



Teachers' Perspectives on Curriculum Reform, Global Identity, and Textbooks in the Context of Pakistan Studies

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Abstract

Provide students with information about the outside world and encourage them to develop a positive attitude towards it. These are two of the most important responsibilities that educators have when it comes to fostering the development of a global identity among students. On the other hand, educators who work in traditional settings can consider the numerous initiatives to change the curriculum, which are connected to the idea of global identity, to be a kind of resistance and might even take part in those efforts. By conducting an analysis of the ideas and perspectives of educators about the concept of global identity as it is addressed in Pakistan Studies curricula and textbooks, the purpose of this research was to increase understanding of the implementation of curricular adjustments in secondary schools in the province of Punjab. In order to accomplish the goals of this study, a total of twenty-seven professors of Pakistan Studies were selected to take part in semi-structured interviews. This was done in order to ensure that the overall research objectives were met. The educators that were mentioned earlier are full-time employees of educational institutions that receive funding from either public or private sources simultaneously. They are located in a certain district within the Punjab region of Pakistan, which is where these institutions are located. The study of the data demonstrates that teachers of Pakistan Studies have a variety of thoughts and attitudes towards the curriculum policy, some of which are at odds with one another and others of which they are dedicated. Specifically, these perspectives pertain to the curriculum reform that is being implemented with regard to the global identity curriculum policy. When we discovered that the viewpoints and attitudes of the Pakistan Studies instructors towards the curricular policy indicate a mixture of compliance and opposition, it became clear that this was the case.

Keywords: Gatekeeping in the curriculum, textbooks, global views, national identity, and cultural diversity

INTRODUCTION

During the implementation phase, educators play a crucial role in the curriculum reform process since their viewpoints and ideas have a significant impact on how the curriculum is practically applied. According to Peck and Herriot (2014) (p. 388), beliefs play a crucial role in various elements of education, such as understanding subject



content, creating lesson plans and assessments, and shaping teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, there is conjecture that the convictions of the three interrelated goals of social studies education have a substantial impact on the ideologies, methodologies, and passions of social studies educators. These objectives include fostering civic virtue, creating a feeling of national identity, and promoting empathy and coexistence among individuals. The educators' perceptions and beliefs about the different teaching methods used in Social Studies have a significant influence on the creation of a curriculum suitable for Pakistan Studies. Pakistan Studies integrates several elements of global identity into its academic structure with the objective of aiding students in the development and establishment of their unique identities on a global scale. The redesigned Pakistan Studies curriculum and its supporting materials, as stated by Pike (2015), aim to prioritise the enhancement of students' comprehension of the globe in relation to the impacts of globalisation. This purpose was duly considered during the construction of the curriculum and its supporting materials. This educational method focuses on fostering students' self-awareness in connection with the wider society (p. 11). In addition, Nussbaum (2002) states on page 4 that the purpose of this information is to foster a sense of kinship and loyalty towards "the global community of individuals" in order to promote the welfare of all individuals (Appiah, 2008, page 87). The purpose of this content is to cultivate a feeling of kinship and loyalty towards "the worldwide collective of individuals." Furthermore, it is crucial to remember that Pakistan Studies is a compulsory subject at all educational levels, starting with secondary school and continuing up to the bachelor's degree. This subject aims to supplant the Social Studies curriculum, which is commonly taught in elementary and secondary schools. The Social Studies and Pakistan Studies curricula include the analysis of Pakistan's economic, historical, and geographical dimensions (Ali, 1992). According to Ahmad (2008), Social Studies and Pakistan Studies have been used as teaching tools for a long time. Their goal is to teach students about Islamic principles, foster a sense of duty and loyalty, and develop a collective consciousness known as the Ummah. Nevertheless, it is crucial to consider that educators working in conventional educational environments may have difficulties while teaching curriculum content related to global identity, as outlined in the Social Studies and Pakistan Studies curricula. Educators' implementation of the curriculum is influenced by their understanding of the concept of teaching global identity. This is because teaching students about global identity often requires using educational methods that successfully communicate a subject matter from several perspectives. The aim of this study project was to examine the ideas and perspectives of educators who specialise in Pakistan Studies about global identity. This was done in relation to a



curriculum update in 2006 and the following introduction of new textbooks for secondary schools in Punjab in 2012. The present study aims to analyse a specific research inquiry related to the global identity discourse found in the redesigned textbooks that Punjabi secondary school educators adopted in 2012, following the curricular reform of 2006. What are the viewpoints of professors teaching Pakistan Studies? Anticipation was held for the evaluation of the convictions and viewpoints of those concerned in Pakistan Studies.

Framework for ideas

Methodology for instructing about global identity. Incorporating a clearly defined national identity and promoting democratic engagement are deemed necessary by several education specialists for the growth of a society. The incorporation of complex topics into the curriculum may be seen as a more difficult task (Banks et al., 2005; Camicia, 2008). Hess (2008) asserts that the inclusion of controversial subjects in educational settings enhances students' acquisition of knowledge, development of analytical skills, and cultivation of critical thinking abilities. By actively engaging with contentious topics, students are encouraged to rigorously examine other perspectives, evaluate potential solutions, and eventually formulate and defend their own positions (p. 124). Hess (2008) provides further rationales for the integration of contentious subjects into educational settings. The aforementioned advantages include fostering comprehension and dedication to democratic principles, instilling enthusiasm for civic engagement, acquiring extensive knowledge, promoting critical thinking abilities, and cultivating advanced interpersonal skills (p. 124). Nevertheless, there are educators who possess misgivings or express hostility towards this instructional approach in the field of social studies. The doubts arise from concerns that engaging in discussions about contentious subjects could have adverse effects on certain students in the classroom (Peck & Herriot, 2014, p. 394) or potentially provoke widespread conflict in society (Hess, 2008; Peck & Herriot, 2014). According to Muhammad and Brett (2017), it is undeniable that conservative educators may consider certain issues related to global identity in Pakistan Studies courses as contentious. Instructors bear the principal duty for creating the formal curriculum, but their influence in this area is somewhat restricted (Ginsburg and Kamat 2009). Adalbjarnardottir (2002) and Marker and Mehlinger (1996) agree that instructors have a responsibility to ensure that their students have beneficial and productive experiences. According to Marker and Mehlinger (1996), social studies teachers have significant political power since they are involved in interpreting the content that is included in social studies curricula. This study examines the method by which teachers convey textbook knowledge in the discipline of Pakistan Studies by gathering instructors' expressed thoughts and



attitudes. Educators that exercise policy discretion in their daily operations might be characterised as street-level bureaucrats, as defined by Muhammad (2015) and Lipsky (2010), due to several contextual circumstances. The aforementioned worry is particularly noticeable in rural areas, where teachers enforce regulations that are often devised at the provincial, district, or national level before being put into practice in educational institutions. The adoption of this policy grants educators the power to exercise their judgement and discretion in relation to these policies. They not only carry out but also adhere to educational policy. However, they have an active role in shaping educational policy (Goldstein, 2008, p. 449). In addition, academic research has shown that educators are likely to resist a policy that requires accountability systems, curricular standards, and instructional approach guidelines in order to limit and control their teaching methods (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006, p. 31). Teacher opposition is sometimes attributed to either a conservative inclination or a manifestation of personal character defects, as often believed. According to Achinstein and Ogawa (2006, p. 32), "principled resistance" refers to the deliberate actions taken by educators to oppose instructional policies, programmes, or any other efforts that seek to control their work or challenge their professional beliefs. These behaviours might be either obvious or hidden. This framework encompasses the principles of promoting community development, nurturing uniqueness and innovation, and establishing high standards. This offers more validation for the educators' opposition. An investigation into whether Pakistan Studies teachers identified themselves as "resisters" would have scholarly importance. Banks (2010) has highlighted numerous more barriers that impede educators' commitment to implementing a diverse curriculum. The person believed that the main barriers to creating a curriculum that acknowledges the viewpoints of a diverse population in a particular society were the excessive focus on being held responsible and high-stakes evaluations, the excessive reliance on textbooks for teaching goals, and the insufficient understanding of ethnic cultural knowledge among educators. Muhammad and Brett (2019) argue that many educators feel uneasy about politics because promoting inclusivity has the potential to upset existing power structures in a varied society. Nevertheless, the person maintains the belief that ideological opposition greatly impedes the execution of this educational programme. Implementing a diversified curriculum is challenging for educators and policymakers due to the widespread adoption of an assimilationist worldview. According to Banks (2001), an assimilationist educator has a vision of a perfect society where there is no ethnic identification. Furthermore, he contends that ethnicity serves as a catalyst for disputes between ethnic groups, fosters division within society, and leads to the breakdown of social cohesion.



Furthermore, communal rights have priority over individual rights (Banks, 2001, p. [page number]). Banks (2001) and Spinner-Halev (2000) argue that supporters of assimilation believe that when all ethnic groups in a country become part of the national civic community, individuals are more inclined to give up their distinct ethnic cultures in favour of a cohesive national culture. Social studies educators in Pakistan possess a considerable degree of autonomy and the ability to make individual decisions. There has been a lack of research performed in Pakistan regarding how Pakistani educators have interpreted the Social Studies and Pakistan Studies curricula. Concerning the centralised determination of a curriculum reform in the domain of global identity, the level of individual autonomy has received limited examination. This study project facilitated the examination of the connections between the teaching methods and viewpoints of educators and the adaptation of the Social Studies curriculum.

Methods

A significant group of individuals (teachers) was intentionally chosen for interviews based on the qualitative case study design. The major aim of this study was to comprehend the viewpoints and ideas held by instructors of Pakistan Studies, using the works of Stake (1995) and Yin (2014) as references. The researchers utilised cross-case analysis to collect and assess data from multiple cases and provide compelling results and interpretations (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2013). Teachers were asked to share their perspectives and assessments on various aspects of the Pakistan Studies curriculum, which was officially designed and published in 2006 during the Musharraf dictatorship. The aim was to collect the perspectives and comprehension of the participants on the integration of global identity representations in the updated textbooks on Pakistan Studies. Educators were asked to provide a detailed list of the global issues that are typically discussed and debated in their classrooms. Moreover, the participants were asked to express their perspectives on the degree to which global issues are emphasised in the newly released Pakistan Studies textbooks. In addition, the authors were obligated to offer explanation on whether and how they tackled the lack of broad global concepts and ideas in the recently published textbooks on Pakistan Studies. The academics gained a thorough understanding and detailed depiction of the teachers' ideas and perspectives by using an investigative process that involved relevant, in-depth, and probing queries. In addition, this method created a conducive atmosphere where educators were motivated to freely articulate their ideas and perspectives (Kvale, 1996; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). In order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the perspectives of Pakistan Studies teachers regarding the content of textbooks, an analysis was conducted on the



interview transcripts using a cross-case approach (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaa, 2014; Saldaa, 2013). The transcription method utilised a strict level of accuracy for every interview transcript. Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis was carried out on each interview transcript to detect any instances of pre-coding. To differentiate and highlight important lines or paragraphs, techniques such as underlining, highlighting, and italicising were implemented (Saldaa, 2013, p. 19). This enabled the identification of important topics within the text that were relevant to the research goal. The data related to the first person were encoded before analysing the data of the second participant, due to the study's many participants. Similarly, information regarding twenty-seven individuals was subjected to categorization. The act of combining appropriate codes enabled the identification of separate subcategories within the dataset. The analysis and comparison of many categories and subcategories confirmed multiple statements. Additionally, the findings drawn from the data were supported by the identification of specific citations.

Conclusion

Most educators in both public and private institutions in Pakistan hold the view that Pakistan Studies textbooks, which focus on a limited range of subjects, allocate the least amount of emphasis to global matters. Through analysing interview data on the core topic of global identity, this result was reached. However, these educators conveyed the idea that they were apathetic towards the content of the textbooks and the inadequate representation of world events outside of Pakistan. A significant number of educators in private schools have not effectively communicated concerns about international extremism, the limited discussion surrounding ecological issues and global warming, and the inadequate representation of non-Muslim groups worldwide. The predominant perspective among the majority of educators working in public and private educational institutions in Pakistan is that national issues should take precedence over regional and international matters in any future curriculum or textbook related to Pakistan Studies. It is worth mentioning that only two of the professors emphasised the importance of having a global identity. An prominent private school lecturer highlighted the significance of fostering connections with the global community rather than solely focusing on one's fellow Pakistanis. This move was performed due of the divisive nature of nationalism, which separates individuals into different states and promotes competition, ultimately leading to the cultivation of hatred. The second educator, engaged at a public school, emphasised the significance of cultivating a feeling of community among pupils within the Muslim Ummah. It is crucial to provide professional development courses to educators in order to educate them on the intricacies that occur when teaching subjects like global perspectives,



ethnic and religious diversity, and national identity. Pre-service and in-service training for instructors must cover both the theoretical subtleties specified in the curriculum and the practical underpinnings that underpin these notions. The professors prioritised cultivating a sense of national identity among the students in Pakistan rather than promoting their assimilation into the global community. In addition, as stated by Joshi (2010), textbooks emphasise the Muslim Ummah in order to establish a unique regional identity that differs from India's aim to establish a comprehensive narrative of the inherent geographical unity of the subcontinent (p. Joshi's argument is located on page 20 of his book. Lall (2008) asserts that teaching pupils discourses rooted in nationalism, exclusion, and religion has the potential to harm global peace. This is particularly accurate when students are educated about differing historical eras on the Pakistani and Indian sides of the border. Given that nationalism and national identity are inherently interconnected with other cultures, peoples, and countries, accomplishing this goal in the current era of heightened globalisation is exceptionally difficult. In order to adapt to the globalising world, it is necessary to come up with innovative solutions. School curricula should aim to both promote students' sense of belonging to the global community and maintain their unique local identities (Dattoo, 2009, p. 220). It is crucial to address this issue in order to successfully navigate the globalising world. However, it should not be assumed that the national and cultural identities of students should be given more importance than their global identities.

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