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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Perceived Impact of Privatization on Quality Education: Educator's perspectives in Punjab

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Abstract: Privatization of public education is a debatable topic that has been widely discussed, but the evidence on its relationship with perceived educational quality is not clear, especially in South Asian contexts. This research explored the linkages between privatization and perceived quality of education among all educational professionals from public and private sectors in Lahore division and explored if such perceptions varied by profession. Data was collected from the 252 participants as government teachers, private teachers and education officers in four districts of Lahore division using a validated questionnaire instrument and with the help of survey design. Exploratory factor analysis, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression and one-way analysis of variance were used for data analysis. The results indicated that privatization was significantly and negatively related to perceived quality of education, and significantly predicted lower scores on perceived quality of education. Professional role had a significant influence on attitudes toward privatization and perceptions of the quality of education, with significant variations between private teachers and certain others with government roles. The results suggest that support for privatization may be a sign of unhappiness with public school systems rather than confidence that privatization will actually benefit students, and that policy makers need to hear from stakeholders with various professional roles individually, and not lump them together when formulating policies on privatization.

Keywords: Educator's Perception, Privatization, Public Schools, Quality Education

Introduction

Interventions in public services are widespread and significant. But these sectors are becoming more and more crowded with public and private providers competing in the same markets (Andrabi et al., 2024). Even if the effect of improvements in the public sector on productivity is less than that of improvements in the private sector, they can be cost-effective if they crowd in the private sector (Bold et al., 2013). Public and private providers, therefore, typically coexist, and public interventions can have an indirect effect on private education through competition and market responses channeled through the actions of public institutions (Andrabi et al., 2024).

This has led to the effective use of education resources being a key issue for policymakers and researchers. Educational efficiency, measured as the efficient use of resources in the production of learning outcomes, has become an important topic of discussion, especially in education systems of low resource levels (De Witte & López-Torres, 2017). Privatisation has become a policy strategy that has been increasingly embraced in recent decades for expanding educational provision to meet growing demand, but which it has been hoped will lead to greater efficiency or effectiveness (Rizvi, 2016).

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In many regions of the world, the role of private education has expanded, and some education players are promoting and investigating private education as a remedy for inadequate public education or failing public schools. Some educationalists are questioning this privatization strategy more and more because they have worries about the availability of free education, equality of educational chances, and quality of education. Teachers are the key pillars of the learning system. Their role not only ignores the classroom boundaries but also affects the educational experience of the students and, at the same time, determines the overall standard of the instruction being provided (UNESCO, 2020). Evidence of the effects of education privatization, whether favorable or unfavorable, on communities and individuals is absent from these discussions.

Several studies across many countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have found that low-fee private schools achieve higher test scores than government schools (Jimenez et al., 1991). Several researchers in India conclude there is a positive impact of the private sector on standardized test scores, albeit with significant variation in the magnitude of this effect, ranging from a large positive effect (French & Kingdon, 2010) a small private school advantage (Kumar & Choudhury, 2021), but at a substantially lower per-student cost. Singh (2013) reports that the raw differences in test scores between Indian children attending private and government schools are significantly in favour of private-school children in rural areas, but not in urban areas. Similarly, Chudgar and Quin (2012) discovered that the benefit provided by the private schools is greater in the rural areas of India as compared to the urban areas.

Millions of people all over the world do not have access to high-quality education because of such structural barriers as poverty, sex inequality, and insufficient infrastructure. Similarly to other countries, the state-funded schools in Pakistan have always played the role of the main access point of education. These governmental institutions have over the years been depended on to meet the educational needs of the citizens of the region, with the province of Punjab being the one with a sizable and heterogeneous population (Ravi, 2015).

Pakistan has been facing challenges in quality and access to education for decades. Several efforts have been made to address these two issues. However, the most famous solution in the past was privatization of schools. This phenomenon has come to the fore again with the government's proposed school privatization policy. Over the past few years, it has become evident that there has been a clear trend towards the education system becoming more and more privatised. This trend, influenced by multiple reasons, such as budget restrictions, demand for efficiency, and the prospect of financial gains. Created by improved quality, has posed many questions on the effects of privatisation on teachers, who are central to education system (Kanwal et al., 2023). A detailed strategy for the gradual privatization of all primary and secondary schools has been developed. Although the implementation process has already begun, the views of all educational professionals, including administrators and teachers from the public and private sectors, have not been addressed to allay their concerns (Knight, 2013).

In Pakistan, private education has existed since before the country gained its freedom. Prior to 1972, missionary schools catering to the wealthiest children controlled the private. Public education was formed in 1972 as a result of a wave of nationalization that dissuaded private attempts. However, this policy was changed in 1979 due to a shortage of public finance, and private schools reopened. The 1990s saw a dramatic increase in private enrollment (Andrabi et al., 2008) .

The current study aims to investigate the perspectives of the government employees and private teachers on the impact of the privatization process on the quality of education. The move by the government to privatize schools is based on the fact that the practice will improve accountability and resource allocation maximization, thus improving the standards of education. It assumes that education achievement will be encouraged by the development of positive competition. The private institutions, due to their relatively flexible management systems, are more likely to adopt the practice of innovation through acquiring the necessary resources and thus increasing the quality of teaching.

The current study is consequential since it investigates the impacts of outsourcing and privatisation of the public school system upon educational quality, taking into consideration the views of all the parties involved. However, a lack of solid evidence to prove that such privatisation efforts improve the standards of education is witnessed. The leaders in schools and teachers will be able to understand the issues and opportunities that outsourcing situations have to offer. Parents and the community will be better informed about the outcomes of privatisation on the educational opportunities of their children. Academically, the study provides a distinct gap as it will be the first to combine the views of many stakeholders. In general, the research provides the useful evidence to improve the quality of education by using evidence-based policy and practice.

The fourth sustainable development goal (SDG 4), Quality education, stresses the principles of inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education as well as facilitating lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. This is in line with the current study (Lee et al., 2016). The study adds to earlier research done on the mechanisms that affect the quality of education by examining the impacts of privatization on learning outcomes, teaching quality, and the performance of the institutions in the public schools.

Literature Review

The discussion of privatization of state-owned educational institutions is made in the light of various points of view and interests of various parties. In the community and business world, teachers are at the centre of creating the discourse of the educational policy and its practice. Privatization is often introduced to enhance oversight; understanding how school leaders navigate external accountability mechanisms provides important context for how these policies are experienced on the ground (Yousaf & Naseem, 2025).

The term 'privatisation' is often used to refer to 'the giving away of assets', management, duties or operations that the state previously performed or held for private parties. It occurs when any government body does not function properly, and the modern world believes that the current institutions are in dire need of privatisation to improve, especially in the field of education (Coomans & Hallo de Wolf, 2005).

Privatisation has had an uneven impact on the quality of education. Issues about equity, a decline in public investment, and worsening of the systems of public education remain, despite the fact that in most international studies, higher student achievement is recorded due to high levels of competition. Little empirical data on Pakistan is scattered, limited, and only related to enrolment patterns as opposed to issues of the effectiveness of instruction and learning performance in the state-run schools. Furthermore, there is still a lack of research on teachers' viewpoints and institutional performance (Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2015). In order to close these gaps, the current study offers empirical, context-specific data on how privatization affects public school education quality, with an emphasis on learning environments, student achievement, and teacher efficacy. The appalling state of the public school system is the reason this business is growing throughout the country (Kanwal et al., 2023)

Education ambitions are fundamentally reflected in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which is aimed at guaranteeing inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning for all by 2030 (Demirbağ & Sezgin, 2021). The roadmap for achieving the education objective, which was established in November 2015, advises governments around the world and private sector partners like Discovery Networks, Samsung, etc. on how to transform pledges into action (Marope, 2016).

Verger et al. (2016) cautiously note that the process of privatizing education tends to increase social inequality and undermine the integrity of a state education system. In the case of South Asia, the indicators are rather subtle. (Andrabi et al., 2025) note that the rate of test scores in private schools in Pakistan is much greater, but the schools largely rely on low-paid teachers. In the meantime, the results of (ASER-PAKISTAN, 2023) indicate that the results of public schools remain at a low level, despite the development of competitors who are not state-owned. At a closer level, Jabbar et al. (2019) they conclude that privatization has increased

the stress on publicly provided schools without necessarily improving their performance. Perceptions of teachers on how teachers perceive and experience these changes has profound implications for their job satisfaction and, ultimately, their ability to fulfill their roles effectively (Kanwal et. al., 2023).

In the Pakistani school context, school culture and institutional environments are heavily driven by administrative practices, where management style directly impacts overall school climate (Mumtaz et al., 2024). Understanding these existing cultural dynamics in public institutions is essential when evaluating how privatization policies alter school environments.

Privatization and Quality of Education

The advocacy of public-Private collaborations in the late 90s combined with a policy overhaul and subsequent approval to establish private schools, has served to give the private sector an enormous portion of the education market. Numerous studies have examined privatization in the education sector on various dimensions depending on the objectives of the study.

According to Yokoyama (2018) , privatization can be approached basically from a financial or organizational point of view, as it can be the government giving up an asset to a nonprofit or a private group, and it can be the nonprofits or private groups beginning to deliver services that were previously delivered by the government. It is about reconsidering government priorities and diffusing the boundaries between the public and private. Its area includes private school registration, public-private partnerships (PPPs), and offshoring of education facilities. It is seen as a failure in the functioning of any governmental organization and modern-day society. Some claim that privatization is the only possible means to change the current state of affairs of the institutions, especially the members of the education industry.

Quality education is the mega objective that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals place at the center stage. The United Nations established the 17 SDGs way back in 2015 in order to eliminate poverty and disseminate prosperity across the globe, particularly in the less developed worlds. SDG 4, in particular, addresses the idea of providing quality education to all. However, before discussing the entire quality-education issue, the initial move will be to understand what we are even talking about when we refer to related ideas. It is important to distinguish between the quality of education and quality in education, as they refer to the same concept, although there are certain nuances given that recent research highlights how educational connections become a reality (Touriñán López, 2022).

People discuss it in three primary ways: quality education, quality of education, and quality in education, and all of them represent the same thing which educators, scholars, and industry individuals are concerned about. However, the concept of quality education is not so clear-cut as Mufic (2022) it is claimed; it is simply presented in the set of guidelines that are evaluated by the local, regional, or national authorities.

Hamid et al. (2024) explored the perception of public and private teachers towards school privatization in Punjab. The current study is an extension of the previous studies and examines the link between perceived privatization and perceived educational quality along with a comparative analysis of perceived educational quality across various professional-role categories in selected districts of Lahore division. Educators' commitment and attitudes toward large-scale structural or policy changes in Punjab are closely linked to their existing institutional culture and professional roles (Azmat & Naseem, 2026). This explains why responses to privatization policies vary significantly across different educational sectors and roles (Hamid et al., 2024)

The literature reviewed indicates that privatization of education is a potential avenue for enhancing the quality of education due to its ability to increase efficiency and competition; yet, the effects are not always obvious in different contexts. Previous research has studied privatization in certain models, in terms of education levels or stakeholder groups, but there is little work that has explored the impact of privatization on the overall quality of education from a multi-stakeholder perspective. Thus, this study set to fill this gap and examine the effect of privatization on the quality of education in Lahore.

Theoretical Framework

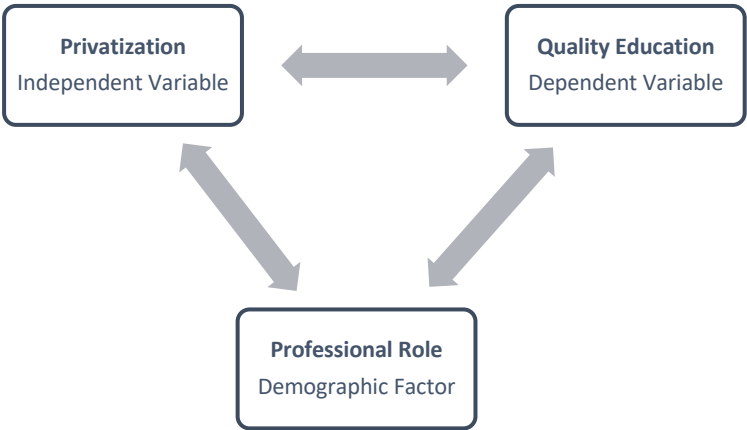
The research is grounded in Public Choice Theory presented by Buchanan and Tullock in 1962. This theory uses economic reasoning to analyze political and institutional decision-making and is applicable in the study of market dynamics in the education sector (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). In the educational sector, the theory assumes that the introduction of market-based approaches, including school choice and privatization, can radically change the resource management and operations patterns of the public schools.

In this theoretical concept, the growth of the number of privately run schools in the educational sector creates competition, which forces the public schools to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in operations. This theory assumes that this type of competition will lead to the implementation of new management and pedagogical strategies in the public schools to maintain their student bodies and achieve higher learning achievement (Balyer & Bayram, 2024). According to its proponents, when parents and students are given the choice between public and private institutions, schools are driven by market forces to improve their quality and performance. There are also limitations identified in the theory. The market forces can further widen the gap between the more successful individual institutions (the higher-performing ones) and the less efficient ones (the governmental ones), which makes the latter ineffective in the competition (Bennell, 2024). However, the Public Choice Theory provides a more balanced approach to the risks and benefits associated with educational privatization, especially in a developing educational industry like in the case of Pakistan.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains the theorized impact of privatization on the quality of education in state schools. According to the framework, the increased competition has an indirect impact on the operation of the public schools by adjusting institutional efficiency, accountability mechanisms, and resource allocation. Therefore, state schools will be able to adopt better management schemes, increase the effectiveness of teachers and improve the learning environment, as they compete with the privates. Such changes are likely to have a positive influence on the overall performance of the institution and student attainment, and eventually collectively reflect the quality of teaching in the state schools. Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study



Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The three research objectives of the study were to explore the impact of privatization from the viewpoint of Government and Private School teachers in Lahore division; to analyze the impact of privatization on the

educational quality in public schools; and to analyze the viewpoints of government school teachers and private school teachers about the effect of privatization on the quality of education.

On the basis of these three objectives, three null hypotheses were formulated.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between privatization and the overall quality of education in public schools.

H₀₂: Privatization does not significantly predict the overall quality of education in public schools

H₀₃: The professional role of respondents does not affect their attitude towards privatisation and their perception of the quality of education.

Methodology

The researchers used a quantitative research approach because numerical data was collected through a questionnaire about the perception of government and private teachers. It was a correlational research design to study the relationship between two variables: privatization and the quality of education. Additionally, respondents' professional role was examined as a demographic factor. The research paradigm for this study is positivism as the study is based on empirical data in the form of numbers also it allows for a pliant and problem-centered approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Population and Sample

The study was about the perception of teachers from government and private schools about quality of education and the privatization of schools in Punjab. The target population of this study was the teachers from Government and private schools from Lahore division. The sample of 252 teachers was selected through cluster sampling technique. The sampling frame consisted of the districts of Lahore division, and participants from Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura, and Kasur became part of the study, including both male and female.

Instrument

The researchers used an instrument that was developed by Hamid et al. (2024) for data collection in this study. Its reliability was assessed through Cronbach's alpha with values of 0.89 for privatization and 0.87 for the quality education for the current study. It was a structured questionnaire consisting of 22 items, using a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, which was appropriate for this study

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected electronically. The researchers used an online survey method for this study. A Google Form was created and circulated among all the teachers' WhatsApp groups. The study complied with high ethical principles. All participants were informed and gave their consent. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The participants could withdraw at any time without consequences.

Data Analysis and Results

The statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected using a structured questionnaire was conducted. Means and standard deviations as descriptive statistics were calculated to generalize the perceptions of respondents and define the general trends in the data set. Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to review the underlying structure of the questionnaire to ensure that the items actually tapped the constructs that the study was seeking to test, not assuming the questionnaire structure without testing. Along with EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used because they indicate whether the sample size and inter-item correlations are sufficient to produce meaningful and stable factor analysis results; if not, then the factor analysis will result in factors that are not reliable representations of the data. The internal consistency of the composite variables obtained was then examined with Cronbach's Alpha.

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to test H_{01} because this hypothesis focused on the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables (privatization and quality of education), which is a domain for the use of Pearson's product-moment correlation. The hypothesis of H_{02} was tested using simple linear regression because this hypothesis was not a correlation, but predicting the variance in quality of education, meaning there was a relationship, and regression also measures the direction of the relationship (β) and the extent (R^2). Lastly, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing H_{03} . In addition to each ANOVA, a Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance was performed to ensure the assumption of equal variances across groups was satisfied, and a Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test was also used to determine which groups differed significantly from each other.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In order to define the background traits of the participants, descriptive statistical methods were used to evaluate the socio-demographic factors. Gender, age, educational qualification, professional role, and district frequencies and percentages were computed. Table 1 provides the general picture of the sample structure, and makes it easier to comprehend the peculiarities of the participants who took part in the research.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	173	68.7%
	Male	75	29.8%
	Prefer not to say	4	1.6%
Age	25-30	61	24.2%
	30- 35	56	22.2%
	35-40	8	3.2%
	40-45	78	31.0%
	Above 45	49	19.4%
Education	F.A	11	4.4%
	B.A	36	14.3%
	M.A	124	49.2%
	MPhil/PhD	81	32.1%
Role	AEO/ DEO	7	2.8%
	EST/ SESE	39	15.5%
	Private Teacher	69	27.4%
	PST/ ESE	87	34.5%
	SST/ SSE	50	19.8%
City	Kasur	59	23.4%
	Lahore	129	51.2%
	Nakana Sahib	38	15.1%
	Sheikhupura	26	10.3%

N=252

Instrument Validation: Exploratory Factor Analysis

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the 22 item questionnaire, with Principal Axis Factoring with Promax (oblique) rotation. Factor analysis was performed and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were utilized to validate the appropriateness of the data.

Table 2*KMO and Bartlett's Test for Privatization and Quality Education*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig
.886	2561.351	231	.000

Table 2 shows that the KMO value was 0.886, which was greater than the recommended value of 0.60, which means that the sample size was sufficient for factor analysis. The correlations among the items were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) via Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and allow for further EFA. The total variance explained by the factors obtained by Principal Axis Factoring is presented in Table 3, where the eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained by each factor are given.

Table 3*Total Variance by Extracted Factors*

Factors	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.054	32.063	32.063
2	2.846	12.938	45.001
3	1.665	7.570	52.571
4	1.260	5.729	58.300
5	1.067	4.850	63.150

Table 3 shows that five factors were obtained which had eigenvalues above 1, accounting for a total variance of 63.15%. This means that the instrument validity was able to detect a relatively high percentage of the variation in respondents' perceptions on the dimensions obtained.

The rotated factor loadings (Pattern Matrix) are summarized in Table 4, which shows the factors that emerged, the number of items per factor and the range of the loadings.

Table 4*Rotated Factor Loadings of Instrument*

Item	Factor Loadings				
	1	2	3	4	5
n8	.918				
n13	.867				
n11	.819				
n7	-.802				
n17	-.594				
n12	.476				
n19	.417				
n15					
n14					
n2					
n6		.875			
n5		.824			
n3		.751			
n1		.743			
n4		.582			
n9			.918		
n10			.659		
n21				.728	
n20				-.505	
n18					.678
n22					.549

Table 4 shows factors 1 and 2, which corresponded with the two primary constructs of the study: Privatization and Quality of Education, and thus were then used in the computation of composite scores for the purposes of testing the hypotheses. Factors 3-5 were other dimensions of respondents' perceptions that were not included in the current hypotheses.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. The overall reliability of the complete instrument was acceptable. When the subscales were analyzed, the Privatization subscale (7 items) individually had excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$), and the Quality of Education subscale (5 items) also had excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.87$). Both were above the threshold of 0.70, indicating that the composite scores for subsequent hypothesis testing were valid measures of the constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between privatization and the overall quality of education in public schools.

Table 5

Pearson Correlation between privatization and quality education

		privatization	Quality education
Privatization	Pearson Correlation	1	-.308**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Quality Education	Pearson Correlation	-.308**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

Table 5 presents the results of the Pearson correlation between privatization and quality of education, which is statistically significant ($r = -0.308$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests a moderate negative correlation between attitudes towards privatisation and perceptions of the quality of public education: as a group with more positive attitudes towards privatisation, respondents were less positive about the quality of education currently provided in public schools, and vice versa. The results were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$; thus, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. The result indicates that support for privatization and satisfaction with the quality of existing public education are not independent of each other, but there is a meaningful and inverse relationship between the two for the respondents studied.

H₀₂: Privatization does not significantly predict the overall quality of education in public schools.

The combined regression analysis results are shown in Table 6, which comprises of the model summary, analysis of variance, and regression coefficients.

Table 6

Regression Model Summary for the Prediction of Quality Education by Privatization

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized β	t	p	df	F	R ²
Constant	5.280	0.400	—	13.195	.000	—	—	—
Privatization	-0.723	0.142	-0.308	-5.110	.000	250	26.110	0.095

According to the $\beta = -.308$ in Table 6, there is a significant negative and moderate relationship between the variables. The significance value indicates that the result has a significant effect and thus the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. The R^2 (.095) indicates that privatisation explains 9.5% of the variance, indicating that privatisation has a significant explanatory power for perceptions of the quality of education among the respondents in this study.

H₀₃: The professional role of respondents does not affect their attitude towards privatisation and their perception of the quality of education.

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Before analyzing the ANOVA results, Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance was checked to ensure the assumption of homogeneity of variance between groups was not violated. The results of Levene's Test are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance for Privatization and Quality Education by Professional Roles

Dependent Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	Df2	Sig.
Privatization	.628	4	247	.643
Quality Education	1.536	4	247	.192

Levene's Test for both privatization and quality of education was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), as indicated in Table 7. This indicated that homogeneity of variance was satisfied and thus the standard one-way ANOVA and Tukey's HSD post hoc test were used to proceed with further analysis. Table 8 presents the outcome of the one-way ANOVA test for differences among the professional role categories in privatization and quality of education.

Table 8

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Privatization and Quality of Education by Professional Roles

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Privatization	6.799	.000	.099
Quality Education	12.038	.000	.163

As presented in Table 8, professional role had a statistically significant effect on both privatization attitudes, $F(4, 247) = 6.799$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.099$, and quality of education perceptions, $F(4, 247) = 12.038$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.163$. The effect size for privatization was of moderate size, and the effect size for quality of education was large, suggesting that professional role explained a significant proportion of the variability in the respondents' perceptions of the quality of public education. Given that both results were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected, thus indicating that there was a meaningful difference in privatization attitudes and in perceptions of quality of education by respondents according to their professional role.

Tukey's HSD post hoc comparisons were performed to determine exactly which professional role groups were different. Only the pairwise comparisons that were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

Tukey's Post Hoc Comparisons of Significant Mean Differences by Professional Roles

Dependent Variable	(I) Role	(J) Role	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Privatization	AEO/ DEO	EST/ SESE	.499	.032*
Privatization	Private Teacher	PST/ ESE	.207	.020*
Privatization	Private Teacher	SST/ SSE	.284	.003*
Quality Education	EST/ SESE	Private Teacher	1.113	.000*
Quality Education	Private Teacher	PST/ ESE	-.885	.000*
Quality Education	Private Teacher	SST/ SSE	-.650	.002*

As indicated in Table 9, Private Teachers were significantly different from EST/SESE, PST/ESE, and SST/SSE role-holders in terms of their perceptions of the quality of education (all at $p < 0.05$), and from PST/ESE

and SST/SSE role-holders in attitudes toward privatization ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, significant differences were found between AEO/DEO and EST/SESE respondents on their attitudes towards privatization ($p = 0.032$).

In general, the results suggest that the views of Private Teachers are significantly different from those of several government role-holders in terms of their attitudes towards privatization and the quality of education, and that the role played by the occupational context within the education sector significantly influences stakeholders' perspectives on privatization and its impact on educational quality.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study revealed that privatisation was significantly and negatively associated with the quality of education. The more positive respondents' attitudes were toward privatization, the lower the ratings of the quality of public education. It implies that the respondents do not perceive privatization as an obvious way to enhance the quality of education. While the evidence from South Asia is mixed, privatization of education can help to exacerbate social inequalities and reduce the quality of a state education system, as warned by (Verger, 2016). How this adds to the picture is brought out by the present finding that, in the case of Punjab, the stakeholders themselves report that there is an inverse relationship between privatization and perceived quality.

This may be due to the real-life process of privatization. Privatization can come in various forms, as pointed out by (Yokoyama, 2018). It can involve the transfer of ownership from the government to a private or nonprofit organization, or it can involve only the transfer of services, with the government retaining ownership. The negative correlation may have been related to one of these forms without the respondents distinguishing clearly between the two, which is the reason they may have reacted to concerns related to either one of these forms. It also should be noted that the concepts of quality of education and quality in education are not synonymous (Tourinan Lopez, 2022). For Mufic (2022), the concept of good education is not easy to understand. It is frequently distilled into a checklist implemented by a local, regional, or national authority. This might account for some of the discovery. Even though there are official guidelines that suggest otherwise, respondents who support privatization may still feel that, in their own experience, quality has not improved as a result of privatization. From the perspective of Public Choice Theory, this is the result of individuals' perceptions of public policy shifts according to their own perspective and interests. It's a message to the schools that, for them, support of privatization does not equal perception of quality improvement. Quality should be assessed on a separate basis, with assessment measures that are meaningful to the educators.

The study showed that privatization has a significant negative prediction of the quality of education. Hence, some of the variance in the respondents' education quality perception was accounted for by privatization. It does not imply that privatization leads to poor quality. It indicates that in this data there is a statistical relationship between the two. This finding corresponds to (Verger, 2016) observation that the impacts of privatisation on education systems are uneven in some parts of the world, particularly in situations where evidence is inconclusive, such as in South Asia. It is also in line with Yokoyama (Yokoyama, 2018), who noted that privatization is not a simple process. Financial privatization and organizational privatization can impact schools differently; this is why respondents who predict lower quality might be focusing on one type of privatization, but not on privatization in general.

This result could also be due to the gap between guideline-based quality and lived quality, as described by (Mufic, 2022). If there is no correlation between official and teacher-staff quality measures, then support for privatization would not be a guarantee of greater reported quality, and might even be correlated with lower reported quality if privatization is perceived to be putting pressure on the school without improving the daily experience of teachers and staff. Public choice theory argues that institutional mechanisms influence the reactions to policy changes, as well as the policy itself. In practice, this should involve making clear quality

checks and accountability measures part of privatization plans rather than sacrificing classroom quality for the sake of efficiency.

The study revealed that there were significant differences between the views of privatisation and quality of education between professional roles. Several groups of government teachers had different opinions than private teachers. That is, different actors in the educational system have different understandings of privatisation and quality.

This is related to (Verger, 2016), who characterizes privatization as having socially uneven impacts. It is plausible that there are different positions in the system, and that different roles will have different experiences and views of privatization. The same principle applies as (Yokoyama, 2018) typologies of privatization. The effect of privatization on government and private teachers may vary from one to the other, depending on the extent of privatization, from simply a change in service delivery to a change in ownership, and their daily work conditions differ. This also supports the finding that quality of education is perceived differently by those who are evaluating it (Mufic, 2022). Private teachers are accountable based on different systems than government teachers are. The differences in oversight can influence the perception of the meaning of privatisation and quality for each group. The explanation is good in terms of public choice theory, which assumes that individuals make policy evaluations in relation to their own self-interest. This is the case for policy, as education authorities should not consider all the stakeholders as a single group. It is important that the various staff groups (government teachers, private teachers) are consulted separately to ensure that any issues specific to that role are considered.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. *First*, a cross-sectional survey was used to gather self-reported data for the study. As a result, rather than showing causal impacts, the results reflect teachers' perspectives and show connections and predictive linkages. *Second*, the study was limited to four districts in Punjab's Lahore Division, which may limit the findings' applicability to other Punjabi districts and other provinces. *Third*, a Google Form disseminated via the teachers' WhatsApp groups was used to gather data. Because teachers with little access to or involvement in digital platforms would have been less inclined to take part in the study, this online method of data collection may have created coverage bias.

Conclusion

This research examined the association between privatization and quality of education in public schools of Punjab and the difference in perceptions across professional groups. The results indicated that privatization had significant, negative, and predictive links to the quality of education and quality scores. The sense of belonging to a profession was also observed to have a significant impact on privatisation attitudes and quality perceptions. These findings are consistent with existing concerns in the literature about the mixed and ambiguous impact of privatisation, particularly in South Asia (Verger, 2016), as well as with the fact that the concept of quality education can have different connotations depending on the subject of evaluation and the perspective of the evaluator. The study contributes to the mixed findings in the literature and illustrates that the professional role indeed has an impact on perceptions of privatization.

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