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Factor affecting students' enrollment in newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ABSTRACT

Education is important for socio-economic development of a country and plays a key role in attaining the sustainable development agenda. *'Access to education for all'* is a basic human right. Keeping this in mind, this study was designed to investigate peoples' access to inclusive and quality education and its role in sustainable rural development in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, Pakistan. This study is based on primary data which was collected from two newly merged districts (ex-FATA) of KP province. Data were collected from the school heads as well as from the household heads. A total of 103 schools and 206 households, which were selected through a mechanism outlined in Chapter III, were included in the survey. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from both sources. To analyze the data, SPSS software was used for both descriptive as well as inferential statistics. To investigate the factors that determine students' enrollment in selected schools, a multiple linear regression model was used. A vector of explanatory variables (teachers' availability, backup energy supply, schools' landscaping, new renovated building, sufficient outdoor spaces, classroom facilities and hygienic sanitation facility) were used to determine their effects on students' enrollment (dependent variable). The results show that teachers' availability, schools' landscaping, sufficient outdoor spaces, and hygiene facilities are the major determinants of students' enrollment in these schools. The study recommends adoption of a bottom-up and inclusive approach for the formulation and implementation of effective educational policies. Furthermore, the school management needs to develop an outreach mechanism to actively engage parents and other community members in school related activities and decisions.

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INTRODUCAITON

Education is an instrument of sustainable development which also reduces poverty and social inequalities and subsequently leads to economic growth. The key indicators of human development are based on skilled manpower that is capable of converting resources into profitable outputs which leads to economic development (Kopnina, 2020). Education is the primary process to shape the human mind towards learning morals, developing intellect and transformation of technical skills to contribute to humanity and society (Van Leeuwen and Janssen, 2019). Education encompasses a holistic process involving research, teaching, and learning, all of which contribute to the accumulation of knowledge. It fosters curiosity, encouraging individuals to explore the realms of the unknown, while simultaneously enhancing their cognitive abilities. Education also plays a pivotal role in human development, equipping individuals with the skills necessary for effective decision-making and resource utilization (Alam, 2022).

Objective of the study and hypothesis

This study assess attempts to find out the factors that increases the level of students' enrollment in the research area. The study tests the null hypothesis Institutional (school) level factors do not play a role in students' enrollment in schools.

LETERATURE REVIEW

Factors affecting students' enrollment

Smith-Hollins et al., (2015) examined the factors that influence students' decisions to enroll in educational institutions that were established in 1862 as part of the land grant program. The participants in this study were students from the southern Cooperative Extension System region. To collect data, researchers used a five-part survey that asked questions about demographics and other factors affecting individuals' choices to attend these educational institutions. Surprisingly, influences from school-related figures, such as high school counselors

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or instructors in relevant subjects, did not have a significant impact on students' decisions to attend these educational institutions.

Chachashvili-Bolotin et al., (2016) emphasized that students are driven by the desire for career opportunities and favorable outcomes when deciding to pursue post-secondary education. The attractiveness of different career paths, including financial rewards, social status, and the impact on society, significantly influences students' decision-making process. The author highlights that students tend to make choices based on the job prospects available for college graduates. The desire for favorable outcomes greatly influences students' decision-making process, as they are influenced by the career paths pursued by graduates, the graduate schools they attend, and the contributions they make to society. In addition to career prospects, lifestyle considerations also play a significant role in students' career decision-making. They suggested that students prioritize greater financial rewards and higher social status upon graduation. These factors contribute to the appeal of certain career paths and influence students' preferences when considering their prospects.

Hewett et al., (2017) aimed to achieve several specific objectives. Firstly, it aimed to examine how physical facilities were structured to accommodate learners with special needs. This involved assessing the accessibility and suitability of the physical environment to meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. Secondly, the study aimed to determine the sufficiency of teaching and learning resources available to support the education of learners with disabilities. This included assessing the availability and adequacy of materials, equipment, and assistive technologies. The study sought to determine the adequacy of funds allocated for financing special needs education. This involved examining the financial resources available and their allocation towards supporting inclusive education practices.

Matsolo et al., (2018) examined the rates of enrollment and dropout in higher education institutions in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The researchers utilized large-scale secondary data obtained from the General Household Survey conducted by Statistics South

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Africa in 2012. The results of the study indicate that financial constraints, being an orphan, difficulties with transportation to higher education institutions, and to a lesser extent, unplanned pregnancies, are significant factors that influence the enrollment rate of students. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, research managers, and other decision-makers in the higher education sector.

Muhghal et al., (2019) revealed that children were dropping out of school in order to assist with household and agricultural activities. This highlights the economic pressures and responsibilities placed on children, leading them to prioritize immediate practical needs over education. Additionally, the study identified a gender disparity in dropout rates, with girls exhibiting a higher dropout rate compared to boys. This could be attributed to various social and cultural factors that restrict girls' access to education. Based on the findings, the study recommended certain measures to address the issue. One recommendation was to increase budgetary allocations for education, aiming to improve primary school participation and reduce dropout rates. Additionally, providing some form of financial assistance to students could help alleviate economic barriers that contribute to dropout rates. It is important to acknowledge that this study was conducted in a specific location and may not fully represent the entire country. However, the findings shed light on the challenges faced in ensuring universal primary education in India and offer recommendations to address the identified issues.

Cabeliza (2021) explored that the factors influence students to enroll in a particular university. The findings revealed that word of mouth played a significant role in influencing students' choice of university. Additionally, the participants emphasized the importance of the university's online presence, particularly on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. They suggested that universities should leverage social media more effectively to promote awareness about university life and programs offered. The research findings led to practical recommendations for improving university recruitment strategies.

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Smith and Johnson (2022) conducted a comprehensive investigation into the factors influencing learners' choices regarding enrollment, completion, or discontinuation in internet-based open courses. Despite the initial high enrollment numbers, completion rates remain modest. Their study uncovered critical factors directly shaping student enrollment, including professional growth opportunities, flexible scheduling, free access, and the potential for certification. Additionally, it highlighted motivators for successful completion, such as high-quality course materials, clear tutor guidance, effective content delivery, and valuable instructor feedback. Conversely, common reasons for discontinuation encompassed deadline challenges, instructor language proficiency concerns, assignment difficulties, and content comprehension issues. These findings offer valuable insights for educators and decision-makers in online education, informing strategies to improve overall success rates in open online courses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This section deals with the methods and materials being used for the conduct of this study. The section focuses on the universe of the study, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, analysis and ethical consideration.

3.1 Universe of the study

The main focus of this study is primary schools, for both boys and girls, in newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province of Pakistan. KP province consists of seven divisions and 35 districts of KP. During 2018, FATA was merged with KP and all seven agencies of the then FATA are also included in 35 districts of KP known as newly merged districts Thus, newly merged districts constitute the universe of the study in which district of Khyber and Mohmand were selected for the said research.

According to the Annual Statistical Report of Government Schools (2020-21) by Elementary and secondary education (KPESE), the total number of government primary schools in KP is 25,993 out of which 15,288 are boys' schools and 10,705 are girls' schools. In district

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Khyber and Mohmand, the total number of governments run primary schools is 549 (Boys = 286, Girls = 263) and 483 (Boys = 306, Girls = 177) (EMIS, 2021).

3.2 Sampling design and sample size

The study adopts multistage sampling technique and in the first stage, two districts namely Khyber and Mohmand were randomly selected from the erstwhile FATA (Figure 3.1).

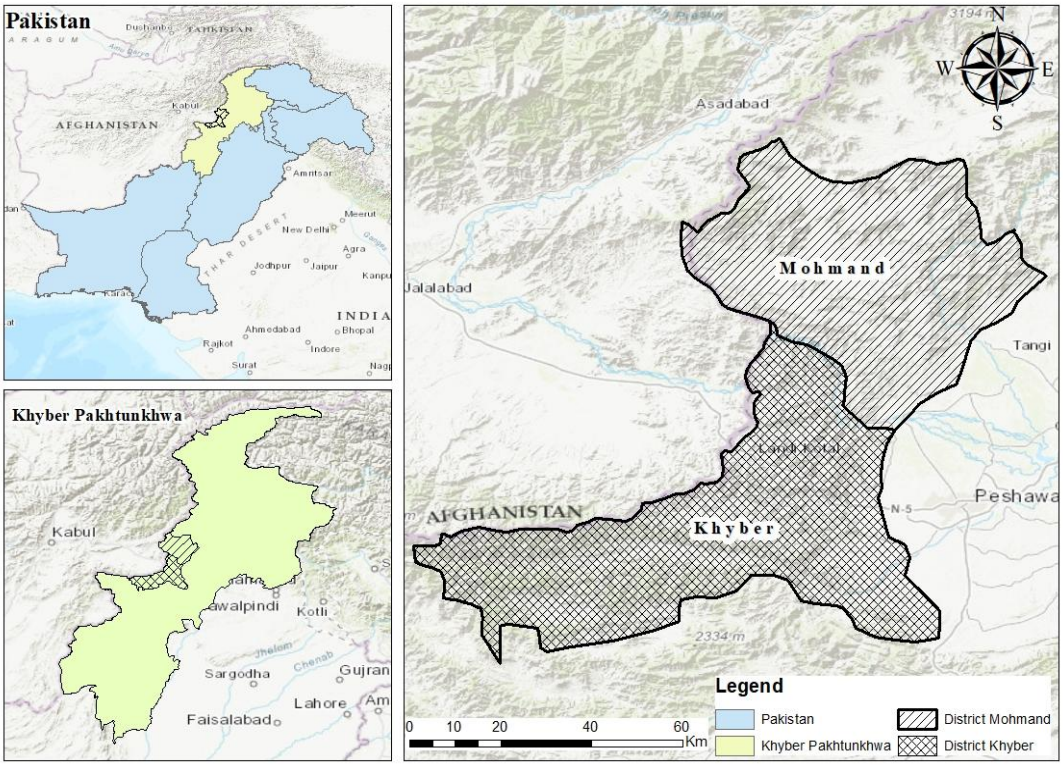

Figure 3.1: Map of Pakistan and KP showing the related districts

Source: Own depiction in GIS

In the second stage, the required sample size was determined as the total number (1032) of primary schools in district Khyber (549) and district Mohmand (483) respectively. Keeping in mind the geographical dispersion of rural primary schools, time, financial and logistic limitations, and a total of 10% of the total school's population was selected as sample size

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(Huber and Helm, 2020). Thus, the total sample size remained 103 schools in both districts (see Table 3.1).

Proportional allocation sampling technique (Chaudhry, 1998; Chaudhry and Kamal, 2010) was adopted to select a proportionate sampling from each respective district with the help of the following formula.

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{N} * n \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \quad (3.1)$$

Where,

N_i = Total number of schools in ith district (given)

n_i = Number of sample schools in ith district (required)

n = Total sample size (103)

N = Total number of schools in the study area (1032)

By putting the values, the following proportionate sampling was drawn from each district. From the total 103 schools, 55 were selected from Khyber and 48 from Mohmand district, as below.

n_1 = 549/1032 x 103 = 55 (Khyber)

n_2 = 483/1032 x 103 = 48 (Mohmand)

In addition to school data, the study also requires data to be collected from households. Therefore, a total of 206 households were selected from each district: 110 households from Khyber and 96 sampled respondents from Mohmand district. Two households per school were randomly selected from each village. The sampling framework is provided in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.

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Table 3.1: Sample size determination

District	Total number of schools	Boys schools	Girls schools	Sample boys schools	Sample girls schools	Total sample schools	Sample size of HHs
Khyber	549	286	263	29	26	55	110
Mohmand	483	306	177	30	18	48	96
Total	1032	592	440	59	44	103	206

Source: Field Survey, 2022

After selection of the sample schools in each district through proportion allocation technique, another round of proportionate sampling technique was used to select proportionate number of boys and girls schools in each tehsil of the selected districts. The detailed break-up of the proportionate sampling technique in each respective district is provided in table 3.2 below. The table also shows the number of households to be selected from each tehsil in each respective district.

Table 3.2: Selection of the sampled schools in the study area

District	Tehsil	Total schools	Boys schools	Girls schools	Sample boys schools	Sample girls schools	Total sample schools	Sample House-holds
Khyber	Bara	252	116	136	12	13	25	50
	Jamrud	164	90	74	9	8	17	34
	Landi Kotal	133	80	53	8	5	13	26
Sub-total-1		***549***	***286***	***263***	***29***	***26***	***55***	***110***
Mohmand	Ambar	23	20	3	1	1	2	4

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	Baizai	73	60	13	6	1	7	14
	Eka Ghund	84	39	45	4	4	8	16
	Ghalanian	116	63	53	7	5	12	24
	Lakarai	94	63	31	6	3	9	18
	Paniali	57	42	15	4	2	6	12
	Prang Ghar	36	19	17	2	2	4	8
Sub-total-2		***483***	***306***	***177***	***30***	***18***	***48***	***96***
Total		**1032**	**592**	**440**	**59**	**44**	**103**	**206**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

3.3 Data sources and data collection

For this study primary data was collected from schools as well as from households in the research area. For the study purpose, two semi-structured questionnaires were formulated. Questionnaire-I *(Annexure-1)* was used to collect data from school heads. Questionnaire-II *(Annexure-2)* was used to collect data from household head.

3.4 Data analysis

After collecting data, data was analyzed using SPSS. Both descriptive as well as inferential statistics were used to test the hypothesis and address the research objectives. Descriptive analysis was used for summarizing the means and standard deviation as well percentage and frequency of the collected data. While inferential statistics is beneficial for studying the relationship between distinct variables and explaining the degree of change in the dependent variable owing to the independent variable, it is also useful for analyzing the relationship between different variables (Sekaran, 2006). The link between the dependent variable and the independent variables can be explained using inferential statistics. It can also be

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used to figure out how numerous independent factors affect the dependent variable. The analytical methodologies utilized in this investigation are detailed in the sections below, in order of the study's objectives.

Objective 1: *To identify the opportunities and challenges in equal access to inclusive and quality education for boys and girls in the study area.*

The above objective was assessed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were based on data collected from schools and households' heads.

Objective 2: *To find out the factors that increase the level of students' enrollment in the research area.*

To achieve the second objective, this study used the OLS regression analysis. The depended variable had student's enrollment (average number of the total enrollment in school in the last five years). Explanatory variables were teacher's availability, back up energy supply in case of load shedding, school's landscaping, new / renovated building, sufficient outdoor spaces, classroom facilities, hygienic sanitation facility. Data was collected from school heads. The estimated regression model is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 D_1 + \beta_3 D_2 + \beta_4 D_3 + \beta_5 D_4 + \beta_6 D_5 + \beta_7 D_6 + e_i \ldots (3.2)$$

Where;

Y= Students' enrollment (average of the total initial enrollment in school in the last five years)

X_1 = Teachers in school (Number)

D_1 = Back up energy supply such as UPS/Generator/Solar (Yes =1, No = 0)

D_2 = School's landscaping such as lawn/flowers (Yes =1, No = 0)

D_3 = New / renovated building (Yes =1, No = 0)

D_4= Sufficient outdoor spaces such as playground/ yard (Yes =1, No = 0)

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D_5= Classroom facilities such as board/tables/chairs (Yes =1, No = 0)

D_6 = Hygienic sanitation facilities such as toilets (Yes =1, No = 0)

e= error term

β_0= Co-efficient

Model : Students' enrollment

In this research, regression model was employed to uncover the intricate interplay between student's enrollment and a spectrum of explanatory variables. The focal point of this model was the dependent variable, representing student's enrollment. Specifically, it signifies the average total enrollment within the school over the preceding five years. The primary endeavor was to discern and quantify the impact of several pivotal explanatory variables i-e teacher's availability, back up energy supply in case of load shedding, school landscaping, new / renovated building, sufficient outdoor spaces, classroom facilities and hygienic facilities.

Results of diagnostic tests

Diagnostic tests of multicollinearity, Normality and Heteroscedasticity were applied which are as follows.

Multicollinearity

For Multicollinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance tests were used.

The hypothesis for the test are.

H_0: Multicollinearity is not present among the variables.

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H_1: Multicollinearity is present among the variables.

The findings presented in Table 4.1 demonstrate the results of the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance tests conducted to assess the presence of Multicollinearity. Tolerance measures the extent to which the independent variable is not represented by other independent variables, while the variance inflation factor is the reciprocal of the tolerance. The VIF values for all explanatory variables in this study were less than 5, indicating the absence of Multicollinearity in the proposed model thus we accept the null hypothesis that there is no multicollinearity among the variables.

Table 4.1: Tolerance and VIF Test of Multicollinearity

Explanatory Variables	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
Number of Teachers in school	.309	3.239
Backup Energy supply	.368	2.715
School's landscaping	.314	3.181
New / renovated building	.351	2.852
Sufficient outdoor spaces	.367	2.726
Classroom facilities	.497	2.011
Hygienic sanitation facilities	.369	2.713

Normality

In the realm of statistical analysis, ensuring data validity and reliability is of paramount importance. Prior to estimating student's enrollment and conducting multiple linear regression analysis, assessing the Normality of the variables used in the model is crucial. Normality, referring to the distribution of data points within each variable, forms a foundational assumption for various statistical tests, including linear regression. To evaluate this Normality, we employed the widely recognized Shapiro-Wilk test, which determines whether data within each variable adheres to a normal distribution characterized by attributes like symmetry and specific mean and standard deviation. Confirming Normality simplifies the application of statistical techniques and

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enhances the reliability of our research. The test operates on the null hypothesis that data follows a normal distribution. If the p-value exceeds the chosen significance level (usually 0.05), we accept the null hypothesis, signifying data conformity. Conversely, a p-value below the significance level leads to null hypothesis rejection, indicating significant deviation from normal distribution. By subjecting our dataset to the Shapiro-Wilk test, Normality assumptions were ensured, affirming the appropriateness of subsequent statistical analysis, including multiple linear regression (Razali and Wah 2011).

The hypothesis for the test are:

$H_{0:}$ *Data is normally distributed.*

$H_{1:}$ *Data is not normally distributed.*

Analysis shows that the p-value presented in Table 4.2 exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05. Consequently, we have made the informed decision to accept the null hypothesis while rejecting the alternate hypothesis. The null hypothesis posits that the data in question follows a normal distribution. This statistical result holds paramount importance as it validates our assumption of Normality, a crucial prerequisite for many statistical tests and procedures. This finding enhances the reliability of our statistical analysis, allowing for more robust and valid conclusions to be drawn from our data.

Table 4.2: Shapiro-Wilk test for Normality

Variable	Observation	SWT	Probability
Standardized Residual for Student's enrollment	103	0.99333	0.11419

The histogram depicted in Fig. 4.13 displays a bell-shaped curve. There is substantial evidence that our dataset aligns closely with the characteristic which suggests that the data is normally distributed.

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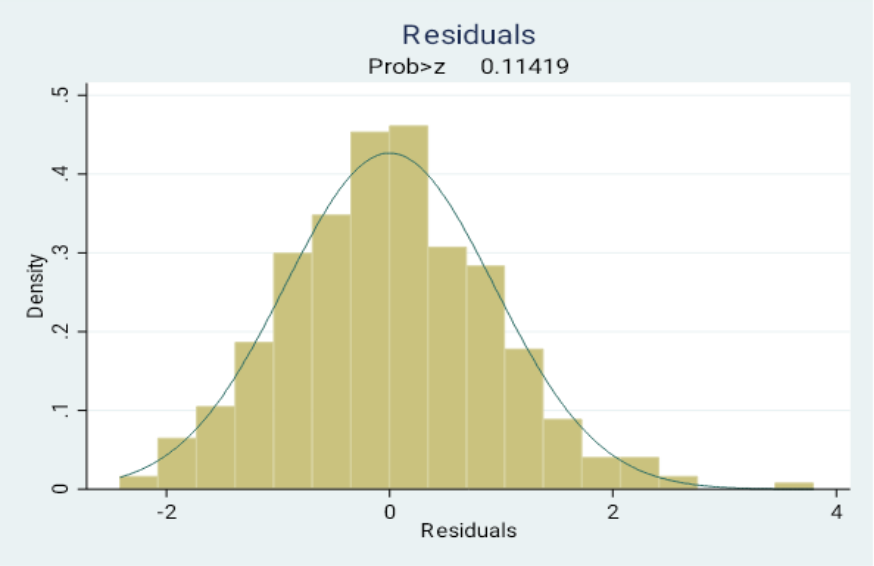

Figure 4.13: Histogram shows normal distribution of residuals

Heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Pagan test is used for checking problem of Heteroscedasticity and presence of variance.

The Hypothesis for test are:

H_0: *Heteroscedasticity is not present in the data.*

H_1: *Heteroscedasticity is present in the data.*

Table 4.3 indicated the assessed worth of the Breusch-Pagan test to check the issue of Heteroscedasticity and is utilized for an enormous sample size. The outcomes show that p-value is high than 0.05; hence we accept the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity so no occurrence of Heteroscedasticity in the data was observed.

Table 4.3: Breusch-Pagan Test for Heteroscedasticity

Heteroscedasticity	**Breusch-Pagan test**	**Sig**
	1.53	**0.1025**

Results of model I

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This study thoroughly investigated student enrollment trends within educational institutions over the past five years. The analysis delves into the key factors affecting students' enrollment, addressing both attraction and retention of students. Utilizing a robust statistical model and examining critical variables, the aim is to uncover the intricate dynamics of enrollment, providing valuable insights for institutions aiming to enhance their enrollment strategies and educational outcomes. The descriptive statistics of all variables (dependent as well as explanatory variables) are provided in Table 4.4 on the next page.

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistic of the variables used in model I.

Dependent variable	Mean/ proportion.	S.E.	Min.	Max.
Student's enrollment	0.82	21.39	32.75	145.50
Independent variables				
Number of Teachers in school	4.6	2.25	1	11
Back up energy supply	53.4			
School's landscaping	66.0			
New / renovated building	27.2			
Sufficient outdoor spaces	68.0			
Classroom facilities	14.6			
Hygienic sanitation facilities	30.1			

Sources: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4.4 provides a descriptive overview of the variables used in the analysis, with student enrollment as the focal point. The data reveals that the average student enrollment is 0.82, but what stands out is the significant variability indicated by a standard deviation of 21.39, encompassing a wide range from 32.75 percent to 145.50 percent. Among the independent

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variables, including teacher availability, back up energy supply, school's landscaping, New/ renovated building, sufficient outdoor spaces, classroom facilities and Hygienic sanitation facilities, the means are reported without accompanying standard deviations. Notably, teacher availability is an intriguing element with a mean of 4.6 and a standard deviation of 2.25, indicating a range from 1 to 11. These statistics provide the foundational data necessary for an in-depth regression analysis, aiming to discern the relationships and significance of the independent variables in shaping student enrollment. The substantial standard deviation in student enrollment underscores the considerable variation in enrollment figures across schools, making teacher availability an especially promising aspect for closer investigation in the subsequent analytical phases.

Table 4.5: Results of Multiple Linear Regression Model for Student's Enrollment

Explanatory variables	β	S.E	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	80.158	8.295	9.664	.000
Number of Teachers in school	4.119	.584	7.049	.000
Backup Energy supply	.297	2.411	.123	.902
School's landscaping	5.605	2.748	2.039	.044
New / renovated building	3.202	2.771	1.156	.251
Sufficient outdoor spaces	5.267	2.583	2.039	.044
Classroom facilities	8.368	2.934	2.852	.005
Hygienic sanitation facilities	12.564	2.621	4.794	.000
N= 103 R^2 = .68 F-stat = 87.936 P-value = 0.000				

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Table 4.5 indicates the assessed consequence of the multiple linear regression model. Estimated Result of the Regression model of the student's enrollment with different explanatory variables. Similarly, the estimated result shows the coefficient of teacher availability is 3.202. It is significant at 5 percent. The result indicates a positive relationship between teacher availability and student enrollment. It also shows that when the number of teacher increases, student's enrollment has increases by 3.202. The result indicates a positive relationship between teacher availability and student's enrollment in the research area. However, the coefficient of energy backup is 0.297, and it is insignificant at 5 percent. The result shows a positive relationship between student's enrollment and energy backup. If other variables are kept constant, if energy backup increases in schools, the number of student enrollment will increase by 0.297 and it is insignificant at 5 percent. The result shows that there is a positive relationship between student's enrollment and energy backup in the study area. In a study conducted by (Kim et al., 2020) within a different educational context, a similar investigation into the relationship between energy backup and student enrollment was undertaken. Their multiple linear regression analysis revealed a coefficient of 0.259 for energy backup, which was also statistically insignificant, aligning with the findings reported in the current study. While, the coefficient of school's landscaping is 5.267, while its p-value is 0.044 which is significant at 5 percent. The result indicates a positive relationship between student's enrollment and school landscaping, and it also shows that if landscaping increases in the schools the student's enrollment will be increased by 5.267. The result shows a positive relationship between school landscaping and student's enrollment in the study area, if other variables are kept constant. In a distinct study conducted by (Chan et al., 2021) in a different educational context, a comparable relationship between landscaping and student's enrollment was explored. Employing a multiple linear regression model, they discovered a statistically significant positive coefficient for landscaping, mirroring the findings elucidated in the current research. The coefficient of building facility is 0.039, which is significant at 5 percent. It indicates that there is a positive relationship between building facilities and student enrollment. The result shows that when Building facility availability increases and construction of new building has increases, the student's enrollment have increased

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by 0.039 in the study area, if other variables remain constant. The result also shows that there is a positive relationship between Building facility and student's enrollment. According to the table the coefficient of outdoor spaces is 5.267, which is significant at 5 percent significance level. The result shows a positive relationship between student enrollment and outdoor facilities. If outdoor facilities increase in educational institutes the number of student's enrollment will be increased. The result shows that there is a positive relationship between student enrollment and outdoor facilities in the research area. In a study by (Patel et al., 2019) conducted in a different geographical region, a similar pattern emerged concerning the relationship between student's enrollment and outdoor facilities in educational institutions. Their analysis, which employed a multiple linear regression model, revealed a significant positive coefficient for outdoor facilities, aligning with the findings presented in the current study. However, the result indicates that the coefficient of classroom facility is 8.368, which is significant at 5 percent. The result shows a positive relationship between student enrollment and classroom facilities. If a classroom facility in schools increased by 8.368 increased will occur in student's enrollment in the research area, the result shows that there is a positive relationship between the classroom facility and the student's enrollment. As we have multiple explanatory variables in the model, the standardize coefficient (Beta) showed the relative importance of each independent variable. However, similar study conducted by (Lee et al., 2018) in a different educational context, a positive relationship between student's enrollment and classroom facility was observed. According to the table, the coefficient of hygiene facility is 12.564 and it is highly significant (0.000) at 5 percent significance level. The relationship shows that if other variables are kept constant, when hygiene facility increases in the schools Student's enrollment will be increases. The results indicated a positive relationship between student's enrollment and hygiene facility in the study area. In a parallel study conducted in a different region, they employed a multiple linear regression model to assess the impact of various explanatory variables on student's enrollment. Their findings align with the results presented in Table 4.10 of this study. Specifically, in their analysis, the coefficient of hygiene facility also exhibited a statistically significant positive relationship with student's enrollment (Garcia et al., 2020).

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The R^2 value was .680, which shows that 68 percent variations in the dependent variable were clarified by the explanatory variables included in the model. The F statistic was 87.93, which is higher than the standard value (0.05), revealed that the general model was significant, with a p-value (0.000). Similarly (Garcia et al., 2019). Also found and concluded that student's enrolment is positive and has significant result.

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