

Multi-grade Teaching and Teachers' Competencies; Perceptions of Primary School Teachers

¹Shaheen Pasha, ²Muhammad Javed Aftab & ³Babar Habib

¹*Chairperson/Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, (DOE) University of Education, Lahore,*

²*Lecturer, Department of Special Education, (DOE) Faisalabad Campus University of Education, Lahore.*

³*DEO, Literacy School Education Department Government of the Punjab*

Corresponding Author's Email: drshaheen.pasha@ue.edu.pk

The major target of this research work was to reconnoiter the capabilities of the public sectors educators educating in the multi-grade system of teaching in primary level educational institutions in Sheikhpura, one of the districts of the province of Punjab. This research study was descriptive in nature. 195 (male 119 and female 76) teachers from primary level public educational institutions from the district of Sheikhpura, where a multi-grade style of teaching was being implemented were selected. purposively who are educating in multi-grade system of teaching classes. Sample data of 195 students was taken from teachers to determine the achievements of students. Self-developed questionnaire that consisted of 25 statements was administered to take teachers views on their competencies on handling multi-grade classes. Piloting was done before the final administration of the research tool, which was the self-developed questionnaire, and the reliability was 0.87 which was calculated by using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The major findings of this research study uncovered that educators confronted troubles in planning and executing lessons in multi-grade classes. Teachers need training and capacity building to expand their competencies in lesson development and to implement a variety of teaching methodologies. Moreover, no significant difference was found in the academic achievement of students based on gender in multi-grade schools. Majority suggested of students in multigrade classes should be reduced and frequent training for teachers should be arranged.

Key words: *multi-grade teaching, competencies, primary schools' teachers.*

Introduction

Multi-grade public sector educational institutions, generally support the provision of multi-grade education at primary education to young learners in the far furlong area of the countries which are being existed confined to the developing category. Characteristically, public sector educational institutions at primary level have single or two teaching staff members with more than two classes which are varied in both ability, physical and mental age of the students. The reason Supporters provided was that, particularly in areas where the density of the population is low, multi-grade public sector schools can be more effective in the learning of the students and cost-effective ways of intensifying educational opportunity (and raising student outcomes) (Thomas & Shaw, 1992). In far furlong and rural zones, multi-grade styles of teaching and pedagogical technique is favoured due to the deficiency of teaching staff in these

areas of the province of Punjab. Also, the reason is children belonging to these areas are incapable to join schools in other far furlong areas (Berry, 2007) due to the transportation and lack of facilities. In a multi-grade style of teaching, students having different needs are combined in one class. Students should be educated with diverse pedagogical styles in multi-grade teaching. Teacher desires to exhibit more exactness in this kind of pedagogical skill. The educators accomplish challenges and perform difficult roles in multi-grade styles of teaching techniques as equated to single grade teaching (Little, 2005). Researches recommend that the education process of the students was pretentious in multi-grade styles of teaching. As educators embrace optimistic attitudes to multi-grade teaching. These teachers are not trained properly adequately for this kind of teaching (Lally, 2005). For the success of multigrade teaching, educators and educational institutions should be

artistic with efforts such as self-instructional style of teaching text-books and professional training in multi-grade instructional methods. (Thomas & Shaw, 1992) Multi-grade teaching needs special kinds of skills during the process of teaching. Therefore, educators require to give different care while schooling in multi-grade styles of classrooms. Educators who are educating in multi-grade public sector primary educational institutions are also unexperienced or they have only experience to educate single grades at a time. Educators in our community have very inadequate material and audio-visual aids for teaching. Educators contemplate that monograde style of teaching is much better if we are comparing it to multi-grade in public sector primary educational institutions (Lally, 2005).

Most of the countries with the developing status are empowering multi-grade instructing in remote territories (Miller, 2000). Research demonstrates that multi-grade instructing is disregarded by instructive arrangement producers during the expert improvement of the instructors. Multi-grade instructing is drilled in various parts of the world. Be that as it may, the administration of these nations doesn't concentrate on the significance of multi-grade educating (Little, 2005b). The information about the significance of multi-grade instructing in various pieces of the world has not been looked into broadly (Little, 2005a). In this manner, almost no consideration is given to multi-grade showing schools (Wright, 2000). Multi-grade instructing is being rehearsed in remote territories of the nation. In the light of previously declared research holes the specialists chose to lead the examination around there. The instructive practice in rustic territories of nations is frequently focused on an unbending configuration in which instructors address, understudies latently duplicate from the slate, support isn't empowered, and repetition retention is the standard (Lockheed, 2001). Regardless

of the need of managing various ages and capacities in a single study hall, most rustic instructors don't get extraordinary preparing or resources for multi-grade style of guidance (Keith 2003). Besides, provincial schools are regularly bound by unbendable timetables, regardless of the inconstancy of farming schedules (Colbert et al. 2002). The primary reason for this investigation was to distinguish the expert skills of educators for instructing in multi-grade schools. This investigation was first, historically speaking, an examination towards the multi-grade instructing in the territory of Punjab. This examination would be similarly advantageous for the arrangement producers and the organizers in the field of school training. This investigation would likewise be useful for preparing foundations to prepare educators in the grade schools particularly in the locale of Sheikhpura.

Objectives of the Research Study

This research study had the following objectives;

1. To explore the perception of the teachers working at primary level about their competencies apropos teaching in multi- grade systems in Government Schools of District Sheikhpura.
2. To explore the difference in the competencies among teachers on the basis of gender working in multi-grade classes in primary schools of District Sheikhpura.
3. To find out the perception of teachers working at primary level of District Sheikhpura about the effectiveness of multi-grade style of teaching.
4. To explore the difference among the students studying in multi-grade classrooms at Govt. Primary Schools of District Sheikhpura on academic achievement on the basis of gender

Review of Related Literature

Multi-grade style of teaching means the instructions of students in one

class partaking different age, intelligence quotient and abilities. In the monograde style of teaching, youngsters having comparable types of capabilities, intelligence quotient and age. In countries with the developing status, the age of children getting admission in public sector primary educational institutions is wide-ranging and young learners often repeat the same grade more than one time. (Benveniste & Mcewan, 2000; Berry, Birch & Lally 2005). Multi-grade is a favorite style of teaching at I to IV grades (Birch & Lally, 1995). Angela (2004) stated that multi-grade style of education is chosen as best pedagogical skills in far furlong areas where the population is less compared to other areas. Mostly one or two teachers are appointed to teach all the primary classes; If the public sector schools have huge statistics of students detached in different area for their education, then multi-grade teaching methodology is experienced. Some of the teachers are directed to teach through the multi-grade classes while some of the staff members are directed to teach with the help of monograde classes. Multi-grade teaching style is chosen at top priority where the statistics of teaching staff are not up to the mark and the population is growing very fast.

This sort of the instructing procedures is for the most part utilized in developing countries when contrasted with the advance countries (Knight, 2008; Little, 2005b; Mason, and Burns, 2002). Multi-grade teaching technique for educating may request more fill in when contrasted with the single-grade instructions. Requirement of representing the teaching resources, both intellectual and enthusiastic, are more noteworthy. Educational program plan and association requires mindful arrangement and more noteworthy coordination (Miller 1991). This is especially the situation if instructors don't approach particular materials, for example, self-instructional reading material, to help their

arrangement. Educators are answerable for more subjects and can't rehash exercises from year to year. Multi-grade educational institution at primary level are typically understaffed so they should satisfy an assortment of different jobs including organization, transportation or network association (Scott 1984). Then again, the multi-grade study hall can be an energizing and testing place for some educators (Mulcahy 1993). With appropriate preparation, instructors become progressively viable, and as they become increasingly viable, teachers find more prominent satisfaction in educating and grow a more grounded promise to multi-grade training. It is conceivable that viable limit building can have the attractive impact of strengthening the desire of instructors.

In multi-grade schools, instructors didn't have appropriate educational program and expected skills to instruct in multi-grade schools for example information on various showing systems, instructional strategies and encouraging methods were inadequate to show the students of multi-grade classes. Multi-grade instructions were rehearsed in different countries with developing phase of the world. Developed countries had created uncommon pre-administration, enlistment and in-administration projects to prepare their instructors to educate in multi-grade schools. In non-multi-grade schools, educators were prepared during pre-administration instructor preparing. Educating in multi-grade classes confronting issues and issues that should be tended to, for example there was an absence of appropriate principles and guidelines for multi-grade educating; Different issues identified with nonappearance of instructors, opportunity of educators in remote regions, absence of preparing for educators educating in multi-grade schools, absence of offices in schools. It was felt that consistent appraisal ought to be done to assess multi-grade instructing to improve the learning

of understudies (Tatto, 2013; Thanh, Bui, and Le, 2000; Stash, and Hannum, 2001). Training offspring of various ages and capacities in a similar study hall appears to be confounding and ineffectual. Hardship and asset shortage are seen as the chief reasons that would confine the one instructor one evaluation proportion. Along these lines, inspiration among instructors is low and preparing for multi-grade guidance is stood up to. Multi-grade tutoring happens to a great extent in country with developing status schools. Educators in this situation as a rule face task to more subjects, more evaluation levels and progressively extra-curricular exercises; lower spending plans and compensations; and deficient materials (Barker 1986; Dove 1982).

In Pakistan, the multi-grade way of teaching includes the teaching of students up-to class six. One classroom utilized for distinction classes in a similar time in every region of Pakistan. Contingent upon the enrolment level educator might be dependable to show 60 students in a single class. Without legitimate preparing and assets, it is unreasonable to anticipate from instructors to accomplish a lot (Mansoor,2011). A thorough report on multi-grade style of educating was distributed about Pakistan by UNESCO. The finding of this report showed that the vast majority of the educators in country like Pakistan were undeveloped. These educators were not proficient enough to show various classes simultaneously. In provincial territories, there is no legitimate spot for homeroom. Students need to share single space for learning. At some point, a solitary instructor is allotted to show the class and at some point these classes are educated by different educators. Students are situated organized in single study hall. An instructor had just a single writing board in the study hall to show students. It is extremely hard for an educator to show the numerous classes without having any appropriate preparation and training (Hawes, 2000, Nussel, Inglis, and

Wiersma, 2007; Little, 2005a). It is important to address the issues of educators' capabilities to deal with the multi-game homerooms in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

To describe the existing phenomena teachers' competencies descriptive research was used. Wholly the teaching staff working in Government Primary Schools of District Sheikhpura, where teachers are engaged in multi-grade teaching style were considered the population for this study. Quantity of public Primary Schools in District Sheikhpura were 758 and mostly in schools of rural areas teachers were engaged in multi-grade teaching. Researchers personally visited the schools and purposively selected the teachers using the multi-grade teaching style as a sample for this research study. PSTs from 100 Primary Schools of District Sheikhpura were particularly selected as per given distribution; 119 primary teachers from male primary schools and 76 from female schools were selected.

Research Tool

A personally developed questionnaire was utilized to this research. Personally, developed research tool was consisting of two portions. Questionnaire comprised on 25 statements related to five components of teachers' competencies i.e.pedagogy, assessment, lesson planning, teacher training and syllabus. Primary part of this questionnaire confined the items related to the teacher's competencies of teaching staff working at the primary level in public sector regarding the multi-grade style of teaching. The second portion of this research tool, teachers were asked to fill the results of Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) for the last five years of the 5th grade. Column of result contain information of number of students, gender and number of pass/fail students. The result of students was taken as standard indicator of students' achievement studying in multigame classrooms.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

For the face validity of tool, it was sent to three experts of the field and the suggestions of experts were combined to make sure of the improvement of the research questionnaire. The reliability of the research tool was ensured with pilot testing. The reliability coefficient is 0.87 which is known as Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient value of reliability was suitable to move further process of data collection.

Data Collection & Analysis

To collect the data the researcher himself/herself visited the enlisted schools. Information was gathered with the assistance of personally developed survey. The researcher personally managed the

poll to the people who have to responded to the questionnaire; teachers teaching with the multi-grade teaching of the elementary schools in region Sheikhpura. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data (Mean, S.D, Independent Sample t-test). To find out the difference in the academic performance of the students and views of the teachers on the multi-grade teaching independent sample t-test will be used.

Table 1

Perceptions of male and female teachers about their competencies regarding syllabus, lesson planning, pedagogy, assessment, training for multi-grade teaching

Gender	Syllabus	Lesson Planning	Pedagogy	Assessment	Training
<i>Male</i>					
<i>M</i>	3.74	2.65	1.67	3.61	1.65
<i>SD</i>	0.708	0.642	0.646	0.814	0.735
<i>N</i>	119	119	119	119	119
<i>Female</i>					
<i>M</i>	3.45	2.45	1.35	3.54	2.42
<i>SD</i>	0.775	0.713	0.719	0.968	0.803
<i>N</i>	76	76	76	76	76
<i>Total</i>					
<i>M</i>	3.63	2.57	1.54	3.59	2.03
<i>SD</i>	0.747	0.677	0.691	0.875	0.768
<i>N</i>	195	195	195	195	195

Table 1 indicates analysis of male and female teachers' competencies to teachers effectively in factors of multi-grade teaching. The mean score shows that male teachers are good to complete syllabus in well-mannered way as the mean is 3.74. The competencies in other aspects i.e. assessment, is also satisfactory as mean for these aspects is 3.67 and 3.61. While the male teachers are not competent in lesson planning, to apply variety of pedagogies and not received training to enhance their competencies mean for these factors is 2.65, 1.67 and 1.65 respectively. The mean score of female teachers for assessment was 3.54. This showed that female

teachers are more competent in assessment in multi-grade teaching. The female teachers are less competent in lesson planning and applying different pedagogies as mean is 2.57 and 1.35. and they have the opinion that trainings are not provided to them in improve their competencies as mean for that is 2.03.

Table 2

Perception of male and female teachers about effectiveness of multi-grade teaching

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. (2 tailed)
Male	119	1.67	0.621	193	2.478	0.014
Female	76	1.43	0.723			

Table 2 shows that male and female teachers both find that multi-grade teaching is not effective as mean is 1.67 and 1.43 respectively. And significant *Difference in male and female students' achievement studying through multi-grade classes*

difference was found in the perception of male and female teachers about the effectiveness of multi-grade schools as t-value is 0.014.

Table 3

Difference in male and female students' achievement studying through multi-grade classes

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. (2 tailed)
Male	90	3.42	0.752	193	0.679	0.667
Female	105	3.54	0.863			

Above table 3 demonstrated that t-value is not significant. This mentioned that there is insignificant difference in the achievement of male and female school children when they are teaching collectively in multi-grade schools.

Findings & Conclusion

The purpose of this research study was to sight see the perceptions of teachers teaching in multi-grade schools regarding their competencies of teaching to teach more than one class at a time. Teachers working in the public sector have point of view that teaching more than one class at a time is helpful in becoming effective and efficient teachers. Teachers are using different assessment techniques to assess their student's performance. Regarding the competencies related to syllabus completion and understanding teachers are satisfied that the syllabus is comprehensive enough that they can understand it well. However, they thought that the syllabus can be reduced so that they can complete it on time. The academic performance of male and female school children in multi-grade schools.

Teachers are facing difficulties to launch a multi-grade teaching style to teach the children at primary level. They find it difficult to deliver lessons as per plan in multi-grade classes. Teachers are facing difficulties in planning. Teachers said that they are not competent enough in lesson planning for students of different grades in one class. It is difficult to complete the lessons in time in multi-grade classes and implementation of time-table in multi-grade teaching is very tough. Teachers complained that they are not able to use multiple methods e.g. activity-based methods and discussion method and to use audio/visual aids in their classes. They mostly rely on peer teaching method in multi-grade teaching. Teachers need training to enhance their competencies. This mentioned that the teachers of the public sector schools specifically belong to the rural areas were found lacking in using the sufficient enough style of teaching and the pedagogical skills because during their education process active pedagogy was not used which effect their teaching style and learning process of their students. Teachers agreed that multigame teaching

is not as effective in their schools as it should be. Because teachers do not have enough competencies to handle students in multi-grade classes. Most famous and popular alternatives to improve the basic education in the rural areas is the multi-grade style of teaching. Different research studies reported that multi-grade teaching is the most effective way to meet the expectation of the teachers regarding the learning outcomes of the students and expand the area of education access for different regions which are far furlong and consider bear to the poverty line. To improve the competencies of teachers should be the priority of authorities to gain the proper benefit from multigame teaching in Pakistan. Teachers provide the data of 195 students (90 male and 105 female) were passed in Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) in last five years from 2013-2017. Approximately 39 students passed each year the PEC exam in the 100 schools of sample.

Recommendations

Multi-grade teaching is effective way to deliver the basic education to the students of far furlong rural areas in Pakistan. However, our teachers are not able to provide their best in the domain of multi-grade style of teaching. On the basis of findings and conclusion, it is suggested that;

- The burden of the teachers engaging in multi-grade teaching might be minimized to improve their performance in the field of teaching. Accordingly, the teachers could have more focus on the academic performance of individual student studying in the multi-grade teaching.
- Teachers have multi-grade teaching style that might be applied with different teaching methods and execute lesson properly if they are provided proper training.
- This type of the research can be repeated in other districts of the province of Punjab to compare the

results with the recent study. In this mode, furtherwide-ranging view of public-schoolteachers' awareness can be attained about multi-grade style of teaching.

- This kind of research study might also be conducted on other levels of education like elementary and secondary level to discover the upshot of multi-grade teaching on the academic upgradation of elementary and secondary public-school teacherswith multi-grade teaching of other districts aswell.

References

- Aikman, S., &Pridmore, P. (2001). Multi-grade schooling in 'remote' areas of Vietnam. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 21, 521-536.
- Angela, W. (2004). Learning and Teaching in Multi-grade Settings. UNESCO
- Barker, B. (1986). *Efforts to Improve the Preparation of Teachers for Rural Schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Southwest Educational Research Association, Houston.
- Benveniste, L. A., &Mcewan, P. J. (2000). Constraints to implementing educational innovations: The case of multi-grade schools'. *International Review of Education*, 46, 31-48.
- Berry, C. (2007). *Achievement effects of multi-grade and monograde schools in the Turks and Caicos Islands*. (Unpublished PhD dissertation), Institute of Education, University of London, London.
- Birch, &Lally, M. (1995). *Multi-grade Teaching in Primary Schools*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Colbert, V., Chiappe, C. &Arboleda, J. (2002). The New School Program: More and Better Primary Education for Children in Rural Areas in Colombia. In H.M. Levin

- & M.E. Lockheed, (eds.), *Effective Schools in Developing Countries*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Dove, L.A. (1982). The Deployment and Training of Teachers for Remote Rural Schools in Less-Developed Countries. *International Review of Education* 28: 3–27.
- Hargreaves, A. (2001). Teacher Development and Educational Change. Teacher Development and Educational Change. In M. Fullan and A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *The London*, Washington, D.C: Falmer Press.
- Hawes, R.G. (2000). Planning for Innovation through Dissemination and Utilisation of Knowledge. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.
- Keith, S. (2003). *Improving Support for Rural Schools: A Management Perspective. Policy, Planning, and Research*. Washington: World Bank.
- Knight, E. E. (2008). A Study of Double Grades in New Haven City Schools. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 7, 11-18.
- Lally, M. (2005). Multi-grade teaching: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines and Viet Nam' (Eds.), *Managing schools for better quality: multi-grade teaching and school clusters* (pp. 33-52). Bangkok: PROAP (Principal Regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific), UNESCO.
- Little, A. (2005a). Multi-grade teaching: Towards an international research and policy agenda'. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 21, 481-497.
- Little, A. (2005b). Multi-grade teaching a review of research and practice (12). London: Overseas Development Administration.
- Lockheed, M.E. (2001). The Condition of Primary Education in Developing Countries. In: H.M. Levin and M.E. Lockheed, (eds.), *Effective Schools in Developing Countries*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Mansoor, S. (2011) *Multi-grade Teaching; An Inevitable Option*. ASER Report
- Mason, D. A., & Burns, R. B. (2002). Reassessing the Effects of Combination Classes'. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 3, 1-53.
- Miller, B. (1991). A Review of the Qualitative Research on Multi-grade Instruction. *Research in Rural Education* 7: 3–12.
- Miller, B. A. (1990). A Review of the Qualitative Research on Multi-grade Instruction'. *research in rural education*, 7, 1-8.
- Mulcahy, D. (1993). Developing a Distinctive Approach for Multi-Grade Classrooms. *Education Canada*, 33: 24–29.
- Nussel, E. J. Inglis, J. D., & Wiersma, W. (2007). *The Teacher and Individually Guided Education: Aclclison-Wesley Publishing Company*.
- Rowley, P. (1997). The Seti Project Education for Rural Development in Nepal. Kathmandu: UNESCO.
- Scott, R. (1984). *Teaching and Learning in Remote Schools: A Dilemma Beyond Rural Education*. National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth.
- Stash, S., & Hannum, E. (2001). Who Goes to School? Educational Stratification by Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity in Nepal. *Comparative education review*, 45, 354-378.
- Tatto, M. T. (2013). Improving teacher education in rural Mexico: The challenges and tensions of constructivist reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15, 13-35.
- Thanh. T. T., Bui, T. P. N., & Le, S. (2000). Multi-grade Teaching in

Southern Provinces of Vietnam.
Hanoi: The British Council.

Thomas, C. & Shaw, C. (1992). Issues in
the Development of Multi-grade
Schools. Washington: World Bank.

Wright, W. N. (2000). Belize experience
of multi-grade teaching. Paper
presented at the Common Wealth
Secretariat Regional workshop on
multi-grade teaching, Gaborone:
Botswana.