P-ISSN: 2709-6254	Journal of Development and Social Sciences	April-June 2022,Vol. 3, No. 2
O-ISSN:2709-6262	http://dx.doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2022(3-II)43	[447-458]

JDSS Journal of Development and Social Sciences
www.jdss.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Socio-economic and Institutional Factors Effecting "Quality Education" in Government Primary Schools in the Naseerabad Division, Balochistan

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PAPER INFO

Received:
March 01, 2022
Accepted:
April 27, 2022
Online:
April 29, 2022

Keywords:
Balochistan Government Primary Schools, Naseerabad Division, Quality Education, Socio-economic and Institutional Factors,

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed socio-economic and institutional factors that affect the quality of education in government primary schools in the Naseerabad division, Balochistan. For this purpose, a semi-structured questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview guide were used to collect data from 272 respondents from the two districts of the Naseerabad division. The information gathered through the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, mean, correlation, and logistic regression. The logistic regression analysis results indicate a positive association between quality education and a well- trained teacher, effective school administration, teaching-learning materials, physical facilities, parental and community involvement in the educational process, a learning-friendly family environment, and family income. On the other hand, teacher absenteeism, an outdated curriculum, and a flawed examination system were negatively associated with quality education. Moreover, data collected through group discussions and in-depth interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. Based on the findings, it is recommended that government needs to appoint competent, trained and qualified teachers to improve the quality of education.

Introduction

Quality education refers to a highly systematic approach implemented to support effective learning. Quality education is a human right with the ability to transform society. According to the former United Nations secretary-general, the cornerstones of freedom, democracy, and sustainable human development rest on the foundation of quality education (Anan, 2017). Therefore, there is particular importance to prioritizing education in any country as it directly affects and contributes to other areas of a country's economy, such as health, finance, tourism, and international relations. Education can negatively or positively affect other economic sectors depending on how education is handled and approached in a particular nation. Most countries with a constructive educational system are considered the world's socioeconomic leaders (Zafar, 2018).

In Pakistan, education in government schools cannot be identified as higher quality because students receive poor education. According to the Government of Pakistan (2019), the education sector is not always prioritized and allocated the required resources because, for a long time, it has not been recognized as a driving force of progress or a primary contributor to economic development. This is because a lack of funds, poor policy

implementation and enforcement, limited access to primary education, outdated curricula, and a lack of public-private cooperation in the education sector impeded progress in education.

The quality of education in Balochistan is far from satisfactory. The issues in the education sector primarily concern access to education, quality of teachers and teacher education, inadequate teaching staff in schools, quality of teaching-learning materials, quality of school management and supervision, and infrastructural facilities in educational institutions. Access to education in Balochistan is limited. Despite the presence of some operational primary or middle schools, there are still hindrances resulting from physical access to the school due to distance from homes, sparse population, and a lack of adequate roads or public transportation (Amima, 2008).

Teacher education is a vital area of the educational system and plays a significant role in developing and strengthening the education sector (Tahira, 2020). The quality of teachers and teacher education in Balochistan is not satisfactory, and it experiences a myriad of challenges as those in the rest of Pakistan. A person is qualified to teach at the primary level after completing at least ten years of schooling and nine months of pre-service training. However, it means nothing in practice. Most teachers have a haphazard knowledge base and, in some cases, perform worse than their students on the same test items in Mathematics, English, and Science. It proves that the level of education for individuals considered as teachers is an issue in itself. Countless people believe that Balochistan's education system has suffered due to teachers lacking professional development opportunities (Qadir, 2020).

Understaffing in schools is another key contributor to poor quality education. At the primary level, 42% of schools are single-teacher schools (BES, 2022). Regardless of the student population, the teachers in such schools must teach six classes and at least six subjects throughout the day. The high number of subjects to be taught per day and the number of students teaching daily subjects teachers to unnecessary pressure, contributing to poor education.

Textbooks are the primary teaching-learning tool in Balochistan and throughout Pakistan's government schools. The developed textbooks fall short of the curriculum objectives while also failing to develop the critical thinking and processing skills necessary for applying the knowledge imparted. Most schools lack access to modern teaching-learning tools such as multimedia and a computer lab equipped with an internet connection.

Supervision and monitoring of activities in educational institutions are essential necessities. It ensures that both students and teachers are constantly kept in check so that each party does their part for overall good performance. In Balochistan, school supervision and monitoring are ineffective. At the primary level, school supervision and monitoring are done mainly through Learning Coordinators (LCs). The low capacity of LCs and inability to visit schools due to distance, transportation issues, and a strict fuel budget have resulted in minimal or no school supervision (Javed, 2015). In Balochistan, most schools lack enough physical facilities like electricity, water, toilet facility, and boundary walls. According to Balochistan Education Statistics (BES) 2022 data, 78% of schools lack electricity, 70% do not have a water tank, 61% lack toilet facility, and 54% do not have a boundary wall. The data further indicate that 12% of Balochistan's schools are without a building. Hence, the poor performance of students can be attributed to a lack of physical facilities in government schools coupled with minimal supervision and monitoring.

In the previous years, no research has been conducted to assess the combined influence of socioeconomic and institutional factors on the quality of education in Balochistan. Some studies have been conducted on the factors affecting the quality of

education at the school level. Thus, the present research has been carried out to fill this gap. This study advances new knowledge into the existing literature by focusing on the socioeconomic and institutional factors that affect educational quality by collecting the opinions of teachers, educational administrators, parents, and community members.

Balochistan is among the four provinces of Pakistan, with about 348000 square kilometers. Despite being one of the largest regions, it remains one of the country's most underdeveloped regions. In Balochistan, numerous factors have been noted that contribute to underdevelopment. Education in the area has lagged for a long time due to minimal attention and resources pumped into the area to ensure that all factors related to quality education are enhanced. The province is divided into eight administrative divisions, one of which is Naseerabad. This administrative division comprises five districts: Sohbat Pur, Jaffarabad, Naseerabad, Kachhi, and Jhalmagsi, of which two (Sohbat Pur and Jaffarabad) were selected for this study. According to the 2017 census, these two districts have a combined population of about 0.7 million people.

The districts chosen for the study face several serious issues, poor education being at the core of such issues. According to Balochistan Education Statistics (BES) data 2021, there are only 849 primary schools in both districts, with a Net Enrollment Rate (NER) of only 33%. Out of this percentage, 38% are males while 26% are females, which is significantly lower than other areas in the province. Furthermore, the annual statistical report of the education department for 2019-20 shows that primary and secondary school dropout rates in the Jaffrabad and Sohbat Pur districts are 44% and 40%, respectively. The high dropout rate of primary school students is a significant source of inefficiency and resource drain in the educational system (World Bank, 2019).

Material and Methods

The data collection and analysis methods are based on the education statistics for the area selected for the study. The study area has 847 government primary schools. From this number, 200 schools (100 boys' and 100 girls' schools) were selected through a random sampling method. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 200 primary school head teachers. Moreover, eight (8) key informants, including the director and regional director of education (Schools), District Education Officers (DEOs), and Deputy District Education Officers (DDEOs) of the Jaffarabad and Sohbat Pur districts, were also interviewed for qualitative data.

This study also entailed the use of focus group discussions held in different tehsils of the study area. Individuals chosen to participate in the focus group discussions were parents and community members who provided valuable information on socio-economic and institutional factors that influence the quality of education. Questionnaire data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, mean, correlation, and logistic regression. Bivariate correlation was run to determine the link between the dependent and independent variables. It was followed by the use of multivariate analysis through logistic regression. Logistic regression was used as an analytical technique as it is the most suitable statistical procedure when the dependent variable (i.e., quality education) is dichotomous. Moreover, thematic analysis was used to analyze data collected through interviews and focus group discussions.

Factors affecting Quality Education: Model Specification

Given the disparities in head teachers' responses to quality education in their schools, an appropriate multivariate regression analysis was deemed necessary to analyze

factors influencing the quality of education. As a result, a dependent variable "quality education" was created by assigning a value of "0" to no and a value of "1" to otherwise. Given the categorical nature of the dependent variable, binary logistic regression was used to identify the factors influencing the quality of education. The regression model hypothesized that the dependent variable was associated with the independent variables X1, X2, X3,.....X13.

The model is specified as follows:

$$logit\ (E[Y_1 \backslash x_1, x_2, \ldots\ldots, x_{12}]) = logit\ (P_i) = \ln\left[\frac{P_i}{1 - P_i}\right]$$

$$= \beta_\circ + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \ldots + \beta_k X_{ki}$$

Where Pi is an observed probability that determines each outcome such as K=1,2,....., and 13 and remains specific to the outcome at hand but related to the exploratory variables.

Thirteen independent variables included in the regression model were the gender of the respondents (X1), a well-trained teacher, (X2), teacher's absenteeism (X3), effective school administration (X4), outdated curriculum (X5), flawed examination system (X6), teaching-learning materials (X7), adequate physical facilities in schools (X8), parents and community members' involvement in the educational process (X9), family income (X10), learning-friendly family environment (X11), gender discrimination (X12), and tribalism (X13).

Results and Discussion

This section provides the results of correlation and logistic regression analysis.

Factors affecting quality education, correlation results

A bivariate correlation was run to analyze the relationship between quality education (the dependent variable) and the independent variables. The correlation results show that except the gender of the respondents, gender discrimination and tribalism, all variables are significantly correlated with quality education.

Table 1 indicates that quality education is positively correlated with a well-trained teacher ($r = .727$, $p < 0.01$), effective school administration ($r = .397$, $P < 0.01$), teaching-learning facilities ($r = .375$, $p < 0.01$), adequate physical facilities in school ($r = .574$, $P < 0.01$), parents and community members' involvement in educational process ($r = .495$, $p < 0.01$), family income ($r = .319$, $p < 0.01$), and learning-friendly family environment ($r = .165$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, quality education is negatively correlated with teacher's absenteeism ($r = -0.319$, $p < 0.01$), outdated curriculum ($r = -.141$, $p < 0.05$), and flawed examination system ($r = -.280$, $P < 0.01$).

Table 1
Correlation results

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Quality Education	1													
Gender of the respondents	.101	1												
A well-trained Teacher	.727 **	.122	1											
Teacher's absenteeism	-.319 **	.15*	-.237**	1										
Effective school administration	.397**	.000*	.273**	-.184**	1									
Outdated curriculum	-.141*	.033	-.080	-.206	-.026	1								
Flawed examination system	-.280**	.031	-.115	.170*	-.075	.382**	1							
Teaching-learning materials	.375**	.023	.58**	.086	.002	-.096	-.210**	1						
Adequate physical facilities in school	.574**	.022	.578**	-.049	.279**	-.002	-.207**	.532**	1					
Parents' and community members involvement in educational process	.495**	.021	.404**	-.068	267**	-.028	-.158*	.227**	.416**	1				
Family income	.319**	-.059	.225**	-.243**	.293**	.016	-.121	-.066	.152*	.355**	1			
Learning-friendly family environment	.165*	-.045	.026	.053	.116	.050	.257**	.062	.078	.72	-.188**	1		
Gender discrimination	.062	-.031	.088*	-.197**	.125	-.228**	.004	-.094	-.073	.071	.023	.279**	1	
Tribalism	.079	.053	.186**	-.039	.224**	.275**	.332**	.066	.081	.075	.094	.162*	-.102	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed
Source: Field survey, 2021

Results of Binary Logistic Regression Model

Table 3 shows the maximum likelihood estimates for the factors in the logistic regression model that characterize socioeconomic and institutional factors influencing the quality of education. The -2 likelihood ratio (-2LL) variances for cox and shell R square and NegelKerek R square are 60 percent and 87 percent, respectively, indicating that the 10 variables included in the model had significant influences.

Furthermore, the p-value for the Hosmer and Lemeshow test is more significant than 0.05, indicating that this model fits the data better than any other model.

The binary logistic regression analysis results are found in table 2. The results reveal that all variables except the gender of the respondents (OR= 0.396, $p > 0.05$), gender discrimination (OR = 2.504, $p > 0.05$), and tribalism (OR = 4.471, $p > 0.05$) were significantly associated with quality education. Table 2 shows that a well-trained teacher was positively linked with giving a high-quality education (OR=25.911, $p < 0.05$), implying that a well-trained teacher was 26 times more likely to provide a high-quality education. The results also reveal that teacher absenteeism was significantly linked with quality education (OR= 0.054, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that teacher absenteeism had a negative effect on educational quality 19 times.

The results further indicate that effective school administration and quality education were positively associated (OR=19.943, $p < 0.05$). That is, an effective school administration was 20 times more likely to provide a high-quality education. Table 2 further shows that an outdated curriculum was associated with a decreased likelihood of providing quality education (OR=.100, $p < 0.05$), indicating that an outdated curriculum decreased the quality of education ten times. Additionally, a flawed examination system was also negatively associated with quality education (OR=0.087, $p < 0.05$), indicating that a flawed examination system adversely influenced educational quality 11.49 times.

Additionally, the logistic regression analysis results reveal a significant relationship between teaching-learning materials and quality education (OR=14.680, $p < 0.05$), implying that schools with high-quality teaching-learning materials were 15 times more likely to give a high-quality education. Similarly, adequate physical facilities in schools were related to a higher probability of offering a high-quality education (OR=21.963, $p < 0.05$), indicating that schools with adequate physical facilities were found to be 22 times more likely to provide a high-quality education. The results further show that parental, and community involvement in the educational process was positively associated with quality education (OR = 16.082, $p < 0.05$), indicating that parental and community involvement in the educational process influenced educational quality 16 times more positively.

Additionally, Table 2 indicates the significant relationship between family income and quality education (OR=15.323, $p < 0.05$), implying that children from affluent families were 15 times more likely to get a quality education. Similarly, a learning-friendly family environment was positively associated with quality education (OR= 13.628, $p < 0.05$), indicating that a learning-friendly family environment positively influenced quality education and students' academic performance 14 times more than a non-learning-friendly family environment.

Table 2
Binary logistic regression model

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig. P	Exp (B)
X1 Gender of the respondents	-.1.399	.752	3.458	.063	.247
X2 A well-trained teachers	3.255	.940	12.001	.001	25.911
X3 Teacher's absenteeism	-2.918	1.011	8.338	.004	.054
X4 Effective school administration	2.993	1.022	8.579	.003	19.943
X5 Outdated curriculum	-2.305	1.142	4.071	.044	.100
X6 Flawed examination system	-2.443	1.099	4.938	.026	0.87
X7 Teaching-leaning materials	2.687	1.089	6.088	.014	14.680
X8 Adequate physical facilities	3.089	1.139	7.395	.007	21.963
X9 Parents and community members' involvement in educational process	2.778	.916	9.200	.002	16.082
X10 Family income	2.729	1.242	4.830	.028	15.323
X11 Learning-friendly Family environment	2.612	1.015	6.626	.010	13.628
X12 Gender discrimination	.918	.939	.955	.328	2.504
X13 Tribalism	1.498	1.289	1.350	.245	4.471
Constant	-22.654	7.266	9.720	.002	000

Source: Field survey, 2021

Discussion

Education in Pakistan has not undergone a qualitative revolution. There are numerous issues with Pakistan's education system, including a high dropout and low

enrollment rate, untrained teachers, ineffective administration and supervision, teachers' absenteeism, inadequate teaching-learning resources, poor physical facilities, inadequate budget for education, poor implementation of educational policies, gender discrimination in education, and political interference in education. The factors which affected the quality of education in government primary schools in the study area are divided into three broad categories, social, economic, and institutional factors.

Social Factors affecting quality education

In the study area, the quality of education in government primary schools was influenced by various social factors, including learning-friendly family environment, and parents and community members' involvement in the educational process.

Family Environment

Logistic regression analysis results show that learning-friendly family environment was significantly associated with quality education. This may be explained by the fact that students' proper nutrition and development are based on their home environment. Educated parents strive to provide an enabling education environment for their children at home to benefit from it. In contrast, uneducated parents frequently fail to provide a learning-friendly environment for their children at home. (Hussain, 2020). In the study area, the family environment was not conducive to learning. People lived in joint families that lacked learning-friendly environments and facilities to foster a child's study interests.

Parents and community members' involvement in educational process

Family and community involvement in education was positively associated with students' academic achievement and school development. This is explained by the fact that when schools, families, and communities work together to promote learning, children achieve better grades, attend school more often, remain longer in school, and enroll in higher-level programs. Family, community and school collaboration increases net enrolment and reduces the high dropout rates.

A significant proportion of schools lacked Parent-teacher School Monitoring Committee (PTSMC) in the study area. Only 71.9% of schools in the Jaffarabad and 51.4% in the Sohbat Pur districts had PTSMCs (BES, 2021-22). The contribution of PTSMCs to improving quality education was not satisfactory. During the Focus Group discussions, the participants stated that they had observed inactive PTSMCs in their community for years. Parents were passive participants in PTSMCs, whilst active members were limited to only 1-2 persons, most of whom were school teachers. PTSMCs' discussions primarily focused on infrastructural challenges and concerns rather than the quality of education or learning outcomes.

Apart from these social factors, the logistic regression analysis results reveal that gender discrimination and tribalism have no significant association with quality education.

Economic factors affecting quality education

A country's economic development determines the quality and type of education. The logistic regression analysis results reveal that quality education in the study area was significantly influenced by family income

Family Income

Family income has a profound impact on the academic success of their children. Empirical solid evidence states that family income directly impacts children's educational achievements. Parents in the study area were not economically different from parents in any other rural area in the province. They were desperately poor and strived to meet their basic needs. Poverty compelled families to send their children to work to share the burden rather than school. Consequently, low household income/poverty adversely affected the education system by contributing to low enrollment and high dropout rates in the study area.

Institutional factors affecting Quality Education

The quality of education is influenced by factors both within and outside educational institutions. The most significant factors effecting an education system's overall quality are institutional or school-based factors. In the study area, institutional factors influencing the quality of education included trained teachers, teacher's absenteeism, school administration, outdated curricula, a flawed examination system, teaching-learning materials, and physical facilities in schools.

A Well-trained Teacher

Logistic r regression analysis results indicate that a well-trained teacher was positively associated with quality education. This is explained by the fact that training improves teachers' productivity which significantly impacts students' academic performance. In the study area, 60% of primary school teachers were not provided with training regularly. Hence, they lacked the required pedagogical skills to teach at this level. They lacked class management skills and effective teaching methodology essential to foster students' cognitive skills.

Teacher's Absenteeism

In the study area, teacher's absenteeism was the critical institutional factor that adversely influenced students' learning and contributed to a decline in the quality of education. Due to frequent absences, course completion became difficult, leaving students with half-baked knowledge. Responding to the issue, the participants in the focus group discussions mentioned that ineffective school supervision and monitoring had resulted in the frequent absence of teachers. Undue political interference in education and the negative role of teachers' unions forced school administrations to refrain from penalizing absent teachers.

School Administration

Effective governance is needed for all organizations. Without that, it cannot grow in the right direction. The educational sector is no exception in this regard. Effective administration and supervision can assist an educational institution in producing high-quality performance. In the study area, school administration and supervision were ineffective as 72% of primary school head teachers had not received administrative training, leaving them with little knowledge of school management.

Outdated Curriculum

An outdated curriculum was one of those factors which negatively affected the quality of education in the government primary school in the study area. This may be explained by the fact that the quality of education is determined by what is taught at educational institutions. (Javed, 2015). Balochistan's primary school curriculum is outdated

and cannot satisfy the needs of the contemporary world. The curriculum promotes remote memorizing of some topics without recognizing that education is a process that molds an individual's complete personality.

Flawed Examination System

A comprehensive examination system provides information about what is taught and how it is taught. Teachers use evaluation results to adjust their teaching methods and approaches to enhance teaching and learning. At the moment, such aims are a dream, especially at Balochistan's government schools, whose examination system is flawed and incapable of assessing students' actual performance. The use of unfair means in the examination has contributed to the province's education sector's poor performance.

Teaching-learning Materials

The logistic regression analysis results reveal that teaching-learning materials and quality education were positively associated. In the study area, the lack of high-quality teaching-learning materials contributed significantly to the ineffective teaching-learning process. Textbooks were the only teaching-learning materials in primary schools. Since no government primary schools had multimedia, computer labs and other modern teaching-learning tools, teachers failed to make the teaching-learning process effective and interested for students.

Physical Facilities in Schools

Physical facilities seem to play a significant role in motivating students to study. In the study area, most of the physical facilities necessary for students' effective learning/academic performance did not seem to be sufficient in government schools. Those available were of poor quality and in dilapidated condition. In the Jaffarabad and Sohabat Pur districts, where summer temperatures reach 50 degrees Celsius, 70% of primary schools lacked electricity, 56.5 % lacked water facilities, 70% did not have toilets, and 54.5 % lacked boundary walls. Moreover, in the Jaffaarabad and Sohbat Pur districts, 20% and 13.5% of schools had no buildings, respectively, leaving students to study under the shade of trees. Inadequate physical facilities in extreme climates adversely affected students' motivation to study, and they were little expected in terms of academic success.

Conclusion

In Balochistan, the education system has not witnessed remarkable progress, and as a result, the quality of education in government schools has been adversely affected by various socio-economic and institutional factors. The study results indicate that most schools in the study area lacked adequately trained, committed, and qualified teaching staff. Most teachers lacked pedagogical skills and knowledge to teach the prescribed courses. School administration was ineffective, which led to indiscipline in school premises, resulting in a decline in the quality of education.

The study also found that teacher absenteeism had a detrimental effect on students' academic progress since they got fewer opportunities to connect with teachers and get a quality education. The primary school curriculum does not foster students' ability to think creatively or analytically. Additionally, the current examination system is unsuitable for assessing students' actual understanding. The use of unfair means and other malpractices has resulted in a general decline in the quality of education at the primary school level in Balochistan.

Moreover, instructional materials and physical facilities such as comfortable classrooms, a conducive school climate, multimedia, and libraries with internet access, electricity, water, and toilet facilities were also missing from schools. Additionally, it was found that school collaboration with family and community was not praiseworthy in the study area. Consequently, Parent-Teacher School Monitoring Committees (PTSMCs) fell short of their objectives.

The results also indicate that affluent students performed better due to their access to high-quality institutions. On the other hand, impoverished parents earning between 12000 and 15000 rupees a month could not provide their children with the facilities required to succeed academically.

Recommendations

The government needs to ensure that schools have an adequate number of qualified and well-trained teachers. It is essential to use unique criteria with a minimum qualification of a B.A. and B.Ed. for the appointment of primary school teachers to provide quality education and help students achieve academic success. The study found that school administrators and teachers lacked significant insight, ideas, and abilities. As a result, on-the-job training programs for head teachers in supervision and administration are necessary. Untrained teachers need to be enrolled in a teaching methodology and other pedagogical skills programs to keep themselves acquainted with the current development in their field. The study also found that most of the primary school teachers were absent. Administrators need to take severe disciplinary actions against absent teachers regardless of their political affiliation or the support of teacher unions.

Overcrowded classrooms are detrimental to students' academic performance and contribute to disruptive conduct. The Balochistan government may hire enough teachers in primary schools to maintain the appropriate teacher-student ratio to address these issues. Moreover, continuous efforts are required to ensure that curricula are beneficial, effective, and relevant to social requirements and reflect the country's ideological, social, and economic needs.

The examination system needs to be compelling enough to accurately assess students' actual knowledge at the primary school level. Moreover, it is crucial to ban pocketbooks, guides, and other cheating material forms to prevent examination malpractices and unfair means. The study also found that most schools lacked teaching-learning materials and physical facilities, such as textbooks, charts, multimedia, computer lab, electricity, clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and fences. Providing sufficient textbooks, establishing computer labs, providing clean drinking water and adequate sanitation, and constructing fences around schools may boost students' learning interests.

Additionally, school collaboration with family and community must be strengthened by involving parents and community members in decision-making. Transfers, appointments, and other administrative decisions made based on merit to eliminate the element of favoritism and nepotism in schools will ensure that educational institutions operate professionally. Moreover, accessible scholarships to deserving students would enable talented but impoverished students to complete their studies. Similarly, the government of Pakistan needs to allocate 4% of GDP for education to improve the quality of education and achieve SDG4 targets by 2030.

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