

Multicultural Education

Research Article

Homepage: www.MC-caddogap.com**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE AND THE
NEED OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EFFECTIVE
TEACHING PRACTICES****Dr. Zahid Ali***Associate Professor, School of Education, American International Theism University Florida-USA***Dr. Noor Ullah***Islamic Culture Center Oslo, Norway***Dr. Nazir Ahmad***Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science & Technology Karachi, Pakistan***Nargis Yaqoob***Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, Sindh Madressatul Islam University***Farukh Saba***M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Education, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Lyari, Karachi***ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to find out how primary school teachers in Karachi, Pakistan, feel about changes to the curriculum and the importance of participating in professional development programs in order to better engage their pupils in the educational process. New ideas and perspectives appear to have had little to no effect on teacher training in Pakistan, despite broad changes in teacher preparation. The researchers believed that their participation in a variety of professional development programs had aroused their interest in understanding how primary school teachers felt about the necessary for professional development and the changing of the curriculum. Specifically, the researchers were interested in discovering how teachers felt about the necessity for professional development and the changing of the curriculum. Researchers used qualitative research methods, examined relevant literature, observed teachers at work, and collected data through focused group interviews in order to achieve the purpose of the study. The entire process of data analysis was carried out in a methodical manner, beginning with the transcription of interview data and continuing all the way through the theme analysis. The findings demonstrated that increasing teacher capacity by participation in a variety of professional development activities, such as seminars and workshops, provided a significant contribution to the improvement of teachers' capabilities for engaging in effective teaching practice. It is imperative that educators participate in ongoing professional development in order to educate pupils using the new curriculum. According to the findings of the study, in order to address the challenges posed by the 21st century and to make the transition to the new curriculum, there should be programs for the professional development of teachers, and technology should be incorporated.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, education reform in Pakistan has been a top priority. It has transformed the educational system in nearly every way. The goal of these changes is to improve education for all students. Curriculum changes are one of the reforms implemented in the school system. The new curriculum is more complex than the old one because it was built using cutting-edge concepts and ideas in order to satisfy modern demands. Teachers must be ready for change because they are the ones who will actually be implementing the curriculum in the classroom. Changes to the primary school curriculum should be implemented with the full support of teachers. However, the curriculum will not be implemented properly if teachers are not informed of the changes. Because of their lack of understanding, individuals will be hesitant to try something new. It has been noted that our educators are ill-prepared to implement the new curriculum. In order to effectively integrate the new curriculum in the classroom, it is important to understand teachers' reactions to the shift, as well as their professional growth and pedagogical methods. Students today are preparing to enter a world that is vastly different from that of their parents and professors. A more interdependent and integrated global community is emerging as a result of recent advances in economics, technology, and society. Emerging issues and the need for a different kind of graduate are being fueled by globalization, technological advancement, mass migration, and the threat of climate instability. We are starting to do a complete rethink of the economy, technology, and society at the turn of the millennium.

The modern educational environment features a wide variety of obstacles that must be overcome by teachers. In today's world, which is characterized by a growing level of global connectedness, teachers of today are expected to be empathic problem solvers who are also capable of recognizing and analyzing the validity of a variety of points of view (Mansilla, Jackson, & Jacobs, 2013; Reimers, 2020; Ameli, 2020). Additionally, large academic achievement gaps continue to exist between socioeconomic groups (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Michelmore & Dynarski, 2017) and a global push towards privatization can lead to less access to quality education for many students. As a result, it is of the utmost importance that the professional development (PD) of teachers instills in them the abilities and attitudes necessary to adapt to the challenges posed by the educational environments of the 21st century. Despite the necessity for cutting-edge PD, the majority of teacher development is still conducted using antiquated methods (Reimers & Chung, 2019). Research is lacking in analyzing the best approaches to generate great teachers, despite the substantial evidence that good teachers help students achieve (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Good instructors help students succeed (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). Much less research has been done to determine which form of professional development (PD) is most effective at preparing teachers for modern global contexts (Reimers & Chung, 2016; Reimers, 2020). These environments need instructors to be responsive and collaborative in their approach to problem-solving.

There is no single criterion by which an educational program's success can be determined. Before, during, and after lessons. Nietfeld, Cao, & Osborne, (2005) that teachers' reflection on instructional goals, student characteristics and needs, content level and sequences, teaching strategies, materials, and other issues related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment significantly increased the effectiveness of the instructional program. Teachers can benefit greatly from systematic follow up after trainings. Moore (2004) argues that in order to ensure that students meet defined, assessable, and (supposedly) lifelong 'standards,' educators must first train them to acquire particular abilities linked to features of classroom management, lesson planning, recording and reporting students' work. An effective teacher must internalize knowledge and skills so that they can implement new innovations in the classrooms. There is a pressing need to reform teacher training programs so that all aspiring educators are adequately prepared to work with today's diverse student body. Second, new developments on a worldwide scale call for immediate shifts in mindsets and methods, even as existing teacher training courses remain largely unchanged. According to (Khan, S. H., & Saeed, M. (2009), high-quality pre-service teacher education fosters dedication to the teaching profession and academic success in the classroom. Learning, teaching, and student learning are all influenced by professional development for instructors (Khan, & Saeed, 2009; Ali, Thomas, Ahmed, Ahmed, & Ahmed, 2020). As a result of the large amount of money invested in professional development, policymakers are looking for data that shows how it improves teaching and learning. For professional development to be useful, it must give educators opportunities to immediately incorporate new strategies into their classrooms.

When teachers' professional development is aligned with state academic standards, assessments, and accountability measures, the results are better instruction and increased student learning. Teachers' professional development on how students learn and how to effectively evaluate that learning was consistently associated with higher student accomplishment and greater growth in students' fundamental and advanced reasoning and problem-solving skills. This shows that subject-based, learner-centered professional development has the

potential to significantly affect students' academic outcomes. New insights about the influence of teacher professional development and how best to improve teachers' abilities and knowledge have resulted from our shifting learning goals, shifts in curricular emphasis, and a deeper understanding of teacher learning and student thinking. The knowledge gained by educators is crucial. Teachers' topic expertise should grow via professional development, as should their capacity to comprehend students' perspectives on that expertise. It is crucial that educators receive training that is both relevant and consistent with the demands of their profession. Professional development events that emphasize high-quality subject-matter content have the greatest impact on students. Teachers and students both benefit from having more time to reflect on and discuss issues related to student learning, curriculum materials and instruction, and subject matter content. According to Fishman et al. (2003), a solid empirical knowledge base connecting various forms of professional development to successful teacher learning can be established by ongoing research on teachers' professional development. But knowing what works in terms of teachers' professional development isn't enough on its own to guarantee that teachers will actually improve their practice. According to Buczynski and Hansen (2010), in order for teachers to benefit from professional development, they must put what they've learned into practice. The elements that influence educators' dedication and motivation to implement new strategies in the classroom will thus be investigated as part of this study. The alterations' long-term viability is also investigated. The overarching goal of this study is to investigate how professional development is perceived by educators and how that affects their implementation of a revised curriculum in the classroom.

Changes in the Curriculum and Need of Teachers' Preparation

Teachers can improve the efficacy of their lessons by reflecting on their own teaching practices before, during, and after class, as well as on instructional goals, student characteristics and needs, content level and sequences, teaching strategies, materials, and other issues related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The continued professional development of educators relies heavily on systematic follow up with them following trainings. Teachers' performance in our public schools in Karachi, Pakistan, is not up to par, and neither the principal nor the relevant authorities conducts regular assessments of teachers' training, subject knowledge delivery, classroom management skills, or teaching practices to improve them. Lack of educational facilities and classroom environment, along with students' lack of creativity, innovation, and full commitment to developing aptitude in various learning skills like information technology and activity based learning, ultimately have a negative impact on student achievement, which is a major problem in our education system. Three key aspects that have a substantial influence on students' achievement—professional traits, teaching skills, and classroom climate—are outside of the control of our trained teachers. There is also a severe deficiency in active learning, as many educators continue to rely on time-honored (teacher-centered) teaching practices rather than employing practical, cutting-edge pedagogical techniques or activity-based approaches. Thus, a fundamental argument against Pakistan's teacher-training programs is that they have not improved students' learning results in proportion to the resources they have invested in in-service trainings. However, the quality of a teacher's education should not be considered in isolation when trying to explain student outcomes.

The teacher's ability, motivation, and opportunity, as well as the supportive culture and environment in which instruction takes place, all have a role in determining the learning outcomes for their students. Thus, these are some aspects and challenges that affect teachers' professional growth and students' accomplishment, but the most significant are teachers' unsatisfactory classroom practices and students' lack of motivation in learning. There is a lack of dedication to new methods of teaching among the experienced and educated faculty. Focusing on how professional development programs can be enhanced, suitable professional growth activities are considered, and problems and dilemmas associated with teacher development in professional practices and new changed curriculum are resolved, this study examines the interplay between professional development and teaching practices as contexts for the ongoing professional development and curriculum change of experienced in-service teachers for the betterment of students' achievement. There is strong evidence that high-quality professional development can help teachers become more effective in the classroom. However, research on the benefits of professional development on intermediate outcomes, such as instructors' practices and their impact on students' success, is more limited. Teachers' perspectives on curricular reform, professional development, and its impact on classroom practice are the focus of this study. There is an immediate need to train teachers in accordance with a curriculum that emphasizes transformation if we are to successfully implement it. The innovation's goals, characteristics, and advantages should be made obvious to teachers. Widespread adoption of a new program or set of materials requires convincing people of the value of that adoption.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the perceptions of teachers about curriculum change, need of professional development and its effect on their teaching practices.
2. To examine the effectiveness of teachers' professional development in implementing the changed curriculum in the classrooms.

Research questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions about curriculum change and need of professional development at primary level?
2. How teachers interact with their colleagues about curriculum change and implementation of curriculum in the classrooms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher preparation and Curriculum Implementation

Teacher preparation programs are widely regarded as the most important steps a prospective educator can take towards becoming an effective educator (Safari, & Rashida, (2015). Curriculum implementation is the process of actually teaching the required lessons, using the required textbooks, and covering the required topics. Facilitating a learner's acquisition of knowledge or experience. It's crucial to remember that the student is an integral part of the curriculum implementation process. So, the student is the focus of curriculum development and delivery. Learners, instructional materials and facilities, teachers, students, school climate, school culture and ideology, instructional supervision, and evaluation are just few of the many aspects that impact successful curriculum implementation (Chaudhary, 2015). The curriculum and the teacher's understanding of its goals and structure are powerful resources used to plan lessons and improve student learning. Understanding enactment requires a careful examination of how teachers actually use curriculum and the reasoning behind those choices (Penuel, Phillips, & Harris, 2014). Teachers play a crucial role in adopting the new curriculum since they are the only ones who can put a stop to the old curriculum and advocate for the new one. Knowledge and skills cannot produce a meaningful transformation unless there is a self-understanding of the person involved in the process, (Siddiqui, 2007). Consequently, if a teacher lacks a deep comprehension of change, he or she will only be able to apply its superficial forms successfully. It hurts to see clearly when new ideas are tried out in an environment where they won't succeed. There are three overarching ideas throughout the sections that explain the prerequisites. The first common scenario for a teacher is a static one. According to Roehrig, Kruse, and Kern, (2007) implementation of the curriculum is strongly influenced by the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, and the presence of a supportive network.

The implementation process often includes efforts to sway user behavior in a desirable way. It's a process, and it takes time for people to warm up to a new idea. People need reassurance that their time and energy spent adapting to the new curriculum will be rewarded. Literature reviews on the topic of teacher professional development tend to suggest that this is the most important factor in ensuring the success of new educational policies. Several authors' works make this clear (Hargreaves, 2000; Fullan & Mascal, 2000). Educators' careers and career advancement are profoundly impacted by shifts in government policy, especially as it relates to the education system. According to Day and Smethem (2009), the vast majority of governments believe that their involvement in the educational system is crucial to ensuring the economic competitiveness of their respective countries. Consequently, standards-based reforms are implemented to improve students' access to a high-quality education; yet, it is contended that government involvement in the form of education reforms has stripped educators of professional agency.

Several prominent authors have argued that improving teachers' professional development is crucial to the success of any educational changes. (Desimone, 2009; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002). professional development is the key to the success of any reform, initiative, provided that it is linked to ongoing learning of individuals and to school improvement and to related policy and program implementation, present further evidence for this assertion. Teachers' professional development is thought to give them the tools they need to carry out the reform in the way it was intended. Educators' participation in professional development programs like those emphasized in the literature has been shown to have numerous positive effects, but the programs' efficacy has also been called into question. The negative views of professional development among

teachers as "something that they must endure and get out of the way" is one of the most worrying concerns brought to light. Additional research into this subject sheds light on the myriad of causes for such pessimism. How the educators conceptualized professional development shaped how they felt about being required to take part in it. A series of unrelated short-term workshops and presentations with little follow-up or guidance for implementation is the common conception of teachers' professional development (Guskey, 2000). They felt their professional development experience was irrelevant to the enhancement of their teaching practice since they are rarely asked what they need in terms of professional development. This, in turn, makes it challenging for teachers to really implement the reforms' intended professional development into their daily work.

However, a lot of effort and time has been put into creating and overseeing professional development for educators. Consequently, ongoing study into the efficacy of teachers' professional development experiences and their effect on the quality of teaching practice is crucial. The government hopes that investing in its educators' professional growth would help it fulfill its mandate to provide its citizens with a high-quality education. The purpose of this study is not limited to only justifying the investment made in teachers' professional development and the results achieved thereby. Teachers' perspectives on the effects of professional development on classroom practice were studied in order to better understand why educators are required to take part in so many courses. But knowing what works in terms of teachers' professional development isn't enough on its own to guarantee that teachers will actually improve their practice. According to Buczynski and Hansen (2010), in order for teachers to benefit from professional development, they must put what they've learned into practice. The elements that influence educators' dedication and motivation to implement new strategies in the classroom will thus be investigated as part of this study. The alterations' long-term viability is also investigated.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative study, researchers sought out and interviewed 12 upper-level primary school teachers. Teachers must have a bachelor's degree as a bare minimum in terms of professional qualifications, and candidates must have attended trainings, workshops, seminars, or professional development programs before being considered for employment. The research goals and components of the curricula were utilized to inform the creation of the instruments (questionnaires, interviews, and observations) aimed at collecting data linked to teachers' knowledge and teaching practice. Experts in the field validated the questionnaire, and it was piloted with other educators, however those data were omitted from the analysis. The interview questions focused on the new standards and how the teachers might benefit from professional development in light of the new guidelines. This was so that we could verify the new curriculum implementation and teaching methods we saw in action in the classroom through the interviews. The checklists were made as a guideline for the observations, and they included both the verbal cycle and the written cycle that teachers used to lead the lessons. Detailed descriptions of what and how new material was taught to pupils in each step were provided. When classroom instructors were asked to participate in interviews and observations. Only 8 of the 12 educators were actually able to participate in the study. Each interview lasted between 30 and 40 minutes, and it was scheduled at the teachers' convenience. The interviews took place in a private area of the school, away from the prying ears of other students and staff. For clarity and to prevent misunderstanding, the conversation was conducted in Urdu. From the start to the finish of meetings, teachers were watched and their practices were recorded using observation checklists.

Procedure

The researchers first informed all participants of the study's purpose, the length of time participation would take, the schedule for participation, the number of sessions, the ethics of the study, and the rights of the participants. The conversations were recorded and held in the Urdu language. The researchers transcribed the recordings and then translated the transcriptions into English. Each interview lasted 30 to 40 minutes to give people plenty of time to think deeply about the topics at hand, as well as to share their perspectives, ideas, and personal experiences. In the first meeting, the researchers briefed the participants on issues related to teacher preparation, professional development and curriculum change including recent innovations, trends, and different strategies that have been incorporated in the teaching practices. Participants' teaching and educational experiences were gathered, and the influence of participants' gender were also explored. After that, attendees were invited to attend interview sessions and discuss their experiences with the Pakistani school system, revised curriculum, and need of their professional development according to change curriculum and new innovations of

the 21st century. After collecting participants' critical reflections on the educational system, we held further discussions to facilitate participants' exploration of the issues they face and the solutions they prefer regarding curriculum change and its implementation in their classrooms as well as regarding the learners of this new arena of technology or modern age. We conducted interviews with all of our participants to get their final thoughts on the issues we discussed regarding our research phenomenon throughout the data collection process of observation and interviews.

Analyzing the Data and Findings

Researchers used a systematic process to analyse the gathered data and checked the accuracy of the data they collected. As a final step in data collection, member checking uses triangulation by having participants check the transcripts of their interview session(s) for accuracy and providing them with an opportunity to clarify and/or comment further on the text (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010). After that Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant comparative method, the transcripts were analyzed in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. At first, open coding was used to determine the most essential categories. Concepts and categories were then developed around the core using axial coding, and any relationships between the concepts and categories were established. The final step was to use selective coding to combine all the different concepts and categories.

Major Themes

- Inadequate teacher preparation
- A shortage of resource material and facilities
- A lack Instructional supervision and assessment
- A lack of knowledge in curriculum issues and implementation
- A lack of smooth environment and working conditions at schools.
- An absence of standardization in the management of curriculum change
- The mismatch between current teaching practices and the requirements of the new revised curriculum.

Teachers' perspectives on the status and need of teachers' professional development and revised curriculum and the role of approaches, current education system were reflected in these overarching themes. Each topic is introduced by a participant's response to a question or concern.

4. DISCUSSION

An analysis was carried out on the information that was obtained from the interviews and observations. The responses that were received from the teachers were then analyzed, and the results of that analysis were used to calculate and classify the teachers' perceived understanding of curriculum change, their teaching methods, and the implementation of the curriculum in the classrooms, as well as the teachers' need for professional development in the appropriate manner. It is essential to provide an account of how instructors have been carrying out their duties in the classroom and how they have been putting the new curriculum into practice. Either they have a superficial understanding of teaching or a profound understanding of how to put the new curriculum into action. It is essential to provide a detailed account of how well teachers have been functioning in the classroom. In addition, a summary of each indicator on the checklists was used to analyze the results of the observations that were conducted. This was done so that specifics regarding the manner in which teachers viewed the significance of their capacity building and ongoing professional progress in accordance with the redesigned curriculum could be obtained. This was done so that specifics regarding the manner in which teachers viewed the significance of their capacity building and ongoing professional progress. This article discusses the outcomes of a study on the professional development of teacher educators. These findings are presented within the context of on-going efforts being made by Pakistan to modernize its educational system. It explains the history behind the introduction of the new curriculum for basic education as well as the effects that

it has had on the effects that it has had on the education of teachers. In addition to this, it investigates the professional shortcomings that are present in the programs that teacher educators and programs that prepare teachers to become teachers participate in. This paper provides an overview of the present curriculum that is being followed for teacher education and emphasizes major professional practices that are being followed by teacher educators. The information that was gathered from the instructors served as the basis for this illustration.

5. CONCLUSION

The teachers' perceived knowledge of curriculum change, the difficulties associated with implementing curriculum into classrooms, and the requirement for further professional development for teachers in accordance with the changed curriculum for the primary level are the most important takeaways from this research. According to the findings, the most significant obstacles to the implementation of the curriculum included a lack of knowledge in curriculum issues, a shortage of resources, unacceptable working conditions, inadequate teacher preparation, and an absence of standardization in the management of curriculum change. All of these factors contributed to a lack of standardization in the management of curriculum change. As a result, during the entire process of curriculum implementation, the learner serves as the primary focus of attention. Learners, resource materials and facilities, facilities, the teacher, the school environment, culture and ideology, instructional supervision and assessment are only few of the many aspects that have an impact on the execution of the curriculum. Instructional monitoring and evaluation are two other important considerations. Problems include insufficient participation from relevant stakeholders, insufficient levels of employment, the absence of a structure for continual professional growth, and the continued presence of relevant expertise. According to the findings, increasing teacher capacity through participation in a variety of professional development activities like seminars and workshops provided a significant contribution to the improvement of teachers' capabilities for engaging in effective teaching practice.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

If there is going to be a change in the curriculum, then there needs to first be a new set of educational resources developed for the students, as well as training programs for the teachers; both of these need to place an emphasis on the professional development of the teaching staff. If there is going to be a change in the curriculum, then there needs to first be a new set of educational resources developed for the students, as well as training programs for the teachers. In order for instructors to be able to instruct students in accordance with the new curriculum, it is imperative that they take part in ongoing professional development opportunities. This is also an urgent necessity that there should be programs for the professional development of teachers, and technology should be included into these programs, in order to face the issues that the 21st century offers and to make the transition to the new curriculum. In addition, in order to meet the problems that the 21st century brings, there ought to be an emphasis placed on diversity in the classroom in accordance with the requirements of the students. After conducting an in-depth analysis of the most significant issues that were found during the course of the investigation, the researchers made the recommendation that additional research be conducted in regard to the formulation of a feasible curriculum for the education of teachers as well as guiding standards for the professional development of teacher educators in accordance with revised curriculum, the requirement for the incorporation of technology, and 21st century skills.

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