Factors Directing Curriculum Debate among Teacher Educators in Pakistan

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This qualitative study has investigated the factors directing curriculum debate among teacher educators in Pakistan. Having potential to create informal discussions, focus groups were used as data collection method. The data were analysed through constant comparison analysis. Focus groups were held till the point of data saturation. The findings indicated that globalization is shaping curriculum debate among teacher educators in Pakistan. The respondents described effective school curriculum in terms of its economic utility for the students. They argued that development of English Language Proficiency and ICTs literacy must be the core focus of school curricula as they are the determinants of success regarding further studies or employment in multinational companies. Education for sustainable development did not emerge as a key theme in the study.

Key words: *globalization, internationalization, digital technologies, English language, education for sustainable development*

Introduction

Under the influence of globalization, "education has been repositioned as a vital tool for creating and maintaining economic prosperity and for retaining a competitive edge in world markets" (Maguire 2010, p.59). Competition in the global markets is infusing business like targets in education (Zajda, 2009; Priestley, 2002). Repositioning of education is changing curricular expectations. Pinar (2003) contends that a worldwide field of curriculum studies is emerging under the influence of globalization. Yates & Grummet (2011) believe that curriculum development is becoming heavily permeated by global movements and issues, and has been influenced by international bodies. American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (AAACS) is one such organization aiming at supporting a "worldwide" – but not "uniform" – field of curriculum studies (AAACS Constitution). Ledger, Vidovich & O' Donoghue (2014, p.7) remind about the global influences on curriculum policy by maintaining that "it is important to keep in mind that curriculum policy is often influenced by

local, national and global forces and agendas, and is translated by policy actors at each level". Winter (2012) states that international, national as well as local forces are framing hybrid curriculum policies. The aim of such policies is to meet the international, national and local needs. Reid's (1999) model of curriculum change included globalization as the first phase in the change process signifying the fundamental nature of the influence. Along with globalization, Education for Sustainable Development has emerged as an important theme in the past few decades. United Nations declared 2005–2014 as of Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The major goal of the decade was to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning to create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations.

Though globalization and education for sustainable development have become key themes in contemporary curriculum discourse, no empirical

studies have been done to investigate their influence on contemporary curriculum debate in Pakistan. Being an ideological state, Pakistan has used education as a national impetus to promote nationalism and spirit of Islam among the youth. National education policies 1979, 1992, 1998 & 2009 explicitly mentioned this focus. The curriculum reforms and textbook development reciprocate the targets of education policies. A study titled "The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan, Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics" was done in 2003 to investigate the extent of ideological and religious emphasis in the curricula and textbooks. The study highlighted the insensitivity of the curricula and textbooks towards religious diversity and it was concluded that curricula and textbooks were responsible for creating sectarian divide within the society. The Government of Pakistan appointed a special task force comprising of people from Ministry of Education, experts and teacher educators to prepare a reformed curricula. The task force prepared standard-based curricula of different subjects in 2006 and 2007. In 2010, the education was decentralized to provinces and they were made responsible for making laws on education and devise curricula. However, till now, no province has produced its new set of curricula rather they have adopted the national curricula prepared in 2006 & 2007.

This study has investigated the factors shaping curriculum debate among teacher educators in Pakistan. Teacher educators were chosen as study participants because they are the key players in Pakistani education. They teach courses of "Curriculum Studies" and "Curriculum Development" at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. They also observe and guide student teachers in making mid-term and short term curriculum plans during teaching practice. They observe student teachers during their teaching practice and provide them feedback to improve their instructional practice. Some of the teacher educators also participated in preparation of national curricula 2006 & 2007.

This study did not intend to extend curriculum theory under globalization or sustainable development rather report contemporary curriculum debate among important curriculum players i.e. teacher educators in Pakistan. Such an investigation was considered significant as the findings would indicate the direction of new curriculum policy at the provincial level, curriculum reform in schools and curriculum of teacher education.

Research Question

What factors are directing curriculum debate among teacher educators in Pakistan?

In this study, curriculum debate includes arguments, opinions, perceptions, orientations on curriculum.

Literature Review

The concept of curriculum is constructed and influenced by a number of factors. Walker (2003) believes that all curriculum theories are social constructions in a certain time and place. Literature shows that globalization, internationalization of education, digital technologies, education for sustainable development are the major influences on current curricular debate. The following sub-sections discuss the influence of these factors on curriculum debate in detail.

Globalization

The term globalization is a multifaceted construct. Babones (2007) notes that there is no consensus over what we mean by globalization. Theorists have explained different dimensions of globalization while elaborating the term. From Wallerstein's (1974) 'world-systems' to Castells' (1996, 2000) 'the space of flows' and 'network society'; from Giddens (1990) 'time-space distanciation' to Arjun Appadurai's (1996) 'global scapes', the term globalization has been elaborated with different lenses. Waters (2001) described globalization as a social process in which the constraints of geography, economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede. "This 'social process of globalization' is influenced by movement of people, money, services, goods, images and ideas around the world" (Leask, 2008).

The 'movement' of people, services and ideas has affected the field of curriculum. Rivera (2003, p.571) found that "just a few decades ago, it was noted that the old curricula of developing countries reflected the needs and influence of their

colonizers. The emerging curricula at the dawn of the new millennium anticipate the demands of the new social, political, and cultural structures in the umbrae of international market and the global cultural economy". Rivera (2003, p.570) also asserts that "the reality of globalization and the Information Age served as a requisite in the construction of new identities. Now more than ever do we all witness a direct link among curriculum, curriculum theorizing, and the demands of late capitalist enterprise".

Internationalization of Education

Internationalization along with digital technologies have been reported as major causes of globalized education. Appadurai (1990) cited in Leask (2008, p.2) contends that "the cross-border provision of education is an important contributor to the growth of a global knowledge society". International education involves "international policies, international curriculum, international schools, teachers, students, communities, cultures, professional development and international resources" (Ledger, Vidovich, & O'Donoghue, 2014, p.45). International schools (international, local, religious-based, commercially-based) are diverse marketplaces for international education (Hayden & Thompson, 2011). While discussing global education brands like: IBO, the International Primary Curriculum and the International Middle Curriculum, Ledger, Vidovich, & O'Donoghue(2014, p. 42) maintain that "affiliated international curricular and assessment organizations have also emerged, aligning themselves to each of the above-mentioned large organizations. As a result, they are transforming themselves into manufacturers of globally branded educational goods and services". International accreditation councils are yet another initiative of global educational brands. "The Council for International Schools, the Northern European International Schools Association, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges" (Ledger, Vidovich, & O'Donoghue, 2014, p. 42) are some examples.

International education has changed language scape of education. Many universities in non-English speaking countries offer courses in English to international students. Chew (1999, p.45) suggests that "the growth in the use of English should be seen more as part of the worldwide movement of 'globalism' rather than as an aspect of

linguicism". Graddol & Meinhof (1999) and Hayden & Thompson (2011) believe that English has become language of technology and international schools prefer recruiting teachers from English-speaking countries. Chew (1999, p. 41) in a study in Singaporean context also noted that the parents wanted their children to study in English medium schools because they knew that lack of a command in English would mean the continued marginalisation of their children. It would also deny them access to the extensive resources available in English. English Language as a global force is directing changes in education policies and curricula. National Education Policy of Pakistan 2009 states that: "English is an international language, and important for competition in a globalised world order" (Ministry of Education, 2009b, p.4). 'Vision 2025' of Pakistan has also included a commitment regarding teaching of global languages at school level (Planning Commssion, 2014). Leask (2008, p.2) argues that the key role played by English in the popular media and on the Internet has resulted in an increased demand for English language education". Though English Language has been discussed in literature as a language of international significance, it has also been viewed as an 'imperialist force' by some theorists like Phillipson (1992, 2008, 2013), Pennycook (1995, 1998), Kachru (1998) and BOWERS (1995). Marginson (2003) also contends that global education markets are colonizing local cultures and identities by extending English language and Americanised practices.

Digital Technologies

Digital age has changed the concept of movement of people, ideas and services. Digital technologies are changing knowledge, social relationships, communication and literacy rapidly (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012) putting pressure on education consistently. Ferneding (2004) considers diffusion of electronic technologies in education as inevitable in furthering a globalized market. Parsons & Beauchamp (2012) maintain that there were nearly 2.7 billion searches every month in the year 2006 but the number increased to more than thirty billion in 2012. This has resulted into more information generation as compared to the information generated in past five thousand years. Parsons & Beauchamp (2012, p.193) have cited Software & Information Industry Association (2010)

and The Foundation for Excellence in Education (2009) who noted that:

> "The current industrial age, assembly-line educational model that is based on fixed time, place, pace and curriculum is insufficient in today's society and knowledge-based economy. Today digital interaction and learning through social media, the Internet, and mobile devices are a way of life for most teens everywhere except in education" (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012).

Lingard (2010) views simple classroom pedagogies as pedagogies of enclosure and states that new technologies have challenged these pedagogies of enclosure (Lingard, 2010, p.171). Technology has given birth to new pedagogies which are more engaging and easily accessible. To Parsons & Beauchamp (2012), technology is no longer a supplement rather an essential part of the core curriculum as it is integral to students' lives outside of the classroom. The information age has coined new terms in curriculum field like: blended curriculum, responsive curriculum. Moll (2005) cited in (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012) views responsive curriculum as a curriculum which is responsive to economic competetiveness, culture and to the subject matter and the growing access to these materials for learners.

Beetham, McGill & Littlejohn (2009) in LLiDA project 'Thriving in the 21st century: Learning Literacies for the Digital Age' affirm that education needs to change fundamentally and digital literacies would be part of this fundamental change. They believe that literacy changes continuously rather than discontinuously as technologies change. With changes in technology new forms of literacy emerge and the curricula need to be responsive to emerging literacies. Though digital literacy is necessity of the day and future, Beetham, McGill, & Littlejohn (2009, p.10) have warned against the danger of digital literacies becoming a new orthodoxy: a set of terms to be laid over existing policies and institutional practices without any real changes to how learners experience their relationships with knowledge, learning and technology.

Education for Sustainable Development

In response to the effects of globalization, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has also received attention. Bindé (2002, 391) believes that there is a need "to humanize globalization to make it a promise and a goal and to give it meaning". Zajda (2010, ibid) argues that "educators have always challenged the economic and political forces that have shaped society. And now it is the very future of Earth that is the central concern. Education for sustainability must become embedded in education for all and at all levels of schooling. It is central to the difficult and complex transition … to ecological sustainability". Smith (2007) asserts that foremost priority of education ought to be increasing students' understanding of sustainable social system and its urgent need. Hough (1991) has perceived ESD inevitable for common good. To O'Sullivan (2000), "the fundamental educational task of our times is to make the choice of a sustainable planetary habitat of interdependent life forms over and against the pathos of the global competitive marketplace" (cited in Moraes, 2003, p.216).

Power (1995) views changing role of education in 21st century under profound scientific and technological revolutions. He maintains that education must prepare the citizens of today to live and work in the world of tomorrow. Power (1995) warns: "Our very survival may ultimately depend upon our success in confronting this challenge [culture of peace]". Dalin& Rust (1996), Delors (1996), Binde (2002), Smith (2010) view peace education as a central theme in 21st century's education.Delors (1996, p.13) insists that "in confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice". Jenkins (2007 & 2008) has advocated an urgent need of peace education in teacher education. Geoffrey Smith (2003) has explained tenets of peace oriented curriculum and pedagogy. To Smith true learning is oriented to peace (p.49).

Though need of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been stressed in literature, what constitutes ESD is not very explicit. Smith (2010) views ESD as a holistic theme by

maintaining that "social justice, peace-building, security and sustainable development are inseparable, and hence, education in, for and about sustainability has the potential to contribute significantly to pathways to peace". Tedesco, Opertti, & Amadio (2011, p.11) have also included a range of sub-themes under the umbrella of ESD. They are: "values education, civic and citizenship education, health education, education for HIV and AIDS prevention, human rights education, ICT, gender equality, and environmental education". They also noticed that among the sub themes, environmental education is the most frequently mentioned theme in curriculum documents (in more than 50 countries). To Smith (2010), ESD is concerned with how humans interact with their total environment, address sustainability issues holistically through the curriculum, apply transdisciplinary approach, critical and reflective processes and transformational pedagogies.

Study Method

This qualitative study used grounded theory approach and employed reciprocal processes of data collection, analysis, interpretation and theory development as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Data Collection Method

This study used Focus Groups (FGs) to generate "informal group discussion" (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 345) on the research focus i.e. 'contemporary curriculum'. FGs helped in providing "an audience for each other" (Kitzinger 1994). The study used five focus groups to gather data. FGs were organized till the 'saturation point' reached.

Study Participants/ Respondents

Thirty six teacher educators (twenty one female and fifteen male), conveniently selected from five public sector institutions and one private sector institution were selected for the Focus Group to get representation of both sectors.. The sample was selected employing purposive sampling because "a randomly sampled group is unlikely to hold a shared perspective on the research topic and may not even be able to generate meaningful discussions" (Morgan, 1997, p.35). The study was delimited to teacher educators working in Punjab, and Islamabad for the sake of convenience.

Selection Criteria

Initially, it was decided that the respondents (teacher educators) included in the study would be the ones who had taught a course on curriculum studies to B.Ed. or M.Ed. students for minimum four semesters and had practical experience of curriculum development. However, after the first two focus groups, the emerging themes changed the selection criteria because themes were too generic. In later focus groups, only fewer participants had taught course on "curriculum studies". Being teacher educators, all respondents had been supervising student teachers during teaching practicum. As the research question tried to trace the influences on curriculum debate, therefore, it was important that teacher educators were aware of current curricular practices in schools.

Composition of Focus Group

The groups were not completely homogenous, an expectation in a focus group (Morgan, 1997). However, an effort was made to maximize homogeneity in terms of gender and age in Group 1-3 to "ensure that the participants in each group both have something to say about the topic and feel comfortable saying it to each other (Morgan, 1997, p.36). Moderator and assistant moderator had to play more active role to monitor group dynamics (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009) in Focus Group 4 and 5.

Table

Profile of Focus Groups

Composition	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Number of participants	8	7	8	6	7
Maximum Qualification	MPhil	MPhil	PhD	MPhil	PhD
Minimum Qualification	Masters	Masters	Masters	Masters	Masters
Gender	All Males	All Females	All Females	2 Females + 4 Males	3 Females + 4 Males
Age	38-49	45-52	40-54	30-43	42-63
Administrative Role	No	No	No	No	Yes
Organization	Same	Same	Same	Different	Different
Organization Type	Public	Public	Public	Private	Public + Private

Among thirty six respondents, five held doctoral degrees- two from abroad and three from Pakistan. Overall, six respondents had some international exposure.

Contrasting to the "rules of thumb" i.e. completely homogenous group, and relatively structured interview with high moderator involvement (Morgan, 1992a), the study was done with acquaintances, using open-ended discussion with little involvement of the moderator. "Rules of thumb" were violated because "acquaintanceship was unavoidable" as three out of five focus group sessions were done on the sites of three organizations. In two of the organizations, authors worked while one organization was requested by the reserachers to facilitate the research.

Data Collection Procedure

1. For group 1-3, study objectives were shared with the heads of the institution or education department and they were requested to identify 12 or more potential participants for the focus groups in the light of the recruitment criteria and minimum age variance.
2. The researchers held telephonic conversations or personal meetings with the potential respondents to share study objectives and requested them to be part of the focus group interview. The participation was voluntary without any monetary benefits.
3. For group 4 and 5, the researchers requested individual teacher educators and gathered them at two different venues. The participants were not offered any monetary benefits. They agreed to participate in the study voluntarily.
4. Focus Groups were scheduled on mutually agreed dates. On average each Focus Group lasted for 1 ½ hours. The researchers themselves took the role of moderator and assistant moderator.

Interview

Considering the exploratory nature of the study, less structured interview was conducted because "less structured approaches to focus groups are especially useful for exploratory research… What makes less structured focus groups such a strong tool for exploratory research is the fact that a group of interested participants can spark a lively discussion among themselves without much guidance from either the researcher's questions or the moderator's direction" (Morgan, 1997, p.40). The question discussed in each focus group was: *"How do you describe effective school curriculum for the 21st century?* Auxiliary questions included: *What should be included in school curricula? What are the urgent issues which need to be addressed through curricula? What may be the role of teachers in contemporary curriculum?*

Notes were taken by the moderator and assistant moderator throughout the session. The notes included points from introduction, discussion and debriefing session. The focus group interviews were audio-taped. The researchers listened to the

tape of the focus groups and then created an abridged transcript to answer the research question. Names mentioned in the data are made-up names to keep anonymity.

Data Analysis

Wilkinson (2003, p. 203) argues that there is "no single canonical – or even preferred – way of analysing (focus group) data". The literature suggests different ways of analyzing focus group data including "cross-coding" (Kidd & Parshall, 2000, p.300), discourse analysis (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009) or describing group data interactrion (Carey, 1995) etc. The study aimed at exploring the content of curriculum debate instead of the process through which debate took a direction. Therefore, group data have been analysed through *'Constant Comparison Analysis'* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It included chunking of data into small units and codifying them; grouping codes into categories (axial coding); and developing themes (selective coding) to reflect content of the groups (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). Along with group data, frequencies of individual responses were also calculated **in case of differences** to acknowledge individuals' voice. Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran (2009) believe that enumerating the frequency of a particular viewpoint or experience in focus group data actually expands the data set rather than reduces it (p.9).

Findings

The data highlighted that the curriculum debate among the study respondents revolved around the following themes.

- International education standards
- English Language
- Information Communication Technologies
- Conservation of Cultural Values/ Ideology
- Peace Education

International Education Standards

Quality of curriculum in comparison with international standards of education emerged as one of the themes. Interestingly, all members in all focus groups maintained that today's world is highly competitive and students would be left behind if they do not experience high quality education. They also agreed that the current national curricula in Pakistan are in line with international standards but students cannot get the benefits of the revised curricula if curricula are not implemented in classrooms.

> *The school education department should ensure the implementation of national curricula in schools to help children acquire higher order thinking skills. The national curricula produced by ministry of education, Pakistan in 2006 and 2007 are of international quality. However, their implementation at the provincial level has yet to be done. (FG1)*

Focus group 2 and 5 also maintained that in today's world of competition, school curricula need to be of high academic standard so that students may find employment easily. Participants in FG 2 mentioned that "*School curriculum does not have academic quality. Pakistani students acquire degrees (Masters & MPhil) but remain jobless. On the other hand, a student completing A level studies gets job relatively easily because of better skills*". Participants in FG 5 charged assessment system for children's poor thinking skills. They mentioned that the "*New curricula have been developed in terms of learning outcomes but assessment is still content-based. Things will not improve unless there is coherence between curriculum and assessment. We need to promote standard-based curricula so that our product i.e. students, is of high quality. Only a quality product has a market*".

FG3 and FG4 also maintained that school curriculum should be in line with global trends and changes otherwise students would be left behind. Besides, they also highlighted the importance of teacher in curriculum implementation. FG 3 argued that "*We may follow O or A level curricula in public sector schools but if teachers cannot teach well, the curriculum document would not benefit*. Similarly, FG 4 also urged the teachers to update their knowledge and skills to teach according to the international teaching standards. The participants said that *"teachers training should be of international level to enable them to teach for international level curricula"*.

Above responses indicate that the study respondents are aware of global competition in job market and want students to experience a curriculum which may prepare them for global competition.

English Language

The issue of English Language emerged as a major theme in all five focus groups (FG). The respondents highlighted the importance of English either in international perspective or in the context of employment. Though there was some disagreement regarding more time allocation for teaching of English, all participants agreed that school curriculum must enable children to be fluent in English Language.

Many respondents perceived English Language as the need of time. They maintained that English Language is the Language of books, internet and media. Therefore schools should ensure that the children become proficient in their English Language skills to access and share knowledge effectively. Four of the respondents maintained that if the teachers do not have effective English Language skills then they should be provided quality training opportunities to develop their skills instead of teaching children in local language.

> *Government of Punjab did an experiment with medium of instruction in 2010. English was declared as medium of instruction. PEELI report (British Council's Research) highlighted issues with teachers' language skills and the decision has been reversed. It is not a solution. Teachers must be trained to improve their language ability. Training may be done by British Council or any other international organization.*
> *[Kamran]*

Though all members emphasized on effective teaching of English Language, two of them asked for equal emphasis on Urdu too.

> *"We should learn English and make our children proficient in English because it has become a tool for knowledge access. However, we should make sure that our children learn our national language (Urdu) too. They should not view Urdu or other local languages inferior".*

The participants also highlighted the importance of English in job prospects. They all agreed that people who are fluent in English get high job positions. While others might be very good in their field but they are discriminated on the basis of language. The participants maintained that school curricula should be realistic and develop students' language skills so that they do not suffer in their later lives.

One of the respondent insisted:

> *Our children talk in local languages (Punjabi, Pashtu, Sindhi, Balochi, Hindkuetc) at home, in Urdu in school and for jobs they need to learn English. We know that English is the language of official communication then why do we dedicate a lot of time in timetable to teach Urdu. Urdu may be made an optional subject. We should leave our idealism and offer students what is needed locally and internationally.*
> *(Alia)*

Other group members did not fully agree with Alia and maintained that status of Urdu should not be compromised because of English. However, they all agreed that students should be given more time to learn English Language.

Focus Group 3 also highlighted the importance of English Language in higher studies locally and abroad. They maintained that deficiency in English badly impacts students' performance in other subjects too as the learning materials are in English. All group members also mentioned that students may avail opportunities for higher studies only if they are proficient in English Language. One of the members mentioned:

> *Higher Education Commission is offering scholarships for further studies in abroad. Passing IELTS or TOFEL examination has become a basic requirement in getting admission in foreign universities. Many students fail to avail scholarships because of their weak English Language skills. Our curriculum should make children fluent in English.* *(Asma)*

Like FG1, members of FG3 suggested that teachers should be trained on English Language by British Council or any other international or renowned, local organization.

Besides discussing English as a tool of knowledge access and sharing, FG4 viewed English language as

an inevitable reality of today's job market. One of the members mentioned:

> *Whether we like it or not but English is today's reality. People do not get jobs if they are not proficient in English Language. To get job in Metro, Hyper-Star, Pizza Hut, McDonald's or KFC, one needs to be proficient in English at least at conversation level.* [Kaleem]

Though the group members agreed with Kaleem, however, two of them also mentioned that besides Focus Group 5 also discussed the importance of English language in school curriculum as a tool to access knowledge. They argued that students language skills cannot be improved unless teachers' language skills are not enhanced. For this they suggested that teachers should be seriously trained.

Information Communication Technologies

Thoughts regarding integration of digital technologies in school curriculum constituted major chunk of focus group discussions. The respondents appreciated that digital technologies are transforming our lives and curricula needs to be in line with the changes taking place outside the school. They asserted that children should be made ICT literate.

All members of FG1 agreed that Information Communication Technologies need to be an essential part of school curriculum. However, half of the members highlighted the issue of infrastructure in Pakistan. They asserted that:

> *Private sector schools allow children to do projects on computer. They have developed online linkages too. But public sector curricula cannot afford all this. Our schools do not have computers. If they have some equipment, there is no electricity and no internet facility. Unfortunately, the only technology available to our children is book and chalk.* [Ali]

The remaining four members strongly put their point saying that: "*If there is a will, there is way. They insisted that infrastructure is undoubtedly an issue but the will is the real issue*". They maintained that: "*There are some urban public schools which have all these facilities but technology is only partially

used because school administration and teachers are not fully convinced on the use of ICT*".

Focus groups 2, 3 & 5 asked for integration of digital technology in school curricula. The participants agreed to the thought that if the schools cannot lead the change of technology; they should at least follow the change and bring innovations in the use of technology. A member of FG2 stated:

> *Schools should aggressively adopt the change. One tablet or a laptop is much more useful resource than 100 textbooks bought in four to five years. Schools should provide these resources.*
>
> [Alia]

The participants also highlighted that ICT literacy is 'the literacy' in today's world. A member in FG3 stated that:

> *Banking, shopping, medical testing, record keeping, everything is technology based. Education is still out-dated. Students should be introduced new technologies as early as possible as it is difficult to learn their use in advance age.* [Kaleem]

FG 4 discussed information communication technologies as a new form of literacy. Four of the members insisted that the schools should value ICT the way they value traditional literacy i.e. language and numeracy. Two of the members mentioned that *Technology is a new form of literacy and old PhD professors are also learning this new literacy.*

Like FG1, three members in FG4 also highlighted the limitations of public sector schools regarding the incorporation of digital technologies in curricula. One of the members strongly disagreed with the possibility of integrating ICTs in curriculum by saying that: "*our teaching staff is not ICT literate; computer syllabi are out-dated; infrastructure is not there, how can we integrate ICTs in all curricula? We should see our ground realities and then plan curriculum*".

Conservation of Ideology

Globalization was perceived as a threat to cultural values by all focus groups except by some members of FG2 and FG4. They placed responsibility on curriculum to conserve traditional values. FG 1 maintained that the school curriculum should be in line with international standards.

However, our own ideology should not be compromised.

FG 3, FG4 and FG 5 blamed media, particularly social media for making children disobedient and disrespectful to adults. They also argued that ICTs are important but they are not alternative of a teacher. They maintained that blogs and other media networks may be used for educational purposes but under teacher's supervision. Teacher should be a central figure in directing technology based learning. FG 5 stated: *Teachers should learn the use of technology and guide children. Otherwise, they would lose their control in class and children would become disrespectful to them.*

FG 3 maintained that curriculum is much more than content of academic disciplines which are taught in schools. It has ideological foundation too. The members suggested that: *Through institutional and hidden curricula we need to inculcate values of respect and obedience among our children. We know that technology is serving as a medium for cultural exposure and mixing but schools can serve as filters.*

Three members of FG2 did not see globalization as a threat to indigenous culture; rather, they viewed incorporation of foreign influences as enrichment of culture. One member asserted that "w*e should allow our culture to grow and it is possible if it welcomes foreign influence".* Two of the members agreed with the thought. However, the whole group criticized the national policy for prohibiting youtube in the country.

Peace Education

Peace education also appeared as a curricular emphasis in all of the focus groups. They agreed on putting in efforts to promote tolerance and peace in schools. They insisted that Islam teaches peace and the people who are not peaceful are not true Muslims.

> *Islam is the religion of peace and holy prophet did his best to establish peace in Makkah and Madina.*
>
> *[FG1 & FG4]*
>
> *Islam does not allow any muslim to kill any human. Prophet said that killing one human is killing the whole humanity.*
>
> *[FG2 & FG4]*
>
> *People are misusing the name of Islam. The people who are killing others cannot be Muslims. We should teach true spirit of Islam i.e. peace for all.* *[FG1, FG3, FG5]*

Two members in FG2 and one in FG5 mentioned peace education as an essential human value. One member in FG 2 said that: "*Concept of peace is not peculiar to Islam only. We all agree that no religion promotes brutality. If we teach students that we should be peaceful because Islam says that would again lead to exclusion".* Another member in FG 5 said that "*Peace does not have a religion. It is essentially a human value. If our hidden curricula silently promote democratic values among children, it would ultimately be peace education.*

Discussion

The paper aimed at identifying the factors influencing the curricular debate among teacher educators in Pakistan. The findings indicate that internationalization and globalization are the major influences on curricular debate in Pakistan. Education for sustainable development could not be found as a major influence on the curricular discourse. The finding is in line with Fraser & Bosanquet (2006) who contend that societal changes like globalisation and internationalisation are among the factors responsible for shaping curriculum framework. Reference of McDonald, Metro, Hyper-Star, Pizza Hut and KFC in the focus group indicates influence of global economic enterprises on local curriculum debate. The respondents advocated a curriculum that leads to developing students' English language skills, thinking skills, and ICT literacy so that they could study abroad and work in global world. The respondents compared local syllabi with O' and A' level syllabi and highlighted that students studying A' level finds better job than a student getting a higher degree in local education system. The data indicate that curriculum is being viewed by the teacher educators as a "key conveyance *into* the world" (Pinar, 2012, p.2). This finding shows that teacher educators are aware of the needs of global employment market. This also

indicates that teacher educators' curricular orientation is inclined towards 'social efficiency' orientation of curriculum (Schiro, 2012) which sees curriculum as a means for future job market.

A realization that school curricula should help children be fluent in English seems a paradigm shift in past 25-30 years. "When, in 1988, the Ministry of Education polled the citizens about educational policies, the majority of respondents, coming mostly from the middle class, supported schooling in the Urdu medium" (Rahman, 2002, p.103). Conversely, in this study, the respondents explicitly asked for teaching in English and suggested training of teachers in English Language so that they could teach in English. A voice questioning the idealism of teaching national language was also heard in the interviews. This shows that though Urdu has served as an ideological language in Pakistan since independence (Rahman, 2002), international status of English has been acknowledged by the respondents strengthening the stance that "English is a global lingua franca" (McKay, 2003, p.1). The findings are also in line with what Mansoor's (2003) reported in her study with students in higher education. She found that the Pakistani students want to study English for instrumental reasons and English is seen as synonymous with progress and prosperity (p.38).

Trust in international organizations for training of teachers in English proficiency seems another effect of internationalization. Today multinational brands and international organizations are considered more trustworthy than local organizations. To gain public trust, local organizations pursue for ISO certification or any other international certification. In education, trust on international organizations may also be attributed to the phenomenon of educational branding as explained by Ledger, Vidovich, & O'Donoghue (2014, p. 42). These brands are providing services around the globe and are trusted by the local people for their international presence.

Arguments regarding place of information communication technologies in school syllabi also indicate the effect of globalization. In Pakistan, history of the use of computers is nearly 58 years old when Packages limited (a manufacturing organization) in 1957 started using computer. Pakistani banks started using mainframe computers

in 1967 (Shaukat, 2009). However, in education and curricula computers did not appear till 1990. ICTs received an explicit focus for the first time in national education policy in 1998. This study indicates that the respondents are aware of the fact that in Pakistan, education sector has not initiated and promoted the use of computer and ICTs. They insisted schools to adopt the change and take a lead role in diverse use of technologies. Their stance that ICT literacy is 'the literacy' and that schools should provide digital learning resources instead of textbooks signifies that "globalization is generating new synthetic visions of education" (WAKS, 2003) and new definitions of literacy.

Data indicate conflict between aspirations for economic development and cultural, religious values. The reason behind this tension may be individuals' beliefs regarding supremacy of their religion and their religious identity. Religious beliefs are usually developed in early years. Ertmer (2005) noted that the beliefs related to individual's identity are stronger than other beliefs, possibly because they were established during earlier experiences and were used in the subsequent experiences.

Though globalization and internationalization are influencing curricular debates in Pakistan, they are causing conflicts too. On one hand, teacher educators wanted incorporation of digital technologies but on the other hand they wanted a restricted use of social media. Presence of Internet is challenging teachers' identity. Traditional teacher is viewed as a 'source of knowledge' but internet has changed this view. Now internet is serving as a repository of knowledge. It is helping in knowledge creation too. Respondents want ICT based education but at the same time they want children to follow teachers. They have a fear of losing students' respect which they get for their position as teachers. McGill, & Littlejohn (2009, p.67) have suggested teachers to demonstrate a shift from "we know, we teach you' to 'Learners' digital skills being recognised, rewarded and used as a resource for the learning community". This shift might lead to reducing tensions.

Education for sustainable development (ESD) did not emerge as a theme in the study. Though the respondents talked about tolerance and peace education, their reasoning lacked orientation of sustainability. The respondents advocated peace

education because that is part of 'religious prescription'. The study respondents did not talk about sustainable future in terms of ecological environment or social justice. A possible reason for this could be lack of educational and professional exposure about these issues. Another reason could be lack of international role models. The concept of education for sustainable development is relatively in its infancy and no established models of ESD exist. Orr (1999) cited in Smith (2010) has critiqued Western Education by insisting that Western education system prepares students almost exclusively for an urban existence and dependence on fossil fuels and global trade. It is also noteworthy that education for sustainable development is not a well-addressed theme in Pakistan. Governmental documents like national education policy (Ministry of Education, 2009b), national professional standards for teachers (Ministry of Education, 2009a) or B.Ed. Honours Curriculum (2012) have not included sustainable development or environmental care as a policy statement or as a standard for teachers' preparation.

Conclusion

The study findings indicate that globalization is serving as a powerful influence on curriculum debate in Pakistan. The respondents greatly emphasized those aspects of curriculum which could increase employment opportunities for the graduates locally and internationally. The study indicates that multinationals are silently influencing curricular priorities in a 'periphery country'. Ecological sustainability and social justice appeared as non-existent themes in the study. It is notable that whether globalization is affecting curriculum discourse in economic perspectives or is creating conflicts, it has emerged as an important factor in constituting the content of curriculum debate among the study respondents. It strengthens the view that "globalization is an influence, a powerful influence on school life and ideologies" (Apple, 2004).

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