Exploring School Leadership and Teachers' Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Classroom Observation on Tracking Curriculum Implementation: A Case Study in a Private School in Abu Dhabi

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Abstract

Curriculum is the core component of education development with a direct impact on learners' knowledge, skills, and competencies. There are many approaches to evaluating the implementation process of the curriculum, and classroom observation is an effective tool as it reflects what happens inside classrooms. This qualitative case study was designed as a response to a current issue in a private international school in Abu Dhabi that lacked an appraisal policy, and the observation report was the only evaluation tool for teachers' overall performance. Given this, the study aimed to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum delivery from the perspectives of heads of departments and teachers. For this to be achieved, the study utilised three instruments: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and qualitative content analysis. The study's findings highlighted key characteristics of effective classroom observation, emphasising deliberate alignment with curriculum goals and the need for a comprehensive understanding of educational activities. The research also identified qualities in current observation rubrics, emphasising the importance of addressing inconsistencies across departments for reliable and valid assessments. Additionally, teacher and school leadership perspectives revealed the influence of experience and pedagogical beliefs, emphasising the need for professional development to enhance professionalism and support positive views of observations.

Keywords: curriculum, curriculum implementation, classroom observation.

1. Introduction

Overview

In this section, the study endeavours to introduce its main aspects which encompass the problem statement, background, rationale, aim, objectives, and research questions. This section flags the significance of the study and illustrates why the research problem deserves to be studied.

1.1   Background

Tracking the quality of curriculum delivery is a major need for all stakeholders in order to establish evidence-based practices (Pak 2020). As the curriculum encompasses many elements, such as content, teaching methods, learning outcomes, lesson plans, and assessment (Viana & Peralta 2021), classroom observation enables stakeholders to track the implementation of the curriculum in a clear fashion (Andal 2019). Despite its important role, there are many obstacles and caveats that eliminate the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to evaluate curriculum implementation (Fahmi, Friatin & Irianti 2020). According to a recent study, there are many factors that negatively impact classroom observation, such as biased comments, teachers' pedagogical beliefs, unmeasurable factors of the school culture, and observation rubric design (Cherng, Halpin & Rodriguez 2022). Given this, this study endeavours to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation in evaluating curriculum implementation to identify the optimum approach to increase its effectiveness.

Chronologically, classroom observation has many aims, types, and forms. Yet, the main aim of classroom observation has been to evaluate two elements of the curriculum: teaching and learning (Uchqunovna 2022). In modern educational systems, the curriculum refers to a set of various elements (Camilleri 2021). The effectiveness of the curriculum could be measured by assessing its impact on students' attainment and progress (Andal 2019). According to the latest inspection framework Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the curriculum comes first in the quality of education measures (Cowley 2022; Miller, Lane & Jaeggi 2022).

Pedagogically, a successful curriculum should provide learners, educators, school leadership teams, and society stakeholders with a considerable strategy and foundation for providing a high-quality education (Sánchez et al. 2018). It is quite understandable that a well-designed curriculum determines the principles, learning outcomes, and essential skills that learners should attain in their learning experience (Stambaugh et al. 2021). For this to be achieved, teachers' role is a major factor in designing, implementing, adapting, improving, and evaluating the curriculum (McCormick 2018). As mentioned earlier, evidence-based curricular practices are considered a guide for teachers and leaders to achieve an informed curriculum implementation (Gunio 2021). Considering the importance of curriculum, it is, therefore, necessary to adopt a systematic tool to track the implementation of the curriculum (McCormick 2018). For many years, classroom observation has been considered the recognised instrument to evaluate curriculum

delivery and teachers' performance (Andal 2019).

Given the above, there are overlapped functions for classroom observation as it is considered an appropriate tool to follow up on the implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, the effectiveness of classroom observations is a debatable issue as it could be an invalid tool if its design fails to measure the quality of curriculum delivery.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognised importance of classroom observation as a tool to evaluate curriculum implementation and teachers' performance, there are several obstacles and caveats that limit its effectiveness. Additionally, the lack of a comprehensive teachers' appraisal policy further complicates the use of classroom observation as it results in overlapping functions for tracking the implementation of the curriculum and evaluating teachers' performance. Consequently, there is a need to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation in evaluating curriculum while considering the absence of a clear teachers' appraisal policy. The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum delivery from the perspectives of heads of departments and teachers.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

This qualitative case study is motivated by the current issue of a private international school in Abu Dhabi, which lacks a comprehensive teachers' appraisal policy. As a result,

classroom observation reports serve as the sole evaluation tool for teachers' overall performance, placing them under considerable stress. Conversely, the heads of departments perceive classroom observation to track the quality of curriculum delivery.

By conducting this case study, the aim is to address the existing gap in the school's appraisal practices and provide actionable insights for improvement. The findings and recommendations derived from this study will be crucial in informing the school leadership team's decision-making process and developing an effective action plan for enhancing overall school performance. In essence, this case study serves as an action research endeavour with the goal of improving the school's appraisal system and promoting a conducive learning environment. performance.

1.4   Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum delivery from the perspectives of heads of departments and teachers. Based on this aim, the study has three objectives. The first objective is to explore the optimum characteristics of effective classroom observation. The second objective is to examine the quality of the current classroom observation rubric. The third objective is to explore school leadership and teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of classroom observation to track curriculum implementation.

1.5   Research Questions

As the aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum implementation, the three following questions are the main research questions:

1-   What are the characteristics of effective classroom observation?

2-   What are the qualities of the current classroom observation rubric?

3-   What are the perspectives of school leadership and teachers on classroom observation in evaluating curriculum implementation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Analysis

2.1.1   Curriculum

Over time, the concept of the curriculum has undergone changes and acquired new meanings (Lee & Willson 2018). According to an earlier study, the term "curriculum" originates from the Latin verb "currere," meaning "to run" (Price & Castner 2021). The verb "currere" evolved into a noun referring to a "racetrack" (Price & Castner 2021). The term expanded further and became "curriculum vitae," which denotes "the course of a person's life." Subsequently, the concept of curriculum gained additional significance with the introduction of "curricula mentis," metaphorically describing "the educational

course of the mind." Historically, the term "curriculum" was not widely used in the educational field before the nineteenth century (Pinar 2019).

In traditional educational understanding, the curriculum simply involves the meaning of a course of study (Gleeson, Klenowski & Looney 2020). It also refers to a set of presented programs in a specific discipline of learning which are needed to complete a degree or a field of specialisation (Shipman, Bolam & Jenkins 2018).   At a simple level, curriculum equals the content. Thus, in traditional perceptions, the curriculum refers to the syllabus with the related portion of studying a subject (Erstad & Voogt 2018). In the curriculum reform process, classic educational perspectives considered the curriculum a structure of subject matter or content that is related to a particular field of education (Reis 2018).

Conversely, from a modern education perspective, the curriculum expanded into a broad meaning (Gleeson, Klenowski & Looney 2020).   By way of elaboration, it gained more meanings such as the course of education which enables students to obtain certain understanding, competencies, and knowledge (Erstad & Voogt 2018). As understood in a medical education study, the modern view of curriculum comprises all implemented activities that take place and everything that does not take place, within the purview of the education (Reis 2018). A recent study clarifies that curriculum is a comprehensive term and signifies the entire teaching, learning, and assessment experience of learners. Based on that, the curriculum encompasses the overall teaching and learning practice that

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is offered by an educational institution, such as schools and universities (Gleeson, Klenowski & Looney 2020). Given this meaning, the curriculum incorporates the content of programs (the syllabus), the utilised methods (strategies), and many other elements such as values, norms, and beliefs (Chadha 2022).

In contemporary education settings, the curriculum is considered a living aspect of the education system (Francis 2022). The concept of the curriculum has gained more prominence as a lively and emerging component of education. The continuous change in the meaning of "curriculum" is a part of all changes which happen in society (Woo et al. 2019).

Based on the above discussion, the curriculum in its limited meaning is regarded as merely a list of subjects to be taught in school; while in its wider meaning, it implies the entire educational practices of learners. This study tends to consider "curriculum" as a broad framework of educational setting that includes but is not limited to, a set of organised activities which are planned to be implemented with a specific educational aim/aims. In addition, it includes the taught content, competencies, knowledge, and skills that are to be purposefully promoted with a clear rationale for the choice of content, materials, methods, and assessment.

In line with this study's aim, this study highlights that "curriculum" has a broad meaning that comprises teaching and learning, content, evaluation, and learning objectives. Hence, classroom observation is intended to track the quality of curriculum

implementation as in the classroom the observer can clearly track the quality of lesson plans, teaching methods, the validity of assessment, and, most importantly, the impact of this curriculum on students' learning.

2.1.2   *Classroom Observation*

A classroom observation is a systematic formal or informal of observing teachers' performance in their classroom or learning environment (Dignath & Veenman 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, classroom observation is implemented online in virtual classrooms (Johnson et al. 2022). In general, classroom observation is an organised quantitative approach to tracking and assessing teachers' behaviour by observing and recording their actions (Praetorius & Charalambous 2018). Normally, classroom observation is conducted by the head of the subject, instructional experts, or administrators (Bell et al. 2019). On a regular basis, classroom observations are applied to develop teachers' classroom practices and instructional skills by providing them with realistic and important feedback (Praetorius & Charalambous 2018). As a result, classroom observation is used to evaluate teachers' performance and to give them some recommendations to improve their future practices (Liu 2019).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In the context of research, the theory-driven approach provides the research with a well-identified and demonstrated foundation for its claims (Kivunja 2018). It also clarifies the study's importance and validity. In addition, theories in the research process

create wider guidelines and a broad collection of concepts to build a solid argument (Varpio et al. 2020).

The theoretical framework in this study is developed to present the theories which elucidate the classroom observation and the curriculum. Additionally, it presents theories that clarify the pedagogical beliefs of the teachers toward classroom observation. It gives an informed understanding of the school as an organisation. Given this, this study introduces three main theories: Curriculum Theory, Theory of Flexible Systems Management, and Force-Field Theory of Change. Table 2.1 shows the organisation of theories.
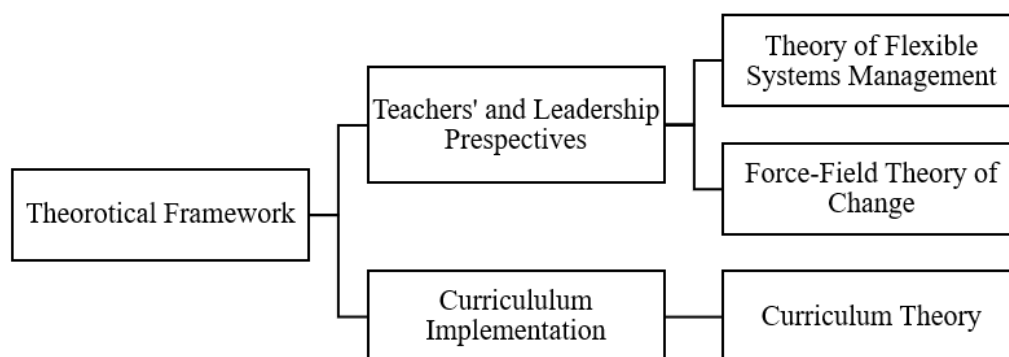

Figure 2.1: Theoretical framework design

2.2.1   *Curriculum Theory*

Curriculum theory provides an understanding of curriculum enactment and improvement. Among the scholars of this theory, Herbert Kliebard (1930-2015) and

Michael Stephen Schiro (1942) are the most prominent scholars. In his explanation of the American curriculum, Herbert Kliebard adopted a historical method to analyse how the unique American curriculum emerged (Kliebard 2004). Generally, Kliebard considers that there are many aspects that explain the existence of any curriculum. These curriculum emitters could be classified into four groups (Kliebard 2004; 2013):

- humanism factors

- social competences

- developmentalism (psychological state)

- social meliorism (beliefs and tents)

John Dewey (1859 – 1952), an American theorist, believed that the curriculum should be designed to prepare the learners to deal with futuristic issues (Paraskeva 2018). In a way, Dewey's offered a social perspective to the curriculum as he established connections between subjects and the learners' life. In contemporary education, there are many scholars that followed Dewey's approach in considering education as a social efficiency tool (Paraskeva 2018).

However, this study highlights a criticism of this theory as it considers the curriculum a broad-field model which places further importance on psychological foundation and humanist factors in education. As a reaction to this theory, many theorists adopt a systematic development of reasoning of curriculum design. For instance, in content-based

curriculum designs, learning a language is divided into subject-matter classifications Moreover, this study underlines a cultural bias in implementing this theory in designing a curriculum. This issue happened in the United States of America during the era of racism (Trem 2014).

2.2.2 Theory of Flexible Systems Management

As highlighted in the earlier conceptual analysis, the effectiveness of classroom observation in enhancing teachers' performance relies on the consideration of the school's structure and culture as a social organisation. Recognising this, it becomes crucial to explore the theoretical foundations that guide the establishment of a flexible management system within the school. Such a system plays a vital role in ensuring the efficacy of classroom observation as a tool for monitoring curriculum implementation.

The theory of Flexible Systems Management, which is based on the systems theory of management, considers that flexible system to be a broader approach than a strict system (Sushil 2016; Singh, Dhir & Evans 2021). In essence, systems theory enables us to consider a comprehensive model of organisations as open systems managed by the causality created by responses (Birkinshaw & Gibson 2004).

Over the last two decades, flexible systems management has been progressing as a theory that illustrates the capacity of systems to learn and improve (Singh, Dhir & Evans 2021). To form an informed understanding of this theory, the term flexibility is defined by many scholars in different fields with different approaches (Sushil 2016). In all

organisations, several kinds of flexibility, such as flexibility of people, the flexibility of decisions, the flexibility of strategies, the flexibility of operations, flexibility of marketing, and financial flexibility are considered (Sushil 2016; Birkinshaw & Gibson 2004).

In line with this study's overall aim, this theory helps to inform school leaders of the essential knowledge to keep their schools' flexible organisations. In a way, this flexibility will adopt organisational learning models. By doing this, the classroom observation will be a means to exchange experience and to build capacity for evaluating the curriculum implementation.

2.2.3   *Force-Field Theory of Change*

To answer the questions of this research, it is required to understand how the perspectives of staff members impact the improvement process inside any organisation. Organisationally, force-field theory provides insights into the overlapped forces in organisations and the impact of these forces on making changes in any organisation (Capatina 2017). Generally, the main scholar of this theory is the well-known American theorist Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947). According to Nash (2019), Kurt Lewin in this theory claims that any organisation is balanced between two converse forces. First is the force for change. The second force is the resistance to change. By understanding the nature of organisations, this theory gives managers a related standpoint on how they can establish a systematic and effective change in their organisations. Figure 2.2 shows the factors of Force-Field Theory.
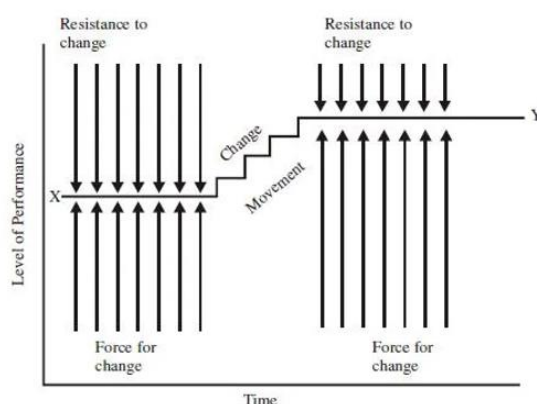
Figure 2.2: Force-Field Theory

In this study, this theory forms an enlightened comprehension of how teachers may reject many changes in their performance based on classroom observation reports. In the curriculum implementation process, there is great importance in tracking teachers' practices. Then, heads of departments recommend the required amendments to teachers' performance. By understating this theory concept, this study recognises teachers' and leadership perspectives as two different powers in the research site. As a result, this theory will enhance the researcher's ability to accurately interpret the qualitative data.

In the following headings, the related literature is introduced in a thematic approach in order to form an enlightened understanding of this study field. To ensure good practices, these themes are critically presented and systematically examined.

2.3 Curriculum Implementation

Simply, curriculum implementation refers to placing into practice the formally approved programs of learning, contents, and subjects (Pak et al. 2020). The

implementation procedure entails assisting learners in developing their understanding, knowledge, and skills. Obviously, curriculum implementation should consider the learners' ability, prior knowledge, and differentiation (Little & Paul 2021). Consequently, the learners are the most important figure in the process of implementation of the curriculum. Putting learners as a priority, the effective curriculum implementation process happens when learners attain the intended or planned skills, knowledge, ideas, experiences, and attitudes that are stated in the curriculum aims (Prasetyono et al. 2021).

Going beyond teachers' and learners' factors in the curriculum implementation, there are several elements that impact the implementation process, such as assessment, instructional supervision, materials, resources, culture, facilities, interest groups, the school environment, and ideology (Pak et al. 2020).

2.4 Types of Classroom Observation

To attain its aims, it is beneficial to address the types of classroom observation. To come up with good practices, these types should be clarified to teachers (Bell et al. 2019). The different approaches of classroom observation assist teachers recognise the objectives and procedures of classroom observations (Andal 2019). By defining its functions to teachers, the leadership procedures behind classroom observation could be clarified (Uchqunovna 2022). There are three main types of classroom observations. (Praetorius & Charalambous 2018). These types of classroom observation give helpful assistance for leaders to improve their proficiency in assessing teaching practice (Liu et al.

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2019). Classroom observation could be categorised into three main types:

1. supervisory observation

2. goal setting and the implementation observation

3. learning walks

2.5 Classroom Observation Elements

For successful practice, classroom observation could encompass these aspects (Bell et al.

2019):

•   purpose for the observation

•   the training purpose for observers

•   observation focus

•   setting

•   time

•   observation plan

•   method to record data

•   method to manage and analyse data

3. Methodology

Overview

According to Creswell (2018, p. 254), "writing a method section for a proposal or study for qualitative research partly requires educating readers as to the intent of qualitative research". This section of the study strives to establish an enlightened

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knowledge of the research paradigm (philosophy), approach, instrument, method, and sampling. This part explains the following procedures to evade any assumed bias.

3.1 Research Paradigm (Philosophy)

In this qualitative study, the interpretivist paradigm (constructivist paradigm) is used to benefit from its features. Principally, this paradigm sees reality as a multiple social reality, knowledge as context-associated, and circumstantial questions would be considered in any interpretation of data (Creswell & Miller 2000; Creswell 2018). It is worth noting that, the main principles of the constructivist paradigm are:

- Epistemology: subjectivist

- Ontology: relativist

- Axiology: balanced

- Methodology: naturalist

3.2 Research Design and Method

As the overall aim of the research is to explore the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum delivery from the perspective of heads of departments and teachers, the qualitative research method is adopted in the design of a single case study. This research design helps the study to get a more in-depth understanding of the research setting and to form a profound understanding of the study field.

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3.2.1   Rationale for the Research Design and Method

This qualitative case study is designed as a response to a current issue in a private international school in Abu Dhabi as the school lacks a teachers' appraisal policy. Hence, for teachers, the observation report is considered the only evaluation tool for their overall performance. On the contrary, the heads of departments consider classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum delivery.

Based on this situation, this study adopted the qualitative single case study as this method suits the purpose of the study. Creswell (2018) highlights the most important characteristics of qualitative research: reflexivity, participants' implications, natural setting, the researcher as a key instrument, and emergent (flexible) design.

3.3 Research Sampling and Participants

To explore teachers' and heads' perspectives on the effectiveness of classroom observation in evaluating curriculum implementation, the purposive sampling (judgemental sampling) technique is selected. It is worth noting that this study is aware of the drawbacks of adopting the purposive sampling technique as it has highly subjective characteristics and it leads to researcher-generated decisions (Campbell et al. 2020). As a result, an expected bias may occur during this sampling process. However, this sampling supports the study to get a strong understanding of the studied phenomenon (Sharma 2017). For appropriate research practices, qualitative scholars would explain their actions to prevent any biased choices (Creswell & Poth 2016).

The sample of this study is Group A (four teachers) and Group B (five heads of departments). Group A contains four teachers with different experiences (2, 6, 9, and 13 years of experience).   In Table 3.1, the instruments and the participants are revealed.

Table 3.1: Participants and instruments

Samples & Participants *N=9* *Instruments*	Teachers *4 (44%)*	Heads of Departments *5 (66%)*	Classroom Observation Reports
Interviews	Yes	No	-
Focus group discussion	No	Yes	
Content Analysis			Yes

3.4 Research Instruments

To answer this research question, three instruments are applied: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and qualitative content analysis. Of note, the semi-structured interviews allow to acquire an in-depth interpretation of teachers' beliefs on classroom observation (Creswell 2018). To explore the effectiveness of classroom observation in evaluating curriculum implementation and to identify the characteristics of effective classroom observation, focus group discussion is utilised with two heads of department who are in charge of observing teachers. To answer the second research question, the study utilised qualitative content analysis to assess the qualities of the current classroom observation rubric.

3.5 The Role of the Researcher to Avoid Bias

Generally, in the research process, bias may occur in any step of research, such as research design bias, sampling bias, and data analysis bias (Creswell 2018). The occurrence of bias is highly possible in qualitative research (Kahalon et al. 2021). As the researcher in this study is an experienced head of the department, bias may happen in any research decisions, such as in-group bias, biased-leading questions, confirmation bias, and research design bias.

In this study, to avoid the dominance the researcher-related bias, the study carefully followed these procedures: the proposal of the research was reviewed by the module coordinator, the questions of the interview were reviewed and evaluated, the delimitations and limitations of this research are evidently indicated, and the rationale of choosing the research method and design are clearly justified.

3.6 Ethical Consideration and Summary

The participants were well-informed that the interviews were for academic purposes. Moreover, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality are applied. The key delimitation in the study is based on the choice of the study sample and site. The methodology section in this qualitative study attempted to justify the rationale of selecting the research paradigm, design, and method. It refined the sampling conditions and ethical clearance as well.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results and Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the qualitative data. Table 4.1 shows a summary of the participants, the number of participants, and the corresponding data collection tools used to collect data from each participant group.

Table 4.1 Participants and Instruments

Samples & Participants *n=9*	Teachers 4 (44%)	Heads of Departments 5 (56%)	Classroom Observation Reports
Instruments			
Interviews	Yes	No	-
Focus group discussion	No	Yes	
Content Analysis			Yes

The study utilised three qualitative research instruments to answer the research questions: interviews, focus group discussion, and content analysis. The interviews were conducted with four teachers. Meanwhile, the focus group discussion was conducted with five heads of departments. The content analysis is used to assess the quality of the current classroom observation form. To scrutinize the qualitative data thematic approach is used. This analysis begins from the specific to the general, and contains some steps of analysis:

- organising and managing the data

- examining all the data

- coding the data,

- setting up defining themes

- presenting the description and themes

4.1.1 Interviews Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews are conducted with four teachers with different work experience (2, 6, 9, and 13 years). The study followed this selection criterion to accurately get more valid interview data. After conducting the interviews, these actions are implemented: organising and preparing the interview data, exploring the codes, and creating themes. The study identified two main themes: biased judgments and unreliable verdicts.

- Biased Judgments

In the qualitative interview analysis, it was evident that all the interviewed teachers expressed their concerns regarding the occurrence of bias during the observation process. Teacher 2 specifically mentioned that the head of the department imposed their own personal ideas about education during the observation. The teachers' responses indicated that evaluators might be influenced by their personal preferences related to teachers' ethnicity, gender, age, or cultural background. This sentiment was echoed by one of the interviewed teachers (teacher 4), who stated that heads of departments from a specific nationality were consistently biased towards teachers of their own nationality.

- Unreliable Verdicts

During the interviews, all the teachers expressed their belief that classroom observation alone does not accurately represent their overall performance. As Teacher 3 pointed out, their daily workload involves teaching multiple classes for nearly eight hours, and they questioned how a single observation of one class, which typically lasts around 40 minutes, can effectively evaluate their teaching skills. This observation raises an important point that the school under study lacks a clear teachers' appraisal policy, further contributing to the limitations of the observation process as a comprehensive assessment tool.

- Stress

Interviews revealed that teachers experience heightened levels of pressure and anxiety during the observation process. All the interviewed teachers shared their perception that being observed induces feelings of unease and apprehension. Furthermore, it was noted that students' behaviour underwent noticeable changes during these observations. Teacher 4 specifically mentioned that, in their experience, students' behaviour tends to deteriorate during observations. This finding raises concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of the outcomes derived from such observations, as the altered dynamics in the classroom during these instances may not accurately reflect the typical teaching and learning environment. These insights highlight the potential limitations and distortions that can arise from observation-induced pressure and changes in student behaviour, ultimately questioning the validity of the observed outcomes.

4.1.2   Focus Group Data Analysis

A focus group discussion is conducted with five heads of departments to answer the third question of the research. The rationale for selecting this purposeful sample of department heads is they are engaged in conducting classroom observation for evaluating curriculum implementation. The focus group discussion data is thematically analysed. This analysis indicates four major themes.

- Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs

Experienced teachers often hold strong beliefs and assumptions about education. These beliefs developed through their practical experiences. These teachers tend to be resistant to receiving recommendations or feedback from classroom observations. Their established beliefs, which may not align with current educational practices or evolving pedagogical approaches, hinder the effective utilisation of classroom observation as a tool for professional growth and development.

The unwillingness of these experienced teachers to embrace observation recommendations undermines the intended role of classroom observation. Instead of serving as a catalyst for the improvement and refinement of teaching practices, observation becomes ineffective in facilitating meaningful changes. This resistance poses a significant challenge to leveraging classroom observation to enhance teaching effectiveness and ensure the alignment of instructional strategies with evolving educational goals and standards.

- Misconception about the curriculum

The analysis of focus group discussion uncovered a prevailing belief among teachers that the curriculum solely encompasses the content to be taught. Consequently, there is a tendency to prioritize the delivery of knowledge, often overlooking the broader aspects of curriculum planning and teaching methods.

During classroom observations, teachers tend to place a strong emphasis on covering the prescribed content within the designated timeframe. This emphasis on content completion can lead to a neglect of the planning and instructional methods that are integral components of the curriculum. The observation process inadvertently reinforces this narrow perspective on the curriculum, as teachers prioritize the efficient dissemination of content rather than employing effective instructional strategies that promote deeper understanding and engagement.

This analysis highlights a significant gap in teachers' understanding of the curriculum, as they fail to recognize the holistic nature of curriculum design and implementation. By neglecting the planning and teaching methods, teachers may inadvertently limit their students' learning experiences and hinder the development of critical thinking, creativity, and other essential skills and competencies embedded within the broader curriculum framework.

4.1.3   Content Analysis

In alignment with the overarching aim of this study, the analysis of classroom observation forms and reports revealed several noteworthy points:

Design: The observed observation form demonstrates a well-designed structure that aligns with the Ministry of Education's inspection framework. However, a significant limitation is identified: the form primarily focuses on evaluating teaching and learning aspects. To effectively assess the broader elements of the curriculum, the study recommends the development of a new observation form that encompasses a more comprehensive range of curriculum components.

Inconsistency: The analysis reveals a notable inconsistency in the quality of written observation reports. Further examination indicates that well-written reports predominantly originate from heads of departments who possess a higher academic background, often holding a master's degree in education. This finding implies a correlation between the level of education and the quality of observation reports, suggesting the need for enhanced training and support for individuals responsible for conducting and documenting observations.

4.2 Discussion

The data analysis of the interviews, focus group, and content analysis provide valuable insights that highlight several important aspects:

The data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis revealed contrasting perspectives and comparative results. Notably, teachers with extensive experience in schools exhibit significant resistance to following observation recommendations due to their firmly held pedagogical beliefs. This resistance stems from a perceived lack of reliability and heightened stress associated with the observation process. Concurrently, heads of departments view teachers' understanding of the curriculum as lacking a solid pedagogical foundation. This observed resistance compromises the functionality of classroom observation, impeding its intended purpose.

Furthermore, the content analysis of observation reports exposed inconsistencies among heads of departments in terms of quality and content. While some reports were critical and well-organized, others appeared disruptive and superficial. This variability in observation reports across departments indicates a lack of standardization and raises concerns about the credibility and effectiveness of the observation process.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, the results, analysis, and discussion of the qualitative data are presented. The findings obtained from the data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis are discussed in detail. The analysis of the data provides insights into the research questions and objectives of the study, shedding light on the key themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative data.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Key Findings

The study's findings directly answer the research questions achieving the overall aim of the study and are closely aligned with the theoretical framework. These findings include:

1- Characteristics of Effective Classroom Observation

The findings of this study underscore that effective classroom observation is distinguished by a deliberate alignment with curriculum goals. It should also involve a comprehensive grasp of the curriculum activities with specific educational aims, including content, competencies, knowledge, skills, teaching and learning practices, content, evaluation methods, and learning objectives. Furthermore, effective classroom observation extends beyond evaluation to provide constructive feedback, fostering continuous improvement in teaching methods. Informed by the Theory of Flexible Systems Management, the study finds that flexibility in organisational structure is pivotal, promoting adaptability and organisational learning.

2- Qualities of the Current Classroom Observation Rubric

Upon analysing the content of observation forms and reports, the study reveals that classroom observations primarily concentrate on assessing teaching and learning aspects, with comparatively less emphasis on assessment practices. This finding suggests a need

for greater attention to be given to the assessment component within the observation process.

Furthermore, the study highlights an inconsistency in the observation reports across different departments within the school. This lack of consistency diminishes the overall reliability of the observations, raising concerns about the validity and effectiveness of the evaluation process. Addressing this inconsistency is crucial to ensure the credibility and uniformity of observation reports, fostering a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of curriculum delivery and teacher performance.

3- Teachers and Schools Leadership Perspectives on the Classroom Observations

The study reveals that teachers' perspectives on classroom observations are influenced by various factors, including their experience, pedagogical beliefs, and the pressure of appraisal. The findings underscore the importance of implementing professional development initiatives to foster professionalism within the school environment. By addressing these considerations and providing opportunities for growth and skill enhancement, teachers can develop a more positive and constructive view of classroom observations, leading to improved educational outcomes and a more supportive learning environment.

4- Hawthorne Effect

The Hawthorne Effect implies to the point that individuals tend to change their

actions when they are under observation (Villaseñor 2021). The study found that teachers in observation classes modify their performance. Hence, their action does not reflect real practices.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on important findings derived from the qualitative data analysis, which contribute to a deeper understanding of the research topic. The following key points emerge from the analysis, findings, and discussion:

1. Misconception about Curriculum: The study uncovers a significant misconception among teachers regarding the concept of curriculum. This highlights the need for targeted interventions aimed at clarifying and enhancing teachers' understanding of the comprehensive nature of the curriculum, moving beyond a narrow focus on content.

2. Inconsistency in Observation Reports: The analysis reveals a notable inconsistency in the observation reports, attributable to the differing academic backgrounds of heads of departments. It is crucial to establish a consistent framework for writing observation reports, ensuring they are uniformly comprehensive, analytical, and constructive, thereby promoting fairness and objectivity.

3. Holistic Approach to Observations: The study underscores the limitation of the current observation report, which primarily concentrates on evaluating teaching practices. To ensure a more comprehensive assessment, observation forms should be expanded to

encompass all relevant aspects of the curriculum, including learning outcomes, assessment methods, and instructional strategies.

4. Long-Term Professional Development: The findings underscore the necessity of implementing long-term professional development programs for both teachers and heads of departments. Such initiatives should focus on enhancing pedagogical knowledge, addressing misconceptions about the curriculum, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement among educators.

By addressing these research conclusions, educational institutions can enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, observation practices, and professional growth. It is through these concerted efforts that the quality of teaching and learning can be enhanced, leading to improved student outcomes and a more robust educational system.

5.3 Implications

The findings of this research on school leadership and teachers' perspectives on classroom observation in the context of curriculum implementation in a private school in Abu Dhabi have significant implications for educational practice. Firstly, the study emphasizes the importance of professional development initiatives aimed at improving teachers' perceptions of classroom observations, which can ultimately lead to a more positive and constructive learning environment. It also advocates for long-term professional development programs for teachers and department heads to enhance

pedagogical knowledge and foster continuous learning Secondly, it highlights the need to broaden the focus of classroom observations to include assessment practices, in addition to teaching and learning aspects. Thirdly, the study underscores the importance of establishing consistency in observation reports across different departments to ensure fairness and objectivity. Moreover, the research recommends a more holistic approach to observations, encompassing all relevant curriculum components. By considering these implications, educational institutions can improve curriculum implementation, observation practices, and overall professional growth, ultimately leading to enhanced teaching and learning outcomes.

5.4 Limitations

- Study Design and Sample Size

As this is a qualitative single case study, the finding cannot be generalised. A rationale generalisation could be applied rather than a statistical generalisation.

- Hawthorne effect

The participants in this study know the researcher. As a result, their responses might be impacted by their feeling that they are under study.

5.5 Recommendations

- Recommendation for School leadership

It is important to consider monitoring heads of department judgments in classroom

observation. Moreover, the observation rubric needs to be more inclusive to all curriculum aspects. Most importantly, teachers' appraisal process should be more comprehensive and should not depend on classroom observation per se.

- Recommendations for Heads of Departments

It is important to conduct professional development sessions to support teachers in their practices. Teachers need to be supported and well-informed about the goal of the observation.

- Recommendation for future Researchers

It is beneficial for future researchers to utilise the quantitative research method in studying this topic to get more generalisable data.

5.6 Concluding Remarks and Notes

This research has shed light on various aspects of classroom observation and its effectiveness in evaluating curriculum implementation and teacher performance. The findings have revealed significant insights into the perspectives and experiences of teachers and heads of departments regarding classroom observations. It has become evident that there are misconceptions about the curriculum among teachers, and the current observation process primarily focuses on teaching practices, neglecting other important elements of the curriculum.

Likewise, the study has underlined the inconsistency in the observation reports,

which can undermine the reliability and validity of the observations. The Hawthorne Effect has also been identified as a factor that impacts the authenticity of observed practices. These findings emphasize the need for improvements in the design and implementation of classroom observations, including the development of comprehensive observation forms that encompass all aspects of the curriculum. In this respect, this study highlighted the importance of filling the gap in teachers' appraisal policy to ensure professional practices.

To address the limitations and enhance the effectiveness of classroom observation, this research recommends the implementation of long-term professional development programs for both teachers and heads of departments. Such programs can enhance teachers' understanding of the curriculum, promote professionalism, and provide guidance on conducting meaningful and unbiased classroom observations. As mentioned earlier, establishing clear appraisal policies and guidelines can help alleviate the pressure associated with observations and create a supportive environment for professional growth.

Finally, it is important to note that this study has focused on a specific context and utilised a qualitative approach, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Further research with larger samples and diverse contexts is warranted to validate and extend these findings. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective curriculum implementation and teacher evaluation, offering valuable insights for educational

policymakers, school leaders, and practitioners aiming to improve the quality of education through evidence-based practices.

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