



## **Multi-grade Teaching and its Detrimental Effects on the Performance of Primary School Teachers in District Hub, Balochistan**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of the present study is to explore challenges faced by teachers in multigrade classes. Many rural Pakistani primary schools lack resources and teachers, so they provide multi-grade classroom instruction. In this arrangement, a single teacher oversees the entire classroom while students from two or three grades are housed in combined classes. This study looked at the elements that lead to poor instruction in multi-grade classrooms in Hub district primary schools. Time and funding constraints limited the study to thirty teachers. For this study, a quantitative research methodology was used. The quantitative research methodology was chosen due to temporal constraints. The research instrument that was used was the questionnaire. Teachers working in Balochistani primary schools in the Hub district made up the research population for this study. As a research sample, thirty primary school teachers were chosen from the Hub district. The data was tabulated and then graphically analyzed. With the aid of their interview guide, the researchers themselves serve as the primary research instrument in this study. Information gathered from one-on-one interviews was coded, transcribed, and question responses were categorized for this study. A questionnaire can be used as one research instrument. It was found that teaching multiple grades negatively affected the ability of teachers to instruct. Teachers' comments revealed that teaching in multi-grade classrooms also calls for a number of advantageous adjustments. Based on the results, constructive recommendations and suggestions were made.*

**Keyword:** Multi-grade teaching, Teachers' performance, Primary education



## **Introduction**

Pakistan's educational system is seriously deficient. There have not been many significant changes to the educational system as a whole since the country gained independence, with primary education being one exception. In many rural Pakistani primary schools, students receive instruction in multigrade classrooms. In these cases, the class is taught by one teacher, and students from two or three grade levels are expected to accommodate each other. When it comes to public schooling, District Hub is ranked highly. Most schools employ a mixed-grade system in which primary teachers teach classes ranging from one to five. The focus of this study is on the negative effects of multi-grade teaching on teachers' performance. The sample population for this study consists of primary school teachers who live in rural areas.

In a multi-grade classroom, students of different ages, grades, and aptitudes are taught together. This is preferred in developing countries where grade replication is common and enrollment ages vary. In the writings, it is referred to incongruously as "multi-level," "multiple classes," and "complex classes." Angela Little concurs with this definition as well.

The positioning of teachers' attitudes, increasing awareness, modifying curricula, expressing learning philosophy, creating learning materials, organizing students socially, altering assessment systems, and emphasizing the value of teachers' knowledge and skills are among the core components of multi-graded teaching that have been identified (Brown, 2010). In a similar vein, the multi-graded teacher training program's key areas have been identified as classroom management, instructional strategies, curriculum development, instructional materials, and community involvement (Beukes, 2006). Key areas and core aspects are important considerations for managing teaching and learning in multi-graded classrooms in a way that is both productive and efficient.

Multi-graded teaching presents a management challenge because the teacher is preoccupied with one group's instruction while another group works on a task (Taole & Mncube, 2012). It has been observed that students frequently finish their assignments without assistance from the teacher. Like this, fostering good time management and upholding parent and community relationships are critical to the development of successful multi-graded teaching and learning experiences (Mulyran-Kyne, 2007). Multi-graded teaching and learning, despite its difficulties, offers certain advantages, such as flexible and adaptive schedules, increased chances to promote and facilitate creative learning, and increased chances to learn in a laid-back setting with amiable



classmates (Jordaan, 2006). Most educators who work in classrooms with multiple grade levels acknowledged that they found teaching multiple grades to be tough and challenging. They went on to say that they did not know what was specifically expected of them and that they felt alone (Taole, 2014).

During the primary education stage of their education, which lasts until they enter secondary school, children receive consistent instruction in fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. Primary school students in Pakistan are enrolled in classes one through five. However, children in developed countries enrolled in first through sixth grades are in primary school. "Teacher performance" refers to how a teacher introduces and applies their competencies in the classroom by using their abilities. Their disagreements with the students in the classroom and their efficient use of the teaching resources have led to this.

### **Statement of Problem**

The study on the negative consequences of multigrade teaching by teachers.

### **Study Questions**

- How to outline the essential elements of teaching several grades in a primary school?
- What effect do these issues have on the efficacy of teachers?
- What adjustments can be made to improve the effectiveness of teachers in multigrade classrooms?

### **Study Limitations**

The study was useful to elementary school teachers in District Hub. The researcher had to restrict the study because of time and resource limitations. With only thirty teachers selected, this study was further limited to the negative effects of teaching in multi-grade classes on teachers' behavior in the Hub district of the province of Balochistan.

The teachers and students in this multigrade school made a great effort to be meaningful and productive in spite of these obstacles and limitations. These multigrade teachers employed a number of effective methods and approaches to improve the students' aptitudes. The researchers found that multigrade schools perform better on the National Achievement Test (NAT) than single-grade schools in the research setting. This led the researchers to investigate how teachers manage multigrade classes in the classroom. This study stems from the observation that positive outcomes could still be achieved in oppressive teaching environments for multigrade teachers. The goal of the research is to gather opinions and ideas regarding multigrade teachers'



experiences with the teaching techniques used in their station. Future multigrade teachers could use this study as a guide for how to handle their classes.

### **Study Significance**

The study will be important in a number of ways and offer a solid grasp of the challenges faced by elementary teachers in multigrade classrooms. The results could differ because this study will offer some information that could help the organizations produce a plan to help provide primary school teachers with facilities.

Information about the importance of certified teachers who are adept at teaching in multi-grade classrooms will be disseminated through this study. In addition to being beneficial for teachers and students alike, this research study will help find answers for the inadequate performance of primary teachers. Additionally, it will offer sufficient suggestions for creating a productive learning environment. It will act as a roadmap for creating an improved system that elementary school teachers can use to work with students of various ages.

### **Literature Review**

Battle cry masterminds argue that multigrade schools are essential for propagandizing immature cultivation across nations. They argue that multigrade schools should be ubiquitous to improve student outcomes and expand access to education in conscience-wracked states and nations.

Regardless of the academic aptitude of the kids in each age group, the multi-grade class doctrine is ideal because it assigns a perfect preparer to oversee doctrine instead of a single combined control in a raise in pair classrooms. In developing nations, the favored level is suitable given the scarcity of both financial and human resources. A multi-grade dogma assembly, which is usually a systematic misrepresentation of the body of dogmas, is excessively formal on top of everything else. Smith and Barker (1987) identified the multi-grade classroom as a prevalent institutional pattern in the United States.

There is a wealth of diverse research on multigrade instruction. Many studies have examined the benefits and drawbacks of multi-grade instruction; however, there is insufficient evidence regarding its influence on the performance of understudies, and on the developmental years of proficiency for critical children. As a result, further research and inquiry are necessary. However, the problem with multi-grade or multi-age instruction is that the utilization of multi-review training is occasionally justified by the understudy's performance level (Tomlinson, 2000). To handle multiple levels at once, they take on a spirit that is brittle. Multi-grade teachers confront a



variety of multifaceted challenges, including academic and regional issues. But the unreserved business of a school is its tenet sketch, which is both advantageous and ineffective. In summary, the multi-grade principles assign teachers the task of devising innovative solutions to fulfill the requirements of mixed-grade classes. A teaching strategy compares bus conditions in a classroom with multiple grade levels. In addition, she must apologize, remain steadfast in her beliefs, and take a deep breath if the school chooses to assign students according to their grades, ages, and sex from different groups. The student's scholar accepts more and aids in their competition on another.

It is necessary to provide multi-grade classrooms with their own textbooks because using pre-identified curricula is both exuberant and unproductive. Right now, Pakistani schools are the best in the world when it comes to multi-grade classrooms. Consequently, an educator responds to anomalous grades right away. To teach effectively, students need to have a combat-based lifestyle, comparable perspectives, and a grouping room environment. Regarding direct and active learning, the educator needs to safeguard all feasible methods. A teacher's primary duty is to involve pupils in educational activities without wasting their time. It is interesting to note that dropouts are appreciative of the challenges their learning activities present because of the capable stands reserve. Planning, forming, producing teaching learning materials, and teaching learning actions are all part of multi-mix teaching, according to Juvane and Brusque (2005). The learning environment, learning process, and learning outcome (LEPO) framework is one method for teaching in a multigrade classroom (Msimanga, 2020). It is crucial for teachers to set up the classroom appropriately when instructing multigrade students. They must make sure that students' learning processes are given the appropriate amount of time. Assessment assignments that correspond with the students' academic proficiency are then given to them.

Since school administrators saw multigrade education as beneficial to many people and a means of achieving education for all, it was created and is now used as a classroom strategy (Buaraphan, Inrit, & Kochasila, 2018; Thephavongsa, 2018). Students from far-off places now have access to education thanks to the development of multigrade education. Some educators never stop meeting their own educational needs. Furthermore, the curriculum of multigrade classes must include topics that are easily integrated and choose a common topic for the class, according to Kaka, Dehraj, Rao, and Memon (2019). Because of this, integrating disciplines in



various ways—such as interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary—might also be a viable solution.

Multigrade teachers know that multilevel classes are "second class" responsibilities and that mono-grade classes are the assumption of instruction. The teachers feel that multi-grade classrooms "get the same" learning outcomes, are harder to manage, and do not have the required instructional resources. A multi-grade curriculum should not use coaching that was designed for a single grade, and coaching should not be planned (Collingwood, 1991). It is typically advised to promote educational initiatives that support students' individuality and foster teamwork. It is crucial to understand that a teacher's choice between different teaching strategies was impacted by a number of factors, such as inadequate facilities for the teaching and learning process and a lack of specialized preparation.

The diverse group of teachers has experience tutoring entire classes, so they are well-prepared to work in settings with just one grade. They also have knowledge of instructional strategies. Nevertheless, these educators require extra training and practical resources when placed in multi-level environments. There are numerous advantages for teachers who work with multiple grade levels, but there are also a number of challenges; teaching, managing the classroom, and administration are all challenging and complex tasks. Teachers of multiple grades must be ready to tutor students daily and must consider their unique needs and developmental stages. Teacher time demands necessitate advanced organizational abilities. Multigrade classrooms are not really meant for teachers who are different or inexperienced. Although multi-grade teachers have a range of expression styles, many instructors are also unqualified in or skilled in one rating pedagogy (Titus, 2004).

According to Muthayan (1999), self-coordinated learning occurs when students participate in activities on their own, at their own pace. In multigrade classrooms with self-coordinated learning, students take ownership of their own education. The ability to operate freely is bestowed by self-organized learning. Since they can determine which learning strategy suits them best, students are able to identify their preferred learning styles. Students are either left to work on their own or receive very little help from the teacher. Because of this, the curriculum demands in multi-grade schools are unbearable; teachers do not have a theoretical understanding of how to teach in these kinds of environments, and there is usually no subject on education department curricula specifically designed for multi-grade teaching.



- Insufficient teacher training and support throughout the continuum.
- A lack of communication between educators and multi-level schools, which prioritize teaching in single-grade classrooms with fewer resources and see teaching in multi-grade classrooms as an unappealing duty.

A multigrade classroom is staffed by a teacher qualified to teach only one grade. Teachers' ought to receive training that considers the realities of the classroom setting (White & Reid, 2008).

Teaching teachers to accurately complete multi-grade conditions is one strategy that is immediately applicable and actively implemented to increase students' participation in education. In remote small towns, multi-level education can also be used to guarantee tutoring for all students.

Using monogrammed syllabi is very overwhelming and results in ineffective coaching, so multi-grade classrooms need their own schoolbooks (Juvane & Little, 2005). In Pakistan, most schools employ a multi-grade classroom setup. Therefore, as soon as a teacher oversees several levels, operative learning can take place in the classroom. The teacher must introduce all the available strategies to the class in order to create a natural and engaging learning environment. The primary duty of the instructor is to involve every student in educational activities without allowing them to waste time. With the help of the gifted children, other students are invited to join in their educational activities. Planning, arranging, and developing instructional and learning activities are all part of teaching across grade levels.

The teacher must plan assignments that minimize work that is grade-specific in the future while enabling collaboration between students in both grades. The teacher's goals for each level are the same or slightly different. Both levels have equal opportunity to gain experience about and practice perception in the hands of teachers and students, as well as to successfully navigate the classroom environment. He or she might draw conclusions about a deeper level of the theme from a shallower level, and the teacher might occasionally have different goals for different levels (Little, 2001).

The self-study materials can be set up in the classroom by the teachers. In fact, activity-based learning can be used as an addition to traditional teaching methods in a multigrade classroom, not as a replacement for them. It helps students comprehend the ideal learning environments and frees up the teacher. Teachers' performances can be enhanced if they are ready to make use of these opportunities.



For educators, teaching in a classroom with several grade levels is an uncomfortable task. Since this is more complicated and challenging than a classroom for a single grade. Because a teacher cannot ignore the ways in which each student is unique or shows up unprepared for the day's lessons. Teachers' time anxieties require advanced managerial skills. Therefore, in a multi-grade classroom, neither a novice nor an experienced teacher should work (Susan Vincent, 1999).

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research design.**

A quantitative research approach was applied for this study. Owing to temporal limitations, the quantitative research methodology was selected. This decision was primarily motivated by the intention to use the questionnaire, a crucial instrument for this kind of research.

#### **Population and Sampling**

The research population for this study consisted of teachers employed in Hub district's primary schools in Balochistan. Thirty primary school teachers were selected from the Hub district as research sample. Because the researchers were looking for a consistent pattern of experiences, they only included research participants who had previously taught multi-grade classes.

Furthermore, every study participant went to an elementary school in a rural area.

#### **Research instrument.**

The main tool for this study is the researchers themselves, with help from their interview guide. One tool for conducting research is the questionnaire. The exploratory questions dug into the study's core as they asked about the teaching strategies employed by the multi-grade teachers.

#### **Data Collection**

The researchers requested in writing that the heads of the schools participate in the study. After receiving approval, they went to inform the leaders of the different multi-grade teachers about the study. The study's target participants were notified about it and asked if they could participate. While collecting the data, the researchers complied with the ethical guidelines necessary for data collection. The participants were given the option to continue the interview or not. After the interview, the researchers gathered the information and began analyzing it.

#### **Data analysis**

The process of data analysis includes preparing the data for analysis, conducting various reviews, comprehending the data more thoroughly, representing the data, and interpreting the data's broader meaning. In this study, information obtained from individual interviews was coded,





transcribed, and the responses to the questions were categorized.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Authorization to conduct the research was requested from district Hub's primary schools. The consent was given before the respondents were given questionnaires. The study was conducted with observance to the Data Privacy Law.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

The previously mentioned study's results are used to show how teaching to multiple grade levels negatively impacts the caliber of their instruction. The teachers' responses showed that there are several beneficial changes that need to be made when teaching in multi-grade classrooms. In the interim, teachers serve as the primary point of contact for students in the classroom, and enhancing student performance and academic success depends heavily on how well they perform.

The infrastructure of schools must be sufficient for a system with multiple grade levels because multigrade teaching necessitates separate books and curriculum planning; teaching aids are required for teachers to perform better; and these kinds of teaching strategies are implied to improve the enactment of student and teacher.

For the following reasons: schools' infrastructure must be appropriate for the demands of a multi-grade system; teaching aids are necessary for teachers to perform better; and such teaching approaches are implied, which improve student and teacher performance. Because separate books and curriculum planning are essential for multi-grade teaching.

### **Discussion**

Finding out the effects of multi-grade teaching and learning at primary level schools was the aim of the study. The study's conclusions and results show that, when it comes to multi-grade teaching strategies, primary school students' perceptions of the benefits of this method of instruction were not very positive. This may be the case because they acknowledged that the shortage of qualified teachers necessitated multi-grade teaching. On the other hand, rather than being a matter of orientation or training, the use of multi-grade teaching was required. In the way teachers view the way students are learning when using multigrade teaching methods. The teacher's responses to the teaching methodology in the multi-grade method were very important. Students' involvement in classes with multiple grade levels and teachers' opinions regarding such participation continue to be viewed negatively. According to a research study by



Tomlinson (2005), the more common mono-grade classrooms use differentiated instruction as an educational theory to meet the needs of each individual student in the class. Little (2004) states that although there is a legal requirement to display multi-grade classes, teachers have also identified a significant number of students who face challenges due to their "non-appearance, visit changes in grade blends, and absence of course books."

The responses of teachers about the teaching difficulties in multi-grade teaching strategy indicating the statistically

The challenges of multi-grade teaching and learning, according to Create (2008), are that learners in recognized multi-grade schools must fight for them because national initiatives to improve educational modules and prepare teachers are primarily based on a mono-grade teaching approach. Studies by Burns and Mason (1998) and Miller (1990) have also shown that teachers' perceptions of the organizational impact on students' academic performance in multi-grade teaching and learning are overwhelmingly positive. The response of teachers in multi-grade teaching does not reflect the parental approach. The current study confirms Cornish's (2009) earlier research, which found that social interaction is still a crucial component of the learning process. Children's academic success is correlated with parental education levels, which include the number of resources in the home and the focus on literacy.

About the working conditions of the schools, in teacher's opinion about the multi-grade classrooms were not

The study conducted by Fosco et al. (2004) revealed that there is a correlation between multi-grade classrooms and the theoretical concepts of cognitive development, reading ability, and classroom type. The results of multiple studies add to our understanding of learning theories related to peer collaboration, differentiated instruction, and social interaction (Tomlinson, et al., 2003). In other studies of Cornish, (2009), Gnadinger, (2008), revealed that in modern era multi-grade classrooms, the basic philosophy of classroom organization. Student achievement has historically been impacted by the socioeconomic status factor, according to a different research study by Cheadle (2008). The current study backs up the additional variables that affect student learning, such as the school's rural location, the educational attainment of the parents, and their socioeconomic status. According to a 2009 study, there is a serious problem with student enrollment in small, rural schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Conclusion**



Following a psychoanalysis of the data, the following conclusion was drawn from the survey's findings about "the multigrade classrooms detrimental impact on the performance of teachers." It has been demonstrated that insufficient multigrade classrooms negatively affect teachers' effectiveness. Effective instruction and learning retention depend on having a qualified teacher. For new teachers, the multigrade classroom offers an engaging environment. Since educators oversee the classroom and grade-level assessments, they need to be well-versed in multigrade teaching techniques and resources. Teachers in multi-grade schools need to have access to these resources. Teachers' credentials would be based on their background in education and their specific accomplishments.

All things considered, teachers must be knowledgeable about every facet of academic work, and improved teacher preparation programs are required for classrooms containing multiple grades. These programs should promote positive differences in the recitation of multigrade teachers through documentation and oversight.

### **Recommendations**

- Separate pre-service and in-service training programs for teachers of different grade levels need to be adjusted by the government. Teachers will receive guidance in these trainings to help them create better learning environments by using instructional strategies, lesson planning, and classroom management techniques.
- For improved performance, teachers in rural areas with multi-grade classroom systems in primary schools should be given enough teaching aids.
- National curricula should incorporate self-learning strategies like peer learning, activity-based learning, and group activities to enhance teachers' and students' performance.
- The possibility of providing teachers with professional development drills in schools should be carefully considered by the government.
- Teachers should possess strong academic backgrounds.
- Teachers working in multi-grade settings should have greater assurance, material support, and training inputs available to them to help them develop a positive attitude toward teaching situations.
- Multigrade instruction should be included in programs that prepare future teachers.
- A robust observing, rating, and response tool should be developed in the area to facilitate the well-organized application of multi-grade teaching strategies.



- Different teaching strategies, such as small group, pair, and self-learning, as well as reading materials and texts appropriate for multiple grade levels would be established separately.

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