

Objectives of Primary Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Perceptions of Teachers and Head Teachers

* Falak Naz, PhD Scholar (Corresponding Author)

** Manzoor Hussain Shah, Professor

*** Muhammad Iqbal Majoka, Professor

Abstract

Universal primary education continues to be a major issue in developing countries, including Pakistan. The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about the context of primary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The objectives of this study were: (a) to analyze the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about the objectives of primary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; (b) to examine the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about the context of primary education in terms of the quality improvement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; (c) to study the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about the context of primary education in terms of character building and skill development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Five hundred and six (506) respondents i.e. teachers and headteachers were selected from five districts (out of a total of 26 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The statistics used for the analysis of collected data included frequency, mean, percentage, and chi-square. The results indicate that learners are mostly made to memorize and learn through rote instead of developing them as independent learners. In addition, the curriculum is not updated, and teachers are not properly qualified to teach according to the needs of students for conceptual learning.

Keywords: Primary Education, Pakistan, Educational Objectives, Curriculum

Introduction

Access to primary education has been identified as one of the fundamental rights of children around the world (UNESCO, 2004). Education was also recognized as a right of children in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Primary education, like elsewhere, is considered of foundational importance in Pakistan. International organizations including The World Bank, ADB, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, JICCA, NORAD, and GTZ, have been contributing to the development of Pakistan's primary education system, recognizing its importance and working to improve its quality (Bessingpas, 2009).

Pakistan's public sector education system faces several challenges including a lack of teacher competence, poor quality of textbooks, and learning and teaching materials. Pakistan has an overall 62.3% literacy rate, according to UNDP's Human Development Report (2018). The male literacy rate is 72.5% and the female literacy rate is just 51.8%. The literacy rate in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where this study has been conducted is low mainly because of the high dropout rate at the primary level. The annual report on the state of education (ASER, 2019) highlights that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 1.8 million students are out of school at the primary level, 64% are girls and 36% are boys (Shah et al., 2019). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's literacy rate is higher than Baluchistan but lower than Punjab. One of the causes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's low literacy rate is the province's geographical landscape where because of access issues educational infrastructure has not been developed in the hard-to-access mountainous areas in its north and south. According to the most recent Pakistan Economic Survey Report, the overall school enrolment rate in 2019-20 was about 94.14 percent, but nearly half of students drop out before reaching fifth grade. Just one-third of the 50 percent of students in primary school complete primary schooling (Khattak, 2012).

* Department of Education, Hazara University Mansehra Email: hamziali111@gmail.com

** Department of Education, Hazara University Mansehra Email: drmhshaah@gmail.com

*** Department of Education, Hazara University Mansehra Email: iqbalmajoka@yahoo.com

The current study aimed at an evaluation of the objectives of primary education in the light of the CIPP model. CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) model is an evaluation model developed by Daniel Stufflebeam and his colleagues in the 1960s and is often used to evaluate educational programs. The primary aim of the CIPP model is to provide information for enhancing the educational system by planning priorities, structuring plans, implementing policies, and revising decisions. This model is also used to guide the design, execution, and evaluation of service-learning projects, as well as to provide feedback and evaluation of project outcomes for quality improvement.

Review of related literature

Primary education is crucial to a country's growth and development. It is rightly regarded as a stepping stone to success because it lays the groundwork for higher education. Human resource development is important and that is why this is one of the aims of the educational process including primary education (King, 2011). Pakistani primary education system faces several problems including a lower education budget compared to other Asian countries. Education receives less than 2% of GDP, impacting educational efficiency, planning and management, and policy implementation (Hayes, 1987). Besides low budget allocation, primary education in the country has been hindered by the feudal system, widespread poverty, a lack of good governance, and certain feudalistic structures in the society (Rasheed, 2004). Besides, inadequate teaching and learning standards, punishments of various forms in schools, and ineffective management, and supervision result in dropouts (Shahzad & Perveen, 2002). Other issues include political interference, corruption, and inadequate management and monitoring (Rehman, 2002). Besides, curricular and administrative issues, the primary education system also faces issues in terms of its evaluation system which is still traditional and obsolete (Memon, 2007).

The other important pillar of the education system is teachers who too are often left out of the education policy-making process (Zafar, 2003). Lack of adequate qualification, lack of facilities, and lack of opportunities for professional development are other issues faced by primary level teachers (Farooq, 1990). Despite their inadequate preparation, their lack of professional skills, teachers are at the center of the education system as they are the ones who implement the curriculum at the school level, and they conduct the evaluation which both are central to the process of effective education (Zafar, 2003).

Two other important issues include dealing with the issue of medium of instruction at the primary level and also the skills needed to teach primary school students (Hussain, 2001). Lack of awareness regarding the aims and objectives of the primary school curriculum is another issue that primary school teachers face. As a result, they teach in the absence of clear objectives.

Like other stages of education, quality is an important aspect of primary education. There is a need for mechanisms to assure the quality of primary education. Quality assurance is the process of ensuring the maintenance of good standards. Hence, quality assurance is described by Ciwar (2005) as the practice of managing the way, facilities are given to ensure that they are sustained at a high norm. Several factors have an impact on the quality of primary education including the provision of teaching-learning facilities like building, furniture, adequate funding, updated curriculum (Cheng, 2003), qualification, and training of teachers.

An important model to evaluate education systems for quality assurance was developed by Stufflebeam in the. It is a very useful approach for educational evaluation. It essentially offers a very thorough examination of several different aspects of the curriculum design process. According to Zhang et al., (2011), this model assists stakeholders in comprehensively evaluating schools and helps in ensuring accountability in educational programming. In this model, evaluation is a continuing process of describing, collecting, and providing necessary information to decision-makers. Context includes the goals, objectives, history, and background of the school.

Gronlund (1990) points out that school evaluation is important to improve educational standards. According to Sax (1980), formative assessment informs teachers on whether students are meeting instructional objectives, whether work is being completed on time, and whether there are any opportunities for improvement during the teaching process. This model can be used to standardized assessments and meet general assessment needs. This model is unique in that it focuses on the context for evaluating the teaching, learning, and development process (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Summative assessment is used to measure the quality and quantity of learning in schools after the educational program, as well as to equate practices with goods to see if the objectives have been met

(Gronlund, 1990). The four dimensions of the CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, and Product) are used for the evaluation of programs as a whole process or are applied individually to satisfy the assessment needs. Context evaluation is used to prepare decisions to define objectives; input evaluation helps to coordinate decisions to plan instructional procedures; process evaluation is used to implement decisions to use, control and optimize processes; product evaluation is used to evaluate recycling decisions and to respond to the outcomes produced by processes (Popham, 1995).

Context assessment is a method for evaluating needs and possibilities in each environment or setting (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The context assessment's goals are to define, understand, and resolve the target group's needs, as well as to identify issues and decide whether the objectives are fulfilling their roles (Khuwaja, 2001; Stufflebeam, 2001). Surveys, document reviews, data analysis, and interviews are among the numerous forms of approaches for context assessment (Stufflebeam, 2003). The CIPP model considers outcomes not only at the end, but also at various stages of the educational program's growth, execution, and production. After that, the results are mapped with goals, deficiencies are identified, and changes are anticipated to enhance education quality (Sancer, Baturay & Fadde, 2013).

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To analyze the perceptions of teachers and headteachers regarding primary education objectives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;
2. To examine the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about quality improvement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;
3. To study the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about character building and skill development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Methodology

A quantitative, descriptive research design was used to conduct this study. Quantitative research designs are useful for exploring educational phenomena on a large scale with greater generalization value (Babbie, 2002).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study consisted of 244 headteachers and 262 schoolteachers. The sample was selected using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique because this approach helps the researchers to obtain a population sample that best represents the entire sampled population (Etkin & Bala, 2017).

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used for collecting data which was based on the CIPP model of Stufflebeam (2003). The research instrument was based on a five-point Likert scale.

Data collection

Data were collected by the first author who visited the schools personally. Permission of the District Education Officers (DEOs) of Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Battagram, and Torghar was obtained before the data was collected. The response rate was a hundred percent.

Validity and reliability

The questionnaire was reviewed by experts in the field of education to ensure content and face validity. Some elements were modified as a result of the experts' recommendations. For ensuring reliability Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the scale's elements. The Cronbach Alpha value was 0.94 which indicates adequate instrument reliability.

Results

Statistical techniques such as percentage, mean, and chi-square values were used to analyze the results. The data collected through the questionnaire was graded and put on the MS, Excel sheet (Likert scale of five points) for data analysis.

Table 1. Context related to core objectives of primary education (HTs N=244, STs N=262)

S. No.	Statements	Res	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean	χ^2	P-value
1.	All children should have an average age of 6-10 years for admission to	STs	37 14%	117 45%	22 8%	74 28%	12 5%	3.44	1.85	.762
		HTs	29 12%	122 50%	17 7%	67 27%	9 4%	3.48		

2.	primary school. The social needs of students must be met by the curriculum at the primary level.	STs	100	124	15	14	9	3.50	.134	.998
			38%	43%	8%	5%	3%			
3.	Free and compulsory education should be provided as a basic right to every child.	HTs	91	118	13	14	8	3.44	.256	.992
			37%	48%	5%	6%	3%			
4.	The curriculum should be offered to accomplish the needs of the practical life of students.	STs	11	61	37	98	55	4.42	.510	.973
			4%	23%	14%	37%	21%			
5.	Primary education should provide conceptual training to students rather than rote memorization.	HTs	9	57	36	88	54	4.59	.300	.990
			4%	23%	14%	36%	22%			
		STs	9	45	29	131	48	3.77		
			3%	17%	11%	50%	18%			
		HTs	7	44	30	122	41	3.70		
			3%	18%	12%	50%	17%			
		STs	118	76	25	30	13	3.44		
			45%	29%	10%	11%	5%			
		HTs	115	68	21	28	12	3.41		
			47%	28%	9%	11%	5%			

P≤ 0.05

DF=4

Objectives included in educational policies related to age limit regarding primary school enrolment were found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to meet the students' social needs regarding primary school curriculum were found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the basic right of every child regarding free and compulsory education was found inadequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to accomplishing the needs of the practical life of students regarding primary school curriculum were found inadequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to conceptual training of students regarding primary education were found adequate.

Overall, the core objectives of primary education were considered adequate.

Table 2. Context related to quality improvement of primary education (No. of STs=262, No. of HTs=244)

S. No.	Statements	Res	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean	χ^2	p-value
1.	For the development of primary education, the current government should have well- qualified teachers.	STs	26	90	23	91	32	4.12	.507	.173
			10%	34%	9%	35%	12%			
2.	Offer courses that must promote scientific and technical education.	HTs	20	87	21	85	31	4.17	.899	.925
			8%	36%	9%	35%	13%			
3.	Curricula should be updated to increase the quality of primary education.	STs	47	109	30	67	9	4.12	.251	.993
			18%	42%	11%	26%	3%			
4.	For the advancement of primary education, public-private partnerships must be	HTs	39	111	28	58	8	4.09	1.51	.824
			16%	45%	11%	24%	3%			
		STs	186	58	6	7	5	4.05		
			71%	22%	2%	3%	2%			
		HTs	169	58	6	6	5	3.91		
			69%	24%	2%	2%	2%			
		STs	63	117	27	98	7	3.88		
			24%	45%	10%	37%	3%			
		HTs	53	122	24	39	6	3.72		

	strengthened.		22%	50%	10%	16%	2%		
	The quality of education	STs	102	114	29	10	7	3.48	
5.	in primary schools		39%	44%	12%	4%	3%		
	should be improved								.366 .985
	through the political	HTs	97	101	30	10	6	3.52	
	commitment.		40%	41%	12%	4%	2%		

$P \leq 0.05$

DF=4

Objectives included in educational policies related to the provision of well-qualified teachers regarding the improvement of primary education were found inadequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to offering courses regarding the promotion of science and technical education were found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the basic right of every child regarding free and compulsory education was found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the curriculum at primary level regarding students' needs and interest was found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the improvement of quality education in primary schools regarding political commitment were found adequate.

Overall quality improvement of primary education was considered adequate.

Table 3. Context related to character building and skill development (HTs N=244, STs N=262)

S. No.	Statements	Res	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean	χ^2	p-value
1.	At the primary school stage, character development should be encouraged.	STs	86 33%	124 47%	23 9%	23 9%	6 2%	3.44		
		HTs	68 28%	123 50%	25 10%	22 9%	6 2%	2.55	1.57	.813
2.	Primary education must promote moral development to produce good citizens.	STs	73 28%	115 44%	35 13%	27 10%	12 5%	2.45		
		HTs	60 25%	110 45%	39 16%	23 9%	12 5%	2.33	1.28	.865
3.	Primary education must provide training to students as true practicing Muslims.	STs	28 11%	123 47%	50 19%	53 20%	8 3%	2.19		
		HTs	21 9%	116 48%	52 21%	50 20%	5 2%	1.94	1.39	.847
4.	Primary education must prepare citizens to live their lives following Islamic teachings.	STs	47 18%	116 44%	42 16%	40 15%	17 6%	3.05		
		HTs	44 18%	108 44%	44 18%	30 12%	18 7%	2.94	1.25	.870
5.	At the primary school level, students should be instilled with a sense of citizenship and patriotism.	STs	37 14%	88 34%	46 18%	48 18%	43 16%	3.06		
		HTs	32 13%	82 34%	46 19%	44 18%	40 16%	3.10	.216	.995

$P \leq 0.05$

DF=4

Objectives included in educational policies related to the promotion of character-building regarding students at the primary level were found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the development of moral growth regarding good citizens were found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the provision of training to students at the primary level regarding true practicing Muslims were found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to enabling students at primary level regarding lead their life according to the teaching of Islam was found adequate.

Objectives included in educational policies related to the sense of good citizen and patriotism regarding inculcation of spirit among students at the primary level were found adequate.

Overall objectives related to character building and skill development of primary school students were considered adequate.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of headteachers and school teachers regarding the objectives of primary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study's findings were discussed as follows:

This study found that the average age for enrolment of all children in primary school is 6-10 years concerning primary education objectives, which was consistent with the study of Chowdhury et al., (2002) who stated that the enrolment rate for completion of basic education without any discrimination is 6-10 years for every child that helps in achievement of EFA goal. Another objective of primary education was found to be that the primary school curriculum addresses students' social needs. In the case of this research, Sassila (2010) found similar findings, stressing that only the courses offered at the primary level fulfill the social needs of children. The present study described the purpose of primary education as the fundamental right of every child to be provided free and compulsory education. This result is similar to the study of Amanullah (2013), which emphasized that the government has to provide all children aged 5-16 years with free and compulsory education as a basic right which results in attaining of UPE goal. However, the study also specified the educational goals offered by the courses to meet the requirements of the practical lives of students. This is something to remember because it is contradictory to the philosophy of education that realistic preparation for life can benefit. It is also not very helpful to provide too much of an abstract for young learners. This outcome is in line with what Rowell & Prophet (1990) found. While another primary education objective was found, primary education focuses on the intellectual training of the students rather than rote memorization. This finding is stated in government policies and documents on national education.

The study also identified the primary educational objectives of providing well-qualified primary teachers to the current government. This finding is similar to the study of Darling-Hammond (2006). This outcome is promising as it illustrates the seriousness of the government in delivering quality primary school education. Besides, to have qualified teaching staff, primary education aims to acknowledge that courses are being provided to encourage scientific and technical education to raise awareness among students and increase the quality of basic education. Also, the present study showed another objective of primary education that, through updated curricula, increases the quality of primary education. Dello (2009), argued that the revision of the curriculum would improve the standard of education, confirms this outcome. In any educational system, and especially in the Pakistani education system, quality has been an important factor. These results are optimistic in the sense that Pakistan's government is making an effort to improve the standard of elementary education. The study found that another primary education aim was to expand the public-private partnership to boost the standard of primary education.

The present study also found the primary education goals of fostering character building among students and ensures moral development for good citizens. These results are similar to Edgington (2002) who suggests that character education is a part of public school that cultivates virtue in the form of core values like honesty, courage, loyalty, kindness, fairness, respect, and responsibility among children. The study found that students were exposed to Islamic religious and moral education at the primary level as their primary education target. This finding is in line with Shakil and Akhtar's study (2012) who highlighted that the main focus of Islamic values is to provide information to students that is necessary for the best moral education of students. The study also found that primary education aims to instill in primary school students a sense of good citizenship and patriotism and to encourage people to lead their lives according to Islamic teaching. These results are consistent with the research carried out by Deraman and Razak (2018), who stressed that among the younger generation, the spirit of patriotism is cultivated to make them devoted citizens.

Conclusions

The study concludes that provision of compulsory primary education for children aged between (6-10 years); free and compulsory education for every child as a fundamental right; and education regarding social needs real, intellectual learning came out as important aims of primary education.

The study also highlights the need for curricular revision to make the process of education more productive at the primary level. The study also highlights the importance of well-qualified and well-trained teachers at the primary school level for the effective implementation of the curriculum at

this very important stage. The study further highlights the importance of religious and moral education and character building as important aims and desired outcomes of primary education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the report, the following recommendations for improvement of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's primary education system were made:

1. The curriculum for conceptual learning be updated and strengthened, and instruction is organized to facilitate students' conceptual learning.
2. More trained teachers be hired to prevent a shortage of teachers.
3. DCTE Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and associated RITE and PITE be kept accountable for developing the curriculum and teacher training.

References

- Bessingpas, M. T. (2009). Reforming primary education in Pakistan in the interest of US national security (Doctoral dissertation). Georgetown University, Washington, DC: USA.
- Chowdhury, A. M. R., Nath, S. R., & Choudhury, R. K. (2002). Enrolment at primary level: gender difference disappears in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 2(22), 191-203.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). No child left behind and high school reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(4), 642-667.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Pecheone, R. (2010). Developing an internationally comparable balanced assessment system that supports high-quality learning. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services.
- Dello-Iacovo, B. (2009). Curriculum reform and 'quality education in China: An overview. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(3), 241-249.
- Deraman, N. A., & Razak, F. H. A. (2018). A study of unity and patriotism elements in film *Ola Bola*: A thematic analysis. *Journal of Media and Information Warfare*, 11(2), 80-107.
- Edgington, W. D. (2002). To promote character education, use literature for children and adolescents. *The Social Studies*, 93(3), 113-116.
- Education Management Information System (2017). Annual statistical report of Government schools, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: Elementary and Secondary Education Department.
- Government of Pakistan (2019). *Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19*, Islamabad: Pakistan, Ministry of Finance.
- Hayes, L. D. (1987). *The crises of education in Pakistan*. Lahore: Vanguard Books.
- Hussain, A., Dogar, A. H., Azeem, M., & Shakoor, A. (2011). Evaluation of curriculum development process. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(14), 263-271.
- Hussain, A., Salfi, N., & Mahmood, T. (2011). Causes of students' dropout at primary level in Pakistan: An empirical study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(12), 143-151.
- Hussain, S. A. (2001). *Education in Pakistan*. Allama Iqbal Open University: Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Khattak, S. G. (2012). Assessment in schools in Pakistan. *SA-eDUC*, 9(2). Retrieved from: http://www.nwu.ac.za/webfm_send/58399.
- King, E. M. (2011). Education is fundamental to development and growth: Keynote address at the education world forum. In *The World Bank, QE2 Conference Center, London*.
- Memon, G. R. (2007). Education in Pakistan: The key issues, problems, and the new challenges. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 47-55.
- Rowell, P. N., & Prophet, R. (1990). Curriculum-in-action: The practical dimension in Botswana classrooms. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 10(1), 17-26.
- Sassila, R. (2010). A proposed proposal to ensure the quality of the educational environment in kindergartens in the Syrian Republic. *University of Damascus Journal*, 26, 235-280.
- Shah, D., Haider, G., & Taj, T. (2019). Causes of dropout rate at primary level in Pakistan. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 11(2), 38-74.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (1983). The CIPP model for program evaluation. In G. F. Madaus, M. S. Scriven & D. L. Stufflebeam (Eds.), *Evaluation models: Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation*. Dordrecht: Springer. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-6669-7_7.

- Ullah, A. (2013). Right to Free and Compulsory Education in Pakistan after 18th Constitutional Amendment. *South Asian Studies*, 28(2), 329-340.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, (2004). *Education for All Global Mentoring Report 2005*. Paris: France.
- United Nations Human Rights. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>.
- United Nations. General Assembly. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights* (Vol. 3381). Department of State, United States of America.
- Zhang, G., Zeller, N., Griffith, R., Metcalf, D., Williams, J., Shea, C., & Misulis, K. (2011). Using the context, input, process, and product evaluation model (CIPP) as a comprehensive framework to guide the planning, implementation, and assessment of service-learning programs. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 15(4), 57-84.