

Exploring the Teacher-Student Relationship in Overcrowded Classrooms at Secondary Level in District Quetta

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to explore and investigate the teacher – Student relationship in overcrowded classrooms at secondary level in district Quetta. This research study was quantitative in nature and survey based. A closed ended questionnaire was administered. Six (06) schools were selected. Total one hundred and twelve (112) both male and female teachers (18 teachers from each school) were selected as a sample using random sampling technique. The results of this study showed that most of the classrooms were overcrowded due to shortage of teaching staff and scarcity of building infrastructure and had a negative impact on teaching learning activities badly. Most of the teachers confront many problems that were associated with overcrowding in terms of noise making, lack of individual interaction, space shortage among learners and rows, inadequate learning resources, poor instructional activities and evaluation and assessment problems that not only disturbed the teaching learning process thoroughly but also made the teachers emotionally and psychologically perturb. At last, the study also suggested ways to cope with the said problems. As government should allocate adequate financial budget to education department so as to enhance building infrastructure and learning materials. Government should recruit

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additional teaching staff and also carry out the training programs for teachers and administrators to reinforce their capabilities to deal with overcrowding flawlessly.

Keywords: overcrowded classrooms, teaching-learning process, discipline issues, individual attention, evaluation and assessment, teacher-student interaction, classroom management.

INTRODUCTION

Large size of classrooms had been the problematic factor faced by the components of the educational process. Such as teachers, students, parents and school administration. This phenomenon affects the entire teaching learning process that creates the physical and instructional problems for the teachers who feel unease while managing the class and to pay an individual attention to every child in overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowding in the classroom can hinder the progress of classroom instruction. A teacher's fundamental goal in the classroom, is to treat each and every student with respect so as to govern his activities and to improve his true character. In addition, he must provide him with the best possible ways to grow his talents, capabilities, and potential outcomes. In large classes, nevertheless, instructors may devote the significant amounts of time seeking students' attention or focusing on classroom organizational processes to regulate the participants' exercises properly. Any instructor who is involved in the teaching and learning process within the classroom efficiently will find that instructing a huge crowd is a difficult assignment. Because the amount of pupils in an overcrowded classroom is large, teachers find it difficult to extend their teaching learning process in an effective manner in order to meet the teaching objectives. At the same time, in a massive crowd, the teacher is unable to provide adequate interaction among the students. This problem prevails not only across the country but it has become a universal problem. It has been observed that most of the government schools are overcrowded due to increasing population, scarcity of economic resources, lack of financial budget, no check and balance from the government officials, dearth of building infrastructure and poor policies in this regard.

Overcrowded classrooms produce a number of problems in teaching learning process. Different studies have been conducted in this concern. As according to the findings of Michael Loh Epri (2016), who conducted a research study

in some schools of Papua New Guinea. He explained the challenges that were being faced by both the teachers and students of the said schools. In addition, he explored that the policy of free education which was implemented in most of the schools resulted a huge enrolment of the students in schools. In past few years, it had been observed that most of the school administrations had ignored the infrastructure development, purchase of extra teaching-learning materials and additional staff recruitment to cope with the increasing enrolment. Due to huge enrolment, overcrowded classrooms has been formed to retrieve the deficiency of staff and classrooms. He observed the class size that ranged from 50 to 88 students. It was very difficult to move around the classroom easily for the teachers while teaching. Although, the standard range of the students in a class must be from 15 to 20 students to attain an effective learning environment. He further found that there were neither additional classrooms nor additional staff to address a large enrolment of the students. He also found the students dropped out of the schools and committed the absenteeism because of re-enrolling fee issues and faced various difficulties in learning as their teacher, due to additional tasks to do could not teach them as in typical learning atmosphere. Due to large classes, teachers were stressed. It was too difficult to mark a plethora of notebooks for the teachers.

Teaching in large classes affects the ability of teachers in time management. Imtiaz, (2014:251) and Mustafa et al, (2014:178) report that teachers have insufficient time for instruction, incorporated reading and writing tasks in large size classes due to attendance lists checking and managing the discipline. Consequently, teachers have to involve most of the tasks to do outside the classrooms in terms of evaluation, classroom assessment homework assignments, tests and examination papers. Furthermore, Imtiaz, (2014:251) as well as khumalo and Mji (2014) agreed that large classes may affect the physical health of the learners as they have contradiction to learning environment. Overcrowded classrooms are detrimental, in this regard if one learner has a spreadable infection, the other learners may easily be victimized of the existing infection. Similarly, during tests, learners need space between them otherwise they will copy from one another due to absence of space in overcrowding. As a result, the learners may easily be promoted to the next classes who depend on cheating. Thus they will lose the quality learning.

Chignons, (2013) studied that smaller classes are the sources of better learning for the students. Therefore, parents prefer smaller classes because

they know that their children will learn more than the classes of large size. If we compare small classes to large classes in this regard, the study of Cortes, Moussa and Weinstein, (2012:25) show that performance of the students depends on class size. Because large size classes have a number of problems in terms of misbehavior, lack of discipline and students' individual attention. The learners of small classes score much better than the learners of large classes. They further added that the learners' achievements are far better in small classes and they did not find any confusion among the students in one hand, but on the other hand, the learners in large classes felt anxiety. Learners can participate easily in group work and in other activities in small classes, and in contrast, the learners of large classes score less due to lack of discipline. In an upsetting environment, it is too difficult for the teachers while managing the class. They further found that in large classes if one learner does misconduct, that almost affect the entire class.

Research Problem

It is very difficult to enumerate problems concerning the overcrowded classrooms. However, there are many problems in common sense, they seem meager in nature but hinder the entire teaching-learning process defectively. Actually, there are undeniable barriers that are associated to the all overcrowded classrooms and cannot be ignored at any stage. Such problems affect the performance of teachers, students and not only this, but also affect the entire educational system. The government of Baluchistan aims to attain the quality education across the province and in this regard, increases the budget to enhance the building infrastructure, recruits the additional teaching staff to deal with the problems of overcrowded classrooms.

Justification/Significance of the Study

This is an undeniable fact that the issue of overcrowding prevails countywide. Moreover, it exists in all over the world that affects not only the teachers and students but it also has an impact on the entire educational process. This study will seek to examine the challenges faced by the teachers and students in overcrowded class rooms during the teaching-learning process and the study will also find the practicable steps to tackle the issues of such overcrowded classrooms in order to increase the effective teaching- learning capabilities after determining the perceptions of both teachers and students on this matter. Secondly, after conducting this study, it will serve all the stake holders in order to have a real picture of the situation and thirdly, the study

will be furnished with appropriate recommendations and suggestions that may equip the new strategies for the teachers with better knowledge and may be included as the part of new curriculum.

Research Objective:

This study infers the following research objective:

1. To investigate the challenges faced by the teachers in overcrowded class rooms at secondary level in District Quetta.

Research Question:

This dissertation bases on the following research question:

- What are the teachers' problems regarding maintaining the discipline in overcrowded classrooms in district Quetta?

Research Methodology

Research Design

In order to discover the experiences of the teachers regarding the teacher-student relationship in crowded classrooms, the study was carried out using the quantitative method of research. It was equipped with a survey design to describe and analyze the information collected by means of a closed ended questionnaire tool. The researcher was able to evaluate the challenges that seriously undermine the learning environment in classrooms that are overcrowded owing to the data gathered through the questionnaire.

Population

The selection of population was based on all male and female teachers of public secondary schools of district Quetta. Six (06) both boys and girls' schools were selected among all the schools.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researcher adopted the random sampling technique for the selection of teachers of public schools (boys and girls) of Quetta city as per requirement as a sample selection of almost one hundred and twelve (112) teachers for the conduction of this research study. For this purpose, from all the secondary public schools, total six (06) schools three (03) each (boys and girls) were selected and from each school almost eighteen (18) teachers (male and female) were selected separately. The researcher had chosen the public schools of Quetta city as it is the capital of Balochistan and because of proximity to the researcher.

Data Collection Tool

The data of this research study was collected via survey based questionnaire. The questionnaire was incorporated by two parts. The first one, the demographic information of the teachers (i.e. gender, age, designation, qualification, professional qualification, teaching experience etc.), and the second part comprised 20 statements, that were associated with 5-point likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree), in order to investigate the teachers' adversities while teaching in large classes. For the validity and appropriateness of the questionnaire and its items, it was checked and reviewed by the experts. In addition, the grammatical and wording texture was also overviewed by the language expert.

Data Collection Procedure

For the data collection from the schools of secondary level (both boys and girls) of district Quetta, the researcher visited himself to each of the randomly selected schools on the basis of random sampling technique. As early mentioned above, a closed ended questionnaire was administered for the teachers. The researcher used random sampling method by distributing questionnaires among 112 both male and female teachers of respective schools. To maintain the authenticity of the data, the researcher visited the said schools and collected the data by himself. After collecting the data, it was refined and analyzed according to the standardized procedure.

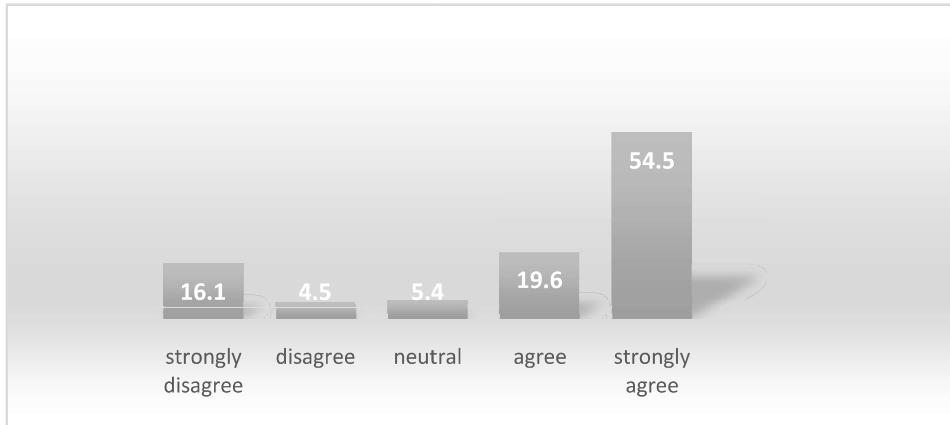
Data analysis

After collection of the data from girls and boys' schools at secondary level of district Quetta through a closed ended questionnaire, it was thus analyzed and refined by using the descriptive and inferential statistics. An SPSS tool was used in order to have better results.

Frequency and percentage of the teachers' opinions for the statement, **“Overcrowding increases classroom discipline issues”**.

| Likert scale | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| strongly disagree | 18 | 16.1 | 16.1 |
| disagree | 5 | 4.5 | 20.5 |
| neutral | 6 | 5.4 | 25.9 |

| | | | |
|----------------|-----|-------|-------|
| agree | 22 | 19.6 | 45.5 |
| strongly agree | 61 | 54.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 112 | 100.0 | |



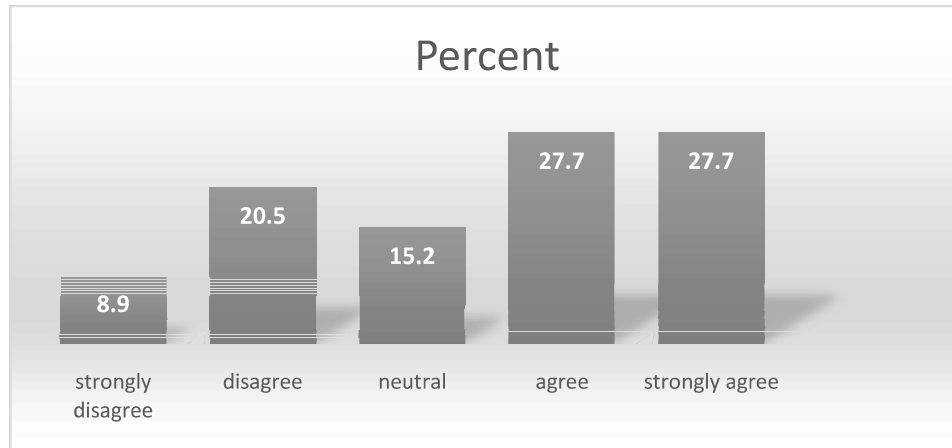
The above table depicts the perceptions of the teachers regarding the statement that overcrowding is the cause of classroom discipline issues. Out of the total 112 participants 18 (16.1 %) were strongly disagree, 5 (4.5 %) were disagree while 6 (5.4 %) were neutral. On the other hand, 22 (19.6 %) were agree and a highest number 61 (54.5 %) of the participants were strongly agree to the statement.

Frequency and percentage of the teachers for the statement,

“A huge strength in a class makes you emotionally and psychologically disturb”.

| Likert scale | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| strongly disagree | 10 | 8.9 | 8.9 |
| disagree | 23 | 20.5 | 29.5 |
| neutral | 17 | 15.2 | 44.6 |
| agree | 31 | 27.7 | 72.3 |
| strongly agree | 31 | 27.7 | 100.0 |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-------|
| Total | 112 | 100.0 |
|-------|-----|-------|



The given table portrays the responses of the teachers for the statement that they can be psychologically and emotionally disturb while teaching to an extraordinary massive class. 10 (8.9 %) were strongly disagree, 23 (20.5 %) were disagree while 17 (15.2 %) were neutral. On the other hand, 31 (27.7 %) were agree and 31 (27.7 %) were strongly agree to the statement.

Discussion

As per findings, the results of the study show that when the class is overcrowded, teachers have to encounter a number of problems in terms of making the students disciplined, and curbing them from noise making as well as to make them controlled when the instructional activities take place. It is mandatory for teachers to avoid themselves being emotionally and psychologically disturbed due to rampant noise by adopting appropriate instructional strategies and to create a conducive learning environment for the learners. If the class is noisy, those students they are not interested in studies, they will disturb the other learners and it would be difficult for the teachers to control them and solve their problems.

These findings are, in this concern, in the line with the previous studies. As according to Hayes (1997), he states that he is not certain if his pupils fully understand what he has taught them. Due to the large number of pupils, it is challenging to keep them under control, and he is unsure of what they have learnt. Some students might comprehend, while others might not, as well as

the teacher might not understand what to do. In other relevant research study, Kunkam et al. (2007), argue that the clear, fundamental standards of behaviour that learners perceive should indeed be expressed, for instance that they should work silently, they are allowed to speak, but not aloud, and that learners who have completed the lesson's duties may read a book to pass the time.

Teachers reported that in constant noise, their voice cannot easily be heard by the learners especially for those students who sit in back zone. Furthermore, they viewed that in large classes, they become dishearten because of extraordinary noise. In the light of their perceptions, it is of course and undeniable fact that with disruptive environment and undisciplined classroom the teacher cannot achieve the targeted goals in terms of productive teaching and learning activities. The findings were in the line with the submission of Mustafa et al. (2014) and Imtiaz (2014), opine that Classroom management in general and classroom discipline in particular are hindered by having a lot of students in one space. Bigger classrooms can have an adverse effect on classroom discipline since they are noisier and more likely to involve bullying, overcrowding, and assaulting. Such issues cannot be handled in the classroom by a single instructor. Since they spend a significant portion of the session attempting to regulate the students, teachers waste crucial instructional time in these situations. Less time remains for effective instruction.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research study was to investigate the challenges faced by the teachers and students while the teaching learning process takes place in overcrowded classrooms in public secondary schools of district Quetta. After findings of this research study, it is concluded that most of the schools of district Quetta were overpopulated and contained overcrowded classrooms. Each of the classes ranged almost between 60 to 70 students and somewhere they were above 70 students. Both the teachers and students face many problems. Majority of the teachers face discipline issues when they teach in overcrowded classrooms because class becomes undisciplined and out of control. Students make noise and disturb the other learners so that most of the time teachers try to make them silent rather than to keep the learning contents sustained. Due to rampant noise, teachers become psychologically disturbed and cannot achieve the targeted objectives.

Recommendations

Although overcrowding has a number of reasons behind it, yet keeping in view the above detailed findings of the study, some appropriate recommendations in this regard, are hereby stipulated to be well pondered over and thus to be implemented by the concerned stake holders (i.e. government, school administration, teachers, students, parents, other related organizations etc.) so as to deal with the aforementioned critical issue(s).

1. The shortage of teaching staff is the root cause of overcrowding therefore, wherever the stated problem exists, government should recruit the additional teachers at prior in order to cope with the said issue.
2. Scarcity of classrooms is another impairment towards overcrowding since government should increase the financial budget so as to extend the early available buildings for the sake of extra enrolments in the schools.
3. Government should train the teachers and make them equipped with new strategies and methodologies regarding assessment and evaluation in overcrowded classrooms.
4. Teachers should motivate and encourage the students to interact in class with their classmates and teachers as more as possible to develop their confidence level and learning skills.
5. Those schools that are overcrowded should be provided with multimedia facilities (i.e. laptops, projectors, micro phones, speakers etc.) in order to overcome the instructional problems and to obtain constructive learning.
6. For better communication in a class a teacher should constitute groups of students and should give them tasks to make them engaged for the maintenance of productive learning in a large class.
7. The focus of provincial institute of teachers' education's (PITE) ongoing professional development programs should be on improving teachers' understanding of instructional and classroom evaluation methods especially In overcrowded classrooms.
8. School administrators should set up a mentoring programme that connects up new and experienced teachers to share expertise on effective classroom management techniques.

Future Research

1. This research study has been conducted in secondary schools of Quetta. In future, it can also be carried out in primary schools to investigate the said problem.
2. This study is quantitative in nature that simply based on closed ended questionnaires but in future, qualitative study with open ended questionnaires and interviews could be employed to know the overcrowding phenomenon deeply.
3. The researcher conducted this study in Quetta district due to time and financial constraints that is needed to be done in all over the province.
4. The population of this study was all the teachers of government schools that can be conducted in all the private schools of Quetta to have a real picture of the prevailing issue.
5. In this study, the researcher had the perceptions of teachers and students regarding their problems in overcrowded classrooms. It is also needed to explore the hurdles of school administrators regarding the said problem.
6. This study was limited to know the miseries of teachers and students in overcrowded classrooms. However, it is mandatory to discover key factors that cause the overcrowded classrooms.
7. To know properly the impact of overcrowding on the entire learning outcome and classroom instructions, a comparative study between large and small classes may be conducted.

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