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The Structure for Teaching as a Component of the Education Systems of South Africa and India: A Comparative Study

Abstract

This research focused on the structure for teaching as a component of the education systems of South Africa and India. India and South Africa form part of the BRICS grouping, and BRICS have set out certain development goals about quality education. This qualitative interpretive study utilised relevant documents from India and South Africa that focused on the structure of teaching. The relevant documents were analysed by employing content analysis. The structure for teaching in the national education system organises and formulates the framework for education in the applicable countries. The study aimed to identify differences and similarities regarding the following elements of the structure for teaching. The elements foci were educational levels and the medium of instruction. One of the aims was to enhance the structure for teaching and learning in the BRICS countries. This research forms part of a larger BRICS project that compares the four components of the education systems and its elements as well as the internal and external determinates of the BRICS member states. It will contribute to a BRICS Education Encyclopaedia.

Keywords: structure for teaching, education system, component, comparative study

Introduction

Education plays a very important part in shaping the lives of people and assisting them with the challenges ahead of them. Education can become effective if there is a structure to which it should adhere. This study investigated the influence the educational structure has on South Africa and India's education systems. Children in the elementary group are entitled to receive free and compulsory education as highlighted in the right of Children to Free and Compulsory Act of 2009. Anderson and Lightfoot (2019, p. 1) indicate that India has the largest school education system in the world. Each year India has more than 260 million enrolments in their 15-million schools. They have over 8.7 million teachers in primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, Anderson and Lightfoot (2019, p. 1) stated that India gained independence from Britain in 1947 and the Education Department operated under the Ministry of Human Resource Department (MHRD). The Department of Education aimed to see an increase in quality education and in 1968 they had their first National Policy on Education. India's economic growth placed a limit on the expense of the education sector but towards the end of the 20th century huge progress was made. In 2000 India committed to the Millennium Development Goals and ever since great progress was administered within primary education. The government or the private sector owns schools and educational institutions in India.

Gumede and Biyase (2016, p. 69) indicate that South Africa's education sphere has changed drastically since apartheid was abolished in 1994. Duvenhage (cited in De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009, p. 359) stated the transformation in education played a crucial role in the transformation of the South African community. Msila (2007, p. 149) stated that the transformation from apartheid education to post-apartheid education did not come without any obstacles. After OBE was reviewed in 2004 the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was introduced, providing a foundation for the transformation of the curriculum in South Africa. The RNCS was against how education, during apartheid, brought separation and inequality but rather the RNCS steered toward a system that embraced democracy from which teachers and learners could benefit.

Research questions

What was the nature of the structure for teaching as a component of the education systems of South Africa and India with the focus on the medium of instruction and educational levels? The following secondary questions contributed towards answering the above primary question:

- What were the similarities regarding the nature of the structure for teaching as a component of the education systems of South Africa and India with the focus on the medium of instruction and educational levels?
- What were the differences regarding the nature of the structure for teaching as a component of the education systems of South Africa and India with the focus on the medium of instruction and educational levels?

Deming's theory

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Deming's theory of profound knowledge, which is based on four components (Evans, 1996). This theory can be applied to an organization that wishes to have a more effective system in place that will at the end of the day provide quality results. Every component involved in that system or organisation will feel like they have something positive to contribute and that working together as a team is not a pain but rather a pleasure.

Education system

According to De Beer, Vos and Niemczyk (2022, p. 11), the education system is "the structure or framework for effective education to provide in the real education needs of the target group". In other words, the education system is a structured guide that helps to achieve quality education by focusing on the needs of those involved. The authors state that an education system is made up of the Education System Policy, Education System Administration, Structure of Teaching, and Support Services. Stone (1981) believed that an education system is regarded as a connecting structure that consists of the state, the different households, the different teacher structures, and educational organisations consisting of their authority in the lane they have to function.

Components of education system

The various types of educational systems are distinguished by a common structure that defines them as educational systems. The education system is made up of several parts, referred to as components, and each component is made up of various sub-divisions, referred to as elements of an education system. The components of the education system consist of policy, administration, support services and the structure of teaching. The latter applied to this study (De Beer, Vos & Niemczyk, 2022, p. 11).

The education system policy

The education system policy is defined as a formal statement in which target groups will be served according to their educational demands. The education system policy is legally binding, and it provides a framework in which decisions should be made in terms of the provision of facilities, what services should be delivered and how activities should be done. The education system policy makes it possible for the education system administration, the structure of teaching and the support services to function effectively to provide in the educational demands of those involved (De Beer, Vos & Niemczyk, 2022, p. 58).

The education system administration

The education system administration includes the control of education, how the education system is organised, and the management of the education system (De Beer, Vos & Niemczyk, 2022, p. 79).

Support services

Support services are provided to improve the quality of success of education. These services are conducted by specialists in their specific field of work. Teachers and learners benefit from support services to ensure that they give their best and contribute to an effective and quality education system (De Beer, Vos & Niemczyk, 2022, p. 138).

Structure for teaching

Include all the different educational institutions and the different levels of education. Structure for teaching aims at effectively providing a learning and teaching environment that will serve the different needs, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses of individuals as well as providing accordingly to the requests that are made by the parties involved and the community (De Beer, Vos & Niemczyk, 2022, p. 100).

The components of the educational structure can be identified as follows (De Beer, Vos & Niemczyk, 2022, p. 121):

- Educational institutions, which comprises a description of all the numerous educational institutions on various educational levels, as well as their goals, nature, and operation.

- Curricula and differentiation, which describe the many educational programs offered at various educational levels and various educational institutions, as well as the various types of differentiation offered.
- Educators as an element related to the gender, age, credentials, and salary of educators in educational systems, as well as training possibilities for educators. The learners as an element refer to the age, gender, admission requirements, and other general requirements expected from learners.
- The educational spaces and physical facilities report focus on the quantitative and qualitative state of the educational spaces and facilities in the school system.
- The education level, such as pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary.
- The medium of instruction is used to organize the languages that are used in teaching and learning.

For this research, we only focused on the education level and the medium of instruction.

Comparative study

According to Khakpour (2012, p. 20), comparative studies can be defined as “when individuals or teams’ study particular topics or phenomena in the formation of two or more countries”. The author further stated that similarities and differences between two subjects may also be explained within a comparative study. Furthermore, Bukhari (2011, p. 4) maintained that the purpose of comparative studies is “to arrive at some conclusions concerning past occurrences”.

Research design and methodology

Akhtar (2016, p. 68) describes research design as the structure of the research. It is the “glue” that holds all the elements in a research project together. The author further stated that a research design is vital seeing that it contributes to the progress of numerous research procedures. Nieuwenhuis (2020, p. 59) highlights that “all qualitative research is naturalistic, it focuses on natural settings when interactions occur, in other words, viewing social life in terms of processes that occur rather than in static terms”. Qualitative researchers are keen to find the answers as to how humans organise themselves and the context they find themselves in.

Similarities regarding the nature of the structure for teaching of the education systems of South Africa and India with the focus on levels and medium of instruction

The educational levels as a component of the structure for teaching

South Africa

According to Steyn and Wolhuter (2014, p. 95) the school pattern in South Africa is as follows:

- Pre-school (ages 4-5);
- Foundation phase, grades 1-3 (ages 7-9);

- Intermediate, grades 4-6 (ages 10-12);
- Senior phase, grades 7-9 (ages 13-15);
- Further education and training, grades 10-12 (ages 16-18).

India

According to Anderson and Lightfoot (2019, p. 15) India's education structure has the following levels:

- Primary education – five grades (ages 6-10);
- Upper primary education – also referred to as middle school, lasts 3 years, grades 6-8 (ages 11-14);
- Lower secondary education – grades 9-10 (ages 15-16), non-compulsory according to Right to Education Act 2009;
- Higher secondary education – grades 11-12 (ages 17-18).

The National Education Policy of India (NEP 2020) lays forth the country's educational vision. The 1986 National Policy on Education has been replaced with the new policy. In both rural and urban India, the program provides a comprehensive framework for basic through higher education, as well as vocational training. By 2021, the strategy intends to completely alter India's educational sector. The 10+2 structure is being replaced with the 5+3+3+4 form in NEP 2020. 5+3+3+4 refers to the first five years of a child's life, whether they are in an anganwadi, a pre-school, or a balvatika. Then, from grades 3 through 5, there are three years of preparatory learning. This is followed by a three-year intermediate stage and then a four-year secondary stage till grade 12 or 18 years of age (Kulkarni, 2020).

Similarities

Both South Africa and India have different levels to their education system. Both countries end grade 12 with the proposed 18 years of age. The South African and Indian education systems have the same structure that is connected to age in their educational levels.

Differences

The South African school system levels are 4+3+3+3 (Foundation phase, grades R-3; Intermediate phase, grades 4-6; Senior phase, grades 7-9; Further education and training, grades 10-12). India's levels were 5+3+2+2, but the NEP of India changed in 2020 to 5+3+3+4 (Foundation phase, pre-kindergarten to grade 2; Preparatory stage, grades 3-5; Middle stage, grades 6-8; and Secondary stage, grades 9-12). Thus, the Indian structure for teaching uses one more year during the Foundation phase, compared to the South African structure. The assumption is that it is important to lay a solid foundation through starting at an earlier age, for a learner to be ready for the next phase. The final stage of the school structure in India is one year more than the SA structure.

The medium of instruction as a component of the structure for teaching

South Africa

There are 11 official languages in South Africa. All of these home languages are taught in the first year of school. Before 2009, schools serving non-English speakers

were required to teach English as a subject exclusively from grade 3 forward, and grade 4 onwards, all courses were taught in English (except in Afrikaans language schools). In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 “The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy subject to the Constitution, this Act and any provincial law”. Since 2009, all schools have taught English as a subject beginning in grade 1 and all subjects beginning in grade 4. The exception is Afrikaans language schools, where all topics (excluding foreign languages) are taught in Afrikaans (Statssa, 2017).

India

Rizvi (2016, p. 224) states that

Three language formulas were enunciated in the National Policy Resolution (1968). The formula of language learning was formulated by the Union Education Ministry of Government of India in consultation with states.

According to Anderson and Lightfoot (2019, p. 26)

The government developed a three-language formula for schools. This formula envisaged that students should study two languages and English. The most common languages in India are Hindi and the state language. Both the Indian Constitution and the Right to Education Act assert that the medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be the child’s mother tongue.

Anderson and Lightfoot (2019, p. 27) further asserts that

While some states have introduced English Medium Instruction across the board others have tried to resist the early transition to English Medium.

The National Education Policy 2020 ‘emphasised’ the use of mother tongue or local language as the medium of teaching until grade 5, while also recommended that it be continued until grade 8 and beyond. It also stipulates that the pupils will not be forced to learn a language. The NEP’s language policy is intended to be a broad guideline and advisory in nature, with states, institutions, and schools deciding how to implement it (Chopra, 2020).

Similarities

The importance of learners being taught in their mother tongue when they begin schooling is evident in both country’s teaching structures. The second similarity is that English features in both the Indian and South African teaching structures. The importance of English as an universal language is realised.

Differences

In South Africa the school has a governing body that decides on the language policy for a school that is in line with other compulsory legislation. In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 members who serve on the governing body comprised of “Parents of learners at the school; educators at the school; members of staff at the school; and learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school”. Whereas in India the state, institutions, and schools get to make the decision based on language policy for schools. The second difference is that learners in the Indian school system will not be forced to learn a language. The third difference is that English is taught as a subject in the South African school structure from grade 1

onwards, while schools in India have an option, depending on the decision made by state, institutions and school.

Findings

The different educational structures in the South Africa and Indian education system, make it possible for institutions to cater to the different educational levels. In both countries, there is a law in place that promotes free and compulsory school. Learners who are between the given ages that fall under compulsory education should be attending school until the cut-off age for compulsory school. In terms of the legislation in South Africa, the medium of instruction is English in most South African schools, where 65% of the school system chose to learn through the medium of English. However, in India, the education system does not regard English as their medium of instruction but rather their mother tongue languages and Hindi. According to UNICEF (2016, p. 3) “It is important to maintain an appropriate role for English because the global dominance is English”. These compressed findings will be added to the BRICS Education System Encyclopedia.

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