

Traditional Journal of Law and Social Sciences ISSN 2957-5753 (Print) 2957-5761 (Online) July-December 2024, Vol. 03, No. 02, [71 –83] Published: 31th December 2024 https://ojs.traditionaljournaloflaw.com/index.php/TJLSS

#### **RESEARCH PAPER**

# An Analysis of Teaching Methods at Undergraduate Level in Public Sector Colleges of KPK, Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

The present exploratory case study is an in-depth analysis of different teaching methods used at the undergraduate level in Government Postgraduate College Nowshera (GPGC NSR), representing the public sector colleges of KPK. The study examines both the teachers and students' perceptions about different teaching methods, and highlights challenges associated with the implementation of different teaching methods. A sample of seven respondents was selected through purposive sampling techniques from one department of the college within the Social Sciences faculty. For data collection, semi-structured interviews were used as research instruments. The data was manually transcribed, categorized, and summarized by using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that traditional lecture and discussion methods are widely used at this level. The study also explores various challenges including insufficient multimedia, projectors, inadequate library books, lack of professional teachers' training, language barriers, and shortage of funds. Recommendations include encouraging teachers to use mixed methods and innovative teaching methods. Initiation of collaborative activities among colleges and universities, organizing professional grooming trainings for teachers, offering language proficiency courses, allocation of funds for purchasing and provision of conducive environment. Establishing proper mechanism for assessment and promoting culture of students' feedback.

**Keywords:** Effective teaching methods, Undergraduate, Colleges, Public sector, Students, Teachers, Qualitative, Case study, Analysis, KPK, Pakistan.

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, it enables individuals to upgrade their lifestyles, enhance their intellectual capabilities, and equips them with modern techniques and innovative skills. Ultimately, education assists people in coping with real-life challenges and contributes to the economic uplift of a country. It is the gateway through which a person acquires structured knowledge, develops skills, and enlightens their mind. To impart knowledge, teachers use various strategies, instructions, or techniques in the classroom. All these approaches collectively constitute different teaching methodologies. According to Roger & Clayton (2019) with the help of these approaches' educators expedite the learning process of students. Every teaching methodology has its unique impact on learners (Cedefop, 2009).

Undergraduate education is the foundation of higher education, and it is a very important stage in the individual's development, because it equips them with the basic knowledge and skills required for succeeding in academic as well as in professional career. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the educators use effective teaching methods at this level. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) is in the northwest region of Pakistan; the population of the province is 35 million with 52% males and 48% females. The literacy rate of the province is 53%, making it the 3rd literate province in the country (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,2024). The total number of public sector colleges across the province is 359 including 30 postgraduate colleges. Government Postgraduate College Nowshera is situated in Nowshera Cantonment. The college was established in 1956 as an Inter college. In 1963 the college was upgraded to degree level, and later considering the importance of higher education, the college offering undergraduate education in various faculties including Arts & Humanities, Natural Sciences, Chemical & Life Sciences, and Social Sciences (Higher Education Department, KPK, 2024).

# Statement of the Problem

Undergraduate education provides a solid foundation for higher education, despite this there is limited research conducted on effective teaching methods, especially at the undergraduate level in public sector colleges. Teaching methodologies significantly influence the quality of education, this gap highlights the need for research into analyzing effective teaching methods at undergraduate level.

# **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To analyze the different teaching methods used at the undergraduate level.
- ii. To examine students' perceptions regarding various teaching methods.
- iii. To explore the factors interconnected with the effectiveness of different teaching methods at the undergraduate level.

# **Research Questions**

- i. What teaching methods are employed by teachers at the undergraduate level?
- ii. How do teachers' chosen teaching methods influence students' learning at the undergraduate level?
- iii. What are students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the different teaching methods employed at the undergraduate level?

# Limitations and Delimitations

Due to time and financial constraints this research study was delimited to only one department of the GPGC NSR. Therefore, the study focused solely on one department over a single

semester. Hence, the findings of the study may not be generally applicable to the other departments of the college or other educational institutes. Despite the researcher's efforts, the subjective nature of qualitative research may affect the reliability and validity of the study.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching is the art of transferring knowledge skillfully to the individuals, it is a dynamic process that requires a variety of techniques and approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners (Vietnam Teaching Jobs, 2024). By employing effective teaching methods, an educator can make the learning process enjoyable and beneficial for the learners. A good teacher possesses the capability of engaging his/her students in the classroom discussion by adopting innovative teaching methodologies (Indeed Career Guide, 2023). Ray & Sikdar (2023) stated that enhancement of quality of education is dependent on teaching methodologies. To face the global challenges teachers must employ students-centered and experience-based teaching methodologies. Teaching strategies can be divided into two main categories:

- i. Teacher -Centered (This method is also known as direct instruction)
- ii. Learner-Centered (This method is also known as an indirect method of learning)

An effective and good instructor can be defined as the one who is aware of the modern innovative teaching strategies and can mold himself/herself according to the needs of the modern changing world (Method of Teaching HEC Course Guide, 2012). Ruhland & Brewer (2001) stated that selection of effective teaching strategies helps in achieving student learning outcomes. It is a very wide term, and this cannot be limited to terms like academic achievement and knowledge of learners. The soft and technical skills also come under the umbrella of this broad phenomenon. The skills and knowledge of critical thinking and civic awareness are the main students learning outcomes. These skills bring positive changes in the intellectual and emotional growth of individuals and lead them towards a successful career

Constructivism Learning Theory: The constructivism learning theory is based on the active engagement of learners in the learning process and classroom activities. It emphasizes that knowledge is creative in nature and individuals create knowledge through experiences. The following are the main points of the theory:

Knowledge is Constructed: The learning process is initiated with basic knowledge. Prior knowledge acts as the building blocks of new knowledge. Learners create their knowledge and understanding, based on their previous knowledge.

Learning is a Social Activity: Interaction with people is a significant element of the knowledge construction process. Team work and collaborative activities lead to the advancement and flourishing of the education. Effective comprehension depends on dialogues, debates, peer work, and collaborative activities, without these interactive elements, one cannot achieve a better understanding.

Learning is an Active Process: Education is dynamic in nature; therefore, involvement of learners is mandatory. Besides curricular activities, co-curricular activities are also of great importance in knowledge construction process

Learning is Contextual: The learning process is dependent on evolving connections between learner's opinions and the previous knowledge they possess. Learning is a social phenomenon, and socialization boosts the knowledge retaining process. Likewise, the level of understanding and the learner's environment also greatly influence the learning process.

People Learn to Learn as They Learn: Throughout the learning process, learners acquire different skills and use them for developing and organizing, new knowledge and understanding. As the learning journey progresses, they improve these skills

Learning Exist in the Mind: The learning process is not merely dependent on practical experiences; rather it takes place within the realm of the mind. Although physical exertion plays a significant role in effective learning, the active engagement of learners in the classroom is fundamental for efficient learning.

Knowledge is Personal: Everyone has their own unique perception, skills, and competencies. These characteristic features make them distinguish from each other and shape the individual knowledge; thus, it is concluded that knowledge is customized or individualized.

Motivation is Key to Learning: Motivation is the key element of the learning process, because it plays a vital role in the overall learning process. For effective learning students need to provoke their prior knowledge and thoughts. A good teacher is one who understands the importance of motivation in the learning process. (Kurt, 2021).

Types of Teaching Methods: There are different types of teaching methods such as traditional teaching methods, interactive teaching methods, and constructivist teaching methods. The following are the common types of these teaching methodologies:

Lecture Method (Traditional Teaching Method): It is known as the oldest and most traditional method of teaching and is widely used at all levels including schools, colleges, and even universities. Throughout the world educators use this traditional method of teaching for delivering knowledge (Kapur, 2020). As this is a teacher-centered approach, the teacher plays an active role and spoon-feeds the learners by delivering the prepared lecture. Carpenter (2006) suggested that lecture methods are adaptive in nature, as it easily align with the strict time-table schedule, all types of subject courses, diverse learners and cognitions. It is a one-way medium for communicating information and sharing knowledge (Charlton, 2006). However, it can be effective, efficient and interesting by ensuring students active engagement in the class and aligning it to the principles of constructivism. There are both the pros and cons of lecture methods, and it is crucial for an educator to keep it in mind before adopting this teaching method.

Discussion Method (Interactive Teaching Method): Discussion method is also known as constructive learning process (Keshavarzi et al., 2016). It involves active participation of the learners in the classroom activities (Shamsudin et al., 2017)

Mckeachie & Svinicki (2006) suggested the use of discussion method at a higher education level in order to promote learning. However, Forrester & Jones (2003) explored that most of the educators did not realize the dynamic nature of this method. Yoder & Hochevar (2005) stated that discussion method is the most efficient and effective teaching method because it is based on team learning and student-led discussion. It helps the students in fostering their self-confidence and develop leadership qualities.

What is Discussion Method: In general, an oral or written activity of expressing different perspectives in a specific situation could be defined as a discussion (Abdulbaki et al., 2018). Brookfield & Preskill (2005) suggested that it is a genuine, energetic and unconventional effort of a group of two or more to share their perspectives by mutual participation in critique. During discussion, the participants get the critical and analytical understanding of the topic. In addition, it also develops and enhances the participants' self-condemnation, self-consciousness, self-realization and the ability to make informed decisions (Parker, 2003).

In the discussion method, many individuals are involved, rather than the lecture method, that is controlled by a single individual or presenter. In the discussion process, the teacher acts as a leader by keeping a proper balance between controlling the class and allowing the students to share their perspectives without any fear and hesitation in a class discussion students participate voluntarily and make sure that the introvert and shy participants of the discussion process don't feel embarrassment and they create a supportive environment for discussion (Abdulbaki et al., 2018).

Socratic Teaching Method (Interactive Teaching Method): This method is named after the great Greek philosopher Socrates, who used a dialogue based, thought-provoking question & answer technique. In this method, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator, asking probing questions to the students. Therefore, it is also known as the question-answer technique. (Saint Leo University, 2022).

Example of Socratic Teaching Method: In Socratic teaching method, the teacher who is a guide or facilitator asks the students to read an article about a particular topic. Then, the teacher asks one student to discuss the summary of that topic and the next to share his/her views about the importance of that topic. In this way the teacher provokes critical thinking and gauges their knowledge from their perspectives. This method, like the constructivist learning theory, emphasizes the active engagement of learners in the learning process.

# CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual and theoretical framework for this study examines the interplay between teaching methods, teacher competence, student engagement, and institutional resources in public sector colleges of KPK, Pakistan. Grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), the framework emphasizes the importance of active, student-centered teaching approaches and experiential learning in enhancing understanding and critical thinking. It incorporates the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991) to highlight how limited resources, such as multimedia tools and library facilities, impede effective teaching. Additionally, Professional Development Theory (Guskey, 2002) underscores the need for continuous teacher training to adopt innovative methods. This framework connects institutional support, resource allocation, and pedagogical strategies to student learning outcomes, guiding the study's analysis of challenges and recommendations for improving undergraduate education.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

Following the qualitative research approach, the researchers adopted a case study research design; hence this is an exploratory single institutional case study of Government Postgraduate College Nowshera (Creswell, 2013).

### **Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm is a model or process that constructs a research plan. It provides a framework for methodology and its underpinning ontology and epistemology, thus helping the researcher in finding the reality and validity of knowledge. It forms a collection of ideas, beliefs and understanding that impact the overall research process (Abbadia, 2022). There are two main types of research paradigms, and all other paradigms available in the literature originate from these main two types. Since this study explored the perception of students and teachers regarding different teaching methodologies employed at undergraduate level, the researchers adopted Interpretivism paradigm for this study, as the positivist paradigm was not suitable for this study.

#### Sample

According to Guest, Bunce, & Johnson (2006), keeping in view the heterogeneity of sample size 6 to 8 interviews is sufficient. However, when researchers intend to achieve greater and maximum variation in data then sample size of 10 will be enough to seem suitable for the study under consideration. Further, according to Creswell (2013), collecting in-depth information regarding individuals from a case study approach, the sample size of four to five cases is sufficient in single study.

Hence, in the light of above a sample size of 7 was selected through purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling helped in recruitment of only those respondents who were voluntarily participated in semi structured in-depth interviews.

Teachers	3
Students	4
Sample Size N = 7	

Table	1:	Sample	e of	the	Study
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### Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with college faculty and students to get their in-depth perspectives about the various teaching methods. All the respondents were well-informed before the interview conduction; further the interviews were audio recorded meticulously. During face- to-face interviews, the researchers keenly observe the participants' facial expression, body language, eye contact, voice tone and hand gesture etc. The secondary data was obtained from reports, college official record and other relevant documents.

# Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed manually. The audio recordings were transcribed into text format. After transcription, the text data were coded. After this, the coded data is categorized and summarized to get the findings of the study. In this study thematic analysis approach was adopted for analyzing the data. Further thematic analysis is an analytical tool which is widely used in qualitative research to identify, analyze and generate themes in data. Usually, the thematic analysis process consists of six stages i) Familiarization with data, ii) Generating codes, iii) Searching for themes across data, iv) Reviewing the themes, v) Define and name themes then vi) producing report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

# Results

No.	Themes
Theme 1	Teaching Methods
Theme 2	Approaches and Techniques
Theme 3	Motivation of students
Theme 4	Interactive Approach
Theme 5	Conducive Environment
Theme 6	Learning Resources
Theme 7	Use of Technology

After transcription and coding of data, the following themes emerged:

Table:2 Themes emerged from the study

# i. Teaching Methods

Majority of the respondents opined that our teachers follow the traditional lecture method and discussion method for imparting knowledge. Assignment and presentation methods are also used; however, some students don't take these teaching methods seriously. "*There should be discussion in the classroom. When teachers use discussion methods, students gain more knowledge, because in this way, everyone takes part in the discussion. In my opinion it is the best way of sharing and getting information*" (*R1*). Teaching and learning are a two-way process, and good teachers always encourage students to play an active role in the classroom activities. For comprehensive understanding, it is crucial that the teachers follow the modern and innovative teaching methods and fully engage their students in the teaching-learning process. Similarly, effective teachers prefer two-way teaching methods over one-way method. "*From my perspective, anyone can deliver a lecture, as it is a one-way process in which the teacher speaks, and students listen*" (*R2*). Effective teaching methods fulfill the needs of diverse learners regardless of their backgrounds. It promotes student-teacher interaction and equips students with vital skills, like communication skills, public speaking, presentation skills, decision making and conflict resolution. "*Teachers should relate their lesson to the real-life situations; it will help the students in tackling the real-life problems*" (R3). The projectors method is crucial for enhanced comprehension; however, our teachers seldom use this method (R1, R2, and R3). One of the respondents among faculty stated "*I use lecture and discussion method, followed by group discussion. There is only one projector in our college, therefore I seldom use it*".

### *ii.* Approaches and techniques

For effective transfer of knowledge and to accelerate the teaching-learning process, skilled educators always use various techniques and approaches. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that a significant number of our teachers use thought-provoking questions at the beginning or end of the lesson to develop and enhance the students' critical thinking and analytical skills. In addition, some teachers incorporate group discussion during the class to encourage collaborative activities and thus improve the students' communication skills. One of the faculty members stated "I ask a few questions about the new topic to know the students' perspective. Additionally, I assign them assignments to develop their abilities of self-study" (R5). Another faculty member expressed *"I believe that students' participatory approach is very fruitful and beneficial. I encourage book reading, and I have introduced a novel approach. Students read different books and write reviews of those books; they also present their analysis in front of class. It boosts their confidence and writing skills" (R6)* 

#### iii. Motivation of students

"Motivation is the key to success" and without motivation the accomplishment of goals is not possible. Most of the respondents shared that our teachers motivate us for group discussions and collaborative activities. Some teachers motivate us through motivational quotes, give advice to us, or share funny jokes. Similarly, when we get bored, they recognize our boredom, and give us a short break from studies, so we can refresh our minds (R2, R3). One of the respondents among faculty members shared "If a class doesn't show interest in studying, it demotivates me. Personally, when I sense students are getting bored and losing their interest in the study, I initiate a general discussion or casual chit-chat to encourage them to focus on their studies" (R5).

### iv. Interactive approach

Mainly there are three types of students, high, medium and low achievers. It depends upon the teacher's experience and pedagogical style that he/she should be able to motivate the students and overcome the classroom challenges. A successful teacher adopts interactive approaches to maximize the learning process. The respondents mentioned that teachers have a lot of knowledge, however they need to keep their knowledge and experience aside, they should understand the students' mental level, only in this way will it be possible for students to easily interact with their teachers (R1, R2, R3). Teacher-student interaction varies with different teaching methods. Similarly, teachers' behavior also plays an important role in student-teacher interaction. One of the respondents stated, "We don't interact easily with strict or rigid teachers" (R3).

#### v. Conducive Environment

A conducive environment is necessary for effective teaching and learning, because it directly affects the quality of teaching and learning capabilities of the students. Most of the respondents among faculty opined that we make sure to provide a positive learning environment for our students, where they feel safe and motivated. "*Being teacher, I always encourage open discussion between teacher and students*" (R5). Another respondent expressed "*Teachers provide us teaching material, notes and encourage our active participation in the class. They also arrange field trips and study tours for us*" (R3).

#### vi. Learning Resources

It is the era of information technology and knowledge explosion; hence a teacher cannot depend on a single resource for gathering information regarding his subject. Both physical and online resources are crucial for effective teaching and learning. Most of the respondents opined that teachers should use various resources to gather information for lesson preparation. "We should Google that topic; watch YouTube videos regarding that topic, and read books, not a single book, but multiple books to collect the desired information. In this way we will be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of a topic" (R1). For quality and effective teaching various learning resources are necessary. In addition, teachers should motivate students to adopt reading habits and utilize library books to promote the concept of self-study at undergraduate level.

#### vii. Use of Technology

Modern pedagogy is incomplete without various online resources, including multimedia tools, projectors, cutting-edge computer labs, LMS classes, digital equipment, and globally collaborative conferences and seminars. An experienced teacher uses a variety of methods and modern techniques to enhance the learning of his students. The  $21^{st}$  century teaching methods emphasize the use of modern technology in the classroom, especially at higher education levels. Majority of the respondents expressed that teachers should equip themselves with modern technology, as multimedia classes provide visual representations of topics that enhance our learning. "*Computer facility is available here, but it is insufficient for all students (R2 &R3)*.

### DISCUSSION

Pakistan is a developing country, and the people lives in follow the same old and traditional pattern for the education, and they thought by following old school of thought we would compete with global world. But after the study findings I believe if we can't change our educational model, we will never be able to compete or even compete with the first world. Many other research studies also highlight the same findings which I discovered in this research study, as there is a need to maintain a balance among both traditional and modern patterns for the sake of building future generations. So, in relation to education Pakistani public sector colleges follow the traditional lecture approach for their students in which students focus only on memorizing their lecture material rather than focusing on practicality of knowledge. This traditional approach refers to not adopting modern technological equipment for lecturing students because the available staff is not trained apart from that there is lack availability of technological equipment's is the reason for adopting traditional methods (Laghari, 2024). Each method has positive and negative impacts on students. The study conducted by (Abdulbaki et al., 2018) highlighted that traditional method

generates discussion and self confidence among students as they are motivated and willingly participate in class discussions just to broaden their knowledge and perspective. Further students also believe that discussion with teachers and other classmates will improve their communication as well as linguist skills. Additionally, students and teachers both believe traditional methods allow asking questions relevant to the lecture such as speaking and sharing ideas can enhance their knowledge and thinking skills (Howard, 2015).

Interactive teaching approaches used by teachers were highly appreciable among students as interactive method promotes critical and analytical thinking that boosts their confidence (Kamran et al., 2023). In addition to this, the important point that needs to be highlighted is that students only interact with those teachers whom they feel satisfaction as teacher behavior is important for them. Those teachers who have short temper and behave rudely with them, students don't engage in any type of discussion with them, so sometimes interactive method discourages the students, and they lose their self-confidence. Consequently, everything depends on the teachers and their teaching style influencing students and their participation in the class discussion (Frankel & Swanson, 2002). Moreover, in relation to conducive environment both teachers and students agreed on interactive academic relationships and learning which leads to mutual trust between them. All the course material are designed by teachers and took responsibility to convey the course material effectively to students in the best possible way and they take students participation in positive way (Shaheen et al., 2020). Hence, to design and prepare lectures, teachers adopt both online and offline tools and learn things from them, particularly using digital libraries and social media platforms to document updated information and shared this acquired knowledge among students. This designing and preparation of course outline or lectures shows teachers attitude towards their profession, as how much they acknowledge their profession (Recker et al., 2007). The use of technology among students and teachers led to professional development as they get information from the world by using various tools. Students claimed when teachers used technological equipment for lecture they understood and performed effectively because of visualization presented in the lectures significantly enhanced their thinking abilities more. So modern method is considered more effective as compared to traditional method (Hussain et al., 2010).

### CONCLUSION

The present case study provides an in-depth analysis of teaching methods in one department within the social sciences faculty at the undergraduate level in the public sector college of KPK. The findings show that teachers at this level prefer traditional methods, such as lecture and discussion methods. While some teachers implement assignment and presentation methods, however, these are not taken seriously by some students. The study reveals that a significant number of teachers use question-answer techniques to develop students' critical thinking and foster comprehensive understanding. An interactive approach is also in practice; however, teachers' behavior plays a significant role in student-teacher interaction. The study also highlights the challenges associated with the implementation of effective teaching methods. AI, chat GPT, and various educational applications are the significant educational tools of the modern era. However, our teachers still struggle with conducting multimedia classes. Similarly, the number of projectors,

multimedia tools, and library books are insufficient to fulfill the needs of all students. Although the Higher Education Department (HED) KPK conducts teachers' training, these training courses are insufficient and often don't acquire productive results due to the fund shortage issues. Additionally, in these training courses everything is present in paperwork but doesn't exist. The study also explores that language barriers are the primary challenge at this level. Every year, students from different socioeconomic backgrounds join public sector colleges. Among them, significant number face difficulties with English proficiency and some are even unable to speak Urdu. This lack of language proficiency is a main hurdle for both students and teachers, and ultimately reduces the effectiveness of teaching-learning process. There is no proper mechanism of assessment and the college relying solely on mid-term and final-term examinations.

#### **Recommendations**

Considering the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

Considering the importance of undergraduate education in higher studies, teachers should encourage them to adopt innovative and mix-method teaching approaches. Teaching and learning are interconnected processes, and both affect the quality of education. Therefore, instead of relying solely on traditional teacher-centered methods, teachers should use student-centered methods to promote students' participation in the teaching-learning process. The Higher Education Department (HED) KPK should organize regular training sessions for teachers' professional grooming. In addition, they should initiate and promote collaborative activities among the public sector colleges and universities to equip college faculty with innovative teaching methods and research skills. The provincial government and higher authorities should allocate proper funding to public sector colleges for the provision of conducive environment, the purchase of multimedia projectors, and the establishment of E-libraries. Similarly, providing teachers with an official laptop is also essential for applying innovative teaching methods. To address language barriers at the undergraduate level, college administration with approval from the high authorities should offer free English and Urdu language courses during summer vacations or, keeping in view the college resources, arrange 30-minute English and Urdu speaking classes for deserving students in the morning. In addition, providing English and Urdu newspapers and developing their reading habits can also help in overcoming the issue. Instead of solely relying on mid and final-term examinations, proper mechanism should be established to assess the performance of students throughout the semester. Teachers should keep and maintain the individual student's file to gauge his/ her progress throughout the academic session. Additionally, colleges should promote a culture of student feedback, as this will help the teachers in selecting effective teaching methods.

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