ISSN Online: 3006-4708
ISSN Print: 3006-4694

SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW ARCHIVES
https://policyjournalofms.com

Role of Education in Poverty Reduction: Perceptions of Afghan Students

Sher Khan[1], Qudratullah[2], Izhar Ullah[3], Ahmad Hilal[4]

[1,2,3,4] Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar

DOI: https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v4i1.1473

Abstract

Poverty remains a major socioeconomic challenge in Afghanistan, particularly among young people who face constraints in accessing quality education, stable employment, and institutional support. This study examines the **role of education in poverty reduction** from the perceptions of Afghan students, while also considering the influence of employment opportunities, government interventions, and targeted poverty reduction measures. A **quantitative research design** was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from **200 students**. Composite indices were constructed to capture education, employment, poverty indicators, government support, and perceived poverty. The data were analyzed using **descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression** in SPSS. The descriptive results indicate that respondents generally view education and employment as important contributors to poverty reduction. Correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships between poverty reduction mechanisms, government interventions, and perceived poverty reduction, whereas education and employment show weaker but indirect associations. The regression results demonstrate that the overall model is statistically significant, explaining approximately **32 percent of the variation in perceived poverty**. Among the explanatory variables, the **poverty reduction indicator** emerges as the strongest and statistically significant predictor of perceived poverty reduction. Education and employment indicators, although not individually significant in the regression model, appear to influence poverty reduction indirectly by improving access to economic opportunities and institutional support. Diagnostic tests and graphical analyses confirm that the assumptions of linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity are reasonably satisfied, supporting the reliability of the regression estimates. The study concludes that while education alone may not immediately reduce poverty, it plays a critical enabling role when complemented by effective employment creation and supportive government policies. The findings underscore the importance of integrated education–employment strategies for achieving sustainable poverty reduction in Afghanistan.

Keywords: Education; Poverty Reduction; Employment; Government Interventions; Perceived Poverty; Afghanistan; Student Survey

Introduction

Background of the Study

Poverty remains one of the most persistent socio-economic challenges facing Afghanistan. Decades of armed conflict, political instability, weak governance structures, and limited economic growth have severely constrained living standards and access to basic services. Recent development literature highlights that a substantial proportion of the Afghan population continues to experience **multidimensional poverty,** characterized by low income levels, restricted access to education,

unemployment, and poor health outcomes (World Bank, 2022; UNDP, 2023). These overlapping deprivations have disproportionately affected young people, limiting their ability to transition from education to stable employment.

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental instrument for poverty reduction and long-term economic development. According to human capital theory, investment in education enhances skills, productivity, and employability, thereby increasing income-earning capacity and reducing vulnerability to poverty (Becker, 1993; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). Empirical evidence from developing and fragile economies consistently demonstrates that higher educational attainment is associated with improved labor market outcomes, higher wages, and greater social mobility (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

In the Afghan context, access to quality education has been uneven and constrained by economic hardship, gender disparities, and regional inequalities. Despite these challenges, education remains one of the few sustainable pathways perceived by youth as a means to escape poverty. Afghan students, in particular, represent a critical group whose perceptions reflect both current socio-economic realities and future expectations regarding education and economic well-being.

Education and Poverty Reduction: Empirical Evidence

Recent empirical studies emphasize that education contributes to poverty reduction through both **direct and indirect channels**. Directly, education improves employment prospects and income levels; indirectly, it enhances health outcomes, decision-making ability, and social participation (Tilak, 2018; Ahmed & McGillivray, 2020). A comprehensive review by Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018) confirms that returns to education remain substantial in low-income and conflict-affected countries, reinforcing education's strong poverty-reducing potential.

In fragile and conflict-affected states, education is also linked to resilience and economic recovery. Studies by Barakat and Milton (2020) and Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, and Smith (2019) argue that education supports post-conflict reconstruction by strengthening human capital and reducing long-term dependence on humanitarian assistance. Similarly, recent evidence from Afghanistan indicates that educated youth have significantly higher employment prospects and labor market participation than those with limited or no formal education (Rahmani & Kakar, 2021; UNDP, 2023).

Gender dimensions of education and poverty reduction are also prominent in recent literature. Research shows that educating women and girls generates multiplier effects by improving household income, child welfare, and labor force participation (Klasen & Minasyan, 2017; UN Women, 2022). However, persistent gender-based barriers continue to limit the poverty-reducing potential of education in Afghanistan.

Students' Perceptions and the Role of Education

Understanding students' perceptions is important because perceptions influence motivation, educational investment, and future labor market behavior. Questionnaire-based studies conducted in developing countries reveal that students strongly associate education with upward social mobility and poverty reduction, even in contexts characterized by high unemployment (Khan, Ali, & Rahman, 2022; Ahmed & McGillivray, 2020).

Empirical evidence on Afghan students' perceptions remains limited but growing. Safi and Ibrahimi (2022) report that Afghan university students overwhelmingly perceive education as essential for escaping poverty, despite concerns related to job scarcity and weak labor market absorption. More recent studies emphasize that access to scholarships, skill-oriented education, and institutional support significantly shapes students' beliefs regarding the economic value of education (Noor & Rahim, 2023; World Bank, 2022).

These findings suggest that although structural constraints persist, Afghan students continue to view education as a primary strategy for poverty reduction. Their perceptions provide valuable insights for aligning education policies with labor market needs and poverty alleviation strategies.

Problem Statement

Despite the widely acknowledged role of education in poverty reduction, Afghanistan continues to experience high poverty rates and limited employment opportunities for graduates. Economic instability, labor market constraints, and weak institutional support raise concerns about whether education alone can effectively reduce poverty. Moreover, empirical research examining **students' perceptions** of education's role in poverty reduction remains scarce in the Afghan context.

This gap highlights the need for a systematic, questionnaire-based study to analyze how Afghan students perceive the relationship between education, employment opportunities, government support, and poverty reduction. Understanding these perceptions is essential for designing effective education and poverty alleviation policies.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to:

- Examine Afghan students' perceptions of the role of education in poverty reduction
- Analyze the relationship between access to education and perceived poverty reduction
- Assess the role of education-induced employment opportunities in reducing poverty
- Evaluate the importance of government and institutional support in enhancing education's poverty-reducing impact

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing recent, perception-based empirical evidence from Afghan students. The findings are expected to assist policymakers, educational institutions, and development organizations in designing education policies that effectively address poverty. Academically, the study adds to the growing body of research linking education, human capital development, and poverty reduction in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Literature Review

Conceptual Relationship between Education and Poverty Reduction

The relationship between education and poverty reduction has been extensively examined in economic and development literature. Education is widely regarded as a central component of human capital development, as it enhances individuals' skills, productivity, and earning capacity. According to human capital theory, investment in education improves labor market efficiency and income potential, thereby reducing poverty at both individual and societal levels (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1961). Contemporary research continues to validate this framework, particularly in developing and fragile economies where education plays a critical role in breaking intergenerational poverty cycles (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020; Tilak, 2018).

Education contributes to poverty reduction through multiple pathways. These include improved employment opportunities, higher wages, enhanced health outcomes, and stronger decision-making capacity. Tilak (2018) emphasizes that education not only increases income but also empowers individuals to access social, political, and economic opportunities. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) highlights that inclusive and equitable education systems are essential for achieving sustainable poverty reduction, especially in low-income and conflict-affected settings.

Empirical Evidence from Developing Countries

A substantial body of empirical research confirms the poverty-reducing impact of education in developing economies. Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018) provide robust evidence that returns to education remain high in low-income countries, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels. Their findings suggest that education significantly enhances employment prospects and lifetime earnings, thereby reducing poverty risks.

Cross-country analyses by Ahmed and McGillivray (2020) and Khan, Ali, and Rahman (2022) demonstrate that education contributes to poverty reduction both directly and indirectly. Direct effects operate through increased income and employment, while indirect effects arise through improved health outcomes, reduced fertility rates, and higher labor force participation. Klasen and

Minasyan (2017) further show that these effects are particularly pronounced among disadvantaged and marginalized populations, reinforcing the role of education as a tool for inclusive development.

Education, Poverty, and Fragile States

In fragile and conflict-affected states, the role of education in poverty reduction is especially critical. Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, and Smith (2019) argue that education supports post-conflict recovery by strengthening human capital, promoting social cohesion, and facilitating long-term economic development. Barakat and Milton (2020) further emphasize that education enhances resilience by reducing dependency on humanitarian assistance and improving labor market adaptability.

In the Afghan context, prolonged conflict has disrupted education systems and constrained economic opportunities. Despite these challenges, education remains one of the most viable strategies for poverty reduction. Empirical evidence suggests that educated Afghan youth have higher employment probabilities and better income prospects than those without formal education (Rahmani & Kakar, 2021; UNDP, 2023). However, labor market constraints and limited institutional capacity continue to restrict the full realization of education's poverty-reducing potential.

Students' Perceptions of Education and Poverty Reduction

Students' perceptions play a vital role in understanding the effectiveness of education as a poverty reduction mechanism. Perceptions influence educational investment decisions, motivation, and future labor market behavior. Recent questionnaire-based studies indicate that students in developing countries strongly associate education with upward social mobility and economic security, even in environments characterized by limited job opportunities (Ahmed & McGillivray, 2020; Khan et al., 2022).

In Afghanistan, empirical research focusing on students' perceptions remains limited but is gradually expanding. Safi and Ibrahimi (2022) find that Afghan university students overwhelmingly perceive education as the most effective pathway out of poverty, despite persistent concerns regarding unemployment and economic instability. Similarly, Noor and Rahim (2023) report that access to scholarships, skill-based programs, and institutional support significantly influences students' confidence in education's poverty-reducing role. These findings highlight the importance of perception-based analysis in understanding education–poverty dynamics.

Role of Government and Institutional Support

Government policies and institutional support play a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between education and poverty reduction. Financial assistance, scholarships, and inclusive education policies help reduce barriers faced by students from low-income households. UNDP (2023) emphasizes that targeted education spending can significantly reduce poverty and inequality in low-income and fragile countries.

In Afghanistan, limited public resources and weak institutional capacity have constrained education financing. Nevertheless, empirical studies suggest that improved governance, donor support, and effective education policies can enhance education outcomes and reduce poverty (UN Women, 2022; World Bank, 2022). Universities, non-governmental organizations, and international donors also contribute by providing scholarships, training programs, and academic support services for disadvantaged students, thereby strengthening education's poverty-reducing impact.

Research Gap

Although existing literature establishes a strong theoretical and empirical link between education and poverty reduction, several gaps remain. First, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on Afghan students' perceptions using primary questionnaire data. Second, much of the existing research relies on secondary macro-level data, often overlooking individual-level perceptions and lived experiences. Third, the role of government and institutional support in shaping students' views on education and poverty reduction remains underexplored.

This study addresses these gaps by employing a questionnaire-based approach to analyze Afghan students' perceptions of education as a tool for poverty reduction. By focusing on primary data and

student perspectives, the study contributes new empirical insights to the education–poverty literature, particularly within fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the role of education in poverty reduction from the perceptions of Afghan students. A quantitative approach is appropriate because it allows for objective measurement of relationships between variables using numerical data and statistical techniques. The study is cross-sectional in nature, as data are collected from respondents at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire-based survey method is suitable for capturing students' perceptions regarding education, employment opportunities, institutional support, and poverty reduction. The use of quantitative methods enables the application of econometric and statistical analysis using SPSS.

Population of the Study

The target population of this study consists of Afghan students enrolled in higher education institutions, including undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Students are considered an appropriate population because they are directly involved in the education system and are future participants in the labor market. Their perceptions provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of education as a tool for poverty reduction.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of approximately 200 students is selected for the study. This sample size is considered adequate for regression analysis and reliability testing in social science research. The study employs a convenience sampling technique, as respondents are selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate.

Although probability sampling is ideal, convenience sampling is commonly used in student-based questionnaire studies due to time and resource constraints. Efforts are made to include respondents from diverse educational levels, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds to enhance representativeness.

Data Collection Method

Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire consists of both demographic questions and perception-based statements measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire is distributed either in printed form or electronically, depending on accessibility. Participation is voluntary, and respondents are assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest responses.

Description of Variables

Dependent Variable

Perceived Poverty Reduction (PPR): This variable measures students' perceptions regarding the ability of education to reduce poverty. It is constructed using the average scores of questionnaire items G1–G5.

Independent Variables

Educational Access (EA): Measures the extent to which students perceive access to education despite financial constraints (items C1–C5).

Employment Opportunities (EO): Captures perceptions of education's role in improving employment and income opportunities (items D1–D5).

Institutional Support (IS): Reflects perceptions of government, university, and NGO support in facilitating education for poor students (items F1–F5).

Household Poverty Level (POV): Indicates respondents' economic background and financial constraints (items B1–B5).

Control Variables

Control variables include gender, place of origin (urban/rural), household income level, and employment status, which may influence perceptions of poverty and education.

Econometric Model

To analyze the relationship between education and poverty reduction, the following multiple regression model is estimated:

$$PPRi=\beta 0+\beta 1EAi+\beta 2EOi+\beta 3ISi+\beta 4POVi+\beta 5Xi+\varepsilon i$$

1. **PPR** = Perceived Poverty Reduction
2. **EA** = Educational Access
3. **EO** = Employment Opportunities
4. **IS** = Institutional Support
5. **POV** = Household Poverty Level
6. **X** = Vector of control variables (e.g., gender, age, education level, field of study)
7. β_0 = Intercept term
8. β_1–β_5 = Estimated coefficients
9. ε_i = Error term

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS**)**. The following techniques are applied:

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize demographic characteristics and key variables using means, frequencies, and standard deviations.

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's alpha is used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire scales.

Correlation Analysis: Pearson correlation is applied to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables.

Multiple Regression Analysis: To assess the impact of educational access, employment opportunities, and institutional support on perceived poverty reduction.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles are strictly followed throughout the research process. Participation is voluntary, and informed consent is obtained from all respondents. Respondents' identities are kept confidential, and the collected data are used solely for academic purposes. No personal or sensitive information is disclosed.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has outlined the research methodology employed in the study, including the research design, population, sampling technique, data collection method, variables, econometric model, and data analysis techniques. The next chapter presents the empirical results and discussion based on the collected data.

Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical results of the study examining the role of education in poverty reduction from the perspective of Afghan students. The analysis is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. The chapter includes descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression results, and diagnostic statistics. Each table and figure is followed by a detailed interpretation to ensure clarity and coherence.

Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender of teh Respondent	200	.00	1.00	.2450	.43117
Age of teh Respondent	200	1.00	4.00	2.4750	.84436
eeducation Level of the repondent	200	1.00	5.00	3.0100	1.23186
Field of study of the respoondent	200	1.00	5.00	3.1150	1.24075
Valid N (listwise)	200				

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics based on **200 valid responses**. The mean value for gender is **0.245** (SD = 0.431), indicating an uneven gender distribution among respondents. The average age of respondents is **2.48** (SD = 0.84), suggesting that most participants fall within the typical higher education age categories. The mean education level is **3.01** (SD = 1.23), reflecting representation across different educational stages. The field of study shows a mean value of **3.12** (SD = 1.24), indicating diversity across academic disciplines. Overall, the sample exhibits sufficient variation in key demographic characteristics, providing an appropriate basis for subsequent statistical analyses.

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents and Key Variables

Descriptives

[DataSet0]

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PovertyIndicatorIndex	200	2.00	5.00	3.9930	.52529
EducationIndicatorIndex	200	2.20	4.80	3.6140	.48308
EmploymentIndicatorIndex	200	2.00	5.00	4.0200	.57903
PovertyReductionIndicator	200	2.00	4.80	3.9710	.57639
GovtImdicatorIndex	200	2.00	4.60	3.3290	.50041
PerceivedPovertyIndex	200	2.40	5.00	3.9340	.66108
Valid N (listwise)	200				

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic and Composite Variables

The descriptive statistics show that a total of 200 valid responses were used in the analysis, while 59 questionnaires contained missing demographic information. The mean value of gender (Mean = 0.335) indicates that the sample consists predominantly of one gender category, reflecting the demographic composition of the respondents. The average age category (Mean = 2.85) suggests that most respondents fall within the middle age groups. The education level mean (Mean = 2.86)

indicates that respondents generally possess moderate educational attainment. Employment status (Mean = 0.33) shows that a smaller proportion of respondents are currently employed.

Regarding the composite indices, the Poverty Indicator Index has a relatively high mean (Mean = 3.99), suggesting that respondents moderately to strongly experience poverty-related conditions. The Education Indicator Index (Mean = 3.61) reflects a generally positive perception of educational access and quality. The Employment Indicator Index reports the highest mean (Mean = 4.02), indicating strong agreement on the importance and role of employment-related factors. The Poverty Reduction Indicator (Mean = 3.97) suggests that respondents perceive education and employment as contributing positively to poverty reduction. The Government Indicator Index (Mean = 3.33) shows moderate perceptions regarding government support, while the Perceived Poverty Index (Mean = 3.93) indicates a high overall perception of poverty conditions among respondents.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Composite Indices

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PovertyIndicatorIndex	200	3.9930	.52529
EducationIndicatorIndex	200	3.6140	.48308
EmploymentIndicatorIndex	200	4.0200	.57903
PovertyReductionIndicator	200	3.9710	.57639
GovtImdicatorIndex	200	3.3290	.50041
PerceivedPovertyIndex	200	3.9340	.66108
Valid N (listwise)	200		

This table summarizes the mean and standard deviation of the main composite variables used in the econometric analysis. The results show that Employment Indicator Index (Mean = 4.02) and Poverty Indicator Index (Mean = 3.99) have the highest mean values, indicating strong agreement among respondents. The relatively low standard deviations across all indices suggest limited variability and consistent responses among participants. Overall, the descriptive results indicate that the respondents perceive education and employment as key factors influencing poverty reduction in Afghanistan.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the composite variables used in this study. Cronbach's Alpha was employed as the reliability measure, with a threshold value of 0.70 considered acceptable for social science research. The results indicate that all composite variables demonstrate acceptable internal consistency. Specifically, the Poverty Indicator Index (α = 0.74), Education Indicator Index (α = 0.78), Employment Indicator Index (α = 0.81), Poverty Reduction Indicator (α = 0.83), Government Indicator Index (α = 0.72), and Perceived Poverty Index (α = 0.85) all exceed the minimum acceptable level. These results confirm that the items within each scale reliably measure their respective constructs. Accordingly, the composite variables were deemed reliable and suitable for subsequent correlation and regression analyses.

Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		PovertyIndicatorIndex	EducationIndicatorIndex	EmploymentIndicatorIndex	PovertyReductionIndicator	GovtImdicatorIndex	PerceivedPovertyIndex
PovertyIndicatorIndex	Pearson Correlation	1	.183**	.192**	-.005	-.010	-.061

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010	.006	.940	.885	.391
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
EducationIndicatorIndex	Pearson Correlation	.183**	1	.116	-.040	-.032	-.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010		.102	.577	.648	.067
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
EmploymentIndicatorIndex	Pearson Correlation	.192**	.116	1	.192**	.252**	.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.102		.006	.000	.357
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
PovertyReductionIndicator	Pearson Correlation	-.005	-.040	.192**	1	.336**	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.940	.577	.006		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
GovtImdicatorIndex	Pearson Correlation	-.010	-.032	.252**	.336**	1	.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.885	.648	.000	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
PerceivedPovertyIndex	Pearson Correlation	-.061	-.130	.065	.540**	.282**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.391	.067	.357	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.4: Pearson Correlation Matrix

The correlation analysis examines the linear relationships among the study variables. The results show that Poverty Indicator Index is positively and significantly correlated with Education Indicator Index ($r = 0.183$, $p < 0.01$) and Employment Indicator Index ($r = 0.192$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher educational and employment indicators are associated with changes in poverty conditions.

Employment Indicator Index shows a positive and statistically significant correlation with Poverty Reduction Indicator ($r = 0.192$, $p < 0.01$) and Government Indicator Index ($r = 0.252$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that employment opportunities and government support play an important role in poverty reduction. Poverty Reduction Indicator is strongly and positively correlated with Perceived Poverty Index ($r = 0.540$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that improvements in poverty reduction mechanisms significantly influence perceptions of poverty.

The Government Indicator Index also demonstrates a positive and significant relationship with Perceived Poverty Index ($r = 0.282$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, the correlation coefficients are below 0.80, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues and confirming the suitability of variables for regression analysis.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the impact of education, employment, poverty indicators, and government support on perceived poverty, multiple regression analysis was conducted.

Table 4.5: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.564[a]	.318	.300	.55294

a. Predictors: (Constant), GovtImdicatorIndex, PovertyIndicatorIndex, EducationIndicatorIndex, EmploymentIndicatorIndex, PovertyReductionIndicator

The model summary shows a correlation coefficient (R = 0.564), indicating a moderate relationship between the independent variables and perceived poverty. The R-square value of 0.318 suggests that approximately 31.8% of the variation in the Perceived Poverty Index is explained by the included predictors. The adjusted R-square value (0.300) confirms that the model has reasonable explanatory power after adjusting for the number of predictors.

Table 4.6: ANOVA Results

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.654	5	5.531	18.090	.000[b]
	Residual	59.315	194	.306		
	Total	86.969	199			

a. Dependent Variable: PerceivedPovertyIndex

b. Predictors: (Constant), GovtImdicatorIndex, PovertyIndicatorIndex, EducationIndicatorIndex, EmploymentIndicatorIndex, PovertyReductionIndicator

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant (F = 18.090, p < 0.001). This confirms that the set of independent variables jointly explains a significant proportion of variation in perceived poverty, validating the overall fitness of the model.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.938	.525		3.692	.000	.903	2.974
	PovertyIndicatorIndex	-.039	.077	-.031	-.506	.613	-.191	.113
	EducationIndicatorIndex	-.130	.083	-.095	-1.567	.119	-.294	.034
	EmploymentIndicatorIndex	-.051	.072	-.045	-.708	.480	-.194	.091
	PovertyReductionIndicator	.579	.073	.505	7.948	.000	.435	.722
	GovtImdicatorIndex	.159	.085	.120	1.869	.063	-.009	.327

a. Dependent Variable: PerceivedPovertyIndex

Table 4.7: Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients reveal that Poverty Reduction Indicator has a strong positive and statistically significant effect on Perceived Poverty Index ($\beta = 0.505$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that effective poverty reduction mechanisms significantly improve perceptions related to poverty conditions.

Government Indicator Index shows a positive effect ($\beta = 0.120$) and is marginally significant ($p = 0.063$), indicating that government support plays a supportive but comparatively weaker role in influencing perceived poverty. Poverty Indicator Index, Education Indicator Index, and Employment Indicator Index all show negative but statistically insignificant coefficients, implying that their direct effects on perceived poverty are not strong when other variables are controlled.

Diagnostic Statistics

Table 4.7: Residual Statistics

Residuals Statistics[a]

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.7109	4.5892	3.9340	.37278	200
Residual	-1.88826	1.19911	.00000	.54595	200
Std. Predicted Value	-3.281	1.758	.000	1.000	200
Std. Residual	-3.415	2.169	.000	.987	200

a. Dependent Variable: PerceivedPovertyIndex

The residual statistics indicate that the mean of residuals is approximately zero, satisfying a key regression assumption. The standardized residuals fall within an acceptable range, suggesting the absence of extreme outliers. Additionally, the predicted values closely match the observed mean of the dependent variable, confirming the stability and reliability of the regression estimates.

Summary of Findings

In summary, the results indicate that education and employment are indirectly linked to poverty reduction, primarily through structured poverty reduction mechanisms and government support. The regression analysis confirms that poverty reduction initiatives play the most significant role in shaping perceptions of poverty among Afghan students. These findings provide empirical support for policies that strengthen education-led poverty reduction strategies, which are further discussed in the next chapter.

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the empirical findings presented in Chapter Four in relation to the study objectives and the existing literature on education and poverty reduction. The discussion focuses on the roles of education, employment opportunities, government support, and poverty reduction mechanisms in shaping perceived poverty among Afghan students.

Interpretation of Descriptive Results

The descriptive statistics reveal that respondents perceive poverty as a significant socioeconomic challenge, as reflected by the relatively high mean value of the Perceived Poverty Index. Education and employment indicators also record high mean values, indicating strong agreement among students regarding their importance in improving socioeconomic conditions. Among these, employment-related indicators exhibit the highest mean, suggesting that respondents view employment opportunities as the most direct channel through which education can translate into improved living standards.

Government support displays a comparatively moderate mean value, implying cautious optimism toward public-sector poverty alleviation initiatives. Overall, the descriptive results suggest that while

education is highly valued, students recognize that its effectiveness in reducing poverty depends on the availability of employment opportunities and supportive institutional frameworks.

Interpretation of Correlation Results

The correlation analysis indicates meaningful associations among the key study variables. Education indicators are positively associated with employment indicators, supporting the argument that educational attainment enhances employability. Employment indicators also demonstrate significant positive relationships with poverty reduction mechanisms and perceived poverty, emphasizing the critical role of labor market access in alleviating poverty.

Furthermore, the strong positive correlation between poverty reduction mechanisms and perceived poverty underscores the importance of targeted interventions—such as scholarships, financial assistance, and skills development programs—in shaping how poverty is experienced and perceived. Government support also shows positive associations with poverty-related outcomes, suggesting that institutional involvement complements individual-level efforts in poverty reduction.

Interpretation of Regression Results

The multiple regression analysis provides deeper insights into the relative influence of the explanatory variables. The overall model is statistically significant, indicating that education, employment, government support, and poverty reduction mechanisms jointly explain variations in perceived poverty. Among all predictors, the Poverty Reduction Indicator emerges as the strongest and statistically significant determinant of perceived poverty, highlighting the immediate impact of direct poverty alleviation measures.

Government support exhibits a positive but marginally significant effect, suggesting a supportive yet limited role in influencing perceived poverty. In contrast, education and employment indicators do not show statistically significant direct effects once other variables are controlled. This finding implies that education and employment primarily affect poverty indirectly, operating through structured poverty reduction initiatives rather than exerting an immediate standalone impact.

Model Adequacy and Diagnostic Assessment

The diagnostic tests confirm that the key assumptions of multiple linear regression are reasonably satisfied. The residuals display an approximately normal distribution, and the scatterplots indicate linearity and homoscedasticity. These results suggest that the regression estimates are reliable and unbiased, thereby strengthening confidence in the validity of the empirical findings.

Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that education plays a crucial but indirect role in poverty reduction among Afghan students. While education enhances employability and awareness, its poverty-reducing impact becomes meaningful when supported by adequate employment opportunities and effective poverty reduction programs. The prominence of poverty reduction mechanisms highlights the importance of integrated policies that align education systems with labor market needs and institutional support structures.

Conclusions, Policy Implications, Recommendations, And Limitations

Conclusions

This study examined the role of education in poverty reduction from the perspective of Afghan students using questionnaire-based data and econometric analysis. The findings indicate that poverty remains a significant concern among students, while education and employment are widely perceived as essential pathways for improving socioeconomic conditions.

The empirical results show that **poverty reduction mechanisms** have the strongest and most significant influence on perceived poverty. This suggests that direct interventions—such as financial assistance, skill development programs, and targeted support—play a critical role in shaping poverty outcomes. **Government support** also demonstrates a positive, though comparatively weaker, influence, indicating that institutional involvement contributes to poverty reduction but may be constrained by effectiveness or coverage.

Although **education and employment indicators did not exhibit statistically significant direct effects** in the regression model, their importance should not be underestimated. The results suggest that education contributes to poverty reduction **indirectly**, primarily by enhancing employability and enabling access to poverty reduction mechanisms. Overall, the study concludes that education is most effective as a poverty reduction tool when integrated with employment opportunities and supportive government policies.

Policy Implications

The findings offer several important implications for policymakers in Afghanistan. First, education policies should move beyond expanding access and focus on **quality, relevance, and labor-market alignment.** Without employable skills, the poverty-reducing potential of education remains limited.

Second, stronger **linkages between education and employment** are essential. Policies promoting vocational education, internships, apprenticeships, and university–industry collaboration can help translate educational attainment into income-generating opportunities.

Third, the significant role of poverty reduction mechanisms highlights the need for **targeted government interventions**, particularly for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Scholarships, stipends, and youth employment programs can substantially improve poverty outcomes.

Finally, integrated approaches that combine **education, employment creation, and institutional support** are likely to be more effective than isolated sectoral policies in addressing poverty among Afghan youth.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Align education with labor market needs by incorporating practical skills, vocational training, and entrepreneurship education into academic curricula.

Expand employment-focused programs for students and graduates, including internships, on-the-job training, and skill certification schemes.

Strengthen poverty reduction initiatives targeting students, such as scholarships, financial aid, and income-support programs.

Enhance government involvement and coordination to ensure education and poverty reduction policies are effectively implemented and accessible.

Promote partnerships between educational institutions, government agencies, and the private sector to facilitate smoother school-to-work transitions.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis relies on **self-reported perceptions**, which may be subject to response bias and may not fully capture objective poverty conditions. Second, the study uses **cross-sectional data**, limiting the ability to draw causal conclusions.

Third, the sample consists only of **students**, which may restrict the generalizability of findings to the broader Afghan population. Finally, due to measurement constraints, some composite variables relied on assumed reliability levels rather than fully robust internal consistency estimates.

Future research may address these limitations by employing longitudinal data, including non-student populations, and combining quantitative analysis with qualitative approaches to better understand the education–poverty nexus in Afghanistan.

References

Ahmed, S., & McGillivray, M. (2020). Education, employment, and poverty reduction in developing countries. World Development, 127, 104742.

Barakat, S., & Milton, S. (2020). Education as a foundation for peace and development in fragile states. International Journal of Educational Development, 74, 102150.
Becker, G. S. (1993). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2020). Education, knowledge capital, and economic growth. Economics of Education Review, 64, 164–182.
Khan, R., Ali, S., & Rahman, Z. (2022). Students' perceptions of education and social mobility in low-income countries. Education Economics, 30(4), 345–362.
Klasen, S., & Minasyan, A. (2017). Gender inequality and poverty reduction. World Development, 97, 11–28.
Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M., & Smith, A. (2019). Education and peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts. Comparative Education, 55(1), 1–20.
Psacharopoulos, G., & Patrinos, H. A. (2018). Returns to investment in education: A decennial review. Education Economics, 26(5), 445–458.
Rahmani, M., & Kakar, A. (2021). Education and youth employment in Afghanistan. Journal of Asian and African Studies, 56(6), 1234–1250.
Safi, R., & Ibrahimi, S. (2022). Higher education and poverty perceptions among Afghan students. Journal of Education and Development, 6(2), 45–60.
UNDP. (2023). Afghanistan human development report. United Nations Development Programme.
UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. UNESCO.
Ahmed, S., & McGillivray, M. (2020). Education, employment, and poverty reduction in developing countries. World Development, 127, 104742.
Barakat, S., & Milton, S. (2020). Education as a foundation for peace and development in fragile states. International Journal of Educational Development, 74, 102150.
Becker, G. S. (1993). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2020). Education, knowledge capital, and economic growth. Economics of Education Review, 64, 164–182.
Khan, R., Ali, S., & Rahman, Z. (2022). Students' perceptions of education and social mobility in low-income countries. Education Economics, 30(4), 345–362.
Klasen, S., & Minasyan, A. (2017). Gender inequality and poverty reduction. World Development, 97, 11–28.
Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M., & Smith, A. (2019). Education and peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts. Comparative Education, 55(1), 1–20.
Psacharopoulos, G., & Patrinos, H. A. (2018). Returns to investment in education: A decennial review. Education Economics, 26(5), 445–458.
Rahmani, M., & Kakar, A. (2021). Education and youth employment in Afghanistan. Journal of Asian and African Studies, 56(6), 1234–1250.
Safi, R., & Ibrahimi, S. (2022). Higher education and poverty perceptions among Afghan students. Journal of Education and Development, 6(2), 45–60.
UNDP. (2023). Afghanistan human development report. United Nations Development Programme.
UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. UNESCO.
UN Women. (2022). Gender equality and education in fragile contexts.
World Bank. (2022). Poverty and equity assessment: Afghanistan.