p- ISSN: 2708-2113 e-ISSN: 2708-3608 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2022(VII-I).46
Vol. VII, No. I (Winter 2022) Pages: 481 – 487 DOI: 10.31703/gesr.2022(VII-I).46

Effect of Early Childhood Teachers Classroom Practices on Preschool Learners Thinking: National Standards Perspective

Naveed Tufail	PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: navid.ch@hotmail.com *(Corresponding Author)*
Rafaqat Ali Akbar	Director Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract: *A country's development is inextricably linked to its education, and education is inextricably linked to early childhood education. Early childhood learners' conceptual and logical thinking is one of the standards' main themes. It's important to look into teachers' classroom practices and how they affect preschoolers' thinking. It's also vital to see if teachers' classroom practices are effectively linked to learners' need for conceptual and logical thinking, therefore the study's goal was to assess the effect of teachers' classroom practices as indicated in the National Minimum Standards. The study's population consisted of two groups: early childhood school students and teachers from schools in Punjab that have ECE classrooms. The study employed a casual comparative research design. 300 learners and 30 teachers were chosen from 30 schools in Punjab province. Two instruments were used to collect data on two variables. To determine learners' conceptual thinking and logical thinking, an activity-based test based on the National Minimum Standards for thinking of preschool learners was developed. Teachers' data on their classroom practices for learners' thinking was also collected. The data also show that when it comes to learning, rural and urban students are completely different in the phase of thinking.*

Key Words: Preschool Learner, Thinking, Classroom Practices, National Minimum Standards

Introduction

Early childhood education emphasises and promotes the whole approach to child development before they go to school. Early childhood education is an important part of a child's growth. According to Hu and Zhu, (2018), it starts when a child is born. When children are young, their physical and mental abilities grow more quickly until they reach the age of five, and the three-to-five-year period is very important in this regard. It starts in the early years when kids learn about concepts and develop skills and attitudes that will help them learn for a long time. It's a time when people are growing quickly in every way: physically, intellectually, socially, morally, and more.

In Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh, there are going to be early childhood classrooms built soon. ECE is also a part of the Provincial Education Department's plans for the education sector (Government of Pakistan, 2017). The National Education Policy of 1998–2010 was the first government text that talked about making the "Katchi Class" a real thing. It was one of three areas that Pakistan's 15-year National Plan of Action (2001-2015) for achieving the Education for All goals listed. Early childhood education was one of the three areas. ECE funding was then included in the Federal Government's Education Sector Reform Program, and money was given to provinces and areas to help them do this.

It is based on the federal government's National Standards, and the goal of this study

Citation: Tufail, N., & Akbar, R. A. (2022). Effect of Early Childhood Teachers Classroom Practices on Preschool Learners Thinking: National Standards Perspective. *Global Educational Studies Review*, *VII*(I), 481 -487. https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2022(VII-I).46

is to see how early childhood teachers' classroom practises having an effect on preschoolers' thoughts. Standards are the specifications or yardsticks for an education system's inputs, processes, and outcomes in the field of education. They are also called "standards." To help people learn, there are a lot of resources (inputs) and processes (outputs) that help them gain knowledge and other skills (outcomes).

The development of early childhood minimum standards helps people agree on what children want to achieve and builds a quantitative foundation for these goals. The process of setting and enforcing standards can help to move child-related agendas forward and make child-friendly policies more common in schools and other places. Standards for early childhood education emphasise learning and development at a young age. It shows what we think children should know and be able to do. There is a lot of talk about standards in the field of early childhood education these days. Standards say how many children each teacher should be able to teach in a classroom (Jensen et al., 2021). Students, teachers, and cognitive development have been talked about in great detail in the National minimum standards documents that are used to set minimum standards. Different types of standards need to be taken into account: Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are standards about what we think kids should know and be able to do. Family Standards are about what adults should do to help their kids grow up. People who want to become teachers usually start with standards that say what teachers should know and what they should be able to do (ECE National curriculum 2017).

Cognitive Development is the study of how children learn and process information, as well as the development of the thinking and organising systems of the mind. In this, they think about things, think about how things work, think about how to solve problems and use what they learn. When kids start school, they already know how to think and process things that they learned as they grew up. According to Hu and Zhu (2018) people who have good cognitive development are better at conceptual thinking and being creative. A good ECE environment allows kids to explore, think, imagine, question, and try new things as they learn how to come up with new ideas and solutions. These things happen because students spend 4 to 5 hours with their teachers in the classroom (Alter and Haydon, 2017).

According to Egeberg et al,. (2016) teacher gives a learner a chance to see how important it is to listen to and respect the ideas and opinions of others. A teacher makes it possible for a learner to connect with other people and build good relationships. Because of how he does things in the classroom, students think and respond. Teaching is a never-ending process in which teachers use the right methods to help their students make the changes they want. Depending on what the teacher is teaching, his or her methods may be the best for the subject matter (Diperna et al., 2016). As a teacher, you should use teaching methods that are based on what your students need to learn best. It is up to each student to read and respond to questions in their own way. They have some basic ideas about what things are, and they try to think and connect things that are known to things that aren't. It affects how well students do in school if teachers use teaching methods that are in line with their needs and learning styles (Lehrl, and Smidt, 2017).

Classroom practices include not only what teachers do when students misbehave, but also what they do to prepare their classrooms for success and minimize problems. It can take up to half of the school day for discipline and other non-educational things to happen in many classrooms. Because students are actively and effectively learning, their educational time is a good way to tell if they are learning (Hijriati, 2017). In early childhood education, classroom activities have a big impact on how young children think. It looked at how teachers behaved in the classroom, how they disciplined students, and how the classroom was set up for social and emotional learning. These traits are linked to how well a student does in school and how well their brains grow (Hijriati, 2017).

The teacher is in charge of passing on and sharing knowledge, and he or she may try to get as much information out as possible while saving time and money. As a result, pupils may not be as interested or understand what they should be. To solve these problems, it was decided that teaching should not only be about giving students rules, definitions, and processes to remember but should also actively involve them as the main players. There are times when a teacher starts his class with things that the students already know. People try to think logically (Khan et al., (2019).

Teachers' classroom practises in early childhood schools can be categorised as developmentally appropriate or not. They can be child-centred or teacher-centred, academic or play-based, or academic or play-based. Different types of teaching practise are provided by teachers, which leads to these groups. In classrooms where teachers use a constructivist approach that is based on Piaget's cognitive theory and Vygotsky's socio-cultural development theory, kids are seen as active creators of their own knowledge. According to these views, teachers who use a constructivist approach in their classrooms may have a big say in how schools are organised. Children's learning can be helped by activities that are appropriate for their age, motivate them to learn, and encourage them to be a part of the learning process. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory says that teachers are responsible for a child's whole development, which means that they must build an educational process that is based on the child's interests and needs (Lehrl, and Smidt, 2017).

There is a lot of time spent sitting in school. He learns a lot of skills that are thought to be important for him to have in order to be successful in his culture at this place. The classroom is where he learns about who he is and what he can do for the world. Students learn about the skills and abilities they need to achieve their future goals at school. Because a learner's environment is important, this is a very important place for him. If schools are going to teach the next generation how to be successful members of society, they should do everything they can to make sure that the learning environment is good for students (Pianta et al. 2016)

According to Sahin et al., (2013) teachers believe that children should be active participants in the educational process and that they can have successful educational activities by supporting their own unique experiences (Khan et al., (2019). Teachers may pay attention to what children like and want to do so that they can arrange the educational process with the right activities and resources for each child's development and learning level, as well as give constructive feedback during the activities. It makes people more excited about studying, helps them learn how to take on responsibility as active learners, and improves their ability to start a task. Early childhood teachers should have sensitive and warm interactions with their students, and they should provide learning experiences that include effective stimuli that are supported in the classroom by a child-centred environment. This will help them teach children how to have an emotional response to things. Teacher chooses and plans activities that help students improve their basic academic skills. This type of mindset is often accompanied by a decrease in playtime and a lack of attention to cognitive development (Bishop-Josef &Zigler, 2011). In areas where people are less well-off or less developed, the practice of putting cognitive and academic skills at the top of the list is more common (Pianta, et al. 2002; Stipek, 2004).

Pianta et al. (2016) suggest that teachers make changes to their classroom rules to fit their country's educational policies and their own families needs. Academic time, teacher-child relationships, and the atmosphere of the classroom are three of the three categories Connor and her colleagues look at when they talk about how to teach (Sahin et al.2013). These parts of classroom procedures might be linked to how students think. When teachers put cognitive goals first and used good management techniques to get the most out of the time they had, students did better in general at school. Pupils also got better at

reading when teachers spent more time on academic activities.

All great teachers use small steps to teach, practice after each step, help students through their first practice, and give all their students a chance to succeed. Teachers have a lot of experience planning a wide range of classroom activities that are meant to get students excited about learning (Government of Punjab, 2007). Teachers use different types of lessons to help their students learn and practice. In small groups, students can listen to each other, think deeply, and help one another understand activities and assignments (Alter and Haydon, 2017).

Vygotsky said that the Zone of Proximal Development is the difference between a child's level of development and that of a Swiss psychologist named Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget studied how children's intellectual and logical abilities worked. During Wu's time, in 2015 the four stages of cognitive development happen in the same order. It has made a big difference in the fields of education and psychology because of his Cognitive Development Theory. He said that a child's thought process moves through each stage until he or she can think logically. Understanding how a child thinks helps with the organization of a child's learning space and the planning of developmentally appropriate learning activities.

The sensory-motor stage, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational are four of Piaget's four stages of development. Preschool years are the second stage in Piaget's theory of how people grow up. When children are this age, they start to think in symbols and use language to talk about their thoughts. However, when a preoperative child gets help, she or he learns how far a learner can go with the right help. As a teacher, you should help your students learn, be more independent, and grow, he said. He came up with the term "guidance scaffolding" (Gettinger and Fischer, 2014).

Children's creativity, problem-solving, logical thinking, and learning abilities are all linked to their own thinking and self-created concepts, as well as common signals and thinking skills that are used by many people. From a pedagogical point of view, it is appropriate to let students think and come up with ideas on their own to help them learn and be more creative. A 1999 report from the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education says young people need to be taught in ways that help them develop their own logical and creative thinking.

Piaget's development theories don't agree with ideas about how to think about information. Piaget used universals of development across ontogeny to describe basic cognitive functioning. Information processing theories, on the other hand, focus on individual differences like tasks and personality traits. Information processing, in particular, is about how stimuli are paid attention to, stored, and used. Memory is one of the most important parts of this system because we use it to remember the past, predict the future, and learn about the world around us.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was:

1. To investigate the effect of teachers' classroom practices on the thinking of preschool learners according to minimum standards for quality education.
2. To see the difference in rural and urban early childhood learners' thinking?

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

3. What is the effect of teachers' classroom practices on the thinking of preschool learners according to minimum standards for quality education?
4. What is the difference between rural and urban early childhood learners' thinking?

Methodology

The major aim of this study was to study the effect of early childhood teacher classroom practices on preschool learners' thinking. A

casual comparative design was used and adopted the quantitative approach, and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Two instruments were used to collect data one from learners for thinking and the other from teachers about classroom practices for thinking of learners. Data were collected through two instruments. The detail of both instruments is given below according to their use and characteristics.

1. Questionnaire 5-point Likert scale to measure classroom practices of early childhood teachers (variable 1).
2. Activity-based test to determine the thinking of learners (variable 2)

The instrument (questionnaire for variable 1) used in this study to measure the teachers classroom practices was self-made by the researcher from the National minimum standards document of Government of the Pakistan. The second instrument was an activity-based test which was self-made by the researchers from the National Minimum Standards document. There were activities in the test to measure the thinking ability of the learners. The material used in all these activities was already available in ECE classrooms in an ECE kit which is provided by the government of Punjab.

The reliability coefficient of .826 for teachers classroom practices and reliability coefficient of .781 for the activity-based test were found to be reliable. In examining the validity of this study, content validity was measured. The revised and modified questionnaire was submitted to a panel of lecturers in the Education Faculty who are professionals in this field for reviews and comments before the data collection process began.

The samples were 30 teachers from government schools where ECE classrooms were available and 300 ECE learners, which were randomly selected from three districts of Punjab where no ECE classrooms were available. The activity-based test was conducted on the learners with the help of a class teacher. The questionnaires were given to the teachers in school and were collected from them upon completion. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the information and contents were merely used for the research study only.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive and inferential statistics both were used for this purpose. In descriptive statistics Mean, Standard Deviation, and Frequency was used while in inferential statistics simple linear regression and independent sample t-tests were used. To demonstrates the locality distribution of the study sample. Forty per cent (120 learners) of rural students participated in the study as research participants and the remaining sixty per cent (180 learners) of the sample consisted of urban students. Thus, the total sample was 300students. In the same way, forty per cent of rural and sixty per cent of urban teachers participated in this study, thus total sample was 30 teachers.

Regression Analysis and Results

1. The *R*-value represents the simple association of .454, which indicates a moderate correlation. The R^2 value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable, conceptual thinking, can be explained by the independent variable. In this case, 20.6, is not very high.
2. The regression model predicts conceptual thinking significantly well. It indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was applied. The *p*-value is less than 0.05 and it indicates that overall the regression model statistically significantly predicts conceptual thinking. It is a good fit for the data.
3. The *R*-value represents the simple association of .312, which indicates a moderate correlation. The R^2 value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable, logical thinking, can be explained by the independent variable, teachers' application of logical thinking. In this case, 9.7, is not very high.

4. The regression model predicts logical thinking significantly well. It indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was applied. The *p*-value is less than 0.05 and it indicates that overall the regression model statistically significantly predicts logical thinking. It is a good fit for the data.

Independent Sample T-test Analysis and Results

1. An independent sample t-test was used to check the difference between rural and urban students' conceptual thinking. There was significant difference between rural (M = 46.11, SD = 6.573) and urban(M = 47.96, SD = 6.315) learners conceptual thinking. Thus, *t-value 2.442 and* $p <$ .05 show that there is a statistically significant difference exist between rural and urban learners regarding their conceptual thinking.
2. An Independent sample t-test was used to check the difference between rural and urban students' logical thinking. There was significant difference between rural (M = 25.49, SD = 4.329) and urban(M = 27.04, SD = 5.017) learners logical thinking. Thus, *t-value 2.771 and* $p <$ .05 show that there is a statistically significant difference exist between rural and urban learners regarding their logical thinking.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to see the effect of teachers' classroom practices on preschool learners' thinking. As we know that early childhood education is very significant for learners' school education. It provides a good base for them. This education is important in the same way teacher's role in child development cannot be ignored. At the early stage of education, teachers' classroom practices influence cognitive development and thinking. The results of this study showed that rural and urban learners got the same type of education but the thinking ability of urban learners was better than rural learners during their activity-based test. It may be said their environment and infrastructure may affect the thinking of learners. The regression analysis confirmed that teachers' classroom practices have a significant effect on the thinking of preschool learners.

4.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to see the effect of early childhood teachers' classroom practices on preschool learners' thinking: National standards perspective. Early childhood is a basic developmental process for learners. Learners start learning with the help of their teachers at this stage. Classroom practices of teachers influence their thinking and future life. ECE learners were a sample of this study. 30 teachers and their 300 students participated in this study. The results of this study showed that there is a significant difference between rural and urban learners' thinking. Urban learners performed well in their activity-based tests. Teachers' classroom practices have a significant effect on learners thinking. Teachers are teaching according to national minimum standards for child development.

Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations in light of the findings and results of the current study.

1. Rural teachers may be provided more training as compared to urban teachers.
2. Rural learners maybe provide more opportunities for field trips so that they may observe city life and see that environment.
3. For rural learners, there may be increased time (in time table) for activities so that they may have more chances to think about different concepts.

References

Alter, P., & Haydon, T. (2017). Characteristics of Effective Classroom Rules: A Review of the Literature. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children*, *40*(2), 114–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406417700962

Diperna, J. C., Lei, P., Bellinger, J., & Cheng, W. (2015). Effects of a Universal Positive Classroom Behavior Program on Student Learning. *Psychology in the Schools*, *53*(2), 189–203. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21891

Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. (2011). Schools as developmental contexts during adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence,* *21*(1), 225–241. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00725.x

Egeberg, H., McConney, A., & Price, A. (2016). Classroom management and national professional standards for teachers: A review of the literature on theory and practice. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education,* *41*(7), 1-18. doi:10.14221/ajte.2016v41n7.

Gettinger, M., & Fischer, C. (2014). *Early childhood education classroom management*. In E.T. Emmer & E.J. Sabornie (Eds.), Handbook of classroom management (2nd ed., pp. 141-161). New York, NY: Routledge

Hijriati, H. (2017). Tahapan perkembangan kognitif pada masa early childhood. *Bunayya: Jurnal PendidikanAnak*, *1*(2), 33-49.

Hu, Y., & Zhu, Y. (2018). Exploring an age difference in preschool childrens competitiveness following a competition. *Frontiers in Psychology,* *9*, 306. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00306

Jensen, B., Valdés, G., &Gallimore, R. (2021). Teachers Learning to Implement Equitable Classroom Talk. Educational Researcher. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X211014859

Khan, K. Tahir, T & Aurangzeb, W. (2019). Effects of Early Childhood Education on Students Academic Achievement in Science at Elementary School Level. *Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education*, *3*, 58-75.

Lehrl, S., & Smidt, W. (2017). Differential effects of preschool quality on childrens emergent literacy skills in the final preschool year in Germany. *Research Papers in Education,* *33*(4), 492-514.

Sahin, I. T., Sak, R., & Tuncer, N. (2013). Comparison of Preschool and First Grade Teachers', *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice 13*(3), 1708-1713.

Pianta, R., Downer, J., & Hamre, B. (2016). Quality in early education classrooms: Definitions, gaps, and systems. *The Future of Children,* *26*(2), 119–137. https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2016.0015