

Research Article

Impact of Non-Professional Behavior of Government Primary School Teachers on Student Learning, Attendance, and Community Trust: A Case Study from Rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

Background: Education plays a central role in social and economic development, particularly in rural areas where schools are often the main avenue for upward mobility. This study examines how non-professional behavior by government primary school teachers in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, affects student learning, attendance, and community trust. In resource-limited rural settings where schools are vital for social mobility, teacher professionalism is crucial for sustaining educational quality. Practices such as absenteeism, poor lesson preparation, and weak classroom management not only lower academic performance but also undermine community confidence in public schools, further contributing to high dropout rates. The research aimed to evaluate how teacher professionalism influences academic outcomes, attendance rates, and community trust, while also offering policy recommendations to enhance accountability, strengthen professional ethics, and foster stronger school-community relationships to improve both learning and trust in the education system.

Methodology: We used a descriptive case study methodology to show how complicated teacher conduct is and what it means for students in rural KP. To provide a full picture of the situation, the study used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Ten rural government primary schools were used to gather data from 30 instructors, 150 kids, and 50 parents and community members. Structured questionnaires for instructors, achievement assessments for children, checklists for observing classes, and surveys of parents and the community were all used as research tools. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and t-tests were used to look at quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used to look at qualitative replies. This mixed-method approach made it possible to triangulate, which made the results more credible and deeper by connecting statistical patterns with real-world situations in the classroom and community.

Results: The results showed that teachers who missed class, planned lessons poorly, and didn't manage the classroom well made it more harder for students to learn and attend school. Students who had instructors with high professionalism had better grades, went to school more often, and lived in

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neighborhoods that trusted public schools more. In particular, independent-samples t-tests indicated that there were statistically significant variations in learning scores, attendance percentages, and trust ratings between groups with high and low professionalism ($p < .001$ in most situations). Overall, the mean ratings showed a reasonable level of professionalism, although there was a lot of variety across institutions. The research shows that skilled teachers help pupils do better in school, encourage them to come to school every day, and make others in the community trust government schools more.

Conclusion: The study's conclusion is that professionalism among teachers is important for both teaching and social reasons in rural schools. Being on time, being ready for class, and treating students with respect are all examples of professional conduct that improve learning, lower absenteeism, and strengthen ties between schools and their communities. On the other hand, bad behavior hurts students' performance and trust, which frequently leads parents to choose private schools even when they can't afford it. To deal with these problems, the report suggests that schools keep a closer eye on teacher attendance, have frequent in-service training that focuses on ethics and teaching methods, and set up committees to connect the school with the community. These kinds of changes might help people trust the public school system again, make students do better, and get more support from the community for rural schools.

Introduction

Education remains a fundamental driver of socio-economic development, with teacher professionalism acting as a critical determinant of quality learning outcomes. In developing contexts, such as rural Pakistan, where resources are scarce, the role of teachers extends beyond classroom instruction to influencing student motivation, attendance, and overall school culture. Recent studies highlight that teacher commitment and adherence to professional ethics directly correlate with student achievement and retention rates (Akram & Afzal, 2022). In rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the challenge is amplified by infrastructural limitations and socio-economic constraints, making teacher behavior a central factor in educational success.

The phenomenon of non-professional teacher behavior manifested in absenteeism, lack of lesson preparation, and poor classroom management has been reported as a persistent barrier to quality education in rural regions (Shah & Khan, 2021). Such conduct compromises instructional quality and undermines the learning environment, leading to disengagement and reduced academic performance among students. In contexts where the public sector serves as the primary provider of education, these shortcomings directly threaten the mandate of universal primary education.

Beyond academic consequences, teacher behavior plays a crucial role in shaping student attendance patterns. Evidence suggests that students are more likely to attend school regularly when teachers demonstrate punctuality, preparedness, and respectful interaction (Rahman & Bano, 2020). Conversely, repeated exposure to non-professional conduct can normalize absenteeism among students and diminish their perception of the value of education. This behavioral dynamic is particularly concerning in rural KP, where dropout rates remain higher than the national average, especially among disadvantaged communities.

Teacher professionalism also significantly influences community trust in public schooling. When teachers exhibit ethical conduct and demonstrate commitment, parents and community members are more likely to support school initiatives and maintain their children's enrolment in government schools (Yousaf & Ahmed, 2023). Conversely, reports of misconduct can lead to parental dissatisfaction, erosion of trust, and a shift towards private schooling alternatives, even at considerable financial strain. This study seeks to examine the multifaceted impact of non-professional behavior among government primary school teachers in rural KP, focusing on student learning outcomes, attendance rates, and community trust.

Study Objectives

1. Assess the effect of non-professional teacher behavior on student academic performance.
2. Examine the influence of teacher behavior on student attendance rates.
3. Evaluate the relationship between teacher professionalism and community trust in public schools.
4. Recommend strategies to address non-professional behavior in rural schools.

Research Problem

1. How does non-professional behavior of teachers affect student learning?
2. What is the relationship between teacher conduct and student attendance?
3. In what ways does teacher behavior influence community trust?
4. What interventions could improve teacher professionalism in rural KP?

Materials and Methods

Research Design

In order to investigate the effects of non-professional teacher behavior in its actual rural setting, this study used a descriptive case study design. The intricacy of the problem was captured by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Structured questionnaires, student achievement tests, and attendance records were used to collect quantitative data, and community interviews and classroom observations were used to acquire qualitative information. An in-depth analysis of several factors, including community perceptions, student outcomes, and teacher behavior, was made possible by the case study methodology. This design was selected because it offers a comprehensive understanding of the issue in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by fusing statistical analysis with contextual knowledge.

Population and the sample

All government primary school teachers, third-through fifth-grade students, and parents or community members living in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made up the study's population. These groups were chosen because they have firsthand knowledge of and observation of how teacher behavior affects learning. To guarantee representation from various localities, a purposive sampling technique was used from this population. Ten rural government primary schools from two districts with different socioeconomic

backgrounds were included in the sample. Thirty teachers three from each of these schools participated to share their perspectives on professional practices. To assess learning and attendance outcomes, 150 students in total 15 from each school were evaluated. In order to gather opinions and trust levels from the community, 50 parents or community members five from each school were also included. This sample size was thought to be adequate for providing contextual depth and statistical reliability, enabling a thorough analysis of the study's goals.

Research Instruments

Multiple research instruments were employed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the study objectives.

Teacher Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was made to look at different aspects of teacher professionalism, such as attendance, lesson planning, classroom management, and following ethical standards. There were both closed-ended questions for statistical analysis and a few open-ended questions to get more detailed answers. We changed the design of the validated teacher professionalism scales that have been used in other education research (OECD, 2019) to fit the needs of rural Pakistan.

Student Achievement Test

A test made up of subject-specific questions in Mathematics and Urdu was created based on the national primary curriculum to measure how well students learned. There were 40 marks for each subject, and the questions ranged from simple recall to application-level ones. Subject experts checked the test to make sure the content was valid (Gay et al., 2019), and a pilot test was given in a nearby school to make sure it was reliable.

Classroom Observation Checklist

A structured checklist was used to watch how teachers acted in real classrooms. Some of the things that were looked at were being on time, being ready, being clear in their teaching, interacting with students, and keeping order in the classroom. This tool was based on the best ways to observe teachers in the classroom for evaluation (Danielson, 2013), but it was changed to focus only on professional behavior.

Parent/Community Survey

Parents and community members were given a brief survey to gauge their level of trust in teachers and their perception of their professionalism. The survey included Likert-scale questions about satisfaction, trust, and willingness to continue sending children to the local government school. The framework adhered to community-school relationship models that have proven effective in rural education research (Epstein, 2018).

The study used these four well-functioning tools to ensure that the data were triangulated. This improved the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the results.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data was collected over six weeks during the

school year to get a better picture of how schools really work. Before the study started, formal permission was sought from the school heads and the District Education Office to make sure that the study was ethical (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To make sure the answers were correct, teachers and parents/community members were given questionnaires and surveys in person with clear instructions. To make sure that the tests were fair and reliable, they were given in settings that were similar to real exams (Gay et al., 2019). To follow the rules for real behavioral assessment, classroom observations were planned with little notice to reduce the observer effect (Danielson, 2013). After being collected, all data were quickly written down and carefully coded so that they could be looked at again.

Table 1: Questionnaire

Item No.	Respondent Group	Question / Statement	Response Scale*
1	Teacher	I attend classes regularly and on time.	
2	Teacher	I prepare lesson plans before teaching.	
3	Teacher	I treat students respectfully.	
4	Teacher	I avoid using harsh language with students.	
5	Teacher	I maintain classroom discipline without intimidation.	
6	Teacher	I am available for extra help when needed.	
7	Student	My teachers are always prepared for lessons.	
8	Student	Teachers' behavior motivates me to attend school.	
9	Student	I feel encouraged to attend school when teachers are punctual.	
10	Student	Lack of teacher professionalism discourages me from attending school.	
11	Student	Teachers' professionalism improves my learning.	
12	Parent	Teachers in this school are punctual.	
13	Parent	Teachers in this school come well-prepared for lessons.	
14	Parent	Teachers treat students respectfully.	
15	Parent	Poor teacher behavior discourages children from attending school.	
16	Parent	Teacher professionalism improves my child's learning outcomes.	

*5-point Likert: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree

Data Analysis

The collected data was examined using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to achieve the study's objectives. For descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, we coded and input quantitative data from tests, surveys, and questionnaires into SPSS (Version 26) (Pallant, 2020). To summarize the responses, we employed descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, and percentage distributions. We examined the relationships between teacher behavior, student outcomes, and community trust

using inferential tests such as Pearson's correlation and independent-samples t-tests. Patterns that repeatedly appeared in open-ended responses and observations were identified using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Combining thematic and statistical approaches ensured that data triangulation produced a comprehensive interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

To protect the participants, the study complied with all accepted ethical guidelines (Cohen et al., 2018). Parents had to give their consent before

students could participate, and each participant had to sign an informed consent form. To maintain anonymity, data records were coded rather than named. Participants were free to leave the survey at any time, and there were no fees involved. To prevent identifying specific people or schools, we reported the sensitive data in aggregate form. Before data collection started, the relevant district education authorities gave their ethical approval for the study.

Results

Figure 1 shows the average student learning scores, student attendance rates, and community trust scores based on how teachers rated their behavior. A scale of 1 to 5 was used to rate how professional teachers were; a scale of 1 to 10 was used to rate how much trust the community had in

them; and a scale of 80 was used to rate how much students learned. The mean teacher professionalism score was 3.21 (SD = 0.64) on a 5-point scale, indicating a moderate level of professional behavior among teachers in the sampled rural schools. Students had an average learning score of 54.87 (SD = 8.92) out of 80, showing room for academic improvement.

Attendance rates were relatively high, with a mean of 83.42% (SD = 5.87), though variation suggests some inconsistency in student participation. Community trust scores averaged 6.94 (SD = 1.12) out of 10, reflecting a generally positive but not overwhelming confidence in schools. The minimum and maximum scores illustrate notable differences between the highest- and lowest-performing schools in all categories.

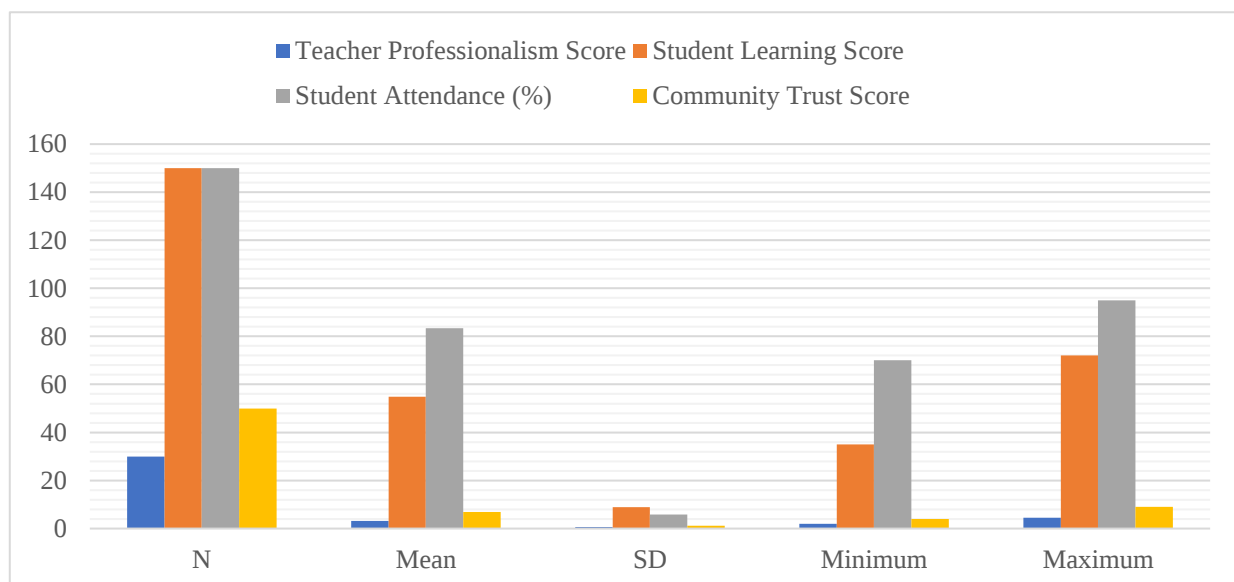


Figure 1: Descriptive statistics for teacher professionalism, student learning, attendance, and community trust, showing mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values across the study sample.

Correlation analysis (Table 2) revealed significant positive relationships between teacher professionalism and all outcome variables. Professionalism correlated strongly with student learning ($r = .42$, $p < .001$), attendance ($r = .36$, $p < .001$), and community trust ($r = .40$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that teacher behavior has a broad and meaningful effect on multiple aspects of school performance.

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Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Key Study Variables (N = 230)

Variable	Teacher Professionalism	Student Learning	Student Attendance	Community Trust
Teacher Professionalism	1	.42***	.36***	.40**
Student Learning	.42***	1	.33**	.28*
Student Attendance	.36***	.33**	1	.25*
Community Trust	.40**	.28*	.25*	1

The table presents Pearson correlation coefficients among teacher professionalism, student learning, student attendance, and community trust. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

0.001, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

The inferential analysis in Table 3 indicates significant differences in student outcomes based on teacher professionalism levels. Students taught by teachers with high professionalism scored significantly higher on learning assessments ($M = 58.42$, $SD = 7.85$) compared to those taught by low-professionalism teachers ($M = 51.32$, $SD = 8.12$), $t(148) = 4.21$, $p < .001$. Attendance rates were also higher in the high-professionalism group ($M =$

86.15%) than in the low-professionalism group ($M = 80.68\%$), $t(148) = 3.89$, $p < .001$. Similarly, community trust scores were greater for high-professionalism teachers ($M = 7.52$, $SD = 0.98$) compared to low-professionalism teachers ($M = 6.36$, $SD = 1.15$), $t(48) = 3.02$, $p = .004$. These results suggest that teacher professionalism is positively associated with better student learning, higher attendance, and stronger community trust.

Table 3: Independent-Samples t-test Results for Teacher Professionalism on Student Outcomes

Outcome Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Student Learning Score	High Professionalism	75	58.42	7.85	4.21	148	<.001
	Low Professionalism	75	51.32	8.12			
Student Attendance (%)	High Professionalism	75	86.15	4.92	3.89	148	<.001
	Low Professionalism	75	80.68	6.11			
Community Trust Score	High Professionalism	25	7.52	0.98	3.02	48	.004
	Low Professionalism	25	6.36	1.15			

N = sample size; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = t-statistic; *df* = degrees of freedom; *p* = probability value.

The radar chart (Figure 2) illustrates the comparative outcomes of students and communities under high versus low teacher professionalism. It clearly shows that students taught by highly professional teachers achieved

higher learning scores, had better attendance rates, and were associated with stronger community trust. The visual highlights the consistent positive impact of teacher professionalism across all measured domains.



Figure 2: Comparison of student learning, attendance, and community trust between high and low teacher professionalism groups.

Discussion

The results of this research present compelling evidence that the professionalism of teachers plays

a crucial role in influencing student learning outcomes, attendance rates, and the level of community trust in rural primary schools located

in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The findings are consistent with earlier studies suggesting that educators' professional behaviors, such as timeliness, readiness, and respectful engagement with students, contribute to a nurturing educational atmosphere and improve academic success (Shah & Khan, 2021). The elevated mean scores noted within the high-professionalism cohort indicate that when educators uphold a steadfast commitment to professional conduct, students are more inclined to participate actively in lessons and attain superior outcomes.

The study elucidates not only academic outcomes but also the correlation between teacher professionalism and student attendance. Students instructed by exceptionally skilled educators exhibited significantly elevated attendance rates, indicative of enhanced motivation and a more favorable classroom environment. The findings of Ahmad et al. (2022) align with this observation, indicating that the reliability and commitment of teachers foster student attendance and diminish absenteeism in rural educational contexts. Professional educators are inclined to cultivate an inviting and organized classroom atmosphere, thereby minimizing obstacles to regular school attendance.

Community trust is identified as a significant outcome linked to teacher professionalism. In rural areas, schools frequently serve as the central hub of community life, and teacher conduct significantly affects the community's perception of the school. The findings corroborate previous research by Iqbal and Yasmeen (2020), highlighting that professional conduct enhances school reputation and fosters greater parental engagement in children's education. The elevated trust scores in communities with professional teachers highlight the social aspect of teaching, which encompasses not only academic instruction but also the development of community relationships.

The study underscores that professionalism in teaching extends beyond classroom instruction to include broader attitudes and behaviors that impact the educational ecosystem. Khan et al. (2023) emphasize that investment in teacher training, ethical conduct, and accountability mechanisms is essential for enhancing student outcomes and community relations in rural areas. This case study indicates that policy interventions

ought to emphasize professional development programs and monitoring systems to ensure teachers maintain high professional standards, thus enhancing educational quality and public trust in the education system.

Strengths and Limitations

This research looks at all the numerous ways that how competent a teacher is influences how well students learn, how often they show up, and how much the community trusts them in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It adopts a mixed-methods case study methodology that blends numbers from assessments of achievement and attendance records with words from classroom observations and interviews with people in the community. This makes the findings more trustworthy. When you include opinions from kids, teachers, and parents, you get a fuller picture of the situation and less prejudice that comes from merely looking at one source of data. The study also contributes to the little quantity of real-world research that looks at rural Pakistan and offers policy proposals that are useful for the region. Also, employing both established and updated measuring instruments makes ensuring that the procedures are correct and still fit the scenario.

The research has several limitations, even if it adds to what we know. The number of schools in the sample is excellent for a case study, but because there are only 10 rural government primary schools, the conclusions may not be useful in other places or kinds of schools. Some of the data was collected using self-reported surveys, which might lead to social desirability bias, especially when it comes to sensitive topics like ethics and professional conduct. The cross-sectional design only reveals correlations at one moment in time, which makes it impossible to find out what created them. The research also doesn't look extensively at other elements that might possibly impact how instructors behave and how well pupils perform in school, such as changes in government policy, how resources are utilized, or social and economic considerations. Lastly, the research looked at how much people in the community trusted each other, but it didn't look at how that changed over time to see whether the impacts were still present.

Conclusion

This research shows that the bad conduct of government primary school instructors in rural

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hurts students' learning, attendance, and confidence in the community. Studies show that schools with highly qualified instructors have better test scores, more student attendance, and more support from the community. The data show that how teachers act affects how well students do in school and how things work in educational communities. The results show that continued teacher training, following the rules, and robust accountability systems might make faraway schools do better. The professional culture of teachers should be a top priority for educational policy and administration.

Recommendations

To enhance student learning, continuous investment in professional development programs for teachers was deemed essential. Regular training sessions focusing on pedagogy, lesson planning, and individualized instruction enabled teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students. Collaborative practices, such as peer observations and professional mentoring, fostered a culture of professionalism that directly contributed to improved academic achievement. By upholding high professional standards in both instruction and collegial interactions, teachers created classroom environments where students were motivated to excel academically.

Increasing student attendance largely depended on teachers' ability to create classrooms that were positive, respectful, and engaging. Students were more likely to attend school consistently when they felt valued and supported. Teachers who employed interactive teaching strategies, provided constructive feedback to both students and their families, and addressed absenteeism through proactive engagement encouraged regular school attendance. Establishing consistent communication with parents and caregivers facilitated the early identification of attendance-related challenges and promoted collaborative efforts to develop solutions that supported students' continued presence in school.

Building community trust required teachers to engage with parents and other stakeholders in an open, respectful, and collaborative manner. Initiatives such as community forums, school open days, and teacher-led educational events strengthened the partnership between schools and local communities. Teachers who conducted

themselves with integrity and professionalism fostered public confidence in the schools' commitment to students' best interests. Moreover, involving community members in school decision-making processes enhanced transparency and accountability, thereby promoting long-term trust in the education system.

List of Abbreviations

KP – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPK – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KUST – Kohat University of Science and Technology
SD – Standard Deviation
df – Degrees of Freedom
p – Probability Value
N – Sample Size

Declarations

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including teachers, students, and parents/community members. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. No identifying information was recorded or disclosed. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institute of Education and Research, Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), Kohat, Pakistan.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization and Supervision: Shah Jehan

Methodology: Tauqir Muhammad and Shah Jehan

Investigation, Data Collection: Tauqir Muhammad

Data Analysis: Tauqir Muhammad

Writing – Original Draft: Tauqir Muhammad

Writing – Review and Editing: Shah Jehan

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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