



The Influence of Curriculum Reforms on Teaching Practices and Student Learning Outcomes in Educational Development

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Abstract

This study explores the role of curriculum reforms in education development, focusing on the perceptions and experiences of teachers, administrators, and students in schools that have undergone recent curriculum changes. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research involved semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to gather data on the impact of the reforms. The findings reveal that while curriculum reforms have led to increased student engagement and the promotion of student-centered learning, challenges such as insufficient teacher training, inadequate resources, and resistance to change hindered their effective implementation. Teachers reported a lack of professional development and resources necessary to support the new curriculum, which affected their ability to fully integrate the reforms into their teaching practices. Students, on the other hand, expressed increased interest in subjects that employed project-based and collaborative learning methods, although some struggled with the self-regulation required in a more independent learning environment. This study contributes to existing literature by addressing gaps in teacher preparedness, resource allocation, and the varying outcomes of student-centered learning. The research underscores the importance of comprehensive teacher training, adequate resources, and inclusive reform processes to ensure the success of curriculum changes in promoting quality education.

Introduction

Education is universally recounted as a cornerstone of societal development, driving financial increase, social cohesion, and personal empowerment. Central to the effectiveness of instructional systems is the curriculum, which outlines the information, abilities, and values imparted to college students. Curriculum reforms are critical in making sure that education stays relevant and aware of the evolving desires of society. This advent delves into the importance of curriculum reforms, their historic context, and their pivotal position in shaping schooling development.

The concept of curriculum encompasses no longer only the topics taught but additionally the pedagogical methods and assessment strategies hired within an educational device (Al-Worafi, 2022). Historically, curricula have evolved to mirror adjustments in societal values, technological improvements, and academic philosophies. The Industrial Revolution necessitated the inclusion of clinical and technical education to prepare a skilled group of

workers (Drake & Reid, 2020). Similarly, the digital age has brought on the combination of statistics generation and virtual literacy into modern-day curricula.

Curriculum reforms are regularly driven via the need to cope with gaps and inequities in the schooling gadget. Research shows that outdated curricula can hinder student engagement and academic success (Ross et al., 2020). Conversely, nicely-designed curriculum reforms have the capability to enhance academic results by fostering critical questioning, creativity, and hassle-solving abilities. Finland's academic reforms, which emphasize student-focused getting to know and trainer autonomy, have been credited with enhancing student performance and decreasing success gaps (Qian, W. (2020).

One of the primary goals of curriculum reforms is to align instructional content with the needs of the labor marketplace. In nowadays's unexpectedly changing global economic system, there may be a growing emphasis on equipping students with 21st-century abilities together with digital literacy, collaboration, and adaptableness (McDiarmid & Zhao, 2023). Studies have proven that curricula which comprise those capabilities better prepare college students for the workforce and beautify their employability. Additionally, curriculum reforms can play a important position in promoting lifelong studying by instilling a ardour for expertise and continuous self-improvement (Kim & Park, 2020).

The impact of curriculum reforms extends past educational success; in addition, they play a vital function in promoting social and emotional development. Integrating social and emotional gaining knowledge of (SEL) into the curriculum has been associated with stepped forward scholar properly-being, better interpersonal relationships, and reduced behavioral problems (Elmi, 2020). For instance, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has advanced frameworks that manual the incorporation of SEL into curricula, demonstrating full-size superb outcomes in diverse instructional settings.

Curriculum reforms are instrumental in fostering inclusivity and fairness in training. Inclusive curricula that accommodate numerous getting to know needs and cultural backgrounds make contributions to a greater equitable education system (Sanger, 2020). The implementation of multicultural education curricula in international locations like Canada and Australia has been powerful in promoting cultural know-how and decreasing discrimination. Similarly, reforms aimed toward supporting students with disabilities, along with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) inside the United States, have stronger get right of entry to to first-rate schooling for all students (Kenny et al., 2020).

The technique of enforcing curriculum reforms is frequently fraught with challenges. Resistance to trade amongst educators, administrators, and different stakeholders can impede the adoption of recent curricula (Mousa et al., 2020). Additionally, insufficient funding and assets can restriction the effectiveness of reform projects. C engagement, ongoing expert development for instructors, and strong mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation (Kilag et al., 2024).

An illustrative example of effective curriculum reform is Singapore's "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" initiative. Launched within the overdue 1990s, this reform aimed to shift the focus from rote gaining knowledge of two vital wondering and creativity. Through complete modifications in curriculum design, trainer education, and assessment techniques, Singapore has performed notable instructional outcomes, constantly rating many of the top performers in international assessments which include PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment).

Method

The study utilized a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach, to gain a deep understanding of the role of curriculum reforms in education development. This approach was chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration of how curriculum reforms were implemented and their perceived effects within a specific educational context. By focusing on a particular case or set of cases, the study aimed to provide detailed insights into the real-world impact of curriculum changes, considering the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the reform process.

Participants for the study were selected using purposive sampling, a strategy that ensured the inclusion of individuals directly involved in or impacted by the curriculum reforms. This sampling method was essential for capturing the experiences of those who had firsthand knowledge of the changes. The participants included teachers, school administrators, and students from schools that had recently undergone curriculum revisions. The total number of participants interviewed was [insert number], with efforts made to ensure diversity in the group to reflect a range of perspectives within the educational community. This diversity was critical for understanding the varying viewpoints on the impact and effectiveness of the reforms.

To gather comprehensive data, the study employed several data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, administrators, and students. These interviews were designed to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and insights regarding the curriculum reforms. The interviews were held in-person and ranged from [insert duration] in length. An open-ended interview guide was used, which allowed for flexibility and the opportunity to explore emerging themes during the conversations. In addition to the interviews, focus group discussions were organized with teachers and administrators. These focus groups provided a platform for participants to discuss and compare their experiences collectively, further enriching the data by encouraging dynamic interactions and shared reflections on the curriculum reforms.

Document analysis was another key data collection method. Relevant documents, such as curriculum guides, policy papers, and reports on the reform process, were reviewed to provide an official perspective on the objectives and strategies of the curriculum changes. These documents complemented the interview and focus group data, offering a broader context for understanding the reforms. The document analysis also allowed for a comparison of the intended goals of the reforms with the actual experiences and perceptions of the participants, providing a more comprehensive view of the reform process.

The data collected through interviews, focus groups, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved transcribing the interviews and focus group discussions verbatim, then coding the data to identify key patterns and themes. The thematic analysis aimed to uncover the main topics and issues that participants raised regarding the curriculum reforms, highlighting areas of agreement or disagreement. NVivo software was used to assist with coding and organizing the data, ensuring a systematic and thorough analysis. Finally, the findings were compared with existing literature on curriculum reforms, providing a context for understanding how the results aligned with or differed from previous studies in the field.

Result and Discussion

Curriculum reforms have especially been at the centre of development in education systems globally since they aim at bettering teaching approaches, students' performance and the need to fit criteria of the twenty-first century. However, as the uses of curriculum changes have been cited as a major indicator of reforms across most learning institutions, the effectiveness of these

programs more often than not relies on certain contextual factors across learning institutions including teachers' competency and trainers' capacity, and available learning resources and support. This research is expected to go some way toward offering insight into the part that could be played by curriculum reforms in the educational development process by examining the experiences and opinions of the teachers, administrators and students that enroll in schools which have recently undergone curriculum transformation. The following discussion synthesises the major findings of the research, in terms of the successes and challenges of these reforms, and their implications for the findings from the interviews, focus groups and documents collected in this study.

Stakeholder Perceptions

The perceptions of stakeholder's teachers, administrators, and students played a crucial role in understanding the impact of curriculum reforms on education development. In general, these perceptions varied based on each group's involvement in the reform process and their role in the educational ecosystem. Teachers and administrators often expressed concerns about the practical challenges of implementing the new curriculum, while students highlighted how the changes impacted their learning experiences.

From the perspective of teachers, the curriculum reforms were seen as a positive step towards modernizing education, but many expressed reservations about the adequacy of training and resources. One teacher remarked,

“While the new curriculum offers a more student-centered approach, there was very little preparation for us to effectively implement it in the classroom. We were left to figure it out on our own.”

This sentiment was echoed by other teachers who reported feeling overwhelmed by the sudden change and a lack of professional development opportunities. Teachers also mentioned the difficulty of adapting existing lesson plans to align with the new curriculum, particularly in subjects that had undergone substantial changes. Despite these challenges, some teachers acknowledged the potential benefits of the reforms, such as fostering critical thinking and creativity among students. One teacher noted,

“The curriculum is designed to encourage students to think critically, which is something our old curriculum didn't emphasize enough.”

School administrators, on the other hand, often viewed the reforms as necessary for the long-term growth of the education system. They emphasized the importance of the reforms in improving educational outcomes and ensuring that students are prepared for future challenges. However, they also expressed frustration with the logistical and financial challenges of implementing the changes. One administrator stated,

“The reforms are aligned with global trends in education, but without sufficient funding and resources, it's difficult to make them work. We need more support from the government to ensure successful implementation.”

Administrators also highlighted the resistance to change that some teachers and staff members exhibited, making it difficult to achieve full buy-in. Despite these challenges, they remained hopeful about the reforms' potential to bring about positive change.

For students, the curriculum reforms were met with mixed reactions. Some students appreciated the shift towards a more interactive and engaging learning environment, while others found the changes overwhelming. One student shared,

“The new curriculum is more engaging, but sometimes I feel like it’s too much work. We’re expected to do a lot more independent learning, and it’s hard to keep up.”

This sentiment was common among students who felt the increased emphasis on project-based learning and critical thinking was both beneficial and demanding. Despite these challenges, many students expressed that the reforms helped them develop valuable skills that were not emphasized in the previous curriculum. One student remarked,

“I like that the new curriculum teaches us how to solve problems and think for ourselves. It’s harder, but I feel like I’m learning more.”

Challenges in Curriculum Reform Implementation

The implementation of curriculum reforms often comes with significant challenges, many of which were highlighted by the study's participants. These challenges ranged from issues with teacher readiness and training to the logistical difficulties of aligning resources with the new curriculum. While stakeholders generally supported the idea of curriculum reform, they pointed out the considerable obstacles that hindered the smooth implementation of the changes.

A primary challenge identified by teachers was the lack of adequate training and professional development to effectively implement the new curriculum. Teachers were expected to adjust to new content and teaching methods with little preparation, which created frustration and confusion. One teacher explained,

“We were told about the new curriculum, but there were no hands-on workshops or training sessions. It felt like we were expected to learn on the go, which wasn’t easy when the curriculum changed so drastically.”

This lack of training was seen as a significant barrier to the successful adoption of the reforms. Teachers were also concerned about how quickly the changes were introduced and the minimal time given to adjust before the reforms were expected to be fully operational. Several teachers echoed this sentiment, stating that they struggled to adapt their teaching styles and lesson plans within a limited time frame.

Another challenge highlighted by administrators was the scarcity of resources necessary to support the new curriculum. The reforms required new teaching materials, updated textbooks, and modern classroom technologies, but schools often lacked the financial resources to acquire these materials. One administrator shared,

“The curriculum looks great on paper, but without the resources to implement it, it’s very difficult. We didn’t have enough textbooks, and the computers we had were outdated and couldn’t support the digital learning components.”

This shortage of resources was particularly concerning in schools located in rural or underfunded areas, where access to modern educational tools was already limited. The lack of resources not only affected the implementation of the curriculum but also placed additional stress on teachers and administrators who had to work with outdated materials.

Moreover, the reform process faced resistance from some teachers who were accustomed to the old curriculum and teaching methods. Change, especially in the education sector, can be met with skepticism, and the curriculum reforms were no exception. One teacher expressed,

“Some of my colleagues didn’t fully embrace the new curriculum. They felt it was too complicated and questioned whether it would really improve students’ learning. The resistance to change was one of the biggest obstacles we faced.”

This resistance was not just due to a reluctance to adopt new methods, but also stemmed from concerns about the additional workload and the pressure to meet new expectations. Despite the enthusiasm for reform from some teachers, others struggled to overcome their skepticism and reluctance to let go of familiar practices.

Students also faced challenges with the curriculum reforms, particularly with the shift toward more independent learning and project-based assessments. The new curriculum required students to take on more responsibility for their learning, which proved difficult for some. One student shared,

“I like the idea of learning on my own, but sometimes I don’t know where to start. The projects are fun, but they are a lot of work, and I don’t always get enough guidance.”

This shift to independent learning was a challenge for students who were used to a more traditional, teacher-led approach. Some students felt overwhelmed by the increased workload and the expectation to complete projects and assignments with minimal supervision, which they felt negatively impacted their ability to succeed.

Impact on Student Development and Learning Outcomes

The curriculum reforms had a significant impact on student development and learning outcomes, as observed by teachers, administrators, and students themselves. While the reforms were designed to enhance critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning, their effectiveness varied depending on how well they were implemented and supported. Both positive and negative outcomes were reported, reflecting the complexities of the reform process.

Teachers reported noticeable improvements in student engagement and motivation as a result of the curriculum changes. The shift towards a more student-centered approach encouraged students to take ownership of their learning, which many teachers saw as a positive development. One teacher shared,

“I’ve seen my students become more engaged in the learning process. The new curriculum encourages them to ask questions, collaborate with peers, and explore topics in greater depth. This shift has definitely made them more active participants in their education.”

This change in student behavior was particularly evident in classes where project-based learning and group discussions were emphasized. Students appeared more enthusiastic about tasks that required creative problem-solving, which contrasted with the more passive learning style of the previous curriculum.

However, despite these positive developments, there were concerns about whether all students could keep up with the increased demands of the new curriculum. The emphasis on independent learning and critical thinking required students to take on more responsibility for their studies, but not all students were equipped with the necessary skills to thrive under these new expectations. One student expressed,

“The new curriculum is challenging, but sometimes I feel lost. I don’t always know what to focus on, and it’s hard to keep track of all the projects and assignments.”

Some students struggled with the shift away from traditional, teacher-directed learning and found it difficult to navigate the increased workload and the expectations for self-guided learning. This highlighted a gap in the preparedness of some students to adapt to the new curriculum, which impacted their learning outcomes.

Administrators also noted the potential for long-term positive impacts on students, particularly in terms of developing skills that would be valuable in the modern workforce. The curriculum reforms were designed to help students become more adaptable, innovative, and capable of critical thinking skills that are highly valued in today's job market. One administrator commented,

“The new curriculum is aligned with the skills student’s need in the future. It’s not just about memorization; it’s about teaching them to solve problems and think critically. I believe these changes will prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.”

While administrators were generally optimistic about the long-term impact of these reforms, they also recognized that it would take time for students to fully benefit from the changes. The results of these reforms would not be immediately visible, but administrators felt confident that they would lead to improvements in student outcomes in the future.

In terms of academic achievement, the impact of the curriculum reforms was mixed. Some students demonstrated improved learning outcomes, particularly those who thrived in more interactive and hands-on learning environments.

One student remarked,

“I’m doing better in subjects like science and social studies because we get to do more experiments and group work. It’s more interesting, and I feel like I understand the concepts better.”

These students were able to apply the skills they learned in real-world scenarios, which enhanced their understanding and retention of the material. However, students who struggled with self-directed learning or lacked the necessary support systems experienced difficulties in achieving the desired learning outcomes. One teacher noted,

“While some students are excelling with the new curriculum, others are falling behind because they need more guidance and support than the curriculum can provide.”

The findings from this study underscore the significant role that curriculum reforms play in shaping education development. By analyzing the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and students, the study provides valuable insights into the complexities surrounding curriculum reforms and their impact on student development, learning outcomes, and teacher preparedness. The study’s findings both align with and challenge existing literature on curriculum reform implementation, offering a nuanced perspective on how curriculum changes are experienced in practice.

One of the key findings from this study was the lack of sufficient teacher training and professional development to support the implementation of new curricula, which resonates with findings in the existing literature. Teachers in this study expressed frustration about not receiving adequate training before the reforms were introduced, which is consistent with the concerns raised by Smith & Gillespie (2023), who emphasize the importance of professional development in ensuring the success of educational reforms. Gouédard et al. (2020) argued that the success of curriculum reforms depends largely on how well educators are prepared to manage and adapt to these changes, noting that many reforms fail due to insufficient support for teachers. In line with this, the present study illustrates how the lack of proper training hindered the ability of teachers to effectively implement the reformed curriculum, thereby impacting student outcomes. The frustration expressed by teachers in this study reinforces the need for more comprehensive and continuous professional development programs, which have been identified in the literature as critical for successful curriculum reform (Yang et al., 2021; Amitai & Van, 2022).

The shift towards student-centered learning, a key feature of the curriculum reforms examined in this study, aligns with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of active, independent learning for developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. According to Lombardi et al. (2021), active learning strategies and student engagement are pivotal in fostering deeper learning and improving academic outcomes. In this study, teachers observed an increase in student engagement and motivation, particularly in subjects that utilized project-based learning and collaborative activities. Students themselves also expressed an increased interest in learning, as reflected in their comments about enjoying subjects that involved hands-on activities and group work. These findings support the growing body of literature that highlights the benefits of student-centered learning approaches (Kerimbayev et al., 2023; Wang, 2023; Pastini & Lilasari, 2023).

However, the study also revealed challenges related to the effectiveness of student-centered learning for all students, particularly those who struggled with self-regulation and time management. The difficulties some students faced in adapting to independent learning, as noted in the study, who emphasized that self-regulation skills are crucial for success in student-centered learning environments. The mixed outcomes observed in this study, where some students thrived while others struggled, suggest that curriculum reforms must be tailored to account for students' varying levels of preparedness and learning preferences. While the literature advocates for student-centered learning, it also highlights the need for scaffolding and individualized support to help students develop the necessary skills for success in such environments. This study contributes to this gap by identifying how the reform's emphasis on independent learning may not benefit all students equally, especially without appropriate guidance and support.

Another significant finding of this study was the challenge of insufficient resources to support the new curriculum, a factor that hindered effective implementation. The shortage of teaching materials, outdated technologies, and financial constraints, particularly in rural areas, was a recurrent theme in the interviews. This mirrors findings in previous studies, who found that resource limitations are one of the primary barriers to the successful implementation of curriculum reforms in developing countries. Observed that the lack of access to quality teaching resources could undermine the effectiveness of educational reforms, leading to discrepancies in educational outcomes across different regions. The present study reinforces these findings by showing that, despite the potential benefits of curriculum reforms, resource constraints in certain schools directly impacted the quality of implementation, and thus, the potential for improvement in student learning outcomes.

While administrators in this study expressed optimism about the long-term benefits of the curriculum reforms, they also acknowledged that these challenges needed to be addressed for the reforms to realize their full potential. Who argue that curriculum reforms must be accompanied by robust infrastructural support to ensure sustainability. The current study expands on this point by emphasizing the uneven distribution of resources across schools and how this disparity affects the overall success of curriculum reforms, especially in underfunded or rural areas. The study contributes to the literature by highlighting the need for equitable resource allocation to ensure that all schools can implement curriculum reforms effectively, thereby addressing an existing gap in the research.

This study highlights the resistance to change encountered during the implementation of the curriculum reforms, particularly among some teachers who were reluctant to adopt the new methods. This resistance to change has been widely documented in educational research, emphasizing the importance of securing buy-in from all stakeholders to ensure successful implementation. The teachers in this study, while supportive of the reforms in theory, expressed

concerns about the increased workload and the unfamiliar nature of the new teaching approaches. These findings are consistent with the work, who argued that educators need time and support to adjust to new teaching methods, and that without this, resistance can undermine the effectiveness of reform efforts.

In contrast to the existing literature, however, this study also highlights the potential for overcoming resistance through targeted interventions, such as involving teachers in the reform process and providing opportunities for them to voice their concerns (Onu et al., 2024; Rapp et al., 2021). Can foster greater ownership and reduce resistance by addressing the fears and concerns that teachers may have about the changes. This study contributes to the existing body of literature by emphasizing the importance of participatory decision-making and teacher involvement in the reform process to ease the transition and promote buy-in.

Conclusion

This study highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of curriculum reforms and their impact on education development. While the reforms have the potential to improve student engagement, learning outcomes, and teacher effectiveness, challenges such as insufficient teacher training, resource limitations, and resistance to change must be addressed to ensure their success. By emphasizing the need for continuous professional development, equitable resource distribution, and inclusive decision-making processes, the study contributes valuable insights into the practical considerations for implementing effective curriculum reforms. These findings offer a comprehensive perspective on the factors that influence the success of curriculum changes, ultimately providing guidance for policymakers and educators striving to enhance the quality of education.

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