

Chapter 11

The Reality of Change: Teachers' Perceptions About Curriculum Reform in Pakistan



Farwa Hussain Shah

Abstract Changing an existing curriculum is a complex process, and its success depends on a number of factors, one of which is the significant contribution of teachers to the success or failure of any educational reform. To explore the importance of teachers in the process of change, this study investigates the currently in use undergraduate curriculum that was introduced by the Pakistani government in 2010. Whereas public schools in Pakistan are following a single national curriculum starting from the year 2021, at the time of this study, colleges and universities continue to adhere to the curriculum that was introduced in 2010 as part of a major nationwide curriculum reform. Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with eight English language lecturers employed in three public sector colleges in a major city. Findings revealed that, despite a positive attitude towards the concept of change, the lecturers who participated in this study considered the curriculum change project impractical due to a lack of planning for implementation. They also felt marginalized in the process of decision-making and found themselves unprepared to take up this challenge. Moreover, the participating lecturers expressed skepticism regarding the sustainability of the new curriculum owing to the political and economic instability at the time. The study thus highlights numerous critical issues such as the importance of the implementation stage of a new curriculum, and the often-ignored role of teachers in making decisions about educational reforms. It also confirms the significance of teacher education and teacher preparedness for the success of any curriculum change.

Keywords Curriculum change · Teachers' perceptions · Implementation · Higher education Pakistan

F. H. Shah (✉)
Durham Technical Community College, Durham, NC, USA

Introduction

In Pakistan, English permeates the social, professional, and educational life and is used as the official language in all legal and official documentation. However, English language education in Pakistan has often been censured for its poor quality and absence of much-needed curriculum reforms (Mehrunnisa, 2009; Siddiqui, 2007). English is taught as a compulsory subject at all levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. In public sector colleges (undergraduate) it was taught through a literature-based curriculum until 2010—an approach that was heavily criticized for not being able to develop the required competencies among undergraduate students. The teaching methodology was generally teacher-centered, textbook-directed, and focused on exam preparation.

In 2001, after more than 30 years of what has been described as stagnation and neglect (Jamil, 2009), reforms were introduced into the English language curricula at all levels. This process of comprehensive curriculum change is still in progress in different phases. In 2010, the higher education curriculum (grade 12 and onwards) underwent a complete change which had important implications for students, teachers, and educational institutions. For the English language curriculum, it meant moving away from the traditional literature-based curriculum towards a skill-based syllabus, and a shift from traditional teacher-centered teaching approaches towards more student-centered teaching methodologies. This not only necessitated changes in the examination system but also required financial support for the provision of resources and materials and for the training and development of teachers (Aziz et al., 2014).

This curriculum change naturally generated challenges for those responsible for its implementation—teachers or lecturers who are ‘a crucial factor in the ultimate success or failure of that innovation’ (Li, 1998: 698). In this study, the terms teachers and lecturers are used synonymously. The curriculum change that is explored in this study greatly affected the lecturers who participated in the study, as they were required to make a paradigm shift in their teaching methodology. This meant that they were required to re-assess their beliefs and practices about learning and teaching (Adey & Hewitt, 2004), creating a situation that necessitated an exploration and understanding of the perceptions, views, and feelings of lecturers teaching in public sector institutions.

This study thus aims at investigating Pakistani lecturers’ perceptions about the nature of the curriculum change implemented, its implementation process, their role in decision-making pertaining to this reform, and their preparedness for the change.

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Curriculum

Curriculum is defined as 'a plan for action that guides instruction' (Zais, 1976: 38). It is a set of intended or structured learning outcomes (Johnson, 1967 is cited in Giroux et al., 1981: 72) that guide a course of study. Post-modernist researchers (Pinar, 2008; Slattery, 2013) consider it as a process of decision-making about the needs, goals, objectives, content areas, teaching methods, and the evaluation of the whole process. Mckernan (2008: 7) perceives the curriculum as something 'creative, unpredictable in its itinerary and path of growth: moral, intellectual, spiritual and constructive'. This constructivist point of view presents the curriculum as a dynamic, complex, and creative process in which teachers and learners are active participants in creating knowledge and understanding it as a construct for social interaction with others (Levine, 2002).

Curriculum Change

Curriculum change implies 'alterations from existing practice to some new or revised practice (involving materials, teaching and beliefs) in order to achieve certain desired students' learning outcomes' (Fullan & Park, 1981: 10). Crookes et al. (1994) believe that innovation in a second language teaching program is generally an informed change that is brought about by direct experience, research findings, or other means. It results in the adaptation of pedagogic practices so that instruction is better able to promote second or foreign language learning.

Curriculum change is perceived to be dictated by the shifting patterns in the social-political, economic, and technological configuration of a society. As times change, a society's vision of itself is affected and transformed by the occurrences around it. This situation also has an influence on what constitutes knowledge (Frank & Gabler, 2006). This makes it imperative for the higher education system to become responsive and relevant to the new needs of the society (Beck & Young, 2005; Castells, 2001) and to ensure that the changes taking place are integrated into the curriculum. Curriculum change is then based on the rationale that there exists a disparity between the requirements of the society and the education system. When the existing educational methods, content, and structures fail to respond to the new visions of the society, a change in curriculum is indispensable.

In the last two decades, these changes have increasingly been influenced by globalization in terms of economic, technological, as well as social and environmental dimensions. Local boundaries have become vague and educational boundaries have been pushed aside (Hargreaves, 1989). The world has become a global village and industrialized countries at the center of progress as well as those in the periphery are all affected by this change (Al'Abri, 2011). With this increasing awareness of

interdependence among cultures, economies, and technologies, there is a dire need for societies to transform their education systems in order to keep up with the rest of the world (Muller, 2000). This places immense pressure on educational institutions to transform their curricula in accordance with the needs of the age.

The problems of educational quality and relevance are considered to be best addressed by changes in the curriculum and its delivery rather than by a simple increase in public investments or expenditures on education (Nanzhao, 2006). Moreover, ongoing changes require that at all educational levels the curriculum is continuously revised and updated (*ibid*) with the main aim being to improve learning (Bondi & Wiles, 1998). With changes in the educational structure, English language education is also faced with change implementation issues. These are more apparent in non-native English speaking (NNEST) countries, which have brought about a number of curriculum changes at different levels and of various degrees. China implemented a new curriculum across all levels in 2003–04. Japan's new curriculum, introduced in 1998, was implemented in 2002. In Pakistan too, in 2010 after a period of more than three decades, the English language curriculum went through large-scale changes across all levels including the undergraduate level of university education. This change has had significant effects on the educational system of the country.

The process of curriculum change involves three stages: initiation, implementation, and routinization (institutionalization) (Fullan, 2001, 2007; Waugh & Godfrey, 1995). The importance of a successful implementation phase of change can never be over-emphasized as this is the stage where issues such as human resistance and understanding of the policy rationale arise. As Verspoor (1989) argues that for the institutionalization of change within an educational setting, successful implementation is a pre-requisite. This is especially significant since implementation focuses on the nature and extent of actual practice as well as the factors and processes that influence the successful achievement of change (Fullan, 1992). Broadly speaking, implementation also entails the process of engaging with and incorporating the latest ideas, programs, activities, structures, and policies that are new to the people involved.

Consequently, it is at the implementation stage that the nature of change is most visible along with the process by which people accommodate themselves and their practices. It can be seen as a separate phase beyond the documented and verbal declarations because it concerns the actual application of innovation by people. The literature on educational change leading to reform and innovation (Fullan, 2007; Verspoor, 1989) continually highlights the significance of the implementation process.

Successful implementation is equally focused on the 'what' and 'how' of the desired educational change. Well-designed curricula with laudable aims might fail to achieve their objectives if the implementation process is ineffective (Fullan, 1991; Higgins, 2004; O'Sullivan, 2002). Often the focus is exclusively on the policy formulation stage, i.e., which results in rushing through the implementation phase in order to get to the routinization phase (Rogan & Aldous, 2005). In reference to curriculum changes in Australia and the USA, Porter (1980: 75) verifies this stating that 'the people concerned with creating policy and enacting the relevant legislation seldom look down the track to the implementation stage'.

Compatibility between the curriculum change and the practical realities at the social and classroom levels is vital for successful implementation. Many non-English-speaking countries in the recent past have endeavored to change their English language curricula. However, these projects have been increasingly mismatched to the ground realities (Phillipson, 1992). Wedell (2003) in discussing the language curriculum changes in Japan refers to Pennycook (1989), who stresses the failure of approaches to language learning and teaching that are adopted without considering the classroom realities and educational cultures into which they are to be introduced. Thus, no matter how ideal the curriculum is, if it does not match the educational culture, learner needs, teacher beliefs, and pedagogical realities of the context it is bound to be resisted and is likely to fail.

In addition to the factors discussed, the role of stakeholders is critical in the success of the change. These include teachers, teachers' associations, school administration, school boards, parents, as well as community leaders, business leaders, political leaders, and taxpayers in general (Schlechty & Bob, 1991). The involvement and engagement of teachers in implementing and managing change is imperative as they transform a specified curriculum into practical reality in classrooms. Dembélé and Lefoka (2007) highlight that the gap between policy and implementation will continue to exist unless adequate attention is given to teachers as they are best aware of learners' needs, and therefore should have the strongest say in curriculum decisions (Webb, 2002). Including teachers in decisions associated with curriculum change guarantees enthusiasm. At the same time, it is also important to upgrade their competencies and skills to enable them to execute the expected change which might otherwise result in failure (Gruba et al., 2004).

The literature on curriculum development and change voices the importance of teachers' roles in curriculum implementation. Sieburth (1992: 191) states that, 'effective and innovative practices are those that promote teacher directed curriculum change and management'. Similarly, researchers such as Bernstein (1974), Elliot (1994), Lieberman (1997), and Markee (1997) highlight the need for teachers' active participation in curriculum change. Finch (1981) believes that teachers' active involvement in decision-making has comparatively increased; however, this involvement is still not as much as it should be. The policy makers are not teachers and changes are imposed from the outside (Barrow, 1984; Richards, 2003 as cited in Troudi & Alwan, 2010). Apple (1995: 38) reveals that teachers in the USA have been largely disempowered and do not have a role in the field of public curriculum development. In Pakistan, the situation is even more disempowering as curriculum development is a prerogative of the Ministry of Education and is carried out at the centralized level. As Jamil (2009) reveals, curriculum changes are politically instigated, and their continuation greatly depends on the political conditions in the country. This is what Barrow (1984) refers to as a top-down approach to curriculum change with teachers being expected to conform to the external policy makers' decisions.

In the situations described here, teachers are not prepared for change especially when importance is given to materials development and the achievement of the objectives leaving the real players neglected (Olson, 1977). To educate teachers about the concept of curriculum development and to keep them engaged in the

process, Olson (1977: 63) calls for the adaptive approach in teacher education which 'seeks to provide teachers with conceptual tools that enable them to exercise choice effectively'. It is believed that such approaches are helpful in increasing teachers' awareness of their situation and in enhancing their intellectual functioning.

Furthermore, successful change requires needs analysis and situation analysis. Teachers' involvement at this stage is quite significant. According to Qureshi (2007: 167), 'It is clear that the curriculum in whatever way it may be designed must be consistent with the comprehension of the student to benefit by it'. If students are unprepared to benefit from the change, then educational reform will be ineffective. Hence, teachers being aware of their students' level and situation, are the best source of information as well as the best agents of change implementation. They can highlight students' needs, prepare their learners for change, and can eventually help make the reforms efficacious.

This clearly implies that the opinions, perceptions, and beliefs of teachers are crucial in implementing curriculum change. To the best of my knowledge, there are few studies on curriculum change and teachers' perceptions in the field of TESOL (Troudi & Alwan, 2010). Defeng (1998) in an exploration of Korean English language teachers' perceptions about introducing curriculum changes identifies that teachers' understanding of the curriculum innovation and change is central to its success. For change to be effective, it has to be gradually introduced with due importance being given to the ideas and perceptions of the teachers, who should also be properly prepared and educated in order to ensure successful implementation.

Kennedy and Kennedy (1996), who explored the attitudes of teachers in a change implementation project in Hong Kong, believe that part of the complexity of curriculum change is the attitude and role of the teachers. Despite being experts in their field, they are forced to follow the wishes of parents and policy makers. McGrail (2005) identifies a range of psychological effects of change on teachers' self-perception when change is imposed without asking for their opinions or analyzing their needs. Burns (1995) in exploring teachers' perceptions on curriculum development highlights the differences between their beliefs and practices. She emphasizes the need for teacher participation in curriculum development stating that it should be a gradual process and should not be implemented 'piecemeal' (Ewell, 1997). Troudi and Alwan (2010) in their exploration of secondary school English language teachers' feelings about curriculum change in the United Arab Emirates discovered that the initial feelings of being marginalized gradually diminished as teachers' understanding of the new curriculum increased. The study strongly recommends teacher participation in curriculum change and decision-making.

Context of the Study

In Pakistan there is little published research on curriculum reform. While a few scholarly works do exist in the form of opinions about the historical and political mishandling of the education system in Pakistan (Jamil, 2009; Nayyar & Salim, 2004),

there is, however, no systematic research about the higher educational curriculum change implemented in 2010. There is also no recorded information available on the feelings or perceptions of lecturers involved in this process, nor any insight into the challenges that they have experienced. This lack of information or research prompted me to investigate the role of lecturers who were stakeholders in implementing the curriculum reform and I thus embarked on this study with a view to contributing to the knowledge base in the Pakistani context.

Methodology

The interpretive paradigm was adopted to capture the diversity of human experience, which, 'begins with individuals and sets out to understand and interpret their experiences of a particular phenomenon' (Cohen et al., 2000: 23). Knowledge in this paradigm transpires from the individuals' interpretation of the world around them in particular situations, thus emphasizing the importance of understanding human experiences from their own perspectives. Employing a qualitative research methodology facilitated my understanding of the subjective world of human experience and to gain a deeper insight into my research questions.

Participants

Eight English language teachers/lecturers (6 females and 2 males) were selected on a voluntary basis from three public sector degree colleges in a major city. Three of these participants were holders of masters' degrees in TESOL/TEFL/English literature. Two were enrolled in M.Phil. programs at the time of participating in this study. All of them had the experience of teaching the old as well as the new curriculum.

I conducted semi-structured interviews to allow participants the opportunity to express their perceptions freely. This helped me identify themes in the information shared and subsequently resulted in the collection of rich data (Kvale, 2007; Radnor, 2001). Semi-structured interviews also encouraged participants to express their feelings, attitudes, expectations, and insights without losing focus.

Data Analysis

Following qualitative research procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the naturally occurring patterns in data were allowed to emerge in an inductive manner (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 is cited in Gan et al., 2004). A 'qualitative content analysis of the raw data was carried out because it is seen as helpful in answering the why questions and analyzing perceptions' (Sage Encyclopedia, 2008:

120). The emergent patterns in the data were analyzed and perceptions related to the research aims were highlighted. These were then comprehensively discussed to provide an exhaustive description of the phenomena. Some of the emergent findings substantiate findings from previous studies, while others refute the scant amount of past research that exists.

Lecturers' Perceptions

In this section, the findings that highlight lecturers' perceptions about the curriculum change in higher education in Pakistan are discussed.

The Necessity of Change

The idea of curriculum changes and communicative language teaching was received positively as a much-desired initiative in higher education. Participants in my research believed that a skills-focused curriculum would improve students' general language proficiency and their overall academic ability. This could bring Pakistan's higher education system at par with the international level. These findings highlight that lecturers in the researched context understood the need for change in their setting because the current curriculum was dated, rigid, limited in scope, lacked innovation, and encouraged rote learning. The results also indicate that most of the English language lecturers in this study were quite progressive and believed in an active educational environment. They were interested in continuous professional development aligned to the requirements of the changing international scenario. This shows the 2010 curriculum change in a positive light as it seems to have driven the teachers/lecturers to become active in their own development. Interestingly, these findings contrast with those of Konings et al. (2007) and Choi (2008), who in their studies about school reforms in the Netherlands and Korea respectively discovered that teachers perceived the curriculum change negatively because they did not believe in the need for communicative language teaching reforms.

Practicality of Change

While they appreciated the concept of change, the lecturers who participated in my study considered the new curriculum impractical and unrealistic as they felt that the pedagogical and logistic limitations were disregarded. They criticized the absence of a formal needs analysis before implementing a radical change and referred to it as 'a cosmetic covering', which would remain unrealistic unless the 'grass root' issues were resolved. This draws attention to the fact that for a curriculum change to be successful, those implementing it must consider the pedagogical realities of that context and society, otherwise, the change is bound to create problems at the time of

implementation. These findings echo the findings from similar studies conducted by Orafi (2013) in Libya and Nunan (2003) in the Asia Pacific region. They conclude that curricular changes and educational reforms which are not grounded in reality and lack consideration for teachers, social realities, and the cost involved are likely to result in failure.

The findings from this study clearly reveal that in making decisions about implementing a curriculum reform, the socio-economic and pedagogical realities of the country, and the background of the students as well as the constraints they experienced were not taken into consideration. The lecturers who participated in my study believed that the decision-makers had little or no experience and understanding of the needs, lacks, and wants of the public sector colleges. They, therefore, took a limited perspective of the situation and based major reforms on the much higher-level students enrolled in elite universities. This was perceived to have resulted in deteriorating the educational standards rather than improving them over the period that these changes were implemented. Part of the problem could be put down to the failure of decision-makers to carry out a needs assessment. Ali and Baig (2012) in their study on curriculum change in medical colleges in Pakistan discovered that the program was unsuccessful because it was imposed by the World Health Organization without taking into account the national needs of the context. Shamim (2011) refers to Brock-Utne (2007) in emphasizing that ideas without any indigenous needs analysis can never be successful in solving the language education issues in any country. Thus, any externally imposed plans that do not consider the needs of the individuals in the context in question, the society, and the organizations that are directly to be impacted upon by those plans can seldom result in effective educational reforms.

Role of Lecturers in the Change Process

The lecturers in my study indicated strong feelings about the change. They believed that it was politically instigated as only bureaucrats, politicians, and representatives from the elite institutions were involved in decision-making. The curriculum change, they believed, was imposed on public college lecturers without any consideration of their views and situation.

This highlights the significant yet ineffective top-down approach towards curriculum change. Weber (2008) in an analysis of curriculum change in South Africa found similar results and emphasizes that for change proposals to become reality, even if they emanate from powerful sources such as the state, the teachers must be directly involved so that they can develop ownership. Sieburth (1992: 191) too, in a review of curriculum change in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea and Israel, discovered that, 'effective and innovative practices are those that promote teacher directed curriculum change and management'. Spillane et al. (2002) add that when teachers do not participate in planning the curriculum change, it results in inappropriate classroom implementation as they lack the knowledge, understanding, and skills required for the successful execution of reforms.

It is no exaggeration to state that participants in this study felt strongly marginalized and considered themselves passive recipients of the orders of the powerful curriculum change planners. Findings thus highlight that for lasting and successful curriculum change teachers should not be treated as technicians merely executing orders. They should instead be included in the decision-making process as professional decision-makers so that they can own the curriculum.

Readiness of the Systems for the Change

Participants in this study felt that the curriculum change in their context was hurriedly implemented without proper planning or groundwork. As one participant states, *'it's not about changing books and increasing the years (required to study). Everything is different...the examination system, the way of teaching'*.

They also perceived the universities affiliating with the curriculum change to be highly inefficient and ill-equipped for this change. They were precipitously compelled to affiliate and manage three to four colleges with a large population. As the systems were not prepared, it led to confusion and inadequacy among teachers and students. Participants argued that the success of any educational change depends on how ready its systems, institutions, and stakeholders are, and when the system itself is unprepared for change, the standards fail to rise.

The lecturers in this research did not resist but they seemed dissatisfied for many reasons, which have been discussed in this study. These findings raise an important issue, that if an educational reform has to show lasting positive results to fulfill the purpose for which it is introduced, then there should be long-term planning based on a formal needs and situation analysis. Policies and changes implemented in haste without any groundwork are likely to result in inefficiency and wastefulness of both human and economic resources.

Student Readiness for Change

Participants in my study believed that public college students, who hailed from backgrounds of Urdu medium instruction, were ill-prepared for a curriculum reform as they lacked adequate English language skills that were required to be able to meet the demands of the new curriculum. Previous research also shows that the English language proficiency level of undergraduate learners in Pakistani public colleges is generally quite low (Malik, 1996; Siddiqui, 2007). Mansoor (2005), in her nationwide research of public and private higher education institutes, found that students in public sector colleges faced severe difficulties in English language. This low language proficiency negatively affects curriculum change implementation. Li (2002) reported similar effects of curriculum reform on students with low English proficiency in Hong Kong. Karavas-Doukas (1995) also discovered that teachers of Greek students with low proficiency in English found it challenging to implement communicative language teaching.

Hence, it is clear that this complex issue calls into question, not only the feasibility of curriculum change but also the whole process of curriculum planning and implementation. The discord between curriculum aims and students' level of English language proficiency might be due to the curriculum designers' ignorance of the level of learners. In this case, the very basis of change becomes questionable implying whether there was an underlying political agenda that drove the intended change. It also raises concerns about whether teachers themselves are over comfortable with the existing curriculum and may have found it difficult to cope with the new one, which is why curriculum planners are being blamed for being inconsiderate. There could be multiple reasons for this, including contextual limitations, and this warrants deeper research into the origins as well as the implementation of the curriculum reform.

There is additional complexity in the fact that despite the starkly different English language proficiency levels of the public sector colleges and elite private colleges, all students are required to follow the same curriculum. This disparity between Urdu and English medium educated students creates complications in the implementation of expected changes for both students as well as teachers. Mansoor (2004) has also pointed out the diversity of educational backgrounds that typically characterize Pakistani students at the university level. Wang (2008) who found similar differences in the level of students in China also identified similar negative effects on the curriculum implementation in Chinese institutions. Her teacher participants from average Chinese universities believed that teachers in the top universities had an advantage over them due to the higher proficiency students.

The concerns of participants in this study appeared justified owing to the situation in Pakistan where elite universities plan and draft courses. These courses are then implemented in their universities and the affiliated colleges where the proficiency levels of students are quite different. Elite universities are thus seen as insensitive to these differences because of which public sector students and teachers tend to suffer.

Teacher Readiness for the Change

Teacher preparedness also surfaced as a strong concern among participants in my study. Findings confirmed that if teachers lack the required skills, expertise, and information, they would be less confident to put the change successfully into practice. Cohen and Hills (2001) also note this issue and state that when teachers are expected to embrace new instructional approaches without sufficient training and information about the importance of change, it often results in inadequate adoption of the curriculum mandate, which in turn affects its practical success. Moreover, the absence of such provision might result in anxiety and thus the teaching and learning process suffers. The ultimate victims are the students.

Participants in my study found themselves unprepared for the change. They were expected to change their teaching methodology, introduce new and the latest techniques, and were supposed to work in a semester system that they were unfamiliar with. These circumstances exposed them to undue stress, and they were worried

about the impact of the situation on their students. All participants were of the view that they should have been properly trained before the implementation of change.

Prospects of Sustainability

An important perception that surfaced was the participating lecturers' skepticism about the viability of a major curriculum change within the constraints caused by political instability in the country. They felt that the social and financial instability of the country along with the lack of planning might bring the curriculum change initiative to a sudden end, a fate similar to many other initiatives taken by governments in the past. They cited this in view of the fact that in Pakistan it is customary for succeeding governments to ensure that any ambitious educational programs launched by preceding governments are disrupted or made redundant. It was feared that the lecturers' hard work might go to waste if a new government suddenly brainstormed another change.

There was also mention of financial constraints caused by political instability which could negatively affect the success of the reform and could even lead to its suspension altogether. Undoubtedly, the political scenario in Pakistan is quite volatile and creates uncertainties about governmental policies. Many governments in the past 68 years have been overthrown in an untimely manner and a number of reforms initiated by them have been reversed by their successors. Aly (2007: 2) states that rather than continuing the policies for the larger interest of the people, the government in power acts on what he calls, 'dominant political paradigm and compulsions of the day'. Jamil (2009) has a similar opinion that curriculum changes are politically instigated, and their continuation is greatly dependent on the political conditions in the country. Often as a result of the continuous political turmoil and successive changes in the top-most levels of government offices, reform policies are generally hurriedly imposed without having clear and well-researched implementation plans. Therefore, ordinances rarely complete the period necessary to bring the expected results. Ali (2006: 4) verifies that the educational policies, plans, and programs of 1970, 1972, 1979, and 1992 all failed to varying degrees to fully achieve their desired objectives. Thus, it seems quite understandable that there is always a possibility in the minds of the lecturers that things might be terminated suddenly, and this feeling of uncertainty is quite harmful to teacher motivation and enthusiasm. However, the curriculum change explored in this study is almost in the tenth year of its implementation, and despite the change in government, so far there are no signs of any plans to revoke the curriculum. Therefore, the fear of unsustainability in the present situation so far seems to be allayed and it is hoped that this change will stay.

Additional interesting details that emerged in this study include participants regarding the new curriculum as theoretically impressive yet overly ambitious and impractical due to a lack of planning and resources and the absence of proper teacher training. The lecturers, perceiving the change as unfeasible in their context, stressed the necessity of needs analysis. They also found themselves quite unprepared to take up the challenge.

This study thus highlights several critical issues related to curriculum change. It stresses the importance of the implementation stage of a new curriculum and the significance of teachers' role in the decision-making process about educational change and reform. It also emphasizes the value of teacher education and teacher preparedness for the success of any curriculum change. Realizing the fact that such a major curriculum change would be highly consequential for the higher education system of Pakistan, and would have far-reaching effects on it, I believe that this reform and its impact need to be investigated further on a larger scale. There is also a need for more research on the classroom implementation of change and the factors that affect teachers' implementation of these reforms. It is hoped that these issues will be examined at length in a future research study.

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Farwa Hussain Shah has a doctorate degree in Education (EdD TESOL) from the University of Exeter, U.K. She also has an MA in TEFL with Applied Linguistics from the U.K., and an MA in English Literature from Pakistan. She is an accomplished professional with vast experience of working in diverse cultures and with a variety of learners from different backgrounds. Farwa's expertise is in TEFL, EAP, qualitative research, curriculum innovation and change, education management, teacher education, and mentoring. Her research interests include curriculum reform and change implementation, teacher development, teaching methodologies, and affective factors in SLA.