

The Impact of Outdated Curriculum Content on Academic Performance of 9th Grade Students in Government Secondary Schools of Nawabshah

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Abstract

Curriculum relevance plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance and learning outcomes. This study investigates the impact of outdated curriculum content on the academic performance of 9th grade students in government secondary schools of Nawabshah. The research aims to examine the extent to which obsolete concepts, traditional teaching materials, and a lack of alignment with modern educational needs affect students' understanding, engagement, and examination results. A quantitative research design was employed, involving a sample of 9th grade students and subject teachers from selected government secondary schools. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and academic performance records, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings reveal that outdated curriculum content significantly hinders students' conceptual clarity, critical thinking skills, and motivation, resulting in lower academic achievement. The study also highlights teachers' challenges in delivering content that does not reflect current scientific, technological, and societal developments. Based on the results, the study recommends periodic curriculum revision, integration of contemporary knowledge, and teacher training to enhance instructional effectiveness. The outcomes of this research provide valuable insights for curriculum developers, educational policymakers, and school administrators aiming to improve the quality of secondary education in Nawabshah and similar contexts.

Keywords: Outdated Curriculum Content, Academic Performance, Government Secondary Schools, Curriculum Relevance, Student Achievement, Educational Quality, Secondary Education, Nawabshah.

Introduction

Education is a Cornerstone of societal development, and the curriculum serves as the backbone of the learning process, guiding what learners are taught and shaping the future of a nation. According to **Elliot W. Eisner** "The curriculum is not just a set of documents or standards; it is the expression of a society's vision of what is important for its citizens to know." A well-structured curriculum not only imparts knowledge but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and the values necessary for responsible citizenship.

However, in many government secondary schools across Pakistan, particularly in Nawabshah, the curriculum has not been updated and fails to align with modern educational standards. This study focuses on the impact of outdated curriculum content on 9th-grade students at Government Girls High School Nawabshah. The curriculum plays a major role in fostering students' intellectual growth, knowledge, skills development and critical thinking abilities. When the syllabus is outmoded, students may struggle to connect

real-world application in learning, resulting in student disengagement poor academic performance the lack of real-world applications in learning leading to disengagement and poor academic performance. This research aims to examine the impact of obsolete curriculum content on students' learning experiences and suggest possible solutions for improvement. The problem of outdated subject matter in the government secondary schools in Nawabshah tends to be more important in the context that a number of textbooks and syllabuses current in grade 9 tend to have outdated concepts and applications that lack relevance to practical and contemporary methods of instruction and delivery that meet modern standards. This can demotivate and affect performance. Further, the rate at which science and world knowledge evolves tends to be in contrast to the stagnant nature of textbooks in the government schools in the public sector. Academic performance of 9th grade students is a crucial indicator of educational quality, as this stage marks the transition from basic education to more specialized secondary studies. When curriculum content does not align with students' cognitive needs, contemporary knowledge, or examination requirements, learners may struggle to understand concepts effectively, leading to lower academic outcomes. This challenge is further intensified in government schools due to limited resources, inadequate teacher training on modern instructional strategies, and delayed curriculum reforms.

Therefore, examining the impact of outdated curriculum content on the academic performance of 9th grade students in government secondary schools of Nawabshah is both timely and essential. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators to initiate curriculum updates, improve instruction

Statement of the Problem

Despite many educational reforms in Pakistan, many government secondary schools are following outdated curricula. The 9th-grade students at Government Girls High School Nawabshah facing challenges due to irrelevant and outdated syllabus content, which does not fulfill modern educational needs. This mismatch leads to:

- Limited student engagement
- poor academic achievement in examinations
- poor preparation for higher education and employment opportunities
- Diminished critical thinking and problem-solving skills

The purpose of this study is to analyze how outdated curriculum content negatively impacts students' academic performance and suggests measures for improvement.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the affects of archaic and outmoded curriculum content on 9th-grade students' academic performance.
2. To explore the challenges faced by teachers in teaching outdated syllabus material.
3. To evaluate student's perceptions of the relevance of the curriculum to modern educational and career needs.
4. To give suggestions for curriculum modernization.

Literature Review

The quality of education in Pakistan has been an ongoing concern, especially when it comes to the curriculum and its impact on teaching and learning. Several studies have focused on the challenges posed by outdated curricula and the subsequent effects on student learning outcomes. For instance, Adesoba (2025) discusses the barriers that outdated curricula present in fostering educational progress, emphasizing that such curricula hinder the development of critical skills and impede student engagement. Similarly, Durrani et al. (2017)

highlight the role of education in promoting social cohesion, arguing that outdated curricula limit students' potential to contribute positively to society.

Curriculum reforms, especially at the school level, are crucial for improving the quality of education. Research by Hussain et al. (2013) sheds light on the need for revising school curricula in Pakistan, particularly at the secondary level, to better align with contemporary educational goals. The study suggests that the existing curriculum is not only outdated but also disconnected from real-world applications, leading to disengagement and poor academic performance among students. Moreover, Hussain and Ghafoor (2024) explore the ongoing curriculum reforms in Sindh, emphasizing the importance of these changes for improving student learning outcomes. They argue that while reforms are necessary, the implementation process faces numerous challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure, teacher training, and resource availability.

The role of teachers in implementing curriculum reforms cannot be overstated. Teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes have a significant impact on the effectiveness of these reforms. Mashur (2023) highlights that teachers in Lombok Timur have mixed perceptions of the curriculum changes, with many expressing concerns over the adequacy of teacher preparation and the practical applicability of the new curricula. Similarly, Malik (2022) points out that curriculum reforms in Pakistan at the primary level are often met with resistance due to lack of training and understanding among educators.

Furthermore, curriculum change in Pakistan is often hampered by structural bottlenecks in the education system. According to Usman et al. (n.d.), these bottlenecks include poor infrastructure, outdated teaching methodologies, and a lack of alignment between the curriculum and student needs. These challenges significantly hinder the effective implementation of reforms and the overall improvement of educational outcomes. They argue that addressing these structural issues is essential for mainstreaming quality education across the country.

A significant body of research also underscores the importance of aligning curriculum reforms with social and cultural contexts to ensure their effectiveness. Surajudeen (2022) notes that the outdated curriculum in Nigeria presents similar challenges to those faced in Pakistan, where curricula are often disconnected from the realities of students' lives and the socioeconomic conditions they face. This highlights the need for curricula that are not only up-to-date but also contextually relevant.

In light of these challenges, a case study conducted at Government Girls High School Nawabshah seeks to investigate the impact of the current curriculum on both teachers and students. The study focuses on 10 teachers, 15 students, and 2 education officers, employing a mixed-methods approach to data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and education officers to understand their perceptions of the curriculum and its effectiveness in promoting student learning. Classroom observations were also carried out to assess how the curriculum is being implemented in practice. Additionally, document analysis, including the review of syllabi, textbooks, and exam results, provided insights into the alignment between the curriculum and student performance.

Through these data collection methods, the study aims to identify gaps in the current curriculum, evaluate the challenges teachers face in implementing it, and explore the impact of these challenges on student learning outcomes. The findings will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of curriculum reforms at the school level and offer recommendations for improving the curriculum to meet the needs of students and teachers alike. Curriculum is a critical factor influencing academic and intellectual development among students. An effective curriculum should be dynamic and adaptable to changing technological and economic environments, as suggested by Tyler (2013). Nevertheless, it has been witnessed consistently that both secondary and 9th class curriculums across developing nations like Pakistan remain unchanged for a long time, and as a result, such curriculums might continue contributing adversely toward academic performance of students (UNESCO, 2020).

Some literature brings into perspective that the outdated curriculum content does not incorporate well within the present needs and requirements of knowledge, modern modes and methods of instruction, and the practical

experience of modern students. Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) mention that the outdated curriculum content places more emphasis on memory and not on problem-solving and critical thinking competencies and abilities in order to perform well in academics during the modern era of the twenty-first century. In the context of Pakistan, studies have revealed that traditional government secondary schools are dependent on outdated curriculums without any addition of new concepts, technology, and implementation. Ahmad & Khan (2019) revealed that students learning from outdated textbooks show reduced conceptual development skills compared to students learning new and updated textbooks. This problem is even more acute in rural areas like Nawabshah.

In grade 9, pupils experience a transition from general to specialized learning. With outdated curricula, it becomes difficult for them to relate their theoretical learnings to realities, hence difficulties in learning or academic achievement (Iqbal et al., 2021). Research has shown that outdated curricula fail to meet levels or address the needs of learners, hence an impact on understanding.

Challenges.

The main challenges diagnosed include:

1. Language and Communication Barriers:

Unfortunately very small number of participants were comfortable in Urdu or Sindhi, some academic documents and reports were in English, requiring additional translation efforts. Similarly, some students who was able to share thoughts were hesitant to express their views openly due to language limitations or lack of confidence.

2. Administrative Limitations:

Coordination with education officers involved bureaucratic delays. Unfortunately there is lake of interest and sincerity on higher level. Permission to access certain school records and conduct interviews took longer than anticipated, which affected the research timeline.

3. Irrelevant Content:

The curriculum fails to show alignment with current technological and societal developments that's why it fails create an interest for students.

4. Teacher Resistance:

Some educators resist change due to their continued dependence on conventional and traditional teaching practices, if government provide new training to them yearly they can perform in a better way.

5. Lack of Resources:

Many schools lack digital resources, modern textbooks and professional training for teachers, so they are not successful in adopting new innovation in teaching method.

6. Exam-Centric Learning:

The current education system in Pakistan remains heavily exam-centered, promoting rote memorization over critical thinking. The evaluation framework prioritizes memorization over deeper conceptual understanding. Teachers also feel pressured to "teach to the test" instead of encouraging interactive learning. As a result, true educational growth is compromised in favor of short-term academic performance.

Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research paradigm in order to investigate the effect of the outdated content

of the curriculum on the performance of the Grade 9 students of the government secondary schools of Nawabshah. A descriptive survey design was utilized in an attempt to gather data systematically.

Population and Sample

A total population consisted of all 9th-grade students and teachers teaching subjects in government secondary schools in Nawabshah. A simple random sampling approach was adopted and a sample consisting of 120 students and 20 teachers was chosen from among five government secondary schools to eliminate bias.

Research Instruments

The data was gathered through a structured questionnaire developed on a five-point Likert scale. The areas covered in the questionnaire included relevance to the curriculum, alignment with contemporary knowledge, effectiveness of teaching, engagement with learning, and perceptions of academic challenges with outdated knowledge. Moreover, students' performance in academics based on annual exams was assessed to judge their performance.

Validity And Reliability

The instrument was pre-tested with subject matter experts and educational researchers for content validity. A pilot study was carried out, and the reliability of the research instrument, a questionnaire, was measured by Cronbach Alpha, which measured the reliability coefficient with an acceptable value.

Data Collection Protocol

The permission to conduct this research was sought from the school administrations. The questionnaires were personally delivered to students and faculty. The anonymity of the questionnaires was preserved. The academic records are obtained with proper permission to enable empirical analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed. Inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis were utilized to test whether old curriculum contents affect students' performance. Data are analyzed using statistical tools such as:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and standard deviation)
- Inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis)

Statistical software is used to determine the relationship between outdated curriculum content and students' academic performance.

Research Design:

The research method employed in this study is the descriptive-correlational research method. The descriptive method of research will help in determining the extent to which the curriculum content has become outdated, while the correlational method will help in determining the relationship between the outdated curriculum content and the students' performance.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of students and teachers is chosen from government secondary schools in Nawabshah through a random sampling method to ensure equal representation. The sample size is determined based on its availability and research feasibility.

Key Findings:

1. **Limited student involvement:** 80% of students reported no interest because of irrelevant content.

2. **Inadequate academic achievement on exams:** Outdated material does not align with modern assessment trends.
3. **Teacher dissatisfaction:** Instructors struggle to make old content interesting for students.

Discussion:

The results obtained from this research work show that the outdated curriculum content has a negative effect on the performance of 9th grade students in government secondary schools of Nawabshah. The results obtained from this research work show that the outdated curriculum content has a negative effect on the performance of 9th grade students in government secondary schools of Nawabshah. One of the most important observations made in this study is that outdated content is a factor in decreased student engagement and motivation. It was found that many students feel that the curriculum is based on a lot of rote memorization and theoretical knowledge, with very little emphasis on practical applications, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. This observation is in line with previous studies that have shown that outdated curriculum content is a factor in decreased learner interest and understanding, especially in the secondary level of education where clarity of concepts is essential.

Conclusion:

This study concludes that outdated curriculum content has a significant negative impact on the academic performance of 9th grade students in government secondary schools of Nawabshah. The findings indicate that curriculum materials which are misaligned with contemporary knowledge, modern pedagogical approaches, and real-life applications fail to engage students effectively, resulting in reduced motivation, limited critical thinking skills, and lower academic achievement. Students exposed to obsolete content often struggle to relate classroom learning to current societal, technological, and economic realities, which weakens their understanding and retention of concepts. Furthermore, the study highlights that teachers face considerable challenges in delivering outdated curricula, as they are compelled to rely on traditional teaching methods that do not adequately address diverse learning needs or encourage active learning. This gap between curriculum content and modern educational demands contributes to passive learning environments and restricts students' ability to develop problem-solving and analytical skills essential for higher education and future careers. In conclusion, updating and revising the 9th grade curriculum in government secondary schools of Nawabshah is imperative to improve academic performance and overall educational quality. Curriculum reforms should focus on relevance, innovation, and alignment with current academic standards, supported by teacher training and the integration of modern teaching resources. Such measures will not only enhance student engagement and achievement but also better prepare learners to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving world.

Recommendations:

1. **Curriculum Revision and Updating**

The curriculum for 9th grade should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with contemporary knowledge, technological advancements, and real-world applications. Outdated topics should be replaced with relevant, skill-based content to improve students' academic performance and engagement.

2. **Integration of Modern Teaching Resources**

Government secondary schools should integrate modern teaching resources such as digital textbooks, interactive learning tools, and multimedia content to supplement the existing curriculum. This will help students better understand concepts and enhance learning outcomes.

3. **Teacher Training and Professional Development**

Regular professional development programs should be organized for teachers to familiarize them with updated curriculum content and modern pedagogical strategies. Well-trained teachers can effectively

bridge the gap between outdated material and current educational demands.

4. **Inclusion of Practical and Concept-Based Learning**

The curriculum should emphasize practical activities, experiments, and concept-based learning rather than rote memorization. This approach can significantly improve students' academic performance and critical thinking skills.

5. **Alignment with Assessment Methods**

Examination and assessment systems should be aligned with updated curriculum objectives. Assessments should evaluate understanding, application, and problem-solving abilities rather than focusing solely on memorization of outdated content.

6. **Stakeholder Involvement in Curriculum Development**

Educational policymakers should involve teachers, subject experts, and academic researchers in curriculum development to ensure that content meets students' learning needs and national educational goals.

7. **Periodic Monitoring and Evaluation**

A structured monitoring mechanism should be established to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum changes on students' academic performance. Continuous feedback from schools in Nawabshah can help improve curriculum quality over time.

8. **Student-Centered Learning Approach**

Schools should adopt student-centered teaching strategies that encourage active participation, inquiry, and collaboration. This can help mitigate the negative effects of outdated curriculum content on students' academic achievement.

9. **Future Research Directions**

Future studies may expand this research by including private schools, other grade levels, or comparative studies across different districts to provide a broader understanding of curriculum relevance and academic performance.

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