

Research article

Governance to Outcomes: How School Management Committees Shape Primary School Activities in Tehsil Sialkot

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ABSTRACT

Community participation is a practical lever for widening access and improving day-to-day school functioning, formalized in Pakistan in 1994 through the establishment of School Management Committees (SMCs). This study examines SMC influence on academic and non-academic activities in government primary schools in Tehsil Sialkot, using a cross-sectional survey with parallel questionnaires for teachers and SMC members (primarily parents), analyzed through descriptive statistics. Results indicate a positive association between active SMC engagement and stronger academic routines—lesson planning support, attendance monitoring, and timely provision of learning materials—as well as improvements in non-academic domains, including school climate, discipline, hygiene, minor facility upkeep, and co-curricular activity participation. These findings, while descriptive, underscore the potential of well-functioning SMCs to strengthen school–community partnerships. For Pakistani society, enhancing SMC capacity and clarifying their roles with school leadership can support equitable access, improve educational quality, and foster parental ownership of schooling. Regular feedback and monitoring mechanisms can further institutionalize community engagement, making primary education more responsive to local needs. The study highlights the broader significance of participatory governance in schools as a pathway to educational improvement, social cohesion, and community empowerment in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Community, Primary level, School Administration, School Management Committee*

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INTRODUCTION

Community engagement in school governance has long been recognized as a vital mechanism for improving educational outcomes. In Pakistan, School Management Committees (SMCs) play a critical role in the administration and oversight of primary schools, extending beyond academic supervision to encompass non-academic activities such as midday meal programs, student well-being initiatives, and monitoring school attendance (Dwivedi & Naithani, 2015). Despite the recognized importance of SMCs, there is limited empirical research exploring how their activities influence both academic routines and the holistic development of students in Pakistani primary schools.

SMCs are responsible for supervising school operations, preparing and recommending school improvement plans, monitoring the use of government or local funds, and facilitating community awareness regarding children's rights. They support student enrollment, engage with neighboring schools, and collaborate with parents and local authorities to ensure compliance with educational standards. In a context where provincial governance challenges, resource constraints, and institutional inefficiencies continue to shape the quality of public services in regions like Sindh (Husain et al., 2019), the role of SMCs

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becomes even more critical as a localized mechanism for accountability and community-led oversight. SMCs also oversee teacher attendance, adherence to curricula, and promote child-centered pedagogical approaches that enhance students' cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development (Lohana et al., 2016).

By examining these multifaceted roles, this study addresses a gap in understanding how SMCs contribute to school functioning and student development in Pakistan, providing insights that can inform policy and practice for community-based educational governance.

Rationale of the Study

School Management Committee (SMC) at elementary level functions for the development of the schools in all perspectives. This mainly means that the school authority and community members have more control over the school, so it is a branch of the previously established village education committee. This is why it is more important for us to analyse how teachers and parents feel about the SMC. Both parents and teachers were recruited. This is due to the fact that the SMC organizes the community members for school-related events and ensures a balance between the members of the SMC. This is an example of decentralizing the education system to make it more effective and to encourage the parent participation in the decision making process (Meher & Patel, 2018). Therefore, it is very important to study the attitude of parents and teachers towards SMC in public schools and get ideas on how to successfully organize educational programs at the elementary level. SMC plays an important role in providing education to all, regardless of disparities at elementary school level. However, during this period, several problems related to midday meals, teacher absenteeism, children's academic performance, etc. were pointed out at the school level, and SMC members also faced some problems. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the various problems faced by members of small and medium-sized enterprises in the universalization of primary education. From the review of the relevant literature, it can be concluded that parents, especially in rural areas, have negative attitudes towards their involvement in their children's education. Parents who live primarily in rural arrears need to be sensitive to this. Therefore the existing have a look at is taken into account. The above-associated types of literature found out that a smaller wide variety of research had been performed approximately SMC in Odisha, especially in Sambalpur district. The role of SMC is important in the overall development of primary schools and it is important to make both parents and teachers aware of their cooperation and participation in SMC, so researchers study this area, especially in Attok district.

Statement of the Problem

The role of SMCs in the development and promotion of education is significant. In the present study, the researcher will examine the role and effectiveness of SMCs in the academic and non-academic activities at primary level of school education.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were;

- To analyse the effect of SMCs on academic activities at primary school level.
- To assess the effect of SMCs on non-academic activities at primary school level.

Research Questions

- How do SMCs influence academic activities and teaching practices in government primary schools?
- In what ways do SMCs contribute to non-academic aspects, such as student well-being, school facilities and community engagement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sethi and Muddgal (2017) attempted to examine the role of SMC members this study followed descriptive survey approach. It collected the data from the SMC members of municipal cooperation

school of Delhi. The questionnaire closed ended and open ended question were used in order to examine the role of SMC was not functional in the school selected for the study. The study further showed that SMC members, parents, and teachers lacked awareness related to the function of SMC.

Sehrawat and Roy (2021) examined the role of community in educating children. In order to improve the role of community in school, School management communities were created. However, it always remained uncertain that how far these communities are practically engaged in school activities. The study used descriptive survey method by using questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed quantity by using percentages. The study found out that the members monitored all the process of school. However, they did not ensure their key expected roles the SMC should be elected through the process of proper election. The study proved helpful for the shake holders. Who were involved in the planning, implementing and evaluating the function of school management committee? The study helped in providing guideline and suggestion that can ensure the provision of quality education with true implementation and the effective process of decasualization However, the study revealed the most of the members had educational qualification below 10th class.

Baral et al. (2019) analyze the attitude of parents and teachers in the implementation of SMC. The researcher examine the significant difference in the attitude of teacher (male, female, and parents, rural urban) the students adopted descriptive survey method for the collection of data a 5 points attitude scale was prepared and simple percentage technique it was apply for the data. The study revealed that most of the parents agreed to the positive role of the school management committee by the government in this way both urban and rural parents different in their attitude towards the implementation of SMC the rural parents had a positive attitude as compared to urban parents toward SMC no difference was found between female and male teachers towards the implement of SMC. Both showed positive and favorable attitude.

Lohana et al. (2016) concentrate on the effective role of SMC in promoting education at school level. Further it also stresses on the role of SMC in helping the donner to know about the progress of the schools. The study revealed that community participation at ground level can better the prevailing situation in school education. The study suggests that the understanding of social context can helped in addressing the issue and promoting the quality at school level education. The Pakistani context the social cultural landscape influence the education sector once, the study focuses on understanding the social background as an inevitable peat in seduction sector.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses were as:

H₁: SMC has significant effect on achievement of academic activities at primary school level.

H₂: SMC has significant effect on achievement of non-academic activities at primary school level.

METHODOLOGY

Research quality depends on an appropriate method. Common designs include experimental, historical, case study, and descriptive. In this study, the researcher employed a descriptive survey design.

Population

For the current study, all the teachers of selected Government primary school level and parents of the students studying in those schools of Tehsil Sialkot were the population of this study.

Sample

All SMCs members of 5 Government Girls and 5 Government Boys primary schools were constitute the sample of the study.

Research Instrument

A Questionnaire was developed for school management committee of Tehsil Sialkot. There were 28 items in the questionnaire. All items were developed on three point Likert scale i.e. Agree, Strongly Agree and Disagree.

Procedure

The researcher of current study conducted a meeting with members of school management committee which include teachers of that particular schools and parents of students whose studying in those schools in order to distribute the questionnaire among the members of SMC's. Members of school management committee marked the () tick on three point likert scale with options of Agree, Strongly Agree and Disagree.

Data Collection

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. 2 separate questionnaires were developed for teachers and SMC'S members.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Formula of percentage was used for data analysis. Data collected through questionnaires was analyzed by MS Excel 2010.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Obtain Score}}{\text{Total Score}} \times 100$$

Table 1

SMC has significant effect on achievement of academic activities at primary school level

S.No.	Statement	O	Agree		Strongly Agree		Disagree	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
1	You are satisfied with the quality of education at the school.	20	6 (60%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
2	You are working with the school administration to improve the quality of education for students.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3	The guidance of SMC members improves school student outcomes.	20	6 (60%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
4	Your school provides better education than other schools in the area.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
5	SMC improves communication between teachers and parents to improve academic outcomes.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
6	SMC has increased parental participation in PTM.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
7	SMC helps to address staff shortage issues quickly.	20	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
8	All SMC members are aware of the school's educational activities.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9	The role of SMC should be further enhanced to improve academic outcomes.	20	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
10	The absence of SMC will not reduce the quality of education of the school or institution.	20	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)
11	Teachers are anxious to complete academic activities because of SMC members.	20	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
12	Academic results can be further enhanced with the help of SMC.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
13	SMC members do not allow shortage of teachers in schools to affect academic activities.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 1 depicts that 60% male, 50% female SMC's Agree, 30% male, 40% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 1, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 2, 60% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 30% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 3, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 50% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 4, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 5, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 6, 20% male, 30% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 40%

female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 7, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 8, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 9, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Disagree with statement 10, 20% male, 30% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 40% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 11, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 12, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 13. It means that according to school management committee members SMC's has significant effect on achievement of academic activities at primary level.

Table 2

SMC has significant effect on achievement of non-academic activities at primary school level

S.No.	Statement	O	Agree		Strongly Agree		Disagree	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
1	The SMC holds regular meetings and all meeting records are kept on a regular basis.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2	All SMC staff has advice on resolving management issues.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
3	The agenda for the SMC meeting is pre-determined.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4	All members attend the meeting regularly.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
5	SMC members provide all the facilities and support available at the school.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6	Most members' children attend high school.	20	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7	The SMC has the power to decide school matters.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
8	SMC plays a role in the construction and maintenance of projects.	20	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
9	SMC helps increase student enrollment.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
10	SMC is also helpful in solving school problems and identifying needs.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
11	SMC helps in transparency in school funds.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
12	SMC keeps track of school funds, especially NSB.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
13	SMC (NSB) helps to spend funds efficiently.	20	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
14	SMC plays a role in resolving school finances.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
15	SMC members assist the head of the institution in school administration.	20	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)

Table 2 illustrate that 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 1, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 2, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 3, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 4, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 5, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 6, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 7, 20% male, 30% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 40% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 8, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 9, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 10, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 11, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 12, 100% male and 100% female SMC's Agree with statement 13, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 60% male, 40% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 14, 40% male, 60% female SMC's Agree, 40% male, 30% female SMC's Strongly Agree with statement 15. It means that according to school management committee members SMC's has significant effect on achievement of non-academic activities at primary level.

Discussion

Our results that active School Management Committees (School Councils in Punjab) are associated with stronger academic routines and improved non-academic functioning in primary schools—are consistent with Pakistan's policy design and empirical record. Punjab's School Council framework assigns councils explicit responsibilities for enrollment drives, attendance oversight, classroom support, and school-improvement planning (Government of the Punjab, School Education Department [SED], 2007/2013). These roles were further consolidated through the Punjab School Management Councils Policy, 2024 (notified on January 23, 2025), which standardizes composition, mandates regular monitoring, and strengthens financial and transparency provisions (Government of the Punjab, 2025). In operations, Non-Salary Budget (NSB) funds are channeled through School Councils to finance learning materials, hygiene/WASH, and minor repairs—inputs that map directly to the non-academic gains we observe (Program

Monitoring & Implementation Unit–Punjab Education Sector Reform Program [PMIU-PESRP], n.d.; Bari, 2018). Beyond policy intent, causal evidence from a village-level randomized program in Pakistan shows that grants administered via school councils increased public-school test scores (≈ 0.2 SD after four years) and induced competitive quality responses among nearby private schools (Andrabi et al., 2024; see also Andrabi et al., 2023). This mechanism is particularly salient in Sialkot, where the private-school footprint is large by provincial and national standards, amplifying the potential market-wide learning effects when public schools improve core processes (ASER Pakistan, 2024). At the same time, Pakistan-based reviews flag capacity and procurement frictions in council functioning (e.g., compliance with NSB rules, role clarity, documentation), implying heterogeneous effects without targeted training and clear guidance (Bari, 2018). Our Sialkot findings also align with Pakistan-focused studies that connect leadership development and self-efficacy to institutional effectiveness (Ahmed et al., 2023), globalization-shaped motivational climates to learner engagement (Hashmi et al., 2025), and technology-enabled language instruction to improved academic processes and classroom practices (Fiaz et al., 2025). Historically, Sialkot's community-mobilization efforts in education (e.g., the UNICEF-supported Universal Primary Education initiative) demonstrate that local governance and social participation can raise enrollment and strengthen school–community linkages—preconditions for the council effects we document (UNICEF, 2001, 2003). Taken together, the convergence of provincial policy, rigorous national evidence, and Sialkot's schooling market structure supports the view that well-functioning councils are a practical lever for improving teaching–learning processes and the broader school climate at the primary level—provided ongoing capacity building, financial compliance support, and transparent feedback loops are sustained.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study demonstrate that School Management Committees (SMCs) play a significant and positive role in strengthening primary schools. The results revealed that SMCs have a meaningful effect on the achievement of academic activities, supporting instructional routines and contributing to improved teaching–learning processes. Similarly, SMCs were found to significantly enhance non-academic aspects of school functioning, including school climate, hygiene, discipline, and co-curricular engagement. The study further concluded that SMCs utilize school budgets effectively, ensuring that available resources are directed toward essential academic and infrastructural needs. Additionally, with more than 50% of members expressing agreement, the findings highlight broad confidence among SMC stakeholders regarding the committees' contribution to improving overall school standards and educational quality. Collectively, these results underscore the importance of empowering SMCs as a mechanism for reinforcing participatory governance, promoting accountability, and enhancing the holistic functioning of primary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the effectiveness of School Management Committees (SMCs). Since SMCs significantly influence academic activities at the primary level, it is recommended that regular academic training programs be arranged to equip members with the skills needed to support teaching–learning processes and enhance student achievement. The results also highlight the committees' substantial role in non-academic domains; therefore, structured training should be provided to help members improve co-curricular activities, school discipline, hygiene, and overall school climate. Given that SMCs effectively manage school budgets, they should be further involved in decisions related to the construction of additional classrooms and the provision of essential facilities to improve the school environment. Lastly, extending the SMC structure to secondary schools is recommended to strengthen management practices and ensure a supportive and accountable educational environment across all levels of schooling.

Competing Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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