

The apprehension of English teachers regarding Single National Curriculum (SNC) of English at Primary level in Multan region: A quantitative study

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ABSTRACT

The government of Pakistan has introduced a Single National Curriculum (SNC) to be followed by all public and private schools nationwide. Private schools must obtain government certificates for their chosen textbooks and use only approved books. Madrassas are also required to adhere to the same textbooks and curriculum as prescribed by the government. In Punjab, training sessions for teachers in both public and private schools have been initiated to ensure effective implementation and desired outcomes. This study aimed to explore English teachers' perceptions of the SNC and its impact on students' and teachers' progress at the primary level, while also unveiling socio-economic disparities within Pakistan's education system. A questionnaire was developed and administered to respondents from primary and high schools in Multan, selected through convenient purposive sampling. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, with strict adherence to research ethics to maintain respondent anonymity. The findings indicated that the SNC has enhanced students' reading and speaking skills, as well as contributed to reducing socio-economic disparities within Pakistan's education system. The SNC ensures equal opportunities for quality education for students across the country, regardless of whether they attend public or private schools. Additionally, the SNC has raised educational standards in madrassas by requiring them to follow the government-prescribed curriculum. Furthermore, the SNC has introduced new dimensions and strategies in teaching the English language, aligning with international teaching trends.

Keywords: national curriculum, educational standards, English language, etc.

Introduction

The prosperity and advancement of a nation depend significantly on the effectiveness of its educational system and the quality of its curriculum. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his lecture delivered on September 26, 1947, in Karachi, emphasized the critical need for education, stating that it is vital for Pakistan's survival. To thrive in a rapidly advancing world, significant advancements in education are necessary.

The term "Single National Curriculum" was coined by former Prime Minister Imran Khan to promote educational equity among students in Pakistan. This initiative, known as "One Nation, One Curriculum," aims to establish a uniform educational system for all. Pakistan's education

system currently consists of public and private schools, with public schools following the curriculum set by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) or other provincial curriculum committees, while most private schools adopt the Oxford curriculum. This division leads to discrimination among children attending government and private sector institutions. The SNC aims to provide equitable opportunities to all students in Pakistan, regardless of their background, to dismantle class disparities and social obstacles.

Pakistan's education system can be classified into three categories: government schools, private schools, and madrassas. Children from middle and lower socioeconomic backgrounds typically attend public schools, while those from privileged backgrounds attend private schools. Families with a religious background often choose madrassas for their children's education. The "One Nation, One Curriculum" initiative aims to establish a uniform curriculum across all types of schools and educational institutions in Pakistan. According to Chugtai (2005), a government consultant, the SNC grants schools the authority to choose their language and method of teaching, which may include Urdu, English, or any other indigenous language.

The implementation of the Single National Curriculum will occur gradually in three phases. Phase I, implemented in March 2021, introduced the Standardized National Curriculum (SNC) for grades Pre I-V. Phase II, scheduled for March 2022, will introduce the Subject National Curriculum (SNC) for grades VI-VIII. Phase III, scheduled for March 2023, will implement the SNC for grades IX-X. The Punjab government released a notification on July 29, 2021, regarding the implementation of the Single National Curriculum. Dr. Murad Raas, the Minister of Education Punjab, shared key aspects of the notification on his Twitter account.

Literature Review

Hussain (2018) conducted a study in which he looked at the religious content included in KPK and Punjab's primary textbooks for the 2016–2017 school year. In order to investigate the relationship between gender and semiotics in order to advance particular ideologies to the target audience, the religious content was analyzed from language and semiotic viewpoints. To analyze the data, a thorough research technique was used. Word, phrase, and discourse levels were all included in the data analysis. Furthermore, the relationship between the conjunction and word picture was also considered in this particular case. Through discussions with focus groups, the study's findings were verified.

According to the study, primary English textbooks are quite successful at encouraging young students' religious beliefs. A study of the English textbooks used in Punjabi and Balochistani primary schools was conducted by Khan (2019). She examined how gender, semiotics, and religious beliefs relate to one another. PTB and BTB provided the data for the analysis. According to the study, basic textbooks strategically use language and images to present particular views regarding religious topics as commonly held notions. From the very beginning, an effort is made to shape the thinking and acquire consent.

Research indicates that gender and religion assumptions are significantly shaped by a variety of socio-political factors.

M. A. Sajid and Khan (2020) looked at the semiotic discourses in the Pakistani newspaper Dawn in their investigation. More specifically, they examined the ways in which caricatures are utilized in Pakistani English print media to convey religio-political ideology. Particularly Dawn and The News, two English-language Pakistani newspapers, provided the research data. After that, it was examined using the Kress and Hodge (2010) approach, which is intended for examining texts that combine many communication modalities. Using focal group conversations with the selected participants to combine the overall impression verified the veracity of the semiotic analysis

findings. In essence, it shows how religious leaders engage in political activity under the cover of religion by using various means of information dissemination (such as coercion and discourse). Waqar and Ghani (2019) looked at cartoons that were published in Pakistani media to see how the publications used their caricatures to further the interests of the country. A comparative analysis of political humor was conducted between Dawn and The Nation publications. The research collected the semiotics of the selected articles that addressed issues on the national agenda. Furthermore, a thorough model that integrates the discourse analysis tenets put forward by Maier (1995) and Roland (1974) was used to analyze the data. According to the study's conclusions, semiotics utilized by "The Nation" present a positive picture of the government, while those used by DAWN are essential in advancing the agenda for national interests. Thus, it is said that print media and political cartoons both incorporate a variety of ideas.

M. A. Sajid, Khan, Sumaira, and Jamil (2021) looked at the caricatures that were published in Pakistani print media and analyzed the underlying religious and political meanings that were being communicated. The daily English newspaper DAWN provided the information. A comprehensive research approach was employed to examine the semiotics that embodied religio-political ideology. This method made use of semiotic and linguistic theories. The researchers used the study frameworks of Hodge and Kress (1997) to analyze the data from both a language and semiotic perspective.

This paradigm looks at multimodal discourses, specifically how different communication channels are employed to disseminate a fabricated social reality. At five different levels, the Krueger and Casey (2000) model is also applied. According to the study, political rhetoric is a crucial aspect of print media, and leaders of religio-political organizations use caricatures and other verbal and visual strategies to propagate their desired ideology under the cover of religion. The process of absorbing the ideologies of the prevailing groups is facilitated by representation. In addition, with reference to FGD.

Research Objectives

The principal objectives of the research are:

1. To understand English teachers' perceptions of SNC English content at the Primary level.
2. To explore whether SNC addresses socio-economic disparities in Pakistan.
3. To assess how SNC affects the progress of primary level students.

Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are English teachers' apprehensions of SNC English content at the Primary level?
2. Can SNC address socio-economic differences in Pakistan?
3. How do teachers perceive the impact of SNC on students' progress?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it provides insights into the impact of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) on English teachers' perceptions and its potential influence on students' academic development. It aims to guide future research on the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a Single National Curriculum and help teachers formulate effective teaching tactics aligned with its objectives. The study also aims to identify necessary modifications to enhance the SNC and address existing disparities within Pakistan's social, economic, and educational systems.

Shaukat (2021) conducted a thorough evaluation of the government's proposal for a Single National Curriculum, highlighting the need to understand children's psychology and the

challenges of implementing the SNC in different types of schools. The study suggests a gradual approach to implementation and acknowledges the disparities between public and private schools.

Research Methodology

The researcher used a quantitative research design and employed a questionnaire to collect data from primary and secondary school educators in Multan. The sample consisted of 64 school instructors from 40 distinct schools, selected through purposive sampling. The questionnaire contained 25 statements categorized into four sections, using a Likert scale for precise measurements. A pilot study was conducted to validate the instrument, and data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Data Analysis

SPSS software was used to conduct statistical analysis on the collected data, and the findings were presented in tables and graphs. The study provided insights into teachers' perceptions of the SNC and its impact on students' and teachers' progress at the primary level, as well as its role in addressing socio-economic disparities within Pakistan's education system.

Table1 The Social Impact & SNC

Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean	SD
1. Through SNC, teachers of each social class will get opportunities of equal level of education.	<i>f</i> %	11 46.7	15 33.3	5 3.3	5 8	28 8.7	2.63	1.443
The SNC tackles the existing socio-economic disparities in Pakistan.	<i>f</i> %	8 18.7	6 43.3	6 15.3	20 12	24 10.7	2.54	1.412
3. SNC will create an environment of social equality.	<i>f</i> %	15 27.3	18 34	6 22	11 12.7	14 4	2.52	1.4159
4. The SNC will help to end "Social Apartheid" in Pakistan.	<i>f</i> %	12 23.3	17 36	7 21.3	14 14	14 53	2.51	1.296
5. Instead of raising the level of education in government schools, government is trying to lower the level if private schools.	<i>f</i> %	24 41.3	15 36	5 12.7	8 5.3	14 4.7	2.37	1.519
6. SNC will help in diminishing the system of social stratification.	<i>f</i> %	14 24.7	18 45.3	0 14	16 11.3	16 4.7	2.58	1.396
Cumulative Mean of the Research Question No.1.		37.33	61.66	22.66	18.13	9.86	2.51	1.39

The table displays the feedback provided by teachers regarding the social impact and SNC (Social and Emotional Learning, Nurturing Care, and Child Protection). The data analysis reveals that the average score of 6 specific items (item no. 1, 2, 3...6) meets the criteria for acceptance, while 2 items (item no. 2, 6, and 8) fail to meet the criteria and are therefore rejected. This indicates that English teachers' response to the use of technology during the pandemic is

reflected in a mean score of 2.52 with a standard deviation of 1.39. Based on the provided table and graph, it is evident that 17.2% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 23.4% of teachers expressed agreement. Additionally, 7.8% of teachers disagreed, 43.8% strongly disagreed, and 0.8% of teachers were undecided on the statement. In general, 40.6% of teachers expressed satisfaction, while 51.6% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the idea that Through SNC, teachers from all social classes will have similar educational chances. 12.5% of instructors expressed strong agreement, while 9.4% agreed, 31.3% disagreed, 37.5% strongly disagreed, and 9.4% were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 21.9% of teachers expressed satisfaction while 68.8% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with The SNC's efforts to address the prevailing socio-economic inequalities in Pakistan.

The data revealed that 23.4% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 28.1% of teachers expressed agreement, 17.2% expressed disagreement, 21.9% expressed severe disagreement, and 9.4% of teachers were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 51.5% of teachers expressed satisfaction while 39.1% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction regarding the potential of SNC to foster social equality. The findings indicate that 18.8% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 26.6% of teachers expressed agreement, 21.9% expressed disagreement, 21.9% expressed severe disagreement, and 10.9% of teachers were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 45.4% of teachers expressed satisfaction while 43.8% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the potential of The SNC to address and eliminate "Social Apartheid" in Pakistan. The data also indicates that 37.5% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 23.4% of teachers expressed agreement, 12.5% expressed disagreement, 18.8% expressed severe disagreement, and 7.8% of teachers were undecided regarding the statement. The satisfaction rate among teachers was 60.9%, while the dissatisfaction rate was 31.3%. Rather than enhancing the quality of education in public schools, the government is attempting to diminish the standards of private schools.

The data revealed that 21.9% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 28.1% of teachers expressed agreement. On the other hand, 25% of teachers disagreed, 25% strongly disagreed, and none of the instructors were undecided on the statement. In general, half of the instructors expressed satisfaction while the other half expressed dissatisfaction regarding the potential of SNC to reduce social stratification.

Table 2 English Content & SNC

Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean	SD
1. The SNC is designed to advance high standards of competence in English language.	<i>f</i> %	30 46.7	25 33.3	5 3.3	12 8	13 8.7	2.62	1.443
2. The SNC may reduce innovations in curriculum design.	<i>f</i> %	28 18.7	25 43.3	23 15.3	18 12	16 10.7	2.55	1.412
3. The content quality of English in SNC is far better than older one.	<i>f</i> %	41 27.3	51 34	33 22	19 12.7	6 4	2.57	1.415
4. The content of English has been oriented to the	<i>f</i> %	35 23.3	54 36	32 21.3	21 14	8 23	2.68	1.293

international content framework.								
5. The SNC can be considered a perfect curriculum implemented by the government.	<i>f</i> %	62 41.3	54 36	19 12.7	8 5.3	7 4.7	2.56	1.518
6. More visual aids and charts have been added in SNC to make learning process effective.	<i>f</i> %	37 24.7	68 45.3	21 14	17 11.3	7 4.7	2.59	1.390
Cumulative Mean of the research question No.1.		45.5	51.66	20.5	15.3	9.5	2.59	1.38

Table 2 displays the feedback from teachers regarding English Content & SNC. The data results indicate that the mean score of 6 items (item no. 1, 2, 3.....6) meet the acceptance criterion, while 3 items (item no. 2, 3, and 5) meet the rejection criterion. This suggests that English teachers' responses to English Content & SNC are characterized by a mean score of 2.59 and a standard deviation of 1.38. Based on the data presented in the table and graph, it can be concluded that 31.3% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 26.6% of teachers expressed agreement, and 15.6% expressed disagreement. 20.3% of teachers expressed strong disagreement, while 6.3% remained undecided regarding the statement. In general, 57.9% of instructors expressed satisfaction, while 35.9% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with The SNC's aim to promote high levels of proficiency in the English language.

Nevertheless, 29.7% of teachers expressed strong agreement, whereas 26.6% of teachers expressed agreement, 21.9% expressed disagreement, 20.3% expressed strong disagreement, and 1.6% of teachers were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 56% of teachers expressed satisfaction, while 42.2% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction regarding the potential impact of The SNC on curriculum design advances. 31.3% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 26.6% agreed, 15.6% disagreed, 23.4% strongly disagreed, and 3.1% of teachers were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 58% of teachers expressed satisfaction while 39% expressed dissatisfaction with the superior content quality of English in SNC compared to the earlier version.

The findings indicate that 31% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 31.3% of teachers expressed agreement, 14.1% expressed disagreement, 21.9% expressed severe disagreement, and 1.6% of instructors were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 67% of instructors expressed satisfaction whereas 36% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the alignment of English material to the worldwide content framework. In addition, 31.3% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while 23.4% of teachers expressed agreement, 0% expressed disagreement, 23.4% expressed severe disagreement, and 21.9% of teachers were undecided regarding the statement. In general, 55% of teachers expressed satisfaction while 45% expressed dissatisfaction over the government's implementation of the SNC curriculum, indicating that it cannot be regarded flawless.

Most 28.1% of teachers expressed strong agreement, while another 28.1% expressed agreement. On the other hand, 12.5% disagreed, and 28.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. Additionally, 3.1% of instructors were undecided. In general, 56.2% of teachers expressed

satisfaction, while 30.6% expressed dissatisfaction, about the use of more visual aids and charts in SNC to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process.

Findings and DISCUSSION

This research has three research questions that aim to explore the views and perceptions of English teachers about a single national curriculum. The researcher has discussed all three research questions one by one.

1. What are English teachers' apprehensions about SNC Textbook content at the Primary level?

The majority of instructors' perspectives indicated that the SNC English textbook is much superior to that of earlier curriculum. The explanation for this could be that the SNC has more effective tactics and activities that assisted students in the process of learning the English language. 58% of teachers agreed with the statement that the content quality of English in SNC is higher than that of the older one, while 39% of teachers did not agree with the statement. Additionally, new elements were incorporated into the teaching of the English language as a result of the one national curriculum. The new curriculum took into account the priorities and requirements of both the instructors and the students. In accordance with the figures, 53.2% of educators expressed contentment with the fact that SNC has brought about new aspects for the implementation of English language instruction. In addition, these modifications were necessary for our educational system, as we are unable to fulfill the requirements of the worldwide content framework if we do not make progress in the application of teaching approaches. The new curriculum made an effort to eliminate the educational discrimination that existed in Pakistan. It is a well-known fact that Pakistan is home to a wide variety of educational institutions, such as public schools, private schools (both elite and non-elite), and Madrasas. As a consequence of this, three separate systems are operating concurrently. Therefore, the majority of educators are of the opinion that SNC has been significant in reducing the educational disparities that exist. Regarding this matter, fifty-five percent of educators were content with the fact that the SNC can be regarded as an ideal curriculum that was adopted by the government..

2. Can SNC address the socio-economic differences in Pakistan?

In addition, the findings of this research showed that fifty percent of educators were content with the fact that SNC contributed to the reduction of the social stratification system. In a similar vein, 51.5% of educators stated that they concur that SNC has established an atmosphere of social equality. Students from higher social classes who attend private schools are more equipped for careers and professional life than students from lower social classes who attend public schools. Due to the fact that students attending government schools and Madrasas are confronted with a multitude of challenges and difficulties in their professional and educational lives, this circumstance ultimately results in a catastrophe for the economy. According to Dr. Maryam Chughtai, who is currently working for the government of Punjab and is a member of the New Curriculum Creation Committee, a Single national curriculum has been developed in order to eradicate educational and socio-economic disparities. As a consequence of this, it is anticipated that this Single national curriculum will ideally put an end to educational and socio-economic segregation and provide equal opportunity for all individuals concerned.

3. What are teachers' perceptions about the impact of SNC on students' progress?

The implementation of a Single National Curriculum has been shown to have a significant influence on the academic development of students, as indicated by the perspectives of

educators. Students were presented with numerous opportunities to improve their educational and social standing as a result of the new content contained within SNC. A significant focus has been placed on the total development of children through the implementation of the Single National Curriculum, which takes into consideration the most recent trends in education and learning. Many of the exercises that are included in the curriculum are able to be implemented in the classroom, which is one of the reasons why the majority of teachers gave favorable responses to the question of whether or not SNC helped students improve their ability to speak and understand the English language. In this regard, 51.6% of teachers agreed with the statement that SNC will enable students to be more efficient as a result of the addition of many activities to the English textbook, while 34.4% of teachers disagreed with the statement.

It is also shown that fifty percent of teachers agreed with the statement that through SNC, every school-going child received the same level of quality education, while thirty-four point three percent of instructors disagreed with the statement. As a result of the comments of the respondents, it is believed that the content of English has been prepared in accordance with the international content framework and trends, which has assisted the students in learning the English language in an efficient manner.

Student social life was greatly impacted by SNC. SNC sought to reduce Pakistani socioeconomic inequities. SNC was thought to promote social equality by 51.5% of instructors. SNC also reduced Pakistani societal polarization. Social status, family background, cast, language, etc. affect schoolchildren's education. SNC has concentrated on controlling social issues to improve education. SNC's social equality environment was praised by most responders. According to replies, 50% of instructors believe SNC will reduce socioeconomic stratification.

Conclusion

This research explored how SNC focuses on instructors' and students' achievement, content quality, and social impact of single national curriculum. The study collected teacher answers on four domains. The document's vision stressed that most instructors supported a national curriculum. Public school teachers agreed that the government's SNC strategy will produce a successful nation. If done properly, SNC can foster national unity, commitment, and love for their country. Teachers said SNC had improved English instruction. According to the responses, 53.2% of teachers were satisfied that SNC has expanded English language instruction.

The main goal of SNC was to equalize Pakistani pupils. SNC promoted an equitable attitude among students by providing equal education to all. It has introduced numerous methods to improve student learning. It is believed that 51.6% of teachers believe SNC made pupils more efficient by adding activities to English textbooks. SNC focuses on student communication, thus the new book includes numerous activities to improve it. 51.6 percent of teachers said SNC's pedagogical approach helped pupils develop their communication skills. SNC prioritized equal education for all pupils nationwide. Considering equality, 50% of instructors believed SNC provided equal education to all schoolchildren.

My findings resemble those (H. Irfan, 2021). In her work "Insightful perspective about the implementation of SNC", she concluded that SNC English language teaches pupils social, cultural, universal, and ethical principles about the country's multicultural and multilingual policy. The curriculum emphasizes lifelong learning and student development into human beings. SNC promotes literacy and skill in English through a holistic approach. SNC uses many electronic devices to improve pupils' writing and speaking.

In another study (M. Naqvi, 2021), she suggested that a uniform curriculum could help unite the next generation. Other issues the government must address are stated below: Higher dropout rates, fewer trained teachers, and unsafe transportation. The government must address these issues rather than relying on a few laws and policies to close educational gaps.

Using demographic, research method, sampling methodology, and analysis, this study included government school primary and high school instructors. Data was collected from 64 school teachers from 40 schools, 16 of which were primary and 24 high. Respondent data was collected using quantitative research design. He used purposeful sampling to acquire data from schools that were easily accessible. The researcher analyzed respondent data with SPSS. Excel graphics and SPSS tables were created. Researchers considered study ethics when collecting data, and respondents were guaranteed to remain anonymous. The respondents cooperated and helped fill out the questionnaire.

Recommendations

- The researcher proposes the following suggestions for future researchers: • This study was limited to instructors' perspectives on the utilization of the SNC English textbook for grade 5 students. The outcomes may differ if future studies opt to examine students' perspectives on the implementation of SNC.
- Nevertheless, the study was restricted to English textbooks specifically designed for students in the 5th grade. Future researchers have the opportunity to investigate the adoption of SNC (Standard Numerical Control) at the secondary and higher secondary levels.
- Differences in population or sampling variance can lead to varying results. The researchers have the ability to choose various places to investigate the topic.
- The researcher utilized a quantitative study design. The outcomes may vary from those of alternative research designs. Prospective researchers may opt for qualitative research. One can conduct interviews with the teachers to obtain their perspectives in a more articulate manner.

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