

Original Research Article

Comparative Analysis of Teacher Qualifications and Resources in Bamyan's Public and Private Schools

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Abstract. Educational equity in conflict-affected settings depends heavily on whether schools can staff qualified teachers and provide basic learning resources. This study examines how teacher qualifications and resource availability differ between public and private primary schools in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan, and considers the implications of these disparities for equity. Using a qualitative comparative design informed by the capability approach, the study drew on semi-structured interviews with 60 purposively sampled teachers across public and private schools. Data were analysed through thematic coding and cross-case comparison to identify patterns associated with school type. Findings indicate that private schools tend to attract teachers with higher formal qualifications and more frequent exposure to professional development, alongside better access to teaching and learning materials and more stable infrastructure. Public schools were characterised by larger classes, limited instructional materials, constrained facilities, and fewer opportunities for teacher development—conditions that teachers associated with reduced instructional quality and uneven learner opportunities. The study argues that closing equity gaps in Bamyan requires targeted investment in public schools, transparent minimum standards for staffing and resources, and practical support for teacher development in hard-to-reach areas. These findings contribute context-specific evidence to ongoing debates on how public–private disparities shape educational equity in fragile contexts.

Keywords Educational equity; teacher qualifications; resource availability; public and private schools; Afghanistan.

Introduction

In the rugged terrains of Bamyan province, Afghanistan, educational disparities pose a significant challenge to the realization of equitable learning outcomes. Bamyan, known for its rich historical significance, is one of the less economically developed regions in Afghanistan. The province's educational sector reflects broader national struggles and limited resources, remote access, and socio-economic disparities profoundly affect its educational landscape (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2025). The challenges faced by Bamyan's educational institutions are symbolic of those encountered across Afghanistan, where decades of conflict, political instability, and economic hardship have severely impacted the education system.

The educational challenges in Afghanistan are multifaceted. Limited access to quality education, especially in rural areas like Bamyan, is a significant issue. Schools often lack basic infrastructure, teaching materials, and qualified teachers. These deficiencies hinder students' learning experiences and outcomes, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limited socio-economic mobility. Furthermore, socio-cultural factors, such as gender biases and security concerns, disproportionately affect girls' education, exacerbating educational inequities (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2022). The situation is further complicated by a lack of governmental oversight and inconsistent educational policies, which vary widely between urban and rural areas, leading to disparities in educational standards and resources.

The disparity between public and private educational institutions in Bamyan is stark. Private schools, often funded by NGOs and private donors, have access to better facilities, more qualified teachers, and a wider range of educational materials. In contrast, public schools suffer from enduring underfunding, leading to disintegrating infrastructure, insufficient teaching materials, and a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers. This divide not only affects the quality of education but also reinforces socio-economic inequalities, as children from wealthier families are more likely to attend private schools, while those from poorer backgrounds are left to contend with the inadequate resources of public schools (Romuald, 2023; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2025).

Understanding the dynamics within Bamyan's educational institutions, particularly the variation in teacher qualifications and the distribution of resources between public and private primary schools, is crucial. These factors are crucial in shaping educational outcomes, which in turn influence the socio-economic mobility of future generations. Teacher qualifications, including their educational background, training, and ongoing professional development, directly impact their ability to deliver high-quality education. Resources, such as textbooks, technology, and classroom infrastructure, also play a critical role in creating an effective learning environment (World Bank, 2018; Popova et al., 2022).

Afghanistan's historical context further complicates these educational disparities. Decades of conflict have not only destroyed physical infrastructure but have also disrupted the training and professional development of teachers. Many experienced educators were lost to migration or conflict, leaving a gap that is difficult to fill. In addition, frequent policy changes and lack of continuity in government plans for education mean that initiatives to improve education often do not reach their full potential. In Bamyan, these national issues are compounded by its geographical isolation, which makes access to resources and professional development even more challenging.

This study seeks to unveil the extent to which discrepancies in educational inputs contribute to unequal student achievements and prospects. By providing a comparison of teacher qualifications and resources in public and private primary schools, this study aims to highlight the broader implications for educational equity in Bamyan province. The objective of this study is twofold: firstly, to analyze and compare the qualifications of teachers and the resources available in Bamyan's public and private primary schools; secondly, to explore the implications of these findings for educational equity. By examining these elements, this research aims to provide actionable insights that could inform policy decisions and aid in the development of strategies to mitigate educational disparities in Bamyan province and similar contexts globally (World Bank, 2018).

In pursuing this analysis, the research will contribute to the growing body of literature that underscores the critical role of teacher qualifications and school resources in achieving high-quality educational outcomes. Previous studies have consistently shown that well-qualified teachers and adequate school resources are key determinants of student success, particularly in environments challenged by economic constraints and limited educational infrastructure (World Bank, 2018; Romuald, 2023; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2025). This study aims to bridge the gap in knowledge by providing a comparison of public and private educational institutions in Bamyan as a rural and poor region, highlighting the broader implications for educational policy and practice in Afghanistan and other similar contexts. Recent research incorporating children's perspectives also underscores that poverty shapes what inclusion and educational participation mean in Afghanistan (Trani et al., 2024).

A substantial body of research underscores the crucial role of teacher qualifications and educational resources in determining student achievements, particularly in developing countries. Qualifications of teachers, encompassing their educational background, training, and ongoing professional development, have been directly correlated with student performance (World Bank, 2018; Popova et al., 2022). In addition, the availability and quality of educational resources, including textbooks, technology, and classroom infrastructure, significantly enhance the learning environment, thereby improving student outcomes (World Bank, 2018; Popova et al., 2022). Studies focusing on rural regions in Afghanistan, such as those by Global Education Monitoring Report Team (2022), suggest that schools with better-qualified teachers and superior resources exhibit markedly higher student achievement levels compared to those that are less well equipped.

Evidence from Afghanistan also suggests that structured teacher professional development and training initiatives can strengthen classroom practice even in emergency settings (Ahmadi, 2021; Ayari et al., 2022).

The literature consistently documents notable disparities between public and private schools in terms of resource allocation and teacher quality, particularly in developing regions. In Afghanistan, private schools often benefit from more substantial funding and investment, allowing for superior infrastructure, more qualified staff, and access to a wider range of learning materials (Wilichowski & Lagos, 2020). These advantages typically translate into better educational outcomes when compared to public schools, which struggle with underfunding and less qualified staff (Romuald, 2023; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2025). Recent evidence indicates that digital learning initiatives can support access and instructional continuity, but their benefits depend on infrastructure reliability and teacher capacity (Barikzai et al., 2025).

Public schools, particularly in less developed provinces like Bamyan, face countless challenges that impede their ability to deliver quality education. Funding deficiencies lead to poor infrastructure, insufficient learning materials, and a lack of necessary facilities such as laboratories and libraries (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2025). Moreover, teacher retention in these schools is a significant issue, exacerbated by lower salaries, inadequate professional development opportunities, and challenging working conditions (Teacher Task Force, 2024). These factors contribute to a cycle of underperformance that affects student engagement and learning.

Addressing the disparities in educational quality between public and private sectors is critical for fostering equity. Increasing funding to public schools is a fundamental approach, enabling improvements in both infrastructure and resources. Furthermore, investing in comprehensive professional development for teachers can enhance their effectiveness and satisfaction, thereby improving retention rates (World Bank, 2018; Popova et al., 2022). Public-private partnerships have also been proposed as a viable solution to leverage private sector strengths in resource management and innovation to bolster public school systems (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2022; Teacher Task Force, 2024).

Recent empirical work on Afghanistan and comparable fragile settings further situates the Bamyan case. Studies have examined differences in teacher conditions across public and private schools in Afghanistan (Noori, 2023), the ways emergency contexts shape teacher well-being and children's learning outcomes (Murendo et al., 2024), mechanisms linking student engagement and attendance to equitable quality education (Trani & Hart, 2023), and broader evidence on public-private differences in learning outcomes across developing countries (Ciampi et al., 2025).

The Capability Approach

This study is framed by the capability approach (Sen, 1999), which understands development and equity in terms of what individuals are effectively able to do and to be, rather than in terms of the resources they hold. Applied to education, the approach directs attention to the conditions that enable or constrain the conversion of educational inputs (such as teachers, textbooks, and facilities) into real opportunities for teaching and learning (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). From this perspective, teacher qualifications and school resources are not valuable in themselves; their value lies in whether they expand the capabilities of teachers to teach effectively and of students to learn. The approach has previously been applied to the analysis of vulnerability and educational participation in Afghanistan, where poverty and contextual constraints strongly shape the opportunities that individuals can actually realise (Trani & Hart, 2023; Trani et al., 2024).

Within this framing, the comparison of public and private schools in Bamyan is treated as a comparison of two conversion environments. The same nominal input, a qualified teacher, a period of teaching experience, or a set of instructional materials may translate into very different classroom practices depending on class size, the availability of teaching aids, and access to professional support. The framework therefore guided both data collection and interpretation: the interview domains addressed qualifications and resources jointly, and the analysis examined how the two interact to expand or restrict teachers' effective capabilities, rather than treating either as an independent determinant of educational quality.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative comparative design, treating public and private primary schools as two contrasting cases within the same provincial context. The design was selected to elicit teachers' accounts of qualification pathways, working conditions, and resource constraints, and to examine how these factors are perceived to shape classroom practice and learner opportunities. A qualitative approach is appropriate where administrative data are incomplete and where understanding the mechanisms linking inputs (teachers and resources) to perceived instructional quality requires contextualized interpretation. The comparative element was operationalised through a structured cross-case design (Miles et al., 2014): the two sectors were treated as contrasting cases, the same interview guide and coding frame were applied to both, and coded material was arrayed in a case-ordered matrix that juxtaposed public and private accounts theme by theme. A pattern was reported as a sectoral difference only when it recurred across multiple participants within one sector and was absent or markedly weaker in the other; patterns shared by both sectors were reported as convergent themes.

Participants and Sampling

Participants comprised 60 teachers from public ($n = 30$) and private ($n = 30$) primary schools in Bamyan Province. Purposive sampling was used to ensure variation by locality (e.g., district/urban–rural setting), school type, years of experience, and subject responsibilities. Where available, school administrators supported initial access, after which teachers were invited individually and participation remained voluntary. Sampling continued until interviews were yielding recurring themes within and across school types. Purposive sampling (Patton, 2015) was used because the study required information-rich participants who could speak directly to qualification pathways and resource conditions in each sector, and maximum-variation criteria (locality, gender, teaching experience, and subject responsibilities) were applied within each sector so that the comparison would not be driven by the composition of either group.

Teachers were recruited from eight public and four private primary schools across the province. Saturation was treated as the point at which additional interviews confirmed previously identified codes rather than generating new ones (Guest et al., 2006); the emergence of new codes was monitored across successive interviews in each sector, and by the final interviews in each group no substantially new themes were arising, indicating that thirty teachers per sector were sufficient to capture recurrent patterns. To ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities, all interviewees were assigned anonymised codes. In this study, 'PU' denotes public school teachers and 'PR' denotes private school teachers, while the accompanying number indicates the individual participant. In some excerpts, limited demographic descriptors such as gender and age are included to provide context without compromising anonymity. A descriptive summary of participant characteristics by school type is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant characteristics by school type.

Characteristic	Public schools (n=30)	Private schools (n=30)
Participants, n	30	30
Gender, n (%)	Female: 15 (50.0%); Male: 15 (50.0%)	Female: 17 (56.7%); Male: 13 (43.3%)
Age (years)	Mean 34.5; Range 25–61	Mean 32.3; Range 22–58
Teaching experience (years)	Mean 7.4; Range 2–30	Mean 4.5; Range 0–18
Training (months)	Median 0; Range 0–9	Median 0; Range 0–12
Teaching hours/day	Mean 5.0; Range 4–6	Mean 4.8; Range 4–6
Teacher–student ratio	Mean 44.7; Range 25–50	Mean 23.4; Range 15–30
Highest qualification (reported)	Bachelor: 16; Diploma: 12; High school diploma: 2	Master's: 1; Bachelor: 21; Diploma: 8

Data Collection and Procedure

The study was conducted in Bamyan Province, a predominantly rural area where schools operate under conditions of geographic remoteness, constrained public financing, and exposure to broader political and

security instability. Within Bamyan, both government-run (public) and fee-supported or privately managed (private) primary schools operate, creating a natural basis for comparing staffing and resource conditions under different governance and financing arrangements. Data were collected through semi-structured teacher interviews guided by a standardised interview schedule. Each interview was documented in a structured response matrix aligned to the guide (qualification, professional learning, resources, perceived impacts, and recommendations), together with basic participant characteristics (e.g., age, gender, experience, and approximate teacher–student ratio). A trained local research assistant who was instructed in the use of the interview guide and in the study’s ethical procedures conducted all interviews in Dari, the participants’ first language. The assistant wrote the responses in Dari in the structured matrix at the time of interview, and the author then translated them into English for analysis and reporting. The translated excerpts presented in Tables 2 and 3 were checked against the original notes to preserve meaning.

Ethical Consideration

We informed the participants about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage. To protect confidentiality, anonymised participant identifiers were used and personal identifiers were removed from the dataset.

Data Analysis

Interview records were compiled into a structured qualitative dataset and analysed through a staged procedure adapted from thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analysis began with repeated reading of the interview matrices for familiarisation. A deductive coding frame was then derived from the interview guide domains (qualification, professional learning, resources, perceived impacts, and recommendations), and all responses were coded against this frame; codes were refined inductively where recurrent patterns emerged that the initial frame did not anticipate, such as the close link between resources and job satisfaction. Related codes were grouped into the two major themes and seven subthemes reported in the Findings and displayed in the thematic map (Figure 1). Cross-case comparison was then conducted by arraying the coded material in a case-ordered matrix (Miles et al., 2014) that contrasted public and private school accounts subtheme by subtheme, and recurring patterns were summarised in Tables 2 and 3. Coding decisions were documented at each stage in an auditable matrix.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was supported by the use of a single semi-structured guide across all sixty interviews, by grounding every reported theme in participants’ documented responses, and by comparing emerging interpretations against the full matrix rather than against isolated cases. Transferability is supported through thick description of the provincial context and of participant characteristics (Table 1), enabling readers to judge the relevance of the findings to other fragile, low-resource settings. Dependability and confirmability were supported by an audit trail in which coding decisions were documented in an auditable matrix, allowing the analytic path from raw responses to reported themes to be traced and reviewed.

Researcher Positionality

The author has worked in the education sector in Bamyan for more than ten years. This professional background informed the design of the study, supported access to schools, and provided the contextual knowledge used in interpreting participants’ accounts. The interviews themselves were conducted by a trained local research assistant in Dari, the participants’ first language; the use of a local interviewer supported rapport and candour, and reduced the risk that teachers would tailor their responses to a figure they associated professionally with the education sector. At the same time, the author’s prolonged professional involvement carries the risk of taken-for-granted assumptions about the two sectors, and reliance on an assistant for data collection places some distance between the analyst and the interview setting. To manage these risks, every

interview followed the standardised guide, responses were documented in writing in the structured matrix at the time of interview, and every analytic claim was required to be traceable to documented participant accounts through the audit trail; interpretations that reflected professional expectation rather than documented evidence were revised or discarded during coding.

The Findings

Figure 1 presents the thematic map derived from the qualitative data. The findings are organised under two major themes: Teacher Qualifications and Resource Availability. Tables 2 and 3 present illustrative paraphrased excerpts from teachers' accounts under the two major themes of teacher qualifications and resource availability.

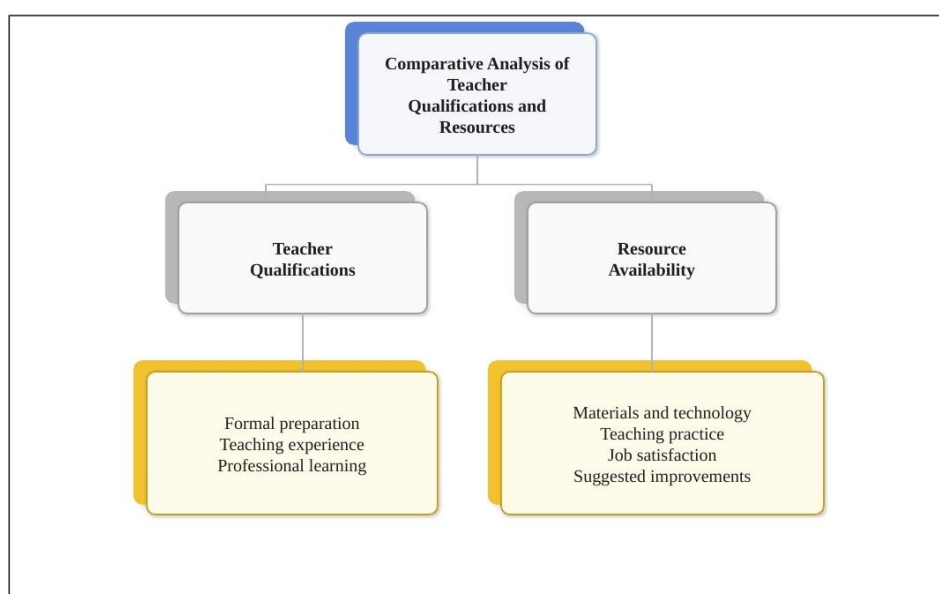


Figure 1. Thematic map of findings on teacher qualifications and resource availability in public and private primary schools in Bamyan.

Teacher Qualifications

The first major theme, Teacher Qualifications, consists of three subthemes: formal preparation, teaching experience, and professional learning. Under formal preparation, participants discussed differences in teachers' educational backgrounds across public and private schools. Teachers in both sectors reported possessing different levels of academic qualifications, including high school completion, teacher training diplomas, and university degrees. However, formal qualifications alone were not always viewed as sufficient to ensure effective teaching.

The subtheme of teaching experience emerged as another important aspect of teacher qualifications. Participants explained that years of teaching experience contributed to classroom management, confidence, and the ability to adapt lessons to students' needs. More experienced teachers were often perceived as better able to handle challenges in the classroom.

The third subtheme, professional learning, highlighted the importance of training opportunities after entering the profession. Teachers, particularly in private schools, referred to workshops, school-based support, and online learning opportunities. In contrast, public school teachers more often described limited access to structured professional development.

Resource Availability

The second major theme, Resource Availability, includes four subthemes: materials and technology, teaching practice, job satisfaction, and suggested improvements. The subtheme of materials and technology revealed

noticeable differences between public and private schools. Public school teachers frequently described shortages of basic teaching materials, outdated textbooks, and limited access to technological tools. By contrast, private school teachers more often reported access to better-maintained classrooms, digital devices, and a wider range of instructional materials.

Table 2. Illustrative paraphrased excerpts related to teacher qualifications

Theme	Quotes	Interpretation/remark
Formal preparation	<i>Public school participants described a wider range of academic preparation, including high school completion, teacher training diplomas, and bachelor's degrees, whereas private school participants more often referred to bachelor-level qualifications and, in one case, a master's degree.</i>	Formal preparation appeared more varied in public schools, while private schools more often employed teachers with higher academic credentials.
Teaching experience	<i>Several teachers explained that teaching experience strengthens classroom management, lesson delivery, and responsiveness to students' needs, but they also noted that experience alone cannot compensate for weak school conditions and limited materials.</i>	Teaching experience was valued across both sectors, but its practical contribution was shaped by the environment in which teachers worked.
Professional learning	<i>PU02 (male, 36) described attending seminars and workshops to improve his teaching, although he linked this effort to difficult material conditions in public schools.</i>	Public school teachers pursued professional learning, but often as an individual effort under constrained circumstances.
Professional learning	<i>PR10 (male, 38) referred to cross-disciplinary seminars and ongoing training that supported confidence and professional growth in classroom practice.</i>	Private school teachers more often described structured and continuing opportunities for professional development.

Table 3. Illustrative paraphrased excerpts related to resource availability

Theme	Quotes	Interpretation/remark
Materials and technology	<i>PU01 (female, 30) reported relying mainly on old textbooks and a chalkboard, whereas PR05 (female, 34) described access to digital projectors and cleaner classrooms.</i>	Public school teachers emphasised basic and outdated materials, while private school teachers more often described better-maintained facilities and greater access to instructional technology.
Teaching practice	<i>PU03 (male, 36) explained that limited laboratory equipment restricted practical science teaching, while PR02 (male, 35) reported that even basic laboratory materials made foundational experiments possible.</i>	Resource availability directly shaped the extent to which teachers could use practical, active, and student-engaged methods.
Job satisfaction	<i>PU05 (male, 27) linked the lack of basic teaching tools to frustration and reduced motivation, whereas PR07 (male, 28) associated job satisfaction with access to library resources and computing facilities.</i>	Teachers' job satisfaction was closely connected to whether they had the means to teach effectively.
Suggested improvements	<i>PU01 recommended increased funding and better teaching materials for public schools, while PR02 recommended modernising laboratory equipment.</i>	Participants in both sectors called for stronger investment in school resources, though public school teachers emphasised baseline provision and private school teachers more often stressed upgrading existing facilities.

Resource Availability

The second major theme, Resource Availability, includes four subthemes: materials and technology, teaching practice, job satisfaction, and suggested improvements. The subtheme of materials and technology revealed noticeable differences between public and private schools. Public school teachers frequently described shortages of basic teaching materials, outdated textbooks, and limited access to technological tools. By contrast, private school teachers more often reported access to better-maintained classrooms, digital devices, and a wider range of instructional materials.

The subtheme of teaching practice showed that the availability of resources directly shaped what teachers could do in the classroom. Teachers explained that limited materials restricted interactive teaching methods, practical activities, and student engagement. In schools with better resources, teachers described greater flexibility in using varied teaching strategies.

The subtheme of job satisfaction was also closely linked to working conditions. Teachers indicated that access to sufficient teaching tools and supportive environments positively influenced their motivation and satisfaction. In contrast, inadequate resources and challenging classroom conditions contributed to frustration and reduced morale. Finally, under suggested improvements, participants proposed ways to improve educational quality in both sectors. These included providing updated teaching materials, improving access to technology, strengthening teacher training opportunities, and investing in school infrastructure.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that differences between public and private primary schools in Bamyan are shaped by the combined influence of teacher qualifications and resource availability. Rather than functioning as separate dimensions, these two factors appear to interact in ways that either support or constrain the quality of teaching and learning. This suggests that educational inequality cannot be explained simply by differences in teachers' formal credentials, nor solely by differences in school facilities. Instead, the evidence points to a more complex relationship in which teacher capacity is closely connected to the material and institutional conditions in which it is exercised. In this sense, the thematic map reflects an important reality of schooling in Bamyan: teachers' professional strengths matter, but their effectiveness is significantly influenced by the resources available to support their work. This interactional reading is consistent with the wider evidence that school inputs are associated with learning primarily when they change what happens in classrooms (Glewwe et al., 2013), and it accords with the capability approach adopted in this study: qualifications and materials matter to the extent that the school environment allows them to be converted into effective teaching (Sen, 1999; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

The findings relating to teacher qualifications show that formal preparation, teaching experience, and professional learning all contribute to teachers' professional capacity. Formal preparation remains important because it provides a foundation for subject knowledge, pedagogical understanding, and professional confidence. Teachers with stronger academic backgrounds may be better positioned to organise instruction, explain concepts clearly, and respond to learners' needs. However, the findings also indicate that qualifications alone do not automatically lead to effective classroom practice. Participants' accounts suggest that teaching experience plays a critical role in classroom management, lesson adaptation, and the ability to deal with diverse student needs, while professional learning strengthens teachers' capacity to improve and update their practice over time. These findings therefore point to a broader understanding of teacher quality, one that goes beyond academic certification and includes practical experience and continuing development. This broader understanding is consistent with evidence from developing countries that pedagogical practice, rather than certification alone, is what links teacher characteristics to student learning (Westbrook et al., 2013), and with global reviews showing that continuing professional development is most effective when it is practical, sustained, and connected to classroom realities (Popova et al., 2022).

At the same time, the data suggest that the benefits of teacher qualifications are not realised equally across school contexts. Even where teachers possess relevant qualifications or substantial teaching experience, their ability to apply these strengths effectively may be reduced when they work in poorly resourced

environments. This is especially important in the case of public schools, where teachers more often described limited support, fewer structured opportunities for professional learning, and greater material constraints. The findings imply that teacher capacity is not a fixed or independent quality, but one that is shaped by working conditions. In other words, well-qualified teachers may still be unable to perform to their full potential if the school environment does not provide the basic tools, support, and opportunities required for effective teaching. This reinforces the argument that teacher qualifications must be interpreted in relation to the institutional setting rather than viewed in isolation. Similar conclusions have been drawn in other crisis-affected systems, where professional development delivered without attention to teachers' material working conditions has had limited effect (Burns & Lawrie, 2015), and where teacher well-being and support conditions are closely tied to what children ultimately learn (Murendo et al., 2024).

The theme of resource availability appears particularly significant in explaining the differences between public and private schools. Teachers' accounts make clear that materials and technology are not peripheral matters; rather, they are central to the everyday possibilities of teaching and learning. Public school teachers more frequently reported dependence on outdated textbooks, chalkboards, broken or limited equipment, and insufficient classroom materials, whereas private school teachers more often described access to relatively better-maintained classrooms, projectors, computers, and other teaching aids. These differences are meaningful because they influence the scope of pedagogical practice. In classrooms where resources are scarce, teachers may be restricted to basic methods of instruction and have fewer opportunities to employ interactive, practical, or student-centred approaches. By contrast, better-resourced settings appear to provide teachers with greater flexibility to diversify lessons, support engagement, and create richer learning experiences for students. These accounts echo classroom-observation evidence from Afghanistan, which documents narrow instructional repertoires in under-resourced public classrooms (Wilichowski & Lagos, 2020), and global findings that educational technology contributes to learning only where basic infrastructure and teacher capacity are in place (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2023).

The findings further suggest that resource availability has a direct impact on teaching practice. Teachers in under-resourced schools described difficulties in implementing methods that require visual aids, practical materials, or technological support, even when they understood the value of such approaches. This indicates that classroom practice is shaped not only by teachers' knowledge and intentions but also by the physical and instructional tools available to them. As a result, disparities in school resources are translated into disparities in students' learning opportunities. Students in relatively better-equipped schools are more likely to benefit from varied forms of instruction, while those in poorly resourced schools may experience more limited and less engaging learning environments. In this way, the findings show that educational inequality between public and private schools is reproduced through the daily realities of classroom life, not only through broader structural differences. The pattern also mirrors the broader input literature, in which resources are most consistently associated with learning where they directly enable changed teaching practices (Glewwe et al., 2013).

Another important outcome of the study is the close relationship between resources and job satisfaction. Teachers often linked their motivation and sense of professional fulfilment to whether they had the means to teach effectively. Public school teachers more frequently associated dissatisfaction with shortages of basic materials, outdated resources, and challenging teaching conditions, while private school teachers more often connected satisfaction with access to supportive facilities and instructional tools. This suggests that job satisfaction is not merely a personal feeling or an individual attitude, but also a reflection of the structural conditions under which teachers work. When teachers are prevented from delivering the kind of education they believe students need, frustration and demotivation may follow. Such conditions may affect not only teacher morale but also commitment, performance, and the sustainability of instructional quality over time. This finding aligns closely with survey evidence from Takhar province, where private school teachers reported significantly higher job satisfaction than their public school counterparts (Noori, 2023), and with the wider literature on teacher well-being in low-resource and crisis-affected settings, which identifies working conditions as a central determinant of teacher motivation and retention (Falk et al., 2019).

Taken together, the findings indicate that educational inequality in Bamyan is sustained through the interaction of human and material factors. Public schools appear to face a compounded disadvantage: teachers often have fewer structured opportunities for professional development while also working in schools with more limited educational resources. This dual constraint may weaken both the quality of teaching and the range of learning experiences available to students. The thematic map is therefore useful in showing that teacher qualifications and resource availability are analytically distinct but practically interconnected. Better qualifications can improve classroom practice, but their impact is constrained when schools lack the necessary materials and infrastructure. Likewise, improved resources can support better learning, but their value depends on whether teachers are prepared and supported to use them effectively. Educational quality, therefore, emerges from the relationship between these two dimensions rather than from either one alone. Comparative research suggests that such gaps are not unique to Bamyan: private school advantages in achievement are documented across developing countries, although much of the raw difference reflects student selection and enabling conditions rather than sector status itself (Crawford et al., 2024; Romuald, 2023; Shakeel & Dills, 2024), and expanding private provision can deepen stratification where public schools are left behind (Joshi, 2020).

Participants in both sectors also suggested practical improvements, particularly increased funding, updated teaching materials, improved access to technology, and the modernisation of school facilities. These findings have important implications for policy and practice. Efforts to reduce inequality between public and private schools in Bamyan should address both teacher development and school resourcing simultaneously. Strengthening teachers' formal preparation and expanding access to ongoing professional learning are essential, but these measures will have limited effect unless they are accompanied by improvements in textbooks, teaching materials, classroom technology, and school infrastructure. Public schools in particular require greater investment in the basic conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning. At the same time, teachers need practical and sustained forms of professional support that enable them to make meaningful use of available resources and adapt their teaching to students' needs. Overall, the study suggests that a more equitable educational system in Bamyan will depend on an integrated approach in which teacher capacity and school resources are strengthened together, especially in public schools where material shortages and limited professional support continue to constrain educational quality. Such an integrated approach is consistent with policy analyses of non-state provision in Afghanistan, which caution that private sector growth cannot substitute for a functioning public system (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2022), and with global calls to address teacher shortages through simultaneous investment in preparation, support, and working conditions (Teacher Task Force, 2024).

Conclusion

This qualitative comparison of teacher accounts indicates notable disparities in reported qualifications profiles and more strongly in access to teaching resources between public and private primary schools in Bamyan Province. Across participants, resource conditions were repeatedly linked to the feasibility of active learning, practical science teaching, and language instruction, with implications for educational equity.

Findings should be interpreted as teachers' perceptions within a specific provincial context and do not constitute direct measures of student achievement. Nevertheless, the consistency of accounts across participants suggests that improving baseline teaching resources, upgrading laboratories and learning materials, and supporting ongoing professional learning are priority areas for reducing inequities between school types.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study relies on teachers' self-reports documented in a structured interview matrix, which are subject to perception and recall bias; the findings represent a single province and may not generalise to other Afghan contexts or grade levels; and the design did not include direct measures of classroom practice or student learning. Future research combining teacher accounts with classroom observation, learner assessment, and the perspectives of students, parents, and school leaders would

strengthen interpretation, as would comparative work across provinces and across different types of private provision.

To mitigate these disparities and promote educational equity, increasing targeted funding for public schools is essential to improve infrastructure, provide up-to-date learning materials, and upgrade basic technology and laboratory resources. In parallel, structured professional learning opportunities can help teachers implement more interactive pedagogy with the resources available.

Public-private partnerships can also play a significant role in addressing these disparities. Collaborations between public and private sectors can share resources, expertise, and best practices, benefiting both types of schools. Community involvement is essential in supporting public schools through donations, volunteer programmes, and advocacy for better funding, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility to support educational equity.

By implementing these inclusive strategies, it is possible to create a more equitable educational environment in Bamyan province. Ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to quality education will provide them with the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Collaborative efforts from policymakers, educational institutions, communities, and private sector stakeholders are essential in addressing these disparities and promoting educational equity. Read through the capability approach, the policy task is ultimately one of equalising conversion conditions: ensuring that the qualifications teachers hold, and the resources schools receive, can be turned into real teaching and learning opportunities in every classroom (Sen, 1999; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

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