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Changing Parental Perceptions Adding Value to School Improvement Processes in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan



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Abstract

Parental perceptions and perspectives play a critical role in their motivation, interest, participation, and valuation of children's education which ultimately influences the quality of education in schools. This article reports the change of perception and perspectives of the parents under the influence of a comprehensive school improvement intervention. A quantitative survey approach was employed in this study including 680 parents from 6 districts. The data was collected in two rounds following the pre- and post- intervention approach. The first round of data was collected at the beginning of the project and the second round was collected at its end. The paired sample t-test showed significant difference between pre- and post-intervention responses of parents about improved relationships between the school and the parents ($p < 0.000$), increased co-curricular activities in the school ($p < 0.000$), fulfillment of students' educational curriculum requirements ($p < 0.000$), the provision of equal attention to both boys and girls ($p < 0.002$), the obligation of the parents to ensure the physical and moral development of their children ($p < 0.000$), the provision of a safe, healthy, and educational environment at home by the parents ($p < 0.000$), and the development and maintenance of positivity expressed by parents for the success of their children ($p < 0.000$). Hence, the study found that a planned intervention has the potential to positively change the perceptions, perspectives, and valuation of children's academic development.

Introduction

When leadership traits of an individual are discerned, their inextricable relationship to the education process is undeniable. Teachers and academic administrators have long been heralded as fundamental in the development of successful pupils. However, one key element has largely been understudied: the role of parents in the success of the academic process.

This article reports the key insights from a cluster-based school improvement initiative targeting, inter alia, the development of and progression in parent perceptions and perspectives related to their children's education in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Parental perceptions concerning academic issues play a vital role in the level of parents' willingness and motivation to engage in processes related to their children's education (Ball, 2014). When parents feel that the school is welcoming them and find interactions with teachers congenial, there is a greater propensity for them to participate in day-to-day school issues (Baker et al., 2016). Other factors such as school safety and support for parents also contribute to parent participation in education (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). In fact, this observation seems truer in case of marginalized communities. When parents receive respect from school administrators and are provided a forum through which their

opinions are heard, they are more likely to participate in the academic process (Baker et al., 2016; Reynolds et al., 2015).

There is a plethora of research exploring the relationship between parental perceptions about schools and their children's academic achievement. For instance, in cases where parents have shown a positive perception about the school where their children attend, the achievement scores of these same children were higher (Catalano, et al., 2004; Ladd & Dinella, 2009). Several studies have recommended the inclusion of parental perceptions in the overall assessment of schools. They believe that parental perceptions can provide the necessary foundation by which to comprehensively understand the entirety of school life as meaningful and complete family engagement is the key component of all school improvement (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006). In this regard, Metso (2004) highlighted a very interesting aspect of parental perception and their motivation to participate in academic development. The forgoing study provides insights that most parents tend to compare their children's school with their own schooling in the past. Based on this comparison, parents develop perceptions and parameters for evaluating the current school system. Hence, they develop their perceptions based on their comparison which guides them in their participation and engagement in their children's academic development. Therefore, the role of parental perceptions and perspectives play a critical role for their direct involvement and participation in their children's education which ultimately influences the quality of education in schools.

This study was part of a comprehensive, integrated, and consortium-based school improvement project known as the Educational Development and Improvement Program (EDIP). This EDIP project followed a cluster approach for school improvement. Each cluster consisted of a centrally-located secondary school as the learning resource school (LRS) and three feeding schools as the units of change and development. The educationally-related component of EDIP Project was implemented by a school-based change facilitator, who worked with the managing or head teachers, the rank-and-file teachers, the parents, and the local level institutions (LLIs) such as the school management committees (SMC) and the mother support groups (MSGs). The EDIP school improvement model benefited from the research work and school improvement interventions across the globe (e.g., Shachar, Gavin & Shlomo, 2009; Datnow & Castelano, 2001; Ertesvag, 2014), gaining key insights on instructional methods, community involvement, organizational structures of the schools, overall management and governance, and the physical and educational environment of the individual schools.

This EDIP Project aimed at “enhancing access, equity and quality of education with increased gender parity, participation and sustainability of community participation,” so that the overall socioeconomic development in the region is supported. The specific objectives of the EDIP project were:

- Enhancing gender parity and increasing children's access to education in targeted clusters;
- Improving quality and relevance of education in targeted clusters; and
- Strengthening governance and management of the Department of Education (DoE) in targeted districts.

The EDIP model of school improvement, implemented in Gilgit-Baltistan, focused on working with various stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and school management committees

(SMCs) to achieve programmatic goals. Frequent formal and informal interactions with the EDIP stakeholders aimed at positively influencing school communities' (i.e., parents', teachers' and SMCs') perceptions and perspectives about education. Therefore, this study investigated school communities' (i.e., teachers', parents', and SMCs') perceptions and perspectives related to their children's education and explored how these perceptions and perspectives were influenced by the AusAID-sponsored Educational Development and Improvement (EDIP) project implemented within the government schools in Gilgit-Baltistan. As parents' worldviews, perceptions and attitudes towards education shape their intrinsic motivation to support their children's education, it was important to have deeper understanding and insight of school communities' perceptions of education. The study partly determined the success of the EDIP project in facilitating the formation and reformation of school communities' perceptions and perspectives concerning their children's education, and shared context-specific insight for policy formulation and project analysis and planning. Therefore, the major question of this study concerned the extent of and the manner in which the EDIP project influenced the school communities' (i.e., parents', teachers', and SMCs') perceptions and perspectives about their children's education in Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. However, due to the richness and abundance of data related to different stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, and school committees) emerging from the study, we only present in this article the findings illustrating the change of perceptions and perspectives in the school parents.

Literature Review

Parental Involvement

Many research studies across the globe note the significance of parental engagement and participation for children's success in their academic endeavors in schools (Sheppard, 2009). It has been explored that the students whose parents are actively involved in the education of their children perform much better in their academic achievements than the children whose parents are passive in the educational development of their children (Daniel, 2011). A meaningful parental involvement in their children's educational processes can add significant value in improving home-school relationships, children's positive development, and their overall success in school (Bunting, et al., 2013). The parental involvement is all about building a positive teamwork strategy between parents and schools to collectively work for generating a positive, safe, supportive, and nurturing school environment (Berkowitz et al., 2015; Berkowitz, Moore, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2016; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

Types of Parental Involvement

The nature and types of parental participation and involvement is multi-dimensional. Parents can contribute by volunteering at school functions and events, develop a continuous and positive communication channel with schools, assist their children in homework, and participate actively and regularly in teacher-parent meetings (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Stewart, 2008). By actively participating in school education in the above areas, parents can significantly contribute to raising the learning outcomes of their children, cultivating a caring and responsive school environment (Arnold, et al., 2008; Houtenville & Conway, 2008).

Amaral and Ford (2005) divided parental involvement into two main categories: the school-centered parental involvement and home-centered parental involvement. They instruct that

school-centered parental involvement consists of activities like participating as teacher helpers, assisting in social and service events in schools, and attending meetings. The home-centered involvement consists of activities, like helping with the children's homework as well as providing balanced food to, and fostering constructive relationships with, children and teachers.

Fisher's (2016) study draws examines activity focus and organizational activities. The first facet of parental activity focus is further bifurcated into two components: the "within" and "without" school activities. The "within" school focus refers to "all school activities that parents could be involved in and are performed within the school's geographical borders, while an outside-school focus refers to all school activities that parents could be involved in and are performed outside the school's geographical borders, i.e., at the child's home or anywhere else except the school" (p. 458). The second facet is also divided into two components of student-level activities and organizational-level activities. "Organizational-level activities encompass a wider spectrum, since they are not targeted solely towards one's own child. They are directed towards the school as a whole, as an organization" (p. 458). These facets are primarily related to improvement of school resources, control, pedagogy, school wellbeing, and school welfare. According to Fisher, "parental involvement in schools reflects a broad spectrum of parental actions and activities focused on various issues and conducted within and outside school grounds. Involvement can be expressed actively or passively, in the context of school as an organization and in the context of the parent's individual child" (p. 462).

Epstein et al. (2009) developed a famous model of parent participation which was extensively viewed and reviewed in the intellectual milieu across the globe. This model has been widely referred to in the literature by many researchers on parental participation. Epstein et al. (2009) proposed the following six basic types of parental involvement:

Type 1, parenting: This type of involvement focuses on helping the families to establish a learning and learner friendly environment at home to support the children as students.

Type 2, communicating: This type of involvement is mostly focused on developing a trusted communication channel between parents and schools about children's progress and the initiatives taken by schools.

Type 3, volunteering: This type of involvement refers to the mobilization of the community volunteers and synergize their efforts to support the schools and the students for education. The volunteers mostly come from the parent community who participate in school and community events related to education.

Type 4, learning at home: This type of involvement refers to the efforts made to help the families develop child learning environment at home by helping them in homework and extracurricular activities.

Type 5, decision-making: This type of involvement refers to the involvement of families in the decision-making of schools through a body of parent leaders and representatives.

Type 6, collaborating with the community: This type of involvement refers to the identification and integration of resources and services from the community to strengthen the school programs.

According to Epstein et al. (2009), “When parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work” (p. 9). In a nutshell, the provision of a safe, healthy, and learning-oriented environment at home and developing a constructive home-school relationship are the most important aspects of parental involvement. This parental involvement is, at its best, when it is viewed as a partnership between educators and parents (Epstein et al., 2009; Emeagwali, 2009).

The contemporary literature on parental involvement in developing context mostly concerns helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, and taking part in school governance (Grace, Jethro, & Aina, 2012; Rafiq et al., 2013). In Cambodia, Eng, Szmodis and Mulsow (2014) explored the critical contextual factors for parental participation. These factors were religious-related beliefs in fatalism and gender-role attitudes. Therefore, they argued that parents’ participation in their children’s education requires not just physical resources, but also the value they place on educational achievement.

Research Design

In this research, an effort was made to study the change in stakeholders’ perceptions and perspectives regarding the education of their children before and after the EDIP intervention. Therefore, a pre- and post-test survey method was employed without a control group. The data were collected in two rounds: the first round of data collection took place at the initial stages of the project and the second round took place towards the end. Due to the remoteness and socio-cultural diversity of the mountainous terrain of the context, it was very difficult to find and manage control schools with similar dynamics, thereby establishing the unavailability of control group as the main limitation of this study. Hence, all changes observed in the perception and perspectives of the parents cannot be claimed as a result of the EDIP intervention, however, due to the rigorous interaction with the parents for a period of four years, it can safely be said that EDIP intervention has a dominant role in the change of perception and perspectives of the parent community.

The survey questionnaires were intended to gauge parents’ perceptions and perspectives in the forty-eight schools organized in twelve clusters of the EDIP project in Gilgit-Baltistan. Each of the clusters, consisting of four schools (i.e., one learning resource school (LRS) and three feeding units) were included which was a substantial population to qualify for an exclusive quantitative method allowing a larger sample size. The survey method enabled the study to reach out to the sample parents in all the 48 EDIP project schools to explore the outcomes of the perceptions and perspectives in quantitative terms.

In order to measure the perceptions and perspectives of parent community on children’s education, a sample (n=744) was recruited from school-parent population (N=7,426) of which 48 EDIP target schools in Gilgit-Baltistan were selected for the research. Altogether, there were 12 LRSs and 36 feeding unit schools in the EDIP project. Therefore, out of the total population, (N=7,426), a quota of 20 parents as a sample was allocated for each learning resource school, while a quota of 14 parents was allocated for each of the feeding unit schools.

The research team developed a specifically designed questionnaire for this survey. The parents’ questionnaire intended to gather data about the awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children, the level of satisfaction with the educational processes in their children’s schools, and their level of participation in the

educational processes of their children – both at home and school in relation to the objectives of the EDIP project. Prior to piloting, the instrument was presented to some experts in the field of education for content validity assessment. These experts included practitioners and scholars from AKU-IED and the participating schools. The questionnaires were then piloted with a group of parents. After the final comments and feedback from experts from AKU-IED and the piloting participants were received, the instrument was improved and administered in the field for data collection.

We anticipated that the majority of the samples – particularly the parents – would experience difficulty in reading, comprehending, and filling in the questionnaires because of the low level of literacy in the region. Therefore, these questionnaires were administered by a team of data collectors. Furthermore, the researchers closely supervised the tools administration by data collectors in the field to ensure the richness and accuracy of the data. Due to the nature and focus of the study, a substantial amount of data was gathered during the data collection phase. After the proper organization, the quantitative questionnaires were analyzed with the help of statistical procedures such as SPSS. A paired samples t-test was employed to indicate the change of perceptions and perspectives of the parents before and after the EDIP intervention. The Aga Khan University, being a research-oriented institution, has an ethical consideration protocol to safeguard the interests of the research participants. The proposal of this study went through all the required procedures of the university and all the ethical consideration protocols were strictly followed throughout the process of the study.

Data Analysis

The data used in this analysis have been gathered from 680 parents across the six project targeted districts of Gilgit-Baltistan Pakistan. These districts are Gilgit, Ghizar, Astore, Hunza-Nagir, Skardu and the Ghanchi. In terms of their qualifications, the largest number of respondents (50.4 %) were illiterate followed by (14.9%) having received a primary-level education. 12.4% had middle-school qualifications and 11.5% of the parents had attained the level of matric. An almost six percent (5.9%) segment of parents were at an intermediate qualification and 4% were graduates.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Sample

		Name of District						
		Gilgit	Ghizar	Astore	Hunza-Nagir	Skardu	Ghanchi	Total
		Column n%	Column n%	Column n %	Column n %	Column n%	Column n %	Column n %
Educational Qualification of the Parents	Illiterate	42.6%	50.4%	59.6%	50.0%	45.5%	54.3%	50.4%
	Primary	14.8%	20.3%	10.1%	10.5%	23.6%	9.5%	14.9%
	Middle	14.8%	9.8%	11.9%	8.8%	15.5%	13.8%	12.4%
	Matric	13.9%	13.0%	9.2%	14.9%	8.2%	9.5%	11.5%
	Intermediate	6.5%	3.3%	4.6%	8.8%	3.6%	8.6%	5.9%
	Graduate	5.6%	3.3%	4.6%	5.3%	2.7%	2.6%	4.0%
	Post Graduate	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	.9%	1.7%	1.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The lowest number (1%) of the sample parents are post-graduates. The highest number of illiterate sample parents (59.6%) came from Astore districts and the lowest (42.6%) came from Gilgit districts. Likewise, the highest number of parents with primary education (23.6%) came from Skardu district and the lowest (9.5%) are from Ghanche district. The 15.5% respondent sample from district Skardu constituted the highest number of parents with middle qualification and the lowest (8.8%) in this qualification category are from Hunza-Nagir district. Likewise, the highest number of parents with matric education (14.9%) came from Hunza-Nagir district and the lowest (9.2%) are from Astore district.

General Awareness

The first part of the study was about the general awareness of the parents regarding the education of their children. The statements were focused on the importance of children's education and their access to the school, precautionary measures at the school in case of natural disaster, admission of special children in school, the parent's role in their children's education, the parent's role in children's homework, and the parent's role in the personality development of children. In order to gauge improvement in parents' views, six companions were made, and all were found to be significant except for the role of parents in the homework of their children.

Table 2.1: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Importance of education and access to school.	.182	1.006	.039	.107	.258	4.726	679	.000
Pair 2	Precautionary measures at the school in case of natural disaster.	.313	1.184	.045	.224	.402	6.897	679	.000
Pair 3	Admission of special children in the school.	.116	1.291	.050	.019	.213	2.346	679	.019
Pair 4	Parents' role in children's education at home.	.224	1.084	.042	.142	.305	5.377	679	.000
Pair 5	Parents' role in homework of their children.	.057	1.047	.040	-.022	.136	1.428	679	.154
Pair 6	Parents' role in the personality development of a child.	-.860	1.059	.041	-.940	-.781	21.181	679	.000

The paired sample t-test showed significant difference between pre and post responses about the importance of child education and children's access to school ($p < 0.001$); precautionary measures at the school in case of natural disaster ($p < 0.000$), admission of special children in school ($p < 0.019$), parents' role in children's education ($p < 0.000$), and parents' role in the personality development of a child ($p < 0.000$). Parents' views in post intervention responses demonstrated more progressive perspectives on a rating scale about the education of their children as compared to their responses before the intervention.

Table 2.2: Fixed Responses of Parents about the General Awareness of the Parents Regarding the Education and the School of their Children

Aspect	Not at all		To some extent Aware		Aware		Fully Aware	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Importance of education and access to school.	9%	3%	45%	38%	38%	53%	8%	6%
Precautionary measures at the school in case of natural disaster.	50%	27%	31%	46%	15%	24%	4%	3%
Admission of special children in the school.	35%	26%	35%	39%	22%	31%	8%	5%
Parents' role in children's education at home.	3%	2%	39%	23%	40%	52%	18%	23%
Parents' role in homework of their children.	2%	2%	28%	23%	49%	52%	21%	23%
Parents' role in the personality development of a child.	1%	2%	30%	21%	48%	51%	21%	26%

Parent's Perception about the Visible Changes in the School Environment

The second part of the study concerned the visible changes in the school environment. This section had fourteen statements about the visible changes that had been observed by the parents in the schooling of their children. These statements regarded improving the student's strength in the school, cleanliness among children, student efforts in their own education, the pedagogical practices of the teachers, regularity and sense of responsibility among the teachers, and the increased number of teachers in schools. The statements also focused on establishment of SMC and their improved performances, updated furniture and other facilities in the school, relationships between the school and the parents, co-curricular activities in the school, the educational environment within the classrooms throughout the school generally, the interest of the education department in the school, and the provision of library resources in the school. All of the fourteen paired comparisons between pre- and post-responses were found to

Table 3.1: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Increased student strength in the school.	.345	1.053	.040	.265	.424	8.530	678	.000
Pair 2	Improved cleanliness among children.	.290	.902	.035	.222	.358	8.379	679	.000
Pair 3	Improved student efforts in their education.	.843	1.123	.043	.758	.927	19.568	679	.000
Pair 4	Increased number of teachers in the school.	.287	1.180	.045	.198	.376	6.338	679	.000

Pair 5	Improved regularity and sense of responsibility among teachers.	.491	1.141	.044	.405	.577	11.226	679	.000
Pair 6	Improved teaching practices of the teachers.	.262	1.078	.041	.181	.343	6.331	679	.000
Pair 7	Establishment of SMC and their improved performances.	.402	1.251	.048	.308	.496	8.374	678	.000
Pair 8	Increased furniture and other facilities in the school.	.475	1.119	.043	.391	.559	11.073	679	.000
Pair 9	Improved efforts for quality of education in the school.	.382	1.034	.040	.304	.460	9.639	679	.000
Pair 10	Improved relationships between the school and the parents.	.150	1.042	.040	.072	.228	3.755	679	.000
Pair 11	Increased co-curricular activities in the school.	.443	1.031	.040	.365	.520	11.196	679	.000
Pair 12	Improved educational environment in classrooms and in the school.	.518	1.109	.043	.434	.601	12.167	679	.000
Pair 13	Improved interest of the education department in school.	.337	1.047	.040	.258	.416	8.390	679	.000
Pair 14	Establishment of library and books in the school.	.384	1.019	.039	.308	.461	9.825	678	.000

The paired sample t-test between the responses of pre- and post-intervention phases, indicate a significant difference for increased student strength in the school ($p < 0.000$), improved cleanliness among children ($p < 0.000$), improved student efforts in their education ($p < 0.000$) and increased number of teachers in the school ($p < 0.000$). In addition, the t-test between the responses of pre- and post-intervention phases, indicate a significant difference for improved regularity and sense of responsibility among the teachers ($p < 0.000$), improved teaching practices of the teachers ($p < 0.000$), establishment of SMC and their improved performances ($p < 0.001$) and increased furniture and other facilities in the school ($p < 0.000$). The t-test also indicates a significant difference for improved efforts for quality of education in the school ($p < 0.001$), improved relationships between the school and the parents ($p < 0.000$), increased co-curricular activities in the school ($p < 0.000$), improved educational environment in the classrooms and the school ($p < 0.000$), improved interest of the education department in the school ($p < 0.000$) and for establishment of library and books in the school ($p < 0.000$). Hence, significant difference between pre- and post-intervention responses were observed for all the fourteen statements.

Parents' views in post-intervention responses showed more progressive perception and perspectives about the education of their children as compared to their responses before the intervention. The following is the comparison of response trends between pre- and post-interventions.

Table 3.2: Fixed Responses of Parents About Their Perception Related to the Visible Changes in School Environment

Statements/Objectives	Not at all		To some extent Visible		Visible		Strongly visible	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post

Increased student strength in the school.	18%	1%	30%	29%	45%	61%	8%	8%
Improved cleanliness among children.	6%	0%	29%	13%	53%	73%	12%	14%
Improved student efforts in their education.	8%	0%	30%	23%	51%	66%	12%	11%
Increased number of teachers in the school.	22%	6%	37%	39%	33%	48%	9%	8%
Improved regularity and sense of responsibility among teachers.	15%	2%	32%	23%	46%	62%	8%	13%
Improved teaching practices of the teachers.	12%	2%	32%	30%	47%	56%	9%	12%
Establishment of SMC and their improved performances.	35%	8%	28%	42%	29%	44%	8%	7%
Increased furniture and other facilities in the school.	30%	5%	38%	38%	26%	52%	6%	5%
Improved efforts for quality of education in the school.	13%	1%	36%	24%	44%	64%	7%	10%
Improved relationships between the school and the parents.	12%	4%	41%	41%	41%	50%	7%	6%
Increased co-curricular activities in the school.	22%	3%	43%	37%	31%	54%	4%	5%
Improved educational environment in the classrooms and the school.	23%	1%	35%	28%	34%	62%	9%	9%
Improved interest of the education department in school.	36%	8%	39%	61%	22%	29%	3%	3%
Establishment of library and books in the school.	73%	44%	20%	38%	6%	17%	1%	1%

Parent's Perspectives about the Educational Processes of their Children

This section had nine statements about parental perspectives related to the educational processes involving their children. These declarations describe the parents' responsibility for the educational development and success of their children, the provision of a friendly environment at home, the fulfillment of the educational requirements of the children, providing equal attention to both boys and girls, and ensuring the physical and moral development of their children. The statements are also focused on the parental contributions to the environmental development at both the locality and village levels, the role of illiterate members of the family within the children's educational environment, and the impact of a positive attitude by the parents with respect to child education and success. Similarly, all of the nine paired comparisons between pre- and post-responses were found to be significant.

Table 4.1: Paired Samples Test

Pair	Items	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower			

Pair 1	Parents are mainly responsible for the educational development and success of the children.	.135	1.010	.039	.059	.212	3.496	678	.001
Pair 2	For the success of the children, with the efforts in the school a friendly environment at home is important.	.219	.952	.037	.148	.291	6.007	678	.000
Pair 3	Parents are mainly responsible for the fulfillment of the educational requirement of the children.	.219	.952	.037	.148	.291	6.007	678	.000
Pair 4	It is important for the parents to provide equal attention to both boys and girls.	.109	.917	.035	.040	.178	3.097	678	.002
Pair 5	It is the obligation of the parents to ensure the physical and moral development of their children.	.169	.937	.036	.099	.240	4.709	678	.000
Pair 6	The illiterate members of the family can also contribute to the educational development of the children.	.128	.991	.038	.053	.203	3.369	678	.001
Pair 7	Parents should contribute in the environmental development at locality and village levels.	.253	.943	.036	.182	.324	7.003	678	.000
Pair 8	With the school, parents should provide a safe, healthy and educational environment at home.	.302	.924	.035	.232	.372	8.512	678	.000
Pair 9	The positive attitude by the parents towards the children plays a vital role in their success.	.225	.890	.034	.158	.292	6.600	678	.000

The paired sample t-test between the responses of pre- and post-intervention phases, indicates a significant difference for parent's responsibility for the educational development and success of their children ($p < 0.001$), for a friendly environment at home ($p < 0.000$), for the fulfillment of the educational requirements by the children ($p < 0.000$), and by providing equal attention to both boys and girls ($p < 0.002$). The t-test between the responses of pre- and post-intervention phases also indicates a significant difference for the obligation of the parents to ensure the physical and moral development of their children ($p < 0.000$), for the parents' contribution to the school in terms of physical and financial resources ($p < 0.001$), for the parents' contribution to the environmental development within the locality and the village levels ($p < 0.000$), for the provision of a safe, healthy, and educational environment at home by the parents ($p < 0.000$), and for the role of a positive attitude exhibited by the parents concerning the success of their children ($p < 0.000$). Hence, as shown in *Table 4.2*, only one statement did not show a significant difference between pre- and post-intervention responses. However, it indicates change of perception and perspectives between their pre- and post-intervention responses.

The views of the parents in post-intervention responses showed more progressive perception and perspectives about the education of their children as compared to their responses before the intervention. The following is the comparison of response trends between pre- and post-interventions for the above nine comparisons.

Table 4.2: Fixed Responses of Parents about their Perception Related to the Educational Processes of their Children

Statements/Objectives	Disagree		To Some Extent Agree		Fully Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Parents are mainly responsible for the educational development and success of the children.	1%	0%	18%	12%	44%	42%	38%	45%
For the success of the children, with the efforts in the school a friendly environment at home is important.	0%	0%	17%	8%	51%	48%	32%	44%
Parents are mainly responsible for the fulfillment of the educational requirement of the children.	0%	0%	12%	7%	44%	33%	43%	60%
It is important for the parents to provide equal attention to both boys and girls.	1%	0%	9%	5%	29%	26%	61%	68%
It is the obligation of the parents to ensure the physical and moral development of their children.	0%	0%	16%	10%	51%	47%	32%	42%
Parents should contribute in the environmental development at locality and village levels.	1%	0%	27%	17%	57%	55%	15%	29%
The illiterate members of the family can also contribute to the educational development of the children.	3%	2%	32%	31%	55%	54%	10%	13%
With the school, parents should provide a safe, healthy and educational environment at home.	1%	0%	25%	10%	58%	59%	16%	31%
The positive attitude by the parents towards the children plays a vital role in their success.	1%	0%	8%	4%	28%	15%	63%	80%

Contact of Teachers and Headteacher with the Parents

A question was included for the parents on how many times do the headteachers and teachers contact them to share the progress of their children. This question was included to explore the progression of the parents-teacher interactions during the EDIP intervention. As shown in table 2.6, the paired sample t- test did not indicate a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses yet the trends of the percentages reflect that the respondent parents are gradually shifting to the option of the collective responsibility of parents and teachers for the education of the children.

Table 5.1: Fixed Responses of Parents on How Many Times the Head Teacher and Teachers Contact You to Share the Progress of Your Children

District	Never		Once a year		Twice a year		Every three months		Monthly	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Gilgit	25.0%	18.5%	6.5%	13.0%	12.0%	13.0%	16.7%	28.7%	39.8%	26.9%
Ghizar	16.4%	17.9%	9.8%	5.7%	9.8%	2.4%	23.0%	21.1%	41.0%	52.8%
Astore	19.3%	14.7%	9.2%	7.3%	22.0%	6.4%	19.3%	29.4%	30.3%	42.2%
Hunza-Nagar	12.3%	11.4%	7.9%	4.4%	15.8%	12.3%	24.6%	25.4%	39.5%	46.5%
Skardu	11.8%	9.1%	8.2%	9.1%	14.5%	7.3%	25.5%	18.2%	40.0%	56.4%
Ghanche	21.6%	6.0%	10.3%	5.2%	12.9%	16.4%	20.7%	24.1%	34.5%	48.3%
Total	17.7%	12.9%	8.7%	7.4%	14.4%	9.6%	21.6%	24.4%	37.6%	45.7%

Discussion and Findings

As mentioned above, EDIP intervention was specifically focused on enhancing parental participation in the schools and at homes to aid child education through a series of capacity building and community mobilization for the parenting community. The EDIP approach used for the project was, in fact, aligned with the propositions coming from Russell and Kim (2007) who argued:

The goal of schools should be to persuade parents to participate in the activities that schools identify as important to the degree that teachers and students begin to notice a difference. The goal could be implemented through several means: (a) workshops focusing on the benefits of parent involvement and those parent behaviors that are the most important ones provided by the community or school, (b) brochures or pamphlets sent homes informing parents about parent involvement, and (c) talks with parents about involvement during parent-teacher conferences (p. 367).

As a result of these interventions, the data indicated a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses of parents about the importance of child education and their access to school, taking precautionary measures at schools in case of any natural disasters, and the parent's role in child education and personality development. This finding is in line with Goldring and Rowley (2006) who noted that parents were most concerned with the discipline and safety of their children in schools. This finding can be linked to Pride (2002) who explored school violence and child safety as a major concern for parents. A good parenting plan was found to be instrumental for children's good behavior in classrooms (Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 2005). Hence, the data reveal that the EDIP has been able to positively influence the perceptions and perspectives in raising parents' general awareness levels about schools and education of their children.

The results of this study explored parents' concerns for the academic processes as well as the curriculum and quality of instruction in schools. The data indicate a significant difference between participants' pre- and post-intervention responses for improved student efforts in their education and the increased number of teachers in schools. Also, a significant difference between participants' pre- and post-intervention responses were observed in improved regularity and sense of responsibility among the teachers, improved teaching practices of the teachers, and improved efforts for quality of education in the schools. These results are closely aligned with Goldring and Rowley (2006) who noted that parents were most concerned with

the academic standard of the curriculum and the effectiveness of instruction. Many other researchers have explored that parent participation for child education is mostly focused on student performance in standardized tests (Gibbons & Silva, 2011) performance of students in subject-specific courses such as reading and mathematics (Friedel et al., 2007) and parental involvement helps the children to achieve higher grades and higher average scores (Chen & Gregory, 2009).

The data supporting this study also indicated a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses of the participants about the collective responsibility of parents and the teachers for the education of children and improved relationships between schools and parents. In the pre-intervention phase, some of the respondent parents felt that parents and teachers are equally responsible for their children's education, however, in the post-intervention phase majority of the parents considered their children's education as a collective responsibility of parents and teachers. Hence, the data revealed that the EDIP has been able to positively influence the perceptions and perspectives of the parents about parent-teacher relationship and the collective responsibility of parents and teachers for their children's education.

This finding is in line with Deslandes and Bertrand (2005) who proposed some measures for enhancing parental involvement in schools. They give high priority to the parent-teacher relationships. They argued that, "The findings call attention to the value of personal teacher-parent contacts for building trusting relationships that will be manifested subsequently by parent involvement activities at school and by other forms of parents' willingness to help" (p.173). Many other researchers have considered this teacher-parent relationship as a predictor for parent satisfaction with schools, as well as participation in parent-teacher meetings and home-school communication (Fantuzzo, Perry, & Childs, 2006; Meier & Lemmer, 2015). In this study, a good number of parents (37.6%) claimed that teachers and headteachers contacted them on monthly basis to share progress of their children and the responses in this category further increased to 45.7% in the post-intervention phase. This progressive trend from pre- to post-intervention is observed in five districts of Gilgit-Baltistan except Gilgit where the responses in this category decreased to 26.9% as compared to the 39.8% of the pre-intervention phase. However, a noticeable change is observed in the responses of the qualification categories of matric, intermediate, graduation, and post-graduation.

In the pre-intervention phase, a good number of parents (35.9%) of the matric qualification category claimed that the teachers and the headteacher monthly contacted them to share the progress of their children and the responses in this grouping increased to 50% in the post-intervention phase. In the qualification category of intermediate, a solid number of parents (30%) claimed that they have been contacted monthly by the teachers and the headteacher to share the progress of their children and the responses in this grouping increased to 47.5% in the post-intervention phase. In the qualification category of graduation, a substantial number of the parents (44.4%) claimed that they have been contacted monthly by the teachers and the headteacher to share the progress of their children and the responses in this grouping increased to 63% in the post-intervention phase. Though the t-test did not indicate a significant difference between the responses of the pre- and post-intervention phase, the trends of the percentages reflect that parents are acknowledging the increasing contacts made by the teachers to share the progress of their children. According to Meier and

Lemmer (2018), “Parents who did voice their opinions were generally satisfied with the school culture in that they felt welcome at the school, teachers who excelled were commended by name, and parents generally reported that teachers were generally amenable to and accessible for consultation...Most parents commented favorably on communication between home and school, referring especially to the electronic and duplicate hard-copy media... Parents’ ability and desire to ensure that they get their money’s worth in terms of quality delivered by the school in its processes and products, which must finally amount to a worthwhile school-going experience for their children...classroom discipline, the quality of classroom instruction and the academic standard of the curriculum are parents’ foremost concerns” (pp. 12-13).

A significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses of the participants were also observed for the establishment of library sources in schools, updated furniture and other facilities in schools, improved cleanliness among children, increased co-curricular activities in schools, and improved educational environment in classrooms and schools. These findings are closely aligned with Friedman, Bobrowski, and Geraci (2006) who claimed that the availability and improvement of resources in schools are the indicator of parental satisfaction.

The data also indicated a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses of the participants concerning a friendly environment at home, the fulfillment of the educational requirements of the children, and providing equal attention to both boys and girls. Also, a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses of participants were observed in the obligation of the parents to ensure the physical and moral development of their children, for the parents’ contribution to schools in terms of physical and financial resources, and for the parents’ contribution to the environmental development at locality and village levels. Likewise, a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention responses of the participants were also observed with respect to a healthy and educational environment at home by the parents and for the role of a positive attitude by the parents to the success of children. These findings are in line with Deslandes and Bertrand (2005) who suggested specific approach for enhancing parental involvement at home.

According to them, “if the objective of the school interventions is to enhance parent involvement at home, the findings suggest the need to work directly with adolescents. That effort could be undertaken by (a) sensitizing adolescents on the importance of their inviting parents to become involved at home and by (b) coaching them on how to involve a family member in homework, discussions, or other tasks” (p.172). They also suggested parenting education in this regard and suggested that, “parent education programs should enhance parents’ skills and self-efficacy. Parents should be aware of the importance of sustained parent-adolescent communication about schooling, and career and work planning over time. Parents could regularly attend workshops or meetings (e.g., parenting classes) to increase their parenting skills and their knowledge of different types of parent involvement, including less intensive involvement” (p. 172). Hence, the data reveal that the EDIP has been able to positively influence the perception and thinking of parents about the educational processes of their children at home.

Conclusion

A key conclusion that can be safely drawn from the findings of this study is that the carefully planned and implemented educational interventions can change the perceptions and

perspectives of parents and communities about the education of their children in schools. It could be due largely to their lack of education, exposure, and awareness that the rural and mountainous communities often hold their views, beliefs, and perspectives dearer and closer to their hearts, i.e., mostly demonstrating inflexibility and resistance to change their worldviews. However, parents' exposure to learning opportunities including their interaction with educators, capacity building opportunities tailored for them, and the parent-teacher meetings, help them review and question their understanding and views, which lead them to develop, alter, and/or change their existing perspectives.

The AKFP and AKU-IED/PDCN implemented EDIP project employed the cluster- and consortium-based school improvement model that had community mobilization, specifically parent involvement in the educational processes of their children, at its heart. It is worth noting that the EDIP model considered school communities and parents as valuable partners in the processes of school improvement, hence, exhibiting increasing respect for parents' views, their peculiar cultural aspects and their contributions, irrespective of their form, magnitude and scale, to school improvement. The project, in fact, made historical breakthroughs by making inroads to some of the highly inaccessible and resistant-to-change communities for the first time, extending to them support for improvement of teaching and learning processes in schools. The final evaluation of EDIP, conducted by external consultants, highlighted "renewing hope" as one of the key EDIP achievements. The following excerpt from the Final EDIP Evaluation might substantiate the claim of the project renewing hope of the marginalized communities in Gilgit-Baltistan:

The most dramatic change was experienced in Diamer where local level institutions (LLIs) either did not exist or were mostly dormant. The project played a key role in creating or resuscitating SMCs in the district. This is illustrated by the following quote from an SMC member in Govt Boys High School Chilas who said: "PDCN has opened our eyes. We have replaced the gun with the pen (Rafiq Jaffer, EDIP Final Evaluation, July 2015)

In sum, the EDIP intervention facilitated and resulted in significant change in parents' perceptions and perspectives. Amongst the numerous other domains, this shift was unambiguously tangible in parents' general awareness about the importance and need of education, their sense of responsibility in children's education, their perception of providing support to children at home, the need to provide children essential resources to facilitate their education, and the importance of parent-teacher and home-school relationships.

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