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Research Article

An investigation of Teachers' Attitudes towards Low academic achievers: A perspective of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching at Federal Government Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Quality teaching methods such as Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) and the positive attitude of teachers significantly enhance the academic achievement of the students. This study investigates whether traditional teaching methods and negative attitudes of teachers play any significant role in the poor performance of low academic achievers. The study's objectives were to determine teachers' attitudes toward low academic achievers, Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT), and the problems involved in implementing DRT in the classrooms. The sample size covers 42 Federal Government Educational Institutes (FGEI) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, involving 230 teachers and 22 principals. Findings reveal that the teachers hold a positive attitude toward implementing Diagnostic Remedial teaching (DRT) in the classroom. Still, inadequate training and heavy workloads of the teachers were the primary challenges. In addition, their attitudes toward low academic achievers were positive. However, they held negative attitudes towards those students who enrolled in the institutes without qualifying for the admission test standard criteria.

Keywords: *Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT), Federal Government Education Institutions (FGEIs), Low Academic Achiever (LAA), Regional Office Peshawar (ROP).*

Introduction

Educational institutions generally favor high-achieving students while providing incentives compared to low-academic achieving students in KPK, Pakistan. The motif behind

selecting high academic achievers is to boost the reputation of their institutes. However, low academic achievers do exist in significant numbers in all institutes. These Low academic achievers are defined as those students whose

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IQ levels are between 75 and 89 and often struggle with academic performance while scoring less than 60%, potentially leading to early educational disengagement. The dilemma of Low academic achieving students in institutions is not limited to Pakistan's FGEIs but rather a global phenomenon (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015). For instance, In the context of Federal Government Education Institutes (FGEI), 82% of students got less than 60% marks in the ETEA test, which was conducted in 2019. Similarly, 96% of students scored below 60% in the ETEA test for admission to Engineering fields. However, more research needs to be gathered regarding the poor performance of students in FGEIs in KPK.

Thus, this research study investigates the challenges faced by low academic achievers in Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) in KPK, who typically score below 60 percent. In addition, this study acknowledges the multifaceted causes of low academic achievement. It investigates whether low academic achievement in FGEI is influenced by teachers' attitudes or the absence of appropriate teaching methods, such as the Diagnostic Teaching Method. Similarly, this study also investigates the unreadiness of teachers and the massive workload of teachers in the FGEI, which contribute to the performance of low-academic achievers.

This quantitative research is quite significant as it attempts to tackle the issue of low academic achievers in FGEI. Executing its results promises the success of eradicating the problem of inadequate educational achievements, enhancing teaching methodologies, and bringing the topic to the stakeholders to work on this issue and bring appropriate policies.

Background

In Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI), a significant concern revolves around students who consistently achieve less than 60 percent or merely pass grades in their examinations. Despite having IQ scores ranging from 75 to 89, these students frequently struggle academically, performing below their grade levels. Interestingly, these individuals do not meet the criteria for being classified as mentally handicapped or learning disabled, as

defined by (Gresham, 1984) and (Kavale, Fuchs, & Scruggs, 1994). This subgroup of students often pays less attention to their learning, and their academic weaknesses persist if not addressed adequately, potentially resulting in premature educational disengagement. The remedy for these students lies in diagnostic remedial teaching, akin to a tailored prescription for their academic challenges, similar to medical diagnosis and treatment.

This issue of low academic achievement is not unique to FGEI but rather a global phenomenon, as emphasized by (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015) who conducted a cross-country study revealing that approximately 20 percent of students face problems and weaknesses in their academic performance. Additionally, the European Union has set ambitious goals to reduce the number of low achievers by up to fifteen percent by 2020 by advocating for the strategic combination of various teaching methods. Therefore, it is evident that low academic achievers are a prevalent concern in educational institutions worldwide.

Several researchers have pointed out various factors contributing to low academic achievement. Traditional teaching methods and poor teacher-student relationships were identified by (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015) as major causes of low achievement, while (Pokropek, Costa, Flisi, & Biagi, 2018) highlighted the significant impact of teaching methods on academic performance. Furthermore, (Selvarajan, 2022) pointed to socioeconomic conditions and students' physical and psychosocial status as factors affecting low achievement. They noted that remedial programs significantly improved student performance in specific subjects. (Siachifuwe, 2017) argued that insufficient teaching aids, teacher motivation, preparedness, punctuality, and failure to mark student exercises contributed to unsatisfactory academic performance.

However, despite these various factors, little research has been conducted on whether low achievement in FGEI is primarily due to teachers' negative attitudes towards students or the lack of appropriate teaching methods, such as diagnostic remedial teaching. This study aims to address this gap in the literature by investigating teachers' attitudes toward low

academic achievers and the implementation of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching in FGEI. The findings of this research can provide valuable insights into improving educational quality and supporting academically challenged students in FGEI institutions.

Methodology

In this section of the study, we provide a structured overview of the research methodology employed, which aims to comprehensively delve into teachers' attitudes and challenges associated with Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) within the educational landscape of Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study adopts a Quantitative Descriptive Research Approach within the Positivist Research Paradigm because it is based on a single objective reality and aims to generalize its findings from a large sample size to the larger study population.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore educators' perspectives concerning students with lower academic performance.
2. To delve into teachers' viewpoints regarding implementing Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT).
3. To identify challenges and obstacles associated with applying Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) techniques.

Population and Sampling

The study's target population encompassed the entirety of the teaching staff employed within FGEI, specifically those operating under the jurisdiction of the regional office in Peshawar, Pakistan. Official records indicated a total of 704 faculty members in this regional context. For equitable representation of both male and female teaching staff, a meticulous stratified random sampling technique was judiciously implemented. This stratification was structured around the diverse designations within the teaching staff, including Principals, Secondary School Teachers (SST), Trained Graduate Teachers (TGT), Elementary School Teachers (EST), Drawing Masters (DM), and Computer Instructors (CI).

Moreover, guided by the pragmatic advice of Kevin Lyons and Lipman Hearne, who advocate for sample sizes ranging from 200 to 300 respondents as offering an acceptable margin of error without reaching the point of diminishing returns (Lyons, 2015). This study selected a sample size of 252 respondents from the pool of 704 teaching staff members.

Data Collection

Data collection for this research centered on using structured questionnaires thoughtfully administered to the selected participants. These questionnaires were meticulously designed to investigate teachers' attitudes toward students with lower academic performance and to learn about the effective use of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching techniques. Stringent adherence to ethical principles was maintained throughout the data collection process, which encompassed securing informed consent from all participants and ensuring the complete confidentiality of their responses. The cornerstone of data collection was the structured questionnaire. As a research instrument, the questionnaire was pilot-tested for reliability checks. A valid and reliable five-point Likert scale was used for data evaluation after collection. Similar questionnaire items were tested for reliability, recorded as 0.791 using Cronbach's alpha. This entire process was meticulously crafted to align with the research objectives seamlessly and to elicit rich, detailed responses from the participants.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a rigorous process of quantitative analysis. Data collected through questionnaires in the survey was compiled and entered into the spreadsheet of spss (version 26). Similarly, Descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, were employed to summarize and lucidly present the research findings succinctly. Furthermore, inferential statistical techniques, such as regression and correlation analyses, were skillfully utilized to delve deeper into the relationships between variables and to test the formulated hypotheses rigorously.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research journey, ethical considerations were accorded paramount significance. Informed consent was scrupulously obtained from all participants, assuring them of the utmost confidentiality regarding their responses. The research unwaveringly adhered to ethical guidelines, meticulously respecting the rights and privacy of the participants at every juncture of the data collection process.

Limitations

Like any research endeavor, this study had limitations. Primarily, using a quantitative approach may have inherent constraints in fully capturing the nuanced depth of teachers' attitudes and experiences. Secondly, The study involved the non-teaching staff (principals) in the sample as well as to minimize the potential biases. Strata were formed for equal representation respective to gender and designation. Furthermore, the study's geographical focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, could potentially limit the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts beyond the borders of other countries.

In summary, this research embarked on a quest employing a quantitative and descriptive methodology to meticulously investigate teachers' attitudes and challenges within the realm of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching within Federal Government Educational Institutions. The research instrument, the data collection process, and the unwavering commitment to ethical principles were carefully orchestrated to ensure the robustness and validity of the study. The resulting findings promise to furnish valuable insights within the field of education, illuminating pathways for the enhancement of academic support provided to low-achieving students within FGEI institutions.

Significance of the Research

Findings and Results

I: Frequency Table: Gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	126	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	126	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

In the realm of education, where the pursuit of knowledge reigns supreme, a formidable challenge exists - the persistence of low academic achievement. This challenge looms large within the hallowed halls of Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI), with nearly a quarter of students falling victim to its grasp. Yet, the causes of this academic descent differ as they shift and morph from institution to institution, region to region. Amid this complex web of causality, two malevolent forces stand out: the teachers' negative attitudes toward their charges and the relentless embrace of archaic teaching methodologies. These twin specters are believed to wield the most significant influence over the fate of struggling students.

In response to this educational problem, our study has embarked on a noble quest - to unravel the mysteries shrouding these evil influences. We delve deep into the heart of FGEI, probing teachers' attitudes toward their students and the utilization of diagnostic remedial teaching—the very lifeblood of academic progress in FGEI courses through this investigation. If we wield our findings with precision and care, we may hold the key to unlocking the shackles that bind low academic achievers in FGEI.

Yet, our mission transcends the realm of individual students; it extends to the foundations of FGEI. The coveted CGPA, a beacon of student achievement, holds the power to shape the destinies of teaching and administrative staff. The recommendations born of this study are not mere conjecture; they are a torchlight illuminating the path to elevated student achievements, paving the way for the ascent of dedicated educators and administrators alike. As the dawn of change approaches, let us march forward, equipped with the knowledge and wisdom of this study, toward a brighter future for FGEI to make it academically excellent.

II: Sampling table

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Principal	22	8.7	8.7	8.7
	SST	50	19.8	19.8	28.6
	TGT	80	31.7	31.7	60.3
	EST	80	31.7	31.7	92.1
	DM	10	4.0	4.0	96.0
	Computer Instructor	10	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

III: Designation of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Computer Instructor	10	4.0	4.0	4.0
	DM	10	4.0	4.0	7.9
	EST	80	31.7	31.7	39.7
	TGT	80	31.7	31.7	71.4
	SST	50	19.8	19.8	91.3
	Principal	22	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Low Academic Achievers (LAA)

(Options: SA for Strongly Agree, A for Agree, UD for Undecided, DA for Disagree, and SDA for Strongly Disagree).

i: Teachers give proper attention to low academic achievers in Federal Government schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	45	17.9	17.9	17.9
	Agree	128	50.8	50.8	68.7
	Undecided	29	11.5	11.5	80.2
	Disagree	44	17.5	17.5	97.6
	Strongly Disagree	6	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

ii: Teachers do not like to teach Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Agree	46	18.3	18.3	22.6
	Undecided	25	9.9	9.9	32.5
	Disagree	120	47.6	47.6	80.2
	Strongly Disagree	50	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

iii: Teachers like to teach Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	26	10.3	10.3	10.3
	Agree	118	46.8	46.8	57.1
	Undecided	58	23.0	23.0	80.2
	Disagree	45	17.9	17.9	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

iv: Teachers encourage Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	43	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Agree	122	48.4	48.4	65.5
	Undecided	48	19.0	19.0	84.5
	Disagree	34	13.5	13.5	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

v: Teachers are responsible for bringing up Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government Schools.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	44	17.5	17.5	17.5
	Agree	116	46.0	46.0	63.5
	Undecided	30	11.9	11.9	75.4
	Disagree	45	17.9	17.9	93.3
	Strongly Disagree	17	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

vi: Teachers change their teaching strategies if students not doing well in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	51	20.2	20.2	20.2
	Agree	128	50.8	50.8	71.0
	Undecided	36	14.3	14.3	85.3
	Disagree	34	13.5	13.5	98.8
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

vii: Teachers' hard work can improve the performance of Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	92	36.5	36.5	36.5
	Agree	138	54.8	54.8	91.3
	Undecided	19	7.5	7.5	98.8
	Disagree	3	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Results

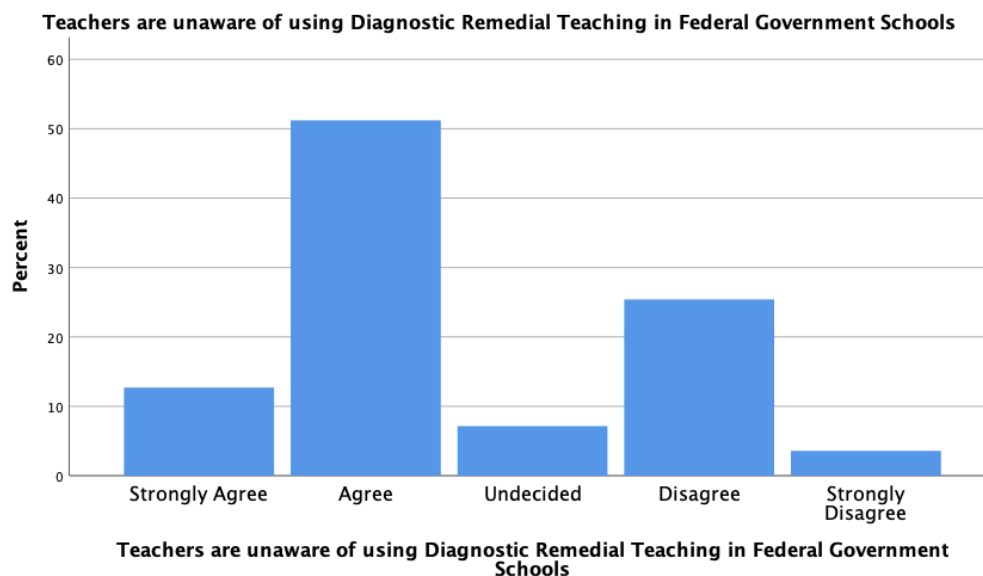
The data presented in the above tables from (i to vii) supports teachers' positive attitudes towards low academic achievers and negative attitudes towards students admitted without passing the admission test. This negative outlook among teachers may result in weaker relationships between teachers and

low academic achievers, subsequently impacting academic achievements indirectly.

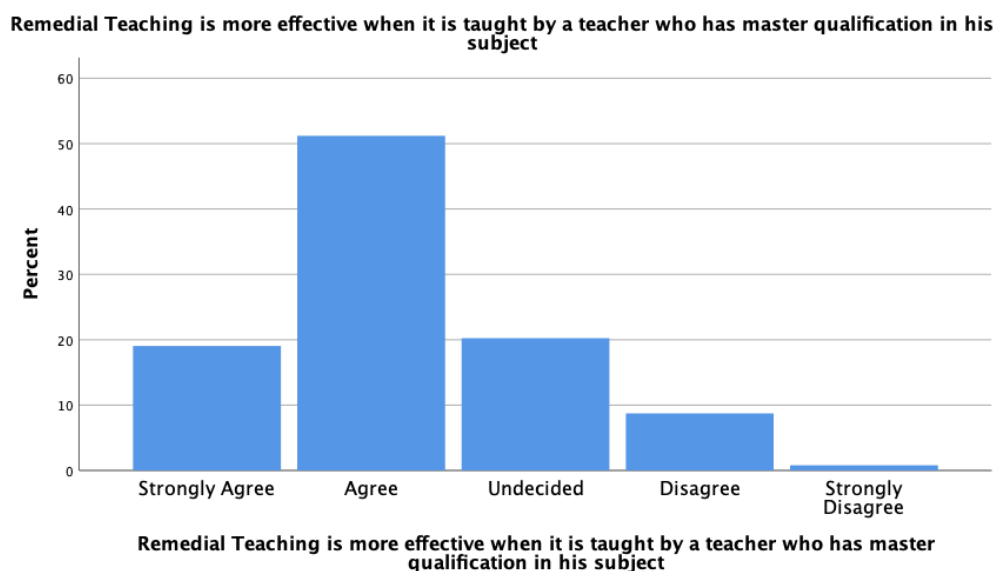
Teachers' Attitudes Regarding Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT)

(Options: SA for Strongly Agree, A for Agree, UD for Undecided, DA for Disagree, and SDA for Strongly Disagree).

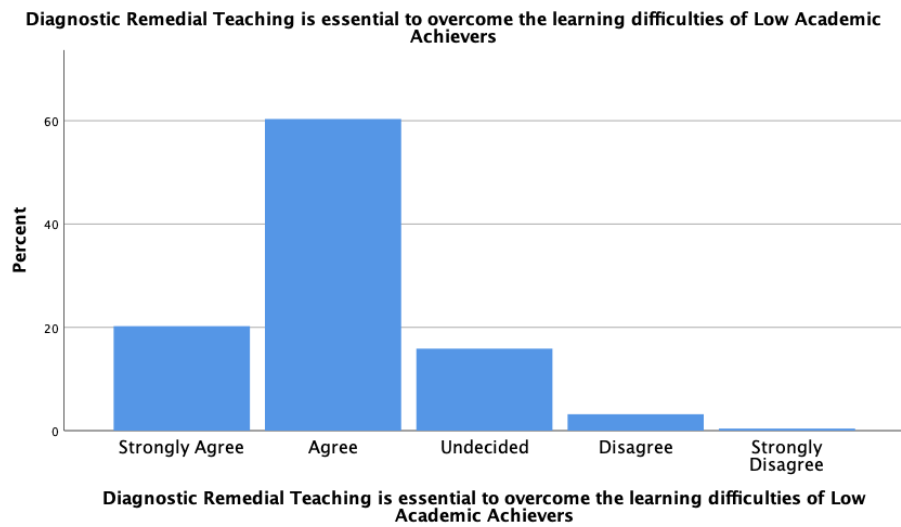
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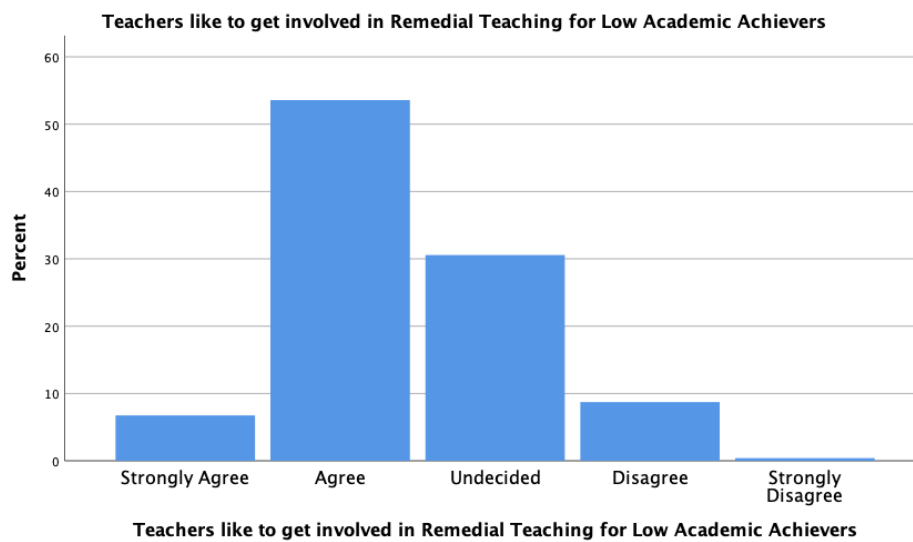
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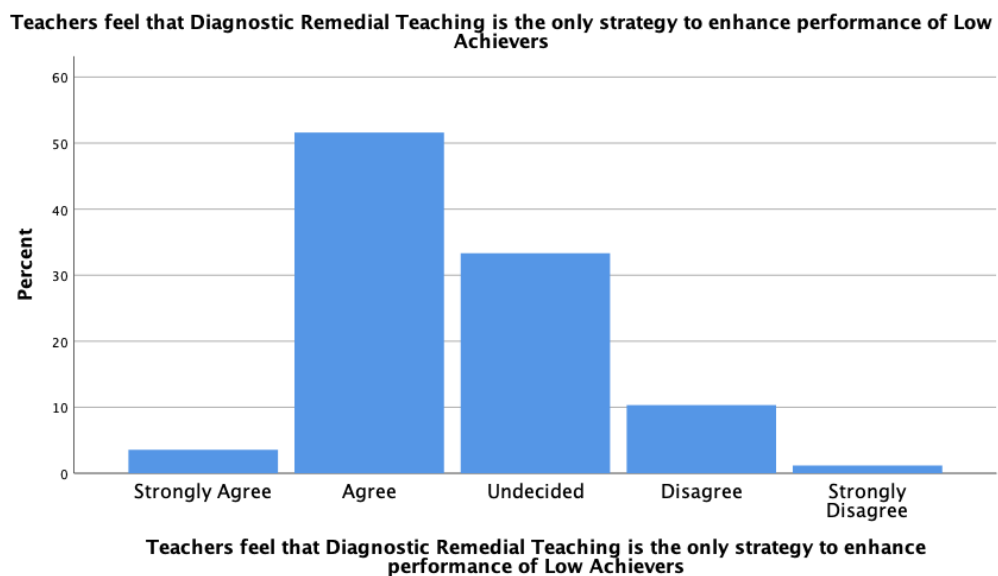
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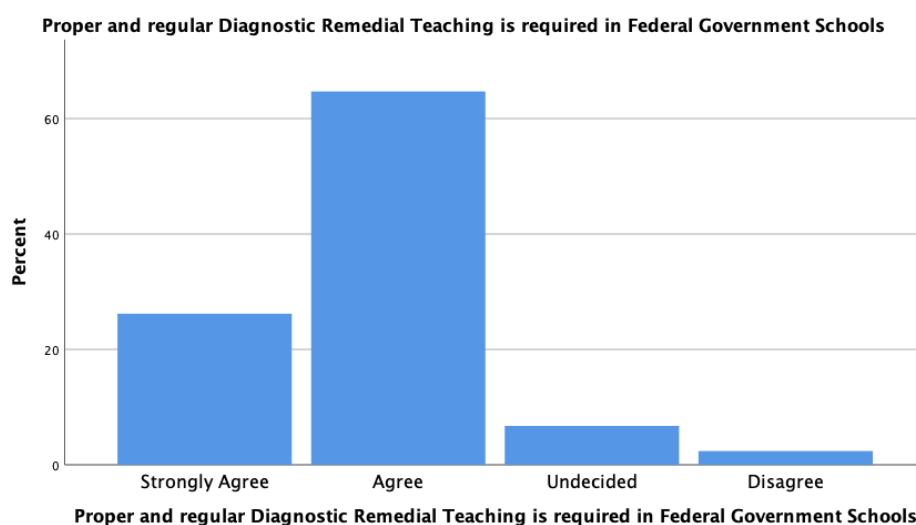
iv:



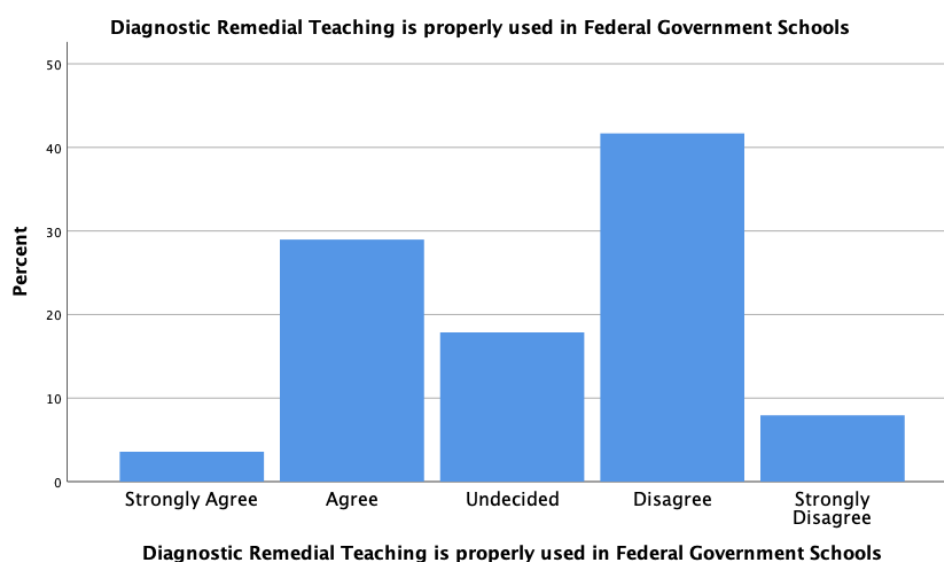
V:



vi:



vii:



Results

The data presented in the Bar charts from (i to vii) above elucidate the affirmative disposition of educators towards Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) and its utilization. The

study's participants concurred that this approach holds the potential to augment the academic performance of students with a history of low achievement.

The problems in the use of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT)

(There is no proper teaching strategy used for Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government schools.)

i:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	19	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Agree	121	48.0	48.0	55.6
	Undecided	39	15.5	15.5	71.0
	Disagree	61	24.2	24.2	95.2
	Strongly Disagree	12	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

ii: Low Academic Achievers are enrolled in the discipline of their own choices in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	5.6	5.6	5.6
	Agree	69	27.4	27.4	32.9
	Undecided	69	27.4	27.4	60.3
	Disagree	91	36.1	36.1	96.4
	Strongly Disagree	9	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

iii: Additional teachers are required for Remedial Teaching in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	61	24.2	24.2	24.2
	Agree	143	56.7	56.7	81.0
	Undecided	14	5.6	5.6	86.5
	Disagree	28	11.1	11.1	97.6
	Strongly Disagree	6	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

iv: Teachers do not adopt Diagnostic Remedial Teaching due to daily workload in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	34	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Agree	143	56.7	56.7	70.2
	Undecided	29	11.5	11.5	81.7
	Disagree	37	14.7	14.7	96.4
	Strongly Disagree	9	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

v: Teachers arrange extra instructional classes for Low Academic Achievers in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Agree	119	47.2	47.2	51.6
	Undecided	42	16.7	16.7	68.3
	Disagree	72	28.6	28.6	96.8
	Strongly Disagree	8	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

vi: Diagnostic Remedial Teaching continues throughout the academic year in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Agree	82	32.5	32.5	35.7
	Undecided	35	13.9	13.9	49.6
	Disagree	109	43.3	43.3	92.9
	Strongly Disagree	18	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

vii: Proper and regular Diagnostic Remedial Teaching is required in Federal Government Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	66	26.2	26.2	26.2
	Agree	163	64.7	64.7	90.9
	Undecided	17	6.7	6.7	97.6
	Disagree	6	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Results

The figures presented in the tables above illustrate two primary challenges associated with the implementation of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) within the context of FGEI: the absence of adequate training in DRT and the demanding daily workload of teachers, both of which impede the effective utilization of DRT. Furthermore, the data indicates that DRT, along with other specialized methods, is predominantly employed for addressing the needs of low academic achievers within FGEI.

Conclusions

This research study delved into teachers' attitudes toward low academic achievers in the context of Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) within Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEIs). Similarly, this study focused on the critical issue of low academic achievement in FGEIs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, specifically among students who typically score below 60 percent. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data collection spanned approximately 30 days, with subsequent analysis conducted using SPSS 26. The findings revealed several important insights into DRT, teachers' attitudes towards low academic-performing students in the class, and the challenges faced by low academic achievers in these institutions. It was found that teachers are positive toward Low Academic Achievers who enroll after transparent screening tests in their institutes. However, teachers hold negative attitudes towards those students who got admitted without appearing, passing admission tests, or trespassing the legal standard set for enrollment through other means rather than merit into the institutions. Therefore, this study underscores the importance of having standardized, valid, and reliable admission and screening tests to

ensure that students entering FGEIs are academically evaluated, adequately allocated based on their actual level, and dealt with by the teachers in a separate classroom where Diagnostic which could help reduce the likelihood of low academic achievement. With the help of admission test results, the students are designated to a different level where low-score achievers can be taught in a unique teaching method.

Additionally, the study highlighted the lack of proper training in the Diagnostic Remedial Teaching Method. One of the significant obstacles to the lack of training was the heavy workload of teachers in the schools. This study recommends strongly focusing on training sessions in Diagnostic Remedial Teaching by the Ministry of Education and the teacher's training institutions, emphasizing that teachers require proper training to design and execute effective programs for low academic achievers. Furthermore, measures to reduce teachers' daily workloads were suggested, as excessive workloads can hinder the success of diagnostic remedial teaching.

Overall, this research study sheds light on the challenges faced by low academic achievers in FGEI and provides valuable recommendations for improving the educational quality and support for academically challenged students. By addressing issues related to teacher attitudes, training, and workload, FGEI institutions can work towards enhancing the academic outcomes and opportunities for all students, irrespective of their academic background, thereby promoting a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

Recommendations

In light of our research findings, we propose a comprehensive approach to improve the fol-

lowing educational issues within Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) in KPK Pakistan.

Firstly, there is a pressing need to reinforce the enforcement of admission tests. We recommend that FGEI administrators issue clear directives to school leaders and administrators, emphasizing the importance of consistently applying the placement/admission test during the admission process. This concerted effort will mitigate teachers' negative perceptions towards students who gain admission without passing the required examination, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Secondly, we advocate for the initiation of targeted training sessions for teachers focusing on Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) in FGEIs. Simultaneously, strategies should be explored to reduce teachers' daily workloads so that teachers have enough time to prepare lessons and come to the class with a prepared lesson plan that aims to address the needs of all students attending the lecture. By equipping educators with the necessary skills and providing them with more manageable workloads, we can enhance their ability to design and implement effective remedial programs, ultimately benefiting low academic achievers.

Furthermore, it is imperative to regularly incorporate Diagnostic Remedial Teaching (DRT) or suitable alternatives into the standard curriculum at FGEI by the administrators. This proactive approach will help address the persistent challenges and weaknesses faced by students with lower academic performance, offering them valuable support to achieve their full potential. When implemented thoughtfully and consistently, these recommendations can

significantly improve the educational experiences and outcomes for academically challenged students, inadequately prepared teachers to use DRT and build a friendly environment between teachers and diverse-level students within FGEI.

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