THE IMPACT OF GRADE RETENTION ON THE SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS

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The Impact of Grade Retention

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Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education with Specialization in Primary Education at the Department of Education, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi

Department of Education
Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi
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FORWARDING SHEET

The thesis entitled ‘The Impact of Grade Retention on the Self-Esteem and Academic Performance of the Students’ submitted by Bushra Iqbal Chohan in partial fulfillment of the requirement of PhD Degree in Education has been completed under our guidance and supervision. We are satisfied with the quality of her research work.

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Dated: ___________________
DECLARATION

I Bushra Iqbal Chohan daughter of Professor (retd) Javed Iqbal Chohan registered as Student of PhD at Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi do hereby solemnly declare that the thesis entitled ‘The Impact of Grade Retention on the Self-Esteem and Academic Performance of the Students’ submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement of PhD Degree in Education is my original work, except where otherwise acknowledged in the text and has not been submitted or published earlier and shall not in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any degree from this or any other university or institution.

Dated: ______________________  

__________________________  
(Bushra Iqbal Chohan)
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ABSTRACT

This mixed method study examines the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and self-esteem of the students. For the quantitative part, the students of grade four in public schools of Rawalpindi city were taken as the study sample. Initially, this sample was divided into two main groups, i.e. identified poor performers and the normal group of students. After annual examinations, the former group was further divided in two subgroups on the basis of results, i.e. Repeaters Sample and Identified Poor but Promoted Sample. A multiphase panel study was designed to collect quantitative data. The data related to academic performance was collected by locally developed tests of the five subjects taught in grade four of the public schools of the Punjab. The self-esteem of the students was measured through Urdu translation of Beck Youth Inventory for Self-Concept of Children (BSCI-Y). A series of analysis were performed with quantitative data to analyze the variations in academic performance and self-esteem of all the three groups. A group of experienced school teachers teaching at primary level in public schools of Rawalpindi city were selected as the key informants of qualitative aspect of the study. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with participant teachers. The first part of the interview was nested in the study, while the second part was triangulated with quantitative findings in order to verify and strengthen the results. The two sets of data were collected concurrently, whereas the triangulation of both types was carried out after the completion of the analysis stage. The findings of the study suggested that there was significant positive impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the repeaters, whereas the impact on self-esteem was found considerably negative. However, the academic performance of the repeaters was not significantly greater than those of the identified poor but promoted group and normal group.
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<td>AP</td>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EST</td>
<td>Elementary School Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBPS</td>
<td>Government Boys Primary School</td>
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<td>GGPS</td>
<td>Government Girls Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>GGES</td>
<td>Government Girls Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>Government Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoP</td>
<td>Government of Pakistan</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>Primary School Teacher</td>
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<td>PTC</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
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<td>SLC</td>
<td>School Leaving Certificate</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SST</td>
<td>Secondary School Teacher</td>
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to give a rationale of the whole research process and other important pre-requisites of the study along with an overview phenomenon of grade retention and its contribution in assessment and learning process. With the backdrop of these details, the rest of the chapter is organized as follows:

i. The role of grade retention is discussed in the context of Primary Education system in Pakistan.

ii. The past and present educational policies and development plans were reviewed with reference to the phenomenon of grade retention.

iii. The rationale for the study of 4th grade repeaters in Pakistani education system is discussed in detail.

iv. The problem statement, along with other requirements of the study including research design and the brief outline of the thesis chapters are elaborated.

v. The findings of the study are summarized in the end of the chapter.
1.2 Grade Retention: An Overview

Assessments are an essential component of instructional process. Assessment process helps the teachers and educationists to make judgments about students’ academic performance. The success of any education system directly depends on the efficient practice of its assessment process. For effective functioning of the instructional process, the teachers require certain information regarding the levels of students’ achievement. Through this process, the teacher can locate the under achievers and also the students who are capable and ready for the next class.

The formal process of learning has evolved from the experience of thousands of years. Historical evidence has revealed that

The earliest classrooms were those of the Sumerian civilization, from which the clay tablets on which students practiced their writing have been recovered. --- The long history of educational assessment can be dated from at least 2200 BC when the Mandarins set up a civil-service testing program. ---For the most part oral examinations (viva voce) were used until the late 1800s to evaluate achievement (Athanasou & Lamprianou, 2005, p. 5).

The basic aim of these assessments was to determine the academic achievements of the pupils. As a consequence of these assessments, the students were placed in a “pass” and “fail” category. Those who had passed move on to the next level, while those who failed were compelled to repeat the same grade or leave the system. In this way, the students have been retained since the days of the earlier formal schooling. More or less the same practice is seen in the modern schooling. “The debate over the effectiveness of grade retention continues since those days” (Tomchin & Impara, 1992, p.200).
A fundamental characteristic of modern schooling is the homogeneity of children in a class in respect of mental capability and age. Transitions through the grades are primarily based on mental capability of the child, but, due to individual differences, all children do not progress at the same rate. This fact forces the educationists to think about how to manage the growing inequality of academic status among the students. One option is to continue the traditional policy of grade retention. Under this policy, students showing poor academic performance are retained in their existing grade rather than being promoted to the next grade. The major aim of retention is considered to improve academic performance by giving children, who are not ready for promotion, an extra year to develop adequate academic skills. Such a policy is often justified as an essential practice for maintaining grade level standards and accountability of students. Due to this policy, the heterogeneity of age within one grade is increased, but a homogenous environment in respect of academic achievement is created within classroom, thus making the instruction practices more efficient.

Grade retention in the early elementary grades, particularly, is often considered as beneficial for child’s socialization and emotional growth in their academic environment. This policy is still seen as a controversial practice in most education systems, both in developed and developing countries. Educationists presented convincing arguments regarding this controversy. Theorists in the field of Education who favored this policy argued that grade retention should not be considered as a disaster (Tomchin & Impara, 1992; Gottfredson, Fink, & Graham, 1994). Moreover, in daily life experiences, the academic success is not a guarantee of a successful career, for instance there are many cases where people who, faced failure at school, did well in later life and become
successful. But this plea does not mean that causes of academic failure and consequences of grade retention do not require explanation or remedy.

In majority of the education systems, grade retention is taken as a best possible solution for student’s poor academic performance. The main purpose of grade retention is still considered to help the low-achieving students by giving them extra time so that they can improve their academic ability. School administration takes retention decision in the benefit of the child, while still holding him/her self responsible for the failure. These beliefs continue to be generally accepted, despite the research evidence indicating the harmful effects of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the students (Pomplun, 1988; Westbury, 1994; Trethewey, 1999; Anderson, 2000; Stearns, Moller, Blau, & Potochnick, 2007).

Educators defend implementation of grade retention policy in early grades on the basis that continually passing low-achieving students only increases the academic problem for them. When these students arrive at high school, they are totally unprepared to fulfill the needs of higher classes. Westbury (1994) argued that “at primary grades, mere failing a student at primary level does nothing to improve high school readiness” (p.249).

The cost-effectiveness of grade retention is also controversial. Research studies reveal that the cost of completion of a primary cycle of students increase due to this policy. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) were of the view that “grade retention is very expensive way of organizing the learning process, it is nevertheless inappropriate to assume that repetition is pure waste” (p.126). Literature has revealed that even most negative research evidence did not necessarily prove that grade retention is totally useless.
or harmful for students. Many educationists argued that grade retention should not be considered a universal remedy, even though in most societies it has been used as such. It is often expected that repeating a grade is ensured success for the child with an abnormally low intelligence quotient or for the emotionally disturbed, brain damaged, or for a handicapped child. There is no doubt that grade retention provides extra time to immature students and helps them to get ready for the extra work of the next grade. Despite the fact that merely repeating the same content can certainly decrease the pressure upon the child and thus improves his/her learning, it should not be expected that grade retention can alleviate all problems related to poor achievement of the students. Educators must seek alternatives to grade retention that correct learning problems at primary level, and hold students through high school graduation.

Opponents of grade retention proposed various arguments for defending their position. They were of the view that grade retention is not an effective school practice and the students do not show better results after repeating (Westbury, 1994). While some others argued that it harms children emotionally; they are forced to face disappointment and failure (Pomplun, 1988; Trethewey, 1999; Chetcuti & Griffiths, 2002). As a consequence of grade retention, they are compelled to adapt socially with children younger than themselves. Still others have opinion that parents also do not accept their children’s failure, as in most societies, children's success in school is considered as a status symbol.

Moreover, there is research evidence that in developing countries, grade retention is considered as one of the major cause of dropping out of students at primary level (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991; Mehrotra, 1998; Roderick, 1994; Wils, 2004; Roderick &
Nagaoka, 2005). A research study by Mosha (1988) revealed that educators considered grade retention as an efficiency oriented issue in Tanzania and expressed dissatisfaction with its high rate in country. Repeating a grade at primary level enhances the probability of dropping out in developing countries, and thus acts as a major hindrance in the universalization of primary education.

The phenomenon of dropout has long term negative consequences on the individual life as well as at national level. When a large number of children do not complete primary education, the labor force production, and the reservoir of human potential from which society and the economy can benefit are all necessarily constrained. The incidence of high grade retention is an indication that the education system is not functioning well, and the school quality is insufficient. High rates of repetition have also the effect of slowing down the flow of students through a school system. When a child fails and is retained in the same grade, the resource input invested in his/her schooling during the past year in the same grade is considered a waste. The Global Monitoring Report (Education for All) (2009) argued that repetition is a source of inequity and it increases financial pressure on low-income families (UNESCO, 2008). At present, the greatest challenge to primary education in a developing country such as Pakistan is to achieve budgetary savings along with maintaining school quality and efficiency. Consistent with this view, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) proposed that “reducing the repetition rate could substantially lower the cost of producing each primary school graduate in low and lower middle income countries” (p.183).
A number of research studies indicated that grade retention is harmful for children’s social and emotional development; damages their self-image and academic self-concept. Research studies also showed that grade retention upholds discipline problems in schools and has a negative effect on the student’s self-esteem (Anderson, 2000; Stearns et al., 2007). Similar studies also reported that grade retention did not seem to improve academic achievement, but did appear to have adverse affects on the child’s self-image and on his/her popularity with other children. It is thus suggested that good academic performance plays an important role in developing self-concept and recognition among peer groups especially during childhood and preadolescence. McMartin (1995) stated that “failure in school plays a significant role in forming a negative self-image” (p.68). Repeaters often do not get the social support or appreciation of the regularly promoted students. As a result, they become more reserved and unfriendly with their class fellows. Grade retention often results in depression and discouragement resulting in child’s distrust in his/her ability and very often leads to probability of further failure. On the other hand, a number of research studies found that retained students became considerably more attached to school than their promoted peers and improved behavior during the year following the retention decision is reported (Gottfredson et al., 1994; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1996).

1.2.1 Grade Retention and Primary Education System in Pakistan

The formal primary education system in Pakistan is derived from the model of the primary education system in industrialized Britain. Since independence, various efforts have been made by the Government of Pakistan and the private sector to develop the system in accordance with national, social, ideological and economic needs of the
country. However, the national and international statistical reports revealed that the progress of primary education in the country is still not satisfactory (UNESCO, 2008; AEPAM, 2009; Government of Pakistan [GoP], 2006-a). The transplantation of the primary education model from an industrialized country into an agrarian society has been one of the main reasons for the restrictive progress of primary education in Pakistan.

1.2.1.1 The Basic Structure of Primary Education System

The formal primary school model in Pakistan has single point entry. The children are admitted to school at the age of 5 plus. The primary cycle is completed in 5 years. A child enters school in nursery class even if he/she is above the age required for nursery. Every enrolled child must attend full-time school hours. The primary education system in Pakistan emphasizes the custodial care of children whose parents are responsible for earning the living and are not expecting any help from the young children. Therefore, it is not possible in the current education system in Pakistan for the child to leave school for household chores at some stage and join school again in a class appropriate to age and attainment.

There are three main examinations in addition to monthly and weekly ones taken in the public primary schools of Pakistan. The academic year is divided in three terms and at the end of each term the performance of the students is evaluated through some kind of assessment system. An annual examination is taken at the end of the academic year. The examinations are mostly descriptive and objective type that are administered, and scored by the respective teacher. There is no established grading system in internal examinations of schools but the pass percentage is 33 % in each of the respective subjects.
The aim of the annual examination is to determine the educational achievements of the pupils and to identify the students who are able to move on to the next grade, and also those who should repeat the same class. Thus, the promotion to next class and grade retention depends on the results of the annual examination.

**1.2.1.2 Major Providers of Primary Education**

There are two major providers of primary education in Pakistan, i.e. the public and the private sector. The public sector includes the Federal Ministry of Education and provincial Departments of Education (DoE). As primary education is the constitutional responsibility of the provinces in Pakistan, so the DoE is considered as the major service provider of primary education in all provinces. The Federal Ministry of Education (MoE) is providing educational facilities to Federally Administered Northern and Tribal Areas (FATA and FANA) and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) as well as acts as a coordinating and advisory authority for policy-making and establishing guidelines on basic curriculum in Pakistan (AEPAM, 2005).

The public sector has provided access to schools and better educational facilities to poor people (World Bank, 2007). The curriculum for primary classes in public schools is practically uniform throughout the country. The medium of instruction is mostly the national language or some regional language of the area concerned. There are also English medium schools in the public sector. National Education Census [NEC], (2005) revealed that “public sector institutions predominantly (68.3 %) follow Urdu as medium of instruction followed by 22.4 % of Sindhi medium of instruction. Only 1.4 % has English as medium of Instruction” (GoP, 2006-a, p.3).
The private sector has played a key role in the promotion of primary education since independence in 1947 till the promulgation of National Education Policy 1972. “Before partition, 42.6% primary schools were in the private sector” (AEPAM, 2004, p.6). As a result of implementation of the 1972 policy, “19,432” privately managed educational institutions were nationalized (AEPAM, 2004, p.7). The National Education Policy (1992) affirmed that “the nationalization process of the people’s government when all private institutions were acquired by the government completely eliminated the private sector from education” (GoP, 1992, p.55). The National Education Policy (1979) analyzed the effects of nationalization and realized that encouragement of private sector is necessary for the improvement of poor participation rates in different education levels, as government alone cannot carry the burden of whole education system (GoP, 1979). In this way, the private sector has regained its vitality since the early 1980’s. The number of private primary and elementary schools has increased dramatically in the 1990’s and in 2005; there were 10,108 private primary schools and 17,363 elementary schools in the Punjab (GoP, 2006-a, p.102). After the breakdown of nationalization policy, all subsequent education policies encouraged the involvement of private sector in the quantitative and qualitative expansion of education in Pakistan. Most of the private schools followed “Federal or Provincial approved curricula with Oxford books” (AEPAM, 2004, p.56). According to NEC (2005) “57.2% private institutions in Pakistan follow Urdu as medium of instruction and 28.4% institutions follow English” (GoP, 2006-a, p.3). A wide range of variety is seen in private sector institutions as it includes very costly institutions such as Beaconhouse School System to simple operations in small
rented houses. The quality of private schools also varies widely but the general public often perceives them as offering better quality of education and often makes sacrifices in everyday living and saves money in order to enroll their children in these institutions.

In addition to this, some Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations have also established educational institutions, both under the formal and non-formal systems (UNESCO, 1999, p.17). These NGO’s provide assistance in the promotion of primary education in Pakistan. Most of the NGO’s are supplying education facilities to disadvantaged population on non-profit basis and funded by foreign donor agencies.

Parallel to the formal school system, there are Deeni Madaris imparting religious education based on the Quran, the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad- peace be upon him), Islamic jurisprudence, logic, etc. According to the report of National Education Census 2005, there are 5,300 Deeni Madaris in the Punjab province (GoP, 2006-b, p.23). “The majority of Madaris are fulltime institutions where free accommodation, books and all basic necessities are being provided to the students” (AEPAM, 2006, p.13). They have their “own curriculum, admission policies and their main source of income is charity and assistance provided by the local communities” (AEPAM, 2004, P.7). The primary level of religious education is called “Ibtedaiya” (AEPAM, 2006, p.6).

1.2.2 Grade Retention and Education Policies in Pakistan

The significant role of primary education was recognized by the founding fathers of independent Pakistan, and Universal Primary Education [UPE] was established as a
major goal at the first National Education Conference in 1947 (GoP, 1948). This goal dominated throughout the history of education policies. The Education statistics of different periods since independence revealed that this goal has proved an unrealistic expectation. The various governments had taken many initiatives in order to improve the state of primary education in the country. Most of the planning was carried out without proper understanding of the ground realities. The mere abolition of fees or providing more schools could not meet the needs of a large number of children from low-income families which are the majority in Pakistan. The drop-out problem together with the phenomenon of grade retention, are aggravating the problem of continuing wastage of educational resources and the inefficiency of primary education system. These problems need serious consideration. More has to be done in order to improve the quantity and quality of primary education, than what the governments have been doing until now.

The achievement of UPE has been an official objective in Pakistan almost since the country was founded. The achievement of this goal is always considered vital in all policies with its inherent belief that without UPE, the country cannot reduce poverty; improve social services and economic growth. Consequently, the focus was on maximizing the enrolment ratios at primary level. Still, the efforts to achieve “Education for All” have focused heavily on getting children enrolled in school, rather than on improving either completion rates or student learning outcomes. Increasing access to schools is an important step towards universalization of primary education, but it is equally important to ensure the pupils’ smooth progress through grades and complete primary cycle. Educational planners in Pakistan have continuously neglected the consequences of grade retention in policies and development plans. As a result of this
The Impact of Grade Retention

negligence, the education policies and plans did not achieve their objectives, and the
target dates and strategies for achieving UPE have moved with each new national
education policy. The initial target of attaining UPE in 1967, fixed in 1947, has been now
postponed to the year 2015 in agreement with the Millennium Development Goals, and in
this way the goal of UPE is now 48 years behind what was originally planned.

Education policies in Pakistan have undergone many changes based on lessons learned
from experience. All education policies recognized, high dropout rate at primary level as
a limitation that obstructed universalization of primary education, but these documents
did not mention the phenomenon of grade retention as a main reason of high dropout
rates. However, the report of the Commission on National Education 1959 realized this
fact and stated on page 171 “one of the major contributing factor in the dropping out of
children from school is the practice of forcing them to repeat classes”. The commission
recommended the promotion of children to the next class by age rather than by results in
the end of year. It is further stated by giving a very comprehensive strategy:

Unless such a measure (automatic promotion) is adopted progressively in
our schools(with the rare exception for the very retarded child), we risk
clogging the first two classes with backward and overage children, once
compulsion is introduced and having few or no places free for the new
comers. We strongly recommend that this matter should be seriously
studied by departments. Applied with intelligence, it will be found that
such a promotion policy will go far to reduce the number of withdrawal
from schools and make the introduction of compulsory attendance a
reality. A headmaster should reserve the power, however to hold back up
to say four children out of a class of forty. Any greater number should be
held back only with the agreement of the inspector. This will be sufficient
power to enforce continued work by the children (GoP, 1959, p. 171).

The National Education Policy 2009 admitted that “repeat rates are an important measure
of internal efficiency of the education system, and the overall repeat rates for Grades 1 to
5 are between 2.1 to 2.6 and typically highest for Grade 1 and Grade 5” (GoP, 2009, p.69), but this policy did not offer any specific measure to improve the situation.

On the basis of the review of all education policies in Pakistan, it can be inferred that, almost all policies, except the report of the commission, 1959, ignored intentionally or unintentionally, the consequences of the grade retention on the academic performance and psychological wellbeing of children and especially on the dropout rate at primary stage.

1.2.3 Grade Retention and Development Plans in Pakistan

Primary education has been given proper weight in all five-year development plans. Adequate financial resources have been allocated in every plan for the development of primary education. But, every successive five-year plan is preceded by dissatisfactory comments about the lack of achievement of the previous plan’s targets especially in relation to primary education.

The careful review of all successive development plans revealed that the phenomenon of dropout is a major responsible factor for poor state of primary education in Pakistan. The first and second developmental plans gave no suggestions about reducing the dropout rate (GoP, 1956, GoP, 1961), but the third plan (1965-70) suggested that the dropout phenomenon can be minimized by taking vigorous measures to improve the quality of primary education, such as improving the quality of teacher training and syllabus (GoP, 1965, p.187). The fourth plan (1970-75) also recognized that poor quality of education is responsible for high dropout rate in Pakistan (GoP, 1970, p.153). The plan recommendations “became irrelevant to the conditions prevailing in Pakistan after
December 1971, but no other plan was adopted in its place, instead planning was made on yearly basis” (GoP, 1978, P.2). The fifth plan (1978-83) “marks a fundamental reordering of national priorities in favor of primary education….among other things, the fifth plan envisages a reduction in dropout rate in primary education” (GoP, 1978, p.147).

The sixth plan 1983-88 stated that “a major problem that affects the quality of education and results in high dropout rates is the curriculum in primary schools” (GoP, 1983, p.387). The seventh plan 1988-93 explained the major reason of high dropout rate is poverty (GoP, 1988). Similarly the eighth plan (1993-98) also indicated that unattractive school environment, uninteresting curricula, harsh attitude of teachers and poverty are the main reasons of high dropout rate at primary level (GoP, 1993, p.300). And lastly the Ten-year perspective development plan (2001-11) recommends without giving the major reasons of dropout, that “dropout rate will be reduced by improving the efficiency of the system through better supervision, administration and involvement of local communities at district/tehsil level” (GoP, 2001, p.143).

In short, every plan stated the major reasons of dropout, but did not mentioned the grade retention as a major reason of dropout of children from school, despite the fact that most of the research studies indicated that grade retention is a major reason of dropout (Roderick, 1994; Gomes-Neto and Hanushek, 1994; Mehrotra, 1998).

### 1.2.4 Contemporary Promotion Policy in the Punjab

In 2003, Government of the Punjab issued an order\(^1\) to all public schools, according to which, the schools were compelled to promote all the children till grade three for

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\(^1\) Despite numerous requests to headmistresses of public primary and elementary schools, and concerned officers of Directorate of Education, Rawalpindi, the copy of this order could not be provided by these officials. Although, every
achieving the target of universal primary education and reduce dropout rate at primary level. This policy is still practiced. The students of first three grades are being promoted without any assessment, although there are some special cases where retention is considered very necessary and allowed such as serious illness or immaturity etc, but no child repeats the early three grades due to slow learning. As a result of this policy, the pupils who have not acquired the desired learning standard for the next grade are also promoted along with better performers. When these poor performers reach grade four, most of them are retained in the same grade, because at the end of primary level, all students of grade five have to appear in final departmental examination for promotion to grade six. This examination increases the pressure especially on low-achieving schools to retain the low-scoring children at grade four. If the weak students are also promoted to grade five, there will be a greater probability of their failure in the final departmental examination and in turn negatively affect the school result at departmental level. But, nobody is concerned about these repeaters that what happens to them in the class rooms throughout the “repeated year” as a consequence of poor implementation strategies of educational policies. Most of these repeaters drop out from school as a result of continuous insulting behavior and unfair treatment by the teachers and their class fellows.

The national statistics of Primary Education in Pakistan presented by the Ministry of Education, Islamabad, also reveal that grade retention is the major cause of dropout and other problems related to quality of education at primary level.

person had acknowledged that the order of automatic promotion for first three primary grades was circulated in 2003 by the Primary Education department, Government of the Punjab, Lahore
Table 1.1: Dropout Rates by Grade and Gender at Primary Level for Public Sector Institutions (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Dropout Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Grade I and II</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Grade II and III</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Grade III and IV</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Between Grade IV and V</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Dropout Rate from Grade I-V</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As depicted by the Table 1.1, the report of National Education Census, 2005 showed that the dropout rate between grade four to five is 8.5 % that is much higher than grade two to four, i.e.3.7 % and 5.0 %. The current practice of promotion policy in primary education system is said to be one of the possible causes of this high dropout rate at grade four. This fact is also described by the highest number of repeaters at primary level by the data taken from two latest consecutive reports of Pakistan Education Statistics as revealed in Table 1.2 and 1.3 respectively.

Table 1.2: Enrolment Statistics at primary level in public schools of the Punjab (2006-07)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Enrolment</th>
<th>Repeaters</th>
<th>% of Repeaters compared to total Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>787,338</td>
<td>717,569</td>
<td>1,504,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>709,367</td>
<td>614,806</td>
<td>1,324,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>630,368</td>
<td>521,230</td>
<td>1,151,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>570,878</strong></td>
<td><strong>450,270</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,021,148</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>458,557</td>
<td>365,159</td>
<td>823,716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Table 1.2 presented the statistics (2006-07) of repeaters at different grades and the total enrolment at primary level of the public schools of the Punjab. It is well
The Impact of Grade Retention

demonstrated that highest number of repeaters was present in grade four. Similar results
are revealed by Table 1.3 that presents the statistics of the year 2007-08.

Table 1.3: Enrolment Statistics at primary level in the public schools of the Punjab
(2007-08)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>grade</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Repeaters compared to total Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>`773,149</td>
<td>706,190</td>
<td>1,479,339</td>
<td>26,450</td>
<td>25,505</td>
<td>51,955</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>689,326</td>
<td>605,212</td>
<td>1,294,538</td>
<td>18,567</td>
<td>18,180</td>
<td>36,747</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>620,915</td>
<td>537,394</td>
<td>1,158,309</td>
<td>15,460</td>
<td>15,658</td>
<td>31,118</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>563,814</td>
<td>462,829</td>
<td>1,026,643</td>
<td>26,468</td>
<td>19,904</td>
<td>46,372</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>451,051</td>
<td>360,549</td>
<td>811,600</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08, AEPAM, 2009

Table 1.3 also reveals that, the maximum number of students repeat grade four as
compared to the other grades of primary level in the public schools of the Punjab.

This huge difference is certainly due to the policy of automatic promotion till grade three
along with final departmental examinations at the end of grade five.

Keeping in view all the official statistics regarding total enrolment, repetition and
dropout rate of the public schools, it is clearly evident that the existing governmental
policy and attitude of the schools’ administration towards slow learners badly affects the
performance of 4th grade students. Furthermore, the educational resources supplied to the
public schools especially at primary level in Pakistan are limited, such policies restrict the
entry of the out of school children in the education system, whose educational potential
and performance might be better than that of the repeaters and drop-outs.
In Pakistan, where poverty is a major social problem, when a student fails in some grade, his/her parents do not agree to spend money for an extra year. As a result, majority of the students leave the school, thus increasing dropout rate. Besides this, those who repeat the same grade are subject to continuous criticism of fellow students as well as teachers because primary grade teachers in Pakistan are generally unaware of the self-esteem and other emotional factors having significant effects on the personality of students.

There is a need to identify the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and self-esteem of retained children, especially in the context of a developing country like Pakistan. Research studies are still not clear about the promotion or retention of students having serious difficulties. Research evidence has revealed that “students were most often exposed to the same material used in the previous year” (Stone & Engel, 2007, p.605). Substantial special help is rarely provided to repeating pupils; instead, they are recycled through a program that was inappropriate for them the first time and that may be equally inappropriate and less interested for the second time also. On the other hand, it is also not clearly known that a student having serious difficulties in one grade can be expected to perform better in the next grade, if merely promoted to the next grade.

On the basis of above discussion, it is concluded that grade retention is still a controversial practice and is needed to be further discussed and studied especially in the context of Pakistani education system. Therefore, the present study is designed to conduct a thorough investigation on the possible negative or positive effects of grade retention in terms of academic performance and self-esteem of students of grade four in public schools of the Punjab province. Overall, this dissertation would be helpful to pinpoint

The Impact of Grade Retention
issues related to grade retention and to develop interventions to handle the problem effectively in the primary education system of a developing country like Pakistan where the problem of dropout is still a big hurdle in the way of achieving the goal of universal primary education.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The broader aim of this dissertation was to study the academic performance and self-esteem of students of fourth grade who were not promoted to next class due to poor academic performance and other learning difficulties along with those who were borderline students and recommended for retention, but did hard work in the final term and were promoted to the next grade. In addition to this, it was proposed to investigate the main reasons of failure of students at primary level in the economically deprived localities.

It was further intended to identify through empirical evidence, the positive or negative impact of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the students by comparing the self-esteem and academic performance of the repeaters of grade four with those students who are promoted to the next grade despite having learning difficulties and also by the behavioral changes of the retained students in the two times, the year they “fail” and the year they “repeat” fourth grade.

At the same time, another group of students with better academic performance in the internal assessment system was also compared with the major group of poor performers through the same instruments. The purpose of this comparison was to verify the accuracy
of the results of the major part of the study as well as the validity and reliability of the outcomes revealed by results of the study sample.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine the impact of grade retention on students' academic performance and self-esteem. On the basis of a review of the relevant issues in the literature, specific research objectives of this study were to:

1. Investigate the major factors of grade retention of students at primary level.
2. Find the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the fourth grade students.
3. Identify the impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the fourth grade students.
4. Find out the immediate impact of failure of students of grade four on their self-esteem.
5. Explore the relationship between the self-esteem and the academic performance of the students.

1.5 The Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses stated below were based on theoretical reasoning and results from previous studies, as explained in the method and conceptual framework of this study later in the methodological section. For the quantitative part of the study, the researcher made the following predictions:

1. Grade retention has negative impact on the self-esteem of the students of grade four.
2. Grade retention has negative impact on the academic performance of the students of grade four.

3. There is negative immediate impact of failure of students of grade four on their self-esteem.

4. There is positive relationship between the self-esteem and the academic performance of the students.

1.6 The Research Questions

The research questions were added along with hypotheses as “mixed method studies need to have both research questions and hypotheses to narrow and focus the problem statement” (Creswell, 2003, p. 114). It was realized after reviewing the relevant literature for formulating the research proposal of the present study, that the second and third objective needed further strength and verification from qualitative data along with quantitative one. Therefore, the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the repeaters was further explored with the perceptions of the primary grade teachers through their in-depth interviews. With the help of open-ended interviews of the participants, questions were asked related to attitudes of repeaters. Thus, for achieving second and third objective, along with quantitative hypotheses, one major section of the qualitative part including a number of questions related to attitude of repeaters regarding their studies, class fellow and teachers were included in the study. Likewise, the first objective was achieved by the qualitative aspect of the study. Therefore, a separate section was included in qualitative part particularly related to this objective. In this way, the major questions raised during the interview process were:
1. What are the major reasons of grade retention of primary grade students specifically in the context of public primary and elementary schools of the Punjab?

2. What type of significant changes, teachers observe in the attitude of primary grade repeaters after failure, with respect to their studies, teachers and class fellows?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is particularly significant for teachers of primary level, who consider it necessary to retain the children at grade four in order to show better results at final examination of grade five. The study will provide a clear knowledge of the consequences of grade retention in relation to both the academic performance and psychological wellbeing of the students of primary grades. It will explore if short term benefits may have long term harmful effects on students’ personality. On the other hand, if findings reveal that grade retention is helpful in some special circumstances, and succeeds in improving students’ abilities without harming them psychologically and emotionally, this fact should also be recognized.

The findings of the study will be helpful for policy makers at primary level, who do not realize the consequences of poor implementation of automatic promotion policy as well as unnecessary retention of students. The findings may be of great use to overcome the drawbacks and weaknesses of the existing practices in primary education system and develop a better policy for reducing dropout rate and improving primary education system in Pakistan.
This study will also be very helpful for parents who are not concerned about the importance of education and often remain busy in family engagements. They do not encourage their children to work hard in studies and think that the teachers should do this job. In a country where nearly half of the population is still illiterate, it is very hard for children to seek proper guidance in academic matters after the school hours. When parents have not themselves been to school and are illiterate and innumerate, the school cannot expect them to understand its aims or activities. It will provide guidelines to all parents who lack consciousness about the education of their children and think it as a sole responsibility of the school. They will come to know, how harmful effects of retention can damage the personality of their child.

1.8 Definitions of the Terms used

Following are some terms and concepts that will be used throughout the thesis write-up.

1. Grade Retention: “In elementary school, requirement for the students’ repetition of a grade level through a second school year because of failing academic work, the failure to be promoted to the next grade” (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.374). It is synonym for grade repetition, repetition, retention and stagnation.

2. Automatic Promotion: “The practice in primary and secondary schooling of advancing pupils from one grade to the next higher grade at the end of the second year regardless of the educational attainment of the pupils” (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.38). It is synonymous with social promotion and chronological promotion.
3. **Self-esteem**: In psychology, the term self-esteem is defined in many ways. McMartin (1995) defined self-esteem as “our evaluation of ourselves, can range between feeling that we are worthy and valuable members of society to feeling we are worthless and valueless” (p. 97).

4. **Repeater**: “A repeater is a child who has to repeat the same grade, due to examination failure, low attendance record, or for any other reason” (AEPAM, 2007-b, p.2).

5. **Drop out**: AEPAM (2007-b) defined a drop out as “a child who enrolls in school but fails to continue the relevant level of the educational cycle. At primary level, this means that a drop out fails to reach the final grade, usually grade V” (p.2).

6. **Public School**: “A public school is a school operated by a public authority (national, federal, state or provincial, or local) whatever the origin of its financial resources” (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.27).

7. **Grade**: A grade is a stage of instruction usually covered in the course of a school year (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.27).

### 1.9 The Delimitations of the Study

The study had some delimitations due to some unavoidable constrictions such as:

1. The policy of automatic promotion at primary level is homogenously practiced in all districts of the Punjab, so by employing convenience sampling technique, the study was confined to only public elementary and primary schools of Rawalpindi city,

2. The basic aim of this study was to explore the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and psychological well-being of children, so a multiphase
The Impact of Grade Retention

study and more than one categories of sample are required for this purpose. Two major categories of sample were selected in the beginning of the study, which was divided into three subsamples after announcement of annual school result. In this situation, it was difficult for the researcher to adopt any proper procedure for sample selection at the start of this study. To solve this ambiguity, with the consent of Advisory Committee, the researcher decided to consult class teachers of grade four for identifying poor performers on the basis of their previous record in the current grade. These poor performers were later (on the basis of annual school result) divided into two sub-categories, i.e. poor but promoted and repeaters’ sample. For an additional comparison, the sample of normal students was also selected from the same classes of the sample schools with the consultation of teacher.

3. As there is no official data available for private sector schools with reference to repeaters, and private schools have their own promotion policies at different grades, so, for the sake of homogeneity of the data, private schools were not included in the study.

1.10 The Research Design

This study has employed a quantitative as well as qualitative method of inquiry. The quantitative part was completed through a multi-phase study. In order to see the impact of grade retention on students of grade four, a panel study\(^2\) was designed so that their academic performance and self-esteem was assessed more than once. Two major phases (phase 1 and phase 2) were designed for this purpose. Phase 1 was completed before

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\(^2\)“A panel study is a longitudinal study in which the same sample is measured two or more times, the sample can represent either a specific or a general population” (Wiersma, 2000, p.162)
commencement of annual school examination, and Phase 2 was completed at the end of second term of the successive academic year. In between these two phases, the immediate impact of failure was estimated through the self-esteem scale in the first month of new academic year, just after the announcement of the annual school result.

For the qualitative aspect of the study, a selected group of experienced teachers teaching at primary level in the public elementary and primary schools of Rawalpindi city was interviewed to collect in-depth information regarding behavioral problems of repeaters.

The population of the study involved students and teachers of public elementary and primary schools of the Punjab. The study sample was limited to the public schools of Rawalpindi city by employing convenience sampling technique.

The instruments of the study included

a. The Urdu translation of Beck Youth Inventory Scale for Self-Concept of the Children of age group 11-14 for the assessment of self-esteem of the sample students,

b. Standardized tests that were locally developed from the Punjab text book board’s syllabus of grade four including the subjects of English, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General Science, and

c. A semi-structured interview guide for teachers.

The instruments were pilot tested and were finalized in the light of the feedback received from the teachers and students. The data was collected personally by administering the instruments developed for the study to the respondents in all the schools included in the
The data comprised of the responses of self-esteem assessment scale, results of the tests of the sample students and the transcripts of responses of the teachers.

The quantitative data was evaluated by paired comparison of the responses taken before and after the retention of the students, and the data was finalized by applying paired t-test and independent t-test and linear regression analysis. The qualitative data was analyzed by using grounded theory method (Creswell, 1998).

1.11 An Overview of the Remaining Thesis Chapters

As the researcher followed pragmatic tradition, so there is no fixed pattern adopted for the thesis organization. The method of research is influenced by the content of research as revealed in some parts of the thesis. Though there is a separate chapter of literature review included in the thesis, the relevant literature has also been integrated into various parts of the thesis as per requirement and for providing the rationale of the different aspects of the study.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two documents the causes and consequences of grade retention narrated in the existing literature. Further, the research studies related to the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and self-esteem of the school age children in general and primary grade students in particular are discussed.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of the dissertation. The first section describes the rationale for using mixed methodology for the present study. Then, quantitative and
the qualitative techniques used for the study along with the findings of pilot run of quantitative analysis are thrashed out.

Chapter Four presents the details of the quantitative analysis of the dissertation. At first, it elaborates the specific features of the quantitative data. Afterwards, the quantitative analysis is illustrated in tabulated form for the purpose to accept or reject the null hypotheses of the study.

Chapter Five focuses on the qualitative part of the study. The detailed account of the subjects and the procedure adopted for qualitative analysis are given in the beginning, then the major themes emerged during analysis were discussed and supported with existing literature in the two subsequent sections.

Chapter Six triangulates the findings of first two objectives of the quantitative analysis with the second part of the qualitative study. First, the contextual diversities of both types of data are mentioned. Then the findings of the two sets of data are triangulated to further understand the consequences of grade retention with reference to academic performance and self-esteem of the students.

Chapter Seven, the last one, draws together the findings presented in preceding chapters and presents the conclusion of the whole research, contributions of the study, and makes recommendations in the light of findings of the study.

1.12 Summary of the Findings

The results of the research show a strong negative impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students of grade four, while at the same time depict a weak but positive
impact of grade retention on their academic performance. The immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of the 4th grade students was found negative. There is no significant impact of academic performance seen on the self-esteem of the students in the first phase, but in the second phase, positive and significant impact was found. Finally, the three main factors of grade retention at primary level came out as a result of analysis of the teachers’ perceptions are family, school and student.
2.1 Introduction

The major objective of this chapter is to present a global scenario of the grade retention policy and its impact on the self-esteem and the academic performance of the students. The key issues extensively discussed in research studies related to this policy are also elaborated.

This chapter is organized as follows:

i. The pedagogical significance of the grade retention policy along with its causes and consequences in the light of existing research studies carried out both in developed and developing countries are discussed,

ii. The psychological underpinning of the concept of “Self-Esteem” is elaborated with reference to the existing literature, and the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the repeaters and its relationship with academic performance is explored.

iii. Finally, the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and the factors affecting the academic performance of the repeaters are discussed in detail.

2.2 Pedagogical Significance of Grade Retention

The literature presents grade retention as a widespread and controversial educational practice, both in developed and developing countries. The pedagogical significance of
grade retention is still debated among educationists. Proponents of grade retention usually argue that it is helpful in improving inadequate academic progress and in the development of emotionally immature students. This policy increases “heterogeneity of age within classrooms but it may also reduce heterogeneity of academic achievement within those classrooms, which may arguably make instruction more efficient” (Hong & Raudenbush, 2005, p.205).

Many educators defend retention on the basis that continually passing students only pushes the achievement problem further down the road so that poor students arrive at high school totally unprepared to do the work, (Westbury, 1994, p. 249). Consistent with this view, Roderick, Jacob & Bryk, (2002) expressed that “such policies motivate students to work harder and encourage parents to carefully monitor their child's progress” (p.333).

Research evidence has demonstrated that most of the teachers supported grade retention policy and thought that continually passing students at primary level created severe learning problems for students in high school education. Tomchin and Impara (1992) examined the teachers’ views about retention of students in grades K-7 and found that “teachers were agreed that retention is not harmful in grades K-3, but they disagreed about the impact on students on grades 4-7” (p.199). Overall this study found that the teachers at all grade levels considered grade retention as an acceptable educational practice that and motivates students to work harder and prevents them from facing daily failure.
On the other hand, a number of research studies argue that retention did not effectively increase academic achievement among low-achieving students (Westbury, 1994; Hong & Raudenbush, 2005). It is often represented as “a mixture of weak cognitive ability, behavioral problems, and lack of engagement in school” (Guo, Brooks-Gunn & Harris, 1996, p.218).

Research evidence has revealed that all the low-achieving students do not benefit equally from this policy. Meisels and Liaw (1993) argued that “retention is an educational treatment with substantially more negative than positive associations. Despite the paradoxical popularity of retention among practitioners, it is apparently unhelpful to students” (p.76). Furthermore, the study revealed that

The results of (the study obtained from) a national sample strengthen arguments against retention policies. The retention at any point is associated with less optimal academic and personal-social outcomes. Non retained students demonstrate higher grades, test scores, and fewer academic, emotional, and behavioral problems than the retained group. Moreover, retention is associated with more negative outcomes for female, White, and higher SES students. In short, retention does not equalize outcomes even when retained students have been in school a year longer (p.69).

Similarly, in a research study of low-income and racial minority students who studied at Chicago Public Schools, Anagnostopoulos (2006) demonstrated “the negative consequences of grade retention policy especially, on the students at risk of school failure” (p.32). In addition to this, Hallinan (1997) also commented in his review of the work of Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber on the reassessment of the effects of retention in the primary grades in the Baltimore City Public School system, that
“retention is only a stop-gap measure, useful for some students, but not for the neediest” (p.1504).

Research evidence has demonstrated that repeaters face a number of problems during the repeated year. Trethewey (1999) stated in his essay that “if a child is placed among children younger and smaller than himself, he tends to lose his self-respect and becomes a real behavior problem. His attitude towards school work suffers, and he falls further and further behind” (p.280). Similarly, Cosden, Zimmer, and Tuss, (1993) focused their study on Latino and Anglo students’ educational experiences as they entered kindergarten and first grade. This study suggested that

Retention policies may have a greater impact on some groups of students than others. If younger students, and students with less preparation for formal schooling, are more likely to be retained, then minority students, particularly those from lower socioeconomic back-grounds, may be more vulnerable to this intervention (p.220).

Consistent with the above evidence, while narrating the consequences of grade retention, Stearns et al., (2007) demonstrated negative impact of grade retention in their study. The authors used data from “NELS: 88, a nationally representative sample of eighth graders in 1988 who were resurveyed in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000. The study included black, white, and Latino students who participated in the 1988, 1990, and 1992 waves” (p.216). The findings of the study revealed that

--- besides their lower achievement rates and more disciplinary problems, retained students have lower self-esteem, are more pessimistic about their future, are less engaged with school, and have fewer bonds with teachers than do continuously promoted students (p.231).
The teachers feel that the grade retention policy increases their responsibilities and diverts their attention from primary objective of teaching. Roderick et al., (2002) stated that

Opponents of the policy worry that it encourages too great a focus on test preparation and basic skills and leads teachers to limit content coverage and slow the pace of their instruction. The authors further stated that, critics argue that grade retention hurts children (p.334).

The phenomenon of grade retention generates a number of other issues for education system especially in a country like Pakistan where there are limited school facilities. UNESCO (1992) stated while discussing the consequences of grade retention in developing countries that repeaters apart from themselves becoming over-aged, occupy places that would have otherwise been reserved for fresh enrolment of students of the exact school-entrance age. “Not being enrolled this year would either result in refusal of enrolment next year, this creates a chain result of delayed over-aged enrolment whose cumulative effects may take years to correct” (p.137).

A number of research studies proposed the strategies to minimize the negative effects of grade retention policy. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) endorsed in their study that

Grade repetition has two major components. First, government provision of suitable schools with grades for student advancement is a prime factor. Other things being equal, the presence of grades beyond the second grade is an extremely strong determinant of student advancement. This suggests that government intervention to insure appropriate schools can have a powerful effect on repetition and wastage. Firmly established schools with adequate facilities, things that the government can influence directly, are required. Second, student achievement is a key determinant of repetition (p.117).
On the same way, Meisels and Liaw (1993) proposed that “retention should be used only in rare exceptions, and new approaches to curriculum development, school restructuring, and individualized student instruction should become the focus of efforts to improve academic outcomes” (p.76).

While keeping in mind the key characteristics of retained students, El-Hassan (1998) suggested that “one can draw several implications to form a basis for establishing systematic procedures, strategies, and policies for mitigating the grief of grade retention in Lebanon” (p.287). He further proposed that

Age of entrance can be monitored, and individualized remedial instruction can begin at kindergarten. Special attention can be given to boys, to public schools, and to rural areas. Mothers can be given help to cope with their newly acquired double role as a primary childcare provider and breadwinner. By providing preventive interventions and developing alternatives to grade retention; schools can reduce the incidence of grade repetition (p.287).

2.2.1 Factors contributing to Grade Retention

Causes of grade retention were investigated in different research studies both in developing and developed countries. A wide range of causes and factors were identified, both internal and external to the education system. Research evidence from several studies has suggested that the academic success or failure of a student is related to cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, and interactive relationships among children, parents, teachers, and peer groups, (Schneider & Lee, 1990; Gomes-Neto & Hanushek, 1994; El-Hassan, 1998). Moreover, those students are required to repeat grades who have not acquired the level of knowledge and skills expected for the completion of that grade.
In addition to this, research evidence is suggested that fear of loss and insult is associated with expected academic failure, and students often work hard to save themselves. Sideridis (2006) argued that “feeling obliged to engage in an activity and to do well was strongly associated with fear; fear of failure and fear of negative evaluations” (p.12).

Research evidence has revealed that a number of factors contribute in this phenomenon. Schneider and Lee (1990) stated while discussing the factors responsible for school failure that

Explanations for differences in academic achievement among America's minority students have tended to be driven by theories that place the responsibility for school failure on a variety of factors which include student cognitive abilities, communication style, home environment, or the socializing and academic influences of the school and society (p.358).

Similar results were obtained from the study by Meisels and Liaw (1993). The authors used data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88) for examining the phenomenon of retention in kindergarten through Grade 8. “Data on 16,623 White, Black, and Hispanic public school students showed that boys, minorities, and students from lower socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to be retained” (p.69).

It is also found that the factors associated with grade retention interact in a combination of two or more factors that may directly or indirectly cause failure. There is no standard mode for combination of these factors. Moreover, these factors do not influence in the

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3National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) is designed and conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education (Meisels & Liaw, 1993).
same way everywhere and possibly do not describe the varying rates of grade retention. However, in many situations, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, these factors interact and make it even more difficult to deal with the problem.

2.2.1.1 Student related Factors

Analysis of a number of research studies both from developed and developing countries revealed that the personal weaknesses and involvement of student in activities other than studies are major contributing factors in his/her academic failure. The student’s personal attributes such as gender, age, birth order in family are found relating factors in grade retention, though contextual differences may affect these factors in a variety of ways. The research studies indicated that males, minority students, students from lower socio-economic background, and students with disabilities and poor health conditions are at risk of being retained in grade (El-Hassan, 1998; Wils, 2004; Gomes-Neto & Hanushek, 1994).

2.2.1.1.1 Demographic Characteristics

El-Hassan (1998) investigated the “relationship between certain antecedent variables in students' academic history and home environment and the frequency of grade retention in Lebanon” (p.279). The study found that certain demographic characteristics played a bigger role in grade retention of students as

The retained child in Lebanon is more likely to be male, overage,--- and was usually in the middle position among his siblings. He has entered school at a relatively young age, has experienced or will be experiencing frequent retention, and is likely to have changed schools; from a large family that is possibly headed by a single parent; and his parents have a low level of educational attainment and work in low-level jobs. All of these variables were significantly related to retention and increased the
risk of frequent retention; education level and occupational status of the mother played significant roles (p.287).

Research evidence has also revealed the contradictory findings that retention is more common in overage children. A research study by Wils (2004) demonstrated that “in Mozambique, pupils who enter school late have substantially higher repetition rates than young entrants” (p.17). Similarly, the study by El-Hassan (1998) also agreed that in some cases grade retention was found more common in overage students.

Consistent with the above evidence, the study by Palafox, Prawda, and Velez (1994) associated “negative correlation between age and cognitive achievement and found that older children tend to be repeaters” (p.176).

2.2.1.1.2 Absenteeism

Continuous and frequent absence from school is also a contributing factor towards grade retention. Research has also been demonstrated that one of "the chief cause of stagnation is poor attendance” (Acharya, 1994, p.3101).

On the basis of a study in a low-income urban locality on the outskirts of Delhi as a case-study, Banerji (1997) explored the factors essential for achieving the universal primary education. For the purpose of data collection, the participant teachers of this study were asked about the major reasons of absenteeism of primary grade students. The analysis of the teachers’ responses suggested a number of possible reasons of this phenomenon with respect to the particular area being researched as

First, many families are relatively new migrants to the city: they retain strong social, kinship and economic ties to their original villages.
Teachers claimed that families visit relatives in the village for festivals and family functions, often for long periods of time. Households also return to the village when they face economic hardships in the city. These long absences from the city cause disruptions in the school careers of their children. When students return after these long absences, they are well behind the rest of their class (p.2056).

2.2.1.1.3 Frequent shifting from one School to another

A number of research studies demonstrated that frequent shifting of child from one school to another disturbed his/her academic activities. Research evidence has also revealed that these school moves are often due to domestic reasons. Romanowski (2003) suggested that the children coming from an immigrant family are retained more frequently as they do not pay proper attention towards their studies because of frequent shifting from one area to another.

El-Hassan (1998) investigated the relationship between certain antecedent variables in the frequency of grade retention and students' academic history in Lebanon. The findings of this study revealed that

The retained students changed schools twice on average during their academic history, with a range of 1-7 schools. This mobility was expected because many students change schools when they have to repeat a grade. Some blame the school for their failure and believe a change of school may remedy the situation. Others may be promoted in the new school and therefore opt for a change (p.284).

2.2.1.1.3 Personal Weaknesses

Research evidence has demonstrated that the personal weaknesses such as poor academic performance and psychological causes (the child may mentally disturb) are also contributing in grade retention.
There is research evidence that previous record of academic performance of the students affect their success or failure in examination. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study that grade retention in Brazil is more frequent in students having low educational achievement. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that “previous achievement of the student was significantly related with the repetition probabilities” (p.130). Similarly, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) also endorsed in their study of primary education in developing countries that “poor achievement leads to repletion and dropout” (p.183).

Gipps and Tunstall, (1998) were of the view that low self-esteem influenced achievement outcomes of the students as it affect child’s motivation.

2.2.1.4 Child Labor

The research studies found that fatigue and various other factors (child labor etc) can cause failure of students. Banerji (1997) stated while searching about the reasons of not completing primary schooling through a case study of a low-income neighborhood in Delhi.

A possible cause for low survival in the primary stage, at least according to teachers, is linked to children's work. A child may attend school irregularly or drop-out because she/he is required to work either in the market to support the family or in the home providing supervision and care for younger siblings (p.2057).

2.2.1.2 School related Factors

The research studies discovered that a number of school related factors are contributing in the grade retention of students. Some considerable school-related factors include
teacher, school facilities, the curriculum, textbooks, student-teacher ratio, method of examinations, and Language of instruction etc.

2.2.1.2.1 Teacher

Teacher is said to be the most important personality that has significant contribution in the success and failure of students. Sahin and Gülmez (2000) endorsed this fact in their study and concluded that “teacher qualities have an effect on students' failure or achievement” (p.107). Similarly, Acharya (1994) also explored that “the chief cause of stagnation is inefficient teaching” (p.3101).

Research evidence has suggested that some significant characteristics of the teacher have positive effect on students’ learning. The study by Wayne and Youngs (2003) demonstrated the relationship between student achievement gains and teacher characteristics found that

Students learn more from teachers with certain characteristics. In the case of teachers' college ratings and test scores, positive relationships exist and should be investigated further to learn about the relative importance of specific college characteristics and tested skills and knowledge. In the case of degrees, coursework, and certification, findings have been inconclusive except in mathematics, where high school students clearly learn more from teachers with certification in mathematics, degrees related to mathematics, and coursework related to mathematics (p.107).

Consistent with this view, Bergmann (1996) re-analyzed the relationship between quality and demand of education by using data of existing studies from various countries, with “special emphasis on Burkina Faso, Mali, and Tanzania” (p.581). The findings suggested that “repeating is related to teacher qualification, an aspect of input quality” (p.596).
Moreover, research evidence has revealed that there are some pre-requisites of efficient teaching. Psacharopoulos, Rojas, and Velez (1993) argued that “a higher teachers' pay, university education of the teacher, and the teacher living in the school all contribute significantly to achievement gains” (p.274).

In education systems, where grade retention policy is practicing, the teacher has the authority to decide about his/her students’ capability to cope with the next class or retained in the same grade. Anderson (2000) also stated in his study that “the decision to repeat a grade is made mostly by the teacher, and because the child is not considered (by the teacher) to be prepared to benefit from the next grade” (p.121).

The research evidence has suggested that raising the teacher quality is more cost effective as compared to improve other school related quality components. The research study Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) disentangled the impact of teachers and schools in influencing students’ attainment with special attention given to “the potential problems of omitted or mismeasured variables and of student and school selection by using panel data from the UTD Texas Schools” (p.417). The results of the study suggested that “the effects of a costly ten student reduction in class size are smaller than the benefit of moving one standard deviation up the teacher quality distribution, highlighting the importance of teacher effectiveness in the determination of school quality” (p.417).

2.2.1.2.2 Administration

The effective administrative policies play significant role in improving the quality of education along with academic achievement of the students. Sahin and Gülmez (2000)
endorsed this fact in their study that “administrator qualities have an effect on students' failure or achievement” (p.107).

Similarly, Anderson (2000) also pointed out that

A reduction in the administrative load on the teachers as a percent of time that could be spent teaching, either with expanded staff (aides) or perhaps even an expansion of the school day, may lead to an increase in time actually spent teaching, increasing student learning and reducing grade repetition (p.150).

2.2.1.2.3 Public vs Private Schools

Research evidence has demonstrated that the private institutions are found more vigilant in improving the educational quality standards. This in turn raises their students’ academic ability and reduces the chances of their failure. On the other hand, public schools are not very much attentive toward raising their quality standard. The literature in this regard, revealed more academic problems of students of public schools. El-Hassan (1998) explored that “a higher percentage of public school retainees (50%) experienced frequent retention when compared with private school retainees (32%)” (p.285).

2.2.1.2.4 School Facilities

A number of research studies found that the schools equipped with better educational facilities are proved more helpful in smooth the progress of academic activities and also reduce the chances of students’ failure. Sahin and Gülmez (2000) revealed in their study that school-related factors such as school facilities are important determinant in success and failure of students. Similarly, Anderson (2000) stated that “with respect to school level variables, a poor condition of the physical plant increases the likelihood of repetition” (p.149).
Anderson (2000) concluded in his study of Mexican primary school children regarding factors affecting grade repetition rate that “if the school is in poor physical condition, it conveys to the children that school is not important, a better physical plant may attract or retain better teachers and encourage students to study harder” (p.141). Similarly, Psacharopoulos et al., (1993) explained that “the availability of electricity contribute significantly to achievement gains” (p.274).

2.2.1.2.5 Curriculum and Textbooks

The research literature has explored that poor planning in selection of appropriate curriculum according to the students’ need is found to be the major cause of grade retention. Sahin and Gülmez (2000) demonstrated that “the uniform curriculum and textbooks from which no deviation is allowed may be the cause of failure with regard to cultural differences” (p.107). Moreover, this study emphasized that “the cultural differences should be respected and represented in the curriculum and textbooks in order to make students feel comfortable, not distinct” (p.107). In the same way, Acharya (1994) also endorsed in his study that “faulty curriculum” is among the chief causes of grade retention (p.3101).

2.2.1.2.6 Method of Examinations

Like curriculum and text books, the particular method of examinations has also significant impact on grade retention. Research evidence has also been affirmed that “defective method of examinations” is among the chief causes of grade retention (Acharya, 1994, p.3101).
2.2.1.2.7 Student-teacher Ratio

The overcrowded classes also cause failure of students, because an overburdened teacher cannot help all students properly. Psacharopoulos et al., (1993) concluded in their study that “a lower student-teacher ratio contribute significantly to achievement gains” (p.274). Similarly, the relationship between class size and retention was also observed in a research study by Bali, Anagnostopoulos, and Roberts (2005). The findings of this study suggested that “the class size reductions may be a promising alternative to in-grade retention, particularly for districts that serve high percentages of racial minority and low-income students” (p.146).

2.2.1.2.8 Language of Instruction

The language of instruction appears to be a major contributing factor in the failure of students. More often, the students are fit and well, but they suffer the handicap of not understanding the language of instruction properly. In Pakistan, as being a part of former colonial territory of British, English became the medium of teaching in schools. Insufficient understanding of the language of instruction creates major problem for students in comprehension of the content. This insufficiency may be due to social background of the student or to the fact that his/her mother tongue is not the same as the language of instruction.

Mehrotra (1998) argued that if “the parents are illiterate, and the medium of instruction in school is a language that is not spoken at home the problems of learning in an environment characterized by poverty are compounded, and the chances of drop-out increase corresponding” (p. 1479).
2.2.1.2.9 Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment or physical punishment refers to "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child pain, but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of the child's behavior" (Straus & Donnelly, 1993, p.420 as cited in Turner & Finkelhor, 1996, p.155).

Research has demonstrated that corporal punishment is considered as an effective strategy of correcting discipline. Peterson (2008) stated that “corporal punishment is a form of corrective discipline and is based upon a belief and assumption that punishment is the best deterrent for inappropriate behavior” (p.3).

The research evidence revealed that corporal punishment reinforce ailing attitude among children and this results in violent behavior later. The study by Arif and Rafi (2007) tested the effects of psychological treatment and corporal punishment on students’ behavior and on their learning in the context of Pakistan. For this purpose the authors framed a pilot study, followed with experimental test on homogeneous variables at the “Punjab University Laboratory School”, Pakistan over the period of six months, in a demographically controlled environment (p.171). Thirty-two students of tenth grade were taken as study sample which later grouped into a “Corporal Punishment Group (CPG)” and a “Psychological Treatment Group (PTG)” for study purpose (p.171). The findings of the study revealed that

The students who were awarded corporal punishment on creating a source of friction and showing lack of interest in their academic work began to show negative behavior and their academic progress showed a gradual regression, whereas the students who were managed with psychological treatment developed their interest in learning, reflected
friendly behavior and improved their long-term scholastic performance (p.171).

Arif and Rafi (2007) further added that “many students in Pakistan fear attending school and many of those who seek admission later leave the school due to physical punishment” (p.177).

A structural equation modeling analysis of a sample of 349 youths aged 9 through 16 in St. Kitts, West Indies, by Rohner, Kean and Cournoyer, (1991) showed that “physical punishment by itself does make a modest but significant direct and negative contribution to youths' psychological adjustment” (p.681).

Research evidence has revealed that corporal punishment is not proved as an effective strategy for improving students’ learning. Peterson (2008) proposed that “positive forms of discipline such as counseling and mediation are more effective in addressing the need for student discipline” (p.15).

2.2.1.3 Family related Factors

Research studies have demonstrated that specific family factors contribute in grade retention of students. Sahin and Gülmez (2000) argued in their study on social sources of failure in education in East and Southeast Turkey that the cultural characteristics of the family affect students’ academic achievement and failure. The authors further added that “family related factors which may be responsible for failure include the economic and social status of the family, family size, working mothers, educational background, language, occupation, and uneasiness at home” (p.107). Consistent with this view, Levine, Pollack and Comfort (2001) demonstrated in their study that “different child
outcomes appear to be influenced by different causal pathways and different characteristics of the family and home environment” (p.368).

Du-Bois, Eitel and Felner (1994) investigated the relationship between family experiences and school adjustment in a 2-year longitudinal study of a community sample of fourth- to sixth-grade youth (N = 159). For the study purpose, family measures assessed perceptions of overall social support received from family members, various dimensions of family environment, and relationships with each parent. On the other hand, measures of school adjustment consisted of grades, frequency of absences from school, and self-reported scholastic self-concept. The findings of the study revealed that “the initial ratings of family organization and parent-child relationships were both related significantly to follow-up indices of school adjustment obtained 2 years later” (p.405).

2.2.1.3.1 Socioeconomic Background

A large number of research studies demonstrated the significant relationship of student s’ academic performance with his/her socioeconomic background.

The meta-analysis by Sirin (2005) reviewed the “literature on socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement in journal articles published between 1990 and 2000. The sample for this meta-analysis included 101,157 students, 6,871 schools, and 128 school districts gathered from 74 independent samples” (p.417). The main findings of this review showed “a medium to strong SES-achievement relation” (p.417). Moreover, the study also revealed that “school success is greatly influenced by students' family SES” (p.445). Furthermore, Sirin (2005) strongly suggested that “the impact of SES
(socioeconomic status) on school achievement was much higher when the focus was on schools, not individual students” (p.445).

The influence of socioeconomic status of parents on mathematics achievement scores of fourth grade students in a low-income county in North Carolina were examined by Okpala, Okpala and Smith (2001). This finding supports the notion that “economic circumstances are correlated with academic achievement” (p.110).

Similar views were revealed by Bali et al., (2005) in their study regarding grade retention of poor and minority students that socioeconomic status of students has stronger impact on their retention. Moreover, Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) also indicated that “socioeconomic background (of the student) is significantly related with the repetition probabilities” (p.130). Moreover, Borman and Overman (2004) found in a study with a sample of “African-American, Latino, and White students from relatively homogeneous low-SES backgrounds, that minority students have lower academic self-efficacy” (p.191).

Research evidence has revealed that the joblessness of parents effect adversely on the academic performance of their children and enhance their chances of failure. The study by Guo et al., (1996) focused on “the impact of weak labor force attachment on grade retention by Grade 9 among urban Black children using data from a 20-year longitudinal study in Baltimore” (p.217). The findings of this study indicated that “children whose parents are continually out of the labor force do worse in school than do children whose parents have some contact with the labor force” (p.231).
Research studies also revealed contradictory findings regarding socioeconomic status and demonstrated that students having high socioeconomic background were more likely to showed poor academic performance. Meisels and Liaw (1993) studied the interaction effects for grade retention status by background variables. The findings of the study showed that “retention was associated with more negative performance for White, higher SES students and girls than for Black or Hispanic, lower SES, and male students” (p.74).

### 2.2.1.3.2 Migrant Families

Research evidence has demonstrated that children coming from migrant families revealed negative performance as compared to permanent residents of a particular community. The research study by Crosnoe (2005) explored the problems associated with the children belonging to Mexican immigrant families in schools. By using a national sample of American kindergarteners, this study revealed that “children from Mexican immigrant families were overrepresented in schools with a wide variety of problematic characteristics, even when family background differences were taken into account” (p.269).

Crosnoe (2005) further revealed that “children from Mexican immigrant families were situated in more disorganized communities than their peers” (p.297). The results of this study demonstrated that

Children from Mexican immigrant families attend more problematic elementary schools, as measured in a wide variety of ways, than their peers from other racial/ethnic populations, including those that have been traditionally advantaged in American society (e.g., White children) and those that have historically faced institutionalized discrimination and other setbacks (e.g., African American children). These school
attendance patterns are related to the social and economic factors that characterize the Mexican immigrant population (p.295).

Similarly, Romanowski (2003) examined the needs of migrant students in his study on “the unique needs of the children of migrant farm workers in a rural school district in northwest Ohio” (p.27). The study expressed that Migrant families occupy a low status in communities because of their work, language differences, and ethnic background. The reasons for the lack of education among migrant workers are many, but the migrant lifestyle's high mobility serves as the greatest impediment to educational success (p.27).

In a case study of a low-income neighbourhood in Delhi, Banerji (1997) found that the “migrant families are among the poorest in the urban population. The author further concluded that the frequency with which these families have to move, in order to find work, poses enormous constraints for their children's school attendance” (p.2057).

2.2.1.3.3 Parental Support

Generally, parents are not directly involved in the teaching-learning activities in school. They are only expected to provide the financial and other material support for the children’s schooling. The interactions among parents and their children are influenced by the socioeconomic and cultural factors of that particular society. For instance, the way a family manages the learning activities of its children at home is dependent upon parents’ socioeconomic position and their resources in term of money and time.

Evidence from developing countries strengthens this fact that proper guidance by parents in learning activities is vital for academic success of students. Sengupta and Guha (2002) stated in their study on “enrolment, dropout and grade completion of girl
children in West Bengal that poverty not only induced early withdrawal from school, but also meant a lack of adequate learning support at home and caused failure and grade repetition” (p.1633).

Similar views were revealed by Anderson (2000). He found in his study on factors affecting learning of “Mexican primary school children that grade repetition was adversely affected by having siblings who have repeated, and was improved if the family was in a social security program and if the level of parent involvement in the school was high” (p.149). The study further added that “the more highly educated the parents and the more books in the home, the better children perform in school” (p.149).

Schneider and Lee (1990) demonstrated in their study on “the school and home environment of East Asian students that the Asians do well in school because their parents expect it, their teachers expect it, and their peer group expects it” (p.374). The study further added that “parents help Asian students succeed by carefully structuring their out-of-school time so it is directed at academic-related skills” (p.374). Consistent with this view, Kaplan, Liu, and Kaplan (2001) endorsed in their study that

The adolescent children in households with parents with a high level of educational attainment may assume that their parents have high educational expectations for them, whereas under the same conditions, adolescent children in households with parents with a relatively low level of educational attainment may assume that their parents have low educational expectations---children in homes with parents with high levels of educational attainment would likely be exposed to many resources that would support and foster their educational achievement (p.367).
The results derived from the investigation by Gonzalez-Pienda, Nunez, Gonzalez-Pumariega, Alvarez, Roces and Garcia (2002) clearly supported “the thesis that parental involvement behaviors significantly affect children's academic achievement” (p. 276).

A research study by Fan (2001) assessed the effect of parental involvement on students' academic growth during the high school years. By using the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88) data, the study was concluded that “parents’ aspiration for their children's education attainment had a consistent and positive effect on students' academic growth” (p.27). The study further indicated that those “students whose parents had reported higher expectations for their children's educational attainment performed better initially and accelerated faster in their academic growth during the period from the 8th to 12th grade, over and above the effect of family SES” (p.54).

The influence of parental involvement, socio economic status of parents, and instructional supplies expenditures on mathematics achievement scores of Grade 4 students in a low-income county in North Carolina was examined by Okpala et al., (2001). The findings of this study supported the notion that “economic circumstances are correlated with academic achievement” (p.110).

On the other hand, the research evidence expressed contradictory findings also. A research study by Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) indicated that “mother's and father's education was not significantly related with the repetition probabilities, although they do influence student performance and thus are implicitly important” (p.124).
2.2.1.3.4 Family Problems

Research evidence has demonstrated strong relationship between family problems and educational achievement of the children. Sahin and Gülmez (2000) endorsed in their study that “uneasiness at home” is the major cause of grade retention in schools of East and Southeast Turkey (p.107). Similarly, the findings of the study by Caceres-Delpiano (2006) showed that “children with divorced parents have lower achievements than children who live in traditional nuclear families” (p.749).

The study by Bankston III and Caldas (1998) examined the influence of schoolmate family structure, racial concentration, and socio-economic status on the academic achievement of individual African American and White students. The data for the study was “drawn from the 1990 test results of 18,000 10th graders who took the Louisiana Graduation Exit Examination” (p.715). The findings of the study did strongly suggest that going to school with peers from female-headed families is a major source of the comparatively weak academic achievement found in schools with a concentration of minority students, (p.722). Moreover, the study argued that “the female headed family structure may provide inadequate socialization for children, or it may be that having only one parent in the family provides inadequate supervision and social control” (p.722).

Analysis of eighth-grade math and reading achievement scores in a research study by Pong (1997) showed that “schools that were pre dominated by students from single-parent families and stepfamilies negatively affect their students' achievement, even after individual demographic characteristics and family background are controlled” (p.734). This study further argued that this “negative effect of single-parent families and
stepfamilies is partly explained by the relatively low socioeconomic status of children in these schools” (p.734).

2.2.1.4 Government Policies and Community related Factors

A number of other research studies found that specific community related factors along with government policies are significantly related to being retained in grade. A research study conducted in Brazil by Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded that “repetition is based on factors other than student performance, such as local politics, the evidence points directly to the role of student performance” (p.117). Similarly, El-Hassan (1998) explored in his study that “45% of the retainees in rural areas experienced frequent retention, compared with 39% of those living in urban areas” (p.285).

Research evidence has demonstrated that stable economic policies of a country may contribute positively in students’ academic achievement and reduce the chance of grade retention. Anderson (2000) indicated that “economic policies that provide stable, formal sector jobs, especially those that provide social security for low income; unskilled workers have a side benefit of improving children's school performance” (p.150).

A multivariate approach was used in a study by Bali et al., (2005) to “investigate levels of student retention in 2000-2001 in 1,039 Texas school districts” (p.133). Results of this study showed that “student achievement and demographics were directly linked to levels of retention” (p.133). Moreover, the findings of this study suggested that “retention is driven not only by student level characteristics and district resources but also by the constraints and preferences of local constituencies and leadership” (p.133).
Research studies proposed some effective strategies for minimizing the extent of educational wastage. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) suggested that “government intervention to insure appropriate schools can have a powerful effect on repetition” (p.126).

2.2.2 Grade Retention and wastage in Education

“Wastage in education traditionally refers to the dual phenomenon of pupils repeating the same grade in consecutive school years and dropping out of a grade of study before completing the prescribed study cycle” (UNESCO, 1992, p.128) The two phenomena (dropout and grade retention) are “quite different in both their causes and their consequences” (Gomes-Neto and Hanushek, 1994, p.117).

The internal efficiency of an education system is assessed by repetition and dropout rates of the students flowing through that particular system. In the broad context of human learning, UNESCO (1992) stated on page 128 that wastage in education implies the following failures:

1. To bring all school-age children into school;

2. To retain them and ensure their smooth passage through schooling;

3. To equip them with basic learning skills and social attitudes; and

4. A student who leaves the country is a dropout regardless of whether that student continues his/her schooling in that country.

___A student moves from one province or district to another within the country is not a dropout; the dropout rate for the country is calculated as a whole.

___A student who leaves one sub-sector/sector (say public sector schooling) to another sub-sector/sector (say private sector) is not a dropout.

___A student who comes to the end of the schooling cycle (say grade V) and leaves the system is not a dropout.

___A student who dies is a dropout. [AEPAM, 2007-b,P.ix]
4. To maximize the use of available resources.

Motala (1995) argued that “high rates of repetition have the effect of slowing the flow of students through a school system, thereby producing a higher enrolment than would otherwise be necessary for a given net enrolment” (p.162).

The nature of educational wastage changes as the level and type of education changes. At primary level, the wastage implies that the enrolled students do not acquire minimum learning standard prescribed by competent authorities. The wastage encompasses five interrelated aspects, namely, non-enrolment, repetition, drop-out, low learning achievement, and inefficient utilization of resources for any specific level of education (UNESCO, 1992, p.131). These aspects are interrelated to each other and often interact in combination with other factors.

UNESCO (1992) stated while explaining the extent of wastage caused by grade retention that

> It also constitutes an important form of wastage in education. When a child repeats the same grade, it is considered that he has wasted the resource input invested in his schooling during the past year in the same grade. Besides, repeaters occupy school places that would have otherwise become available to other children. Repeated incidences of repetition may also lead to drop-out from school (p. 135).

On the other hand, there are research studies who argued that repetition should not be considered as wastage. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) disagreed with this view that repetition is totally waste and expressed their opinion in the light of their study findings that

> The central finding from the examination of achievement is that repetition does enhance a student's learning. On average, while students
who repeat are below average in performance before repetition, they move to above average after repetition. Therefore, repeating a grade is not pure waste, as some would suggest. This may be a very expensive way of organizing the learning process (p.130).

2.2.3 Grade Retention and Dropout

There is research evidence that grade retention is considered as one of the main causes of dropping out of primary school students. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) stated that “repeating a grade enhances the probability of dropping out” (p.181). There is a high probability of repeaters drop out or remain lost to the educational system and less chance to re-enter the school at a later stage.

While discussing the situation of primary education in developing countries, UNESCO (2008) expressed that

In many developing countries, smooth progression through the primary school system is the exception rather than the rule. Students are locked in to cycles of repetition and dropout. The cycles are mutually reinforcing because repetition is often a prelude to dropout (p.67).

Roderick (1994) endorsed in her study that “students who experience a retention may face an increased risk of school leaving because they do more poorly in school, or have lower self-esteem as a result of that retention” (p.730). Similarly, UNESCO (1992) also stated that “repetition in the lower grades is frequently accompanied by similar high proportions of early drop-out” (p.137).

Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) explored that “the combination of high dropout and repetition rates has been identified as one of the main failures of the Brazilian education system” (p.117). Similarly, Motala (1995) argued that “high repeater and dropout rates
are one of the most glaring manifestations of poor quality and inequality in primary education in South Africa” (p.161).

A study on policy lessons from high-achieving countries with reference to “Education for All”, Mehrotra (1998) mentioned about the primary schools in developing countries that “high repetition often tends to lead to drop-out by the repeaters” (p.473). Similarly, Siddique (2007) stated while discussing the situation of primary education in Pakistan that “repeated failure in examinations results into dropping out” of students (p.142).

However, research evidence indicated that “students who repeat a grade prior to high school have a higher risk of dropping out of high school than do students, who are continuously promoted” (Stearns, et al, 2007, p.210). Similarly, Anderson (2000) studied the factors affecting learning of “Mexican primary school children and concluded that repetition has an effect on dropout statistics” (p.121).

Palafox et al., (1994) explored in their study on primary school quality in Mexico that “children who repeat one or more grades in their early years of schooling are likely to drop out from the educational system later” (p.179).

The research study on primary education in South Africa by Motala (1995) questioned conventional definitions of dropout and repetition, and argued for “greater attention to be paid to repetition” (p161). The study further added that

A reduction of failure and consequent repetition leads to reduced dropout rates and higher rates of completion of the school cycle. Particularly relevant in the South African context is that reduction of repeaters also increases the space available in the system without additional capital expenditure (p.172).
While narrating the major reasons of drop out of seventh grade class of 1980-1981 in Fall River, Massachusetts, public schools, Roderick (1994) found that

The impact of being overage for grade during adolescence is the main reason of the higher dropout rates among retained youths. This study further revealed that students who ended sixth grade overage for grade experienced substantial disengagement during middle school; nearly one quarter dropped out, and those who remained had significant declines in attendance (p.729).

Research evidence also revealed contradictory findings in this regard. Using data from Chicago, a study by Allensworth (2005) examined dropout rates after execution of an eighth-grade promotion standard. The results of the study indicated that

Retention by the policy did have adverse effects on dropping out, but the relationship was smaller than seen with traditional teacher-initiated retention and was unrelated to the timing of dropping out. System wide, slight decreases in dropout rates among the 90% of students who were not retained counterbalanced the higher dropout rates among those retained (p.341).

2.2.4 Cost Effectiveness of Grade Retention

Grade retention increases the cost of producing a graduate by delaying his/her completion of primary education cycle. Tilak (2005) pointed out that “Repetition rates are generally taken to mean high levels of internal efficiency” (p.79). Motala (1995) argued in this regard that “high repetition rate is recognized as major symptom of inefficiency in schools” (p.162) as it “hinders the school’s ability to accommodate new students and its effectiveness” (Lockheed & Verspoor (1991, p.182).
Similarly, Anderson (2000) also described that grade retention increases the opportunity cost for the student to be in school by increasing his/her age. The study further explained that:

The highest cost of repetition is for the future of the child. Undereducated workers face lower wages, lower quality of living and more difficult and dangerous work. They are less productive, and, as some studies indicate, in turn raise children that are more likely to repeat grades and drop out (p.120).

While discussing strategies to reinforce the resource base of primary education in developing countries, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) stated that “dropouts and repeaters raise the costs associated with producing a graduate of the primary education system” (p.182).

Similar point of view was resented by Roderick and Nagaoka (2005) who endorsed in their study the practice of grade retention as economically and academically expensive. They further added that “it involves investing in an extra year of schooling and makes students overage for grade and, as a result, increases their risk of dropping out of school, an outcome with substantial social costs” (p.333).

On the other hand, the contradictory point of view was revealed by Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) who stated as:

Discussions of repetition tend to neglect one important aspect of the issue: students who repeat a grade are in fact attending school, albeit in the same grade as previously, and would be expected to learn something during the experience. While this may be a very expensive way of organizing the learning process, it is nevertheless inappropriate to assume that repetition is pure waste (p.126).
Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) also identified “grade retention as a very expensive form of schooling” (p.130). They were of the view that “the student must spend at least one more year in the same grade at school and beyond the increase in opportunity cost, the direct costs are not negligible, even in an area where the student cost is low” (p.129). Motala (1995) stated that “students who repeat occupy places that might otherwise be occupied by those out of school” (p.162).

Anderson (2000) stated that repetition and dropout are proved expensive for the Mexican economy in general and for its educational system particularly. He further added that “students who repeat grades create problems of overcrowding and age heterogeneity, creating additional problems for classroom management” (p.119).

Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) proposed that “reducing the repetition rate, the dropout rate, or both could substantially lower the cost of producing each primary school graduate in low and lower-middle-income countries” (p.183).

2.2.5 Automatic Promotion: An Alternative to Grade Retention

Grade retention depends to some extent on promotion policies in the education system of a country. “Some countries systematically promote pupils to the next grade while others apply stringent achievement criteria” (UNESCO, 2004, p.99). The policy of automatic promotion is considered as most appropriate and cost effective alternative of grade retention. It is the simplest way to reduce repetition of students and is more beneficial for children to carry their studies with their age fellows.
Opponents of grade retention have long advocated the automatic promotion policy because it helps to keep homogeneity of age within grades. But this policy can only be effective if some kind of remedial instruction in a later grade is also applied to overcome deficiencies in academic performance revealed in the previous grade.

Dictionary of Education (2000) defines automatic promotion as “the practice in primary and secondary schooling of advancing pupils from one grade to the next higher grade at the end of the school year regardless of the educational attainment of the pupils” (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.38). Hong and Raudenbush (2005) acknowledged automatic promotion as that “educational practice under which all students are promoted to maintain homogeneity of age within classrooms” (p.206).

Similar to grade retention, automatic promotion policy is also considered as a controversial practice. Advocates of this practice affirmed it as more cost effective whereas; the opponents believe that it affects quality of education by eliminating competition and motivation for students and teachers as well. Motala (1995) stated that “critics of repetition suggest automatic promotion, whereas advocates of repetition oppose this policy on the basis that it lowers academic standards, destroys incentives for pupils and teachers, and creates pedagogical problems by increasing the ability range in the classroom” (p.172).

A number of research studies examined the impact of this policy on students’ learning. “In the mid-1990s, the Chicago Public Schools declared an end to social promotion and instituted promotional requirements based on standardized test scores in the third, sixth, and eighth grades” (Roderick and Nagaoka, 2005, p.309). The study by Roderick and
Nagaoka (2005) examined the short-term effects of retention on reading achievement of students of third and sixth grades who were retained under Chicago's policy from 1997 to 2000. The findings of this study revealed that

Students who were retained under Chicago's high-stakes testing policy continued to struggle during their retained year and faced significantly increased rates of special education placement. Among third graders, there is no evidence that retention led to greater achievement growth 2 years after the promotional gate. Among sixth graders, there is evidence that retention was associated with lower achievement growth (p.309).

The contradictory findings were revealed by Roderick et al., (2002). The authors estimated the impact of High-Stakes Testing in Chicago on student achievement in promotional gate grades. The findings of the study showed that

Test scores in these grades increased substantially following the introduction of high-stakes testing. The effects are larger in the 6th and 8th grades and smaller in the 3rd grade in reading. Effects are also larger in previously low-achieving schools. In reading, students with low skills experienced the largest improvement in learning gains in the year prior to testing, while students with skills closer to their grade level experienced the greatest benefits in mathematics (p.333).

Palafox et al., (1994) argued that “repeating a grade does not necessarily help learning, an automatic promotion policy for the first two or three grades of the primary cycle and a pass-fail evaluation thereafter are recommended to reduce repetition and dropout rates” (p.179). Similar views were revealed by Mehrotra (1998) who favored automatic promotion policy and argued that it “increases the number of years low achieving students spend in school, and thus may increase learning” (p.474).
Hong and Raudenbush (2005) expressed about effectiveness of automatic promotion policy that “remedial instruction in a later grade could possibly be designed to overcome deficiencies in academic growth exhibited in early grades” (p.206).

Mehrotra (1998) explored that “Panama and Puerto Rico, which once had automatic promotion, reversed that policy when faced with increasing numbers of illiterate primary school graduates” (p.473). He explained the reason of ending this policy that “if automatic promotion is implemented, with no attempt to eliminate the factors associated with school failure; problems of learning in the early grades may be passed on” (p.474). Consistent with this view, Lewin (cited in Motala, 1995) suggested that “automatic promotion is only workable if it is accompanied by other reform measures such as curriculum-development activities and reorganization of teaching” (p.173).

Gomes-Neto and. Hanushek, (1994) argued that “mandatory promotion policies would produce lower achievement in later grades because there is learning that goes on through repetition” (p.130).

Lorence, Dworkin, Toenjes, Hill, Rotherham and Shepard, (2002) examined the academic performance of poor performers who were promoted to the next grade while comparing with the academic performance of “similar low-performing students required to repeat a grade, by utilizing data based on a cohort of all low-achieving elementary students in the state of Texas over a number of years” (p.16). The study found that

Neither generic grade retention nor generic social promotion practices by themselves were optimal solutions for the learning problems of children not meeting educational achievement standards. Both strategies represent systemic failures to aid children, while retention may lead to improved
educational performance, social promotion reaches the same end in the same amount of time (p48).

2.3 The Impact of Grade Retention on the Self-Esteem of the Students

The self-esteem characterizes how persons feel about themselves. McMartin (1995) stated that “self-esteem is an important determinant of our behavior” (p.98). Moreover, it is “the combination of both the consequence of the earlier experiences and the determinant of much of what is experienced later in the course of life” (Mischel, Shoda, & Smith, 2004, p.127).

2.3.1 The Theoretical Perspective of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is considered one of the most significant aspects of the self-concept. Cast and Burke (2002) stated that “self-esteem has been conceptualized as an outcome, motive, and buffer, but there is no overall theory of self-esteem” (p.1041). whereas, Kahn (1996) affirmed that “self-esteem is a slippery concept……is likely to be acknowledged, promoted, even cherished, but rarely defined, monitored, or used to guide educational policy” (pp.17-18).

The theoretical perspective of self-esteem is further elaborated as follows.

2.3.1.1 The Self

The “self” is thought to be a fundamental idea in the field of personality psychology. Generally, it is used as I and Me. William James (1890 as cited in Funder, 2007) has explained a significant division between these two aspects. The self ‘I’ as an agent, conducts basic functions, as self regulation, self evaluation etc. “me” as an object, represented in self concepts, in how we see ourselves. During the course of development,
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“the child attains gradually more rich concept of himself or herself as an active agent, “I” separate from other people and objects, and “me” that has defining features and qualities reflected in multiple self-concepts” (Mischel, et al., 2004, p.293). “Infants appear to develop a sense of self as subject or causal agent “I” prior to developing a sense of self as object “Me” (Harter, 1983, as cited in Demo, 1992, p. 308).

Funder (2007) explored the connection between self and self-esteem and stated that

In terms of “me” the self comprises everything we know, or think we know, about what we are like, including both declarative and procedural self-knowledge—the declarative self comprises all of your (conscious) knowledge or opinions about your own personality traits. These opinions are of two sorts. First, there is your overall opinion about whether you are good or bad, worthy or unworthy, or somewhere in between. This opinion is called self-esteem (p.559).

Funder (2007) endorsed that “the idea of the “self” is a western cultural artifact as depicted in some cross-cultural research studies” (p.586). Consistent with this view, Burger (2000) pointed out that “western conceptions of the self and its relation to society are not shared by all cultures” (p.368). The cultural concepts always have different meaning in different cultures. Funder (2007) added that “the western self is a relatively separate entity, while the eastern self is more integrated into the social and cultural context” (p.586). The western and American culture is generally considered as individualistic culture and eastern as collectivist culture.

While narrating the characteristics of people belonging individualistic and collectivist culture, Burger (2000) explained that

People in individualistic cultures typically feel good about themselves when they think about their unique value and personal accomplishments. In contrast, people from collectivist cultures derive self-satisfaction from
their perceived relationships with others ---fitting in and doing one’s
duty are sources of pride in collectivist cultures. Personal achievements
and independence are valued in individualistic cultures (p.368).

Thus, the self-concept is said to be a set of planned self-attitudes that are relatively
established and "characteristic" of an individual (Demo, 1992, p.303). While discussing
the relationship of self-esteem and self-concept, Mischel et al., (2004) explained that
“self-esteem is such an important aspect of the self-concept that the two terms are often
used as if they were the same” (p.298).

2.3.1.2 The Definitions of Self-Esteem

A number of authors have described different definitions of self-esteem. According to
Funder (2007) self-esteem refers to “the degree to which a person thinks he or she is
good or bad, worthy or unworthy” (p.G-11). Similarly, McMartin (1995) defines self-
esteeam as, “our evaluation of ourselves, can range between feeling that we are worthy
and valuable members of society to feeling we are worthless and valueless” (p. 97).
Whereas, Leary (2003-b) is of the opinion that “self-esteem reflected a person's self-
evaluation-a comparison of oneself to either one's personal standards or an idealized
principally reflects the value the child perceives he/she has in the eyes of others,
particularly those ‘significant others’ whose opinion really count” (p.37). Similarly,
Leary (2003-b) states that “self-esteem is related at least as strongly to people's beliefs
about others' evaluations of them as to their own self-evaluations” (p.270).
Mischel et al., (2004) states that “the sense of self-esteem that ultimately emerges characterizes how persons feel about themselves. It is both the consequence of the earlier experiences and the determinant of much of what is experienced later in the course of life” (p.127). Whereas, Leary (2003-a) is of the opinion that

Successfully dealing with life's challenges nearly always increases the sense that one is valued by other people, thereby raising self-esteem in an optimal way. In contrast, failing to meet life's challenges typically raises the possibility that one is not as valued as a relational partner (friend, mate, group member, etc.), thereby lowering self-esteem (p.53).

Similarly, according to Feist and Feist (2002) “self-esteem is based on real competence and not merely on others’ opinions” (p.500).

Chetcuti and Griffiths (2002) argues that the self-esteem is a complex concept and “current orthodoxy about self-esteem is oversimplified because it focuses on an individual's response to personal achievement and to face-to-face social relationships” (p.529). Moreover, Griffiths (1993) points out that “self-esteem is a political, not a psychological issue. … improvement of the self-esteem of minority or oppressed groups would result in their empowerment” (p.301).

2.3.1.3 The Origin of the Idea of Self-Esteem

Presently, the concept of self-esteem has gained significant position in educational theories. While narrating the social history of truth-making, Ward (1996) described “self-esteem as having its origins in the fragile remarks of William James” (p.14). Similarly, Griffiths (1993) endorsed in his study while discussing the origin of self-esteem as
The idea of self-esteem has come into education through psychological theory, where there are two main influences: William James and Carl Rogers. William James' original proposal that self-esteem is the ratio of one's success to one's pretensions (1892, p. 187) has been translated by a number of psychologists into the idea that self-esteem is best understood as the discrepancy between the 'ideal self and the 'self-image'. Carl Rogers was one of those who developed James's work, but he also developed an alternative strand of self-esteem theory. He places emphasis both on the giving of 'unconditional regard' to individuals so that they may set their own goals in life, and on the role that individual empathy plays in the process (p.301).

Burger (2000) narrated that self-esteem is considered as the single concept that threads its way through the writings of the humanistic psychologists. A well-known humanistic psychologist “Maslow identified two levels of esteem needs---reputation is the perception of the prestige, recognition, or fame a person has achieved in the eyes of others, whereas self-esteem is a person’s own feeling of worth and confidence” (Feist & Feist, 2002, p.500). Similarly, Carl Rogers argued that “a child (or adult) who receives unconditional positive regard gains in self-acceptance and self-liking” (Griffiths, 1993, p.302). “The central concept of Rogers’ psychotherapy is to get clients to accept and appreciate themselves for what they are” (Burger, 2000, p.360). “The part of Rogers' views that has proved widely acceptable is that a child's self-esteem is raised if he or she is loved and accepted by the teacher” (Griffiths, 1993, p.302).

2.3.1.4 The Domains of Self-Esteem

to “one's evaluation of self in relation to a particular source such as academic ability” (Rosenberg et al., 1995 as cited in Mahaffy, 2004, p.311).

Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach and Rosenberg (1995) stated “the two types of self-esteem may have strikingly different consequences, global self-esteem being more relevant to psychological well-being, and specific self-esteem being more relevant to behavior” (p.141). The study further stated that “global self-esteem is heavily affective in nature and tends to be associated with overall psychological well-being. Specific self-esteem, being more judgmental and evaluative, has a more cognitive component and tends to be more strongly associated with behavior or behavioral outcomes” (p.153).

In addition to this, Cast and Burke (2002) stated that

Self-esteem is a combination of two diverse aspects of human personality, i.e. the competence and worth dimension.... the competence dimension (efficacy-based self-esteem) refers to the degree to which people see themselves as capable and efficacious. The worth dimension (worth-based self-esteem) refers to the degree to which individuals feel they are persons of value (p.1042).

Self-esteem of a person varies depending upon his/ her psychological condition. Kernis, (2003) was of the opinion that “high self-esteem can be fragile or secure depending upon the extent to which it is defensive or genuine, contingent or true, unstable or stable, and discrepant or congruent with implicit (nonconscious) feelings of self-worth” (p.1).
2.3.2 Factors affecting Self-Esteem

Research studies revealed that different aspect of human personality along with life experiences affect self-esteem of students. Some important contributing factors in this regard are elaborated as follows:

2.3.2.1 Academic Performance

Rosenberg, Schooler and Schoenbach (1989) indicated that “the well-established relationship between self-esteem and academic performance is primarily attributable to the effects of school marks on self-esteem rather than the reverse. ... global self-esteem appears to have little or no effect in enhancing academic performance” (p.1014). The authors used “a panel of 1886 adolescent boys to explore the reciprocal relationships between self-esteem and poor school performance” (p.1004) the findings showed that “school marks have a significant effect on self-esteem” (p.1015). Moreover, this study also revealed that “the relationship between self-esteem and school performance is primarily attributable to the effect of school performance on self-esteem” (p.1004). Similarly, the findings of another study by Rosenberg et al., (1995) indicated that the “degree to which specific academic self-esteem affects global self-esteem, particularly the positive component of global self-esteem, is a function of how highly academic performance is personally valued” (p.141).

Owens (1994) used nonrecursive linear structural equation models and collected data from the “Youth in Transition study, to compare the reciprocal interrelations of self-deprecation (negative self-evaluations), positive self-worth (positive self-evaluations), and global self-esteem (which includes both positive and negative evaluations) on high
school grades, depression, and delinquency” (p.391). The findings revealed that “negative self-feelings had a small but significant suppressive effect on grades” (p.403). Furthermore, the data indicated that “school achievement is important to adolescent self-worth, as theory suggests, and that it may foster positive feelings when grades are high and stimulate self-reproach when grades are low” (p.405). Consistent with this view, Burfeind and Bartusch (2006) stated that “poor school performance leads to frustration and anger and subsequently to delinquent behavior” (p.320).

### 2.3.2.2 Failure in School

Research evidence has demonstrated significant negative effect of school failure on the self-esteem of the students. McMartin (1995) endorsed that “failure in school plays a significant role in forming a negative self-image, especially when the child’s self concept is negative to begin with” (p.68). Similarly, Rosenberg et al., (1995) stated in their study that “children with poor academic self-concepts are often described as having low self-esteem” (p.143). Consistent with this view, Westbury (1994) was of the opinion that “the emotional strain attached to repeating a grade would lower self-esteem in repeaters” (p.248).

Chetcuti and Griffiths (2002) revealed in their study of the “implications for student self-esteem of ordinary differences in schools of Malta and England that the self-esteem of students is affected by their perceived ability, especially as formalized from test results or other assessments” (p.544). Similarly, Psacharopoulos et al., (1993) also found in their study of “cognitive achievement third and fifth graders that repeaters had a negative self-esteem” (p.272).
2.3.2.3 Student Identity

Literature on self-esteem has revealed that student identity is associated with various aspects of self-esteem. A study by Shields (1995) investigated the relationships between student identity, causal attributions and self-esteem among a sample of grown-up students who were returning to college after a break of at least three semesters to complete a degree. The author demonstrated in this study that “student identity was related to many aspects of self-esteem …internal attributions for attending school were also expected to promote self-esteem” (p.269).

Consistent with this view, Marcussen, Ritter and Safron (2004) used convenience sample consisting of 174 under-graduate students at a large mid western university for investigating the role of identity salience and commitment in the stress process. Using longitudinal data, the study found some support that “commitment moderates the relationship between strain in the student identity and both mastery and depression” (p.289). The findings suggested that “performance-based inefficacy was associated with decreases in self-esteem” (p.306).

2.3.2.4 Physical Abuse

Research evidence has suggested that physical abuse and corporal punishment result in lowering of self-esteem of the children. Bolger, Patterson and Kupersmidt (1998) revealed in their study that “physical abuse coupled with frequent maltreatment was associated with lower self-esteem” (p.1189). The study further concluded that “children who were maltreated beginning early in life reported lower self- esteem than did children who did not experience early maltreatment” (p.1193).
Similarly, Turner and Finkelhor (1996) stated in their study of the impact of corporal punishment by the parents on the psychological well-being of their children that “the use of physical punishment, contributes to negative self-judgments (self-esteem)” (p.156). The findings of this study revealed that “use of physical punishment is not beneficial to the well-being of children” (p.164). The study further concluded that “physical abuse by a parent also has negative psychological consequences for the child” (p.163).

### 2.3.2.5 Sexual Abuse

Research studies have demonstrated the negative consequences of sexual abuse on the self-esteem of the children. Bolger et al., (1998) concluded in their study about self-esteem and peer relationships among maltreated children that “sexual abuse was associated with low self-esteem among children who experienced it” (p.1193).

### 2.3.2.6 High-Quality Friendship

Research evidence has revealed that the quality of friendship is significantly related to the self-esteem of the children. Bolger et al., (1998) found that “a high-quality friendship was associated with a greater increase over time in self-esteem among children who experienced chronic maltreatment” (p.1194).

Furthermore, Franco and Levitt (1998) conducted “personal interviews with 185 fifth-grade European American, African American and Hispanic American children to obtain measures of self-esteem and friendship quality” (p.315). The findings of the study
revealed that “the friendship quality was associated with self-esteem in the sample of pre-adolescent children” (p.320).

2.3.2.7 Parent-Child Affection

Literature on self-esteem of children has demonstrated that extent of their affiliation with parents had long-term consequences on their self-esteem and personality development. Roberts and Bengtson (1993) investigated the psychological benefits of close parent-child relations for the adult children. “A panel of 293 parent-child dyads provided longitudinal data (spanning 14 years) on quality of relationship and filial well-being as the sons and daughters aged from their late teens to thirties” (p.263). The study found that “parent-child affection made a modest contribution to filial self-esteem in late adolescence and early adulthood and early contributions of affection to filial self-esteem provided modest long-term psychological benefits for sons and daughters in adulthood” (p.263). Similarly, Ross and Broh, (2000) stated in their study that “parental support have a larger effect on self-esteem” (p.270).

A research study by Franco and Levitt (1998) determined whether friendship quality and family support contribute exceptionally to the child's self-esteem. For this purpose, “personal interviews were conducted with 185 fifth-grade African American, European American, and Hispanic American children to obtain measures of family support, friendship quality, and self-esteem” (p.315). The findings of the study revealed that “across ethnic groups, family support and friendship quality were associated with self-esteem” (p.315).
2.3.2.8 Changes in Social Situations

Changes in social situations are also found influenced the levels of self-esteem. Cast and Burke (2002) endorsed in their article about the theory of self-esteem that it is highly stable but at the same time, is responsive to changes in social situations. They further stated that “when these changes include persistent problems in self-verification, self-esteem is likely to decline even more as the energy reservoir is depleted” (p.1043).

Similarly, Repetti (1996) concluded in her study of school-age children's subsequent interactions with parents regarding the effects of perceived daily social and academic failure experiences that “performance in the social and academic realms plays an increasingly important role in self-concept during middle childhood and preadolescence” (p.1468).

2.3.2.9 Economic Hardships

Research evidence has demonstrated that poverty and economic hardships faced by the family are affected child’s self-esteem. A research study by Whitbeck, Simons, Conger, Lorenz, Huck and Elder, Jr., (1991) was based on observational data and self-reports from “a sample of 451 families of early adolescents” (p.353). The authors used “structural equation modeling to examine the effects of parents' reports of family economic hardship on the self-esteem of their adolescent children” (p.353). The study found that “family economic hardship affects early adolescents' self-esteem indirectly by decreasing parental support and involvement” (p.353).
Similarly, Wiltfang and Scarbecz (1990) replicated and extended Rosenberg and Pearlin's study of self-esteem and social class among children and adults. The study explored the effects of more proximate school and social experiences and their ability to moderate effects of parental social class on self-esteem. We find the following: 1) father's education has a small effect on adolescents' self-esteem, 2) nontraditional class measures have moderate effects on self-esteem, with one exception (neighborhood unemployment strongly affects adolescents' self-esteem); and 3) direct support exists for a self-perception interpretation of the relative effects of parental and adolescent variables on adolescents' self-esteem: adolescent variables have somewhat stronger effects than parental class variables and mediate the impact of parental social status on self-esteem (p.174).

2.3.2.10 Provision of Educational Facilities in Home and School

Research evidence has revealed that provision of adequate educational facilities both in schools and in home, play significant role in enhancing self-esteem of the children and adolescents. In a research study by Psacharopoulos et al., (1993) “the cognitive achievement of third- and fifth-grade students in mathematics and Spanish was determined, in 168 Escuela Nueva⁵ and 60 traditional schools in the rural areas of 12 regions in Colombia” (p.264). The study found that “the availability of books at home was positively affected to the self-esteem of students. In regard to school characteristics, the findings revealed that access to electricity and the number of supervision visits affected negatively the student's self-esteem” (p.273). The study further demonstrated that “teachers with university studies in education had a negative impact on self-esteem and when teachers lived in the school, students tended to have a higher self-esteem level” (p.273).

⁵ Escuela Nueva is a rural school in Colombia with one or two teachers offering all 5 years of the primary education cycle, (Psacharopoulos, et al, 1993, p.264)
2.3.2.11 Narcissism

Different types of personality traits have influenced child’s self-esteem. Magnavita, (2002) stated that “individuals suffering from narcissism\(^6\), have fluctuations in self-esteem, often triggered by perceived slights or disapproval, to maintain consistency in their esteem, they need continual external validation” (p.199).

2.3.2.12 Delinquency

Research studies revealed contradictory findings while explaining the relationship of delinquent behavior and self-esteem of children and adolescents. The studies also demonstrated that socio-economic status of family is also affected the above mentioned relationship. Rosenberg et al., (1989) explored the reciprocal relationship between self-esteem and juvenile delinquency. The findings revealed that “low self-esteem fostered delinquency and that delinquency may enhance self-esteem” (p.1004). The study further concluded that

The effect of self-esteem on delinquency is stronger in the higher than in the lower socio-economic status (SES) group but is significant in both. On the other hand, the effect of delinquency on self-esteem is stronger in the lower SES group, where it is highly significant, than in the higher SES group, where it is not (p.1014).

2.3.2.13 Depression

Research studies on depression revealed positive association between self-esteem and depressive symptoms. A panel of 1886 adolescent boys was used in a study by

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6 Narcissism is derived from Greek mythology, as is the story of Oedipus, on which Freud modeled his Oedipal complex. Narcissus was a young man transfixed by his own image, who fell in love with his reflection and died of starvation, staring at his image, (Magnavita, 2002, p.199).
Rosenberg et al., (1989) to explore the reciprocal relationship between psychological depression and self-esteem. The findings revealed that

The comparatively strong association between self-esteem and depression is partly attributable to the fact that each psychological disposition reinforces the other (bidirectional effect). Feelings of depression lead to low self-esteem and low self-esteem fosters depression. Although depression exercises a somewhat stronger effect, both variables function to strengthen the relationship (p.1015).

The study by Lengua (2002) investigated the “additive and interactive effects of multiple risk, emotionality, and self-regulation in predicting children's adjustment problems and positive adjustment using a community sample (N= 101) of children in third through fifth grades” (p.144). Results of the study indicated that

Questionnaire measures of emotionality and self-regulation predicted children's positive and negative adjustment over and above the effects of multiple risk, as well as resilience and vulnerability. Negative emotionality predicted adjustment problems, positive emotionality predicted positive adjustment, and self-regulation predicted both. In addition, observational measures of self-regulation moderated the association between multiple risk and adjustment such that children low in self-regulation were more vulnerable to multiple risk. The results suggested that emotionality and self-regulation operate as additional risk and protective factors in multiple-risk models (p.144).

2.3.3 Consequences of low self-Esteem

Research evidence has revealed that “when individuals experience a significant decline in self-esteem, they are likely to manifest depressive symptoms” (Robertson and Simons, 1989 as cited in Gipps and Tunstall, 1998, p.133).

Furthermore, research studies found that human behavior can be determined by the levels of self-esteem. Mosley (2005) endorsed that “individuals with low self-esteem are likely
to view themselves as useless, unlikeable and incompetent” (p.50). Consistent with this view, McMartin (1995) pointed out that “children who become pregnant, dropout of school, or use drugs are commonly thought to do so, at least in large part, because they have low self esteem” (p.98).

On the other hand, research studies revealed that high self-esteem enhances human abilities and he/she performs better in different situations. Gipps and Tunstall (1998) were of the view that “individuals who have high self-esteem usually try harder and persist longer when faced with difficult or challenging tasks” (p.135). Similarly, Mosley (2005) argued that “success is dependent upon a positive mental attitude because people who have high self-esteem are more likely to work hard and have confidence in their skills and competence” (p.50).

Low self-esteem causes many social problems. Research evidence has revealed that the people having low self-esteem may be motivated by different concern as compared to high self esteem people. Bangulia (2007) argued that “children with low self-esteem have negative self-image and poor self-concept. They do not believe in themselves or others and feels that they have nobody to depend on. No matter what effort they put in, they feel it is depreciated” (p.17). Similar views were revealed by Mosley (2005) that “people with poor self-esteem regard themselves as failures, or as misunderstood, and it seems to them that everyone else is more capable than they are” (p.51). Consistent with these views, Burger (2000) also pointed out that “people low in self-esteem become discouraged and unmotivated when they receive negative feedback about a
performance” (p.364). Whereas, “people with high self-esteem are believed to be unlikely to engage in self-defeating or deviant behavior” (McMartin, 1995, p.98).

Research evidence has demonstrated that “students high in self-esteem interpreted the teacher's feedback more favorably than did students low in self-esteem” (Jussim, Coleman & Nassau, 1987, p.98). For the study purpose

Students were prescreened using the short form of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and those who were high and low in self-esteem were selected to participate in this study. In response to a student's performance on an analogies test, the teacher conveyed either positive feedback, negative feedback or no feedback. Questionnaires assessed students' self-evaluations and their perceptions of the teacher's evaluation of their performance. Results demonstrated that students high in self-esteem evaluated their own performance more favorably, and saw the teacher as evaluating their performance more favorably, than students low in self-esteem (p.95).

Psychologists believe that self esteem of a person fluctuates according to the situation he/she is facing. Robertson and Simons (1989) endorsed in their study that “low self-esteem may not be a stable personality characteristic, the self-esteem of some individuals seems to dissipate more quickly in the face of stress than that of others” (p.135).

2.3.4 Grade Retention and Self-Esteem

Quite a large number of research studies indicated that grade retention is a major cause of low self-esteem in students. Grade retention damage their self-image and they often start dislike themselves. Trethewey (1999) affirmed that “being rated as "unfit for promotion" at the end of a year frequently undermined a child's self-respect and confidence” (p.280). Similarly, Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded that “repetition sufficiently
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lowers a student's self-esteem so as to negate any learning during the repeated year” (p.130).

A research study by Pomplun (1988) indicated that “students, who were retained, displayed a significant decrease in self-concept” (p.285). Consistent with this view, Westbury (1994) explored in her study that “the emotional strain attached to repeating a grade would lower self-esteem in repeaters” (p.248). Furthermore, Anderson (2000) also endorsed in his study that “repetition has an effect on dropout statistics: it lowers self-esteem and isolates the student from his/her friends and peers” (p.121). In the same way, Stearns et al., (2007) demonstrated in their study that “retained students have lower self-esteem than continuously promoted students” (p.231).

On the other hand, the research evidence also revealed contradictory findings that retained students became significantly more attached to school than their promoted peers and reported improved behavior during the year following the retention decision.

A study conducted by Gottfredson et al., (1994) explored “the causal nature of the association between grade retention and later adolescent problem behaviors including delinquency, drug use, and dropout, by taking a sample of African-American sixth and seventh graders in two urban middle schools” (p.761). They concluded that “retention reduced rebellious behavior in school and increased attachment to school” (p.761).

Similarly, a research study carried out by Alexander, Entwisle and Horsey (1997) concluded that measures of self-esteem and attitudes toward school for the retained
students show no deterioration after retention and in some cases reveal improvement, possibly because students gain confidence from better academic performance.

2.3.5 Self-Esteem and Academic Performance

Research evidence has revealed positive association between self-esteem and academic performance. Brooker, (2005) was of the view that self-esteem and academic achievement are correlated. He further stated that “children’s self-esteem is a key factor not only for their well-being but also for learning outcomes” (p.37). There are research studies who reveal that high self-esteem improves academic achievement and there exist research evidence also that high academic achievement causes high self-esteem.

Geisler-Brenstein, Schmeck and Hetherington (1996) found their study that “students’ self-esteem as well as beliefs regarding their abilities and competencies plays an important role in determining educational outcomes” (p.77).

The article by Ross and Broh (2000) proposed that “academic achievement boosts self-esteem and the sense of personal control, but that only the latter influences subsequent academic achievement” (p.270). For this purpose, the authors used three waves of panel data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, and examined the effects of academic achievement in the 8th grade on the sense of personal control and self-esteem in the 10th grade and the subsequent effects of control and esteem in the 10th grade on academic achievement in the 12th grade. They present evidence that the sense of personal control affects subsequent academic achievement, but that self-esteem does not. Earlier academic achievement and parental support increase self-esteem and the sense of personal control (p.270).
In the same way, Powell and Arriola (2003) studied the relationship between academic achievement and psychosocial factors among African American students and concluded that “there was a strong negative association between the way the student copes with unfair treatment and GPA. That association suggests that the student who talks with others about being treated unfairly is more likely to have a higher GPA” (p.175).

Furthermore, Rothman and Cosden (1995) investigated the relationship between self-perception of a learning disability (SPLD), social support and self-concept. For the purpose of data collection, “Fifty-six third- through sixth-grade children with learning disabilities were administered Heyman's SPLD scale” (p.203). Results of this study revealed that “children with less negative perceptions of their learning disability had higher math achievement scores…. they perceived more positive global self-concept, more intellectual and behavioral competence, and more social acceptance” (p.203).

Research evidence has revealed that Burfeind and Bartusch (2006) concluded in their study that “poor school performance leads to frustration and anger and subsequently to delinquent behavior” (p.320).

Gipps and Tunstall (1998) endorsed in their study that “a pupil's self esteem is seen as influencing achievement outcomes through its effect on motivation” (p.151). They further added that “the development of a favorable self-concept in children is dependent upon perceiving themselves as successful, this in turn may depend on the way the child interprets the teachers' reaction to his/her performances” (p.151). Similarly, Chetcuti and Griffiths (2002) stated that “the self-esteem of students is affected by their perceived ability, especially as formalized from test results or other assessments”
The Impact of Grade Retention

(p.544). Gonzalez-Pienda et al., (2002) also found that “students' self-concept has a powerful effect on academic achievement” (p.277).

Moreover, the findings of a study by Rosenberg et al., (1995) indicated that “self-esteem does affect school performance, but it must be the right kind of self-esteem, namely, specific self-esteem” (p.153). However, this study further added that “global self-esteem has very little effect on marks, whereas specific self-esteem (academic self-esteem) has a strong effect on school performance” (p.153).

2.4 The Impact of Grade Retention on the Academic Performance of the Students

Research studies revealed diverse responses regarding impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the repeaters. A large number of studies indicated positive impact of grade retention, while at the same time, almost similar number of studies explored contradictory findings.

Westbury (1994) concluded that grade retention was proved ineffective for improving achievement and ability of students in North American schools. The findings of this study suggested that “grade repetition does not correct the original learning problem” (p.249).

The study by Westbury (1994) described that “the retained students show neither positive academic gains nor negative academic losses when compared to the promoted group on ability and subject matter achievement” (p.247). However, Westbury (1994) also demonstrated that “a small minority of the repeaters did significantly improve achievement scores after retention” (p.249), but “the achievement of the retained students
was not significantly greater than that of the continuously promoted students” (p248). Westbury (1994) further concluded that “an extra year of schooling may increase achievement but not a so-called fixed or innate capacity for learning” (p.247).

Research evidence has explored the diverse impact of grade retention on different grade levels. The findings of the study by Pomplun, (1988) of “the students from first to fourth grade and seventh, eighth grades from a “semirural area of west central Florida participated in the study over a period of 2 years did suggest that retention as an educationally effective alternative decreases in utility as grade level increases” (p.286). The study further indicated that “students, who were retained, showed increased achievement in every area and an increase in motivation” (p.285). This study also explored that “these students rated their retained year in significantly less positive terms than did their primary level counterparts” (p.285).

Alexander, Entwisle, Blyth, and McAdoo (1988) found that “in the second year (repeated year), youngsters who have been retained in grade register considerably smaller cognitive gains than those who kept pace with their entering cohort” (p.82). The study further revealed that “by the end of the second year, repeaters attained about the same CAT levels as non repeaters did by the end of the first year” (p.82).

Hong and Raudenbush (2005) analyzed the “data from the US Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten cohort with the technique of multilevel propensity score stratification, and found no evidence that a policy of grade retention in kindergarten improves average achievement in mathematics or reading” (p. 205). The findings of this study revealed that “the kindergarten retention treatment left most retainees even further
behind, and, therefore, impeded these children's cognitive development over the repetition year” (p.220). Moreover, this study recommended that “at-risk children promoted to the next grade level seemed to have a better chance of growth acceleration” (p.220).

Jacob and Lefgren (2004) found in their study on “retained students of third grade that grade retention increases achievement for third-grade students” (p.226). This study further concluded that

These achievement gains are possible with remedial education for low-achieving students. In settings with fewer resources, outcomes may be somewhat worse. Thus remedial summer school and retention programs under favorable circumstances can improve the performance of young disadvantaged students. In the quest for higher standards and achievement, these programs offer at least some hope for students struggling to cross the bar (p.243).

Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study of “primary grade students in rural northeast Brazil that students learn when repeating” (p.129). They further added that “on average, while students who repeat are below average in performance before repetition, they move to above average after repetition” (p.130). However this study found that “after repetition, the students are still somewhat behind the promoted students” (p.131).

Research evidence has revealed that grade retention is not proved successful as a motivating factor for low-achieving students. Allensworth (2005) stated that “using the threat of retention to motivate student learning has negative consequences for students who do not pass the promotional criteria. It penalizes the lowest-achieving students in an attempt to motivate all students to perform better” (p.356).
The research study by Pomplun, (1988) “supported the effectiveness of retention at the primary level especially in comparison to the secondary level” (p.281). The author used Measures of self-concept, motivation, teacher, student, and parent attitudes; and reading, language, and mathematics achievement to compare primary, intermediate, and secondary retainees with borderline and regular students. Students from first, second, third, fourth, seventh, and eighth grades from a semirural area of west central Florida participated in the study over a period of 2 years. Subjects were grouped into three levels by grade: primary (first and second), intermediate (third and fourth), and secondary (seventh and eighth). The data showed significant academic improvements for primary and intermediate retainees but not for secondary retainees. Students who were retained, in contrast, showed increases in all achievement areas, a stable self-concept, and a temporary increase in motivation at the beginning of their retained year. These students also rated their retained year in significantly more positive terms than did retained students at the intermediate and secondary levels. All students, however, displayed a significant decrease in self-concept over the 2 year (pp.281-282).

Similarly, Singh, Granville and Dika (2002) investigated the effects of interest motivation, and academic engagement of 8th grade students. For study purpose, the authors used “the nationally representative sample of 8th graders drawn from the National Education Longitudinal Study 1988” (p.323). The findings of the study confirmed that “attitudes and interest affect achievement” (p.330).

Meisels and Liaw (1993) also concluded in their study that “retention is an educational treatment with substantially more negative than positive associations” (p.76). The authors found that “students who were retained showed a disadvantage on later school performance outcomes” (p.75).
2.4.1 Factors affecting Academic Performance of the Repeaters

Research evidence has revealed that the academic performance of the students in their repeated year is influenced by a number of factors.

2.4.1.1 Repeaters Age

Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study that students’ age had a consistent effect on repeaters’ achievements. The study further added that “the effect is negative; that is, older students do worse than younger ones” (p.130). Similarly, a research study by Anderson (2000) also explored the same fact and endorsed that “the repeaters do not relate well to younger children in the classroom, aggravating their learning problems” (p.119).

2.4.1.2 Teacher’s Attention

The role of teacher is very important in the rehabilitation of students after failure. A research study had examined the experiences of a group of students of sixth and eighth grades retained under Chicago’s Ending Social Promotion program during 1999 and demonstrated that “students reported little guidance from teachers” (Stone & Engel, 2007, p.605). The study further added that “students who received high levels of support were more likely to meet promotional standards after the retained year” (p.627).

Lorence et al., (2002) proposed in their study of social promotion and grade retention in Texas, 1994-99 that “long-term beneficial outcomes of grade retention may be more forthcoming if teachers know they will be held responsible for the performance of students who have failed to meet the minimum standards for a specific grade level” (p.
48). Similarly, Gipps and Tunstall (1998) stated with concern to academic self-esteem that “teachers' evaluations are the most crucial, particularly in the early years of schooling” (p.151).

2.4.1.3 Repeaters’ Personal Efforts

Stone and Engel (2007) also demonstrated that “the students who changed their learning strategies were more likely to meet promotional standards after the retained year and had larger learning gains” (p.627).

2.4.1.4 Interventions offered by the School

If the schools propose some special interventions for repeaters, then they may show improved result, but in real practice, particularly in developing countries, the majority schools do not provide remedial interventions for repeaters. Research studies indicated that “most teachers did not modify curricular content for retained students” (Stone & Engel, 2007, p.621).

2.4.1.5 Student’s Previous Achievement

The literature supports the notion that the previous academic record of the students had greatly influenced their academic performance in the repeated year. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study that “students' previous achievement is consistently related with their achievement after repetition” (p.130).

2.5 Summary

In sum, the existing literature highlighted the causes and consequences of grade retention especially with respect to Primary Education. Moreover, the impact of this
policy on the self-esteem and academic performance of the students particularly at primary level was explored in detail with reference to developed and developing countries.

The review of existing literature demonstrated that the major contributing factors of grade retention are including the student him/herself, the school system, the family of the student and the community or system in which he/she survives. The literature perceived the grade retention practice as a contributing factor in the phenomenon of educational wastage. The consequences of the existing educational practice of automatic promotion policy at primary level as a major alternative of grade retention policy were presented in the light of the findings of the existing research literature. The literature has presented both positive and negative consequences of automatic promotion policy.

The literature supported the assertion that grade retention has negative impact on the self-esteem of the students. However, it seemed reasonable to postulate that the existing research studies yield mixed results about the relationship of the academic performance and self-esteem of the students with grade retention practice. Some educationists thought grade retention as an effective educational practice, while other considered it as harmful for students’ academic performance.
Chapter Three  
METHODOLOGY  

3.1 Introduction  
The main objective of this chapter is to describe the process of data collection and the implementation of the research. It discusses both quantitative and qualitative aspect of research process in detail along with the rationale of using these techniques.

This chapter is written in three sections:

i. In the first section the strengths of combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to address the complexities of research problem are discussed.

ii. In the second section, the procedure of quantitative study along with process of pilot testing and item analysis is elaborated.

iii. The third and last section deals with the detailed description of qualitative method of the study.

3.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study  
The conceptual framework describes “the assumptions that underlie the research” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.10) and facilitate the researcher to select the most appropriate method of study. After carefully reviewing the relevant literature, and understanding the basic elements of both quantitative and qualitative research, this study has focused on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The mixed method paradigm, by providing complementary perspectives, was regarded as the most appropriate for the problem addressed in the present research. Moreover, mixed method research is “practical because individuals tend to solve problems using both numbers and
words, they combine inductive and deductive thinking, and employ skills in observing people as well as recording behavior” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.10).

As a philosophical underpinning for mixed method studies, Creswell (2003) conveyed that pragmatic knowledge claims focus attention on the research problem in social science research and then use pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem. Creswell (2003) further stated:

> Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This applies to mixed methods research in that inquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research (p.12).

Pragmatic framework gives the mixed method researcher an opportunity to use any method of inquiry to address current problems, along with multiple forms for data collection and analysis. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) explained that Pragmatism also helps research approaches to be “mixed in ways that offer the best possible opportunities for answering important research questions” (p.16). Furthermore, “pragmatists embrace a mixed method design if it will enhance their understanding of their research problem with little regard for the philosophical underpinnings of either research perspective” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.320). They believe that the problem is more important than the research method. Lodico et al., (2006) endorsed that “one could use both frameworks by recognizing that some aspects of educational settings have an objective reality (e.g., students’ test scores) whereas others might be more subjective (e.g., student attitude towards teachers, fellow students)” (p. 283). It provides an in-depth look at the processes of teaching and learning, and interactions between teachers and students. Mixed method approach recognized that both quantitative and qualitative
The Impact of Grade Retention

research methods are important and useful. Moreover, “the goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.14).

Lodico et al., 2006 is of the opinion that “Carrying out a mixed method study is somewhat more complex than using either a quantitative or qualitative approach alone because one must consider both type of data at each step” (p.287). Moreover, a researcher has to decide about which type of data should be given priority and when to collect and analyze different types of data. For this purpose, it was decided to combine both methods concurrently. A multi-phased panel study was designed for the collection of data related to quantitative part. Two major phases along with a third mini phase in between these two phases, in the first month of new academic year were carried out for data collection.

The qualitative method had two main parts. The first part was seeking information related to first objective of the study. The second part of the qualitative inquiry was collected information related to second and third objective of the study. The rationale for using this design was that it “provides a more complete picture of the topic studied and enhanced credibility” (Lodico et al; 2006, p.286). In this way, separate quantitative and qualitative methods were used “as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method” (Creswell, 2003, p.217).

3.3 Quantitative Aspect of the Study

The major objective of the quantitative aspect of the study was to investigate the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and self-esteem of the students of grade
four. For in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of grade retention, it was considered necessary to evaluate the immediate impact of the failure and also the effects of the academic performance on the self-esteem of the 4th grade students.

“As a plan, research design deals with matters such as selecting participants for the research and preparing for data collection—activities that comprise the research process” (Wiersma, 2000, p.82). In mixed method research, the word design refers to “the decisions about which type of data is given priority and when each type of data is collected and analyzed” (Lodico et al; 2006, p.284). In the present study, because of using two distinct mix-methods strategies, equal emphasis was given to both approaches.

A panel study was designed for the quantitative aspect of the study, that was completed in two phases, so that their academic performance and the self-esteem were being assessed before final examination, and then at the end of second term in the successive year. In between these two major phases, the self-esteem of the whole group was assessed in the month of April, just after the annual result announcement in order to see the immediate impact of failure as well as success in final examination.

It is important to note that this study has evaluated retention effects only during the 10-month period following the retention decision. Research studies regarding grade retention “effects on academic outcomes over a several-year period have shown that the immediate benefits reduce over time… retention tends to have long-term negative consequences on students' educational achievement” (Bali et al., 2005, p.139). The present study did not address long term consequences.
3.3.1 Instruments for the Quantitative Data Collection

Two types of instruments were used for the collection of quantitative data. First, the Self-esteem assessment scale for the sample students. The Urdu translation of Beck Youth Inventory Scale for Self-Concept of the Children of age group 11-14 was used for this purpose. And second, the locally developed tests of the subjects of English, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General Science, for grade four were used. The content for the tests was taken from the syllabus of the Punjab Text Book Board, Lahore that is officially recommended curriculum of all public schools in the Punjab.

3.3.1.1 Adaptation of Self Esteem Scale

The major challenge of this study was preparation of research instruments for investigating the impact of grade retention on the academic performance and self-esteem of the students while keeping in view the academic standards of the public schools and the family background of the students. The issue of the assessment of the self-esteem of the students has become more complicated because of two reasons. First, absence of any self-esteem scale developed for Pakistani children and second, the scales found are mostly developed in western context or for American students, due to the contextual diversities, they are quite unfamiliar to Pakistani students. Thus, it was decided to select some of the standardized scales and then translate it into simple Urdu for better understanding of the students. To eliminate expected complexities, a pilot testing of the translated scale was planned.
After careful review of seven self-esteem/self-concept scales, the selection of the Beck Youth Inventory\(^7\) for Self-Concept (BSCI-Y) for this research was made. This scale was the latest and most reliable scale with a detailed manual available in the Psychological Research Centre at Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi.

The statements in the Self-Concept Inventory represent perceptions about self-competence, potency, and positive self-worth. The inventory requires less than 10 min to complete and is composed of 20 statements that are written at a second-grade reading level. A total score is calculated for this inventory by summing its 20 ratings, and these scores can range from 0 to 60 (Steer, Kumar, Beck, & Beck, 2005 p.123).

These scores are then converted into T scores by using Tables A.1-A.3 from the manual of the inventories. Higher T score indicates a more positive self-concept, and a lower score indicates less of a positive self-concept.

### 3.3.1.1 Factor Analysis of the Scale

The factor analyses by Steer et al., (2004) of the Self-Concept Inventory with a sample consisting of 300 children (150 girls and 150 boys) of the age group 7 to 12 years. These children were evaluated for outpatient psychiatric services in Cherry Hill, NJ. The findings revealed that this inventory was composed of two dimensions i.e. Self-Esteem and Competency dimensions, and:

McDonald’s omega (\(\omega\); McDonald, 1999) was calculated by the authors to determine whether the Self-Concept Inventory was sufficiently homogeneous with respect to item content to warrant scoring the instrument not only as summative scales, but also calculating subscale scores for the inventory. McDonald’s \(\omega\) is the ratio of the variance that is explained by the common construct assumed to be underlying a scale to

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\(^7\) The Beck Youth Inventories of Emotional and Social Impairment included five self-report inventories used to assess anxiety, depression, anger, disruptive behavior, and self concepts in children between the ages of 7 and 14 years old. These inventories are used, separately or in combinations.
the total amount of variance that is explained by the scale. The \( \omega \) coefficient for all 20 of the items in the Self Concept Inventory was .68. To estimate the \( \omega \) coefficients for the Self-Esteem factor, the nine items whose standardized regression coefficients in the factor analysis had been higher in the Self-Esteem factor than they had been in the Competency factor were employed, and the \( \omega \) was .73. Similarly, the 11 items with standardized regression coefficients higher on the Competency factor than they had been on the Self-Esteem factor yielded a \( \omega \) of .57 (p.128).

### 3.3.1.1.2 Validity of the Scale

While applying this instrument to the sample of this study, there was a doubt that whether this scale is suitable for Pakistani children studying at public schools, or not. In order to remove this ambiguity, it was decided by the advisory committee to check the validity and reliability of the scale. The validity of the scale was checked by translating it in Urdu and then the scale was retranslated into English by two experts. A highly qualified teacher translated the English version of the scale in Urdu and the other expert with similar qualification had retranslated the Urdu version again in English. The retranslated version of the scale was found identical to the original version.

### 3.3.1.1.3 Reliability of the Scale

The Urdu version of the scale was then approved by the PhD Advisory Committee for reliability testing. The Cronbach’s Alfa reliability of the Urdu version of this 20 item scale was measured by using SPSS\(^8\) 13.0 with a sample of 48 students of age group 7 to 11 studying in grade four of the public schools of Rawalpindi city. The reliability level of .88 was attained that was quite near to 1.00 (Perfect reliability) (Ysseldyke, 2004, p.122). The minor confusions revealed by students’ complaints during reliability testing

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\(^8\) SPSS, Statistical Package for Social Sciences.
were then removed with the consent of Advisory Committee. A demographic section was attached with the scale for getting required information related to individual students. The queries regarding name, father’s name, father’s education, mother’s education, father’s occupation, mother’s occupation and school’s name presently attended were included in this section for creating a profile of students.

3.3.1.2 Development of Achievement Tests

The second issue was raised during development of achievement tests for students of grade four. It was not clear that which mode of testing (standardized or locally developed) would be most suitable for the sample students. After careful and detailed study of relevant literature, it was realized that, in some studies, the researchers used standardized tests with the belief that they are the most objective and thus most accurate measure of achievement, while others argued that standardized tests do not tap accurate achievement in students from disadvantaged backgrounds and hence rely on school measures, such as grades. But, during the initial visits of the sample schools before pilot testing, it was observed that most schools rely on just oral tests for their pupils’ assessment during the academic year and do not take monthly or terminal tests, moreover, almost all schools reported that they had not completed the syllabus of grade four\(^9\). So it was decided to develop tests locally with the help of some concerned personnel and then verify them through pilot testing. The objective type tests had been developed for the subjects of English, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General

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\(^9\) The reason of not completing the syllabus was according to teachers’ point of view that the students were not able to pick all the concepts, so they decided to teach them some selected chapters of all subjects. This fact also hindered in using standardized tests as they cover the entire syllabus.
Science, for grade four students (see Appendices D, E, F, G, and H). All tests had 20 multiple choice items. The content for the tests was taken from the syllabus of the Punjab Text Book Board Lahore that is officially recommended curriculum of all public schools in the Punjab.

3.3.1.2.1 Validity of the Test Items

Four teachers from the selected primary schools of Rawalpindi city for pilot testing had checked the validity of the test items. Printed versions of tests of all the five subjects were given to these expert teachers with the request to comment on their readability, understandability and comprehensiveness. The feedback received from these experienced teachers had enabled the researcher to improve test items for pilot run.

3.3.1.2.2 Pilot Testing

Before administering the tests on full scale, the “items are pretested by administering these items to a group of test takers like those who will take the test” (Livington, 2006, p.423). As Wiersma (2000) stated that “the group used for pilot run need not be a random sample of prospective respondents, but the members of the group should be familiar with the variables under study and should be in a position to make valid judgments about the items” (p.171). For this purpose, four public schools (one elementary and three primary schools) of Rawalpindi city were selected for pilot testing. All the students of grade four (present on the day of pilot run) of these schools were the respondents of the instruments. The total number of students was 48 to whom the locally developed tests were administered in actual class room situation and in the presence of class teachers.
3.3.1.2.3 Item Analysis

Item analysis consists of “statistical analyses of the data produced when the test takers respond to test items ___analyses conducted for the purpose of providing information about the items, rather than the test takers” (Livingston, 2006, p.421). The basic aims of item analysis as very comprehensively described by Satterly (1989) are:

- To identify items with weak construction that they should be discarded on the grounds of their ambiguity, misleading instructions, undue complexity or lack of plausibility in the distracters if used; to determine the degree of difficulty of each item. Items which are “too difficult” or “too easy” are of little or no use in norm-referenced assessment; and, to determine the effectiveness of the item in discriminating pupils who are “high” or “low” in the ability or achievement being tested (p.92).

Item analysis directs the test developers “to identify and correct any flawed items before they are included in an operational version of test” (Livingston, 2006, p.431). Moreover, “the statistical information from a test item analysis is an invaluable tool for both interpreting test results and improving the items for future use” (McDonald, 2002, p.175) and the “deficiencies may be uncovered that were not apparent by simply reviewing the items” (Wiersma, 2000, p.171).

3.3.1.2.3.1 Difficulty Index

On the basis of results of pilot testing, item analysis of the tests was carried out. All the responses were scored and then enlisted in descending order. Then, number of students was recorded, choosing the correct answer to calculate the difficulty index. “The difficulty of a test question is a function of the percent of examinees who responded
correctly to it ($p$ –value$^{10}$)” (Wendler & Walker, 2006, p.450). The $p$-value for each item was calculated by using the following formula:

$$p = \frac{R}{T}$$ (Satterly, 1989, p.95)

Here,

$p =$ the difficulty index for a particular item,

$R =$ number of correct responses, and

$T =$ the total number of students to whom the test was administered.

The value of $p$ ranges from 0.0 to 1.0.

The numerical presentation of the $p$-values calculated for each item of all the five tests are given in table 3.1.

### Table 3.1: The values of Difficulty Index for each item of the tests of five subjects taught at grade four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question no.</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Urdu</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>S. Studies</th>
<th>G. Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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$^{10}$ “$p$-values are influenced by the academic ability of the students who responded to the question, for example, a test item given to more able group of examinees shows that items are somewhat easier than if the same test item is given to a less able group” (Livington, 2006, p.450). In order to eliminate this possibility, the sample for pilot run of the present study was taken randomly.
Generally, “it is best to create an item difficulty distribution that has a moderate spread items having difficulty around a mean $p$-value of .50” (Wendler & Walker, 2006, p.450). the items having difficulty index below 0.2 were considered very difficult items and similarly the items having difficulty index above 0.8 were taken as very easy items, as Satterly, (1989) describe that “the higher the index the more children get it right” (p.95). Both very easy and difficult type of items needed revision. “Eliminating poorly functioning items from a test can increase the test’s reliability coefficient” (McDonald, 2002, p.179). Moreover, “besides eliminating ambiguities and clarifying directions, a pilot run can avoid results that provide little or no information” (Wiersma, 2000, p.173). On the other hand, it is also worth noting that “having some easier and some more difficult test items allow for finer distinctions among examinees at the tails of the reporting scale” (Wendler & Walker, 2006, p.450).

3.3.1.2.3.2 Discrimination Power of Test Items

The next step was to calculate the discrimination power of all the test items. “Discrimination is the tendency of the item to be answered correctly by test takers who are generally strong in the skills or type of knowledge the item is intended to measure and to be answered incorrectly by test takers who are not” (Livington, 2006, p.422). Similarly, Schoer (1974) stated that “discrimination refers to the degree to which good students answer correctly and poor students do not” (p. 151). Moreover, “item discrimination is vital to a test in that it allows examinees with different ability levels to be distinguished from each other” (Wendler & Walker, 2006, p.451).

The discrimination power for individual items was computed by taking the 27% students from the top and 27% from the bottom of the originally prepared list in descending order.
The Impact of Grade Retention

(Satterly, 1989). Thus two groups formed, the top scorers and the bottom scorers, each having 12 members. By using the formula presented by Satterly, 1989 on page 98, the discrimination power was computed by using the list of top and bottom scorers.

\[ Dr = p_1 - p_2 \]

Where,

- \( Dr \) is the discrimination Power of a particular test item,
- \( p_1 \) = the number of top scorers who correct the item/total top scorers
- \( p_2 \) = the number of bottom scorers who correct the item/total bottom scorer

Satterly (1989) pointed out that “the higher the value of discrimination power, the more effectively performance on the item reflects performance overall” (p.98).

The values of discrimination power calculated for each item of the test of English are given in the Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: The values of Discrimination Power for each item of the tests of five subjects taught at grade four**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question no.</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Urdu</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>S.Studies</th>
<th>G.Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<td>0.29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.53</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wendler and Walker (2006) indicated that “items with moderate correlations (+0.30 to +0.80) allow distinction among ability levels of examinees while still providing unique information” (p.451). So, items with discrimination power 0.4 and above are considered very well, whereas less than 0.30 were revised.

3.3.1.2.3 The Reliability Testing

After careful revision of all the test items and replacement of weak items, all tests were administered to the same students in order to check the reliability of the tests. The Cronbach’s Alfa reliability of the five tests was measured by using SPSS\textsuperscript{11} 13.0. The reliability level of .882 was attained that was relatively close to the acceptable value i.e. 0.90. The minor confusions revealed by students’ complaints during reliability testing were then removed with the consent of Advisory Committee. The final version of the tests of all five subjects was approved by the Advisory Committee for collection of data on full scale.

The experience and feedback received as a result of the pilot study had also enabled me to confidently carry out the data collection process.

3.3.2 Population of the Study

The population of quantitative part of the study was comprised of the students of grade four in the public elementary and primary schools of the Punjab. According to the report of National Education Census 2005, the total number of students studying in grade four in public primary and elementary schools of the Punjab is 1,44,199 (GoP,2006). Public

\textsuperscript{11} SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences
schools in Rawalpindi city were selected for study purpose as they serve majority of economically deprived population, and those having better socio-economic status living in this area, send their children to private schools. Moreover, the people with low socio-economic status also deprived of basic educational facilities, even though they live in urban areas of Rawalpindi city. Thus, the whole population considered for the purpose of the study belonged to public schools of the Punjab, and the private schools were excluded from the population as there is no official data available for these schools with reference to repeaters. Moreover, the private schools have their own promotion policies at different grades; therefore, for the sake of homogeneity of the data, private schools were not considered in the study.

### 3.3.3 Sample of the quantitative aspect of the Study

In order to see the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the 4th grade students of the public schools of the Punjab, a multiphase panel study was designed. The academic performance of the students was assessed twice and the self-esteem was evaluated three times during the whole process of the study. As discussed earlier, the policy of automatic promotion at primary level is homogenously practiced in all public schools of the Punjab, (see also section 1.9). So by employing convenient sampling technique, the study sample was limited to the public schools of Rawalpindi city.

The determination of sample size for the quantitative aspect of the present study was very complex. After a detailed discussion regarding sample size with PhD advisory committee, it was decided to take 20% of the whole population as poor performers. This large value was taken due to greater probability of dropout cases after failure as revealed
The Impact of Grade Retention

by official statistics (GoP, 2006). With this estimate, an approximate formula (by Cochran, 1977 as narrated in Czaja and Blair, 2005, p.142) for determining the sample size for a variable expressed as a percentage is

\[ n = \frac{(1-n/N) \times t^2 \times (p \times q)}{d^2} \] (Czaja and Blair, 2005, p.142)

where

\( n = \) the sample size

\( N = \) the size of the eligible population

\( t^2 = \) the squared value of the standard deviation score that refers to the area under a normal distribution of values

\( p = \) the percentage category for which we are computing the sample size

\( q = 1 - p \)

\( d^2 = \) the squared value of one-half the precision interval around the sample estimate

To solve the equation, the researcher sets the values for two components (probability level and confidence interval) and approximate the third (variance). The researcher took confidence interval to be ±5% and probability level to be 95%; that was to include the population value in 95 of every group of 100 samples of the same size and its score is 1.96 (Czaja and Blair, 2005, p.143). The researcher assumed \( p = .20 \) and, therefore, \( q = 1 - .20 = .80 \). Substituting these values into the formula gives

\[ n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (.20) \times (.80)}{(.05)^2} = \frac{.614656}{.0025} = 245.86 \]

and

\[ n = \frac{245}{1 + (245-1/1,44,199)} = 240 \]

It was then decided to take approximately 240 fourth grade students as sample of poor performers. In addition to poor performers, another group of fourth grade students
(normal group) was also taken for comparison and checking the validity of the results. This group comprises 108 students of fourth grade. Thus the whole sample of the quantitative aspect of the study was comprised of total 346 fourth grade students, which were then reduced to 305, with 203 being Identified Poor Performers, and the Normal Group remained 102 students in phase 2.

The required number of sample students was attained from 42 public schools. Out of these 42 public schools, 8 were elementary and the other 34 were primary. Majority of the primary public schools included in the sample, were co-education institutions (both boys and girls studying together) but there were separate schools for boys and girls also. However, all elementary schools were gender specific.

The sample description of schools in table form is presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed earlier in chapter one, this study employed samples from two main groups:

1. Identified Poor Performers of the grade four (n=238) before final examination who later split into two sub groups (promoted and retained) according to their final examination result. It was found that 29 students who were declared failed, left (dropout) the school just after announcement of result and did not carry on their studies in the repeated year. Whereas, during next academic session 6 more students from the repeater sample also left school due to unknown reasons\(^{12}\). As a

\(^{12}\) All these left cases did not apply for school leaving certificates (SLC), so they were also included in dropouts.
result, the data for these students was not usable and these cases (n=35) were eliminated from the sample. Thus, the usable sample actually represented a better group of students. Although this may not be an important concern for sample-size consideration, such loss of participants may have caused an unidentified degree of bias in the usable sample. The original number of this sample of Identified Poor Performers (n = 238) was reduced to 203,( out of them 117 students failed and repeated the same grade and 86 passed and were promoted to the next grade), in the second phase of the study;

(2) The Normal Group of 4th grade students of the same sample schools, who later passed and were promoted to next grade (n=108). The sample of Normal Group was selected for the purpose of comparing the poor and better performers of the same grade. Moreover it also verified the validity and reliability of the tests during the two phases of the study. During first and second phase, 5 students shifted to some other schools due to some domestic reasons\textsuperscript{13} and the total number of group two was left 103. Thus, the total number of subjects was remained 305, with 203 being Identified Poor Performers, and the Normal Group comprised of 103 students.

The elementary public schools were included in the sample because, in the system of Education Department, the elementary schools also serve as Center Schools. All the correspondence from the department to the primary schools and from the schools to the department is conducted through these ‘Center Schools’. It helped the researcher to locate primary schools easily. Otherwise it was very difficult to access the primary schools, as most of these schools run in rented buildings and often moved to other addresses. Thus,

\textsuperscript{13} As described in applications for. SLC
the whole study sample was said to be a group of students studying at urban public primary and elementary schools of Rawalpindi city.

### 3.3.4 Formal Approval for Data Collection

Since the sample of the study involves students and teachers of the public elementary and primary schools of Rawalpindi city, the research was carried out through formal procedure of seeking permission from Directorate of Education Rawalpindi district. Data was collected personally in all phases by administering the instruments developed for the study to the respondents in all the schools included in the sample.

### 3.3.5 Procedure of Data Collection

The quantitative part of the study was completed in three phases. In the phase 1, during the last term of academic session, students of grade four in the public elementary and primary schools of Rawalpindi city, who were considered weak in academic achievement (Identified Poor Performers), had been taken as study sample and had delivered to them a self-esteem assessment scale and the locally developed tests of the syllabus of grade four containing the subjects of English, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General Science. At the same time, another group of better performers (the Normal Group) was also evaluated for comparison of good and bad performers of the same grade. This group comprised of the students of grade four of the sample schools who had shown better performance in internal assessment system. In between the phase 1 and Phase 2, at the beginning of the new academic year, just after the announcement of annual school results, the whole sample was evaluated again by the same self-esteem assessment scale.
In this way, the self-esteem of the students was judged thrice during the whole period of the study.

In the second and last phase, the whole sample was reassessed by both instruments at the end of second term, (i.e. after ten months of the first phase) in the next academic session. In this way, the researcher compared the repeaters of grade four and the promoted students of grade five of the same sample. At the same time the whole sample of Identified Poor Performers are also compared with the sample of Normal Group.

3.3.6 The Analytic Procedure for Quantitative Data

The whole sample of the study was further divided for the purpose of analysis into three sub categories i.e.

(a) Repeaters,

(b) Promoted but Identified poor performers, and

(c) The Normal Group of students.

Following the completion of data collection, the whole data were coded for procedure of analysis. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 13.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Various statistical techniques such as paired $t$-tests, independent $t$-tests and regression analysis were carried out with all above mentioned samples to demonstrate how the grade retention affects the self-esteem and academic performance of the students.
3.4 The Qualitative Aspect of the Study

The last part of this chapter deals with the qualitative aspect of the present study. In this section, the rationale of employing qualitative techniques, instrument and sample of qualitative study, the process of data collection and analysis procedure are discussed in detail.

3.4.1 The Rationale for using Qualitative Method

The quantitative survey data had allowed the researcher an exploration of variations in some direct measures of academic performance, self-esteem of students and their influential relationship with grade retention. However, at the same time, the review of the related literature had manifested the researcher that quantitative data can improve understanding of only some the issues related to psychological wellbeing of the child and the academic performance. The complexities of the relationship of grade retention with self-esteem and academic performance are simply too difficult to disentangle through a survey study. This limitation was balanced in the present study by the use of qualitative research methods. Moreover, the literature revealed that “the voices of the participants are not directly heard in quantitative research” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.9). Therefore, it was decided to employ qualitative approach along with the quantitative, to unravel the multifarious issues related to the phenomenon of grade retention.

Qualitative research methods, with their flexibility and an interpretative approach, enabled the researcher to capture the intangible issues related to grade retention. The epistemological position of the researcher also suggested that for generating in-depth data, she would have to interact with the primary school teachers as key informants, talk to them, listen to them and gain access to their insights and articulations in order to
capture their “lived experiences” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.317). In correspondence with the research questions, a study was designed with semi structured in-depth interviews of selected group of teachers teaching at the Public primary and elementary schools of Rawalpindi city. The rationale of using interview technique was the assumption that “individuals have unique and important knowledge about the social world that is ascertainable through verbal communication” (Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2006, p.119). The interview data had two major dimensions, on one side, it was used to “confirm and augment data” gained by quantitative method (Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2006, p.324). On the other hand, it also provided another dimension for explaining how individual teacher interpret student’s performance and other factors while making retention decisions and how they interpret changes in attitude and the coping strategies of retained students.

3.4.2 The Interview Guide

An interview guide was prepared for study purpose, in the light of existing literature on grade retention. “An interview guide is a set of topical areas and questions that the interviewer brings to the interview” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.126). During its development, three experienced teachers (not included in the sample) reviewed the interview guide and modifications were made based on their suggestions. The interview guide was further modified based on some basic theoretical concepts that were emerging after two pilot interviews were analyzed. Amendments proposed by these respondents have been used to improve the interview guide; one additional question was added at that time. The interview guide was divided into themed sections so that the information obtained from each participant (teacher) can be to some extent regulated, yet allowing the
researcher to explore the individual differences. The details of the interview guide are presented in the Appendix -B.

The questions included in the interview guide were focused on the teachers’ experience about retained students. Teachers were asked to portray the types of students having academic problems, in order to explain the main reasons of failure of the students at primary level. Teachers were asked to describe about the changes in the attitude of retained students towards their studies, fellow students and teachers, and they were further asked to state the different kind of coping strategies adopted by the retained students during the retained year. The participants were given “authority over their own stories, which means that they were seen as experts” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.128). Interview data was particularly facilitated the researcher in explaining how individual teachers interpret attitude and coping strategies of retained students.

3.4.3 The Profile of Participant Teachers

The logic of qualitative research is concerned with “in-depth understanding, usually working with small samples” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.70). As the researcher employed “Grounded Theory” approach in qualitative aspect of this study, so the technique of “theoretical sampling”( Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.72) was used for sample selection. This type of sampling implies that “the researcher decides who or what to sample next, based on prior data gathered from the same research project in order to make comparisons with previous findings”( Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.72).

For this purpose, the process of interviewing of experienced primary grade teachers was started for getting in-depth information regarding reasons of scholastic failure and
behavioral problems of repeaters. The sample size for the qualitative aspect of this study was not pre-determined and it was decided that if the researcher finds the results are the same for the selected group of individuals and learns nothing new by sampling again from this population or a point of “theoretical saturation” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.72) is reached, then the researcher may stop gathering data. Due to selection of a “cohesive sample” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.73) the saturation was obtained after interviewing twelve experienced teachers.

The detailed profile of the participants in table form is described as follows:

**Table 3.3: The Profile of Participant Teachers being interviewed:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr no.</th>
<th>Teacher Name</th>
<th>Academic Qualification</th>
<th>Professional Qualification</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>School (where serving)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ms. S.I</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC&lt;sup&gt;14&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>PST&lt;sup&gt;15&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>23 Years</td>
<td>GGPS&lt;sup&gt;16&lt;/sup&gt;, No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ms. K.B</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>PST, Headmistress</td>
<td>17 Years</td>
<td>GBPS&lt;sup&gt;17&lt;/sup&gt;, No.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ms. I.K</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>EST&lt;sup&gt;18&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>32 Years</td>
<td>GGES&lt;sup&gt;19&lt;/sup&gt;, No.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ms. F.Y</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>PST, Headmistress</td>
<td>34 Years</td>
<td>GPS, No.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ms. I.A</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>PST, Headmistress</td>
<td>38 Years</td>
<td>GPS, No.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ms. S.K</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>PST, Headmistress</td>
<td>32 Years</td>
<td>GGPS, No.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ms. N.S</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>PST, Headmistress</td>
<td>25 Years</td>
<td>GBPS, No.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ms. S.B</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>PST, Headmistress</td>
<td>32 Years</td>
<td>GGPS, No.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ms. S.S</td>
<td>B.A</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
<td>SST&lt;sup&gt;20&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>20 Years</td>
<td>GPS, No.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ms. R.C</td>
<td>B.A</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
<td>SST, Headmistress</td>
<td>30 Years</td>
<td>GGES, No.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mr. S.M</td>
<td>M.A in Urdu, M.A in Islamiat</td>
<td>M.Ed</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td>16 Years</td>
<td>GBPS, No.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ms T.M</td>
<td>M.A in Islamiat</td>
<td>M.Ed</td>
<td>EST, English Teacher</td>
<td>14 Years</td>
<td>GBES, No.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>14</sup> PTC, Primary Teacher’s Certificate, a minimum professional degree required for the job of primary school teacher
<sup>15</sup> PST, Primary School Teacher
<sup>16</sup> GGPS, Government Girls Primary School
<sup>17</sup> GBPS, Government Boys Primary School
<sup>18</sup> EST, Elementary School Teacher
<sup>19</sup> GGES, Government Girls Elementary School
<sup>20</sup> SST, Secondary School Teacher
All of the 12 interviewed teachers had at least 14 years of experience. Among them, six were primary school headmistresses, one was elementary school headmistress and remaining five were primary school teachers. As revealed by the Table 3.3, eight teachers held the professional certificate of Primary Teachers Training after matriculation, two teachers were studying for the professional degree of Bachelor’s in Education, whereas the rest of two teachers held the professional degree of Master’s in Education. All of them were regular classroom teachers and taught either in the public primary schools or in the primary section of public elementary schools located in the Rawalpindi city. The elementary school headmistress was an exceptional case in a way that she was near her retirement, with a lot of teaching and management experience at primary level and also held bachelor’s degree in education. One teacher of the sample interviewed was male; however, all remaining referents were female and their names are fabricated to hide their identities. This group of teachers was selected as key informants during the first phase of data collection of quantitative part of the study. It was anticipated that these participants will provide the key information required to achieve the study objectives, as they appeared to be competent, and committed to their profession.

3.4.4 The Process of Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews (based on interview guide) were conducted with sample teachers, in the months of April and May 2009. During the first phase of quantitative data collection, a rapport was built with the class teachers of grade four that enabled the researcher to observe their actions and interactions with students and to understand things from their point of view. Interviews averaging approximately 25 to 30 minutes were
briefly noted and later written in detail on the same day. The participants felt safe, comfortable, as “though what they were saying was valued” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.128). In qualitative research, there is greater probability to face ethical problems associated with interference upon confidentiality and with gaining informed consent from research participants. Ethical considerations of interviewing on issues related to official matters were therefore, imperative in relation to confidentiality. From the beginning of an interview, participants were assured that they could withdraw at any point, or refuse to discuss any issue they disliked. They were told that interview questions were designed to cover qualitative data about the teacher's opinions in the light of their experiences, thoughts and perceptions. All the participants were informed about the nature of the research, but they were reluctant to give written consent\textsuperscript{21}, it appeared that they wanted to hide their identity as informants. However, their verbal agreement was sought prior to interview sessions. They were also assured that the information has been taken only for research purpose and would not be disclosed at any cost. Despite of guarantees of confidentiality, most of the teachers were even reluctant to allow the use of tape recorder for recording their views. They consented on condition of taking notes and not tape recording anything. Perhaps they felt threatened that someone could be exploited them through audio tapes of their views and thus their job could be in danger. The researcher tried to convince them but they disagreed and looked apprehensive in the presence of tape recorder. In such situations, some researchers are dishonest and use tape recorder covertly without informing the participants and thus “use deception in order to conduct their research” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.109). The ethical considerations of conducting

\textsuperscript{21} The researcher developed an informed consent form for the informant teachers to sign before they engage in the research. That form acknowledged that informants’ rights have been protected during data collection. All informants read the form and agree to participate in the study but did not sign that.
research did not allow the researcher to do so and deceive the informants. Moreover, most of them were of the opinion that the researcher appeared as some official person to them and they are always cautious of any 'official' type of person they encountered. This fact enhanced the probability of loosing key information that was expected to be obtained through interviews. At last, while keeping in mind their position and job related threats, (and little knowledge about the research requirements) it was decided to take notes of their views, even though this meant that the “data were reduced to relatively unreliable field notes” (Silverman, 2000, p. 126). The researcher had undertaken a shorthand course formerly, which proved helpful during taking notes. However, it was still not easy to engage in a form of interaction with participants and take down notes at the same time, a trouble overcome to some extent by this shorthand training. There was another reason of this compromise; majority of Pakistani public (including educated ones) do not understand the requirements of conducting a study perhaps due to the absence of proper research culture. If they were forced to allow recording, the reliable information could be concealed. This situation forced me to rely on written notes. Demographic data were collected at the end of each interview. Findings from the study were shared with the participants. Interview transcripts were coded as categories emerged from the data.

3.4.5 The Process of Data Analysis

The interviews taken for this study were transcribed verbatim. All the transcriptions were “regarded as ‘the truth’ and each transcription was considered to contain a one-to-one correspondence between what was said orally and the printed word” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006, p.345). The qualitative data was analyzed by using grounded theory method. This process involved “generating categories of information (open coding)
selecting one of the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial coding), and then explicating a story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding)” (Creswell, 2003, p.191). The researcher read these transcripts in their entirety in order to understand individual teachers’ experiences fully. Interviews were semi structured, and while the interviews had provided some opportunities for unstructured responses, the interview data was analyzed with the goal of characterizing teacher responses to a key set of interview items (see the exact interview items in the analysis section) related to the research questions. Thus, after reading all of the transcripts, the researcher focused on pinpointing variables across individual participants (teachers) that would allow her to better understand the main reasons of failure of students, and the changes in the attitude of repeaters during the retained year. The themes emerged during the process of analysis, were supported with existing research studies in the relevant field. Thus the literature was used for “supplemental validation” for the accuracy of findings or how the findings differ from the published data (Creswell, 1998, p.209).

3.4.6 Interpretation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The interpretation of findings of the present study was multifaceted, as it employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques for investigating a research problem. Consequently, two distinct mixed method strategies were used for the interpretation of the analyzed data. The quantitative data was collected for testing four null hypotheses of the study (see at section 1.5). The qualitative data explored two major questions along with several sub questions (see also section 1.6). The first major question of the qualitative aspect was looking for information about a diverse but closely associated issue
with the major research problem. The findings of this question were embedded in the study by using “Concurrent Nested Strategy”²² (Creswell, 2003, p.218). By using this strategy, the researcher gained “perspectives from different types of data … within the study” (Creswell, 2003, p.218). In the same way, the findings of third and fourth hypotheses were also embedded in the cumulative findings by using the above mentioned strategy. Whereas, “Concurrent Triangulation Strategy”²³ (Creswell, 2003, p.217) was employed to integrate the findings of the second question of qualitative part with the results of first two hypotheses of the quantitative inquiry, by giving “equal emphasis” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.286) to both types of data.

**3.5 Summary**

This chapter provided the detailed description of the methodology used for the present study. In accordance with the nature of the problem being studied, mixed method technique was used. The methodology of the study is explained separately as quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study. Before giving the details of both aspects of the study, the rationale for using mixed methods was explained. Afterwards, the whole process of quantitative method along with procedure of pilot testing and item analysis were elaborated. In the last section of the study, the qualitative method along with the details of its essentials was thrashed out.

²² In this design, one method (quantitative or qualitative) is embedded or nested, within the predominant method (quantitative or qualitative). This nesting may mean that the embedded method addresses a different question than the dominant method. (Creswell, 2003, p.218)

²³ This model generally uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other methods (Creswell, 2003, p.217).
4.1 Introduction

The general purpose of this research study was to examine the impact of grade retention on students' academic performance and self-esteem. For quantitative data analysis, the specific objectives were formulated to:

i. Explore the association between grade retention and the self-esteem of repeaters of grade four.

ii. Demonstrate how the grade retention affects the academic performance of the repeaters of grade four.

iii. Find out the immediate impact of failure of fourth grade students on their self-esteem.

iv. Explore the relationship between the academic performance and self-esteem of the students.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, the procedure of quantitative data collection was elaborated. Second, the impact of grade retention on students’ self-esteem and academic performance was analyzed through statistical procedure. With the help of analytic process, the variations in the five measures of academic performance (results of locally developed tests of the five subjects taught at grade four) and the self-esteem scores of the sample students as revealed during the phases of the study are illustrated.
4.2 The Process of Data Collection

The process of quantitative data collection of the study was completed in two major phases along with a mini phase. In the Phase 1, students of grade four in the public elementary and primary schools of Rawalpindi city, who were considered weak in academic achievement, had taken as study sample and delivered them a self-esteem assessment scale along with the locally developed tests of the syllabus of grade four containing the subjects of English, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General Science during the last term of their academic session. At the same time, another group of normal students was also evaluated for comparison of poor and better performers of the same grade. This group was comprised of the students of grade four of the sample schools who had shown better performance in internal assessment system and according to teacher’s estimation; they had the chance of success in the annual examination.

In between the first and second phase, at the beginning of the new academic year, just after the announcement of annual school results, the whole sample was evaluated by the same self-esteem assessment scale for assessment of immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of students.

In the second and last phase (Phase 2), the whole sample was reassessed by both instruments at the end of second term, and after ten months of the first phase, in the next academic session. In this way, the researcher compared the repeaters of grade four with the promoted but identified as poor students of the same sample, at the same time the sample of identified poor performers was also compared with the sample of normal Group of students.
4.3 The Sample Description

The researcher considered two categories of subjects for the purpose of data collection namely, the Identified Poor Performers of grade four, and the Normal Group of students of the same grade from the same selected sample schools. The Identified Poor Performers consisted of those 4th graders, who had shown poor performance in the internal assessment system of the school. This sample size comprised of 238 students of 4th grade students of public elementary and primary schools24 of Rawalpindi city. Of the 238 Identified Poor Performers, the original number of students (n = 238) was reduced to 203 in the second phase due to the dropping out of 35 students. Out of these Identified Poor Performers, 117 students failed and repeated the same grade and 86 passed and promoted to the next grade.

The Normal Group (n=108) comprised of those students of grade four who had shown better performance as compared to Identified Poor Performers in the internal assessment system in same schools and had the probability to succeed in final examinations. The Normal Group later passed and promoted to the next grade. During first and second phase, 5 students shifted to some other schools due to some domestic reasons25 and the total number of Normal Group was left 103. Consequently, the total number of subjects of the study was remained 305, with 102 Normal Group and 203 being Identified Poor Performers; the detailed account of the whole sample of the study is described in Table 4.1.

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24 The primary and elementary schools in the education system of Pakistan are differed in a way that the elementary school comprised of eight classes whereas in a primary school, five classes are taught.
25 As described in applications for SLC
Table 4.1: Detailed Account of the Original Sample of the Study (N=346)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Original Sample</th>
<th>Promoted</th>
<th>Repeaters</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Remaining sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified Poor Performers</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Group</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After announcement of annual school result, the sample was divided into three subcategories. The sample of Identified Poor Performers was further divided into two subcategories i.e. Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted sample on the basis of school result. In this way, For the purpose of analysis, the whole study sample was categorized as follows:

1. Repeater group
2. Identified Poor but Promoted group, and
3. Normal group

**4.3 The Instruments**

Two types of instruments were used for the collection of quantitative data. First, the Self-esteem assessment scale for the sample students. The Urdu translation of Beck youth inventory scale for self-concept of the children of age group 11-14 was used for this purpose. And second, the locally developed tests of the subjects of English, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General Science, for grade four. The content for the tests was taken from the syllabus of the Punjab text book board Lahore, that is officially recommended curriculum of all public schools in the Punjab.
4.4 The Statistical Analysis

When the data is taken in numerical form, such as scores, the usual course of action is to perform an appropriate type of statistical analysis (Wiersma, 2000, p.323). Statistics is a general term for procedure for summarizing or displaying data (descriptive statistics) and for analyzing data (inferential statistical tests) (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2006, p.383). Following the collection of complete data of two phases of panel study, the data was coded by assigning numeric values and then recoded it for the purpose of computer analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.129).

The statistical analysis was performed using computer software SPSS 13.0.

4.4.1 The Descriptive Statistics

“In quantitative analysis, exploring the data entails visually inspecting the data and conducting a descriptive analysis (the mean, standard deviation etc.) to determine the general trends in the data” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.130). Moreover, “the role of descriptive statistics is to provide the reader with an understanding of what the data look like by using a few indicative or typical values” (Brace et al., 2006, p.07)

Therefore, the descriptive statistics were obtained relating to the major variables in the study in order to give details of the three sub samples from which the quantitative data were collected. The rationale of employing the descriptive statistics was “to see the distribution of the data and determine whether it is normally or non-normally distributed so that proper statistics can be chosen for analysis” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.130).
As the original sample in phase 1 was comprised 346 students of grade four, which was reduced to 305 in the phase 2, the situation analysis of the whole study sample in the next academic year is described in Table 4.2 to Table 4.10.

### Table 4.2: Gender Description of the whole Study Sample (N=346)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>148 (42.7%)</td>
<td>34 (22.9%)</td>
<td>114 (77.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>198 (57.3%)</td>
<td>07 (3.6%)</td>
<td>191 (96.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 4.2 presents the situation analysis of study sample on the basis of gender. There were total 148 (42.7%) boys included in the study sample, out of the 34 (22.9%) were left the school and 114 (77%) retained in school and carried their studies. There were 198 (57.2%) total girls in the whole sample, 07 (3.5%) were left and 191 (96.4%) retained in school and continued their studies. The Table 4.2 revealed that more boys left school than girls.

### Table 4.3: Sample Division (pass/fail) of Identified Poor performers on the basis of Annual School Result (n=238)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Dropout/left</th>
<th>Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>91 (38.24%)</td>
<td>05 (05.4%)</td>
<td>86 (94.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>147 (61.76%)</td>
<td>30 (20.4%)</td>
<td>117 (79.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 4.3 presents the description of Identified Poor Performers on the basis of annual school results. Out of total 238 fourth grade students, 91 (38.23%) were passed in annual examination, among them 05 (05.4%) were left the school due to unknown reasons and 86 (94.6%) remained in the school and continued their education in the same school. There are 147 (61.76%) students failed in annual examination, out of them, 30

---

26 Here, left cases included both dropouts and left the sample school for carrying their studies in some other schools.
(20.4%) were dropped out from school, whereas 117 (79.6%) continued their studies and repeated the same grade. It is revealed in the Table 4.3 that dropout rate of failure students is much greater than promoted ones.

The failure students who had repeated fourth grade were the main focus of the study.

Table 4.4: Categorical Description of Normal group on the basis of Annual School Result (n=108)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>left</th>
<th>Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal Group</td>
<td>108 (100%)</td>
<td>06 (5.6%)</td>
<td>102 (94.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 4.4 shows the detail of the normal group of the study sample. There were total 108 students included in the sample; all students had passed in the annual examination. Out of these passed students 06 (5.6%) were left due to unknown reasons and 102 (94.4%) had carried their studies in the next grade. The Table 4.4 revealed that 5.6% normal students left school due to unknown reasons.

In the preceding section, the whole sample (N=346) taken for study purpose was discussed. During the first and second phase this sample was reduced to 305 students, (the reasons discussed earlier in section 3.3.3) therefore, in the succeeding section, the particulars of only this remaining sample (N=305) will be discussed.

Table 4.5: Gender Description of the study sample in relation with Annual School Result (N=305)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Failed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>114 (37.4%)</td>
<td>74 (64.9%)</td>
<td>40 (35.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>191 (62.6%)</td>
<td>114 (59.6%)</td>
<td>77 (40.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 4.2 presents the gender description of the whole study sample excluding drop out and left cases. There were 114 (37.4%) boys and 191 (62.6%) girls included in the
sample having total number 305 of fourth grade students. Out of 114 boys, 74 (64.9%) were passed and 40 (35.1%) were declared fail in annual examination. In the girls’ sample, 114 (59.6%) were passed and 77 (40.3%) failed in examination. The reason of greater percentage of female students was the greater number of girls’ enrolment ratio in public primary schools included in the study sample.

| Table 4.6: Categorical Description (Pass/Fail) of the Study Sample on the basis of School Result (N=305) |
|------------------------------------------------ -------------------------------------------------- |
| Category                  | Frequency         | Pass  | Fail  |
| Identified Poor Performers | 203 (66.6 %)      | 86(42.3%) | 117(57.6%) |
| Normal Group              | 102 (33.4 %)      | 102 (100%) | - |

The Table 4.3 describes the two major categories of the whole study sample. The total number of 305 students included in the study sample was further categorized as 203 (66.6%) Identified Poor Performers and 102 (33.4%) students as Normal Group. Among Identified Poor Performers, 86 (42.3%) students were succeeded in examination while 117 (57.6%) declared fail. All 102 (100%) students belonged to Normal Group succeeded in the annual examination.

In the following section, the descriptive statistics related to major variables of the quantitative aspect of the study are presented.

| Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics regarding major variable of the Study (Academic Performance$^{27}$ & Self-Esteem$^{28}$) (N=305) |
|------------------------------------------------ -------------------------------------------------- |
| Variables                  | Minimum Score | Maximum Score | Mean  | Std. deviation |
| AP-1$^{29}$                | 5.00          | 82.00          | 42.28 | 13.43          |
| AP-2$^{30}$                | 5.00          | 82.00          | 45.81 | 14.26          |
| SE-1$^{31}$                | 30.00         | 65.00          | 47.69 | 07.84          |
| SE-2$^{32}$                | 28.00         | 65.00          | 47.36 | 07.80          |

$^{27}$ Total score for Academic Performance (AP) = 100
$^{28}$ Total score for Self-Esteem (SE) = 65
$^{29}$ AP-1= Cumulative academic performance in phase 1(before annual school examination).
$^{30}$ AP-2= Cumulative academic performance in phase 2 (at the end of second term in the successive year).
$^{31}$ SE-1= Self-Esteem score in phase 1(before annual school examination).
The Table 4.5 presents the descriptive statistics regarding cumulative academic performance and self-esteem scores of the whole study sample in Phase 1 and Phase 2. The minimum score achieved by the study sample in the academic performance in both phases was 5.00. Similarly, the maximum score of the study sample in the academic performance in both phases was also equal i.e. 82.00. The mean score for academic performance of students in Phase 1 was 42.28 with a standard deviation of 13.43, and the mean score for academic performance of students in Phase 2 was 45.81 with a standard deviation of 14.26.

The self esteem scores of the study sample in both phases also demonstrated some similarities. The minimum self-esteem score in Phase 1 was 30.00 that was declined to 28.00 in Phase 2. The maximum self-esteem score of the study sample was same in both phases. The mean score for self-esteem of students in Phase 1 was 47.69 with a standard deviation of 7.84 and the mean score for self-esteem of the students in Phase 2 was 47.36 with a standard deviation of 7.80.

As discussed earlier, the whole study sample was further divided into three sub categories i.e. Repeaters’ sample, Identified Poor but Promoted sample and the Normal Group, so their separate descriptive statistics were also calculated in order to get more clear picture of the whole sample.

\[ SE_{-2} = \text{Self-Esteem score in phase 2 (at the end of second term in the successive year).} \]
Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics regarding major variable of the Study (Academic Performance\textsuperscript{33} & Self-Esteem\textsuperscript{34}) of Repeaters Sample (n=117),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP-1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>30.54</td>
<td>9.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-2</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>32.60</td>
<td>9.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE-1</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>62.00</td>
<td>47.56</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE-2</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>42.65</td>
<td>6.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to repeaters’ sample, the Table 4.6 indicates that the minimum score for academic performance of Repeaters achieved in Phase 1 was 5.00, whereas the maximum score in Phase 1 was 50.00. The mean score of Repeaters in Phase 1 was 30.54 with a standard deviation of 9.20. The minimum score for academic performance of Repeaters achieved in Phase 2 was 5.00, whereas the maximum score in Phase 1 was 54.00 and the mean score in Phase 2 was 32.60 with a standard deviation of 9.05.

Similarly, the minimum self-esteem score for Repeaters in Phase 1 was 30.00 and maximum score was 62.00. The mean score for Repeaters in Phase 1 was 47.56 with a standard deviation of 7.59. In the Phase 2, the minimum self-esteem score of the Repeaters was 28.00 whereas, the maximum score was 56.00. The mean score of self-esteem for Repeaters in phase 2 was 42.65 with a standard deviation of 6.48.

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics regarding major variable of the Study (Academic Performance\textsuperscript{35} & Self-Esteem\textsuperscript{36}) of Identified Poor but Promoted Sample (n=86),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP-1</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>76.20</td>
<td>44.26</td>
<td>8.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-2</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>78.40</td>
<td>48.87</td>
<td>8.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE-1</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>7.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE-2</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>6.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{33} Total score for Academic Performance (AP) = 100
\textsuperscript{34} Total score for Self-Esteem (SE) = 65
\textsuperscript{35} Total score for Academic Performance (AP) = 100
\textsuperscript{36} Total score for Self-Esteem (SE) = 65
With respect to Repeaters’ sample, the Table 4.7 indicates that the minimum score for academic performance of Identified Poor but Promoted sample achieved in Phase 1 was 25.00, whereas the maximum score in Phase 1 was 76.20. The mean score of this sample in Phase 1 was 44.26 with a standard deviation of 8.44. The minimum score for academic performance of Identified Poor but Promoted sample achieved in Phase 2 was 27.00, whereas the maximum score in Phase 2 was 78.4 and the mean score of this sub-sample in Phase 2 was 48.87 with a standard deviation of 8.67.

Similarly, the minimum self-esteem score for Identified Poor but Promoted sample in Phase 1 was 30.00 and maximum score was 63.00. The mean score for this sample in Phase 1 was 48.00 with a standard deviation of 7.79. In the Phase 2, the minimum self-esteem score of Identified Poor but Promoted sample was 38.00 whereas, the maximum score was 65.00. The mean score of self-esteem for this sample in Phase 2 was 50.00 with a standard deviation of 6.59.

### Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics regarding major variable of the Study (Academic Performance\(^{37}\) & Self-Esteem\(^{38}\)) of Normal Group (n=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP-1</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>82.60</td>
<td>54.09</td>
<td>9.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-2</td>
<td>36.80</td>
<td>82.00</td>
<td>58.38</td>
<td>9.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE-1</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>47.58</td>
<td>8.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE-2</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>49.87</td>
<td>7.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to the Normal Group of study sample, the Table 4.8 indicates that the minimum score for academic performance of this group achieved in Phase 1 was 33.00, whereas the maximum score in Phase 1 was 82.60. The mean score of Normal Group of

\(^{37}\) Total score for Academic Performance (AP) = 100

\(^{38}\) Total score for Self-Esteem (SE) = 65
students in Phase 1 was 54.09 with a standard deviation of 9.06 and the mean score in Phase 2 was 58.38 with a standard deviation of 9.23.

Similarly, the minimum self-esteem score for Normal Group of students in Phase 1 was 30.00 and maximum score was 65.00. The mean score for this group in Phase 1 was 47.58 with a standard deviation of 8.22. In the Phase 2, the minimum self-esteem score of the Normal Group was 35.00 whereas, the maximum score was 64.00. The mean score of self-esteem for this group in Phase 2 was 49.87 with a standard deviation of 7.49.

4.4.2 The Inferential Analysis

“The quantitative data analysis proceeds from descriptive analysis to inferential analysis and multiple steps in the inferential analysis build a greater refined analysis” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.131). Thus the main purpose of inferential analysis is “to draw conclusions about the population from which the sample was drawn” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.247). In the quantitative analysis

The descriptive measure, such as the mean and standard deviation computed from the sample data, are called statistics. Correspondingly, there are descriptive measures of the population called Parameters. Of course parameters are not computed, because data are not collected from the entire population. Rather inferences are made and conclusions are drawn about parameters from the statistics of the sample (Wiersma, 2000, p.345).

“Analyzing the data consists of examining the database to address the research hypotheses” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.131). “Hypothesis testing is the more common procedure reported in the research literature” (Wiersma, 2000, p.345). Technically, for a statistical test, null hypothesis is being tested by using inferential statistics, (Wiersma, 2000; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). For this purpose, the null hypotheses’ being formulated at the start of the research as follows:
Ho.1 There is no impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students of grades four.
Ho.2 There is no impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the students of grade four.
Ho.3 There is no immediate impact of failure of students of grade four on their self-esteem.
Ho.4 There is no relationship between the academic performance and the self-esteem of the students.

“The goal of the researcher generally is to reject (not support) the null hypothesis and to accept (support) the research hypothesis” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.247). The researcher goes through “a procedure of testing the hypothesis to determine whether or not it is consistent with the sample data” (Wiersma, 2000, p.345).

“The researcher decides on the statistical test to use in part based on the type of data, type of hypothesis, and the number and type of variables in the study” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.256). While considering all the requirements of the study, some appropriate tests were selected for inferential analysis. The paired $t$-test was carried out with all study samples to demonstrate the effects of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the fourth grade students. Independent $t$-test was conducted to analyze group differences of Identified Poor Performers and the Normal Group, as well as Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted sample. Moreover, linear regression analysis was employed to evaluate the impact of academic performance on the self-esteem of the
fourth grade students, while incorporating academic performance as predictor and self-esteem as criterion variable.

**4.4.2.1 Hypothesis No.1:**

There is no impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students of grades four

In order to test the first hypothesis, Paired $t$-test and Independent $t$-test were applied to the quantitative data. As discussed earlier, for the purpose of analysis, the whole sample was further divided into three sub-categories; i.e. Repeaters, Identified Poor but Promoted and the Normal Group.

| Table 4.11: Comparison of Self-Esteem (phase 2/phase 1) of the Repeaters (n=117), Identified Poor but Promoted (n=86), and Normal sample (n=102) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                 | Repeaters       | Identified Poor but Promoted | Normal Group    |
|                 | mean  $t$-value | mean  $t$-value | mean  $t$-value |
| SE-2            | 42.65           | 50.79            | 49.87           |
| vs              |                  | -13.29***        | 5.21***         |
| SE-1            | 47.56           | 48.00            | 47.58           |

*** Significant at .000

Table 4.11 describes the mean scores and $t$-values of self-esteem scores of the Repeaters, Identified poor but promoted students and Normal Group in the Phase 1 and Phase 2.

The mean score of self-esteem of the Repeaters was 42.65 in the Phase 2, while it was 47.56 in the Phase 1. The negative sign of the $t$-value (-13.29, $p < .001$) revealed that the self-esteem score of the Repeaters decreased after retention in the same grade.

The mean scores of the self-esteem of Identified Poor but Promoted students in next grade (Phase 2) was 50.79 while 48.00 before promotion (Phase 1). The positive sign of
the t-value ($t=5.21, p < .001$) indicated that the self-esteem score of this sample increased in Phase 2 as compared to Phase 1. The mean difference of the self-esteem scores of Identified Poor but Promoted group in both phases was found highly significant at .000 alpha.

Similarly, for the Normal Group, the mean score of self-esteem in the Phase 2 was 49.87 and 47.58 in Phase 1. The positive t-value ($t = 9.76$) depicted that the self-esteem score of normal group increased after promotion in next grade (in the Phase 2 with respect to Phase 1). The mean difference of the self-esteem scores before and after promotion in next grade was found highly significant at .000 alpha.

The analysis presented in the Table 4.11 revealed that self-esteem score of the Repeaters decreased after retention in the same grade, whereas; the self-esteem of the Identified Poor but Promoted sample and the Normal Group was increased after promotion to the next class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.12: Comparison of Identified Poor but Promoted sample (n=86) and Repeaters (n=117) with respect to Self-Esteem (phase 1/phase 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Poor but Promoted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs Repeaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 4.12 compares the Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted students on the self-esteem measures in Phase 1 and Phase 2. The mean score of self-esteem of Identified Poor but Promoted in the Phase 1 was 48.00 and, the mean score of self-esteem of
Repeaters in the Phase 1 was 47.56. A slight and not significant increase was seen in the mean difference \((t = .40)\) of self-esteem scores of both groups. The mean score of self-esteem of Identified Poor but Promoted in the Phase 2 was 50.79 and, the mean score of self-esteem of Repeaters in the Phase 2 was 42.65. A significant and large increase was seen in the mean difference \((t = 8.77, p < .001)\) of the self-esteem score of Identified Poor but Promoted group and Repeater group. The t-value of both groups was found significant at .000 alpha. The Table 4.12 shows that the mean differences of the two groups increased in Phase 2 as compared to Phase 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repeaters</th>
<th>Identified Poor but Promoted</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE-2</td>
<td>42.65</td>
<td>50.79</td>
<td>-5.31***</td>
<td>5.21***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem score just after exam</td>
<td>44.64</td>
<td>49.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 4.13 presents the changes in the self-esteem of the sample students for a period from start of the successive year to the end of second term. The self-esteem scores just after annual examination, of the Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted students were compared with the self-esteem scores in Phase 2 (after nine months of annual examination). The mean of self-esteem score of Repeaters after nine months of annual examination (42.65) was compared with the mean score of self-esteem just after examination. The mean of self-esteem score of repeaters just after examination was 44.64. The findings of the \(t\)-test \((t = -5.31)\) was found highly significant at .000 alpha.
In the same way, the mean of self-esteem score (50.79) of the Identified Poor but Promoted sample in Phase 2 (after nine months of annual examination) was compared with the mean score of self-esteem just after examination (49.35). The mean difference ($t= 5.21$) between the two set of scores was also found highly significant at .000 alpha.

The analysis demonstrated that mean differences of Repeaters revealed negative impact of grade retention, whereas, the mean differences of self-esteem of Identified Poor but Promoted students showed positive significant results of success in annual examination.

The statistical analyses presented in Table 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 revealed a negative and significant impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students. So the null hypothesis that there is no impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students was rejected.

4.4.2.2 Hypothesis No.2:

There is no impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the students of grade four

The second hypothesis was related to the impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the Repeaters. For this purpose, Paired $t$-test and Independent $t$-test were applied to all three categories of the sample selected.

The analysis related to second hypothesis is presented in Table 4.14, 4.15 and 4.16.

| Table 4.14: Comparison of Academic Performance (Phase 1/Phase 2) of Repeaters (n=117), Identified Poor but Promoted (n=86), and Normal Group (n=102) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Repeater mean   | $t$-value       | Identified Poor but Promoted mean | $t$-value       | Normal Group mean | $t$-value       |
| Repeater AP 2   | 32.60           | 48.87           | 13.56           | 14.24           |
| vs              | 5.45***         | 13.56***        | 14.24***        |
| Repeater AP 1   | 30.54           | 44.26           | 54.09           |

*** Significant at .000
The Table 4.14 describes the cumulative academic performance of the Repeaters, Identified Poor but Promoted students and Normal Group in Phase 1 and Phase 2. The mean score of the cumulative academic performance of the Repeaters in Phase 2 was 32.60, and 30.54 in the Phase 1. The mean difference \( (t = 5.45) \) of the academic score of the Repeaters in two phases was found significant at .000 alpha. The positive sign of the \( t \)-value indicated that the academic performance of the Repeaters was increased significantly in the Phase 2 as compared to Phase 1.

Similarly, a significant increase has been seen in the mean scores of the cumulative academic performance of Identified Poor but Promoted group of students. The mean score of the academic performance of this group was increased to 48.87 in Phase 2, from 44.26 in Phase 1. The mean difference \( (t =13.56) \) of the academic score of the Identified Poor but Promoted students in two phases was found significant at .000 alpha. The positive sign of the \( t \)-value indicated that the academic performance of the Identified Poor but Promoted group of students was increased significantly between the two phases.

In the same way, the mean score of the cumulative academic performance of the Normal Group in Phase 2 was 58.38, whereas 54.09 in the Phase 1. The mean difference \( (t=14.24) \) of the academic score of the Normal Group in two phases was found significant at .000. The positive sign of the \( t \)-value indicated that the academic performance of the Normal Group was increased significantly in the Phase 2 as compared to Phase 1.

A significant increase has been seen in the mean scores of the academic performance of all the three groups. Although the \( t \)-values reveal minimum increase in the mean of the
Repeaters’ academic performance, whereas, the Identified Poor but Promoted sample had shown significant increase. Same is the case with Normal Group. The Normal Group has depicted highly significant increase in their academic performance throughout the period.

Table 4.15: Comparison of Identified Poor but Promoted sample (n=86) and Repeaters (n=117) regarding Academic Performance (Phase 1/Phase 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>AP-1 Mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>AP-2 Mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified Poor but Promoted vs Repeaters</td>
<td>44.26</td>
<td>10.86***</td>
<td>48.87</td>
<td>12.86***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeaters</td>
<td>30.54</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Significant at .000

The Table 4.15 demonstrates the comparison of Identified Poor but Promoted students and Repeaters regarding the academic performance in both phases. The mean score of the cumulative academic performance of the Identified Poor but Promoted and the Repeaters in Phase 1 was 44.26, and 30.54 respectively. The significant mean difference was found between the two groups in Phase 1 ($t = 10.86, p < .001$). Similarly, the mean score of cumulative academic performance of the respective groups in Phase 2 was 48.87 and 32.60 respectively. A highly significant $t$-value ($t = 12.86, p < .001$) was found of the two groups in the Phase 2. The increase in the $t$-values of both groups between the two phases revealed that the academic performance of both groups was increased in the phase 2 with respect to Phase 1.

As the academic performance was measured on five subjects separately in the two phases, therefore in order to find out the impact of grade retention on each subject respectively, a paired $t$-test was conducted between the two sets of scores of Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted sample.
Subject-wise paired comparison of Academic Performance (Phase 1/Phase 2) of Repeaters (n=117), and Poor but Promoted students (n=86)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Repeaters Mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Identified Poor but Promoted Mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng-2(^{39})</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>(5.57^{***})</td>
<td>12.22</td>
<td>(8.23^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs Eng-1(^{40})</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu-2(^{41})</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>(2.84^{**})</td>
<td>13.85</td>
<td>(2.97^{**})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs Urdu-1(^{42})</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math-2(^{43})</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>(1.92^{ns})</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>(11.23^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs Math-1(^{44})</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.St-2(^{45})</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>(2.43^{ns})</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>(5.79^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs S.St-1(^{46})</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.Sc-2(^{47})</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>(3.13^{**})</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>(9.13^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs G.Sc-1(^{48})</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Significant at .000, ** significant at .00, ns=not significant

Subject-wise comparison of Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted students in both test scores is displaced in Table 4.16. The mean of English score of Repeaters in Phase 2 was 7.28 and 6.29 in Phase 1. The \(t\)-value for English score of Repeaters in both sets of score was found highly significant \((t=5.57, p<.001)\). The mean of Urdu score of this group in Phase 2 was 10.62 and 10.14 in Phase 1. The findings of \(t\)-test for Urdu score in
both phases also revealed significant results ($t = 2.84, p<.01$). The mean of Mathematics score of Repeaters in Phase 2 was 6.73 and 6.43 in Phase 1. The $t$-value for Mathematics score was found not significant ($t= 1.92$). Similarly, the mean of Social Studies score of this group in Phase 2 was 6.82 and 6.44 in Phase 1. The findings of $t$-test of Social Studies scores of Repeaters ($t= 2.43$) indicated not significant results. The mean of General Science score in Phase 2 was 6.85 and 6.33 in Phase 1. The $t$-value of General Science score revealed significant results ($t= 3.13, p< .01$).

The positive $t$-value of all the variables indicates that Repeaters perform better in Phase 2 as compared to Phase 1, though the findings of the paired comparison revealed that the rate of progress varies from subject to subject.

The Table 4.16 also presents subject wise comparison of Identified Poor but Promoted sample in both test scores. The mean of English score of this group in Phase 2 was 12.22 and 11.07 in Phase 1. The $t$-value for English score in both sets of score was highly significant ($t= 8.23, p< .001$). The mean of Urdu score of this group in Phase 2 was 13.85 and 13.26 in Phase 1. The findings of $t$-test for Urdu score ($t= 2.97$) in both phases also revealed significant results at .00 alpha. The mean of Mathematics score of Repeaters in Phase 2 was 10.12 and 8.53 in Phase 1. The most significant results were found in mean differences of Mathematics scores of the two sets of scores ($t = 11.23, p<.001$). The mean of Social Studies score of Identified Poor but Promoted sample in Phase 2 was 10.76 and 9.78 in Phase 1. The mean differences of Social Studies ($t = 5.79$) revealed significant results between the two sets of scores at .000 alpha. The findings of $t$-test of Social Studies scores ($t= 5.79$) of this group indicated highly significant results at .000 alpha. In
the same way, the mean of General Science score in Phase 2 was 9.65 and 8.10 in Phase 1. The findings of the $t$-value ($t = 9.13$) for General Science score revealed highly significant results at .000 alpha.

The $t$-values of all the variables indicate that Identified Poor but Promoted sample performed much better in Phase 2 as compared to Phase 1, and yielded highly significant results in all subjects.

The analyses presented in Table 4.14, 4.15, 4.16 revealed a positive and significant impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the students. So the null hypothesis that there is no impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the students is rejected. Moreover, the paired comparison of different sets of scores depicted that the mean differences of academic performance of Identified poor but promoted students were higher than the mean differences of Repeaters.

4.4.2.3 Hypothesis No.3:

There is no immediate impact of failure of students of grade four on their self-esteem

In the present study, the immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of fourth grade students was also observed, as due to automatic promotion policy of the Government till grade three in all public schools, it was the students’ first experience in the school education.

In order to see the immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of the fourth grade students, the self-esteem scores of the Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted group
of sample students before annual examination (Phase 1) was compared with their self-esteem scores just after examination.

The table 4.17 presents the comparison of self-esteem of Repeaters and Identified Poor but Promoted sample in two times, i.e. before annual examination and just after examination. The mean of self-esteem score of Repeaters just after examination was 44.64 and before examination (Phase 1) was 47.56. The mean difference ($t = -6.80$) between the two set of scores was found highly significant at .000 alpha. The negative sign of $t$-value indicated a decrease in the self-esteem of Repeaters after failure.

The mean of self-esteem score of Identified Poor but Promoted students just after examination was 49.35 and before examination (Phase 1) was 48.00. The findings of the $t$-test for self-esteem scores ($t = 2.89$) of the before annual examination and just after examination revealed significant results at .000 alpha.

The analysis presents in the Table 4.17 depicted a significant immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of the fourth grade students, so the null hypothesis that there is no immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of the students is rejected. Moreover, the impact of grade retention was found more significant. The analysis demonstrated that mean differences of repeaters revealed negative impact of failure, whereas, the mean
differences of self-esteem of Identified Poor but Promoted students showed positive significant results after success in annual examination.

4.4.2.4 Hypothesis No.4:

There is no relationship between the academic performance and the self-esteem of the students.

In order to assess whether academic performance has an impact on self-esteem of the students, or is there significant of relationship between the academic performance and the self-esteem of the students, the linear regression analysis was employed on the whole sample of the students in both phases separately.

Table 4.18: Linear Regression statistics of Academic Performance and Self-Esteem of the students (N=305) in Phase 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Criterion variable</th>
<th>MR</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>t-sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linear regression analysis of the whole study sample in the Phase 1 is presented in Table 4.18. The analysis was employed on the two major variables, i.e. academic performance and self-esteem. The academic performance was taken as predictor and the self-esteem as criterion variable of the study. Table 4.18 shows that academic performance had no significant impact on the self-esteem of the students in the Phase 1 of the study (before annual school examination). In other words, no significant relationship was seen between the academic performance and the self-esteem of the students.
The Table 4.19 presents the linear regression analysis of academic performance and self-esteem of the whole study sample in Phase 2. The academic performance was taken as predictor and self-esteem as criterion variable. The analysis presented in Table 4.19 revealed that academic performance was a significant predictor for the self-esteem of the students in the Phase 2. Using the enter method, a significant model of one factor i.e. academic performance emerged that explained 19% of the variance ($R^2 = .19$) in self-esteem alone. The $t$-value (8.68) was significant at .000 alpha.

Regression analysis in phase 2 revealed that 19% variation in self-esteem is due to academic performance. The remaining 81% variation is unexplained. The latter could be due to other reasons such as increase in family income, extra tutoring, maturity etc.

The analysis presented in the Table 4.18 revealed that academic performance has no significant impact on the self-esteem of the students in phase 1. Whereas the analysis presented in the Table 4.19 demonstrated that academic performance has a significant impact on the self-esteem of the students in phase 2. The difference in the findings of the two phases for the same study sample is perhaps due to improvement in academic performance of the Identified Poor but Promoted Sample between the two phases, as it was evident that they worked hard in the last term and proved as better students (see section 4.4.2.2). Moreover, as these findings are related to the whole sample of the study,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Criterion variable</th>
<th>MR</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>t-sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Impact of Grade Retention
so the above mentioned difference may be attributed to better status of Identified Poor but Promoted and Normal Group also. Immediately, few weeks before the annual examination, all the students were seemed under pressure due to the threat of upcoming examinations. The teachers and parents also become alert before examinations in Pakistan context. The unsecure feelings due to the expected failure is confined every child in last term. It is perhaps the reason that the no relationship between academic performance and self-esteem was detected in phase 1. Whereas in phase-2, the students were more relaxed as the annual examinations were due after three months. They still had time to enjoy. So they felt more confident and enjoyed their studies also. In this relaxing situation, their self-esteem level was also improved.

Keeping in view, the entire situation, it can be said that the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the academic performance and the self-esteem of the students is partially rejected as in phase 2, academic performance caused 19 % variation in self-esteem of the students.

4.5 Summary

The above analyses regarding quantitative aspect of the study are summarized as follows:

- The impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the Repeaters was found negative and significant.
- There was positive impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the Repeaters, but the paired comparison of different sets of scores revealed that the academic performance of Identified Poor but Promoted students was better than the Repeaters.
• There was a significant immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of the fourth grade students. Moreover, the impact of grade retention was found more significant than immediate impact of failure.

• There was no relationship found between academic performance of the students and their self-esteem level in phase 1, whereas academic performance has a significant impact on the self-esteem of the students in phase 2.
Chapter Five

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter expresses the details of the thematic analysis of perceptions of the participant teachers from which the qualitative findings have emerged. The main objectives of the qualitative data analysis were to:

i. Investigate the teacher’s perception regarding the reasons of grade retention of students at primary level.

ii. Obtain the explanations of the teachers about the repeaters’ attitude toward their teachers, studies and fellow students before and after failure.

This chapter is organized in three sections. In section I; the specific features of qualitative techniques used for data collection and analysis have been elaborated; the section II explores the detailed thematic analysis of the responses of the participants regarding the major contributing causes of grade retention of students at primary level in public schools of the Punjab; and Section III portrays the interpretations of the teachers’ observations related to changes in the attitude of repeaters after failure, with respect to their studies, teachers and class fellows.

5.2 The Process of Data Collection

In connection with the research questions, semi structured in-depth interviews of selected group of teachers teaching at the public primary and elementary schools of Rawalpindi
city were carried out. The major purpose of these interviews was to collect the teachers' beliefs that are “important influences on how they interact with and teach students” (Tiedemann, 2000, p.205).

A semi structured and “issue oriented” interview guide was prepared for this purpose (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.123). The interview had two main parts. In the first part, the participants were asked about the main reasons of grade retention of students at primary level specifically in the public schools of the Punjab. In the second part of the interview, the significant changes in the attitude of the students after failure with respect to their studies, teachers and fellow students as observed by the teachers were investigated (for interview guide, see Appendix- B).

All participant teachers were experienced and competent in their profession. The criterion for the selection of the participants was based on their years of experience. The participants’ years of experience ranged from 14 to 38 years. Their views reflected their proficiency and knowledge. However, their academic and professional qualification varied from person to person. Majority of the participants held matriculation certificate along with professional Certificate of Primary Teaching (PTC) that is the minimum required professional qualification for teaching at primary level in public schools of the Punjab. During data collection of phase one (quantitative), it was found out that highly qualified teachers were also teaching at primary level. Therefore, the researcher had selected four highly qualified teachers (i.e. two having Bachelors’ and two Masters’ Degrees) for interview purpose in order to get privilege of their high qualification along
with experience. The detailed profile of all the teachers is presented in Table 3.3 in the method section of the thesis.

Each of the twelve teachers selected from twelve public schools of Rawalpindi city participated individually in 25-30 minutes in-depth interview. Only one interview was conducted per day and transcribed on the same day. As, “the in-depth interview is a way of gaining information and understanding from individuals on a focused topic” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.123) so, the focus of attention in the interviews was grade retention related issues. All interviews were conducted in Urdu (the official language in public schools), and later transcribed in English for analysis purpose. Consent and agreement was sought from all the participants. The participants were allowed to express their ideas liberally.

The in-depth interviews yielded a large amounts of data in the form of interview transcript (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.120); the data corpus of present study also consisted of over sixty pages of transcriptions, and field notes.

5.3 The Analytic Procedure

The analytic procedure was based on immersion in the data and repeated organization, coding, and constant comparisons, which are the main features of grounded theory approach. “The core feature of qualitative data analysis is the coding process” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 132). “Coding is a central part of a grounded theory approach and involves extracting meaning from nonnumeric data such as text” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.349). It is a “process of grouping evidence and labeling ideas so that they reflect increasingly broader perspectives” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.132). The other important
feature of grounded theory is “constant comparison” that is a procedure where the researcher compares one component of the data with the other components of the same data to find out similarities and differences between them (Lodico et al., 2006, p.272).

For the purpose of qualitative analysis, codes and categories were sorted, compared, and contrasted until no new codes or categories were produced. Then followed by “a procedure called ‘discriminant sampling’ the researcher posed questions that relate the categories and then returns to the data and looks for evidence, incidents and events that support or refute the questions, thereby verifying the data” (Creswell, 1998, p.209). The whole text was then organized in terms of major themes that arose from the data analysis. “Themes are typically ‘big ideas’ that combine several codes in a way that allows the researcher to examine the foreshadowed questions guiding the research” (Lodico et al., 2006, p. 307). The pattern of themes characterizes “a necessary dialogue between data and researcher, which emerges from and then helps to further make sense of data, and then to provide a structure for writing” (Holliday, 2007, p.94).

5.4 Teachers’ Perceptions regarding main Factors of Grade Retention

As discussed earlier, there were two main parts of the interview guide for collection of qualitative data. The first part was related to the main reasons of grade retention at primary level. Participants were requested to express their perceptions regarding reasons of grade retention of primary grade students in the light of their daily experiences with students.
Several themes emerged from the first part of the interview. These themes were then grouped together into larger perspectives that provide answer to the qualitative research question related to major reason of grade retention of students at primary level (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The main perspectives that came out as a result of analysis are as follows:

- **Family**
- **School**
- **Student**

In accordance with the teacher’s point of view, the above mentioned factors do not contribute equally to grade retention. As discussed earlier, these major themes or perspectives were the result of combination of several sub themes.

The participants expressed diverse viewpoint on each factor. Their views are discussed in detail as follows:

### 5.4.1 Family

Generally, schools are considered as places which provide appropriate learning environment for a child, but importance of family and home environment cannot be ignored in this regard.

The research studies revealed that family factors are responsible for scholastic failure of students, such as the support given by the parents and other family members, low socio-economic background, and environment of the home (Khan & Malik, 1999; Fan, 2001; Gonzalez-Pienda et al., 2002; Chohan & Khan, 2010)
A study conducted by Sahin and Gülmez (2000) in East and Southeast Turkey explored that cultural characteristics of the family affected the academic achievement and caused scholastic failure. The authors of the study concluded that “family-related factors which may be responsible for failure included the economic and social status of the family, family size, cultural characteristics of the family, working mothers, educational background, language, occupation, and uneasiness at home” (p.107).

Results of the study by Schneider and Lee (1990) indicated that academic success of East Asian students was related to cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, and interactive relationships among children, parents, teachers, and peer groups.

In the analysis of qualitative part of the present study, the family emerged as most influential and dominating factor in accordance with teachers’ beliefs. Some participants were of the view that family and school are equally responsible in academic failure of the student; however the thought pattern of some participants suggested that the impact of family factors is stronger than school related factors. Parents and their socioeconomic status were frequently blamed during the interviews for the sorry state of children’s failure.

After careful thematic analysis of all the interviews, the common sub-themes related to family factors that emerged are described as follows:

**5.4.1.1 Parental Support**

All participants of the present study were agreed that parental and family support is vital for academic success of the children. All participants were of the opinion that if family
members especially parents do not provide adequate support to their children, then it is not possible for teachers to maintain their appropriate learning. Consistent with the teachers’ point of view, a research study conducted by AEPAM (2005) revealed that almost 83% teachers agreed that in public primary schools, students repeat classes due to lack of proper guidance at home.

The pivotal role of parents still continues as it has been recognized by the teachers and parents themselves that they are essential for complete development of the personality and career of their children. Gonzalez-Pienda et al., (2002) indicated that “without the children's parental support, it is hard for teachers to devise academic experiences to help students learn meaningful content” (p.281). In home settings, the learning processes occur explicitly or consciously, often in an informal way. Parents teach and train children early in their lives, the fundamental skills, attitudes and values necessary for day-to-day living (UNESCO, 1992). The unwritten knowledge being conveyed by parents to their children, is specific and to a certain degree, specialized, i.e. that which would enable the children to cope successfully with the requirements of the immediate confines of homes and the community.

Parental support is a multidimensional construct. Research studies have presented some theoretical frameworks for parental support, (Gonzalez-Pienda et al., 2002; Fan, 2001). Researchers have reported that some dimensions of parental support may have more noticeable effects on students' academic achievement than others. Gonzalez-Pienda et al., (2002) stated that the criteria parental support was developed in accordance with six
dimensions that are strongly related to students' conduct at school and the attitude towards learning.

The six dimensions are (a) parents' expectations about their children's achievement, (b) parents' expectations about their children's capacity to achieve important goals, (c) parents' behaviors that reveal interest in their children's school work, (d) parents' degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their children's level of school achievement, (e) parents' level and type of help provided when their children do homework, and (f) parents' reinforcement behaviors of their children's achievements. Research studies have pointed out that some dimensions of parental involvement may have more noticeable effects on students' academic achievement than others (p.259).

The lack of parental support creates major problem for school and the child also. Teacher Ms I.K said in this regard

*Carelessness of parents is the major reason of child’s failure*

These results are consistent with a number of research studies. Fan (2001) demonstrated that parents' educational aspiration for their children proved to be strongly related to students' academic growth. Similarly, Schneider and Lee (1990) “linked the academic success of the East Asian students to the values and aspirations they share with their parents, and also to the home learning activities” in which their parents involve with them (p.358). In fact, all parents have desired to do something better for their children according to their available resources. But the extent and effectiveness of parental support depends on a variety of reasons, such as, ethnicity, family income, and home environment and their awareness about the importance of education.

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49 The comments of the teachers are translated and presented in bold to make their voices distinct and audible.
All the teachers had complained regarding parents’ lack of awareness about the importance of family support for their child. The teacher Ms. S.B told that when the parents are called, they become angry with us and say that if they are themselves responsible for their children’s education, then what is the point of sending them to school? Teacher Ms N.S endorsed

*When we call their parents for intimating them about the progress of their children, they say, “We do not want them to become doctor or engineer, so we cannot spend all our limited resources on their education”*

The teacher I.A mentioned that most of the parents are manual workers. They go for labor after sending their children to school. They think that their children are safe in school; they are not very much concerned about the benefits they can get from school. Many parents do not even bother to know, whether their child attends school properly. Most of our students do not wear neat and clean uniform as parents do not care about their cleanliness. Similar results were obtained by Okpala et al., (2001), who found that “children from high-income backgrounds are more likely to have academically supportive home environments than most children from low income homes” (p.115).

The teacher Ms K.B mentioned that if parents do not pay attention to their child, it is impossible for him/her to be successful in studies. She was of the view that there are few people, who are very concerned about the studies of their children, and it is seen that the academic progress of such children is relatively better than others. Research studies also indicated that parental involvement in doing home tasks has significant effects in students’ achievement, (Singh et al., 2002; Eilam, 2001).
Likewise the teacher Ms S.B shed light on the issue

**Majority of laborers send their children to public schools. They are busy all day in work, how can they give proper attention to their children**

In the context of Pakistan, where the majority of the parents are illiterate, and the teachers are also psychologically distressed due to multiple financial and job related problems, the lack of proper parental support for child create barriers in improving the quality of education. If parents are educated, and have better understanding of how to break a problem into parts, or know more effective motivational techniques, then they can help their children more effectively. A study conducted by Voorhis, (2003) demonstrated that those students who reported more parental involvement in connection with daily homework, did their homework assignments more regularly. The findings of this study supported the effects of family involvement in student accomplishments in the middle grades.

**5.4.1.2 Relationship of Parents**

All participants were agreed that the nature of relationship among parents is very influential in the success or failure of the child. They added that good relationship among parents is crucial for the wellbeing of the child. Due to high illiteracy ratio and poverty, strained relations among parents and domestic abuse are much more prevailing in families having low socio economic status. A non educated person does not realize that how can domestic problems divert the attention of child away from the studies. The teacher Ms F.Y explained that

**If father is drug addicted, he will frequently beat his family, this repeated phenomenon will result in academic failure of his children**
The teacher Ms N.S told that attitude of jobless father is also more or less same as drug addict father towards his family. She was of the view that parents should behave moderately with their children. She added

**The more a child is mentally satisfied, the more he/she will be attentive towards studies**

All participant teachers were of the view that presence of both parents is vital for the better development of the child. The absence of one member, either due to death or the separation causes serious problems for the child. The teacher Ms S.S mentioned

**Divorce between parents is seriously damaged the personality of the child**

Research studies also demonstrated that the effects of divorce on children are mostly negative (Amato, 1991). Similarly, another study by Amato (2000) found that “children from divorced families, as a group, score lower than their counterparts in married-couple families on a variety of indicators of well-being” (p.1282).

Likewise, the teacher Ms K.B expressed

**The child coming from separated family or single parent homes, might be intelligent, but never excel in studies**

Research evidence has revealed that domestic problems have caused negative effects on the academic achievement as well as psychological wellbeing of the children. The child is unable to take interest in a stressed environment, but it is a common practice in low socio economic families. A research study by Pong, Dronkers, and Hampden-Thompson,
The Impact of Grade Retention

(2003) explored that children from single-parent families face greater hardships than two-parent families because of more limited income resources in single parent families.

5.4.1.3 Family Structure

There are different types of family structures existing in Pakistani culture, such as joint family, single family, polygamous family, large family (family having large number of children) etc. Participant teachers were agreed that family structure has significant consequences on the academic progress of the child. Some types have negative effects on child development. For instance, majority of teachers were complaining about joint family system. Teachers were of the view that there is interference of many people in the joint family. This creates tumult which diverts child’s attention. The teacher Ms S.B expressed

Majority of Pathan families and migrant families (Afghan refugees) send their children to public schools. Many Pathan families living together in little place, and each family has a lot of children. It is because of this reason; their children do not take interest in studies

Consistent with this view, Sahin and Gülmez, (2000) concluded that “in East and Southeast Turkey, the crowded houses were a factor causing failure” (p.105). Similarly, the research study on migrant families by Romanowski, (2003) stated that “migrant families occupy a low status in communities because of their work, language differences, and ethnic background” (p.27). Moreover, Alexander et al., (1996) also explored that “children who move are performing poorly, on average, before they move, because they are disproportionately low-income, minority youngsters. Such children are challenged academically for many reasons, not just because they move often” (p.09).
The teacher Ms I.K explained while discussing the negative impact of large families, that the studies of a child are affected being a member of a large family. The eldest child among siblings especially has many other responsibilities that ultimately cause his/her academic failure. Similarly, it is often seen that the youngest sibling in a big family is spoiled due to extra love, and the proportion of failure of such cases is high among other children.

However, some participants disagreed with the above statement and said that large family itself does not hinder, it is the atmosphere of the family that affects. If parents are well aware of the importance of education, then the children will perform well, whether they belong to large or small family. Contrary to the teachers’ view, a research study by Palafox et al., (1994) demonstrated that “family size is inversely correlated with student achievement, perhaps indicating less time and exposure to parental stimulation in large family households. In addition, there probably is less money for culturally and educationally stimulating materials and events in such households” (p.176).

5.4.1.4 Non-Literate Parents

Analysis revealed that one of the major contributing factors of children failure is lack of education of the parents. The participant teachers were of the view that now only poor and illiterate parents send their children to public schools. There is no proper coaching or guidance for children available in such families. The parents have no awareness about the importance of education. These findings are consistent with the findings reported in the study conducted by AEPAM (2005). It indicated that literacy level of both parents does have a positive impact on the academic achievement of their children. When parents have
not themselves been to school and are illiterate and innumerate, the school cannot expect that they will understand its aims or activities. Research studies have found that parental educational level has a significant impact on child’s learning (Khan & Malik, 1999). Similar findings were revealed by Kaplan et al., (2001) who concluded in their study that “children in homes with parents with high levels of educational attainment would likely be exposed to many resources that would support and foster their educational achievement” (p.367).

According to Pakistan Social and Living Measurement Survey, (2007-08) the overall literacy rate (age 10 years and above) is 56% (67% for male and 44% for female) in 2006-07(GoP, 2009-a). In a country where nearly half of the population is still illiterate, it is very hard for children to seek proper guidance in academic matters after the school hours.

The lack of awareness about education among parents creates major problem for the school and the child. The student’s attendance at school is largely affected by his/her house hold engagements i.e. to take care of younger siblings or to help in fields. It is difficult for an illiterate person to understand why continuity in school attendance is important. Research evidence also supports that “Students in families with, better-educated parents are expected to be less likely to repeat a school year than those whose parents have less education or are illiterate” (Gomes-Neto & Hanushek, 1994, p. 124). The illiterate and uneducated parents generally assume that schools are prison like places where poor children sit in rows, listening and being punished. This attitude toward school
is probably because of their own bad experiences. They think that teachers and schools can never change. They have little hope of their benefiting children from school.

In general, the parents cannot be taken as a single unit; often one parent is illiterate, whereas the other is not. But, as the teacher Ms I.A emphasized the education of mothers is considered more crucial for better performance of the children.

The teacher Ms I.K expressed

**The parents, who have a passion to educate their children, make every possible effort in this regard**

Consistent with this view, the findings of the study by Schneider and Lee (1990) explored that

Parents’ expectations are extremely powerful and are transmitted through a cultural context in which education is highly valued because it leads to self-improvement and increases self-esteem. … Asians do well in school because their parents expect it. … Parents help Asian students succeed by carefully structuring their out-of-school time so it is directed at academic-related skills (p.374).

The children also seek emotional support from parents when they face some academic problems at school. Educated and careful parents always encourage their children and give proper guidance in school related matters, but illiterate and economically deprived parents may act violently and thus upset their child more. A study by Repetti (1996) indicated that

Children described themselves as more demanding and difficult with their parents on days in which they had earlier perceived more problems with peers, such as being teased by another child or feeling excluded by friends, or more academic problems, such as receiving a poor grade or having difficulty with schoolwork (p.1477).
5.4.1.5 Financial Problems

Research evidence has suggested that poverty is said to be the one of the characteristics most closely related to grade retention. Okpala et al., (2001) examined the influence of socio economic status of parents on Mathematics Achievement scores of fourth grade students in a low-income county in North Carolina. The findings support the notion that “economic circumstances are correlated with academic achievement” (p.110).

Nevertheless the relationship between poverty and low-educational achievement holds true for developed and developing countries equally; even when the lowest level of poverty in the former might equal prosperity in the latter. Financial problem create tension not only for parents, but they also hinder the smooth progress of child’s education.

El-Hassan, (1998) endorsed in his study of retainees in Lebanon, that

53% of the retainees attended public schools; the share of the public sector in the Lebanese education system was only 30%. The higher incidence of retention associated with low-SES children is caused by a poor environment that does not favor the normal physical and mental development of the child and that is lacking in teaching facilities and resources (p.285).

Consistent with the research evidence, teacher Ms K.B said

**The financial position of the parents does affect the studies of the child**

The teacher’s statement is confirmed with a meta-analysis by Sirin (2005) who reviewed the literature on academic achievement and socioeconomic status (SES) in journal articles published between 1990 and 2000. The main finding of this review showed that “school success is greatly influenced by students' family SES” (p.445).
Generally, parents are not directly involved in the teaching-learning activities in school. They are only expected to provide help in doing homework assignments and the financial support for the children’s schooling. The interactions among parents and their children are influenced by the socioeconomic and cultural factors of that particular society in which they survive. For instance, the way a family manages the learning activities of its children at home is dependent upon parents’ socioeconomic position and their resources in term of money and time.

Poverty leads to many other problems as well. The frequent fighting among parents and child labor are said to be the cause of limited financial resources. The children of poor families become helping hand of their parents at a very young age; this in turn diverts their attention from studies. They do not give adequate time to their studies. After school hours, they leave for labor, so do not find time for rest or studies. They just rely on in-school learning. The teacher Ms T.M explained

*Their basic concern is earning, not education. They carry out their studies partially*

Child labor is considered as a major hindrance in achieving universal primary education in all developing countries. A study by Canagarajah and Nielsen (2001) revealed that

Child labor is widespread in the developing world. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that in developing countries the total number of working children age 5-14 years is 250 million. Of these, 120 million work full-time, and 24 million are below the age of 10. In absolute terms, child labor is most prominent in Asia because approximately 150 million working children live in Asia (p.72).

Research studies indicate that socio economic status is correlated strongly with parents' educational ambition for their children. Khan, Khan and Zubairi (1999) stated that
“interacting with and sharing the child’s activities is affected by level of parents’ education and income” (p.92). Similarly, Fan (2001) also concluded that socio economic status is correlated most strongly with parents' education aspiration for their children.

In the families with low socioeconomic status, majority of the illiterate parents do not have understanding of the requirements of their children’s education. Some poor parents make some arrangements for helping their children in studies and to do their home assignments, while others rely on school for the education of their children, as they do not have enough resources to spend extra money on home tuitions etc. This results in poor performance in academic achievement of their children.

The teacher Ms N. S reported

**The laborer child thinks that he can earn at least hundred rupees daily by laboring or paper picking. What can he/she get from school?**

Here also contradictory themes emerged related to child labor. Some participant teachers thought that child labor does not have negative impact on studies. They are of the view that laborer child is more responsible than others. The teacher Ms S.I said

**My experience tells that children who do labor side by side with their studies are more serious towards their studies**

Similarly, the teacher Ms I.A was of the view that every other child in public schools goes for some labor in the evening. Child labor does not affects, however personal interest and family care are necessary conditions of success of any child.

The teacher Mr. S.M added
I think poverty is the major cause of the failure of students. Poor parents do not pay proper attention towards their child’s education

Similarly, the teacher Ms F.Y was of the view that the appropriate study environment cannot be created in one room residences.

There are also some contradictory themes related to poverty that emerged during analysis. Some teachers argued that poverty is not important a reason as others might be.

Teacher Ms I.A mentioned that almost all children coming in public schools belong to poor families. There are good students among them as well as poor performers. In her opinion poverty is not responsible for the worse situation. Parents’ attention is needed.

Similarly, the teacher Ms N.S added that there are children from poor families, who are very serious about their studies.

5.4.2 School

The research studies also revealed that school factors are responsible for the grade retention of students, (Khan and Malik, 1999; Fan, 2001; Gonzalez- Pienda et al., 2002).

Analysis of interviews of teachers revealed some important themes related to school factors. Participants were of the view that if teachers are vigilant and responsible, then the ratio of grade retention will obviously be decreased. Rivkin et al., (2005) explored that school policy can be an important tool for raising the achievement of low income students, (p.449).
A study conducted by Sahin and Gülmez (2000) in East and Southeast Turkey explored that

--- teacher and administrator qualities have an effect on students' failure or achievement, and other school-related factors such as school facilities are also important. Perhaps more importantly, the uniform curriculum and textbooks from which no deviation is allowed may be the cause of failure with regard to cultural differences (p.107).

Similarly, the study by Robinson and Biran (2006) explored the connections between academic achievements and the school quality and found that “schools can increase the motivational levels of --- students to excel academically by helping them to become more aware, proud, and willing to work for the benefit of their community” (p.67).

5.4.2.1 Teacher

Teacher plays a key role in the success and failure of the student. Rivkin et al., (2005) concluded in their study that “achievement gains are systematically related to observable teacher and school characteristics” (p.449). All participants of the present study had recognized the significant role of the teacher in education system. They were of the view that the responsibilities of a teacher increases many times, in a situation where the child is totally deprived of family support or coaching in studies at home. Majority of students of public schools come from very low socio economic back ground and their parents are illiterate. In such circumstances, teacher must have missionary zeal to adorn the life of their student. Teacher Ms S.I said

The teacher should pay special attention to those students, who do not have any proper coaching facility available at home
All teachers agreed that the student cannot fail if he/she receives special attention and care from the teacher. The participants who considered the teacher as responsible for the failure of students, also proposed effective strategies to improve the situation.

The teacher Ms K.B mentioned in this regard

*If every teacher does his/her duties with full passion, come daily to school, take classes in time, then the rate of failure of students will obviously be decreased.*

Similarly, the teacher Ms I.K stated that the teacher, who pays extra attention to weak performers in the class, can save the children from failure.

Analysis has revealed a variety of opinions related to the responsibilities of a primary teacher and the hindrances in performing his/her duties properly. The participants complained that every primary teacher has multiple responsibilities besides teaching in schools that he/she cannot pay proper attention to students. Teacher has only six to seven hours in school, and he/she has to take attendance of all the students, listen to their lesson, and check their written assignments, within that limited time. In addition to this, school administration also distributes some extra duties among teachers due to limited clerical staff and other resources in our primary schools.

Although all teachers agreed that individual attention should be given to every child, but in the presence of all other extra duties, it looked impossible.

The teacher Ms T.M expressed

*It is not possible for a teacher to give individual attention to every child in a period of forty minutes*
In the same way, when the teachers were asked about the role of inexperienced teachers in the failure of students, different opinions were observed.

Majority of the participants stressed that inexperienced teacher cannot deal with the problem cases effectively. They believed that through experience, a teacher learns how to handle slow learners.

The teacher Ms S.I emphasized the importance of the professional experience in teaching. She was of the opinion that the experience helps in teaching. She further added that if a highly qualified teacher cannot guide the students effectively and does not teach them according to their mental caliber, then his/her qualification is of no worth.

Two participants were of the opinion that only experience is not very important, a highly qualified teacher can uses effective strategies to handle slow learners.

The teacher Mr. S.M said

A primary teacher should have at least master’s degree in addition to his/her professional qualification

Contradictory to the teacher’s view, a research study by Rivkin et al., (2005) found “absolutely no evidence that having a master's degree improves teacher skills” (p.449).

The teacher Ms R.C has given an unusual response in the light of her experience. She argued that teacher should be highly educated; experience does not count much. She believed that a fresh and highly qualified teacher can successfully handle problem cases. Rivkin et al., (2005) endorsed in their studies that “there appear to be important gains in teaching quality in the first year of experience and smaller gains over the next few career
years, and there was little evidence that improvements continue after the first three years” (p.449).

5.4.2.2 Discipline in Schools

Research evidence had revealed that “disciplinary practices, even those that are viewed as ordinary and acceptable, may affect well-being in important ways” (Turner & Finkelhor, 1996, p.165).

One important sub theme that emerged during thematic analysis related to school factors is the lack of discipline in public primary schools. Some participants were of the view that the proportion of failure of students has increased due to disobedience of discipline rules. Moreover the negligence of school administration further deteriorates the problem. The teachers expressed that one of the major reason of grade retention of a student is his/her continuous absenteeism from school. The study conducted by AEPAM (2005) also indicated that more than 70% teachers considered the absenteeism of a student as an important reason for repeating a class. When this problem is observed, it is the duty of the administration to take strict action. The teachers viewed increased absenteeism as a flaw in disciplinary practices in primary schools. The teacher Ms K.B said

If the children are firmly asked about their absence from school, the rate of absenteeism obviously decreases

There are certain serious issues related to discipline observed in developing countries especially in Pakistani context. Administration and teachers frequently use corporal punishment for maintaining the discipline in schools. Corporal punishment or physical punishment refers to "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child pain,
but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of the child’s behavior” (Straus & Donnelly, 1993, p. 420 as cited in Turner & Finkelhor, p.155). The sociological perspective of corporal punishment was explained by Garland (1991) as

Sociological perspectives view punishment as a complex social institution, shaped by an ensemble of social and historical forces and having a range of effects that reach well beyond the population of offenders. The Durkheimian perspective interprets punishment as a morality-affirming, solidarity-producing mechanism grounded in collective sentiments. Marxist studies depict punishment as an economically conditioned state apparatus that plays an ideological and political role in ruling class domination. Foucault’s work focuses on the specific technologies of power-knowledge that operate in the penal realm and links them to broader networks of discipline and regulation. The work of Norbert Elias points to the importance of cultural sensibilities and the "civilizing process" in the shaping of modern penal measures, (p.115).

Despite of absolute ban on corporal punishment in all public schools of the Punjab, it is still practiced to some extent. Majority of the participant teachers were vocal against punishing children. Research evidence has also revealed that “corporal punishment significantly contributes to both psychological distress and depression” (Turner & Finkelhor, 1996, p.163). Similarly, Rohner et al., (1991) concluded that “severe physical punishment is modestly but significantly related to youths' negative adjustment” (p.691).

The teachers were of the view that corporal punishment is a risky practice. The child gets nervous, and often forgets a learned lesson also. The learning is always being better in a friendly environment. The teacher Mr. S.M added

**The corporal punishment damages the abilities of children, and thus increases the chances of his/her failure**

Similarly, the teacher Ms T.M was not in favor of beating and insulting the child. She said the teachers should not scold the child in the presence of other children, as the child
gets embarrassed and often become rebellious. She proposed that the child should be warned in isolation.

The teacher Ms R.C was also complained that the teachers want children to quit school. She suggested that extra love and care can create a big change in the attitude of a child towards learning.

On the other side, the participants who favor corporal punishment and scolding were of the view that it is necessary to some extent. The teacher can improve the child learning by limited use of this practice.

The teacher Ms I.K explained

**The three things that improve the performance of a child are love, desire and fear**

The teacher Ms S.S admitted that the loving behavior is more effective, but sometimes it does not work. The fear of teacher is necessary to put the child on the right path.

Similarly, the teacher Ms N.S was of the view that a little pressure on the child enhances his/her learning. The teacher Ms S.K added that there are very few children who can be handled with polite manners. The child does not know what is right or wrong. It is the duty of the teacher to use check and balance strategies.

The teacher Ms I.A was complained that due to some governmental policies the role of teacher becomes insignificant in success and failure of students. Teacher is totally powerless now.
5.4.2.3 Accountability by the Department

Supervision has always played an important role in maintaining the quality of education. It is the duty of supervisor to “identify positive teaching behaviors, which should be maintained and negative behaviors which should be changed in order to solve the problem” (AEPAM, 2007-a, p.10).

The accountability procedure of education system in Pakistan is not well established yet. Akhtar (1992) stated that

The field supervisory staff is not trained especially in the field of supervision. They lack the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes to help and support teachers. The job description and supervisory functions are not clear to them. They are even not aware of the objectives, role and importance of instructional supervision. This is why supervision is not succeeding in improving qualitative instruction. It is only succeeded in keeping a number of people employed as “masters over teachers” in the education organization (p.21).

The teacher Ms R.C complained about the negligence of supervisory staff. She expressed that supervisors emphasized only the physical checking of the school, and nobody is concerned about the teaching and learning situation inside the class room. She argued that there is no concept of accountability of irresponsible teacher in public schools.

Similarly, the teacher Ms K.B was also complained about the irresponsible behavior of supervisory staff. She was of the view that the supervisors do not perform their duties efficiently. They highlight only quantitative aspects of education and thus ignore the qualitative aspects of teaching and learning.

Rest of the participants does not respond on this topic (they considered it as sensitive and may harm their career).
5.4.2.4 Difficult Syllabus

Diverse opinions appeared regarding the syllabus of grade four in public schools of the Punjab. Majority of the teachers thought it suitable for primary level in general and for the age group studying at grade four in particular. However, a contradictory point of views also emerged. Teacher Ms I.K complained that the syllabus of grade four is difficult. The students could not comprehend it properly and eventually failed in the examination.

The teacher Mr. S.M was also dissatisfied with the current syllabus. He was of the view that the syllabus does not meet the challenges of the fast changing world. Teacher Ms F.Y held the view that the syllabus of grade four is a bit difficult and not according to mental capabilities of our students. Weak students are promoted in earlier grade due to automatic promotion. These students do not have ability to cope with the syllabus of higher grades. Thus the chances of failure of these students are increased.

Research evidence has also revealed that difficult syllabus is a contributing factor in grade retention of students at primary level. A study conducted by AEPAM (2005) has revealed that 50% teachers thought syllabus as an important cause for repetition at primary level.

5.4.3 Student

Analysis of responses of the participant teachers explored that personal weaknesses and family engagements of the students are also contributing in his/her academic failure. These results are consistent with the research studies at primary level, that revealed
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student is also responsible for his/her academic failure (Khan & Malik, 1999; Fan, 2001; Gonzalez- Pienda et al., 2002)

5.4.3.1 Personal Weaknesses

All participants agreed that the major reason of failure of student is his/her lack of interest in studies. They were of the view that unless the child takes keen interest in studies, he/she cannot learn. A research study by Schneider and Lee (1990) revealed that “East Asian students succeed in school because they spend much of their time studying rather than playing with their friends or participating in organized group activities” (p.374).

Teachers illustrated a number of reasons of this lack of interest. Some of these are lack of family support, carelessness of parents, bad company and mental incapability. All of these factors are interlinked to some extent. Teachers were of the view that when the children go back to their homes after school, they waste all their time in playing games and watching T.V.

Teacher Mr. S.M complained

These children do not even bother to open their school bags at home for doing home assignments.

This perception of teacher can only be partially true as most of these children belonged to poor families and they have to work either inside or outside the home (as revealed by their profile and perceptions of most of the teachers).

Similarly, a study conducted by AEPAM (2005) also explored that almost 70 % teachers were of the view that lack of proper interest in studies is the major reason of repeating
class at primary level in Pakistan. The parents do not have sense or time, to sit with them and help them in doing home assignments. In addition to this, most of the parents do not have the literacy skills to provide this support.

The teacher Ms T.M affirmed that some children are often left behind because of shyness and unfair treatment of the teacher and fellow students. She further stated that sometimes the student does not understand what the teacher has explained in the class, and thinks that fellow students will laugh at him/her or the teacher will scold him/her. Consistent with the teacher’s perception, findings of the study by Powell and Arriola (2003) indicated that “there was a strong negative association between the way the student copes with unfair treatment and GPA” (p.179).

All the teachers agreed that mental capability is the necessary condition of academic success of the student. If a child is mentally incapable, then he/she cannot pay proper attention towards studies.

The kind of company a student keeps also has an effect on students learning. All other teachers agreed on this point except one, who said that at times some students having bad company also show good results. Two teachers argued that our students come from families with very low socio economic status, and it is a usual practice here to see criminal people around them, that retards the students’ abilities.

Analysis revealed that continuous illness also affects learning. The teacher Ms S.K argued that a sick child can only show improvement in studies if his/her parents give extra care and attention towards his/her health and studies.
5.4.3.2 Family Engagements

The participants were of the view that majority of our students come from migrant families. Parents often take their children to their native villages and stay there for long intervals. So the continuous absence from school also diverts the attention of the child from studies. The students thus cannot cover the lessons they have missed, and are left behind other class fellows. A research study by Romanowski (2003) also demonstrated that “migrant students are in desperate need of consistency in their school experiences because they spend parts of each academic year in different schools across the country” (p.31).

The teacher Ms S.I stated

**In majority of homes, there is no appropriate atmosphere for studying. Frequent get-togethers on marriages and other ceremonies divert the child’ attention away from studies**

Likewise, the participant teacher Mr. S.M explained that non-literate parents are unaware of the importance of education, so their children also show careless attitude towards their studies.

The general thought pattern of the participants revealed that majority of them blamed the students themselves and their family factors to be primarily responsible for their academic failure. Though they recognized that school related factors are very important in the academic success and failure of the students, but they all thought that neglect of parents and the children themselves is the main cause of failure. It has appeared from the responses of the teachers that they lacked the missionary zeal that is needed in such circumstances where poverty and illiteracy are prevalent and are a major hindrance in
promotion of universal primary education. The participant teachers criticized the different categories of parents not realizing that an illiterate person is equally vulnerable as an innocent fourth grade child. Similarly a child’s personality is the product of school and home environment. A primary school child does not have any sense to realize the importance of learning. Attractive school environment can enhance children’s interest in studies.

The overall analysis of the teachers’ perceptions revealed that they emphasized the importance of parental support for the academic success of the students. Most of them were of the view that teacher is overburdened and cannot be held responsible for teaching and character building of the students alone.

The analysis of the responses of participant teachers exposed the typical thought pattern of Pakistani primary school teacher. The teaching at primary level in the education system of Pakistan is low paid profession and requires matriculation as minimum academic qualification for recruitment of a primary school teacher\(^50\).

**5.5 Teachers’ Perceptions regarding Attitude of the Repeaters**

The second part of the interview focused on the expected changes in the attitude of students after failure at primary level in public schools. This part of the interviews was proposed to triangulate with the quantitative section of the study. The part of the quantitative data to be triangulated comprised of the objective related to the impact of grade retention policy on the self-esteem and academic performance of the repeaters in

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\(^{50}\) Though, recently it is decided by higher authorities of education department that the minimum qualification required for the recruitment of primary school teacher should be graduation, but in the existing school system, the majority of the primary school teachers held matriculation certificate along with professional degree of PTC (Primary Teachers’ Certificate).
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the repeated year. The rationale of the triangulation was that the self-esteem scale was standardized for American children of age group 7 to 11. Though this scale was adapted for fourth grade Pakistani children after careful reliability and validity testing, but for deeper understanding it was considered necessary to revalidate the data in order to get “a more complete picture of the topic studied and enhanced its credibility” (Lodico et al; 2006, p.286). Moreover, as Rosenberg et al., (1995) stated that “self-esteem is an attitude” (p.141) and “a major determinant of self esteem is feedback from others, thus children's self-evaluations are to a large extent a reflection of significant others' evaluations, i.e. parents” (Gurney (1987) as cited in Gipps & Tunstall, 1998, p.151).

Teachers were taken as study participants as they are the persons who work most closely with these children, yet the teachers in Pakistani education system have no special training to understand the special problems created by grade retention. Without such understanding, teachers cannot be involved to improve the situation as effectively as possible. Experience gives them many strategies to cope with such situations. While keeping in view, all these conditions, it was decided to consult the class teachers of fourth grade students, as they have better understanding of the repeaters’ problems. All participant teachers were asked about the changes in the attitude of repeaters with respect to their studies, class fellows and the subject teachers. Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson, (2005) argued that “no doubt actual student behavior and perceptions of student behavior both matter, but the two are hard to separate” (p.1490). Research evidence has demonstrated significant differences in the attitude of repeaters and promoted students. Stearns et al., (2007) found that “continuously promoted students are more engaged with
school, have more positive bonds with teachers during post elementary education, and are more popular with their peers in the post elementary years” (p.231).

For the purpose of analysis, this part is further categorized as:

- Attitude of repeaters towards studies
- Attitude of repeaters towards teachers
- Attitude of repeaters towards fellow students

A variety of responses were encountered, when the participants were asked about the changes in the attitude of repeaters after failure, which they had observed time to time during their teaching experience. The detailed account of the responses is given below.

### 5.5.1 Attitude towards Studies

There is a big debate about the pedagogical significance of grade retention. Proponents of grade retention usually argue that it is helpful in improvement of inadequate academic progress and in the development of emotionally immature students, (Pomplun, 1988; Tomchin & Impara, 1992). Most frequently, those students are required to repeat grades who have not acquired the level of knowledge and skills expected for the completion of that grade. On the other hand, a number of research studies argue that retention does not effectively increase academic achievement among low-achieving students (Westbury, 1994; Meisels & Liaw, 1993).

In the present study, when participant teachers were asked about changes in the attitude of repeaters towards studies, diverse responses were encountered. Four teachers reported that the students feel very disturbed and sad at the start of the repeated year. The teacher Ms K.B explained
They in fact worry about this loss. It seems that they need some support to come out of this tense situation. If the teacher pays special attention to them and shares their problems, then they feel a bit satisfied, start paying attention to studies, thus enhance their self esteem and get adjusted very soon.

Consistent with the teacher’s point of view, the research evidence has also explored the association between the coping strategies while encountered unfair treatment by the teacher and fellow students and academic performance. Powell and Arriola, (2003) investigated the relationship between psychosocial factors and academic achievement among African American Students. Findings of the study indicated that “there was a strong negative association between the way the student copes with unfair treatment and GPA” (p.175). The findings further suggested that “students who talk to others about being treated unfairly instead of keeping it to themselves are more likely to have higher GPAs” (p.175).

Consistent with this view, the conclusion of a research study by Ross and Broh (2000) explored that “better academic performance improves the self-esteem and the sense of personal control” as proved by another study that “the self-esteem of students is affected by their perceived ability, especially as formalized from test results or other assessments” (Chetcuti & Griffiths, 2002, p.544). This rapid rehabilitation is perhaps due to the optimistic sentiments of the children of this age group as research evidence has also revealed that “optimism is overwhelmingly more characteristic than pessimism in both boys and girls in the age range 9-13 in grades four through six” (Fischer & Leitenberg, 1986, p.246).
Five participants reported diverse reaction among repeaters. They stated that some feel embarrassed and work harder but some do not. This difference is perhaps due to individual differences among children. The teacher Ms I.K reported that the repeaters show improvement in studies. Consistent with her view, Jacob and Lefgren (2004) found that “retention has no negative consequences on the academic achievement of students retained in the third grade, and it increases performance in the short run” (p.227). The participants mentioned that the repeaters can be well adjusted through extra love and care. The role of teacher is very significant in this regard. He/ she can handle the situation effectively or worsen it significantly.

The teacher Ms I.A stated that no improvement is seen in the attitude of repeater, rather they show more belligerent behavior. Similarly teacher Ms T.M added that some students try to improve at the start of the repeated year, but fail to show any improvement. She explained that they lose their interest in studies and are left behind their class fellows and in extreme cases even dropout from school. A study conducted by Westbury (1994) also suggested that “grade repetition does not correct the original learning problem” (p.249). He further concluded that “retention is ineffective for improving achievement and ability” (p.241).

Only teacher Ms S.K gave a contradictory response. She said that the attitude of repeaters towards studies does not change after failure. Others had reported significant changes in the attitude of repeaters after failure. Consistent with this view, Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study that “students learn when repeating” (p.129). They further added that “on average, while students who repeat are below average in
performance before repetition, they move to above average after repetition” (p.130). But this study also admitted that “after repetition, the students are still somewhat behind the promoted students” (p.130).

### 5.5.2 Attitude towards Teachers

Research evidence revealed that “the children did see the teacher as having a role in their success and failure” (Gipps & Tunstall, 1998, p.160). In response to the queries about the attitude of repeaters towards their teachers, eight participants reported no change in attitude of repeaters after failure, whereas the rest of others observed some differences.

Teacher Ms I.A described significant difference. She said that the attitude of repeaters is definitely changed with teacher, after failure. Often the child supposes that the teacher is responsible of his/her failure, and thus tries to stay away from the teacher. A research study by Stearns et al., (2007) revealed that “retention may lead retained students to view the school system as one in which they have experienced failure” (p.212). On the other hand research studies have demonstrated that successful students who were “high in self esteem saw the teacher as evaluating their performance more favorably, than students low in self esteem” (Jussim et al.,1987, p.95). Similarly, the teachers revealed that the child after failure start disliking him/her, Consistent with this view, Bangulia (2007) stated

> Children with low self-esteem have negative self-image and poor self-concept. They do not believe in themselves or others and feels that they have nobody to depend on. No matter what effort they put in, they feel it is depreciated (p.17).
Teachers Ms R.C and Mr. S.M reported more or less the same reaction from the repeaters. Both teachers told that at the start of the repeated year, the students seems a little bit angry and remain at a distance from the teacher. Stearns et al., (2007) explored that “retention may hurt students' ability to bond with teachers later in their educational careers” (p.213). Participants’ views revealed that the student feels threatened by the expected insult from the teacher, but if teacher is caring and sympathetic, then the situation can be changed. Only the teacher can gave the confidence to the child to recover and return to normal life. Similarly, Repetti (1996) was of the view that “following a social or academic failure, it seems reasonable to expect that many children would attempt to restore self- confidence by seeking attention and reassurance from important others, such as parents” (p.1468).

Teacher Ms T.M added that though the child tries to keep at distance from teacher, but if the teacher shows concern for him/her, then he/she adjusts very soon. If the teacher does not show love and sympathy then the child reacts and shows worse attitude towards studies, fellow students and even behaves impolitely with teachers also.

These results are consistent with the research evidence of the study by Stearns et al., (2007) which has revealed that

The retained students have lower achievement rates and more disciplinary problems, are more pessimistic about their future, are less engaged with school, and have fewer bonds with teachers than do continuously promoted students (p.231).
5.5.3 Attitude towards Fellow Students

A number of research studies indicate that grade retention is harmful for children’s social and emotional development, being particularly damaging to their self-image and academic self-concept having long-term consequences. Research studies show that retention promotes discipline problems and has a negative effect on the student’s self-concept (Pomplun, 1988; Stearns et al., 2007).

When/while asking the participants about the anticipated changes in the attitude of repeaters toward their fellow students, seven participants reported no significant difference seen before and after failure, they argued that small children have no such sense of insult and failure. Others gave a variety of responses.

The teachers Ms S.I and Mr. S.M reported that after failure the child become more reserved and sensitive. They both stated that if class fellows make fun of his/her failure, then he/she reacts very aggressively. Research evidence has demonstrated that “demanding and difficult child behavior can be an unfortunate and unintended result of a child's efforts to recover from the distress engendered by a failure situation” (Repetti, 1996, p.1480). Similar results were obtained by McMartin (1995) who found that “failure in school plays a significant role in forming a negative self-image” (p.68).

The teacher Ms I.A expressed that she has never seen any improvement in the attitude of repeaters. Rather they tried to spoil other children, and terrify them. She further explored that they perceived academic failure as maltreatment and injustice. Research evidence also supports this notion. Bolger et al., (1998) concluded that “the children who experienced
chronic maltreatment were most likely to experience low levels of acceptance by their peers” (p.1194).

Both the teachers Ms R.C and Ms T.M expressed that the repeater child feels very sad and lonely at the start of the year. He/she becomes more reserved than ever before. It appears that he/she feels threatened about expected insult by peers, but recovers later if receives special attention by teacher. Stearns et al., (2007) demonstrated that retention may rupture social bonds with peers Retention separates students from their same aged peers and may end friendships. Retained students must develop new peer groups among their new classmates and overcome their label of “flunker” while doing so.

The overall analysis of the above responses of the participant teachers clearly revealed that the role of teacher is very crucial for repeaters. A fourth grade student cannot understand the rational reason lie in his/her failure. Rather he/she take this failure some kind of revenge by teacher. So if the child does not receive any kind of support from family members or teacher, he/she shows rebellious behavior in order to gratify his/her inner self. This rebellious behavior further aggravates, if peers and teacher make fun of his/her failure. But if the child receives support and encouragement from teachers and parents, then he/she feels better and the rebelliousness eventually changes into positive behavior.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the teacher act as an important character in the rehabilitation of the child after failure. The research studies reported that if schools offer some special interventions, then retention may produce better result, but in actual practice, especially in developing countries, most schools do not provide special interventions or modify curricular content for retained students. A research study indicated
that “students who received high levels of support and who also changed their learning strategies were more likely to meet promotional standards after the retained year and had larger learning gains” (Stone & Engel, 2007, p.627). The authors added that students did not report high degrees of individualized attention from their teachers regarding their retention experiences.

In a situation, where the majority of the parents are illiterate and economically depressed, the responsibilities of the school and the teacher increase more than in the normal situation. The teachers should be more caring and consider their students' needs and interests and should help them define their personal goals. The teachers should have the missionary zeal in performing their duties. The teacher should encourage students in a manner, that they perceive themselves as efficient individuals, through their own effort and responsibility for the learning process.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, the thematic analysis of the interviews of the participant teachers was described in detail. In the beginning, the details of analytic procedure along with techniques and important features of data collection were presented. Then the thematic analysis of the views of teachers was explored in two major parts. The first part dealt with major reasons of grade retention at primary level in public schools of the Punjab. The analysis presented three major factors of grade retention, i.e. family, school and the student him/herself. The second part narrates teachers’ experiences with repeaters. Overall, the participant teachers were of the view that the attitude of repeaters change after failure towards their studies, teachers and class fellows with some exceptional cases due to individual differences.
Chapter Six
TRIANGULATION

6.1 Introduction
The main objective of this chapter is to triangulate the quantitative and qualitative results presented in chapters Four (section 4.4.2.1 & 4.4.2.2) and Five (section 5.5). The triangulation will be helpful in further understanding of the relationship of the survey findings and the perspectives of participant teachers in relation with the impact of grade retention on the fourth grade students of public primary schools.

The chapter is organized as follows.

i. First, the brief overview of the triangulation process is presented.

ii. Then, the contextual scenario of the quantitative and qualitative samples is described in detail.

iii. Finally, the findings of the two sets of data are triangulated to further understand the relationships of grade retention with academic performance and self-esteem of the students as identified through the survey and the teachers’ perspectives.

6.2 An Overview of Triangulation Process
In the present study, the strengths of the quantitative and qualitative methods were combined by applying them “to the same situation at the same time” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.286). The purpose of this design was “to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic” (Morse, 1991, as cited in Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.62). Moreover, this
design “enhanced the credibility because of the use of multiple methods and provides a more complete picture of the topic being studied” (Lodico et al., 2006, p.286).

After analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data, for interpretation of findings “Concurrent Triangulation Strategy”\(^5\) (Creswell, 2003, p.217) was employed to integrate the findings of the two different sets of data on the same issue “collected and analyzed separately and independently, using the techniques traditionally associated with each data type” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.66). It is worth mentioning here that “equal emphasis” was given to both types of data (Lodico et al., 2006, p.286). The concurrent triangulation strategy is selected as “a model when a researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross validate, or corroborate findings within a single study (Greene et al., 1989; Morgan, 1998; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird, &McCormick, 1992, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p.217). The rationale of using “Concurrent Triangulation Strategy” was some inconsistencies and contradictory findings of the qualitative data with respect to quantitative data. In this way the interpretation of the findings noted the convergence of the similar findings as a way “to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study or explain any lack of convergence that may result” (Creswell, 2003, p.117).

The quantitative data was collected for achieving the four main objectives of the study (see section 1.4). For this purpose, a panel study was designed to collect data regarding self-esteem and academic performance of the repeaters. The findings related to the first two hypotheses (see section 1.5) were confirmed and cross validated by the perceptions

\(^5\) This strategy usually integrates the results of the two methods during the interpretation phase that can either note the convergence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study or explain any lack of convergence that may result. (Creswell, 2003, p.217)
of the persons who are closely linked with these students, i.e. teachers. The decision of selecting teachers as key informants of the study was the research evidence that the “teachers' evaluations are the most crucial, particularly in the early years of schooling” (Gipps & Tunstall, 1998, p.151).

In the course of pilot study, it was realized that the primary grade teachers in public primary schools are not very well aware of the concept of self-esteem and other psychological factors, thus it was decided with the consultation of PhD advisory committee, to assess the students’ self-esteem indirectly by the perception of the teachers regarding students attitude towards their class fellows and teachers themselves. Research evidence has indicated that self-esteem of the students is reflected by their actions and attitude toward others (Deigh, 1983). Consistent with this view, Labenne & Greene, (1969) also narrated that "Students who misbehave generally have a negative self-regard ... People tend to behave in ways consistent with their self-concept." (as cited in Carlton, 1981, p.80). Similarly, for the assessment of academic performance of the repeaters during the repeated year, it was decided to request participant teachers for narrating their experiences regarding attitude of repeaters towards studies before and after failure.

In this way, the results of the survey were triangulated with the findings of the thematic analysis of the responses of the participant teachers. These parts of both methods collected information related to the primary objective of the study i.e. to see the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the fourth grade students.
Moreover, the two sets of results, based as they are in different methodologies, enable the researcher to address the issue of the level of analysis. The survey data was based at the level of students of grade four and are longitudinal as well. The qualitative work, on the other hand, allows a study of the context in which the observations of the teacher related to repeaters were located. The context is particularly important for the research question because in teaching learning situations, the role of teacher is very crucial. The teacher observes his/her students while teaching and has a better view of their habits and attitudes.

6.3 The Contextual Scenario of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

For in-depth understanding of the triangulation process, it is essential to explain the contextual scenario of the universe from which the quantitative and qualitative data were drawn.

The quantitative data was drawn from the students enrolled in grade four of the urban public primary and elementary schools located in different areas of Rawalpindi city. The data was collected through a five point self-esteem scale and locally developed tests of the five subjects taught in grade four of public schools. A two phase panel study was designed for data collection. The phase 1 was completed in the third term just before annual examination, while the phase 2 was completed at the end of the second term in the next year. Public schools in Rawalpindi city serve majority of economically deprived population. Those having better socio-economic status in this city send their children to private schools. Moreover, the public primary schools also considered themselves as schools for community having low socio-economic status. During survey, it was also
found that majority of Pathan and immigrant families send their children to public schools, perhaps due to free education and availability of books. The sample included both mixed and separate schools. The total sample (N=305) included both boys and girls, i.e. (n=114 boys) and (n= 191 girls).

In order to cross validate the quantitative findings, observations of the teachers were also included as qualitative part of the study. The observations of the teachers teaching 4th grade students were collected through semi-structured interviews of the selected group of experienced teachers (one male and eleven female) from the public primary and elementary schools located in the Rawalpindi city. These open-ended individual interviews explored attitudes, and behaviors of repeaters pertaining to studies, teachers and fellow students’ relations particularly after failure in the repeated year. On average, interviews lasted about 30 to 35 minutes. Each interview was briefly noted and transcribed, then coded and analyzed. All sample teachers belonged to lower middle class families. Their views revealed that they had attained their present status after long and untiring efforts. Being the earning members of lower middle class families, they all had some perception of the problems their students encountered.

An example indicative of the variations between the quantitative data set and qualitative responses is the orientation of individual differences. The quantitative data presented the whole picture of the repeaters with reference to changes in their academic performance and self-esteem during the whole repeated year, whereas the qualitative responses clearly mention the existing differences between the attitudes of repeaters, moreover these
responses also provide information regarding the attitude of teachers toward problem cases as well.

6.4 Triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative Findings

While keeping in view the above mentioned diversities of the two sets of data, this section integrated the quantitative and qualitative findings by employing the “Concurrent Triangulation Strategy” (Creswell, 2003, p.217).

The quantitative findings that are to be triangulated with qualitative data are related to the impact of grade retention policy on the academic performance and self-esteem of the students of grade four. The section 5.5 of the qualitative part of the study was triangulated with the first two hypotheses of the quantitative section of the study. This section was focused on expected changes in the attitude of students after failure at primary level in public schools. The participant teachers were requested to share their observations related to the changes in the attitude of repeaters with respect to their class fellows, the subject teachers and studies.

The teachers’ perceptions regarding the attitude of repeaters towards fellow student and the respective teachers was triangulated with the results of first hypothesis of the quantitative part that was concerned with the self-esteem of the repeaters, whereas the teachers’ perceptions regarding the attitude of repeaters towards studies was triangulated with the findings of the second hypothesis that was related to their academic performance in the two phases of the study.
6.4.1 The Self-Esteem of Repeaters

The self-esteem is a complex psychological aspect of human personality. The self-esteem of a child cannot be observed directly but has to be inferred from a self report of the child or from observation of the teacher. Brooker (2005) stated that “in early childhood, self-esteem principally reflects the value the child perceives he/she has in the eyes of others, particularly those ‘significant others’ whose opinion really count” (P.37).

In the present study, the self-esteem of the repeaters was assessed by both quantitative (directly) and qualitative (indirectly) measures. Quantitatively, the self-esteem of the 4th grade students was measured through a standardized scale that was translated into simple Urdu. The scores obtained by the students in this scale were considered as self report of the students. Qualitatively, the self-esteem of the repeaters was indirectly assessed by the observations of the participant teachers relating to their attitude towards their class fellows and the teachers. In this way, the quantitative findings were verified by the qualitative data comprising of teachers perceptions.

The quantitative data did show a strong negative impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students of grade four, whereas, the qualitative findings revealed a variety of responses in this regard.

In the quantitative analysis, the Table 4.11(see section 4.4.2.1) described the mean scores and $t$-values of self-esteem scores of the repeaters, identified poor but promoted students and normal group in both phases.
The mean score of self-esteem of the repeaters was 42.65 in the phase 2, while it was 47.56 in the phase 1. The negative sign of the $t$-value ($t = -13.29, p < .001$) showed that the self-esteem score of the repeaters was decreased from the phase 1 to phase 2.

The mean scores of the self-esteem of identified poor but promoted students in next grade was 50.79 while 48.00 before promotion. The positive sign of the $t$-value ($t = 5.21, p < .001$) indicated that the self-esteem score of this sample increased in phase 2 as compared to phase 1. The mean difference of the self-esteem scores of identified poor but promoted group in both phases was found highly significant at .000 alpha.

Similarly, for the normal group, the mean score of self-esteem in the phase 2 was 49.87 and 47.58 in phase 1. The positive $t$-value ($t = 9.76$) depicted that the self-esteem score of normal group increased after promotion in next grade. The mean difference of the self-esteem scores before and after promotion in next grade was found highly significant at .000 alpha.

The analysis presented in the Table 4.11 revealed that self-esteem score of the repeaters decreased after retention in the same grade, whereas; the self-esteem of the identified poor but promoted sample and the normal group was increased after promotion to the next class.

Similarly, the Table 4.12 (see section 4.4.2.1) compared the repeaters and promoted students on the self-esteem measures in two phases. The mean score of self-esteem of identified poor but promoted students in the phase 1 was 48.00 whereas; the mean score of self-esteem of repeaters in the phase 1 was 47.56. A slight and not significant increase
was seen in the mean difference ($t = .40$) of self-esteem scores of both groups. The mean score of self-esteem of identified poor but promoted in the phase 2 was 50.79 and, the mean score of self-esteem of repeaters in the phase 2 was 42.65. A significant and large increase was seen in the mean difference ($t = 8.77$, $p < .001$) of the self-esteem scores of identified poor but promoted group and repeater group. The $t$-value of both groups was found significant at .000 alpha. It was demonstrated by the Table 4.12 that the mean differences of the two groups increased in phase 2 as compared to phase 1.

The table 4.13 (see also 4.4.2.1) presented the self-esteem of repeaters at two times, i.e. in the start of the repeated year just after annual examination and after nine months of annual examination in the same academic year. The mean of self-esteem score after nine months of annual examination (42.65) was compared with the mean score of self-esteem just after examination. The mean of self-esteem score of repeaters just after examination was 44.64. The findings of the $t$-test ($t = -5.31$) of both scores was found highly significant at .000 alpha.

In the same way, the mean of self-esteem score (50.79) of the identified poor but promoted sample after nine months of annual examination was compared with the mean score of self-esteem just after examination (49.35). The mean difference ($t = 5.21$) between the two set of scores was also found highly significant at .000 alpha.

The statistical analysis presented in the Table 4.13 demonstrated that mean differences of repeaters revealed negative impact of grade retention, whereas, the mean differences of self-esteem of identified poor but promoted students showed positive significant results of success in annual examination.
Therefore, it can be concluded by the quantitative analyses presented in Table 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 that the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the repeaters was found negative and highly significant.

As far as, the qualitative findings are concerned, the second part of the interviews was related to the academic performance and self-esteem of the repeaters. In this part, two main questions put to the participant teachers were linked to the self esteem assessment of the repeaters. The first question was related to the changes in the attitude of repeaters toward their fellow students, and the second one was about the attitude towards their teachers.

In response to the questions related to the attitude of repeaters toward fellow students in the repeated year, seven participant teachers reported no significant difference. They were of the view that the overall attitude of repeaters remains same in the repeated year. They reported that the repeaters show more or less similar attitude before and after failure, whereas other five explained significant changes.

The participant teachers, who reported significant changes, believed that the repeaters become more reserved and quiet after failure, it seems that they felt threatened by expected insult from their peers. If someone among their class fellows ridiculed their failure, then they reacted violently. They often terrified others and tried to have a negative effect on their peers.

However, participant teachers agreed that repeaters feel very sad and lonely at the start of the repeated year, but they recover with the passage of time and majority of them
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start taking interest in their studies. The teachers reported that when the repeaters start taking interest in studies, an improvement is also seen in their confidence level. Research evidence also demonstrated that students who improve academically show enhanced self-esteem (Gipps & Tunstall, 1998).

A careful review of the above responses of the participant teachers revealed that grade retention does affect the psychological condition of the students; their reactions depict their abnormal behavior. Research evidence also demonstrated that “children with low self-esteem have negative self-image and poor self-concept” (Bangulia, 2007, p.17).

In the light of participants’ observations, it can be concluded that the effect of failure disturbs the personality of the student. He/she is left behind by his/her class fellows and also looses their company. The student faces insulting behavior from teachers; fellow students in school and in home parents and other family members also reproach him/her. The innocent child is held responsible for wasting money and time. These circumstances badly affect the mental condition of the student, and he/she starts dislike himself/herself. Similar views were found in a study by Burfeind and Bartusch (2006) who concluded in their study that “poor school performance leads to frustration and anger and subsequently to delinquent behavior” (p.320).

Similarly, a variety of responses came out in relation to the question related to the attitude of repeaters towards their teachers. Eight participants reported no change in the attitude of repeaters, whereas others felt about significant differences in the attitude of repeaters before and after failure.
One of the participant teacher said that the attitude of repeaters definitely changed with teacher, after failure. Often the child supposes that the teacher is responsible for his/her failure, and thus tries to stay away from teacher.

Two teachers also told that at the start of the repeated year, the students seem a little bit angry and remain at a distance from the teacher. It seems that he/she feels threaten by the expected insults from the teacher, but if teacher is caring and sympathetic, then the situation can be changed. Only the teacher can give the confidence to the student to recover and return to normal life.

Another teacher added that despite the fact that the repeaters often keep themselves at distance from teacher, but if teacher shows concern for them, then they adjust very soon. If the teacher does not show love and sympathy then the child reacts badly and displays worse attitude towards studies, fellow students and behaves impolitely with the teachers also.

However, all the participant teachers admitted that the kindness of teachers always yields good results. Their role is of vital importance in the rehabilitation of the repeaters. If teachers gave them extra care and love, then they try to improve themselves. It was clearly revealed from teachers’ perceptions that their encouraging feedback about the performance of the repeaters can enhance the self-esteem level of the repeaters. Research evidence has also demonstrated similar findings. A study by Cassidy, Ziv, Mehta, and Feeney (2003) found that “the feedback children and adolescents receive is important to their development” (p.612). The authors “designed two experimental studies to examine children's (M = 12 years) and adolescents' (M = 17 years) active selection of the quality
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of feedback they wish to receive” (p.612). The cumulative findings of both of the studies revealed that

Participants’ self-perceptions influence their feedback seeking. Participants with positive self-perceptions sought more positive feedback than participants with negative self-perceptions and sought more positive feedback than expected by chance. Participants with negative self-perceptions lacked this tendency to seek positive feedback and sometimes sought less positive feedback than expected by chance. As expected, depression and attachment-related measures were also associated with participants’ feedback seeking (p.612).

On the other hand, if the teacher ignores them, or criticizes them, then their performance declines and their personality is damaged. The neglect of teachers ultimately results in dropping out of repeaters from education system. Gipps and Tunstall (1998) stated that “the development of a favorable self concept in children is dependent upon perceiving themselves as successful, this in turn may depend on the way the child interprets the teachers' reaction to his/her performances” (p.151).

6.4.2 The Similarities and Differences between Quantitative and Qualitative data with respect to Self-Esteem of the Repeaters

There are similarities as well as discrepancies found while triangulating both types of data related to the self-esteem of the repeaters. The quantitative data revealed a negative and significant impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students and the null hypothesis that there is no impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students was rejected. The analysis show that the self-esteem of those students who were promoted despite learning deficiencies increased significantly ($t= 5.21, p< .001$). These
results strengthen the notion that grade retention phenomenon negatively affects the psychological wellbeing of the child.

The qualitative findings, while supporting the quantitative relationship between grade retention and self-esteem of the students to some extent, show some discrepancies also. The views of majority (eight out of twelve) of the teachers contradict the results of quantitative data, as they believe that the attitude of the repeaters remains the same as before failure. This discrepancy discloses a big communication gap between the teacher and the student. The indifferent attitude revealed that these teachers were not very sensitive about psychological wellbeing of their students and did not pay proper attention to their behavioral changes. They took such attitude as routine practice.

The qualitative analysis revealed individual differences among teachers and their attitude toward their duty also. Those teachers, who do their duty with full zeal, are always conscious about their students’ problems. On the other hand, apathetic teachers always showed unconcerned attitude towards their duty and students as well.

The analysis of the views of the teachers who reported changes in the attitude towards teachers revealed that students blame teachers for their failure and the students often express their hatred by staying away from the teacher. They do not respond properly to the teacher and become more reserved day by day. This attitude depicts clearly that they need teachers’ attention. A sympathetic and considerate teacher can minimize the bad effects of failure and stabilize the behavior of the child by paying more attention towards him/her.
6.4.3 The Academic Performance of Repeaters

Academic performance of the repeaters was an important variable of the present study. The basic purpose of grade retention is to improve the academic performance of the students by giving them an extra year. A number of research studies support this notion as well (Pomplun, 1988; Neto & Hanushek, 1994; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004).

The quantitative findings regarding academic performance of the repeaters in the two phases of the study i.e. before annual examination and at the end of second term were triangulated with the responses of the participant teachers related to the attitude of repeaters towards their studies.

The analysis of the quantitative part does show that the academic performance of the students is positively associated with grade retention. The quantitative analysis presented in the Table 4.14 (see also section 4.4.2.2) revealed the cumulative academic performance of the repeaters in the two phases (before annual examination and at the end of second term in the next academic session). The Table showed that the mean score of the cumulative academic performance of the repeaters in phase 2 was 32.60, and 30.54 in the phase 1. The mean difference ($t = 5.45$) of the academic score of the repeaters in two phases was found significant at .000 alpha. The positive sign of the t-value indicated that the academic performance of the repeaters was increased significantly in the phase 2 as compared to phase 1.

In the same way, a significant increase has been seen in the mean scores of the cumulative academic performance of identified poor but promoted group of students. The mean score of the academic performance of this group was increased to 48.87 in phase 2,
from 44.26 in phase 1. The mean difference ($t = 13.56$) of the academic score of the identified poor but promoted students in two phases was found significant at .000 alpha. The positive sign of the $t$-value indicated that the academic performance of the identified poor but promoted group of students was increased significantly between the two phases.

Likewise, the mean score of the cumulative academic performance of the normal group in phase 2 was 58.38, whereas 54.09 in the phase 1. The mean difference ($t = 14.24$) of the academic score of the normal group in two phases was found significant at .000. The positive sign of the $t$-value indicated that the academic performance of the normal group was increased significantly in the phase 2 as compared to phase 1.

A significant increase has been seen in the mean scores of the academic performance of all the three groups. Although, the $t$-values reveal minimum increase in the mean of the repeaters’ academic performance, whereas, the identified poor but promoted sample and the normal group had shown significant increase.

Similarly, the Table 4.15 (see also section 4.4.2.2) demonstrated the comparison of repeaters and identified poor but promoted students on the academic performance in both phases. The mean score of the cumulative academic performance of the identified poor but promoted and the repeaters in phase 1 was 44.26, and 30.54 respectively. The significant mean difference was found between the two groups in phase 1 ($t = 10.86$, $p < .001$). Likewise, the mean score of cumulative academic performance of the respective groups in phase 2 was 48.87 and 32.60. A highly significant $t$-value ($t = 12.86$, $p < .001$) was found of the two groups in the phase 2. The table revealed that the increase in the $t$-
values of both groups between the two phases revealed that the academic performance of both groups was increased in the phase 2 with respect to phase 1.

As the academic performance of the repeaters was measured by the locally developed tests of the five subjects separately in the two phases, therefore in order to find out the impact of grade retention on each subject respectively, a paired t-test was conducted between the two sets of scores of repeaters and promoted sample that was displayed in the Table 4.16 (see also section 4.4.2.2). The table revealed that the mean of English score of repeaters in phase 2 was 7.28 and 6.29 in phase 1. The t-value for English score of repeaters in both sets of score was highly significant (t= 5.57, p< .001). The mean of Urdu score of this group in phase 2 was 10.62 and 10.14 in phase 1. The findings of t-test for Urdu score in both phases also revealed significant results (t= 2.84, p<.01). The mean of Mathematics score of repeaters in phase 2 was 6.73 and 6.43 in phase1. The t-value for Mathematics score was found not significant (t= 1.92). Similarly, the mean of Social Studies score of this group in phase 2 was 6.82 and 6.44 in phase 1. The findings of t-test of Social Studies scores of repeaters (t= 2.43) indicated not significant results. the mean of General Science score in phase two was 6.85 and 6.33 in phase one. The t-value of General Science score revealed significant results (t= 3.13, p< .01). The positive t-value of all the variables indicated that repeaters perform better in phase 2 as compared to phase 1, though the findings of the paired comparison revealed that the rate of progress varies from subject to subject.

Table 4.16 also presents subject wise comparison of Identified Poor but Promoted sample in both test scores. The mean of English score of this group in Phase 2 was 12.22 and
11.07 in Phase 1. The \( t \)-value for English score in both sets of score was highly significant \( (t= 8.23, p< .001) \). The mean of Urdu score of this group in Phase 2 was 13.85 and 13.26 in Phase 1. The findings of \( t \)-test for Urdu score \( (t= 2.97) \) in both phases also revealed significant results at .00 alpha. The mean of Mathematics score of Repeaters in Phase 2 was 10.12 and 8.53 in Phase 1. The most significant results were found in mean differences of Mathematics scores of the two sets of scores \( (t = 11.23, p<.001) \). The mean of Social Studies score of Identified Poor but Promoted sample in Phase 2 was 10.76 and 9.78 in Phase 1. The mean differences of Social Studies \( (t = 5.79) \) revealed significant results between the two sets of scores at .000 alpha. The findings of \( t \)-test of Social Studies scores \( (t = 5.79) \) of this group indicated highly significant results at .000 alpha. In the same way, the mean of General Science score in Phase 2 was 9.65 and 8.10 in Phase 1. The findings of the \( t \)-value \( (t= 9.13) \) for General Science score revealed highly significant results at .000 alpha.

The \( t \)-values of all the variables indicate that identified poor but promoted sample performed much better in phase 2 as compared to phase 1, and yielded highly significant results in all subjects.

In a nut shell, the statistical analyses of the collected data of both phases showed significant impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the repeaters. Moreover, the findings revealed that students work hard in the repeated year and show better results, it was also revealed by these analyses that the poor performers could show much better results if they were promoted.
On the other hand, the qualitative findings regarding attitude of repeaters towards studies explored a diversity of responses. Few participants supported the quantitative results to some extent while others showed considerable deviations. Only two teachers expressed satisfactory remarks in response to the queries related to the attitude of repeaters towards studies. They explained that improvement is often seen in the academic performance of the repeaters. Both teachers were of the view that students seem to be concerned about this loss; they try to pay more attention towards studies, work hard in the repeated year to show better results. Consistent with teachers’ perception, Pomplun (1988) also demonstrated that “the students, who were retained, showed increased achievement in every area and an increase in motivation” (p.285).

One participant believed that the attitude of repeaters towards studies deteriorated further after failure; another participant narrated similar views that she did not see any improvement in the learning outcomes of the repeaters, their performance declined after failure. She elaborated these students do not show any improvement, and behaved more aggressively. The majority of the repeaters express more hostile attitude towards studies. Research evidence has revealed that “people low in self-esteem become discouraged and unmotivated when they receive negative feedback about a performance” (Burger, 2000, p.364).

Two teachers were of the view that repeaters feel very disturbed especially in the starting first and second months of the repeated year and do not show any interest in studies. They further added that the repeaters can be adjusted with extra love and care by the teacher.
Other participants reported variations based on individual differences. One participant stated that the attitude of repeaters remain same as before failure. Consistent with this view, Gomes-Neto and. Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study that “students’ previous achievement is consistently related with their achievement after repetition” (p.130). The rest of participants were of the view that very few students feel embarrassed upon their failure and become serious towards studies. They added that few cases try hard to improve their academic status and thus show better performance in studies. These teachers further stated that this kind of attitude is not shown by all the repeaters, there are cases when the repeaters feel very humiliated after failure and become more reserved, and consequently remains dull in studies throughout the repeated year.

6.4.4 The Similarities and Differences between Quantitative and Qualitative data with respect to Academic Performance of the Repeaters

Similar to the case of self-esteem, there are similarities as well as discrepancies found while triangulating both types of data related to the academic performance of the repeaters. The quantitative data described overall significant positive impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the repeaters, whereas the subject wise comparison did show significant and positive impact on English, Urdu and General Science scores, while the impact of grade retention on the Mathematics and Social Studies score was found positive but not significant. On the other hand, the other group of identified poor performers, (who had passed the annual examination and promoted to next class) showed highly significant and improved performance as compared to the repeaters’ group (see also Table 4.15).
The qualitative findings explored contradictory responses. Some teachers (n=6) believed that repeaters become more serious in repeated year and seem more attentive towards studies, whereas, the rest of others reported negative attitude of repeaters towards studies. The teachers’ perceptions were based on individual differences as in the case of responses related to self-esteem of repeaters. The teachers believed that there are some repeaters who feel sorrow at their failure and thus decide to be more attentive towards studies, and some do not show any regret and carry on with their previous routine, whereas, some extreme cases take their failure as insulting experience and become rebellious. In this way, it cannot be said that the qualitative findings completely support the quantitative results, but they provide evidence that improvement is seen in many cases. The qualitative findings present clearer picture with respect to individual differences among the repeaters.

6.5 Summary

This chapter triangulated the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data. The triangulation of both type of data revealed considerable discrepancies and supportive similarities. The quantitative analysis verified statistically that on the whole, the repeaters improved their academic performance during their repeated year, while their self esteem declined significantly. In contrast, the qualitative findings suggested that the relationship of grade retention with self-esteem and academic performance was varied with respect to individual differences, and the impact of grade retention was not the same on all repeaters. However, majority of the teachers were of the view that grade retention does not give fruitful results in normal circumstances and does not prove as a beneficial educational practice for majority of the poor performers.
Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The final chapter draws together the findings presented in preceding chapters to give an overall conclusion of the study while addressing the main objectives of this study separately. A comprehensive discussion about the observations of the researcher during data collection, contributions of the study and some recommendations are also included.

This chapter is organized as follows:

i. A brief overview of the whole research study is presented.

ii. The objective-wise conclusion in the light of the cumulative findings of both parts of the study are elaborated.

iii. The limitations encountered during the study process are highlighted.

iv. The contributions of this study along with some important recommendations towards promotion of Primary Education in Pakistan is reported.

v. Some important issues related to primary education in Pakistan encountered during the research process are explored as perceptions of the researcher.

vi. Suggestions for the future studies are presented in the last section of this chapter.
7.2 An Overview of the Study

Since independence, the Primary Education System in Pakistan has suffered from insufficient information of ground realities and poor planning both at policy and implementation level. Many good initiatives by the government proved unsuccessful because of imperfect situation analysis before planning and poor implementation strategies. As a result of these deficiencies, the country still lags far behind the target of achieving universal primary education.

For achieving the target of universal primary education, the implementation of automatic promotion policy in first three grades of primary level was initiated in all public schools of the Punjab in 2003. The basic aim of this policy was to increase the enrolment ratio by lowering the dropout rate at primary level. Due to this policy, almost all students of first three grades in the public schools of the Punjab are automatically promoted ignoring the academic performance they have shown throughout the year. As a result, majority of poor performers reach grade four and then they are retained here as they are considered academically wanting to appear in the departmental examination. In this way, the first experience of grade retention affects them severely and they feel very disturbed and shocked. Most of these students leave school in order to avoid expected insult by peers and teachers. The latest official statistics have confirmed this fact also (GoP, 2006; AEPAM, 2008). The statistics clearly reveal that the automatic promotion in first three grades and then high rate of retention at grade four has proved an unsuccessful practice. Literature on grade retention and automatic promotion policy demonstrates that these policies would prove workable if accompanied by other reform measures, such as summer
classes and special coaching etc, (Tomchin and Impara, 1992; Gomes-Neto and Hanushek, 1994).

In line with the above discussion, the researcher realized that the phenomenon of grade retention should be studied specifically with reference to the psychological aspects of child development. Therefore, it was decided to examine the effects of grade retention on the students of grade four in the current situation of primary education system in Pakistan. Consequently, the present study was undertaken to explore the impact of grade retention on the self esteem and academic performance of the repeaters of grade four in public schools. For this purpose, a multiphase mixed method study was designed. The students of grade four and teachers teaching at primary level in the public schools of Rawalpindi city were taken as study sample. Initially, the sample was divided into two major categories, i.e. the identified poor performers and normal group of students. The latter was selected for comparison with the former and for validation of instruments. After announcement of the annual examination, the poor performers’ sample was further divided into poor but promoted and repeaters’ group. The quantitative data related to academic performance was collected by locally developed tests of the five subjects taught in grade four of the public schools of the Punjab. Similarly, the self-esteem of the students was measured through Urdu translation of Beck Youth Inventory for Self-Concept of Children (BSCI-Y). Moreover, the qualitative data was collected with the help of semi-structured open-ended interviews of a selected group of teachers teaching at different public schools of Rawalpindi city. The quantitative data related to academic performance was collected in two phases:

a. In the last term of academic session, before final examination, and
b. At the end of second term in the next academic session.

The data related to self-esteem of the students was collected three times separately, i.e.

a. In the two major phases along with the execution of locally developed tests, and

b. In the first month of the next academic session, just after the announcement of the final examination.

The qualitative data was collected in the first term of the next academic session, i.e. in the period sandwiched between the two major phases of quantitative data collection. The quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed separately. Both types of data have some nested parts along with a part that was triangulated in order to validate and strengthen the cumulative findings. The process of triangulation of the specific parts of both types of data was conducted after analysis stage. In this way, the results of one section of qualitative part of the study were triangulated with the findings of the quantitative part in order to strengthen the overall conclusion of the study.

7.3 **The Objective-Wise Conclusion**

The objective-wise conclusion drawn from the findings of the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative analyses along with their nested parts have been presented as follows:

**7.3.1 The Main Factors of Grade Retention of Students at Primary Level**

The first objective of the study was to investigate the main factors of repetition of students at primary level, in accordance with the teacher’s perceptions. This objective was achieved through qualitative research method. The teachers (N=12) of public primary and elementary schools of Rawalpindi city (N=12) were taken as study sample. The semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted with these participants in
order to collect the relevant information. An interview guide was prepared for this purpose. The interview guide had two main sections. The first section was related to the investigation about main reasons of grade retention of students at primary level; the other was concerned with changes in attitude of repeaters.

The thematic analysis of the first section of interviews of participant teachers revealed three main reasons for grade retention of students at primary level, which were further divided into sub categories. The three main factors that came out as a result of analysis are family, school and student. The participant teachers were of the view that these factors have not contributed to the grade retention namely, but they all markedly influenced this phenomenon at different stages. The government has implemented automatic promotion policy for the students of first three grades. The teachers were aware that due to government policy, grade retention is only applicable for the students of grade four and five at primary level. In public schools grade retention for the first three grades is allowed in some special cases with the consent of parents.

Participants talked about school environment, their personal experiences about repeaters and causes of repetition. They described students with reference to their home and school environments, and shared personal opinions about their students. Personal experiences of the teachers helped the researcher to understand the connectivity of all the factors that contributed to the students’ failure and their attitude afterwards.

The family emerged as most influential and dominating factor during the thematic analysis. Some participant teachers believed that family and school are equally responsible in academic failure of the student; however the majority of the participants
suggested that the impact of family factors was stronger than school related factors. Parents and their socio economic status were frequently blamed for the sorry state of student. All participants of the present study were agreed that parental and family support is vital for academic success of the students. They believed that the lack of parental support often creates major problem for school and for the student. Consistent with the findings of the present study, Sahin and Gülmez, (2000) and Levine et al., (2001) demonstrated in their respective research studies that the students’ academic outcomes were affected by the home environment and family factors and these were considered a major cause of grade retention of the students. The teachers had complained regarding parents’ lack of awareness about the importance of family support for their child. The participants also expressed that frequent fighting among parents and other domestic problems divert student’s attention from studies, thus causing failure at the end. Analysis also revealed that one of the major contributing factors of child’s failure is uneducated parents. Other important causes of grade retention with respect to family as described by participant teachers were large family size, joint family system, non-literacy of parents and poor financial status of parents.

The second important contributing factor towards grade retention in the teachers’ perception was the school itself. Thematic analysis of interviews of the participant teachers discovered some important themes related to school factors. Participants were of the view that if teachers are vigilant and responsible, then the ratio of grade retention will obviously be low. Similar findings were revealed by a number of research studies, (Acharya, 1994; Bergmann, 1996; Sahin & Gülmez, 2000 and Wayne & Youngs (2003).
One important sub theme that emerged related to school factors was lack of discipline in public primary schools. Some participants were of the view that the proportion of failure of students has increased due to disobedience of discipline rules, such as continuous absenteeism of the student, practice of corporal punishment, no concept of accountability of irresponsible teacher in public schools etc. Some participants thought that the syllabus is difficult and not suitable for primary students, so the syllabus can also be considered as a cause of grade retention. These findings are affirmed by Acharya (1994) and Sahin and Gülmez (2000) also in their respective studies.

Thematic analysis of responses of the participant teachers revealed that personal weaknesses and family engagements of the students were also contributing in their academic failure. All participants agreed that the major reason of grade retention of student was his/her lack of interest in studies. Consistent with the teachers’ views, Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) concluded in their study that grade retention in Brazil is more common in poor performers.

Teachers exemplified a number of reasons of this non serious attitude of students. Some of these were lack of family support, carelessness of parents, bad company and mental incapability, continuous illness, shyness and fear of teacher etc. All these factors are interlinked to some extent. Moreover, In addition to this, frequent gatherings on marriages and other ceremonies divert the student’s attention from studies. Similar findings were demonstrated by a number of research studies, (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991; Banerji, 1997; El-Hassan, 1998; and Romanowski, 2003).
The overall analysis of the teachers’ perceptions revealed that their foremost emphasis was on the significance of parental support for the academic success of the students. Majority of the participants were of the view that the primary teacher is overburdened and cannot be held solely responsible for teaching and character building of the students. Parents and other family members should also contribute equally.

7.3.2 The Impact of Grade Retention on the Self-Esteem

The second objective of the study was to find the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of repeaters of grade four. In order to achieve this objective, the sample of fourth grade students was taken from the public primary and elementary schools of Rawalpindi city. The impact of self-esteem of the sample students was measured both by self report and by observation of the teachers.

Quantitative measurement of self-esteem was carried out in a multiphase panel study with the help of the translated version of Beck Youth Inventory for Self-Concept (BSCI-Y). During the whole study process, the self-esteem of the study sample was measured on three different occasions, i.e. before annual examination, in the first month of next academic session and at the end of second term in the next academic session. For the measurement of self-esteem before annual examination, (phase one), the whole sample of the study was divided into two sub categories, i.e. identified poor performers and normal group of students. After annual examination, the identified poor performers were further divided in two sub groups, i.e. repeaters’ group and identified poor but promoted group. Therefore, the whole sample was further studied as three sub samples, i.e. repeaters’ group, identified poor but promoted group and normal group. The self-esteem of the
The whole sample was measured for the second time in the first month of next academic year. Then, at the end of second term, the self-esteem was measured for the third and last time. The self esteem of the whole sample was measured at three occasions by using the same scale. The comparison of self-esteem scores of the three sub samples and between three phases revealed highly significant results. The quantitative analysis explored highly significant and negative impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students. Consistent with the quantitative findings, the qualitative findings did support the quantitative results, while explaining the existence individual differences among repeaters’ attitude after failure and the perceptions of the participant teachers as well.

On the whole, the triangulation of both types of data did show the strong negative impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of the students of grade four. This conclusion is supported by a number of research studies, (Pomplun, 1988; Westbury, 1994; Gottfredson, et al., 1994; Trethewey, 1999; Anderson, 2000; Stearns et al., 2007). A contrasting position is taken by theorists like Alexander et al., (1997) who argued that retained students show no deterioration after retention.

### 7.3.3 The Impact of Grade Retention on the Academic Performance

The third objective of the study was to identify the impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the fourth grade students. This objective was achieved by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The academic performance of the sample students was measured both by locally developed tests of the five subjects taught in grade four of public schools and by the observation of the teachers. During the whole process of the study, the academic performance of the study sample was
measured in two phases. The first phase was completed in the last term of academic session, i.e. before annual examination. The second phase was carried out at the end of second term in the next academic session. For the measurement of academic performance before annual examination, (phase one), the whole sample of the study was divided into two sub categories, i.e. identified poor performers and normal group of students. After annual examination, the identified poor performers were further divided in two sub groups, i.e. repeaters’ group and identified poor but promoted group. Therefore, the whole sample was further studied in the second phase as three sub samples, i.e. repeaters’ group, identified poor but promoted group and normal group. The whole study sample was measured in both phases by the same instrument, i.e. locally developed tests. The comparison of academic performance of the three sub samples in both phases revealed significant results.

The quantitative analysis explored significant and positive impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the repeaters. Whereas, the qualitative findings support the quantitative results to some extent, at the same time, some discrepancies have also been emerged due to individual differences. On the other hand the findings of identified but promoted group revealed that if students are promoted to next grade despite of weaknesses in studies, they perform much better in the next grade as compared to repeaters’ performance in the same grade.

On the whole, the triangulation of both types of data depicted a weak but positive impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the students of grade four. Literature has presented both supportive and contradictory findings in this regard. Alexander et al., (1988); Westbury (1994) and Hong and Raudenbush (2005) found in their respective
studies that the academic performance of the repeaters did not improve during the repeated year. However, the findings of the research studies by Pomplun, (1988); Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) and Jacob and Lefgren (2004) reveal improvement in the academic performance of the students in the repeated year.

7.3.4 The Immediate Impact of Failure

The fourth objective of the study was to find out the immediate impact of failure of students of grade four on their self-esteem. This objective was achieved by applying quantitative techniques on the self-esteem scores of identified poor sample of fourth grade students. This sample was further divided into two sub categories after announcement of annual school examination, i.e. repeaters group and poor but promoted group. The immediate impact of failure on the self-esteem of the fourth grade students was measured by the paired comparison of the self-esteem scores of the repeaters and poor but promoted students before annual examination (phase 1) with their self-esteem scores just after examination. The statistical analysis demonstrated that mean differences of repeaters revealed negative impact of failure, whereas, the mean differences of self-esteem of poor but promoted students showed positive and significant results of success in annual examination.

The study findings with respect to this objective reveal that there is significant negative impact of failure on the self-esteem of the students of grade four. This conclusion is also supported by a number of research studies, (Pomplun, 1988; Westbury, 1994; Gottfredson et al., 1994; Trethewey, 1999; Anderson, 2000; Stearns et al., 2007).
7.3.5 **The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Performance**

The fifth and last objective of the study was to explore the relationship between self-esteem and the academic performance of the students of grade four. This objective was related to quantitative aspect of the study. The self-esteem and academic performance of the students was measured quantitatively by the self-esteem scale and locally developed tests of five subjects taught at grade four of public schools respectively. The linear regression analysis was employed on both variables. The academic performance was taken as predictor and the self-esteem as criterion variable of the study. The analysis revealed that the academic performance had no significant impact on the self-esteem of 4th grade students in the first phase of the study (before annual school examination), whereas, the academic performance was revealed as a significant predictor for the self-esteem of the students in the second phase.

Regression analysis in phase 2 revealed that 19% variation in self-esteem is due to academic performance. The remaining 81% variation is unexplained. The latter could be due to other reasons such as increase in family income, extra tutoring, maturity etc.

The analysis presented in the Table 4.18 revealed that academic performance has no significant impact on the self-esteem of the students in phase 1. Whereas the analysis presented in the Table 4.19 demonstrated that academic performance has a significant impact on the self-esteem of the students in phase 2. The difference in the findings of the two phases for the same study sample is perhaps due to improvement in academic performance of the Identified Poor but Promoted Sample between the two phases, as it was evident that they worked hard in the last term and proved as better students (see section 4.4.2.2). Moreover, as these findings are related to the whole sample of the study,
so the above mentioned difference may be attributed to better status of Identified Poor but Promoted and Normal Group also. Immediately, few weeks before the annual examination, all the students were seemed under pressure due to the threat of upcoming examinations. The teachers and parents also become alert before examinations in Pakistan context. The unsecure feelings due to the expected failure is confined every child in last term. It is perhaps the reason that the no relationship between academic performance and self-esteem was detected in phase 1. Whereas in phase-2, the students were more relaxed as the annual examinations were due after three months. They still had time to enjoy. So they felt more confident and enjoyed their studies also. In this relaxing situation, their self-esteem level was also improved.

Keeping in view, the entire situation, it can be said that the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the academic performance and the self-esteem of the students is partially rejected as in phase 2, academic performance caused 19 % variation in self-esteem of the students.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

As discussed earlier, the present study was a multiphase panel study. The academic performance of the sample students was assessed in two phases and the self esteem of the whole sample was evaluated three times during the whole process of the study. Keeping in view the constraints of time and money, it was not possible for the researcher to select the sample randomly from the total population, i.e. all public schools of the Punjab. Therefore, it was decided to employ convenience sampling technique, and the study sample was taken only from the public schools of Rawalpindi city. The convenience sampling procedure decreases the generalizability of findings (Creswell, 2003). As this
study was delimited to the students of grade four of the public schools in one city of the Punjab so, the researcher makes no claim that the findings are generalizable to other settings, other times or to grade retention at other levels of students in public schools. Moreover, the results of the study emerged from the data collected in short duration of period i.e. 10 months, thus it can be expected that these “short-term outcomes do not speak to the possibility of long-term effects” (Gottfredson et al., 1994, p.776) which may be different from the results of the present study.

The second limitation of the study is related to the loss of participants because of the longitudinal design. During this 10 month period of data collection, a number of students dropped out of school, and consequently the study sample decreased. As discussed earlier, the researcher considered two categories of subjects for the purpose of data collection namely, the poor performers of grade four, and the normal group of students of the same grade from the same selected sample schools. The sample size of identified poor performers was comprised of 238 students of 4th grade students of public elementary and primary schools of Rawalpindi city. Of the 238 students, the original number of students (first group = 238) reduced to 203 in the second phase due to drop out of 35 students. The second category of the subjects, i.e. the normal group (n=108) consisted of those students of grade four who were considered better performers as compared to poor performers and had the probability to succeed in final examinations. During first and second phase, five students of normal group shifted to some other schools due to some domestic reasons and the total number left was 103. Consequently, the total number of subjects of the study remained 305 in second phase, with 102 normal students and 203 identified poor performers, out of them 117 students failed and repeated the same grade and 86 passed
and were promoted to the next grade. In this way, there were total number of students was 346 in the first phase (at the start of the study) and in the second phase this sample was reduced to 305, when 41 students dropped out. As a result, the data for the dropped out students was no more usable and these cases were eliminated from the sample. Fan (2001) stated in his study limitations while narrating about the dropout problem:

Although this may not be an important concern for sample-size consideration, such loss of participants may have caused an unknown degree of bias in the usable sample.... As a result of the dropout problem, the usable sample actually represented a better group of students (p.58).

The third limitation is concerned with quality of academic performance of students of grade four in public schools. As discussed earlier, due to automatic promotion policy at primary level, the students of the first three grades are promoted to next grade without assessments. Grade retention is allowed in these grades only in some exceptional situations with the consent of parents, such as chronic illness or the child is underage etc. However, there is no child repeating the early three grades due to slow learning. As a result of this policy, the pupils who do not acquire the desired learning standard for the next grade are also promoted. When these poor performers reach grade four, most of these are retained in the same grade, because at the end of primary level, all students of grade five have to appear in final departmental examination for promotion to grade six. This examination increases the pressure especially on low-achieving schools to retain the low-scoring children at grade four. The school administration in public sector apprehended that if the weak students are also promoted to grade five, there will be a greater probability of their failure in the final departmental examination and in turn negatively affect the school result at departmental level.
In the document of Pakistan Education Statistics 2006-07; 2007-08, the data of repeaters at primary level in the public schools of the Punjab revealed that, the maximum number of students repeat grade four as compared to the other grades of primary level in the public schools, (see Table 1.1, Section 1.2.4). These statistics manifest that the existing governmental policy and attitude of the schools’ administration towards slow learners has badly affected the academic performance of 4th grade students. Although, the research findings revealed that the repeaters did show some progress, but the pace of this progress is too low. In these circumstances, when the academic base of the students is extremely weak, the researcher makes no claim about quality of academic performance of the repeaters, which they show in the repeated year.

The fourth limitation is about the types of schools. As discussed in chapter one, there are three major categories of educational institutions in Pakistan, i.e. Public schools, Private schools and Deeni Madaris. All the three have separate policy regarding admission, curriculum selection and examination criteria. The research findings taken from the sample of one category are not applicable to other categories. But as grade retention is common among them, so it can be anticipated that to some extent, the institutions of other categories may take benefit from the findings of this study.

7.5 Contributions of the Study

The focus of present study is the phenomenon of grade retention which directly affects the primary education in Pakistan. Primary education is considered as the foundation of entire educational pyramid. It is also “the gateway to all higher levels of education that train the societies, teachers, doctors, and other highly skilled professionals that every
country, no matter how small or poor, requires” (World Bank, 2003, p.27). Pakistan has national and international commitments to achieve Universal Primary Education and is a signatory to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MDG-2 aims to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Unfortunately, the efforts to achieve “Education for All” in Pakistan have focused mainly on improving the participation rates, rather than on improving either completion rates or students’ academic performance. The psychological aspect of students is still neglected in educational planning. The recent policy of prohibition of corporal punishment is considered a positive step towards psychological wellbeing, but extreme violations of this act have minimized its expected positive outcomes. Although, majority of poor performers, especially in public schools, are still victims of the routine practice of insulting comments by the teachers and fellow students, yet the repeaters are the most vulnerable group in this regard. After three years of continuous automatic promotion, the first experience of failure in grade four shatters the personality of the student.

The present study provides evidence that how the experience of repetition for fourth grade students has badly affected their self-esteem, i.e. a measureable concept that is directly linked to child’s psychological wellbeing. The immediate impact of failure also demonstrated negative consequences on the self-esteem of the students. As for as academic performance is concerned, the statistical analysis of the scores of both groups (repeaters and promoted) of the identified poor performers revealed that the promoted group showed better performance in the next grade as compared to repeaters in the same grade.

This research study has made contributions in the following distinct areas:
7.5.1 Awareness-Raising among Education Policy-Planners and Administrators

This study has attempted to increase awareness among policy planners and implementers so that they may focus on how their policies can facilitate students’ engagement with learning activities. It was intended to reveal the facts regarding the effects of the school-level retention policy at the primary level. UNESCO (1992) stated that

A major concern of education policy makers and administrators is the need to make full use of educational resources in order to ensure maximum access of school-age children and their retention in school until they have attained the basic level of literacy and numeracy as well as the ability for self-sustained learning (p.127).

Presently, the policy planners and administrators of primary education in Pakistan are quite concerned about expansion of enrolment ratio at primary level as well as to reduce the drop-out ratio. Due to lack of complete awareness about ground realities, their policies are not successful. The field data revealed that these unplanned and unorganized macro and micro level policies have further deteriorated the primary education system. The official statistics also support this notion (AEPAM, 2008; GoP, 2006).

The most important issue that has emerged during the data collection process was the loss of participants. In the beginning of first phase of data collection, the sample of 238 poor performers was selected for the study. This sample was reduced to 203 students in second phase. It was found from the concerned office records from school that, these participants were dropped out (n=35) from school after failure in the annual school examination. The
The Impact of Grade Retention

drop out phenomenon caused serious concerns for policy planners and implementers. As discussed in chapter one, the official statistics also demonstrated that the dropout rate between grade four to five is 8.5% that is highest as compared to other grades (GoP, 2006). The existing policy of automatic promotion in first three grades is said to be one of the possible causes of this highest dropout rate at grade four.

As discussed earlier in the introduction of the study, the highest dropout rate and the maximum number of repeaters (see Table 1.1, Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 in the Section 1.2.4) in grade four are strongly suggesting the negative consequences of automatic promotion policy in the first three grades. The first experience of failure at grade four is a shocking experience for innocent students, thus resulting in decline in their self-esteem level. They feel left out and depressed which often leads to their dropout from school or delinquent behavior also. Sometimes, these repeaters create immense troubles for school administration.

Moreover, the study draws the attention of policy planners and administrators towards the psychological factors of child’s personality which are very crucial for his/her success in academics. The findings of the study revealed that the psychological aspect of self-esteem is associated with the phenomenon of grade retention. The study provides wakefulness to policy planners to effectively plan future strategies focusing the psychological issues through teachers training programs that directly affect student’s personality and his/her academic performance.
7.5.2 Awareness-Raising among Primary Teachers

The present study has provided information about how teachers can handle the problems related to repeaters at primary level. The participant teachers themselves explored issues associated with the phenomenon of grade retention. The findings of this study will assist teachers in realizing the significance of psychological aspect of the child development during teaching practice. It is also anticipated that the findings would help teachers in making efforts to strengthen the students’ spirit along with creating awareness in parents regarding the importance of a caring and supportive environment in home after school hours.

7.5.4 Awareness-Raising among Future Researchers

The researcher realized several times during data collection process that the contextual diversities of the developed and developing countries should be kept in mind while doing research study. Our cultural norms are much different from those of western standards. Our people feel comfortable with the person whose appearance and thoughts are similar to them. Especially the lower middle class feels threatened in the presence of a modern person. Whenever they realize that the person in front of them is just like themselves, they comfortably share their thoughts and experiences with him/her. During pilot study phase, the researcher had realized this fact and decided to go for data collection on full scale following simple and ordinary dress code to make the participants comfortable and closer to the researcher. These strategies proved very practical and the researcher collected reliable data very successfully and comfortably. Except in very few cases, all informants offered every kind of cooperation in data collection. The future researchers can also use these strategies while collecting data for their research study.
The other important contribution related to future researchers is about tape recording of the interviews. As stated earlier in the chapter on methodology, the researcher took field notes during the conversation with participant teachers for qualitative data collection. The notes were transcribed in detail on the same day just after completion of the respective interview. The researcher realized that just depending on ‘unreliable field notes’ (Silverman, 2000, p.126), can cause threats to research reliability and validity. Again while keeping in mind the context in which the interviews were taken, the researcher realized that a teacher having an ordinary education level surviving in a disadvantaged circumstances cannot accept the presence of tape recorder. If someone allows to tape record his/her views in response to repeated requests, he/she will not give correct information, and this in turn influences the reliability of the research process. There were teachers who even hesitated to tell their names. Every teacher requested repeatedly that this information should be kept with the researcher only and not disclosed to any official personnel. This strategy created some problem for researcher but proved very useful in the long run and the researcher had successfully collected accurate and reliable data with full confidence. This experience told the researcher that instead of forcing informants or compromising on ethical values, it is necessary to employ the strategy that is acceptable to the informants. This is essential for the accuracy of the collected data in a context of Pakistani culture.

7.5.5 Considerations for Improving Teacher Education and Training Programs

The significant relationship of self esteem and academic performance of the students that has emerged during the analysis demonstrated that teachers are not fully aware of
students’ psychological needs. Their indifferent attitude was reflected more than once during interview sessions. The study findings may give insights in improving teachers’ training programs regarding self-esteem devastation due to insulting behavior of the teachers.

7.5.6 Use of Mixed Methods in the Discipline of Education in Pakistan

In the present study, the researcher has used mixed method design of research that is still a very rare practice in the field of education in Pakistan. Other studies related to educational problems have used either qualitative or quantitative method separately. Quantitative methodology is often preferred in this regard. The researcher has made an effort to comprehend an educational phenomenon by using mixed methods. Moreover, in both aspects of the study, two sub-types of research strategies were employed, namely, concurrent triangulation strategy and concurrent nested strategy. The blend of all these strategies proved very helpful in achieving the research objectives. It is anticipated that the successful experience of the researcher will make a significant contribution in the promotion of mixed method design in the field of education.

7.6 Recommendations of the Study

The current study has uncovered several issues related to primary education at grass root level. The researcher realized that some recommendations based on the conclusion of the study will also prove valuable in the promotion of Universal Primary Education in Pakistan. These recommendations are related to different categories and are given below.
7.6.1 Policy Planners and Administrators

The findings of this study will serve as practical source for education researchers and policymakers in their efforts to provide better access of educational facilities to the poor and disadvantaged population of the country. The study has offered some practical recommendations in the light of the conclusion drawn from the study. These findings are as follows:

7.6.1.1 Relating Alternatives to Grade Retention

The findings of the present study suggested that the current practice of automatic promotion policy in the first three grades and grade retention in the last two grades of primary level needs revision after careful analysis of grass root problems. These policies can be workable if they are accompanied by other reform measures. The literature has offered a number of alternatives to grade retention. Stone and Engel (2007) proposed that

--- as an alternative to (or, at least, in parallel to) “doing retention differently,” investment in other efforts at the levels of both scholarship and practice may yield more promising outcomes, systematic efforts to develop individualized, classroom, and school strategies to address differing learning needs within students, as well as differing densities of these students across classrooms and school (p.630).

Similarly, Stearns et al., (2007) had suggested the alternatives to grade retention, including “summer schools and academies that keep children with their same-age peers while ensuring that they gain mastery of the academic content and skills that had previously caused them difficulty, can be attractive” (p.231). In the same way, Meisels and Liaw (1993) proposed in the concluding remarks of their study of examining the phenomenon of retention in kindergarten through eighth grade that “retention should be
used only in rare exceptions, and new approaches to curriculum development, school restructuring, and individualized student instruction should become the focus of efforts to improve academic outcomes” (p.76).

During the interview sessions for this study, the participant teachers also offered various alternatives of grade retention, such as summer classes and extra coaching of poor performers etc.

It is therefore strongly recommended that the policy of automatic promotion at the first three grades of primary level should be modified after careful survey of ground realities and implemented with other reform measures as discussed above. Moreover, the high ratio of grade retention at grade four should also be noticed and take effective steps to minimize the negative consequences of this phenomenon.

7.6.1.2 Relating Teacher Education and Training Programs

The major findings of the present study are related to the psychological aspect of the students’ personality that significantly affects their academic performance. Presently, the child psychology has a dominant place in the curriculum of teacher education. In practical situation, the teachers’ attitude especially at primary level does not present a learned behavior. It reveals that the teacher education and training programs are based on theoretical knowledge and not on practical know-how and are not as effective as they should be. The researcher recommends that while designing teacher training programs the practical aspects of child psychology alone with theoretical considerations ought to be build up as depicted in the conclusion of the present study. If the practical aspects of
child behavior are incorporated into the training programs, they may become more viable, relevant and acceptable for the teachers.

### 7.6.2 Teachers

The findings of the present study revealed that the psychological aspect of self-esteem is associated with the phenomenon of grade retention. The role of teacher is discovered as very crucial for repeaters. The teacher should encourage students in a manner, that they perceive themselves as efficient individuals, through their own effort and responsibility during the learning process.

In the light of study findings, the researcher recommends that primary teachers should realize the significance of psychological aspect of the child development in teaching practice. They should be more caring and considerate about their students' needs and interests and should help them define their personal goals.

### 7.6.3 Future Researchers

Based on the experiences during the data collection phases, it is recommended for the future researchers that while using data collecting techniques, the contextual diversities of developed and developing countries should be kept in mind. The research techniques should be adapted in accordance with the socio-economic background of the sample selected. The researcher also recommends for the future researcher that while collecting data for their research study, they should not try to impress their informants; rather they should appreciate their thoughts and suggestions empathetically.
7.6.4 Use of Mixed Methods

The present study is first ever study of its nature in the field of Education in Pakistan with respect to the topic of the study and also the design of research. It explores the phenomenon of grade retention by using mixed method of research. The personal experience of the researcher tells that this strategy proved very helpful in achieving the research objectives. The researcher recommends that mixed method design of research should be used in the field of education so that the educational problems can be comprehended and resolved in a more inclusive manner.

7.7 Perceptions of the Researcher

During the research process and especially in the data collection phases, the researcher encountered some important issues that were not directly related to the main objectives of the study, yet they have very close connection with the quality of the primary education system of the country. So the researcher decided to report them for the betterment of the primary education in Pakistan.

The personal experiences of the researcher during the whole research process and especially in data collection have suggested that there is still large gap to fill in to enhance and improve the prevailing educational practices at primary level.

An important issue related to policy makers and administrators in this regard that come to light during data collection was the physical condition and available facilities at the public primary schools. The researcher realized during the schools’ visits that at present, most of the public primary schools of Rawalpindi city are surviving in underprivileged circumstances. As discussed earlier, the researcher had visited overall forty two public
schools of Rawalpindi city, out of them, eight were elementary and rest of thirty four were primary schools. Six elementary schools were functional in government buildings, whereas two were operating in rented buildings. All elementary schools were equipped with necessary facilities (i.e. electricity, water and washrooms) and their physical condition was found satisfactory. As far as the primary schools are concerned, the situation is even worse. Twelve public primary schools were in rented buildings, in deplorable conditions. One primary school was found operational on the second floor of an old building, similarly three public schools were found functioning in partially constructed buildings lacking doors and windows. Rest of the rented buildings were in terrible and perilous conditions. There was one school, that shifted into three different buildings during the data collection phases. Very stinking, freezing and dark atmosphere was noticed in those rented buildings. The schools functioning in government buildings have their own dilemma. One school was found operating in a “Janazagah”. When dead bodies were brought, the students waited in the outer street and after “Namaz-e-Janaza” they again went inside and teaching-learning process was resumed. The researcher has witnessed that there were two rooms of a government building and three schools were functioning in those two rooms. Similarly, four schools were running in second shift of some other (high, elementary or primary) government school buildings. No proper school zoning was found during the study. The researcher has observed three public primary schools functioning in the same small street with in a distance of few yards. The researcher has found that the schools operating in second shift have led to further deterioration in the primary education system. Very few students were enrolled in those

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52 A place where Muslims draw together with deceased person and say prayer for his/her forgiveness before burying the dead body.
schools. The researcher recommends that the policy planners and implementers should discontinue the second shift schools system.

The other major issue concerned with policy makers and administrators was related to the quality aspect of education. During the school visits, most of the teachers of public primary schools were found non-serious and busy in gossips and their own engagements in school hours. The researcher observed that some teachers even did not observe school timings strictly and left school before the closing time. Moreover, the researcher also noticed during the study that most of the children studying at public schools were come from poor and non-literate families. The participant teachers explained during interviews that majority of immigrant and destitute families send their children to public schools. The illiterate parents have no sense of quality of education. The educated people prefer private institutions for their wards, as the private institutions are perceived as better quality provider of education. The interviews of the teachers revealed that the absence of proper accountability of the teachers by the parent department has also aggravated the miserable situation of the primary system in Pakistan. All these factors collectively deteriorate the quality of primary education system day by day. The researcher realized that the teachers’ accountability system by the Education Department should be modified and made functional so that the quality of primary education is improved.

In addition to above mentioned issues, it was revealed by the results of annual examination of fourth grade and also during the data collection phase one, that students pointed out as poor performers by their teachers had actually done well and passed the annual examination. Their results in the first phase also depicted this information. It is
the duty of the teachers to make closer contacts with their students and recognize their potential. The insulting attitude of teachers can affect the students’ performance as revealed in present study. The researcher desires the teachers to adopt careful attitude towards repeaters and poor performers and take them as special cases.

Another implication emerging from this research is related to the purpose of doing research studies among educated people of Pakistan. At least the school teachers should have some knowledge about the advantages of research studies in the field of Education. The researcher encountered a problem in this regard during data collection of phase one. The researcher used to go straight to the office of head teacher of the school to be visited, and inform the concerned person about the purpose of coming. Then the head teacher was requested to facilitate the researcher in the data collection process. Most of the head teachers welcomed the researcher and provided every possible help in the collection of required data. But there were found some exceptional cases, when the head teachers deceived the researcher and did not provide the required sample. For example there were three cases during the whole research process when the researcher requested the head teachers to provide her poor performers of fourth grade students; instead they gave most prominent and bright students of the class. Perhaps they were frightened of some expected official inquiries. But this deception could affect the quality of the sample of poor performers. These students were easily promoted to the next grade as they were not poor performers. For the transparency of the collected data, such cases were eliminated from the sample of poor performers and added to the normal group. This experience taught the researcher that there is need of some sort of awareness-raising about the purpose of research among the school teachers.
It is anticipated that the recommendations based on study findings and the perceptions of the researcher during the whole study process can make distinctive contributions in the major areas of primary education in Pakistan.

### 7.8 Suggestions for the Future Research

The present study is said to be a base-line study on the topic of grade retention in the field of primary education in Pakistan. During the whole study process, a number of issues arose, that need further exploration. These issues were related to both quantitative and qualitative research projects that may provide further statistical analysis and insight into effective education practices.

During this research, the phenomenon of grade retention of the fourth grade students was studied in relation to their academic performance and self-esteem. The repeaters were compared by these two variables with continuously promoted students as well as identified poor but promoted sample also. The findings of this study also highlighted many interesting possibilities for future research in Pakistan, such as gender differences among repeaters and the link between grade retention and drop out of students from education system etc.

There are a number of individual level differences between repeaters and promoted students which were not included in the study, such as relationship of repeaters with successful peers, the contribution of family support factors in success or failure etc. These factors were identified during the qualitative data collection and realized that they
needed further exploration. Moreover, the aspect of engagement with schooling was also beyond the scope of this study and thus needs to be investigated.

In addition to this, further research on the topic of grade retention could involve parents and school administration for looking at the relationship between grade retention and the factors related to the personality development of student.

Finally, the researcher realized during data collection process, that there is need of some kind of comprehensive investigation about the dropout cases. The students, who left school after passing the annual examination, took school leaving certificates for getting admissions in some other school. On the other hand, those who left after failure in examination and without taking school leaving certificate, emerged as drop out cases. Nobody knew about the status of those drops out cases, whether they started their studies in some other private schools\textsuperscript{53} or left the education system. There should be a comprehensive study on such cases as they appear as wastage in education system.

7.9 \textit{Summary}

In this chapter, the objective wise conclusion drawn from the findings of the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative analyses along with their nested parts were presented. The findings of first two study objectives were triangulated with analysis of the teachers’ perceptions in order to validate the data. The rest of three objectives were achieved through quantitative and qualitative methods separately. With respect to first objective, the triangulation of both types of data demonstrated the strong negative impact of grade

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{53} Ordinary private schools in Pakistan often do not require school leaving certificate from students coming for new admission.
retention on the self-esteem of the students of grade four. With reference to second objective, the triangulation of both types of data revealed a weak but positive impact of grade retention on the academic performance of the students of grade four. In accordance with third objective, the statistical analysis demonstrated that mean differences of repeaters revealed negative impact of failure. Similarly, with reference to fourth objective, the academic performance was discovered as a significant predictor for the self-esteem of the students. While addressing fifth and the last objective, the thematic analysis of the interviews of participant teachers had revealed three main factors of grade retention of students at primary level, which were further divided into sub categories. The three main factors that emerged as a result of analysis are family, school and student. The overall analysis of the teachers’ perceptions explored that the parental support is vital for the academic success of the students.

The limitations of the study included the reduced generalizability of findings because of using the purposive sampling procedure, the loss of participants because of the longitudinal design, and the quality of academic performance of students of grade four in public schools due to automatic promotion policy for the first three grades at primary level.

While discussing the contributions of the study, it was explored that this study may contribute significantly in the major areas of policy planning and implementation at primary level; provide essential knowledge to teachers in the personality development of students, and awareness about the consequences of the failure on their psychological wellbeing. The teachers’ training programs can also consult the study findings for further
improvement. Moreover, the practice of using mixed methods along with multiple strategies can open new portals for future researcher in the field of education.

The study has offered practical recommendations in the light of the conclusion drawn from the study findings, to improve the situation in primary education. It was recommended, that the existing practices of automatic promotion policy in the first three grades along with the policy of grade retention in fourth and fifth grade of primary level need reconsideration. The other recommendations were related to primary teachers, future researchers and to field of research methodology in primary education in Pakistan.

Some important issues encountered during the research process related to actual situation of primary education in Pakistan at grass root level are explored as perceptions of the researcher.

Lastly, some innovative possibilities were discussed that identify areas for further investigation.

This research was an effort to signpost the impact of grade retention on the self-esteem and academic performance of the students. It is just a preliminary attempt and need further investigation by future researchers.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Public Schools of Rawalpindi City from where Quantitative and Qualitative Data was collected

1. Government Girls Primary School Dhok Rahim Baksh Rawalpindi
2. Government Girls Primary School Dhok Kashmirian Rawalpindi
3. Government Girls Primary School Shakrial Rawalpindi
4. Government Girls Primary School Muslim Town Rawalpindi
5. Government New Capital Girls Primary School Muslim Town Rawalpindi
6. Government M.C. Girls Primary School Dhok Pracha Rawalpindi
7. Government Hamidia Girls Primary School Khayaban-e- Sirsyed Rawalpindi
8. Government M.C. Girls Primary School Afandi Colony Rawalpindi
9. Government Girls Primary School Pindora Rawalpindi
10. Government Al-Hassan Girls Primary School Pindora Rawalpindi
11. Government Apwa Girls Primary School Commitee Choak Rawalpindi
12. Government Girls Primary School Dhok Chragh Din Rawalpindi
13. Government Girls Primary School Qasim Abad Rawalpindi
15. Government Islamia Girls Primary School Ratta Amral Rawalpindi
16. Government Iqbal Boys Primary School Shakrial, Rawalpindi
17. Government Anglo Oriental Boys Primary School Amar Pura Rawalpindi
18. Government Boys Primary School Jhanda Chichi Rawalpindi
19. Government Barlas Boys Primary School Pindora Rawalpindi
20. Government Boys Primary School Tehmasip Abad No 1 Rawalpindi
21. Government Boys Primary School Tehmasip Abad No 2 Rawalpindi
22. Government M.G Boys Primary School Ratta Amral Rawalpindi
23. Government Millat- Islamia Boys Primary School Zari Farm Rawalpindi
24. Government Boys Primary School Pindora Rawalpindi
25. Government Al-Abbas Boys Primary School Dhok Kala Khan Rawalpindi
26. Government Boys Primary School Ratta Amral Rawalpindi
27. Government Islamia Boys Primary School Waris Khan Rawalpindi
28. Government M.C. Boys Primary School Dhok Pracha Rawalpindi
29. Government Boys Primary School Jehangirabad Rawalpindi
30. Government Boys Primary School  Amar Pura Rawalpindi
32. Government Junior Model School Saidpur Road Rawalpindi
33. Government Khan Boys Primary School Asghar Mall Rawalpindi
34. Government Model Boys Primary School Dhok Kashmirian Rawalpindi
35. Government Boys Elementary School Zari Farm Rawalpindi
36. Government Boys Elementary School Dhok Charagh Din Rawalpindi
38. Government Madrassa-tul-Banat Girls Elementary School Rawalpindi
39. Government Girls Elementary School Sarfraz Road Rawalpindi
40. Government New Girls Elementary School Ghanda Chechi Rawalpindi
41. Government Girls Elementary School Hussain Abad Rawalpindi
42. Government Nusrat Girls Elementary School Shakrial Rawalpindi
Appendix B: Interview Guide for Teachers

The researcher is undertaking this research for doctoral study and seeking your valuable cooperation in this regard. Your permission might be needed for a follow up interview after this interview session. The researcher is extremely obliged for your cooperation and trust to share your experiences related to research purpose.

Demographic Information
Name____________________
Designation____________________
Academic Qualification____________________
Professional Qualification________________________
Years of Service____________________
Name of School presently serving_________________________________

Part One
Main reasons of failure or repeating the same grade at primary level.

1. Please tell me in the light of your experience with children during the course of your service, that what are the main reasons of failure of students at primary level, why primary level students repeat the same grade? (the participant teachers will be allowed to speak freely and share his/her experiences with full confidence).

2. (at the time of interview, the researcher will have an organized list of possible reasons of failure or repeating the same grade prepared in the light of existing research literature. After listening carefully, all the views of the teacher, the researcher will ask his/her opinion about those points who will not be discussed by the teacher ). Your points are very much concerned with the issue, then what is your opinion about.....(narrate the remaining points in the interview guide one by one).

Family related factors
- Parents’ income
- Parents’ education
- Parents’ relationship with each other and with children
- Uneasiness at home
- Drug addicted father
- Financial problems of the family
- Joint or separated family system
- Parents’ attitude towards education
- Proper guidance in studies at home
- Family structure (big family or the repeaters are youngest or eldest)

School related factors
- Availability of the qualified teachers
- Commitment of the teacher
- Experienced/inexperienced teacher
- Teachers’ absenteeism
- Difficult syllabus
The Impact of Grade Retention

- Corporal punishment
- School facilities (electricity, drinking water, latrine etc)
- Lack of discipline
- Supervision/ accountability of teacher by the department

**Student related factors**
- Lack of personal interest in studies
- Learning disability or mental weakness
- Child’s sickness
- Child’s absenteeism
- Frequent shifting of schools
- Bad company or peers’ relationship
- Over-age or under-age child
- Making earning

**Part two**
The second part of the interview is related to the perceptions of the teacher regarding attitude of repeaters towards their teachers, studies and fellow students. The teacher will be asked three main questions along with several sub-questions when and where needed. The teachers will give full freedom of expression and request them to share their experiences in this regard.

1. How do you feel that the attitude of repeater towards studies changes after failure?
   - What significant difference you have observed during your interaction with repeaters before and after failure and specifically during the repeated year while repeating the same course?
   - What specific type of problems a teacher can face in this regard?
   - What strategies a teacher can use to make them attentive towards studies again?
   - How teachers can manage the individual differences especially in case of repeaters?

2. What kind of significant changes you have observed in the attitude of repeaters at primary level, with respect to their teachers before and after failure and also during the repeated year?
   - Do you think that they feel that the teacher is responsible for their failure?
   - Do they feel threaten of expected insult by the teacher?
   - What is the role of the teacher in normalizing their feelings?

3. Do you observe any difference in the attitude of repeaters towards their new class fellows in the repeated year?
   - What was their previous attitude in this regard? (were they been friendly or bully before failure)
   - How they react with the new situation?
   - Do they feel threaten of expected insult by the new class fellows?
   - What is the attitude of their class fellows towards them?
   - How can a teacher help them in rehabilitation?
Concluding question
As an experienced primary school teacher, what else you want to add more in the above discussion that would be helpful in deep understanding of the situation especially in public schools of the Punjab province?

Note: the interview guide was semi-structured and amendments and additions were made during the interview process when and where needed. Extra questions were also asked in addition to the above mentioned questions.
Appendix C: Self-Esteem Scale for 4th grade Students

(Translated version of Beck Youth Inventory for Self-concept)
Appendix  D: Locally Developed Test of English for 4th Grade Students

Note: four answer choices are given for each question. Please ( ✓ ) the correct choice.

1. What is the popular dish on “Eid-ul-Fitr”? Kheer Vermicelli Halva
2. The person who grows crops is a……. Doctor Farmer Carpenter
3. How many days are there in September? 30 31 28
4. We should keep our surroundings ________. Dirty Clean Busy
5. Where does Hina live? City Town Village
6. How many days are there in August? 28 30 31
7. The person who delivers letters is a …… Cobbler Pilot Postman
8. Eid is …………. festival Local Religious Social
9. We must …………. The poor and the needy Avoid Help Punish
10. Ali is going to the …………… Hospital Superstore School

Mark ( ✓ ) for true and ( × ) for the false.

i. The night after the Eid day is called “Chand Raat”.
ii. People buy new dresses and shoes for Eid.
iii. Ali throws the wrapper of the chocolate on the road.
iv. Sunlight is not necessary for the crops.
v. February has 29 days in a leap year.

Match the words in the list “A” with their opposites in list “B”

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<tr>
<th>A</th>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
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Appendix E: Locally Developed Test of Urdu for 4th Grade Students
Appendix F: Locally Developed Test of Mathematics for 4th Grade Students
Appendix G: Locally Developed Test of General Science for 4th Grade Students
Appendix H: Locally Developed Test of Social Studies for 4th Grade Students