

Citation: Shah, N. H., Kausar, R., & Shaheen, A. K. (2023). Career Counseling Practices: A Survey of Secondary Schools of Kotli. *Global Educational Studies Review*, VIII(I), 136-147. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023\(VIII-II\).13](https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023(VIII-II).13)

Challenges to the Implementation of Single National Curriculum: A New Tool for Education Reform

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Abstract: *The aim of this study was to examine the feasibility of introducing the Single National Curriculum in Balochistan's public schools. The research analyzed the potential impact of various educational tools, such as the implementation of new educational strategies, trained teachers, and curriculum changes, on achieving educational reform. The study employed a quantitative research approach and SPSS-22 software to analyze data collected from 208 teachers, and 4 members from Balochistan's Bureau of Curriculum. The findings indicated a significant correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The implementation of the Single National Curriculum, combined with trained teachers, new educational strategies, and curriculum changes, resulted in positive outcomes for education reform in public schools in Balochistan.*

Key Words: Education Reform, Implementation of Single National Curriculum, Trained Teachers

Introduction

The set of syllabuses that are offered at any school or college is referred to as the "curriculum" (Barnes, 2018). The curriculum is designed to be implemented for students who need to be taught in a specific course or subject and focuses on specific goals, topics, strategies, measurements, and resources in an interactive system (Holiday, 2013; Lashari, Mashori, Abbasi & Talpur, 2018). The curriculum is attempted to set an experience or knowledge with the goal of disciplining students in a collective way of cognitive thinking and learning performance. The various assortment of experiences is specified as the curriculum (Liu & Perrewé, 2005). School curricula are

gradually getting out of date and creating a significant gap between learning, social, and practical job circumstances as a result of the world's rapid changes in education (Ku, Lee, Wei, & Weir, 2019). Therefore, the educational system must change its curriculum, address all the issues, and create a learning society that harnesses each person's creativity and intellectual powers and prepares them for the challenges of a globalized educational system, success, and economic advancement (Smith, Jayaraman, Clerkin, & Yu, 2018). As concluded by Irfan (2021) for reform, it is important to be focused on the latest education and bringing changes in curriculum according to the need of students and society. In this regard, Pakistan is facing many challenges, due to limited

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resources, poor policies and lack of pragmatic initiatives (Tayyab, Umer, & Sajid, 2022). Similarly, Zaman, Saleem, and Ali (2021) specified that educational stakeholders, policymakers, parents and teachers have concerns about far-reaching challenges, being stuck in the past, no curriculum reform, failure of following a single national curriculum and unable to achieve the global challenges (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). To fulfil the demand the educational institutes in Pakistan need to implement a curriculum frame book that focuses on curriculum development, reviews, processes, and other issues pertaining to school learning are covered by the framework of Pakistan's constitution, national education policy, and vision 2025. Additionally, Bashir, Yasmin, and Ahmad (2021) thought that the fundamental principles of the curriculum, the demands of teacher education, and the mindsets required to achieve the goal had been defined. It offers a thorough framework for curriculum policy that may be applied to create subject-specific curricula, training Programmes, evaluation systems, professional development, and student accomplishment.

Moreover, the Pakistani government started the process of establishing a universal education system in 2018 and eliminating inequality and class distinctions. Promoting equal education under the motto "Eik Qoum, Eik Nisaab" (One Nation, One Curriculum) to stop the reinforcing of class divisions (Jahanzaib, Fatima, and e Nayab, 2021). To ensure that all educational institutions across the nation have an equal chance of success, the policy compels all provincial governments to adopt equal education, including by using a single national curriculum, medium of instruction, assessment, and evaluation (Tahir, 2022). Three phases were suggested for curriculum implementation: the first phase should cover grades 1–5 in the academic year 2021–2022; the second phase should follow in the next year; and the third phase should cover grades 9–12 in the following year. For the first phase, the federal government has given directions to be implemented in all public, private and religious madrasas. Because of the

lack of consistency in the education system and gap in learning, less teacher education inequality in society, the implementation has not stipulated a good result. In Pakistan, there are three types of educational institutions: madrasas, public schools, and private schools. The divisions of the three systems have significant differences, and because of the divisions and differences, the students have different ideological mindsets (Suhag, Lashari, Malik & Memon, 2017; Ahmed, 2020).

The Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training claims that in order to bridge the gap between the three various types of educational systems, one national curriculum was put into place. Despite all the facts that the single national curriculum deliberations are well assumed to develop students' values, confidence makes them effective national and global citizens with the necessary knowledge and skills. Moreover, Qazi (2020) claimed that the current government may face several challenges in implementing a single national curriculum in public schools and an equally useful roadmap in the existing education. This research investigates the challenges to implementing the Single National Curriculum in Balochistan's public schools and focuses on examining if the implementation of SNC will be a new tool for bringing about educational reform in Balochistan's public schools.

Statement of the Problem

In 2018, the government of Pakistan's efforts to implement a single national curriculum (SNC) in all provinces, there are still challenges in the education system, particularly in Balochistan. The government's goal is to provide an equal education system, bridging the gap between public, private, and madrasa education. However, due to limited resources, poor policies and initiatives, lack of consistency, and gap in learning, the implementation of SNC has not been as successful as anticipated. Moreover, the divisions and differences in the education system in Pakistan have significant effects on students, resulting in different ideological mindsets. The study aims to

investigate the challenges of implementing SNC and examine whether SNC can be a new tool for education reform in Balochistan. The objectives of the research include exploring new education strategies, curriculum changes, and trained teachers to facilitate education reform.

The Objective of the Study

- To investigate the challenges in the one national curriculum's implementation.
- Examining the implementation of the single national curriculum as a new tool for education reform.
- And, explore new education strategies, curriculum changes, and trained teachers may be the reason for reform in education.

Research Questions

The research question gives the research statement life and gives the creation of the instruments a focus (Mills and Jordan, 2022). The following questions are the focus of the study:

1. What are the most significant challenges that policymakers and educators face in implementing a single national curriculum in a diverse country like Pakistan?
2. In what ways can a single national curriculum benefit the educational system of a country, and what are the advantages of a uniform curriculum over a fragmented one?
3. To what extent can the adoption of a single national curriculum be considered a novel approach to improving the quality of education in Balochistan, and what factors may impede its success in the province?
4. What are some of the potential strategies and reforms that can be implemented to ensure that the introduction of a single national curriculum in Pakistan leads to positive outcomes in terms of educational equity, access, and quality?

Literature Review

The academic courses and lessons taught in schools are referred to as the curriculum. Although a course offered at a school is usually described as the curriculum in dictionaries, this concept is rarely applied in classrooms (Sinnema, Nieveen, and Priestley, 2020). The learning goals and objectives that students are required to meet in class, as well as the books, presentations, and other learning resources that are offered, are a few examples of the curriculum. For a teacher, a curriculum is a list of the learning goals, tasks, and other resources needed to prepare for and educate a particular course (Richards, 2011). A curriculum is a road map that consists of a body of knowledge to be provided and a method of monitoring the outcomes. The committee members of the Bureau of curriculum believe that the single national curriculum concept focuses to provide an equal education system in the country (Bjorg, 2016). The curriculum, student assessments, and evaluation processes are all part of one educational system for all students. The well-being of teachers and students is a product of curriculum and school growth that is sustained. Curriculum reform is suggested to be a new tool that can enable education sustainable development (Holiday, 2013). One of the key factors in the success of reform has been demonstrated to be the strategies of reforms and one of the important factors in educational reform is the implementation of a single curriculum approach. Reforming the curriculum depends on flexible accountability, procedures, and student and teacher autonomy, with a focus on building school trust. curriculum reforms rely on (Opie, 2018).

The Pakistani educational system is divided based on the quality of learning, educational objectives, the existence of equal opportunities, and poverty (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021)

(Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021).

The single national curriculum, which is a unified collection of objectives and standards, is created to address the issues that the educational system is experiencing. SNC is a system that provides uniform education to the

state and country (Kalsoom and Qureshi, 2019). It is believed that the implementation of SNC reduces the imbalances which are created by public and private schools and madaris in Pakistani's education system. A major issue and the reason why public schools don't have a strong reputation for providing quality education is the lack of involvement and monitoring on the part of instructors and management (Molapo & Pillay, 2018). Stands in opposition, Madaris only emphasizes religious education whereas private schools make greater financial investments and provide higher-quality instruction. Considering this, it implies concluding that Pakistan's divided educational system is inconsistent and incoherent. Pakistan has struggled since its founding in 1947 to forge a national identity, which is now reflected in the nation's educational policies and curricula. Strengthening Pakistan's sense of national identity has been a long-term goal. It has prioritized creating a sense of national identity ever since its founding in 1947, and today's educational Programmes and curricula continue this legacy. (Yusuf, 2023).

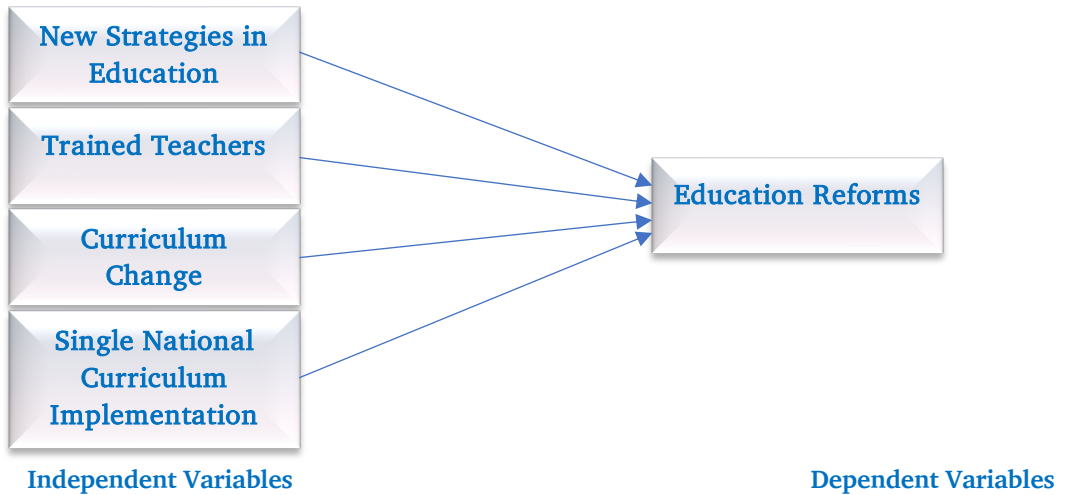
Due to the emphasis on forming an identity via it, public education has evolved into a tool for nation-building in response to difficulties with collective imagination, cooperation, and critical thought. With the introduction of the new national curriculum framework in 2018, Pakistani education experienced its first-ever curriculum framework. Prior to now, specific subject curricular requirements were used to develop and create the curriculum (Rubab, Yousuf, and Dahar, 2021). According to the 18th Amendment of 2010, the new framework encourages harmony and national ideology to combat education's decentralization to the provinces and associated divisions. The implementation and development of the curriculum were under provincial responsibility which is shifted recently to the national level. SNC's implementation makes it possible for uniform

education and greater national harmony. A single national curriculum was promoted by the gap between curricula and learning standards (Panjwani & Chaudhary, 2022).

The curriculum includes co-curricular activities, global effective learning, educational standards, infrastructures, texts, evaluation systems, and teaching methodologies. In order to prepare society for global change, the curriculum must be current and meet all standards. This means that curriculum change is unavoidable (Bari, 2021). Implementing a unified national curriculum is particularly challenging because of class tensions in the educational process, such as differences between secular and religious education and private and public education (Khan, Lashari & Iqbal, 2022). Concentrating on learning a single national curriculum will be a new approach to implementing educational reform (Qureshi & Kalsoom, 2022). Teachers are the key factor in promoting and fulfilling the responsibility of all the ambitious goals (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021) that are linked with a single national curriculum. Teachers must be well-qualified and trained for achieving educational objectives. Unfortunately, Pakistan has a shortage of qualified and well-trained teachers. Hence, for a successful curriculum and education reform there is a dire need for qualified teachers (Duong, Pullmann, Buntain- Ricklefs, Lee, Benjamin, Nguyen, & Cook, 2019). A unified national curriculum can be beneficial in addressing issues like teacher training, enrolling all children who are currently not in school, and identifying inequalities in education (Creswell, 2019). It is encouraging that the government has taken the initiative to implement a single national curriculum in the country. The initiative's decision to implement SNC would soon make changes through advanced betterment, development and advancement as a result of the reorganized education system (Tareen & Jalal, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is displayed in the below diagram.



The independent variables that are displayed have characteristics that are related to the dependent variable, which is education. The factors in the study were developed to investigate the challenges to implementing the Single National Curriculum in Balochistan's public schools and focus on examining if the implementation of SNC will be a new tool for bringing about educational reform in Balochistan's public schools.

Research Hypothesis

H1. Challenges to the implementation of SNC have a significant impact on bringing education reform.

H3. New education strategies, curriculum change, SNC implementation and trained teachers have a significant impact on bringing education reform

Methodology

This study used a quantitative research methodology. For the said purpose a Google survey questionnaire based on adapted measuring items on a five- to nine-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree was created. Sequential sampling including convenience and purposive

sampling techniques (Tashakkori, & Teddlie, 2009), was employed. A population of Balochistan public school teachers and members of the Bureau of Curriculum Committee served as the source of quantitative data for the study. Participants in this study (N=208), were female, and male teachers of various public primary and secondary schools and the bureau of a curriculum committee member from Balochistan. The sample had 208 valid respondents, whose demographic profiles are listed below.

Data Analysis

Surveys and Google Forms were used to gather quantitative data, which provided a piece of in-depth proof of the purposefulness of the research study to the participants and its objective. In the data analysis of the quantitative data SPSS-22 software was used. Mean and standard deviation, the Pearson moment-product correlation was utilized to determine the relationship between the implementation of a single national curriculum, trained teachers, new educational strategies, and curricular changes in education reform. Furthermore, multiple linear regression was also performed to define the effect of independent variables. the research study uses

multiple linear regression to forecast the dependent variable which is based on two or more two independent variables. The data from this research study satisfied all the criteria, and it was discovered that there was a linear relationship between the independent factors and the predictive variables. The outcome demonstrates that the data were evenly spaced and had a normal distribution.

An adopted questionnaire was modified through Google form by the researcher to investigate the challenges to implementing the single national curriculum in Balochistan's public schools and focuses on examining if the implementation of SNC will be a new tool for bringing about educational reform in

Balochistan's public schools. The study employed a 5- to 9-point dimensional Likert rating scale.

Reliability of Instrument

The survey's Google form was made accessible to the participants, and the internal consistency of each item was determined using Cronbach's Alpha Statistics. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The tool contains 29 items which were further divided into 5 to 9 subscales as New Education Strategies (n=5), Curriculum Change (n=5), Trained Teachers (n=5), Single National Curriculum Implementation (n=9) and Education Reform(n=5). (See Table 1).

Table 1

Instrument Validity

Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
NEWS	.897	5
TT	.913	5
CC	.901	5
SNCI	.974	9
EF	.944	5

Data Analysis and Results

The statistical Programme (IBM Statistics SPSS Version 22) for social sciences was applied and the researcher applied a systematic analysis to the data that had been gathered. The participants were given IDs based on the aliases of their respective schools. Additionally, the responses were coded as follows: 1' = strongly disagree, 2' = disagree, 3' = neutral, 4' = agree, and 5' = severely disagree. (Ghazi & Maringe,2011). In order to improve the analysis of the data, data screening was done using SPSS-22. The data did not contain any missing values or out-of-range values.

Demographics

The study demographics include gender, designation, age, teaching experiences and members of BoC from Balochistan and among these, only four variables (gender, age,

designation and experience) were analyzed. 204 public school teachers and 4 members of the BoC committee made a total of 208 participants, who were then categorized by age-wise. There were 88 (42.3%) female teachers and 120 (57%) male teachers. In comparison to their female participants, there were more male participants. In four groups, the participants were divided based on their professional backgrounds.131(63%) teachers were having teaching experience from 1 to 10 years, 53 (25%) with 10 to 20 years of teaching experience, 17 (8.2%) between 20 to 30 teaching years, and 7 (3.4%) teachers with between 30 and 40 years of classroom experience participated in the study. The data show that 141 (63%) teachers graduated involving BoC members, 53 (25.5%) teachers were intermediate with PTC/Bed and 7 (3.4%) were post-graduated in academic qualification. Shown in Table 2.

Table 2*Demographics*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	120	57.7
Female	88	42.3
Designation		
Administer	21	10.1
Bureau of Curriculum Committee members	4	1.9
Class Teacher	103	49.5
Subject Teacher	80	38.5
Experience		
1 to 10	131	63.0
10 to 20	53	25.5
20 to 30	17	8.2
30 to 40	7	3.4
Academic Qualification		
Intermediate/Bed and PTC	53	25.5
Graduate	141	63.0
Post Graduate	7	3.4

Validity of Instrument

In this study overall the four variables were applied for examining whether they are reliable in education reform. Teachers' and BoC members' data were collected by providing the instrument. Pearson correlation was used to examine the subscales' validity. It served as a

test for the linear. The NES, CC, TT, and SNCI subscales make up the majority of the scale. Table 3 shows that all four dimensions; NES, CC, TT, and SNCI of education reform are both strongly and moderately correlated. Through the variables, it shows a definite moderate and strong level of educational reform.

Table 3*Correlations*

	NES	TT	CC	SNCI	EF
NES	1				
TT	.720**	1			
CC	.696**	.689**	1		
SNCI	.638**	.682**	.685**	1	
EF	.656**	.517**	.695**	.848**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The independent sample t-test was used to calculate the average level of educational

reform in public schools in order to come up with a response to the research question.

The results of an independent t-test for the relationship between the EF on the four variables are shown in Table 4. The data analysis revealed a substantial difference in the other four factors between the EF

The findings show satisfaction on education reform with SEC (M=.232, SD =.067; t (5.650), p=.000) TT has a positive and statistically significant (M= -.417, SD =.061; t= (-6.833), p=.000). CC has a positive

effect and statistically significant value (M= -.417, SD =.061; t= (-6.833), p=.000) and SNCI has a positive significant effect on EF (M=.709, SD=.045; t= (15.874), p=.000). However, EF has a positive and statistically significant value ((M= -.440, SD =.051; t= (-8.645), p=.000). Overall findings are significant and indicate that the new education strategies, trained teachers, curriculum change and single national curriculum implementation have a positive effect on education reform.

Table 4
Means and standard deviations.

Predictor Variables	M	Std.D	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.231	.199		1.161	.247
SEC	.381	.067	.288	5.650	.000
TT	-.417	.061	-.354	-6.833	.000
CC	.273	.062	.223	4.404	.000
SNCI	.709	.045	.753	15.874	.000
EF	.440	.051	.517	8.645	.000

Ethical Considerations

The code of ethics was provided to all professions to keep on for the ethical practices in a profession. Fore-prompt agenda of the research is the consideration of ethics, which plays an important role in research studies. The researcher and participants should behave honestly, ethically, and with respect. The participants received guarantees that their opinions, names, and information would remain private and that they would be shielded from danger.

Limitations of the Research

In this research study, there were specified limitations. Participants were not allowed to identify a causal association between the different factors because the study was based on a cross-sectional survey with a correlation design. Convenience sampling is used in the study and was generally considered representative of the population of interest. It was only limited to the province of

Balochistan’s public schools, all data were collected from Balochistan.

Conclusion

The focus of this research was to look at the difficulties associated with implementing the single national curriculum in Balochistan’s public schools and to determine whether doing so might be used as a vehicle for educational reform. The study’s conclusions showed a strong correlation between the dependent variable—education reform—and the independent variables, which included difficulties with SNC implementation. The research hypotheses were supported, indicating that the challenges associated with SNC implementation had a substantial impact on educational reform. Additionally, new educational strategies, curriculum changes, SNC implementation, and trained teachers were shown to have a significant influence on bringing about education reform.

Cronbach's Alpha statistics were used to evaluate the study instrument's validity and reliability, verifying the questionnaire's internal consistency. The data analysis showed that the predictive variables and the independent variables had a distinct linear connection. Furthermore, the demographic analysis provided insights into the characteristics of the participants, including gender, designation, teaching experience, and academic qualification.

The study's findings emphasized that the implementation of SNC, along with trained teachers, new educational strategies, and curriculum changes, yielded positive outcomes for education reform in Balochistan's public schools. The results underscored the importance of addressing the challenges to SNC implementation and highlighted the potential of SNC as a valuable tool for bringing about educational reform.

The study advances knowledge of the variables affecting the Single National Curriculum's adoption and offers insightful information about the SNC's potential as a tool for educational reform. The findings highlight the significance of addressing challenges, implementing effective strategies, and training teachers to achieve successful educational reform in Balochistan's public schools. In the correlations, the result showed that there is the highest effect of trained teachers (TT) on

education reform which means there is a great need for trained teachers for education reform. Teachers are the ones who can bring reform to education providing quality education. As stated by Van Veen & Slegers, (2009) when teachers implement change in schools and provide invaluable insight into a greater knowledge of professional life during times of reform, teachers' emotions should be considered. Further Sounders (2013) added that teachers can help with initiative-taking and wisely managing educational reform during times of change.

On the other hand, the implementation of a single national curriculum plays a great role in removing the educational gap that exists in the education system of Pakistan. According to the results, the single national curriculum implementation has a high, positive and statistically significant relationship with education reform, which can also be a reason for uniforming education in every province and helping all levels of children to get an equal education. However, the results show a significant relationship between the variables.

Overall, the quantitative study results showed that teachers and community members are optimistic and think that the implementation of a single national curriculum in the schools in Balochistan can bring about change and reform in education.

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