

Problems and Factors Regarding Developing Effective Curriculum at School Level

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Abstract

An innovative curriculum and effective Education system sets the foundation for any country's social, political, and economic progress. A feasible education system empowers the nation to attain its national goals successfully. The basic purpose of this research paper was to explore the different problems and factors regarding the effective developing curriculum at the school level. The preparation and implementation of an effective curriculum is one of the most challenging issues in Pakistan, especially in Punjab province. Many stakeholders are responsible for this alarming situation. But now, the government of Pakistan has taken a serious and sober step to this issue and PM Imran Khan has shown his serious concern to SNC in Pakistan. However, some severe problems and factors disturb the productive development of the curriculum in Pakistan. For this purpose, 50 senior subject specialists (SSS) were interviewed to know their perceptions and opinions about this national dilemma. This research is descriptive and a qualitative approach was applied to conduct this study. Results were explained after content and thematic analysis of the Semi-structured interviews of the participants. The development of an effective Curriculum is preferably an ongoing, continuous, dynamic and long term process, including prerequisites assessment, its designing and planning, training of school teachers, piloting, preparation and modification of the materials, proper monitoring and its complete implementation, evaluation and feedback of the implemented curriculum. The suggestions and

recommendations will be helpful to improve and eradicate the problems regarding designing an effective curriculum at the school level.

Keywords: Problems and factors, effective curriculum development, curriculum implementation.

1. Introduction

"Curriculum," "training," "courseware," and "education programs" are all phrases that are frequently used interchangeably. Learning experts use the term "curriculum" to refer to an overarching learning strategy and organizational framework that includes a number of individual learning solutions in an organizational setting (e.g. courses, webinars, eLearning, job-aids, wikis, etc.) (Duan et al., 2020). A curriculum design, when done effectively, is a proven road map for diverse learning audiences in the organization to obtain skills and information. The term "curriculum" is used in some countries to refer to not only subjects, but also the connections between them, teaching methods, and other aspects of education that define a student's experience. In some countries, a smaller definition is employed, referring to either a set of courses (the Year 6 curriculums contains eight different disciplines) or a year-long study programs (the chemistry curriculum at secondary level) (Erstad & Voogt, 2018).

Planning the school curriculum in terms of subjects and certifications is only a piece of the approach. The experienced curriculum of a great school delivers a learning experience that goes beyond the certificates, subjects, and activities mentioned on the school calendar. This is because curriculum design and implementation take into account learning inside, across, and across topics and activities. All instructors and school personnel encourage the development of the learner attributes and other qualities specified in the school's vision. It's critical to plan for breadth, balance, and coherence. The school's vision and goals will include personal and social results as well as academic outcomes. Outside of the classroom, in the school environment, and in the greater community, learning takes place (Marsh, 2018).

The process of developing curriculum is never-ending. Philosophically, psychologically, socially, and economically, it should be sound. Curriculum planners must thoroughly research the type and qualifications of those for whom curriculum is to be prepared. • A core principle of curriculum design is that "students must either be recruited to match the intended curriculum or the program must be developed to fit the level of the students enrolled." When creating or updating a curriculum, a slew of problems and issues arise. The curriculum is a collection of exercises that have been meticulously planned (Colvin & Carmona, 2020). Curriculum is a web of moral and intellectual aims and beliefs that come together to form a society's political, economic, and social institutions. The planner can supply answers to many of the curriculum's important questions if the society is generally stable. Changing a person's personality and character is simple. Curriculum development in highly dynamic civilizations, curriculum concerns are becoming increasingly challenging. Aims, objectives, and goals, as well as the selection of key curriculum areas (Zamroni, 2020).

Putting the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses, and subjects into practice is part of implementing the curriculum. Assisting the learner in gaining information or experience is part of the procedure. It's important to note that curriculum implementation is impossible without the learner's participation. As a result, the learner is at the center of the implementation of the curriculum. The learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, abilities, concepts, and attitudes that

will enable him or her to function effectively in society throughout implementation. In this sense, curriculum implementation also refers to the stage at which the curriculum is put into action as an educational program (Shen, 2021).

According to Handelzalts (2019) to put the curriculum into action, an implementing agent is necessary. The teacher is the agent in the curriculum implementation process. According to her, implementation refers to how a teacher selects and integrates the many components of information in a curriculum paper or syllabus. Implementation occurs when the student interacts with the syllabus created by the teacher, the teacher's personality, the teaching materials, and the teaching environment.

Curriculum implementation refers to a teacher's translation of a planned or formally designed course of study into syllabuses, schemes of work, and lessons to be delivered to students.

According to Nevenglosky (2018) there are some Factors that Influence Curriculum Implementation

- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence on Teachers.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence on Learners.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence by Resource Materials and Facilities.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence on Interest of Groups.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence on the School Environment.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence due to Culture and Ideology.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence through Instructional Supervision.
- ♣ Curriculum Implementation Influence by Assessment.

2. Literature Review

In education, a curriculum is defined as the sum of all student experiences that occur throughout the educational process. The term is usually used to indicate a pre-planned sequence of teaching or a viewpoint on a student's experiences in connection to an educator's or school's instructional objectives (Sharipov, 2020). Affective learning investigates the challenges and ideas that surround the development of students' inner personal skills. The focus is on increasing self-esteem and developing a good self-image. Emotional exercises can help to improve and increase individual self-esteem as well as group cohesion (Lin & Hwang, 2018).

People who work on curriculum development get together without having opposing perspectives on the basics. They might be able to work more swiftly as a result. If the parties involved can't come to an agreement on these, there would be misconceptions as a result of this. The cultural and philosophical conundrum has been widened by the curriculum's sociological and ideological issues. These may have a tenuous but important connection to the curriculum (Teo, 2019). Take into account the following: Globalization is an inherent fact of life. In a world that is growing increasingly complex, what are our responsibilities for teaching "how the world works"? How do professors change or alter their teaching methods? To be more aware of a more interconnected world and the far-reaching economic, social,

political, and technological developments brought about by globalization (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020)?

If evaluation is to have any educational value, it must become an integral part of the total learning process, not an afterthought as it is in Pakistani schools. In Pakistan, it is normal practice to change the curriculum, but the evaluation system allows the teacher to concentrate on educating the student rather than changing the student's behavior (Abdullah & Mirza, 2020). The school curriculum, according to Lawton, is just a selection from society's culture. Some components of our way of life, such as particular forms of "knowledge," beliefs, and attitudes, are considered so crucial that they must be passed down to future generations (Ahmed, Parveen, & Dahar, 2021). The curriculum patterns in Pakistan were handed down from colonial rulers. In social necessity, which is typically frowned upon by society, the same trend can be found. When it comes to public members of society, the school should have a lot of say in the curriculum (Butt, Mahmood, & Urooj, 2021). In Pakistan, uniformity has always been misconstrued. Rural areas account for approximately 70% of the entire population. When urban children come from a certain background of language, notably Urdu, with either topic such as social studies, general science, etc., the same courses are taught in rural and urban schools. • There is a need to create a unique curriculum for rural communities (Khan, Farooqi, & Mehmood, 2018).

Due to a scarcity of instructional materials, many educational programmers are hesitant. The semester system was used in higher education institutions. It had a lot of troubles because it didn't have enough textbooks and other instructional materials. Though the teacher is interested, the lack of educational resources is a crucial reason in its failure (Revina & Leung, 2018). Teachers are not appropriately introduced to new learning activities and teaching practices when new curriculum is designed and implemented. Both initial and in-service teacher education must persuade teachers of the importance of their role in supporting innovation if they are to be mobilized in support of curricular change. It serves as a resource for teachers looking for answers to problems they've experienced in the classroom (Maba & Mantra, 2018).

It is a global phenomenon that teachers are regarded as conservatives. They have good reasons for not wanting to change their ways, not least because they have an investment in knowledge and skills that will depreciate over time. They must overcome the natural human desire to reject any change that can jeopardize their stock in trade. Secondary school students have always been against new curriculum since they are expected to pay greater attention to new concepts and ideas (Seow, Looi, How, Wadhwa, & Wu, 2019).

When Pakistan was formed, it was emphasized that our educational system would be rebuilt to reflect Islamic teachings. Our political, social, and economic ideas will be centered on the Islamic way of life. A workable educational policy is always based on a philosophy. This credo was left aside soon after the death of Quaid-e-Azam. Every country has its own philosophical outlook. We are unable to identify consistent educational objectives due to a lack of philosophy (Islam & Islam, 2018).

According to Kalinowski, Gronostaj, and Vock (2019) curriculum development is influenced by a number of things. Curriculum development is influenced by philosophical, psychological,

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sociocultural or social, political, economic, educational, technological, and gender factors, among others. The following is a quick rundown of these elements:

Philosophical Factors

Curricular decisions are made based on fundamental beliefs drawn from one's educational philosophy, and they consider a wide range of topics and issues. As a result, philosophy is regarded as one of the most important foundational disciplines in the curriculum. Philosophical research can help us deal with our own systems of beliefs and values, as well as how we interpret the world and decide what is important to us. As a result, a study of educational philosophy is essential in terms of curriculum development. In essence, educational beliefs affect and, to a large extent, decide our educational choices and alternatives. As a result, persons in control of curriculum decisions should be open about their perspectives. If we are unsure or confused about our own values, our curricular ideas will be sloppy and puzzling.

Psychology Factors

Psychology is concerned with the study of human behavior. Psychology assists instructors in developing curriculum by providing knowledge about the nature of students, the nature of the learning process, motivation, personality, and individual differences among students, as well as the value of teaching methods and teaching effectiveness.

Aspects of a societal or social nature

Sociology is concerned with the study of organized human relationships. Its main focus has been on analyzing the course of societal change and individual socialization, and its largest contribution to curriculum has been in making decisions about curricular material. Its methods of operation include providing detailed information about students' social origins and fostering a realistic evaluation of the teacher's and school's role in social change. It increases teachers' flexibility, tolerance, and awareness of inquiry-based approaches. It's crucial to keep in mind that the elementary school curriculum differs from that of the secondary school. The demands of society play an important role in curriculum development; for example, a technical-based curriculum should be emphasized for the establishment of an industrialized society.

Political Restrictions

Politics has an impact on every part of life, and political unrest leads to unrest in everyday life. It usually provides objectives and content; political concerns must be taken into account during curriculum creation; and political actions may change the needs for curriculum development. Patriotism, nationalism, and ideologies must all be encouraged by governments. As a result, they have policies that they use to issue orders. The rules establish, among other things, the medium of instruction, the nature of the curriculum, and the sort of textbook to be used.

Considerations on the Budget

Due to financial constraints, schools in lower socioeconomic strata are unable to consider adopting modern equipment such as computers, but privileged schools do not have this problem. As a result, skilled teachers and other professionals flee to nations with higher wages.

Education-Related Factors

To enhance effective learning, modern and efficient educational methodologies should be used, and qualified and skilled teachers are necessary to accomplish so. Athletics, theatre, debates, excursions, and other co-curricular activities must all be included in the curriculum.

Technology Factors

The impact of technological growth can be observed in every part of life, and the technological aspect of curriculum creation is critical.

Technology innovations and their effects are too important for curriculum designers to ignore. Technological innovations can be applied to curriculum development in a variety of ways, as "a plan for the systematic use of various devices and media," and as an issue "found in models and procedures for the construction or development and evaluation of curriculum materials and instructional systems.

Gender Disparities

The expectations of each gender are also taken into account when developing curricula. Although this is an age when women are entering occupations previously seen to be the realm of males and women are seeking equal rights, options such as home economics for girls and technical education for boys should be left open, as these should not be regarded primarily feminine or male domains. There are a variety of educational institutions that cater to male and female curricular needs separately in advanced countries where women have more independence.

3. Methodology

This research paper used a qualitative approach to explore the various problems and factors relating to developing an effective curriculum at the school level in Punjab, Pakistan. The study was delimited to the Province Punjab, and its results were generalized across the country. A Semi-structured interview technique was assumed to determine the perspectives of the research participants (senior subject specialists) concerning the different problems and factors which create hurdles in designing an effective curriculum at the school level. Senior subject specialists were interviewed personally by the researcher himself after the departmental permission of the concerned competent authority. Viewpoints of the interviewees were recorded and coded by the researcher. Later on, these responses were explained in descriptive form after content and thematic analysis of the recorded interviews of senior subject specialists. The experience and perceptions of the administrations were also investigated about the preparation and implementation of an effective curriculum. The data of the research were gathered from 50 different senior subject specialists at the school level from different selected higher secondary schools. The interview questions were related to the challenges and issues the curriculum designer faced while developing an innovative curriculum. Recommendations were suggested to deal with the prevailed challenges of the syllabus. Before conducting the final interviews, pilot interviews were practiced to test different open-ended interview questions. The simple purposive sampling method was employed to choose research participants respectively. The study sites were twenty higher secondary schools of district Lahore to get the research data.

4. Data Analysis

Curriculum design and change are successfully implemented only when the community understands and endorses it when adequate resources are available. Still, the classroom teacher is the key to curriculum execution because it is simply what the teacher makes of it. The screening of cultural heritage is now the main activity in curriculum development. This task is becoming increasingly important as cultural heritage is considered important in devising the curriculum. According to the interpretation of semi-structured interviews of the senior subject specialists, the following are perceived as the main problems and factors that affect developing an effective curriculum at the school level in Pakistan.

1. The interference of bureaucrats

The interference of the bureaucrats influences the preparation of innovative curriculum at the school level. Being part of every government, many bureaucrats run and own many well-known private educational institutes. They are not in favor of changing and revising the curriculum according to the national needs and goals.

2. Lack of participation of school teachers

Moreover, teachers' lack of involvement, especially the participation of school teachers in the curriculum scheming wing, affects the curriculum's efficacy.

3. Political interference

Education has become too important to be ignored solely by party leaders and politicians. Destabilization in the political government harms the education system. Every new leader introduces their private interests and few educational plans for the country. An educator is likely to be frustrated in such an environment. He cannot keep up with the constantly changing demands of political leaders. Many administrative issues arise as a result of political interference. Political interference also influences the development of an effective curriculum.

4. Teachers' reluctant to accept change

It is a widespread concept that teachers are regarded as progressives. They are unwilling to change their strategy for various reasons, not least as they have an asset in skills and knowledge that depreciates over time, and they confront the natural human tendency to resist any change that may effectively make their knowledge and skills obsolete. Secondary teachers are more conservative since they are subject-centered. They are always unhappy and opposed to the new curriculum because it requires them to pay closer attention to new concepts and creative ideas. According to the research participants, it is also the major factor in shaping an inventive curriculum.

5. Insufficient teachers' training

When new curriculum designs are implemented, teachers are not properly introduced to new learning activities and teaching strategies. Hence, they are invited for curriculum development and the results are ineffective and unproductive material of the textbooks. If teachers are to be redeployed to endorse curriculum reforms, both beginning and in-service teachers' education must persuade them of the importance of their role in fostering advancements. This requirement should be in many different forms, including on-the-job training and more particular courses offered outside of schools.

6. Economic issues

According to interviewees' responses, whenever there is a change in syllabus and curriculum, financial support is required. It is necessary to create new teaching materials. It is necessary to create new teaching materials. Teachers must receive in-service training and be outfitted with new teaching materials. Textbooks must be updated to meet the changing demands of society. Supportive staff is needed to assist teachers in developing successful curriculum designs. Despite these requirements, insufficient funds are available to develop new curricula. Pakistan spends approximately 2% of its GDP on education. In these circumstances, a lack of adequate funds leads to the failure of effective curriculum development at the school level.

7. Inadequate evaluation

Evaluation has become an essential part of the entire educational process, rather than an extra part. True evaluation occurs daily more precisely. In general, the curriculum is reshaped in Pakistan. Still, the evaluation process allows teachers to teach students examination techniques instead of bringing about the desired difference in students' behavior and attitude. Rapid and true evaluation of the curriculum can help the curriculum designers according to the needs and interests of the learners at the school level.

8. Lack of obligation of national ideology

According to the senior subject specialist and administrators, When Pakistan was established, it was affirmed that our public education system would be reformed under Islamic teachings. But still, we don't have a clear educational philosophy. A practical educational policy is always founded on a national ideology. Every country has its philosophical way of life. We are still unable to develop an effective curriculum and consistent educational objectives due to a lack of national philosophy.

9. Society's disapproval

According to the research participants, the school curriculum is principally a selection and choice from society's culture. When a curriculum is designed, it is not consulted and properly compared with the current social needs. Specific aspects of our life, different kinds of experience and understanding, specified values and beliefs are so important that they must be passed down to the next generation. Pakistan's curriculum patterns were passed down from colonial rulers. The same pattern is used with minor variations. It is frequently condemned by society because it is incompatible with societal needs.

10. Lack of coordination and sequence

Another hurdle in developing an effective curriculum at the school level is that there is very little harmony and coordination among the various committees working on curriculum development. When students complete their studies at one stage and advance to the next, they find themselves helpless. At this stage, the concepts being imparted are quite unusual. Therefore, each stage's learning experience chosen and organized must follow the previous one and take on a sequential format.

11. Urbanized curriculum

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In Pakistan, uniformity has always been misunderstood. Almost 70% of the total population resides in rural areas of the country. However, when urban children arrive with a specific language background, particularly Urdu, the same courses are offered in rural and urban schools. A separate curriculum for rural areas is required. They require knowledge and skills specific to their contexts.

During curriculum development subject specialists and experts do not make use of academic information when revising updated sections of school textbooks. Hence, it is also considered an important factor that creates hindrance in designing innovative curriculum.

Table1. Demographic description of research participants (SSS) of Semi-structured interviews.

Subject	Frequency	Qualification	Institutes	Experience
English	10	Ph.D =4 M.Phil=6	Public HSS	15 to 20 years
Urdu	12	Ph.D=8 M.Phil=4	Public HSS	10 to 20 years
Islamiat	8	PH.D=3 M.Phil=5	Public HSS	15 to 20 years
Maths	5	Ph.D=2 M.Phil=4	Public HSS	15 to 20 years
Physics	5	Ph.D=3 M.Phil=2	Public HSS	15 to 20 years
Chemistry History, Eco,	10	Ph.D=4 M.Phil=6	Public HSS	15 to 20 years

5. Conclusion

The process of curriculum development is facing numerous serious issues in Pakistan. These issues are the interference of bureaucrats, the absence of involvement of school teachers, political interference, teachers reluctant to accept change, economic issues, inadequate evaluation of present curriculum, lack of obligation of national philosophy, lack of coordination and sequence, lack of teachers' training, social disapproval and urbanized curriculum are considered the factors which create hurdles in designing effective curriculum, especially at school level. During curriculum development, subject specialists and experts do not properly use academic information when reviewing updated units of school textbooks. The reforms required in the present education system and designing innovative

curriculum cannot be done by the government alone; private, public participation and a mix of formal as well as non-formal education can develop an innovative and effective curriculum and pull out the majority of the country's population from illiteracy. Similarly, to make the youth of the country an asset, attention should be paid to the vocational and technical training of the teachers and students, respectively. In Pakistan, the quality of education and curriculum development is on the decline despite the present government introducing drastic measures in elevating the quality and capacity of the present education system. The quality of teachers, especially at the school level, is still questionable. They are not able enough to meet the challenges concerning the present curriculum. It is apparent that without teachers' renovation, we cannot design an effective curriculum and change the present education system of our country to refine the efficacy and quality of the existing curriculum. In this scenario, a sequence of education reforms and improvements in the area of teachers' education has been announced in the public sector, but still their visions seemed to be narrow, and hence, they have failed to create any significant impression on the quality of different teachers and their teaching process. Eventually, it further affected the quality of education being offered in schools.

Recommendations

First of all, there should be no political interference while planning and designing the national curriculum. Secondly, Curriculum development should involve some of the enthusiastic working teachers. The curriculum must be future-oriented to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, which is presumed to be scientific and technological. The government should increase the amount of money allocated to the curriculum development wing. There should be adequate budgetary provision for curriculum designing wing as well as for advance educational policies in the national GDP. This will improve the system of education and curriculum improvement according to the national goals. There should be equal participation of school-level teachers for excellence and efficient curriculum development; for this purpose, trained and expert teachers would be required from primary to higher levels. The present structure of teachers' educational institutes must be provided with sufficient funds and skilled human resources to run various programs regarding training curriculum designers and teachers on a periodical basis. The system and structure of officials' accountability should be reinforced. All the authorities connected with the education system must be educated to own their responsibilities individually and collectively. This creates a sense of self-responsibility. The curriculum must be evaluated and assessed yearly.

In this concern, a general survey should be piloted to seek the teachers, community, and parents' views and opinions concerning their observations and expectations. According to the experts' endorsements, the curriculum aims and goals should be rearranged. Such curriculum should be designed to provide the spirit and requirements of society and the country deprived of any discrimination of color, caste and creed. There should be no party and political interferences while designing an innovative curriculum. This will let the curriculum developers and system work smoothly and without anxiety. Recurrent party and political involvement create gaps in the system, leading to dishonesty, corruption, and other evils. Policies regarding eradicating political involvement in developing curriculum should be executed rapidly without delay in time and available resources.

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