



Original Article


Teachers’ Professional Knowledge of Lesson Plans and Its Practices of Teaching: A Case of Quetta Secondary Schools



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Abstract

Teachers' professional knowledge and its implementation are part and parcel of the comprehensive students' academic achievements. This study aimed to assess the practice of teachers' professional knowledge of lesson plans for teaching Pakistan studies at the secondary school level. The study's research design was descriptive, using a quantitative method. The total population of the study comprised 56 male teachers of secondary schools. The researcher used a convenience sampling technique to select 40 male teachers teaching Pakistan studies to classes 9 and 10. Data were collected through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire using Google Forms using SPSS version 25, and frequencies and percentages were computed. The study's findings reveal that while teaching Pakistan studies, teachers develop logically structured lesson plans that engage all students in the classroom according to students' needs. It also focuses on the sequence of a single lesson and gives step-by-step instructions. However, it was also assessed that teachers do not identify clear learning objectives of the lessons, align content to appropriate cognitive skills, activities and assessment of lessons, use learning materials effectively in the classroom and plan various instructional strategies for different lessons. It is recommended that teachers be provided with professional training to improve their skills of developing lesson plan skills, and the teachers' education programs impart different instructional strategies for teaching social sciences subjects.

Keywords: Lesson plans, Professional knowledge , Teachers' practices

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional knowledge includes content, pedagogical, curriculum, and learners' knowledge. If teachers have sound professional knowledge and competencies and cannot practice these in the classroom setting, it is worthless. Therefore, teachers' professional knowledge and its implementation are part and parcel of the comprehensive students' academic achievements. Presently, special attention is being paid to improving teacher education and teaching practices for the students' learning outcomes.

Teachers' professionalism is well-defined as teachers' obligation and responsibilities to control, manage, and build their knowledge and practices for the learners' academic achievements (Webb et al., 2004). Teacher professionalism refers to the total enhancement of teacher practices, skills, and attitudes (Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020). Teacher's professional knowledge encompasses subject matter, curriculum, and pedagogical knowledge. According to Omar et al. (2020), the major goals of teaching are to assist students in acquiring, remembering, and applying knowledge; creating routines and developing attitudes; increasing their knowledge base; and comprehending the fundamental concepts and guidelines of the subject matter. Professional teachers know how to instruct and their position, which is vital to advancing education and the nation (Omar, et al., 2000). Therefore, teachers must practice their learning and competencies in the classroom. Ajayi et al. (2020) assert that effective educators with a strong foundation in the subject matter, the necessary pedagogical training, and a positive teaching style substantially impact students' academic success.

Pakistan teaches Pakistan Studies as a compulsory subject from secondary to bachelor level. Therefore, it is a moral and professional obligation of teachers to make efforts to promote the ideology of Pakistan and preserve national integration to bring social cohesion and cultural harmony among the masses. While teaching Pakistan Studies, some professional competencies and skills need to be owned by teachers to teach Pakistan Studies. The National Curriculum of Pakistan Studies for classes 9 and 10 articulates different aspects of teaching the subject such as, the aim and objectives, teaching, and assessment methods of Pakistan Studies.

Similarly, in the course content of B Ed, teaching of Pakistan Studies is taught as a course. The basic aims and objectives of the subject are to impart the teaching competencies for teaching Pakistan Studies to prospective teachers so that they can teach Pakistan Studies well. The course contents of the teaching of Pakistan Studies (Course Code: 8640) of Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad comprises various units to improve the teacher's professional knowledge and skills, like methods of teaching, techniques of teaching, teaching aids and instructional resources, lesson planning, and assessment techniques.

Singh (2004) stresses that social studies teachers should complete a professional training course to be

knowledgeable about successful teaching methods, audio-visual aids, and child psychology. He further says that educational approaches teach students to think constructively, reason, and critically. Many basic teacher-education programs worldwide offer pedagogical, subject-centered, and practical learning opportunities to help pre-service teachers prepare for giving a particular lesson or a component of lessons (Flores, 2016). Lesson planning is the systematic preparation of instructional objectives, preparation, environments, resources, and learning testing and assessment.

Unfortunately, lesson planning practices are few and far in our educational institutions. Furthermore, wherever it exists, it is quite traditional and only remains for the sake of formality in the institutions. The majority of teachers do not organize their lessons on a day-to-day or weekly basis. The teachers fail to plan their lessons; they do not keep track of their lesson plans in their diaries, and the principals do not review these diaries. During in-service training, the teachers do not receive adequate lesson preparation instructions (Gujjar et al., 2011).

A study by Malik (2012) found that teachers had a positive outlook on the importance of instructional planning in successful teaching. Teachers thought that instructional planning was extremely important and necessary for good teaching. However, the analysis outcomes revealed that most instructors did not organize and plan their lessons and the teachers prioritized cramming and memorizing various subjects. As a result, evaluating these methods in schools is critical. Therefore, the study aimed to assess the teachers' professional knowledge of lesson planning and its practices of teaching Pakistan Studies at the secondary school level. In this regard, the aspect of the practice of lesson planning for teaching Pakistan Studies was studied to identify whether teachers practice their professional knowledge of lesson plans in classrooms or not.

Objectives of the Study

To assess the practice of teachers' professional knowledge of lesson plans for teaching Pakistan Studies at the secondary school level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Flores (2016), teaching entails creating conditions that promote effective learning. Instructional planning and tactics are the most important abilities for effective teaching. Instructional planning means making the steps teachers expect to take when teaching students to achieve a curricular or instructional goal. One of the most critical abilities teachers need to succeed in the classroom is the ability to plan for instruction (Reiser & Mory, 1991). Adequate instructional preparation and methods are critical for successful teaching. Students may be very motivated throughout effective schooling. All aspects must be carefully determined to motivate pupils during the instructional process. The following principles must be followed during the decision-making process:

- Considering the planning process by clearly outlining the broad goals and detailed objectives that students can be expected to reach;
- Constructing teaching activities to assist students in meeting those goals and objectives;
- Developing instruments for assessment to measure their progress toward those goals and objectives.

In the light of students' achievement of each goal and attitudes toward educational activities, it is important to revise the instructions (Reiser & Mory, 1991). Reports and research studies argued that instructional planning includes identified goals, objectives, teaching strategies, lesson planning, materials, assessment, and feedback (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1996). The importance of classroom instructional preparation and techniques cannot be overstated. Teachers who are knowledgeable about instructional planning and techniques, enable students to learn from available resources, promote collaborative pedagogy, and value different approaches to problem-solving. A good teacher should be well-versed in the various teaching methods used in various subjects. Such abilities ensure that students learn as much as possible in the classroom.

The development of appropriate teaching skills is facilitated by teacher education programs (Anbesie, 2020). Teachers' education programs worldwide provide pedagogical, subject-specific, and practical learning opportunities to help pre-service teachers prepare to conduct a single lesson or a series of lessons

(Flores, 2016). For the said purpose, several course materials provide theoretical and practical guidance on lesson planning to perspective teachers (Scholl, 2018). According to Beyer and Davis (2009), teachers work actively to build and implement a lesson plan. Teachers learn to design lessons by considering the benefits and drawbacks of various techniques while considering their students' needs, knowledge, and objectives. Tyler (2013) inspired the traditional lesson planning technique, which consists of four steps: (a) categorizing the school's objectives, (b) selecting methodologies and learning practices to achieve those objectives, (c) consolidating teaching experiences, and (d) assessing how well objectives were met.

The systematic design of instruction, arrangements of resources and activities as well as teaching and learning testing and assessment, is what lesson planning is all about. Teachers' consciously attempts to understand learning needs of students and build a cohesive system of actions that supports the assessment of students' cognitive structures. Instructional planning helps numerous significant purposes, giving the most excellent possible learning opportunities, assisting children with special needs and making adaptations, offering direction and support to substitute instructors, covering learning expectations adequately, and appropriately allocating time.

Unfortunately, different studies demonstrate that professional knowledge and competences, as well as their application, are much lower in secondary schools, particularly in teaching social studies. According to a study by Khanum and Saeed (2020), secondary school instructors do not use instructional planning regularly. Daily lesson preparation was found to be used by only a few teachers. The practice of lesson preparation is not being followed owing to congested classrooms, time limitations and additional tasks enacted by the competent authorities on teachers. As a result, traditional techniques of instruction were used.

Similarly, according to Malik (2012), most teachers do not prioritize lesson planning before presenting the lesson and do not use inquiry, discussion, or project strategies. The reason for not employing these tactics could be that teachers are under pressure to cover curriculum content in a limited amount of time with various resources, and teaching Pakistan studies content using these strategies would need more time. Nasreen and Naz, (2011) suggest that teachers in schools cannot display lesson plans and provide numerous explanations for not having lesson plans on hand.

Furthermore, Gujjar et al. (2011) found that most teachers did not prepare their lessons regularly and daily; teachers did not save their lesson planning in diaries, and the heads of schools did not examine them. The majority of teachers believed that their in-service training did not provide them with adequate lesson planning instruction. Their boss did not assist them in preparing lesson plans and the teachers did not put their lesson planning skills to test when teaching.

Pakistan as a developing nation must change its education system to become a developed country globally. In this regard, there is a need to develop a productive educational system from kindergarten to postgraduate level. Quality teaching techniques and a quality education system are not conceivable without dedicated and quality teachers. Teachers should possess various qualities to motivate pupils to achieve high levels of learning. Quality teaching is the only way to ensure quality learning (Khanum & Saeed, 2020).

It can be concluded that Pakistan is a developing country facing various socio-economic problems. A proper education system with quality learning outcomes can solve the country's problems. For quality education, teaching methods and strategies play an important role but various studies were conducted on the topic and it was analyzed that the teachers were not professionally performing their tasks and responsibilities. The specialized practices of professional knowledge seem to be missing like lesson plans. It is time to focus on the issue and find ways to improve teaching practices so that quality education is provided to all the children across the country.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was qualitative, and a descriptive survey approach was followed.

Population

The study population comprised 56 male teachers of secondary schools teaching Pakistan studies in Quetta.

Sample

The study's sample size was drawn through the convenience sampling technique because the population of the study had the same characteristics. A total of 40 secondary school teachers made the study's sample size.

Instrument

A questionnaire was developed to collect the data for the study, in which the questions were closely linked with the study's objectives. The tool was finalized after taking suggestions from subject specialists. Three professional experts validated the content validity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha checked the instrument's reliability and its value was 0.947, which implies that the questionnaire was reliable to collect the final data from the study's respondents.

The data were collected through Google Forms questionnaire and the link was sent to the teachers by different means of communication i.e., WhatsApp, email, and Facebook. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS version 25. The data were collected, scored, tabulated, and analyzed using percentages and frequency.

Results

Table 1

Develop Lesson Plan While Teaching Pakistan Studies

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	25	62.5	62.5	62.5
	Undecided	4	10.0	10.0	72.5
	Disagree	11	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (62.5.9%) agreed that while Teaching Pakistan Studies, they develop lesson plans and (27.5) disagree about the statement that while teaching Pakistan Studies, they do not develop lesson plans. While (10%) of respondents were undecided.

Table 2

Goals of Lessons are clear and according to Student' needs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Undecided	7	17.5	17.5	62.5
	Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents (45%) agree that the goals of lessons are clear and according to the students' needs and (37.5%) disagree with the statement that the goals of lessons are not clear and according to student's needs. While (17.5%) of the respondents are undecided.

Table 3

Identifies clear learning objectives of the lesson

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
	Undecided	4	10.0	10.0	62.5
	Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents (52.5%) disagree that they do not identify clear learning objectives of the lesson and (37.5%) agree with the statement that they identify clear learning objectives of the lesson. While (10%) of respondents are undecided.

Table 4
Plans Logically Structured Lesson Plans

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	19	47.5	47.5	47.5
	Undecided	6	15.0	15.0	62.5
	Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 presents that the majority of respondents (47.5%) agree that they plan logically structured lesson plans and (37.5%) disagree with the statement that lesson plans are not logically structured. While (15%) of respondents are undecided.

Table 5
Align Content to Appropriate Cognitive Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Undecided	8	20.0	20.0	52.5
	Disagree	19	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 indicates that the majority of respondents (47.5%) disagree that they do not systematically develop plans that align content to appropriate cognitive skills and (37.5%) agree with the statement that systematically developed plans that align content to appropriate cognitive skills is a routine exercise. While (30%) of the respondents are undecided.

Table 6
Aligns the Learning Objective, Activity and Assessment of Lessons

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Undecided	8	20.0	20.0	52.5
	Disagree	19	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 presents that most respondents (47.5%) disagree that they align the learning objectives, activities, and assessment of the lessons and (32.5%) agree with the statement that they align the learning objectives, activities, and assessment of lessons. While (20%) of respondents are undecided.

Table 7
Appropriately Use Learning Materials in the Classroom

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
	Undecided	5	12.5	12.5	55.0
	Disagree	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 illustrates that the majority of respondents (45.5%) disagree that they do not appropriately use learning materials in the classroom and (42.5%) agree that they appropriately use learning materials in the classroom. While (6%) of the respondents are undecided.

Table 8

Lesson Plan Engages All Students in the Classroom

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Undecided	12	30.0	30.0	67.5
	Disagree	13	32.5	32.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 shows that (27.5%) agree that lesson plans engage all students in the classroom and (32.5%) disagree with the statement that lesson plans engage all the students in the classroom. While (30%) of the respondents are undecided.

Table 9

Focuses Attention on the Sequence of a Single Lesson

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
	Undecided	9	22.5	22.5	65.0
	Disagree	14	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that the majority of respondents (42.5%) agree that they focus on the sequence of a single lesson and (35.0%) disagree with the statement that they focus on the sequence of a single lesson. While (22%) of respondents are undecided.

Table 10

Gives Step-By-Step Instructions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
	Undecided	5	12.5	12.5	65.0
	Disagree	14	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 shows that the majority of respondents (52.5%) agree that they give step-by-step instructions and (35%) disagree with the statement. While (12.5%) of the respondents are undecided.

Table 11

Planning a Variety of Instructional Strategies for Different Lessons

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Undecided	6	15.0	15.0	50.0
	Disagree	20	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 shows that the majority of respondents (50%) disagree that teachers plan a variety of instructional strategies for different lessons and (35%) agree with the statement that teachers plan a variety of instructional strategies for different lessons. While (15%) of the respondents are undecided.

Table 12

Assessment of Lessons

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Valid	Agree	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Undecided	5	12.5	12.5	45.0
	Disagree	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 signpost that the majority of respondents (55.5%) disagree that after delivering the lesson they assess the lesson and (32.5%) agree with the statement that after delivering the lesson, they assess the lesson. While (12.5%) of respondents are undecided.

Discussion

In this study, the main characteristic of pedagogical skills, that is, the lesson plan was studied and the implementation degree was assessed. The findings of the study show that while teaching Pakistan Studies at the secondary school level, teachers develop lesson plans, set clear learning goals according to students' needs, and plan a logically structured lesson. A well-developed lesson plan engages all the students in the classroom, focuses attention on the sequence of a single lesson, and gives step-by-step instructions. Similar studies conducted by Malik (2012) and Gujjar et al. (2011), revealed that teachers generally do not plan lessons.

On the other hand, it was also found that teachers were not able to identify clear learning objectives of the lesson, align content to appropriate cognitive skills and learning objectives, activities and assessment of the lessons, appropriately use learning materials in the classrooms, and plan a variety of instructional strategies. Similarly, Khanum and Saeed (2020) share that most teachers were unaware of need-based educational methodologies and that cramming of content was practiced throughout the lesson. Teachers solely employed lecture and discussion tactics to teach the compulsory topic of Islamiyat, and all teachers agreed that students should learn and recall the principles. According to Malik (2012), teachers did not use instructional materials in the classroom. Discovered that multimedia as a medium for cooperating learning is not used in public schools. Therefore, it can be said that in this study, a mixed approach to the practice of lesson plans was observed. Some aspects of the lesson plan were being implemented professionally and a few were not.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that while teaching Pakistan Studies at the secondary school level, teachers while developing lesson plans, make sure to consider the goals of the lessons. These lesson plans are designed according to students' needs and planned logically, as they engage all students in classrooms. Moreover, a logically organized lesson plan focuses attention on step-by-step instructions. It was also assessed that teachers did not identify clear learning objectives of the lessons to align content to appropriate cognitive skills, learning objectives, planning of teaching activities, and assessing lesson objectives. Thus, teachers are required to appropriately use learning materials in the classroom and plan various instructional strategies for different lessons.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that teacher training programs be arranged to improve their skills in identifying clear lesson learning objectives and align content to appropriate cognitive skills, objectives, activities, and assessments.
- It is recommended that the teacher education programs and the professional training segments convey different instructional strategies for teaching Social Sciences subjects, appropriately use classroom learning materials, and plan various lessons.
- The school administration may actively inform the teachers to use all available learning materials in the classroom and provide missing learning materials.
- As numerous components of lesson planning are significant aspects of good classroom teaching, secondary school teachers' promotion may be linked to regular classroom instructional planning activities.
- The same study may be conducted at different demographic locations by mixed approach and experimental design to access the practice of lesson planning to get good results.

Competing Interest

The author had no competing interests.

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