



## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN: AN UNTOLD STORY

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to contribute to knowledge about students' academic achievement by exploring factors impeding the academic achievement of children in public primary schools in Tanzania. The study adopted an exploratory sequential design whereby teachers' story and closed-ended questionnaire were used to collect data from 186 informants from Dodoma Urban District. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis whereas quantitative data were subjected to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to analyze the loadings of the items of the questionnaire for measuring low academic achievement. The findings of the study indicated that deficiency in inclusive participation and limited resources for the organization of learning was revealed as the key factor to low academic achievement. The findings also revealed that obsolete pedagogical strategies and insensitive assessment techniques were the most influential source of inhibiting children's academic achievement. These findings are a wakeup call for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Tanzania to organize workshop aiming at changing the insensitive/apathetic attitude of teachers, parents, and other community members so that the academic achievement of the children could be scaled up.

**Keywords:-** Academic achievement, Public primary school, Factors impeding academic achievement

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## 1. The Problem and its Context

Achieving higher academic achievement has been a constant agenda of every country but making it real, seems to be at the crossroads. Low academic achievement among primary school children remains chronic in some regions of Tanzania. Dodoma is a front-runner in this race, as it is identified as a low-performing region in the primary school leaving examination (Haki Elimu, 2019). Dodoma being the capital city is surrounded by many higher learning institutions but the academic achievement of primary school children is the opposite. The government's long-cherished goal – that all school-going children successfully complete their primary education appears to be passive. Past researches by (Behera & Makunja, 2013; Prisca, 2014; Nkingwa, 2014; Elieza, 2017; Seleman, 2017, Mnada & Rugeiyamu, 2021) on the barriers to primary school children's academic success and the extent to which those factors explain the loss of achievement were relatively out of focus. However, researchers outside of Tanzania have identified the factors that contribute to children's academic underachievement but are less acute in Dodoma municipal, Tanzania. In addition, achieving of national vision of transforming Tanzania an industrialized country by 2025 is likely to remain a tall claim if underachieving children at foundational level will be graduated to the further levels of education.

Further, expected results from the proposed research will inform on how a teacher can re-align the pedagogical strategies and techniques to defuse the inhibiting factors of academic achievement. School heads and parents can also realize the importance of inclusive participation in education and role of academic stimuli at home. In addition, past researches in the same direction are beyond the location of the current study. Hence, this empirical exploration assumes significance in filling the gaps found in the early researches. In view of the intention specified, the essence of and factors to low academic achievement, measurement of academic achievement and way forwards to scale down the academic achievement loss assume significant to elucidate. So, the subsequent deliberation devotes some spaces on these aspects.

### 1.1 What is academic achievement?

Academic achievement is a multidimensional construct that embraces different domains of learning. It covers content areas in acquiring and understanding knowledge in a specific domain of

tasks (e.g., numeracy, literacy, science, history). Precisely, academic achievement is a net performance that refers to the extent to which a learner has attended to a specific instructional objective derived from the curriculum. However, low academic achievement is attributed to a normative process in which children's average academic achievement scores decline over the years in various domains of learning and fail to meet the national standards even after appropriate learning inputs.

### 1.2 Factors impeding the academic achievement

The early researches delineate different factors that inhibit the academic achievement of primary school children. Factors of low academic achievement are seemed to be multifaceted, complex, and interconnected. The most recurrent factors were school-based factors (Jane, Manduku & Makero 2018), teacher-based factors (Wamalwa, Mugasia & Sugut, 2019, Atchia, Chinapah, 2019), community-based factors (Alcuizar, 2016; Akeri, 2015; Muema, Mwanza & Mulwa, 2020) besides, children's personal attributes and aptitudes, and their social interaction (Binong, 2020; Khaton, Khokhar & Asad-ull-ah, 2018). These factors can be considered as predictors of lower academic achievement.

Among school-related factors – curriculum design, availability of instructional materials, teaching techniques, and inappropriate instructional practices (Srinivas & Venkatkrishnan, 2016) are likely to have some link to students' academic achievement. Inadequate instructional materials - reference books and teachers' guides, overcrowded classes because of unavailability of classrooms, unavailability of libraries, lack of laboratory equipment, absence of dormitories, and frequent teacher transfer with no replacement and shortage of teachers (Opula, 2012; Munyoyeta & Denuga, 2017; Mutindi, 2018) adversely affect the teaching and learning process and therefore, reduces students' academic achievement. Students' academic performance is unimaginable in the absence of committed and qualified teachers as these kinds of teachers have a positive impact on students learning achievement (Castellane, 2019). There is a saying, if a doctor makes a mistake, the patient will go 6<sup>ft</sup> below the ground; if a magistrate makes a mistake, the person will be hanged 6<sup>ft</sup> above the ground; if a teacher makes a mistake, the entire batch will be

wiped out. Teachers' weekly teaching workload, managing students' classroom assignments, assessment of students' tasks, providing individual attention to weaker students, completing the syllabus, and setting performance targets significantly influence students' academic achievement (Kimani, Mara, & Njagi, 2013). A study by Olagbaju, (2020) confirmed that teacher-related factors such as teacher's subject mastery and questioning behaviour significantly contribute to students' achievement. These evidences suggest that teachers-based factors have a definite effect on student academic achievement.

Parents with low educational qualifications are not only inhibiting factor that is responsible for children's low academic achievement (Abuubakar, Mamat & Ibrahim, 2017) but low parental income and unemployment are also responsible for the same trait (Muyalo, 2017; Ugulumu, 2016 & Akeri, 2015). No or little involvement of family members in the child's learning process (Martinez, 2015), parents' insensitivity to their children's education (Ugulumu, 2016), and an inappropriate home environment (Khan, Begum & Imad, 2019) cannot be ignored as an impediment to academic achievement. In addition, children's academic success appears to be more intrinsic in nature than extrinsic, as students' discipline is a key predictor of student's academic achievement (Nyoni, & Bonga (2017) along with self-esteem and motivation (Binong, 2020; Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). Binong, (2020) further provide evidence that students' absenteeism is one of the debilitating forces for academic achievement (Wamalwa, Mugasia & Sugut, 2019).

### 1.3. Assessment of children's academic achievement

Academic achievement is a multifaceted construct that is being managed differently by different teachers. Achievement performance assessment is one of the key tasks to enhance the quality of education by monitoring the delivery of intended goals in the curriculum (Australian Council for Educational Research [ACER], 2018). In this regard, various methods of assessment (observation of learning activities, assessment of practical and project works, oral and standardized tests, and so on) are used. For example, academic achievement was measured by students' excellence in the academic discipline and co-curricular activities - confidence, communication skills, punctuality, arts, culture, and the like (Mimrot, 2016). More often than not, academic

achievement was measured using tests and examinations conducted for each subject at the end of each semester (Simatwa, 2016 & Mwesiga, 2017). In addition, standardized tests are examinations and are scored in a predetermined standardized manner in this venture (Attakumah, 2020; Grissom, Kalogrides & Loeb, 2014). It typically relies on a question format of multiple-choice items and true and false questions that can be scored automatically, and short or long answer type questions that are assessed by following an assessment rubric. Therefore, if the student performs below the standard set by the authority, he/she is said to have performed poorly.

### 1.4. The way forwards to increase the academic achievement

Low academic achievement of children has been identified as a chronic problem in the education system. It has always been a priority of education policy all over the world. Children at all levels must graduate with the skills and abilities needed for the next higher level of education. Different scholars and researchers have suggested different strategies on this. Parental involvement in and outside school activities, pro learning environment of the school in terms of availability of basic infrastructure and services - water, toilet, electricity, and sports equipment and didactic facilities - laboratory, library, and computers with internet access as strategies to improve children's academic achievement is advocated (Maimela & Monyatsi, 2016). Besides, discussion, peer teaching, group work, and projects can be used as pedagogical strategies to increase pupils' knowledge and skills depending on the learners' understanding level, thereby reducing students' poor academic performance (Akam, 2015).

With the same sensitivity, Algani and Eshan (2019) asserted that success in academic achievement cannot be thought of due to the absence of motivation to set goals, planning without due consideration of time, failure to figure out the real reasons for self-failure, absence of multiple breaks during learning, unable to choose like-minded peers in school, and inconvenient learning environment. They further observed that children who received encouragement and respect were more likely to demonstrate higher grades as compared to children who did not receive encouragement and respect. It is believed that the child per se is not a problem to be a high academic achiever but inadequate and improper learning inputs. To ensure children's academic excellence, teachers

must monitor constantly their students and act appropriately by taking into account individual differences, contacting and sharing children's problems with parents, employing creative teaching pedagogy with appropriate teaching aids, conducting diagnostic assessments, and post-treatment exams, avoiding too much homework, provide verbally constructive feedback, and award additional grades for outstanding efforts made by children. These are strategies a school must follow through the teachers to reduce children's academic achievement loss.

In view of the factors of low academic achievement, different countries have taken different measures to improve the academic achievement of children. For example, in Botswana, the revised National Educational Policy on Education recommends the creation of incentive packages for teachers to increase their work morale and motivation (Maimela & Monytsi, 2016). The government of Tanzania has made many efforts to make education accessible to all by revising the curriculum, making teaching and learning materials available, and recruiting qualified teachers. Despite these efforts, low academic achievement is still experienced at the primary level.

The above description gives the impression that many studies have been conducted to assess how school-based factors, teacher-based factors, community-based factors contribute to the academic performance of students worldwide. In the case of Dodoma, Tanzania, limited studies seem to have been conducted to investigate the causes of the low academic performance of children in public primary schools. Specifically, there appears to be a dearth of studies on critical factors which are widely perceived to be predictors of academic achievement. Therefore, the current study is planned to explore the factors impeding the academic achievement of children in public primary schools in Tanzania.

## **2.0 Methodology**

A brief description of the methodology applied is presented below in view of the research objectives.

### **2.1 Research design**

A mixed methods research design (exploratory sequential design) guided the study in terms of sample selection, data collection, and its analysis. This research design facilitated the exploration of the factors of low academic achievement using a

qualitative interpretative perspective. The factors explored for low academic achievement were then directed to gather quantitative information for further validation of explored factors for predicting low academic achievement using exploratory factor analysis.

### **2.2 Selection of the study area**

The study was carried out in Dodoma Municipality, Dodoma Urban district, Tanzania. The fact is that Dodoma is the country's capital surrounded by three higher learning institutions and all of which produce school teachers. Under these circumstances, poor academic achievement among public primary schools is not expected. The most important fact is that Dodoma is consistently ranked as an academically poor-performing region by the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA). In addition, a few studies are conducted in addressing the current research agenda.

### **2.3 Sample and sampling procedures**

In the first phase of the study, 9 in-service public primary schools and its teachers were selected using typical case purposive sampling techniques, while 177 teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique in the second phase of the study, and a total of 186 informants were involved in the data collection. The selected schools and teachers were primarily based on the examination performance, which was relatively low compared to other counterparts. As the first phase of the research was qualitative descriptive in nature, data were collected until data saturation. Access to these teachers was facilitated by the head teachers of the selected schools and teacher selection was based on their teaching experience and willingness to engage in the research.

### **2.4 Data collection**

The study used two data collection instruments: teacher's story as a guide and a close-ended questionnaire. These instruments facilitated the collection of data from the in-service public primary school teachers. Teacher's story and close-ended questionnaire were used to identify the factors of low academic achievement and the extent to which each factor is responsible for predicting low academic achievement respectively. Teachers were requested to write about the causes of low academic achievement in schools visited, which on average lasted 45 minutes.

## **2.5 Ethical consideration**

The study followed the entire research protocol. To begin with, a research permit was obtained from the University of Dodoma and then from the Dodoma municipality authority. Out of ethical considerations, consent forms were used to obtain informed consent from all informants before their participation in the study. In this process, the purpose of the study was explained before signing the consent form. To maintain confidentiality, a special folder was created to store all collected data and was encrypted by the researchers. Anonymity, was also observed where by alphabets and pseudonyms were used instead of the actual names and schools of the study participants.

## **2.6 Data analyses**

An inductive thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze the qualitative data related to the causes of low academic achievement. To start with, the researcher bracketed the predispositions (epoche) on the inhibiting factors of academic achievement. The data in Kiswahili were transcribed by the researcher, keeping the participants' statements intact in the language of data collection. This is due to the language of data dissemination. After this, the researcher examined and identified important segments of information of the participants by reading and re-reading and then labelled with codes accordingly. Thereafter, the researcher clustered frequently used words and phrases to develop subthemes and themes from the identified important statement. Finally,

the textual description provided a rich description of phenomena under investigation supported by specific excerpts from teachers on the causes of low academic achievement.

Besides, the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed to analyze the loadings of the items of the questionnaire for measuring low academic achievement. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were estimated to support the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and interpreted accordingly. To examine the factor structure, an eigen value > 1 was considered (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2011). Internal consistency for the questionnaire items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Finally, the predictive power of explanatory variables (factors to low academic achievement) to the outcome variable (academic achievement) was examined.

## **3.0 Results**

### **3.1 Exploring Causes of Low Academic Achievement using Inductive Thematic Analysis Framework**

This section presents the results in terms of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data collected for the study. Data analysis determined two major themes (factors) that inhibit the academic achievement of public primary school children. The first was composed of three sub-themes and the second was composed of two sub-themes, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Themes, sub-themes and codes of the study

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive participation deficiency and limited resources in the organization of learning activities</li> </ul>	Children's hesitation in learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's hesitation towards some subjects</li> <li>Children's hesitation to complete homework</li> <li>Children's inadequate preparation during continuous assessment</li> <li>Students' indiscipline and truancy</li> <li>Students' absenteeism due to corporal punishment</li> </ul>
	Limited school-community partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casual attitude of parents towards children's learning</li> <li>Limited community participation in organizing learning activities schools</li> <li>Demotivated school heads and teachers</li> </ul>
	Limited teaching-learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate academic stimuli at home</li> <li>Few experienced and subject specific teachers</li> <li>Limited teaching and learning materials</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obsolete pedagogy and assessment</li> </ul>	Limited in-service professional training in pedagogy
Limited in-service professional training to teachers on assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inexperienced in using authentic assessment techniques</li> <li>Assessment without rubrics</li> <li>Ignorant about alternative assessment techniques</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Inclusive Participation Deficiency and Limited Resources in the Organization of Learning Activities:

The study revealed that inclusive participation deficiency for the organization of learning activities is perceived due to a lack of school-community partnership which causes limited instructional resources and pupils' hesitation of learning. These collectively inhibit the academic achievement of children. This indicates that, unless we change the apathetic attitude of teachers, parents, and other community members, efforts to end low academic achievement will be a

source of wastage only. Teachers' perspectives in relation to low academic achievement give evidence that inclusive participation leverage one's social skills including academic success. Teacher 'y' who wrote story on the causes of low academic achievement remarked:

*Despite being a trained and experienced teacher, I feel demotivated about organizing learning activities when parents and community members exhibited indifferent attitudes to extend support for their children's better academic*

*achievement and social skills development (Primary School Teacher / Personal Story / 2021).*

This suggests that inclusive participation in organizing learning activities can make difference in children's academic achievement and can be proved as one of the critical agents to shape and reshape the social skills of children. In line with Teacher 'y's opinion, another teacher expressed that the limited availability of teaching-learning resources can also be attributed as the most significant factor that escalate low academic achievement.

### **3.2.1 Children's hesitation in learning**

Students' passive engagement in a given learning task has been found to be a cause for low academic achievement, as children hesitate to study hard, show laziness to complete homework on time, unwillingness to study some subjects, inactive preparation for continuous assessment, and keep busy in watching television and mobile. Teachers also reported that truancy and indiscipline are inevitable factors that contribute to low academic achievement. One of the informants had this say that *"for children to perform well in the class, they need to have good discipline and the presence of indiscipline curtails a school to be an unproductive"* (Math. Teacher / Personal Story / 2021).

A female teacher has reported that student absenteeism was experienced in class due to teachers' corporal punishment, which is a catalyst for low academic achievement. Correspondingly, some studies (see, for example, Nyoni & Bonga, 2017; Wamalwa, Mugasia & Sugut, 2019; Binong, 2020) have corroborated that children's academic success is more intrinsic in nature, as students' self-esteem, motivation, and discipline are the predictors of good academic achievement but the absence of these impaired the academic achievements. This implies that the pleasure-seeking behavior of the child curtails him or her to be a meritorious learner, hence low academic achievement.

### **3.2.2 Limited school-community partnership**

Limited school-community partnership has been found to have adverse effects on children's success in academic. It is attributed due to demotivated school heads and teachers, the casual attitude of parents toward children's learning, limited support from the community, and students' absenteeism due to corporal punishment. The teacher feels demotivated as an

instructional leader because the community and government did not respect, recognize, and value what a teacher expects. Therefore, the community should value the teachers and the government should address the unnecessary delay in their promotion at the right time. It will be bringing change in the mindset of teachers that the teaching profession is noble and praiseworthy. Emerson, Fear, Fox, and Sanders (2012) supported this finding as he observed that parental and community support at schools to organize learning activities brings positive changes in children's academic excellence. Similarly, a study by Henderson and Mapp (2002) revealed that when an amicable collaboration is established between the school and the community, children become more successful and take learning seriously without any burden. This was evident when teacher 'L' remarked:

*Our commitment and self-esteem tend to deteriorate when the support and cooperation of parents and community members is almost nil or negligible in organizing learning activities for children and this attitude actually contributes to children's low academic achievement (Male Teacher / Personal Story / 2021).*

This indicates that limited school-community participation not only affects teachers' commitment and self-respect but also impact negatively on children's academic achievement. Therefore, it can be interpreted from the participants' lived experiences of the current study that limited school-community participation serves as a factor in low academic achievement.

### **3.2.3 Limited teaching-learning resources**

The current study revealed that limited resources, both at school and at home, constrain a child's academic growth. It is characterized by insufficient academic stimuli at home, absence of subject-specific teaching-learning materials, and the shortage of experienced subject-specific teachers creating barriers to academic achievement. A science teacher who participated in this research had this quote:

*I do not feel my teaching and children's attainment of concept is actualized if required instructional materials relating to a specific lesson is unavailable.*

In line with science teachers' argument, an art teacher reported that:

*. . . children learn better by operating concrete things or by doing certain activities than any other ways, but the absence of [. . .] creates difficulties among pupils in forming meaningful and joyful learning experiences.*

These teachers' assertions confirm that instructional materials are essential to motivate students extrinsically, help pupils to memorize easily by simplifying the lessons, promote active participation in the class; without which better academic achievement will be far from achievable. This is supported by Tandika (2020) and Twizeyimana, et al. (2020) who suggested instructional materials facilitate better teaching-learning. Therefore, instead of relying on government-supplied materials, a teacher should develop the necessary teaching-learning materials using locally available or waste materials.

#### **3.2.4 Obsolete Pedagogy and Assessment:**

Teacher's perspective on the impact of obsolete pedagogical strategies and wrong techniques of assessment on the pupils' academic achievement provides clear evidence that these are the most influential source of low academic achievement. When teachers were asked what is the reason behind the use of obsolete pedagogy and wrong assessment technique? They reported that these resulted from limited in-service professional training for teachers on innovative pedagogy and assessment techniques. This was supported by Ekpoh, Oswald and Victoria (2013) as they observed that teachers who attend in-service training perform better in classroom management, teaching methods, and student performance assessment. In relation to this, one of the teachers commented:

*Teaching any lesson with the teacher-centric method [lecture method, chalk and talk method] monopolizes the learning process and makes children inactive in the knowledge-acquisition process due to the limited scope of learning engagement. Even so, teacher(s) fail to conduct formative learning assessments objectively and fail to give constructive feedback for learning improvement as well. When this situation occurs, children appear to graduate with low academic excellence (Male Teacher / Personal Story / 2021).*

This implies that outdated pedagogical strategies [lecture method/chalk and talk method] and

incorrect assessment techniques [assessing performance without using rubrics] are not only a contributory factor to children's low academic achievement but also a potential cause of being an ineffective teacher. This study, therefore, suggests authorities of education to conduct in-service professional training on innovative pedagogy and assessment.

#### **3.2.5 Limited in-service professional training in pedagogy**

Teachers' views on innovative pedagogy give evidence that they feel inferior in teaching because of limited in-service professional training. This is reflected in their teaching behavior - entering class without a lesson plan, using inappropriate teaching methods and limited hands-on learning activities, inability to contextualize the content [using live events, experiences, examples, visiting of natural sites], use of unsupportive subject-specific language [every subject has its own language but not used judiciously], inability to access and use digital learning materials, and failing to create joyful learning experiences using art and sports [drawing, painting, modeling, plays, songs, dialogues, games etc.]. This was evident clearly when Usha (a female teacher) remarked:

*Now a days, it is common for teachers to face challenges in teaching in the digital age. In-service training on the development, access and use of digital learning material is needed to make learning meaningful and enjoyable.*

In support of this excerpt, Ali, Haolader, and Muhammad (2013) reported that teachers with ICT knowledge were able to use digital instructional materials in the teaching-learning process which made easy their instructional role and helped children to widen their knowledge.

On the other hand, Asha remarked:

*Art, songs, games, [...] need to be used as teaching techniques for better academic achievement, and also these skills are necessary to be instilled through in-service teacher training. (Female Science Teacher / Personal Story 2021).*

This was also supported by Pant, Luitel, and Shrestha (2020) and Bradshaw (2017) as they stated that arts-integrated pedagogy is an innovative or tangible pedagogy that offers better alternative means of experiential learning,



encourages joyful engagement in the process of knowledge construction and stimulates to think critically about the solution to real-world problems. This implies that in-service teacher training on innovative pedagogy [development, access, and use of digital learning material, art as means/techniques of teaching, and use of subject-specific language] is a potential factor in becoming an effective teacher. As a result, growth in academic achievement is expected to be true. Therefore, in-service training on digital, arts, and sports -centric pedagogy must be mandatory for every teacher not only for making their teaching alive but also for bringing positive changes in the children's academic growth.

### 3.2.6 Limited in-service training in assessment

The study found another factor [limited in-service training on assessment] that adversely affects children's academic achievement. This is evident as teachers were found to be used conventional techniques of assessment [pen and paper tests, homework, etc.]. In addition, teachers rarely use alternative or authentic assessment techniques [peer assessment, presentations, speeches, debates, group discussions, group activities, projects, etc.] and teachers also assess without using rubrics. The absence of these skills is associated with limited in-service training. As a result, this has led to a shortage of competent teachers. This means that low academic achievement is not caused by a child per se but by an incompetent teacher. The study, therefore, suggests that it should be mandatory for every primary school teacher to attend at least one in-service training every year to update their pedagogical skills with the skills that have been changed over time.

### 3.3 Statistical Validation of Explored Factor Structure of Low Academic Achievement

At this phase of the study, researchers listed potential indicators of low academic achievement from the teachers' self-narratives. The corresponding items were constructed and submitted to the concerned experts to receive constructive suggestions to improve the questionnaire for validating the established factors of low academic achievement. Based on the suggestions, 20 statements were finalized for the pilot. Subsequently, the data collected through this questionnaire were subjected to conduct principal component analysis. The result of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity indicate high sampling adequacy (0.836) for factor

analysis as it is beyond the cut-off point of 0.5. The significant value of Bartlett's test ( $P < 0.001$ ) indicates that the original R-matrix is significantly different from an identity matrix. However, seven items (8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20) were excluded from the further analysis as they did not meet the psychometric requirements. After removing seven items with loadings less than 0.50 and those with complex structures, the commonalities after extraction ranged from 0.527 to 0.770, which are all above the cut-off point of 0.50. Finally, Eigen values' assessment resulted in a four-factor structure with 13 items.

The total explained variance of the four factors of low academic achievement was 65.41%. The children's hesitation in the learning factor explained 21.171% of the variance with four items whereas the limited school-community partnership in education factor accounted for 16.167%. variance with three items. Similarly, the limited teaching-learning resources factor explained 15.097% of the variance with four items while the limited in-service professional training in pedagogy and assessment factor accounted for the remaining 12.970% of the variance with two items. Based on these results, it seems reasonable to conclude that the 4-Factors to low academic achievement. As such, the four factors of low academic achievement have theoretically separated components that are not necessarily related constructs. The reliability of the scale was established by the Cronback's Alpha reliability coefficient. The estimated coefficient of whole scale was found to be 0.85. These reliability coefficients can be considered adequate for the scale.

### 3.4 Discussion

The main objective of this study was to explore the factors that impair the academic achievement of public primary school children and then validate the exploratory factors of low academic achievement statistically as a subsidiary objective. *Deficiency in inclusive participation and limited resources for the organization of learning* was revealed as the key factor to low academic achievement. The findings indicated that the lack of inclusive participation is felt due to a lack of school-community partnerships. This situation perpetuates the ineffective organization of learning, confirms limited instructional resources, and leverages children's learning hesitancy. These are the sources that collectively impair the children's social skills along with academic achievement. Categorically, children's learning

hesitancy, limited school-community partnership, and paucity of teaching-learning resources inhibited academic achievement by more than 21 percent, 16 percent, and 15 percent respectively. Therefore, it is imperative to change the insensitive/apathetic attitude of teachers, parents, and other community members so that the academic achievement of the children could be scaled up. This finding is consistent with other early researches as these have corroborated that academic achievement is more intrinsic in nature—pleasure-seeking behavior or children's hesitancy of learning curtails them to be a high achiever (e.g., Binong, 2020; Etienne & Mujawimana, 2020; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Nyoni & Bonga, 2017; Wamalwa, Mugasia & Sugut, 2019; Sanders, 2012; Srinivas & Venkatkrishnan, 2016; Tandika, 2020) and inconsistent with few others (Amirtha & Jebaseelan, 2014), particularly on the correlation between children's learning behavior and academic achievement. The latter author revealed that children's learning behavior and academic achievement was negligibly correlated as opposed to the findings of the others and results of the current study. Similarly, *obsolete pedagogical strategies and insensitive assessment techniques* were evident as the most influential source of inhibiting children's academic achievement. This seems actualized due to limited in-service professional training on pedagogy/heutagogy and assessment. This finding is aligned with findings reported by Ekpoh, Oswald, and Victoria (2013), Ali, Haolader, and Muhammad (2013), Pant, Luitel, and Shrestha (2020) and Bradshaw (2017) as they claimed that through in-service training teachers perform better in classroom management, use of relevant teaching methods, and students' achievement. Therefore, the study suggests that it should be mandatory for every primary school teacher to attend at least one in-service training every year, particularly on digital, art, and sports-centric pedagogy not only for making their teaching alive but also for bringing positive changes in the children's academic growth.

### 3.5 Conclusion

It is this study results through which the researcher would like to put forth the thought that even though children's learning hesitancy, limited school-community partnership, paucity of teaching-learning resources, obsolete pedagogical strategies, and insensitive assessment techniques were evident as dominant predictors of insensitive academic achievement; there are many other factors which debilitate the children's academic

achievement. It is high time that stakeholders of education focus not only on these identified factors but also on the other policy deliberations that will eliminate the debilitating factors of academic achievement.

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