Role of Academic Quality Assurance towards Student Performance in Government Secondary Schools of Punjab

Shahid Abbas[1*], Dr.Khuda Bakhsh[2], Hina Gul[3], Dr. Shumaila Farooqi[4]

[1*]PhD Student Department of Education Government College University Faisalabad
[2]Associate Professor Department of Education Government College University Faisalabad
[3]LecturerDepartment of Education Government College University Faisalabad
[4]Assistant Professor Department of Education Government College University Faisalabad

Abstract
District education authorities support the public schools by providing guidance, facilitating collaboration, and addressing specific needs. Additionally they provide staff personnel administration, gathering input, advocating for district needs, and communicating information about educational policies and initiatives. Academic quality assurance is the backbone of our educational system, ensuring that its programs meet rigorous standards of excellence. At its core, academic quality assurance involves a systematic approach to monitoring and improving the various facets of an institution's educational offerings. The objective of the study to investigate the role of academic quality assurance towards student performance in government secondary schools run by District Education Authorities in Punjab. The researcher developed a questionnaire to measure the academic quality assurance and student performance to answer the research questions. A sample of 50 principals working in government secondary schools participated in the study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression. It was found the academic quality in government secondary schools is below the median level. The academic quality assurance contributed 69 percent to the variance of student performance. Some bold recommendation were made the researcher to see the role of district education authorities better as required for the academic quality assurance and student performance.

Keywords: Government, District Education Authorities, Academic Quality Assurance, Principal, Students Performance, Secondary Schools,

Introduction
District Education Authorities
District education authorities are administrative bodies responsible for overseeing and managing the educational system within all districts of Punjab. They handle tasks such as implementing educational policies, allocating resources, monitoring educational quality, and ensuring compliance with regulations. These authorities support individual schools by providing guidance, facilitating collaboration, and addressing specific needs. Additionally, they serve as a link between local communities and higher levels of government, gathering input, advocating for district needs, and communicating information about educational policies and initiatives. Overall, it is ensuring effective education delivery at the local level.

These authorities are typically tasked with a range of responsibilities, including implementing educational policies set forth by higher levels of government, allocating resources such as funding and staffing to schools, monitoring the quality of education provided, and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and standards (Ali, & Tauqeer, 2023).
Established on 1 January 2017, the District Education Authorities DEAs perform their duties under the Punjab Local Government Act, 2013. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is chairman of each DEA in each district. Authority works through a group of posts declared in the Act including Chief Executive Officer (CEO), District Education Officer (DEO), Deputy District Education Officers (DDEO) and principal.

One of the primary functions of district education authorities is to provide support and guidance to individual schools within their jurisdiction. This support may involve assisting with curriculum development, offering professional development opportunities for teachers and staff, and facilitating collaboration among schools. District authorities also play a key role in identifying and addressing the specific needs of schools and students, such as by implementing interventions for struggling schools or providing additional resources for students with special needs (Riaz, 2019).

In addition to their role in supporting schools, district education authorities often serve as a liaison between local communities and higher levels of government. They may solicit input from parents, educators, and other stakeholders on educational issues, advocate for the needs of their district to higher authorities, and communicate important information about educational policies and initiatives to the community.

Overall, district education authorities play a critical role in ensuring that schools within their jurisdiction are able to provide high-quality education to all students, and in fostering collaboration and communication among stakeholders to support the goals of education at the local level.

Academic quality assurance

Academic quality assurance is the backbone of any reputable educational institution, ensuring that its programs meet rigorous standards of excellence. At its core, academic quality assurance involves a systematic approach to monitoring and improving the various facets of an institution's educational offerings. This encompasses everything from curriculum design and teaching methodologies to assessment practices and student support services. By carefully evaluating each of these components. Central to academic quality assurance is the ongoing review and refinement of curriculum design. Institutions must regularly assess the relevance and effectiveness of their course offerings to ensure that they align with industry standards and meet the evolving needs of students and employers.

This involves engaging faculty members, industry experts, and other stakeholders in curriculum development and review processes to ensure that programs remain current and impactful. Additionally, institutions must continuously evaluate their teaching and learning practices to identify areas for improvement and innovation. This may involve adopting new instructional technologies, implementing active learning strategies, or providing faculty development opportunities to enhance teaching effectiveness (Riaz & Qasim Shahani, 2023).

Assessment and evaluation play a crucial role in academic quality assurance, providing institutions with valuable insights into student learning outcomes and program effectiveness. By implementing robust assessment methods and collecting data on student performance. This may include academic advising, tutoring services, counseling, and career guidance, among other offerings (Saim,2021).

The academic quality assurance is an ongoing process of continuous improvement, rooted in a commitment to excellence and accountability. By adhering to established standards and best practices, institutions can uphold their academic integrity and support the students with educational experience. Through diligent oversight and a dedication to excellence, academic quality assurance ensures that educational institutions remain at the forefront of innovation and advancement in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education (Haider, 2022).

Academic quality assurance ensuring that all processes involved in student education and performance at all times. Key parts of academic quality assurance include control and duty for academic quality assurance, i.e. ensuring the quality of each study program regarding teacher performance appraisal, staff personnel administration, transactional leadership, financing and monitoring the annual results of the students in exams conducted boards of intermediate and secondary education. Academic Activities Processes and processes for academic quality certification, including regular, accurate and reliable comments from internal and external partners to allow constant improvement in higher education activities, students and teaching quality. Other feedback, as a means of better teaching methods, student tasks, practice and other forms of integrated learning, regular renewal through review and external ratings of academic material and tracking and improvement of their study plans.

Student Performance

Secondary school student performance encompasses a multifaceted evaluation of academic achievement, skills acquisition, and personal development throughout the secondary or high school years. At its core, it reflects the culmination of students' efforts across various subjects, extracurricular activities, and personal endeavors. Central to assessing student performance are traditional metrics such as grades and standardized test scores. However, student performance extends beyond academic achievement alone. Attendance records and behavioral assessments play crucial roles in evaluating overall engagement and commitment to learning. Regular attendance demonstrates a student's dedication to their education and can significantly impact their academic progress. Similarly, positive behavior and adherence to school rules contribute to a conducive learning environment, fostering both academic success and personal growth.

Furthermore, the breadth of student performance encompasses participation in extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and community service. Engagement in these activities not only enriches students' experiences but also nurtures essential skills such as teamwork, leadership, and time management. These experiences contribute to a well-rounded education, preparing students for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter beyond secondary school.

Teachers' assessments and feedback also play a vital role in evaluating student performance. Educators provide valuable insights into students' strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, guiding their academic journey and fostering continuous growth. Additionally, feedback serves as a catalyst for student self-reflection and goal setting, empowering them to take ownership of their learning and strive for excellence. Secondary school student performance is a multifaceted measure that encompasses various aspects of academic achievement, personal development, and engagement within the educational environment. At its core, student performance in secondary school is often assessed through academic metrics such as grades and standardized test scores. These quantitative measures provide insights into students' comprehension of subjects like mathematics, language arts, and science, reflecting their ability to grasp and apply foundational knowledge (Muzammil, 2019; Ullah et al. (2022).

However, secondary school student performance extends beyond academic excellence alone. Attendance rates and behavioral indicators also play pivotal roles in evaluating overall performance. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and can significantly impact students' academic progress, while positive behavior fosters a conducive learning environment for both individual and collective growth.

Extracurricular activities form another integral component of student performance. Participation in sports, clubs, and community service not only enriches students' experiences but also nurtures essential skills such as teamwork, leadership, and time management. These activities contribute to a well-rounded education, preparing students for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter beyond secondary school (Habibullah, 2020).

Moreover, teacher assessments and feedback provide valuable insights into students' progress and areas for improvement. Educators play a crucial role in guiding students' academic journeys, offering personalized support and encouragement to maximize their potential. Student performance is a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's academic achievements, personal growth, and overall engagement within an educational context. At its core, it encompasses the attainment of knowledge and skills . Academic quality assurance is often measured through assessments such as exams, quizzes, projects, and homework assignments, which provide insights into a student's understanding of curriculum content and their ability to apply it effectively.

However, student performance extends beyond grades and test scores. It also encompasses factors such as attendance, participation in class activities, and adherence to classroom expectations. Regular attendance demonstrates a student's commitment to learning and their willingness to engage with educational opportunities. Active participation in discussions, group projects, and extracurricular activities fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and communication skills essential for success both inside and outside the classroom Furthermore, student performance is influenced by socio-emotional factors such as motivation, resilience, and self-regulation. These qualities contribute to a student's ability to overcome challenges, set goals, and persevere in the pursuit of academic excellence.

In addition to individual performance, educators also consider the progress of students within the broader context of their academic community. Collaborative learning environments encourage peer-to-peer support, mentorship, and collective responsibility for academic success. By fostering a culture of mutual respect and academic integrity, schools empower students to strive for excellence while valuing the contributions and achievements of their peers.

Secondary School Education
In many countries, secondary education is compulsory and serves as a foundational stage in a student's academic journey. The curriculum is designed to provide students with a broad-based education while also preparing them for further academic pursuits or entry into the workforce .

The structure and organization of secondary education can vary widely from one country to another, as well as within different regions or school systems within a country. Secondary school education often referred to as high school education in some countries. It typically spans the ages of approximately 12 to 18, although this can vary depending on the educational system and local regulations.

These elective courses may include foreign languages, arts, computer science, vocational subjects, or advanced coursework in specific academic disciplines.

Secondary school education often involves a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on learning experiences, and extracurricular activities to support students' academic, social, and personal growth. Secondary schools may vary in size, structure, and focus, with some offering. Students typically progress through grades or levels within the secondary education system, culminating in the completion of a high school diploma or an equivalent qualification.

There are various proportions of school quality assurance. The focal point of this review was restricted to the nature of school direction, nature of initiative practices, and school environmental factors. The point of this review is to investigate the connection between nature of school the board, nature of administration conduct, school environment and school achievement. Experimental review has connected these qualities to school achievement. The consequences of the review showed that educators under elevated degrees of management took care of preferable on their business over their associates under low watch (Riaz, 2024).

A government secondary school, also known as a public secondary school in some regions, is a type of educational institution that is funded and operated by the government or public authorities. These schools are typically established and maintained by government education departments at the national, state, or local level, depending on the country's administrative structure. Government secondary schools provide education to students at the secondary level, following primary or elementary education. They offer a wide range of academic subjects and often have diverse extracurricular activities to support students' holistic development (Shahid, 2020; Khan & Ullah (2021).

Government secondary schools are institutions of education that are established and operated by government authorities at the national, state, or local level. These schools play a significant role in providing accessible and quality education to

students in communities around the world. Typically funded by government budgets, they aim to offer a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students for higher education, employment, or other post-secondary opportunities.

One of the key features of government secondary schools is their commitment to inclusivity and equal educational opportunities. They are open to all students within their jurisdiction, regardless of socioeconomic background or other factors. This accessibility helps ensure that education remains a fundamental right for all individuals, regardless of their circumstances. Government secondary schools usually follow a prescribed curriculum set by the government or education department.

Upon completion of their secondary education at a government secondary school, students typically receive a diploma or certificate that signifies their academic achievements. This credential serves as a foundation for further education, such as attending college or university, or entering the workforce. Government secondary schools are subject to government regulations and oversight to ensure they maintain educational standards, quality instruction, and a safe learning environment for all students.

In conclusion, government secondary schools concerns about future of students performance and vocational. They serve as pillars of the public education system, promoting literacy, knowledge, and social mobility while fostering a sense of community and citizenship among students.

Statement of the Problem

The main problem of the study was to investigate the role of district education authorities active in thirty seven districts of Punjab by ensuring the academic quality towards student performance in government secondary schools.

Research Questions

The researcher tried to answer two following research questions

- What is the level of academic quality assurance in government secondary schools of Punjab?
- What is the role of academic quality assurance towards student performance?

Research Methodology

A sample of 50 principals working in government secondary school participated in the study. The researcher himself develop questionnaire to measure Academics quality assurance and students' performance. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression.

Results

Research Question **1**. What is the level of academic quality assurance in government secondary school of Punjab?

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics*

Academic Quality Assurance	Mean
Teacher Performance Appraisal	2.1
Staff Personnel Administration	2.9
Financing	3.1
Transactional Leadership	2.0
Monitoring the Monthly and Annual Results of the Students	1.4
Overall	**2.3**

Table 1 shows that district education authorities have below average progress (2.3 /5) in ensuring academic quality in government high schools. CEO (Education), DEO (Secondary Education) and Principals as core elements of DEA are too responsible for this poor score. They is no performance appraisal of Secondary School Teachers SSTs . They reach the school only for time killing and gup-shup. They threaten the principal and he is in not is in position to take an action against them as majority of the teachers flow in same direction. Valuing the transactional leadership, no teacher is punished on poor performance. Majority of the teachers is enjoying on haram payments and they tend to do nothing. They impose upon their students to join tuition academies even during school times. Parents sell their home essentials to pay the high fees of these academies and the annual result is shown with the name names of these road runners called teachers of government schools. DEA never thinks properly about the monthly and annual results of the students.

Research Question **2**. What is the contribution of academic quality assurance towards student performance?

Table2: Regression Analysis of Academic Quality Assurance with the Student Performance

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.834[a]	**.695**	.681	3.13

The table2 displays that academic quality assurance 69 percent (R^2 =.695, p<0.05) contributed towards the student performance. It means that the good academic quality is a bold determinant of student performance. Having good leadership, the academic excellence is ensured. Student Performance is well determined with better leadership practices of the principal, DEO and CEO (Education).

Conclusions

It is concluded based upon the results of the study that overall progress of District Education Authorities regarding the academic quality assurance is too poor. There is no rigid system to check the teacher performance. They spend most of their time on long leaves, official duties and personal outings. No one is punished on poor performance. DEA is partially failed in this regard.

Recommendations

The government should take strict action against the teachers and principals with poor performance immediately. All the core elements (Principal, DEO and CEO) of District education authority are equally responsible for the below average score of academic quality assurance regarding teacher performance appraisal, staff personnel administration, financing, transactional leadership and monitoring the annual results of the students.

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