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Exploring Perspectives of Private Sector Secondary School Teachers Towards Project-based Learning

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Abstract

The current environment of education requires a new skillset and instructional practices for teachers to be effective in the classrooms. With the introduction of project-based learning (PBL), the foci of teaching turns to a student-centered approach. Studies reported that secondary school teachers in Sukkur, Sindh, are struggling to adopt PBL as required by the national education policy. To address this gap, a qualitative study was conducted to analyze the perspectives of secondary school teachers of the private sector towards PBL. The perspectives considered teachers' perceptions, motivations, and experiences in PBL. The study took epistemologically constructivist and ontologically interpretivist philosophical worldviews. The qualitative research design was adopted to inquire about the perspectives of the participants. The participants' selection was mutually decided by the researcher and the school principal based on previous performance records, training received, relevant qualifications, and experiences. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to glean data to draw themes after coding, and doing within and cross-case analyses. The thematic analysis technique was used to classify the data under pertinent research questions. A valid interview guide was developed for eliciting data. The findings highlighted the central role of the teacher alongside regulations of the school management to implement the PBL. Moreover, curriculum, course schema, and exam patterns set out as influencing factors for practicing the PBL. Understanding these perspectives will aid the stakeholders in making appropriate adjustments to the PBL implementation in schools. Future research can undertake exploring the role of school rules and regulations in the implementation of the PBL. Likewise, the effects of PBL to determine is significance from the perspective of student outcomes can provide another avenue for further inquiry.

Keywords: *science teacher, project-based learning, perspective, motivation, perception*

Introduction

Education is dynamic in nature and requires a new skill set for instructors to be effective in the classroom, as learning in the twenty-first century has some different connotations. With the addition of methodologies such as project-based learning (PBL), the new pedagogies are aimed at making classrooms more student-centered (Wan Husin et al., 2016). Studies have shown that Pakistani teachers, particularly the secondary school teachers of Sindh are struggling to adopt updated and modern instructional approaches as required by the educational policy of the state (Memon et al, 2023). Now, teachers can no longer be effective with only having the title of 'dispenser of knowledge' (Riley & Ward, 2017), rather teachers ought to create such opportunities that assist students in creating, communicating, cooperating, investigating, thinking critically, solving issues, making decisions, and efficiently using technology and information in twenty-first-century classrooms (Smith & Gibson, 2016). For that, teachers are required to possess skills and resources that help pupils genuinely. Therefore, it is critical for teachers to change their role from knowledge disseminators to facilitators to scaffold students and make them able to take charge of their learning (Canuto, 2015).

Teachers' perceptions play a critical role in unfolding and practicing different pedagogical approaches because ultimately it is the teacher who decides what is to be taught, and in which way (Khalaf & Zin, 2018). Therefore, the different perceptions of teachers lead to the implementation of learning approaches in different ways, hence, the outcomes vary accordingly. However, it is of equal significance to determine what forms the perspective of a teacher regarding any learning approach (An et al., 2021). Therefore, it is better to mark the domains that are counted as part of the study. With this argument, this study is confined to the perspectives of teachers in terms of their perception, motivation, and experiences regarding project-based learning.

Most studies reported that private school teachers are more prone to adopt modern learning approaches for the continuation of their professional growth (Muir et al., 2021). Furthermore, their motivation is extrinsic in nature because professional growth is stressed by the school management to update their teaching methods according to the needs of the hour. As a result of non-compliance, teachers face the consequences in most cases like losing their jobs (Moats, 2014). Therefore, teachers overtly show an obligatory willingness to shift their pedagogy from conventional to the most modern one (Hollweck & Doucet, 2020).

Considering this fact, the perspectives of private school teachers towards the adoption and implementation of the modern learning approach, the PBL, are identified in this study. The purpose of selecting secondary school teachers is that project-based learning is a somewhat advanced approach, therefore, it is presumably functional with an advanced group of students (Almulla, 2020). So, this study compiled data from multiple teachers of various disciplines to explore the area under research from a different lens.

The context of the study is significant in terms of conducting research as Sukkur is considered the hub of prestigious institutions and also represents the largest portion of the province which is the rural population. Different teachers having numerous capacities teach there who belong to different parts of the province. Hence, the data collected is significant for determining the perspectives of teachers of Sindh towards PBL. Here, it is worth mentioning that the literacy rate of Sindh is the lowest among the provinces (Our Correspondent, 2023) as 44% of the children are still deprived of the blessings of education (Rehman et al., 2015). The literacy rate significantly correlates with the pedagogical approaches used by the teachers. Hence, the assumption is that due to a lack of good instructional methods, the students in this context suffer (Munshi et al., 2015). The current scenario indicates an opening in the literature to probe into teachers' perspectives regarding effective pedagogical approaches, like the PBL. This leads to the formulation of research questions:

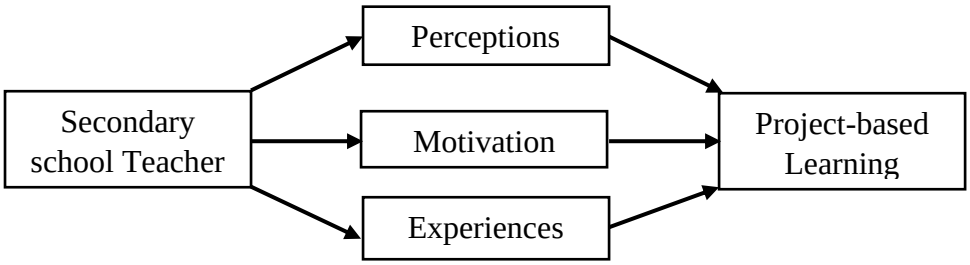
1. What are the perceptions of secondary school teachers in the private sector about project-based learning?
2. What are the motivation levels of the secondary school teachers of the private sector for implementing project-based learning in the classroom?
3. What is the account of the experiences of the secondary school teachers of the private sector when applying project-based learning in the classroom?

The Conceptual Framework

The selection of variables and conceptual framework of the study is based on the argument of Surdek (2016) who defined perspective as the lens through which people view the world (Figure 1). It originates from their own unique viewpoint and is influenced by a variety of factors, including their past interactions, ongoing events (experiences), present mindset, beliefs (derived by motivation), and assumptions about the world (based on perceptions).

Figure 1

The Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework denotes the variables in the middle drawing from the internal factors of the teacher that directly influence the decision to utilize project-based learning in the classroom.

There exists a chasm that highlights the requirement to conduct a study on teachers' perceptions of the PBL tasks in the context of Sindh, Pakistan. Further, the literature also indicates a paucity of studies on teachers' perspectives on how the PBL work is perceived, conducted, and experienced in the classroom. Therefore, this study will contribute to the small corpus of knowledge on teachers' perspectives, especially understanding of what instructors believe a PBL work is, and how they see its implementation. Additionally, the perceptions of multi-grade teachers would add value to it. Most importantly, understanding these perspectives will aid in making proper adjustments to the PBL implementation by the school management and other stakeholders.

Literature Review

The PBL is defined as an academic approach that indulges students in authentic and real-life problem-based scenarios where students strive to find solutions while working in a team or a group by using a variety of skills such as inquiry, research, problem-solving, and decision-making (Condliffe, 2017). The questions that are raised by the students during project-based learning are often multidisciplinary and multi-perspective (Yuliansyah & Ayu, 2021). Therefore, the role of a teacher is more than a dispenser as they serve as advisors or facilitators. To make the learning process meaningful, often technology is deemed as a value-added tool while to double the exposure, experts from the real field are also asked to share their related experiences and information (Lock & Redmond, 2021).

At the beginning of the 18th century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau felt that children are curious to learn since birth, hence to facilitate their growth and learning; it is better to nourish their

intrinsic motivation by providing them with healthy learning opportunities (Schiro, 2007). Rousseau was of the view that a child's learning should proceed from direct and real experiences to indirect and abstract experiences in an appropriately developed order. He further advocated physical and active learning rather than that of conventional instructional design (Salvastru, 2012). Hence, the core idea of his theory is to acknowledge the significance of physical and cognitively active and engaging learning which renders the experiences of joy and pain (Mintz, 2012).

The PBL holds the learner-centered ideology that focuses on student-driven approaches to construct their learning through investigation under the facilitation of the teacher (Stefanou et al., 2013). The key component of this approach is to give rise to students' voices so that they can make their own choices (Bell, 2010). This child-focused pedagogy shifts the emphasis of learning responsibility from teacher to student and transforms the role of a teacher as a guide or facilitator who becomes responsible for creating a supportive milieu and relevant opportunities where students can satisfy their curiosity about learning with interest and involvement (Galvan & Coronado, 2014). Moreover, the major concern of the PBL is beyond making projects and accomplishing tasks. rather it entices learners to have an experience and then to learn by reflecting on that experience. The intended outcome of the PBL is 'learning' rather than a 'product' that is achieved as a result of experience (Larmer et al., 2015).

Minimal instruction is regarded as the key benefit of the PBL as it requires fewer instructions to be delivered from the teacher's side, and more efforts to be made from the students' side. However, Kirschner et al. (2006) argued that less-guided instruction cannot be so effective, as there will be more chances of misinterpretations, and wrong implementations. There are fewer chances to drive expected results from minimal instructions and those instructors who produce desired outcomes using this approach spend their maximum time with students to let them clear about the instructions at each instance. Moreover, studies have also revealed that no outcomes are achieved when students are taught through the PBL method, and assessed by traditional assessment techniques (Barber et al., 2015). Besides, due to the high consumption of time and energy, this method seems a displeasing pedagogy to students and instructors (Gibbes & Carson, 2014).

Methodology

The study used the research onion framework of Saunders et al. (2019) to cover the methodology section. First, the philosophical stance of the study was chosen, which was

epistemologically interpretivist, and ontologically constructivist or subjectivist (Bryman, 2008). Similarly, the study employed an inductive approach with a phenomenological case study; moreover, the data collection process was completed using a qualitative method of inquiry with cross-sectional time horizons, and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection; also, a thematic analysis technique was used for generating themes (Saunders et al., 2019).

In a qualitative study, participants' views hold central importance in understanding a happening where the researcher takes an interpretive viewpoint to investigate the topic (Merriam, 2002, p 6). The reason for adopting the qualitative approach is that it acknowledges the importance of context and allows the researcher to consider ground realities. Moreover, it permits the researcher to explore the study in depth and look into the problem by using the participants' lens. Since, the objective of this study was to explore the notion of Project-based learning according to Secondary school teachers and to investigate how their perception, motivation, and experience form their overall perspective toward PBL. Hence, the data was collected from multi-disciplinary pedagogues of private sector institutions to explore the problem statement from different lenses to have diversified but reliable data.

The data collection tool chosen to conduct this research was a semi-structured interview. In order to conduct semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was developed in which the list of pre-determined questions aligned with the center of this study and also designed some prompts to ask the participants. Besides this, bilingual communication was carried out so that the participants were able to exactly respond to what the questions were asked them. Also, to record their every single word; note-taking and audio recording during the interviews were done. Particularly, the whole conversation of the participants was later divided into certain themes pertaining to the research questions.

Keeping in view the research design of this study, a purposive sampling technique was used to select participants in this research. Purposive sampling is referred to as: "The phenomena of selecting information-rich-cases for an in-depth study" (Mugo, 2002). Using purposive sampling, the participants of this research were selected in such a way that firstly, a set of criteria for the respondents who were familiar with the PBL approach, and were likely to implement the PBL strategies in their classrooms. Most importantly, they have practiced some PBL activities with secondary school students and can quote those examples to provide

the required data. In addition, the convenience sampling technique was also used as the researcher also taught in the same school at the time of the study, making it easy to collect data with the convenience of time and energy. The final list of participants was provided and verified by the school principal as he knew the qualifications, subject expertise, and professional development training given to such teachers. Hence, the final list from the principal's office had eight participants but only four volunteered to participate in the study.

The sample of this study was composed of four participants. All four participants were private-sector secondary school teachers. Two of them were science teachers while the other two were language instructors. Among science teachers, one female was a chemistry teacher whereas the other male was a physics teacher. However, the remaining two participants (male and female) were both English language teachers.

The data for this qualitative study were acquired through semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to generate themes that led to findings.

Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to explore secondary school teachers of the private sector for their use of PBL in the classroom. The findings of the study have been classified under the research questions discussed:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of the secondary school teachers of the private sector about project-based learning?

Finding 1: Teachers Confusing PBL with Projects

Several studies indicated that most teachers confuse Project-based learning with making projects (Hanney & Savin-Baden, 2013). However, they both are entirely different phenomena. Bland (2020) defines the project as an outcome-based product, usually done at the end of the academic year. It doesn't always require the presence of a teacher, neither poses critical questions nor focuses on real-world solutions. Whereas, project-based learning focuses on the process rather than a product. Here process refers to learning that is being done as a result of critical inquiry and presents real-world solutions under the facilitation of the teacher. This is revealed and further emphasized by one participant (4):

> My belief regarding project-based learning is somehow different than what is usually perceived by most of our teachers. I believe that the PBL is somewhat beyond making projects only. Rather it is more about that learning which is acquired from

> accomplishing a goal, or performing a task, or solving a problem, or even making decisions while making a project.

Finding 2: The PBL an Instructional Method not a Snapshot Activity

Referring to Finding 1, those teachers who confuse PBL with projects are generally of the view that it is a snapshot activity that is being done at a particular time as reported by Mukund (2022, pp 190-194) that teachers having inadequate knowledge perceive the PBL as a time-bound activity, which is not the case. Sometimes, it starts before the making of the project and continues even after the project's completion (Bland, 2020). According to Razzak (2012), it is a pedagogy that allows teachers to transform non-conducive classrooms into conducive ones. This is in line with what one participant (1) has stated in her interview:

> For me, I think project-based learning is student-centered pedagogy, in which students explore and resolve their problems on their own. And also learn to face real-life challenges. Hence, it is a student-centered pedagogy where a teacher plays a passive role.

The above quotation reveals two things about PBL: first, it is an approach to teaching –a pedagogy; second, a pedagogy where a pedagogue plays an in-active but responsible role in facilitating the process of learning.

Finding 3: Teachers' Knowledge and Expertise Determine Meaning of PBL

There is a proverb that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. This becomes more dangerous when it comes to Students' learning. Teachers having wrong or inadequate knowledge can put the whole class at stake, whereas the purpose of learning remains unaccomplished on the other hand. This is also true for those PBL pedagogues who do not possess sufficient expertise and keep certain misperceptions, as mentioned by a participant (2): *I think, project-based learning is all about students' involvement and engagement, where the teacher plays no role. The teacher is not supposed to intervene while students work. The students work as self-guide in the PBL classrooms.*

This is evident from the above quotation, that knowledge (particularly correct knowledge) plays a critical role in making perceptions. Insufficient knowledge does not only alter the meaning of the phenomenon but can also cause severe consequences. According to the above participant, PBL encourages students' involvement and participation which is right, but it

never states that the teacher has no role. Similarly, it enables students to take charge of their learning but it never asks the teacher to stay on the side and leave students on their own.

Finding 4: The PBL Approach Effectiveness for Science Teachers

The PBL has been working on magnificent domains of teaching and learning. The approach carries equal benefits for both Scientific and non-scientific disciplines (Keller, 2002). However, according to most participants, the approach is more suitable for Science subjects than that of humanities and others. As quoted by a participant (3):

> The PBL is one of the most effective and interactive instructional strategies particularly when it comes to teaching Science. The science concepts which are taught at secondary level are usually a little more advanced and complex than the previous classes, therefore, here, the PBL activities provide an opportunity to students to witness and experience their bookish content hands-on in the real world.

The above statement indicates that the PBL is the most effective pedagogy for the teaching of Science at secondary levels because at this stage the students become more excited to see the real-world application of their learning.

Finding 5: The PBL a Source of Energy and Excitement in Classrooms

The activity of the PBL in monotonous classrooms is similar to colors on canvas. Many researchers have highlighted that an effective classroom cannot be a boring classroom (Deiter, 2000). Lamnina et al., (2019) stated that a room where students are no more curious to learn is not a classroom. Therefore, 21st-century classrooms promote the idea of students' continuous engagement, involvement, and excitement through approaches like project-based learning, where students do not remain passive receivers anymore (Minner et al., 2010). The idea is affirmed by a participant (4) in the following quotation: *I found PBL effective when I witnessed that students enjoy and show their interest in learning when they finally got something to experience hands-on.*

The participant accounts signify the impact of the PBL on the classroom environment, and how the tone and culture of the class is changed with the PBL use. Similarly, the element of mental involvement of the PBL makes students remain on-task and focused and achieve the learning outcomes effectively and efficiently rather than straying away from the learning purpose.

RQ2: What are the motivation levels of the secondary school teachers of the private sector for implementing project-based learning in the classroom?

Finding 1: The Conventional Teachers Lack Motivation for the Implementation of PBL

Serow (1994) argued that teachers who are more prone to conventional practices are less likely to adopt modern approaches. They are less motivated to change their pedagogy and for that, they keep certain justifications. This means that perceptions also derive motivation as stated by Participant (2):

> I acknowledge the benefits of the PBL, although I don't support this approach as a pedagogy to be practiced in regular classrooms. I believe that students learn less and are distracted more when they get engaged in such processes. Moreover, the teachers lose some control as well which disturbs the discipline of the classroom. Therefore, it is better to have such a teacher-centered approach where students can learn more with discipline.

Teachers' attitudes and teaching philosophy direct the decision for the inclusion of the PBL in the classroom. The ones with a growth-dominant attitude are more likely to adopt the PBL than others who believe otherwise.

Finding 2: The PBL a Supportive Tool for Conducive Milieu Creation in the Classroom

The following statement presents the vitality of the PBL in creating an environment effective for teaching and learning. The research participant (3) states:

> I believe learning life skills beforehand stepping into practical life is one of the key benefits for students using the PBL in the classroom. Moreover, it also helps teachers to stimulate, motivate, and encourage students to engage in learning to their fullest.

The above quote discloses two characteristics of the PBL instructors as effective teachers. The first one is that the teachers try to bridge the gap between theory and application by using PBL. The second one unveils the reason why PBL is chosen by effective pedagogues while stating its role in creating effective and supportive classrooms, where students remain stimulated and motivated toward learning (Shin, 2018).

Finding 3: The Influence of Student Motivation on Methodological Choice of Teachers

It is said that an active class has the power to activate the teacher. Serow (1994) states that the primary source of teachers' motivation to teach is their students' interest and their active

participation. Teachers are more encouraged to use such strategies that derive their students' active participation. A participant (1) has revealed that the use of the PBL activities fosters students' involvement and hence encourages teachers to use them in the classroom by stating the following quotation: *I found that the PBL activities encouraged students' participation in the classroom. Even the students who use to remain silent or less participative in the classroom, such students also become energized and start interacting with their peers.* Another participant (4) affirmed: *Students get motivated when they are assigned PBL tasks. This motivation entices them to be regular and punctual in the classroom*. However, it is surprising to note that the finding goes vice-versa as well as mentioned by participant (2):

> I found some of students do not take an interest when I engage them in the PBL activities. Once, I involved my students in the PBL, and half of the class didn't respond the way they should. I lost my time and energy and avoided using it frequently in my classroom.

The above statements reveal that teachers also become discouraged from using PBL when they don't get the expected response and participation from students. So, the choice of method application lies in the students' motivation, the more they are interested in learning, the more the teacher devises novel approaches to teaching in the classroom.

Finding 4: The PBL an Energy-consuming Approach for the Novice and Less Motivated Teachers

The findings of the study also disclose that novice and less motivated teachers regard the PBL as an effortful and energy-consuming approach. For novices, it might be due to a new approach as every new thing seems tiring when they are tried in the initial stages. Once the expertise is developed, things become easier and less time-consuming. However, for less-motivated teachers, it is evident that the PBL appears a high-energy and time-consuming task as it requires a little more effort and time than conventional teaching (Gibbes & Carson, 2014) as highlighted by participant (2): *It takes me more time to deliver a lesson using the PBL approach. I have to put more effort to make my PBL lesson successful.*

The above account straightforwardly narrates that one of the reasons for opting out of the PBL approach by less motivated teachers is that they are not willing to make efforts to use the approach in its truest sense.

Finding 5: Reward as a Source of Motivation for the PBL Implementation

Rewards and incentives are always counted as the extrinsic source of driving motivation (Dilworth, 1991). This postulate also works for teaching and learning. Students and teachers are highly motivated towards those practices that bring them incentives and good acknowledgments. The case is the same for the PBL implementation as well as mentioned by participant (4): *I like it when I get appreciated for implementing new practices in my classroom. The appreciation from parents, colleagues, and management is sufficient to make me motivated enough to pursue modern teaching techniques.* The real motivation for teachers comes from motivated students. Hence, another participant (3) further quoted: *To derive students' positive attitude towards PBL, I use a behaviorist approach and thence I assign different rewards on students' participation and accomplishment.*

The above quotations revealed that the motivation to use PBL is equally derived by teachers and students. In order to make the most of it, both learners and facilitators need to keep their motivation ascending.

RQ3: What is the account of experiences of the secondary school teachers of private sector when applying the project-based learning in the classroom?

Finding 1: The PBL a Modern Approach of Teaching

Since the pedagogical shift has taken place, the adoption of modern strategies has become one of the key practices for updating teaching (Efstratia, 2014). Now, student-centered pedagogies like PBL are getting priority as a tool to modernize teaching. The idea is expressed by a participant (3) in the following words:

> It has been more than two years since I am using PBL as a pedagogical approach. Before that, I used to teach with a teacher-centered approach. The difference I found in this transition is in the change in perspectives of my colleagues and school management. Now, they believe that I have updated my pedagogy over time. Moreover, parents also do appreciate this thing in PTMs and general visits.

The quote vividly states the progressivity of the whole school toward the dynamics of education. The PBL approach has shaped the mindset of educationists for its effectiveness and student engagement. So, the PBL approach serves as a significant pedagogic tool for teachers to influence students, parents, and school management.

Finding 2: The PBL Appreciation among Students and School Management

One of the participants (4) applauds the effects of the PBL in the following words: *Children love to get engaged in hands-on learning. I have witnessed that those teachers who prefer activity-based learning are the favorite teachers of students. And for sure, management as well.*

The quotation makes it evident that those instructors who opt for the PBL activities in their routine classrooms receive appreciation and acknowledgment from their peers, teachers, students, and management. Students enjoy more in their classroom and show their willingness to learn during activities (Hugerat, 2016).

Finding 3: The PBL as a source of Continuous Professional Development

Professional development isn't restricted to yearly training and earning degrees only. Rather it refers to getting better each coming day by learning and experiencing something new (Muir et al., 2021). The PBL provides a chance for teachers to increase their professional expertise by coming across novel situations in every new class as mentioned by a participant (3): *To me, an effective teacher always strives for his personal and professional development. I perceive PBL as a source of vast professional (teaching) experiences and exposure.*

The use of PBL lies at the shrewd discretion of the teacher. Teacher attitude determines the professional progress they want to make in teaching to yield encouraging results for students. Moreover, only teachers with concern for teaching take up the PBL for effective learning and a bright future for the students.

Finding 4: The PBL Experience as a Source for Real World Preparation

The PBL advocates truly believe that this approach is most reliable when the aim is to prepare students for the real world. One of the relevant experiences has been shared by a participant (4):

> I would like to quote an example of arranging a cultural exhibition at the classroom level. I believe this activity helped them to connect with the real world in the following ways: firstly, researching about their respective province helped them to acquire and learn more than the content given in their course book; secondly, the students didn't gather only the information but also tried to explore the real essence of the culture. They collected different real artifacts of the particular culture. Moreover, they also tried to learn different phrases in their particular language. Hence, when

they presented their work, it was a true depiction of enacting content in a real-world scenario.

It is important to note that the objective behind the PBL activity is ultimately decided by the teacher. So, it is the teacher who prepares students for practical life by making the correct use of the pedagogy. The PBL approach requires both will and skill for its implementation. A teacher possessing these characteristics can easily achieve student learning outcomes through the PBL.

Finding 5: The Barrier of Extra Workload in Private Schools for the Implementation of PBL

The most inhumane approach practiced by most private schools is to overload teachers with extra work and responsibilities (Chughtai et al., 2013). This approach carries a significantly negative impact on teachers' choice to opt for the PBL as a pedagogical tool. The argument is made by a participant (1): *I feel overburdened when I have to carry out the PBL activities and other assigned duties simultaneously. At that time, I usually don't give my best and prefer to run conventional lectures.*

Apart from the key findings, four additional dimensions were also revealed that significantly impact the perspectives of private school teachers towards the PBL adaptation in their classrooms. They are discussed under the dimensions of significant roles played by different stakeholders.

Dimension One: Teacher Role as the Advocate of the PBL

Finding 1: Igniting Interest for Self-learning in Students for PBL

The role of a teacher being the PBL advocate is very crucial and inevitable. Though the roles and responsibilities have some transitions from traditional practices they are regarded as significant and primitive ones, particularly in secondary science classrooms. It is what exactly has been reported by NASEM (2018) in his study that the role of a teacher in 21st-century classrooms has been shifted from content provider to the facilitator of learning, therefore, now it is assumed that the teacher does not teach everything to the students rather give them chance to construct their learning by co-learning with them. This also implies that the teacher in the PBL classrooms is not solely responsible for students' learning rather the learners will also share some responsibility and take some charge of learning as mentioned by a participant (4):

> I always try to involve each student in my class, whenever I practice any PBL activity by dividing them into groups; using various strategies. Dividing the students into groups not only ensures their maximum participation but also creates a sense of responsibility among them to take charge of their learning.

Teachers' dedication inspires students to direct cognitive energies toward learning. Moreover, teacher experience coupled with modern knowledge and skills assists students in learning from uncommon approaches like the PBL, where active participation of students increases.

Finding 2: The PBL Fostering Healthy Interactions among Students

About the above finding, Chhuon and Wallace's (2014) results have informed that teachers focus more on making good connections with students rather than making good delivery of the content. The students take more interest in the classroom task and feel connected and engaged. This shows that ensuring students' healthy interaction with peers and facilitators is also a key area to be focused on by the PBL instructors. Its purpose is not only to maximize students' learning but also to protect their personal and professional well-being as stated by a participant (1): *I believe students can't learn much alone in comparison to learning in groups with friends. When students discuss the assigned task in the group, they feel involved and try to participate in the discussion.*

The above quote demonstrates that the teacher is an advocate of the PBL, which makes the teacher's role different from that of the conventional teacher. The PBL pedagogue always serves more than the 'content provider'. He provides a platform to students where they can interact with their peers to consolidate their learning to the optimum level. Above all, the teacher makes students reflect on their PBL dialogically with one another. Resultantly, the students not only acquire new learning as an outcome, but also re-organize, and re-develop their previous knowledge and understanding.

Dimension Two: *Role of School Management in the PBL Implementation*

Finding 1: Institutional Support Impact on Teachers' Inclination to Adopt PBL

The data reveal that teachers' uptake of any approach to teaching depends on school management. The rules and regulations, workload, and school culture allow the enactment of certain activities. For instance, one participant (3) said:

> Where I teach earlier, the management did not cooperate with teachers to implement innovative teaching styles. Hence, I became less motivated. However, since I have joined here I maximum management support and cooperation for implementing student-centered pedagogies in my classroom.

The use of the PBL becomes easy when school management provides support for its smooth implementation (Lam et al., 2013). It requires overall general support from management to make the process more meaningful. However, in the absence of management support, it becomes quite difficult for a teacher to carry out the activities in a smooth manner.

Finding 2: Support for the PBL in the Private Schools

In line with the above finding, when further inquired from participant (3) that whether the school provides financial support for the PBL programs or not, the following response was received:

> I would say "Absolutely, yes", because being a teacher of a highly-recognized institute it is legitimate to make this claim that our school management does provide adequate resources to perform classroom activities. However, at times, we have to suffer for the appropriate resources as well. In that particular case, the teacher and some influential students contribute to bringing the required resources into the classroom and making it accessible for everyone to enjoy the real flavor of learning.

The above quotation reveals that private sector institutions are more likely to promote PBL programs, therefore, they try to provide both moral and financial support to their teachers which is also advocated by the study of Olszewski & Crompton (2020). Whereas, in rare cases, the students and teachers go for self-help.

Dimension Three: Role of Curriculum and Course Scheme in Promoting PBL

Finding 1: Limited Room for the PBL Implementation in Private Schools

Research has shown that teachers are more prone to opt for such methods of instruction that support the nature of their Course Schema (Collins et al., 2013). Unfortunately, the existing course schemas in private schools discourage teachers from adopting student-centered pedagogies as mentioned by one participant (2):

> No, they neither remain absent nor participate actively because they don't take it much seriously. The reason behind it is that our system supports result-oriented learning

rather than process-oriented learning. The main objective is to complete the syllabus. So, the students also prioritize outcome-based learning and focus on the completion of their SLOs.

The private sector schools are particular about course completion and restrict teachers to course books only. Therefore, taking time out for the PBL appears a daunting task in these schools. So, the teacher autonomy is restricted to conventional teaching.

Finding 2: The Non-flexibility of Curriculum as a Hindering Factor for the Adoption of PBL

In line with the study of Batool et al. (2020), the above finding alarms policymakers and curriculum developers to ponder over the existing issue as it unveils the failure of existing curricula to the unsuccessful incorporation and advocacy of student-centered pedagogies. This assumption is further consolidated by the following statement of a participant:

> Besides students, management is also reluctant to foster the PBL. But, they both are not solely responsible. Because our course (curriculum) has been designed in such a way that students are encouraged to cram or memorize. So, if the syllabus (curriculum) lacks this capacity neither management nor students should be accused of this.

This signifies the cruciality of the curriculum flexibility to follow novel trends in education. Interestingly, the school management and teacher's role maintain prime importance for making the curriculum instrumental for students' learning.

Dimension Four: Role of Examinations in the Adaptation of PBL

Finding 1: Examinations as the Hinderance for the Adaptation of PBL

The conventional exams focus on remembering and memorization significantly impact teachers' choice for the PBL in their classrooms (Akiri et al.,2021). When students come to know this fact, they find it disadvantageous to be engaged in something that has a slim chance of appearing in the exams. The idea is further elaborated by a participant (1) below:

> I found students' low participation in the PBL activities, and the main reason behind it is that it has not been made a part of our academics yet. Students think that their actual progress is based on their traditional paper-pencil tests. And certain PBL activities are something out of the curriculum. Hence, they keep 0 motivation for participation.

Since exams receive emphasis from teachers, institutional management, and parents, thus, a robust approach to teaching is compromised, and mostly workable teaching methods are considered appropriate for students. Students see this and rely on the prevailing assumption associated with exams, and, thus, objectify exams.

Finding 2: Dynamic Assessment as Requirement for PBL

The PBL adaptation aligns with the idea of introducing it as a complementary part of the formative assessment. Moreover, the assessment of PBL activities is an intricate process, and many teachers find it a challenging task (Aldabbus, 2018). When further inquired about the PBL assessment, a participant (4) made the most relevant response:

> Assessment of the PBL tasks is no doubt a very challenging job. Therefore, to make it fair and smart, I always go for rubrics, and key performance indicators to evaluate my students' performance. Sometimes, I assess them in groups but most of the time, I prefer individual assessment. The challenges that I encounter while assessing my students during the PBL activities are time management, designing appropriate rubrics, and communicating clear instructions to the students to perform the task.

Today's teachers need dynamic assessment patterns to evaluate students' competencies that are pertinent to the PBL and to introduce the PBL as a phenomenon and outcome-based pedagogy. However, teacher assessment competencies may affect the outcomes associated with the implementation of PBL.

Conclusion

The twenty-first-century classrooms require updated student-centered pedagogies to be opted by the teachers to prepare students according to the needs and requirements of this century. The adoption of such pedagogies as the PBL, problem-based learning, inquiry-based approach, hands-on learning, etc. are all those pedagogies that allow students to connect their bookish content with the real world. However, this could only be possible in the truest sense when it became evident what sort of perspectives pedagogues keep for these approaches. This study was conducted to analyze the perspectives of secondary school teachers of the private sector towards the PBL (a highly inclined student-centered pedagogy). The limitation of the study is that it is only confined to the perspectives of secondary school teachers, whereas, the study's findings are delimited to reveal teachers' perspectives toward the PBL in terms of perception, motivation, and experiences (implementation). It also highlighted that each

variable is interdependent on one another. Teachers' perception of the PBL does affect their motivation and experiences in the said domain. Similarly, the motivational factor encourages them to go for certain experiences and to form specific perceptions regarding the PBL as a result. All in all, three variables work interdependently when it comes to forming a whole perspective towards the PBL approach. As the study only addresses the perspectives of private school teachers, the results cannot be generalized to the whole population. Above all, the findings of the study highlight multiple contextual ground realities that are either supporting or hindering the adoption and implementation of PBL in today's classrooms. Therefore, the results will be significant for not only teachers but also for the other concerned corners who bear the charge of bringing quality reforms to the educational system of Pakistan.

Implications

The findings of the study indicate that teachers can opt for the PBL approach as a source of their professional development. Besides, teachers can also use PBL to maintain positive interactions with students and to stimulate their participation for effective teaching and learning experiences. On the other hand, school management should facilitate teachers in arranging the PBL activities in all disciplines. Moreover, the teachers practicing the PBL as a new instructional approach must be less burdened. Whereas, Curriculum Developers should introduce the PBL activities in the course content along with proper assessment patterns for its evaluation. Most importantly, policymakers to consider PBL programs during teachers' professional training. The more teachers are informed and motivated to opt for modern strategies, the more the quality of teaching will be improved.

Recommendations

This study opens an avenue for the researchers to investigate the perspectives of public sector teachers regarding the PBL for comparative study to analyze the difference in perspectives between public and private sector teachers, provide a clear picture to the stakeholders, and help in bringing quality reforms in education.

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