms of poor access to playgrounds in the neighbourhood may have derogatory effects on children's education and their overall personality. These findings are in

line with Perry et al. (2000) who found in their psychological research on the link between play, brain development and enhancement in IQ level. In the playgrounds the children are found to be on the extreme of their freedom to play and express their emotions, and as a result the natural potential of the children is surfaced and polished. Furthermore, such children are higher ranked among their peers through their physical strength and mental capabilities while using games as a tool. The physical and psychological wellbeing of children through games have a strong link with the child's learning process (Hudson and Thompson 2001). Playing games in the playgrounds positively links with physical, mental and cognitive development of children along with creativity. Playing games in playground improves various skills in children, enhances school engagement and attachment with study (Ozdemir and Yilmaz 2008). Playgrounds and parks are the places used by children for physical activities or sports, which has a positive influence on children's wellbeing. Usage of playgrounds and parks depends on its accessibility, quality and facilities (Willenberg et al. 2009; Qazi 2013). Sports activities, once common in rural areas, are dwindling and near to extinction now. These sports activities were a source of cultural expression, skill exhibition, sportsmen spirit, psychological relief and economic wellbeing of the host and participatory communities. Although the rural areas in Pakistan are least benefited from the positive benefits of modernisation, the negative consequences of such development in terms of weak societal fabrics are most obvious. These areas once famous for their cultural festivals and *Hujras* (community centres) are entangled in spending excessive onscreen time. The role played by sports and *Hujras* (community centres) is shrinking with little interest of youth in these agents of socialisation. These results are supported by Brown and Massey (2001) that education is a tiresome event for the children and sports is a sigh of relief to their mind and a recharge for their learning process (Preuss and Solberg 2006). Singh et al. (2012) reported the relationship of physical activities, sports participation and students' academic performance. Participation in sports is positively associated with health and educational outcomes. Students who participate in sports have high cognitive skills and perform better academically (Qurban et al.

2018). Participation in sports improves the learning skills, reduce stress level and ultimately improve academic achievements (Kat 2017). Sports events, therefore, positively affect the physical and mental performance of children. Therefore, educationists and sociologists recommend sports activities both in school and in the neighbourhood (Schulenkorf and Edwards 2012).

Moreover, while assessing the association between neighbourhood services and children's academic performance on the basis students' gender, the differences in both chi square significance values and Tau-c test results for both male and female respondents' exhibit spuriousness of relationship between variables. It is obvious from the results that females are more advantageous in securing better academic grades due to better neighbourhood services whereas, the association for males was non-significant and weak. In a patriarchal society, like the one in the study area, the males are invested more in terms of their education and other elite facilities than females. It is a common observation that the son is preferred for better education over daughter. Their admission in a good quality institution is ensured even if these facilities are at distance. The same is the case with other facilities like health and recreation. On the other side, the females are on the disadvantaged side of this gendered based actualisation of facilities unless these facilities are provided at the doorstep. The results make it clear that academic performance of boys is a non-significant associate of neighbourhood services, as they can achieve these facilities by any means, even when these facilities are far away from the neighbourhood. The influence of neighbourhood characteristics on children's academic achievements is explained through the influence of a peer group in the neighbourhood, collective socialisation process and opportunities and services in the neighbourhood (Jencks and Mayer 1990). Lovasi et al. (2014) added that children experiencing a disadvantaged neighbourhood in terms of facilities and services achieve lower grades in intelligence tests. A poor neighbourhood influenced the academic performance of children negatively (Hanson et al. 2011). It was found that the negative academic and behavioural influence of a high poverty neighbourhood is much higher on boys than girls (Snell et al. 2013).

CONCLUSION

The present study assessed the neighbourhood services in the domain of children academic performance primarily with effects of student gender. The study concluded that, the neighbourhood is one of the basic agents of child socialisation within the micro level system, which directly influenced child development, specifically their educational outcomes. Consistent with above results, availability of services in the neighbourhood such as schools, health services, playgrounds or parks, and arrangement of socialisation activities in community centres or *Hujras* for children from both genders has significant and positive influence on children academic performance. Furthermore, the findings illustrated that respondents' gender explained variation in children academic performance with neighbourhood services. Therefore, girls with satisfactory neighbourhood services were more liable to score high grades in exams. In a patriarchal system the male children are preferred in all available benefits, resources and facilities over female children. Female children of such culture, therefore, best efficiently utilise the available educational, recreational and health related limited facilities with profound effects on their educational attainment as compared to male children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research study recommends that there is need of arrangements for development of residential areas through strategies for promoting safety, security, improving environment of trust, promotion of health, educational, recreational, transport, employment, welfare facilities, services that resultantly leads to better living standards of life. Arrangement of sports events in terms of sports competition, street theatres for children at community level could improve psychosocial health of children to help them in securing better educational outcomes.

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