

Factors Influencing Teaching Methods at College level: A Case Study of Public Sector Colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

Effective teaching methods play a vital role in achieving and enhancing student learning outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to identify and understand the factors influencing teaching methods. This qualitative study aims to explore the key factors that influence teaching methods at BS level in public sector colleges. A sample of 8 respondents was selected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with mutual consent of the respondents. Following thematic analysis, the data was transcribed, categorized, and summarized. The findings of the study revealed teacher-related, student-related, and institutional related factors. It also highlighted technological and other potential factors that are the main challenges in implementing effective teaching methods in the public sector colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Recommendations include designing the undergraduate syllabus in alignment with the semester duration, involving all the stakeholders in curriculum development process, providing professional training to the college faculty, offering language proficiency courses to overcome language barriers, and allocating sufficient funds for implementation of various activities smoothly.

Keywords: *Undergraduate, Effective Teaching Methods, Factors, Challenges, Learning, Teaching, Influencing*

Introduction

Despite significant investment in education, Pakistan and particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is still suffering from 21st century challenges. According to Shirani et al. (2016) the main purpose of teaching is to shape the young minds and polish their skills. Throughout the world, educators are considered the integral part of the education system. A sound education system provides quality education to its learners, and at the same time focuses on adaptation of innovative teaching methods. Pakistani government has been constantly thriving to improve the quality of education since 1947. Higher Education Commission (HEC) introduced a 4 year BS (Bachelor of Studies) program in 2009 to meet the international education standards. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government

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offered BS program in 15 colleges on trial base in 2010. Later on the program was expanded to 93 colleges, and currently 317 colleges have been offered the program (Rehman et al., 2024). Four year BS program was designed for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation. Keeping in view the significance of the BS program, it is crucial that the educators employ effective and innovative teaching methods at this level.

Problem Statement

The undergraduate (Bachelor of Studies) program is designed to equip the learners with essential skills and prepare them for global challenges. However, educators often neglect its importance and rely on the traditional teaching methods. As BS program provide foundation to the higher education; therefore, it is crucial that the educators employ effective teaching methods to achieve the student learning outcomes. However, educators face multifaceted challenges that hinder the implementation of effective teaching methods in public sector colleges. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and identify the key factors influencing teaching methods. By providing solutions a conducive and effective learning environment can be created.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To explore the factors influencing teaching methods at BS level.

Research Question

- i. What are the key factors that influence teaching methods at BS level in public sector colleges?

Limitation and Delimitation

Due to time and financial constraints this study was delimited to one department of the Government Postgraduate College Nowshera (representing the public sector colleges of KPK). Despite the researcher's efforts, the subjective nature of qualitative research may affect the reliability and validity of the research study.

Literature Review

Teaching is the art through which educators impart their knowledge to the learners and bring a desirable change in learners' behavior via consistent methods (Ayeni, 2011). These are the techniques or strategies that educators use for classroom instruction. In colleges and universities people interact with each other and share their perspectives. These are the places that covers the universe of knowledge and germinate new ideas. Mainly there are two types of teaching methods. Traditional teacher-centered and student-centered teaching methods (Idris et al, 2012).

Teacher centered methods include lecture and demonstration method. Whereas student centered methods include discussion method, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, Experiential learning and inquiry-based learning. In the last few decades' education sector also adopted high technological approaches (Al-Rawi, 2013). Effective teaching is influenced by the following factors:

- i. Teacher related factors
- ii. Student related factors
- iii. Learning environment
- iv. Institution related factors

Teacher related factors

Factors affecting teaching related to teachers are following:

- i. Subject Knowledge: For effective teaching-learning process the most significant element is subject knowledge.
- ii. Understanding Learners: Educators need to understand the mental capabilities of the learners. He/she should aware of the different developmental stages of the learners.
- iii. Teaching Skills: For imparting knowledge and effective communication, teacher require particular skills or techniques.
- iv. Approachable: A good teacher is approachable and develop rapport with his/her students. Welcoming nature of teachers help in creating conducive teaching-learning environment.
- v. Behavior: Teachers should be kind and open hearted. If teacher is rigid or strict, it will definitely influence his/her personality and learning process.

- vi. Mental Health: Mental health is as much important as physical health. Good and positive mental health leads to effective communication and enhance learning (Hartweg, 2016)

Student related factors

Factors affecting teaching related to students are following:

- i. Students' well-being: Students' mental and physical health play a significant role in the effective teaching-learning process. Dysfunction of any organ, anxiety, stress, or frustration can hinder the learning process.
- ii. Maturation & Age: Age and maturation are vital for effective learning. As learners mature with age, their mental capabilities and comprehension are enhanced.
- iii. Prior Knowledge: Learner's previous knowledge assist them in better comprehension and understanding.
- iv. Motivation & Readiness: For effective learning environment it is crucial that the learners are ready and self-motivated.
- v. Interest: When students are ready and motivated they are fully attentive in the classroom. This interest aids in improving and enhancing comprehension.

Institution related factors

Institutional policies, rules & regulations provides the guidelines for teachers and students. The professional growth and working environment of any institute is directly dependent on these policies. These policies can either grant a favorable autonomous environment to the teachers or impose restriction. Controlling and restrictive guidelines have a negative impact on teachers' creativity in the teaching process.

Instructional facilities related factors

Following are the factors that can influence effective teaching-learning process:

1. Properly equipped Classrooms: Effective teaching and learning require properly equipped classrooms. Classroom size, seating arrangement, lightning, and ventilation all are prerequisite of effective and conducive learning environment.

2. Availability of Advanced Technology: Modern and Innovative teaching methods needs easy access to multimedia, computers, and projectors etc.
3. Modern Laboratories: In order to provide hand-on-learning experiences to the students, it is crucial that the institution provides fully equipped laboratories to the science and computer science students (Peritus, 2024).

Methodology

Research Design

A single case study research design was adopted for this qualitative study. This approach is mainly used in social sciences for in-depth understanding of a complex issue. Experimental research design is used to test a hypothesis, whereas the case study approach is used to answer ‘how’, ‘what’, and ‘why’ questions. By undertaking interpretative research paradigm, the researchers can easily understand the perspectives of the respondents. The researchers adopted Interpretivism paradigm to understand the perceptions of teachers and students. This approach also helps in exploring factors that affect the teaching methodologies.

Sample

According to Creswell (1998) 5-25 interviews for phenomenology, and 20-30 for grounded theory. Kuzel (1992) recommended 6-8 interviews for case studies. Guest *et al.* (2006) proposed 6-12 interviews for single project. Sharma *et al.* (2024) explored that in single case study, sample size range from 4-30. Hence, in light of above justification, a sample of 8 was selected through purposive sampling. According to Ilkar *et al.* (2016) in qualitative research, purposive sampling is used to identify and select the information-rich cases.

Table 1: Sample of the Study

Teachers	3
Students	4
Principal	1
Sample Size N = 8	

Research Instrument

In this study the researcher used semi-structured interviews as research instrument. Face-to-Face interviews were conducted with the respondents to get their perceptions regarding the factors that affecting teaching methods. The researcher informed all the respondents before the interview.

Data Collection

The primary data was collected through the semi structured interviews. All interviews were audio recorded with prior consent of the respondents. The secondary data was obtained from official reports, college record and other relevant documents.

Data Analysis

In qualitative study various software are used for data analysis, however in this case study data was manually analyzed by following thematic analysis. The researcher transcribed the audio recorded interviews into text format. After transcription, the data were coded, categorized and summarized accordingly. Thematic analysis is an analytical tool which is widely used in qualitative research to identify, analyze and generate themes in data. Usually, thematic analysis process consists of six stages i) Familiarization with data, ii) Generating codes, iii) Searching for themes across data, iv) Reviewing the themes, v) Define and name themes then vi) producing report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

After transcription and coding of data, following themes were emerged:

Table:2 Themes emerged from the study

No	Theme
Theme 1	<i>Institutional & Resource Based Factors</i>
Theme 2	<i>Teacher-Related Factors</i>
Theme 3	<i>Student-Related Factors</i>

1. Institutional and Resource-Based Factors

- **Learning Resources:**

Learning resources facilitates the teaching-learning process. It includes libraries, course material, reference books, multimedia tools, online resources, AV aids, and computer labs etc. These are

actually the crucial tools that makes the teaching-learning process more effective and efficient. *“For quality and effective teaching various learning resources are necessary. At higher education level there should be self-study and here teacher motivation and guidance is of immense importance. Other respondent expressed that “I use the lecture method and the discussion method, followed by group discussions. There is only one projector in our college; therefore, I seldom use it” (R 6). Another participant stated “The principal and concerned government officials should provide modern technological system for our college. We need facilities comparable to those provided to students in foreign states or well-reputed universities. Both projectors and computer labs are insufficient. Despite having a college library, the number of books is also inadequate”*

Technology and Infrastructure:

It is the era of information technology; hence a teacher cannot depend on a single resource for gathering information. That’s what most of the respondents opined that our teachers use various resources to gather information for topic preparation. *“We should Google that particular topic; watch YouTube videos regarding that topic, and read books, not a single book, but multiple books to collect the desired information. In this way we will be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of a topic.”* Other respondent opined that *“in the previous semester, we used to take our class in the computer lab, and teacher delivered lecture through multimedia, that improve our learning”*. While another respondent expressed that *“I deliver lecture through multimedia for better understanding and also use A.V aids, and pictures. These are the important tools for effective teaching as well learning”*.

- **Classroom Environment**

For in depth and conceptual learning peaceful and conducive environment is necessary. *“In hot weather, electricity shortages make it difficult for both teachers and students to concentrate on teaching and learning”*. Other respondent stated that *“we are requesting the authorities to ensure the provision of generator at our college so we may continue our studies without disruption”* .

2. Teacher-Related Factors

- **Teaching Skills**

Majority of the respondents expressed that their teachers use lecture and discussion methods. Lecture method is widely use in higher education throughout the world. In discussion method each student fully participate in the discussion and interactive teaching learning is created. It enhances the learning. Other respondent. opined that *“me and my colleagues try our best to employ the interactive methods. Sometimes I face technical issues in multimedia class, so my colleague is always there to assist me”*.

- **Teacher as Facilitator**

Innovative teaching methods emphasizes the teacher’s role as facilitator. Simple telling is not teaching and in the same way simple listening is not learning. Teaching is always a two-way process. An effective teacher always uses various strategies to create interest and thinking habit among students and facilitates his/her students. *“Actually teachers are mentor. We are here to facilitate and guide our youth”*. Other respondent shared that *“there are no restrictions in our class and we feel like a family. Our teachers assign us assignments and also guide us to complete our assignments. They are very cooperative and even provide us with material”*.

- **Interaction and Attention**

Effective learning is increased by students’ active involvement in the learning process. *“I prefer interactive methods because I believe that students’ participatory approach is very fruitful and beneficial”*. Other respondent expressed that *“our teachers engage us through interaction methods e.g. question-answer and presentation etc.”*. Similarly, other respondent shared that *“I always insist that teachers need to establish a rapport with their students, unfortunately many teachers failed to build so. In my opinion, during the attendance session, teachers should call their students by name instead of their roll numbers, as this will help in the development and building of trust and rapport. Apparently these are small gestures but these small acts or gestures of teachers can significantly influence our students’ personalities. One other respondent shared his experience “during my entire academic career, I notice teachers who are very rigid and rude towards their students and often scolding them without any reason. Students never take interest in their classes. One of the respondent opined, “I think teachers should possess a gentle nature, and likewise students should show respect to their teachers. Teachers should be approachable, allowing students to interact with them without hesitation and ask questions freely.*

3. Student- Related Factors

- **Motivation and Engagement**

Motivated students take deep interest in their classes and it enhances the achievement of their learning outcomes. Teachers should adopt those methods and approaches that help them in sustaining the students' interest. *"To keep my students motivated and active during the lecture I apply a certain strategy. I also use modern technology in my class, but its ratio is 60:40"* (R6). Other respondent mentioned *"exactly, there are some teachers who motivate us through motivational quotes in the classroom. They give advice to us and share joke or general knowledge to keep us motivated throughout the class ."*

- **Adaptation**

Students' ability to adopt to new learning environment play a significant role in their learning. It also influences the effectiveness of teaching methods. *"I completed my earlier education in a village. For further education I shifted to the city. In the beginning, I encountered many challenges; including a distinct difference between teaching methodologies of school teachers and college professors"*. Other respondent expressed that *"teaching students from diverse backgrounds is a challenge itself. Occasionally, students with lower mental capacity enroll, requiring me to adapt my teaching to their level"*.

- **Language Barrier**

Majority of respondents opined that as students belong to diverse backgrounds so language barrier is the primary challenge that we are facing at this level. Urdu medium students encounter difficulties in English medium. Some struggle to speak Urdu properly.

- **Prior Knowledge and Readiness**

Learners' readiness and prior knowledge play a significant role in effective teaching. With prior knowledge they can easily grasp new and complex concepts. *"in my classes, I share written material in PDF form before delivering any lecture and ask the students to give it a thorough read at home"*. Other respondent shared that *"teachers assigned us homework and asks us to prepare it so that we can discuss it in the classroom tomorrow and assignments are assigned for group discussion"*.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the factors that influence teaching methods at BS level in public sector colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Bachelor of Studies (BS) is one of the most important educational level, because it provides foundation for the higher education. Achievement of student learning outcomes and desired behavior of students purely depend on the contents' type and its mode of delivery. The study revealed that there are various factors including teacher-related, student-related, and institution-related that influence the selection of teaching methods at this level. Majority of the respondents especially students both male and female opined that usually teachers use traditional lecture method. Beside this they use discussion and assignment methods and provide maximum facilities of participation in the discussion. In this way, we gain a lot of confidence and clarify the ambiguities regarding a particular point. Teachers often implement interactive and innovative teaching methods. However, it is a time consuming process and covering lengthy course outlines within the semester is a huge task for teachers. Therefore, although they acknowledged its importance but expressed their concerns that due to limited time it creates hindrance in covering contents in stipulated time. The study explored that by considering institutional and student related factors, majority teachers prefer the traditional lecture method. However, the most prominent flaw in lecture method is one-way delivery of the contents. It also promotes passiveness among the students and hinder the abilities of critical and analytical thinking. The availability of learning resources, libraries, conducive environment and classroom size play a significant role in effective teaching-learning process. The study identified that most of the teachers use various learning resources other than books available in the library. Teachers recommend different online resources and use of social media. "We should Google that particular topic; watch YouTube videos regarding that topic, and read books, not a single book, but multiple books to collect the desired information. In this way we shall be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of a topic". The absence of digitalized and up to date libraries hinder the learning process. The study highlighted electricity shortage in hot weather as a main challenge for both students and teachers. For conducive learning environment the college's administration and concerned authorities need to ensure the availability of uninterrupted generators supply. The study identified that teacher and student interaction is crucial for effective comprehension. Similarly, the student-teacher rapport and trust develop students' interest. It also helps them in developing and enhancing

critical thinking and communication skills. The study pointed out that students' ability to adopt new learning environment plays a significant role in their learning. It also influences the effectiveness of teaching methods. "I completed my earlier education in a village. For further education I shifted to the city. In the beginning, I encountered many challenges: including a distinct difference between teaching methodologies of school teachers and college professors" (R4). Other respondent expressed that "teaching students from diverse backgrounds is a challenge itself. Occasionally, students with lower mental capacity enroll, requiring me to adapt my teaching to their level".

Conclusion

In the light of interpretation and transcription of the data following conclusions are made:

By considering institutional and student- related factors, teachers prefer lecture and discussion methods at BS level. Limited time and lengthy syllabus hinder the adaptation of innovative teaching methods in the semester system. Assignment and presentation methods excel the students' analytical and critical thinking abilities. However, students' mental level and adaptation to new educational environment affect these teaching methods. Inadequate learning resources like insufficient projectors, multimedia tools, computer labs and lack of digital libraries are the significant obstacles for the teachers as well as management of the institute. In this modern era, the institute is still suffering from disruption of electricity. Beside these challenges, language barrier and diverse backgrounds of learners are profound challenges for the faculty that require their notable struggles for implementing innovative teaching methods.

Recommendations

It is recommended that while designing the BS curriculum and syllabus, the universities must involve all the stakeholders in the process especially the affiliated colleges. In semester system, the duration of a semester is very short therefore, the BS syllabus needs amendment and redesigning. The syllabus should be aligned with the semester duration. Furthermore, it is essential that the courses must be designed by keeping in view the mental level and diverse backgrounds of learners. The administration need to organize professional training for faculty grooming and personality development. In addition, English and Urdu proficiency courses in the morning or evening should be arranged to overcome the language barriers. Government and concerned

authorities are required to allocate sufficient funds for provision of learning resources and uninterrupted generator facility for smooth teaching-learning environment.

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