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Rural Children's Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Their Education in Pakistan

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Abstract: Drawing from focus group discussions, this study reports 40 school-aged children's (12–14 years, boys and girls) perceptions of parental involvement in the context of a developing country with a collectivist culture. The results indicate that despite parental interference, adherence to local customs, poverty, and illiteracy, children felt encouraged by their parents through strategies that reinforced their motivation to continue their education. Extended families' educated members can also compensate for parents being unable to support their children in learning. The study highlights the role of the socio-cultural context in understanding parental involvement.

Keywords: children's perceptions; parental involvement; school education; developing country

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1. Introduction

Pakistan is currently unable to provide education to all children between the ages of five and sixteen [1]. Although the country is trying to eliminate barriers that prevent children from having an education [2], it has not yet been successful in implementing its constitutional mandate: 'the state shall provide free and quality education to all children' (Constitution of Pakistan, art. 25A). In addition to the poor implementation of government policies, education is also influenced by poverty, lack of qualified teachers, and lack of parental involvement, rendering it less of a priority for the populace [3,4]. Consequently, 22.5 million children between the ages of five and sixteen are not in schools [5] According to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey [6], the overall literacy rate has been invariant at around 60% since 2014–2015, with urban and rural literacy rates of 73 and 52 percent, respectively.

In developing countries, particularly those in South Asia (i.e., Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan), most of the population lives in rural areas where the condition of schools is unsatisfactory, and the vast majority of state schools lack necessary facilities [7]. Similarly, defects in the physical infrastructure of schools further increase parents' concerns—schools without a boundary wall, for example, are perceived as insecure, especially for girls [8,9]. Likewise, rural families face barriers with respect to involvement, such as being unable to impart appropriate social and academic skills to their children due to vulnerable socio-economic situations [1,10]. Nevertheless, it is widely known that both home and school play a crucial role in shaping children's interest in learning [11], and that parental involvement is an effective predictor of children's success [12,13].

Researchers have conceptualised the role of parents in children's education in different ways, and parental contributions have variously been termed *parental involvement* [13], *parental engagement* [14], and *home–school cooperation* [11], thus making operationalization unclear and inconsistent [15]. Such involvement can vary between developed and developing countries and even within a single country, based on people's socio-economic circumstances [16]. The term *parental involvement* is well-known from Epstein's (e.g., 2018) framework, which includes parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home,

decision-making, and collaborating with the community, with a focus on the US context. However, Kim explained that, despite its widespread use, Epstein's framework might not be entirely relevant to developing countries because of policy and socio-economic differences [17]. In the developed world, involvement means collaboration with schools and participation in children's learning [18,19]. However, in the context of limited material resources (e.g., Pakistan), parental involvement may encompass exceptional efforts to meet the children's basic educational needs and to spare them from household tasks in order to attend school at all [20,21]. Most studies on parental involvement have been carried out in the developed world, and so conceptual frameworks and operationalisations have likewise mainly focused on developed countries [17].

1.1. Children's Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Studies conducted in developed countries indicate that children expect and value parental involvement in their learning [19,22]. For instance, in New Zealand, children reported that their parents talk to them about learning and tell them how important education is for their future success [22]. Similarly, in a Canadian study by Deslandes and Cloutier [23], children stated that their parents visit their school and oversee their learning activities. In a Spanish study, children reported that their parents help them with their homework [24]. Likewise, British children conceded that parental participation in school positively influences their learning [18]; parental support promotes and enhances children's motivation and interest in learning endeavours [13].

In contrast, studies in developing countries have found patterns of parental involvement that have adverse effects on children's education [21,25]. Parental interference and lack of involvement seem to discourage children, with detrimental effects on their academic performance [26], and even positive involvement can become problematic for other financially and academically less privileged parents [27]. For example, when children from underprivileged families see other children enjoying facilities provided by their parents, they expect the same and become discouraged when their parents cannot support them in the same way [21,28]. Moreover, the children's curricula are often beyond the didactic level of the parents, and the children, perceiving that their parents may not be competent, are likely to believe that they cannot ask for help, such as with their homework [26].

1.2. Developing Country Context

In developing countries, demographic factors such as family income, education, and local customs may hinder parental involvement [29]. Research has highlighted how parents' attitudes and knowledge play a crucial role in supporting or impeding children's schooling [30,31]. Children from low-income families are also aware of the disparities between families, and this awareness can affect their behavioural expectations and cognitive skills [28]. In rural Pakistan, parents generally hold low-paid jobs, such as tailors, barbers, farmworkers, or self-employed [32]. Those who want their children to learn work hard to provide the resources needed [3], often having to work longer hours, leaving less time for involvement [10]. Although education in provincial state schools is free for all, finding the money to buy the necessary school supplies is an extra burden for low-income parents [21]. This, in turn, leads parents to favour males over females, as a male child receiving an education is seen as an investment in the family's future [33]. Girls' education in many developing countries is thus a significant challenge [34], and poverty, social ignorance, and a lack of separate schools for girls can make parents reluctant to send their daughters to school [4]. Moreover, a culture of early marriage is also pervasive, and many girls are married off between the ages of 15 and 18 [35]; girls are therefore often prepared for household responsibilities rather than being offered a formal education [9], even though research indicates that having two educated parents is a clear advantage and that an educated mother alone can do much to enhance children's learning [12].

Similarly, rural Pakistani parents often do not know the procedures for contacting the school or lack the skills needed to help their children [36]. In such circumstances,

collectivist and joint family cultures reinforce parental involvement [37]. According to Hofstede [38], developing countries generally have a collectivistic culture. Families in such a culture reciprocally cooperate and expect shared responsibility to meet material and emotional needs [39]. In rural Pakistan, people generally live in multigenerational families where two, three, and sometimes four generations live together, including grandparents, uncles, cousins, and siblings. Such a family system shares common property and residence because family ties and unity are often needed for people to survive socio-economically [39]. Likewise, the collectivistic socio-domestic culture is a potential resource that supports children in their education [40] because parental involvement in extended families does not reside only in the hands of the parents, but it can be contained and supported by the members of the extended family [25,37]. According to Motha [41], despite facing social and economic adversity, the extended family's cooperation, emotional support, and cohesion can serve children's educational needs and keep members together. For instance, parents who cannot help their children in learning attain compensation for parental involvement through an educated family member [39].

The current study examines children's perceptions of parental involvement in a developing country and collectivist culture. Children's voices on this issue have rarely been heard in the developed world and even more rarely in developing countries. Hence, this study contributes to the literature by providing new insights into a context characterised, on the one hand, by a lack of economic and social resources but, on the other, by a rich network of family relationships.

2. Methods

To gain an in-depth understanding of the children's viewpoints, we adopted a qualitative approach and conducted thematic focus group (FG) interviews with school-aged children. The interview guidelines and themes were based on Epstein's seminal framework [42], supplemented by themes found in previous studies of parental involvement [13,16,19,25]. Features of Epstein's model relevant to the context were used, and special attentions was paid to features such as how parents help and support their children in learning at home and facilitate them by providing resources needed for learning.

2.1. Participants

The participants were selected from rural state schools in Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa (KPK; a province of Pakistan). Although widespread illiteracy and poverty are problems across the country, the inhabitants of rural KPK face greater challenges and hardships in educating their children [43]. The schools were single-sex, and equal numbers of FGs were conducted with boys and girls. Children aged 12–14 years were selected because they had enough school experience to discuss the role of parental involvement. First, permission from the district education officers and school principals was obtained, and then written consent was collected from the participating children and their parents. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all children received a gift.

2.2. Data Collection

The data collection was carried out in eight focus group (FG) interviews with 40 school children (21 boys and 19 girls) in grades six to eight from eight different state schools. Interviewing children can be challenging due to the power differential between the interviewer (an adult) and the children [44], but research suggests that FG interviews with children can be effective in familiar situations [45]. FG interviews permit study participants to express their personal stories and opinions without observing a stringent order of questions. This technique is highly appropriate for gathering data from children and parents [45,46]. The FG moderator (i.e., the researcher) created a comfortable environment for the study participants for their unrestricted communications during the interviews and kept control of the session by involving everyone in the focus group discussions, and leading questions were avoided for more detailed and candid answers from the study participants. A limitation of

FG interviews is the possibility of one individual dominating the group; to avoid this, the interviewer sought to ensure that all the children's voices were heard [47]. We developed the interview guidelines to ensure that the topics and sub-topics would encompass different aspects of involvement, including parental support, parental help in learning, and parents' reactions to success and failure.

A pilot interview was conducted, and revisions were made to the protocol as a consequence. Each FG was composed of four to six children, and the duration of the interviews ranged from 35 min to just over an hour. The transcribed FG interviews resulted in 116 pages of A4 size. The first author conducted all the interviews in Urdu, transcribed them, and translated excerpts into English. All the FG participants expressed their views about parental involvement, but there was a degree of variability in children's responses; for example, some children provided more detailed answers than others. Similarly, children's discussions portrayed a variety of perceptions regarding parental involvement in their learning activities. Notably, a male researcher interviewing female children in rural areas presented a challenge due to cultural constraints, so interviews with girls were conducted in the presence of a female chaperone (school worker). To ensure that enough data were collected, the interviewer monitored the extent to which similar comments accumulated. Pseudonyms invented by the children themselves were used to maintain their anonymity.

2.3. Data Analysis

The first author transcribed the audio recordings of the eight FG interviews word by word, and a data-driven thematic analysis was performed on the collected data [48]. The interview transcripts were read several times to ensure their accuracy. After becoming familiar with the data, initial codes were identified and highlighted. The data were analysed by using a 'bottom-up approach [49]. After coding the entire FG dataset, further analysis was performed to identify sub-themes and themes within the dataset. After identifying the sub-themes and main themes (see Table 1), the transcriptions were carefully re-read to verify the relevance of themes to the data and the research questions, which helped in labelling themes better to answer the research question. The themes were then named in a manner so that their applicability to the research question is apparent. Finally, quotes were chosen from the dataset to exemplify each established theme reported in this study to answer the research question [50].

Table 1. Themes, sub-themes, and excerpts from the interviews.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Data Excerpts
Parental engagements in children's education	Parents convince children	*My parents look after my education, and they say to me, look, we never became literate and have faced many problems, so you study hard . . .*
	Joint family compensate Parenting	*My parents are illiterate and cannot help me with homework, but they ask me to get help from my cousin because she is educated and helps me . . .*
Barriers to parental involvement	Parental illiteracy	*My parents are not educated . . . Sometimes, I feel very sad and disturbed . . . if they don't come to my school, how they will know whether I'm studying at school or not?*
	Parental poverty	*I have a friend Aliya; she was the second-best in class . . . she left the school . . . her father can't cover her studies costs . . .*
Parental interference hindering children's education	Local customs	*My parents sometimes ask me to leave school after the eighth grade . . . you'll be getting married in a few years.*
	Gender-based involvement	*Our neighbors don't let their girls go to school; girls are really fond of learning . . .*

3. Findings

We were interested in how rural school children perceive parental involvement in their education. The children talked about their own experiences and those of friends, relatives, and neighbouring children. Interestingly, the children tended to talk about other children's experiences when discussing the challenges of parental involvement. The children seemed aware that the educational opportunities in rural Pakistan are far from ideal. The data analysis yielded three main themes and six sub-themes regarding children's perceptions of parental involvement.

3.1. Parental Engagement in Children's Learning

> *Some parents are not educated, but this is not their fault; it's their parents' fault. My parents look after my education, and they say to me, look, we never became literate and have faced many problems, so you study hard. It doesn't matter that they are uneducated; they take care and play an important role in my education. (Pinki, girl)*

> *My father is a fruit seller, but he encourages me and tells me to study as much as I can. Even on Sundays, if I say that I want to help him, he says, do your schoolwork. (Nomi, boy)*

The children explained that, despite being poor and illiterate, their parents worked hard to get them educated. According to the children, their parents often cited themselves as examples of the outcomes of poor education, saying that their lack of education is responsible for their relative poverty and long working hours on low pay. They highlighted how their parents sometimes worked harder to arrange private tuition when they could not help them with homework. Nevertheless, the children viewed their parents in sympathetic terms and seemed to understand their hardships, thus feeling morally obligated to study hard. The above excerpts revealed a picture of children whose parents are financially unstable and uneducated and do their best to educate them.

> *My father is a driver and comes home in the evening. He always works and cannot take much interest in my studies due to his work, but you know he sends me to the tuition centre to study and complete my homework. He doesn't know about my books, but he is happy when I pass exams. (Fiqa, boy)*

The children described their parents' responses to both their successes and failures. Even poor and uneducated parents enjoyed it when their children were successful at school. The children explained how their parents used gifts, prizes, and promises conditional on good academic achievement as positive reinforcement for performing well in class. They recognised their parents' selfless efforts and sincere attention to their education. The following excerpt is an experience of a child whose weak performance saddened her mother; she then worked harder and secured a class ranking that pleased her mother.

> *I couldn't get good marks in the previous exam, and my mother was sad. I understood her pain and the hard work she had done for me, and so I studied hard and was third-best in my class, and then I studied harder and, in the last exam, I was top in the class. You know my mother was very happy and bought me a computer. (Zari, girl)*

> *My parents are very nice; they support me in my learning and wish to see me educated. They don't understand but see my notebooks and appreciate me. I try my best to make them happy. (Sheeda, boy)*

Moreover, children credited the joint family system as an informal source of help for their learning. They described how their extended families are helpful and encouraging, especially when their parents cannot help them academically due to illiteracy or long working hours. They talked about the support they received from their extended families. Several children said that even though their parents are uneducated, they make efforts and hope to see their children educated. For this, parents often seek help from an educated family member. The children acknowledged the support from their elder siblings, uncles, and aunts. Babli, Gogu, and Veer spoke about their experiences:

When I go back home from school and start doing my homework, I sometimes don't understand my lesson. Whenever I don't understand my lesson and get worried, I go to my grandparents' place, and my uncle helps me do homework. (Babli, girl)

My father cannot help me in learning at home as he has many responsibilities. But whenever I have to prepare for any task or face a problem with doing homework, my aunt and sometimes my uncle helps me. (Gogu, boy)

It is a very serious issue that our parents are not educated. Thank God my elder brother helps me, and you know when he is not at home, I try to study by myself, but I cannot learn as well as I do with my brother. (Veer, boy)

The children talked about the multiple benefits of the joint family. According to them, a literate family member can be a blessing for children whose parents cannot help them with their homework. Where poor parents must work hard to support their families and thus do not have time to monitor their children's education, the joint family can compensate with an educated family member assuming the role of guardian and visiting the school to receive updates on the child's learning activities. Diya and Chintoo expressed their views as follows:

My mother is illiterate, so she doesn't come to the PTM [parent–teacher meeting], but my sister comes and discusses my progress with my teacher. (Diya, girl)

First, my father tries to come to school, but if for some reason he cannot come, my elder brother or sometimes my cousin come and meet my teacher. (Chintoo, boy)

Conversely, working parents, especially in rural areas, need someone reliable and responsible around their children, and in such cases, the joint family is also an advantage. The children explained that, while many parents work in cities and towns far from their homes, the joint family system means that they do not feel ignored. Their parents can ask other family members to monitor their children's learning activities. Although parental absence from a child's education is detrimental, support from the joint family plays a compensatory role.

My grandmother always comes to my school and asks my teacher how I am getting on. She is not educated, but she comes to my school and then informs my parents. (Nina, girl)

My father is out of the country and works in Saudi Arabia, but my uncle comes to my school to know about my learning progress from my teachers at my father's place. (Munna, Boy)

3.2. Barriers to Parental Involvement

According to children, parents' unstable financial conditions and lack of didactic skills are the most prevalent reasons for parents' non-involvement in their children's education. Due to their parent's susceptible socio-economic circumstances, many children cannot continue their education and thus, sacrifice their dreams of learning.

The children's views indicate that any lack of parental involvement in their school education is mainly due to their parents' unstable financial condition or low education level. The children voiced concerns that parental inability to help them in their formal learning negatively affected their interest in education. According to them, uneducated and less informed parents were reluctant to attend their children's schools, and, in some cases, parents seemed not to know about the annual parents' day at school and thus failed to show up, to their children's disappointment. One of the study participants expressed his views as follows:

My parents are not educated, and I know that is why they don't come to school. Sometimes, I feel very sad and disturbed because, if they don't come to my school, how they will know whether I'm studying at school or not? (Bablu, boy)

Mothers in rural society are often illiterate or less educated and thus cannot participate in children's learning. The children reported that a girl's mother might be unable to visit

her daughter's school because she is primarily occupied with domestic chores. Likewise, a father or other male family member would not be allowed to visit a school for girls because of gender segregation. Thus, the children's—and especially the girls'—schools were not visited by parents due to their ignorance and lack of interest, resulting in a communication gap between students, teachers, and parents.

> *My mother cannot help me with doing homework because she doesn't know about my books. She also doesn't come to my school to meet my teacher as she remains busy with household tasks and my father or uncle cannot meet my teacher because this is a girls' school. (Honey, girl)*

Likewise, the children revealed that while their parents might not visit their schools because they are overburdened with work, many children also go to school irregularly because they are helping their parents with chores much of the time. The children disclosed that their parents force them to help with domestic-related affairs to contribute to family earnings, badly affecting their learning. Taking time for activities other than learning can divert children's attention away from education, and parents' economic hardships and lack of interest can result in children being sent to workplaces instead of schools.

> *After school, in the evening, I often go into the fields with my father to cut fodder for our goats, and we come back home at sunset, and sometimes I cannot do my homework because of power cuts. (Khan, boy)*

> *My uncle is poor; he has a small shop in the village and works there all the time. His son doesn't complete homework and often doesn't come to school because his father needs his help in the shop. (Mintu, Boy)*

The children also explained that parents are often unable to meet their basic educational needs, with even the relatively low cost of necessary school supplies, such as books and notebooks, putting formal education out of the children's reach. Sometimes, even the children who work hard cannot continue their schooling and must sacrifice their educational dreams because of their parents' hardships. The following excerpts describe how a parent's poverty caused the withdrawal of a child from formal education and how a teacher's ignorant reaction to poverty can act as a barrier to education.

> *I have a friend, Aliya; she was my classmate and a good friend of mine. She was second-best in the class, but in the seventh grade, she left school. We were all very sad when she left school. Her father could not cover her school expenses. I wish she could study because she had big dreams. (Fairy, girl)*

> *We have to buy exercise books to write in, and sometimes my father doesn't have the money to buy my exercise book and then I don't go to school, because if I go to school without an exercise book, the teacher insults me. (Nomi, boy)*

3.3. Parental Interference Hindering Children's Education

The interviewed children were concerned over their parents' adherence and compliance with local traditions. They said that local tradition perhaps causes interference and gender segregation, affecting involvement in children's learning possibilities, especially for girls.

The children uncovered that rural parents occupy a dominant position and decide almost everything in the family. They revealed that uneducated and less informed parents tend to have conservative ideas about the education of children—especially girls, who might not be allowed to go to school in case their so-called honour becomes compromised. In many cases, a family's fear of girls entering a romantic relationship before marriage keeps them out of school, and school children, especially girls, can thus find it hard to convince parents regarding their dreams of becoming educated. In the excerpt below, a girl's parents asked her to leave school because they believe that girls are supposed to be married and therefore will not benefit from education.

My parents sometimes ask me to leave school after the eighth grade, and I have asked my father, why are you asking me this? [girl was angry] He (father) replied, what will you do if you get an education, you'll be getting married in a few years. (Honey, girl)

My cousin is very intelligent. Every year she got a good ranking in the class. Her mother says they will not educate her further, so she only studied until the fifth grade. After that, they arranged her engagement, and next year, she might get married. (Guria, girl)

The children—mainly girls—exposed how many families do not send their daughters to school. They described how rural parents are highly conservative and marginalise girls in the name of family honour. The fact that girls walk to school increases parental worries, especially in light of the possibility of sexual harassment or involvement in a romantic relationship, both of which can damage a family's reputation. One of the interviewees described a family who did not let their daughters go to school.

Our neighbours don't let their girls go to school. They are very strict parents. The girls are really fond of learning, but they don't allow them because they think it could put their family's honour at risk. (Pinki, girl)

The participants also argued that parents' differential treatment of girls and boys is a further barrier to girls receiving an education. They noted that, in poor and uneducated families where the parents must choose between sending male or female children to school, the decision generally favours the male children. Educating male children is seen as an investment in a potential breadwinner for the family and is thus seen more positively than girls' education.

I have a cousin (male); his father sent him to a private school, and his sister is studying in our school [state school]. I know his parents don't take much interest in their daughter's education, but they really care about their son. They say that our son will take care of us when we become old, and the daughter will get married soon. (Jiya, girl)

On the one hand, children revealed that parental inspiration and the compensation of extended family play a crucial role in their education. On the other hand, their views unveil that parents often fail to give proper time, support, and attention to their education due to either illiteracy or poor economic conditions. The children were concerned about parental adherence to local customs, which may negatively influence their education, especially in the case of girls.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

This study's findings contribute to a new understanding of how rural children in a collectivist culture perceive their parents' role in their education. The results show that children perceive parental involvement as a critical factor in their education. The children explained that they felt inspired to study hard to avoid ending up poor and uneducated through various parental persuasion techniques that reinforced their motivation and ambition for a better future. They described how extended family compensates for parents' unavailability or inability to help children with their studies. In rural KPK, living in an extended family is part of the collectivist societal culture, and children from such a family system felt closer to their uncles, aunts, and cousins, learn from them and from each other. An individualistic society generally emphasizes self-reliance, whereas a collectivistic culture stresses individuals' reliance on the family-unit to which they belong [51]. Extended families are usually typified by shared residence, mutual support, and knowledge exchange. Younger and relatively learned family members (elder siblings, aunts, uncles, or cousins) often facilitate children in their learning activities, whereas elder members (e.g., grandparents) offer indirect assistance, i.e., emotional support, affection, and sharing of diverse learning experiences with children [44]. Besides poverty, children explained that their parents' low education also caused dependency on extended family members, with parents asking better-educated relatives to help their children learn because of their

illiteracy or lack of time caused by work demands. Thus, living in an extended family familiarises children with its members' struggles and offers the chance to learn from them.

In light of our findings, it appears that the concept of parental involvement used in earlier studies maybe too narrow or partially unsuitable for use in developing countries, especially rural communities. Whereas the concept of parental involvement in developed countries generally assumes that all children have the opportunity to attend school [18,19], in a developing country, involvement can turn to interference, and parents may stop their children from going to school if, for example, their labour is needed; the children gave several examples of this in the study. The findings demonstrate that parents' poverty can wipe out children's entire life. Children often work to support their families because, without their help, families would not be able to meet their basic needs. Consequently, often, some intellectual and ambitious children with big dreams cannot continue their education. Previous research also shows that children's learning and performance are directly associated with parents' socio-economic circumstances [20,21]. Alongside socio-economic hardships, the children also revealed deeply rooted practices that impede children's—especially girls'—education. For instance, educating girls is discouraged by older family members, who rule the family in a patriarchal society. Due to traditional customs and a conventional mindset, many girls are expected to stay home and work 'in the kitchen'. Other reservations may also exist linked to the notion of 'honour', with parents fearing that a daughter might become involved in a relationship that does not lead to marriage, damaging the family's reputation and making her ineligible for marriage later [33]. The children indicated that social ignorance could lead parents to decide to marry their children off at a young age or to use them as labour. Child marriage is both a cause and a consequence of girls not going to school, because those who marry young are less likely to continue their education, and children from poor families often have to work to help their families, while child labour is not regarded as a bad thing in rural society. Thus, poor parents often send their children to work in fields, hotels, and factories, and these children either drop out of school or their attendance becomes irregular. The children also revealed that rural parents often think that a daughter will leave home to live with her husband's family, whereas a male child will remain with them, and sending a male child to school is thus considered an investment in the family. Other issues, such as gender gaps, child labour, parental interference, and reluctance to educate daughters, can be seen in many developing countries (e.g., India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan), which affects the rights of girls badly, particularly in education [52,53]. Therefore, the results of this study could also be applicable in countries other than Pakistan.

Future Research Directions

This study data were gathered through focus group interviews and children provided candid responses to the researcher's questions. Yet, the children did not mention corporal punishment, despite rural parents and teachers commonly using it as a disciplinary tool. Future research could use methods more sensitive to children's negative experiences caused by corporal punishment. Likewise, children might have adverse consequences (i.e., negative feelings and demotivation) when their parents fail to support and participate in their school education. Thus, future studies could explore children's feelings that emerge when parents cannot positively contribute to their learning activities. Future research could compare the individualistic and collectivistic country contexts regarding the perceptions of parental involvement in children's learning endeavours.

Moreover, this study examined children's perceptions about parental involvement in their education, but it did not include rural parents' stance regarding the difficulties faced by them in positively contributing to their children's learning endeavours. Therefore, future research could investigate the challenges rural parents face in contributing to their children's education. Moreover, the present findings come from a small-scale qualitative study and are thus not generalisable, although they do describe different aspects of parental involvement from the viewpoint of children and are therefore worth studying further with

a more extensive research design that could yield generalisable results. Finally, this research was carried out in a rural setting, and replicating the study in urban areas of developed or developing countries may produce different outcomes.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from participating children and their parents.

Data Availability Statement: The data of this study were collected in the Urdu language. The study participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. The data were transcribed in (Urdu) handwritten form, and the written text does not exist in the soft copy form. Therefore, the data are not publicly available.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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