

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the major findings that emerged from the detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative data that was scientifically collected and analyzed. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative analysis facilitated the researcher to evolve the study's findings. The major findings are presented in this chapter sequentially along the lines of research questions and objectives.

The following are the key findings of the study:

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The study revealed that IB schools are situated in urban/semi-urban localities established by private bodies with large campuses, well-equipped labs, libraries, adequate learning resources, and a wide range of amenities. These schools catered to the elite social class.
2. The study revealed that in the sample schools, the majority of the teachers were female, having multidisciplinary academic backgrounds with teacher education certification (B.Ed.- 64%, IB certification- 24%).
3. It was found from the study that all IB schools adopted a school-based curriculum development process by strictly adhering to the guidelines of the IB PYP framework developed by IBO. A coherent and contextualized inputs in the curriculum were found interesting and challenging.
4. The study revealed that curriculum development in IB schools is a dynamic process in which different stakeholders such as principals, PYP coordinators, teachers, and students actively engage in developing transdisciplinary themes, integrating learner profile, and planning inquiry-based learning experiences, assessment practices, and learning outcomes. It was found that the curriculum development in IB schools is a collaborative and cooperative endeavor in which discussions, negotiations, and collective consensus were essential elements.
5. It was observed that the schools aligned IB international curriculum with the national curriculum framework to facilitate the students' further academic progression. Extensive mapping of the curricula (PYP and national curriculum) in the sample

schools overshadowed the essential elements of the international IB curriculum (intercultural education and global citizenship education).

6. Parental aspirations and expectations were found to be major external influencing factors while taking decisions in curriculum development. Parental expectations reflected the standardized assessment practices and their urge for their children to perform in such examinations.
7. It was observed that most parents preferred PYP for their wards and then migrated them to other national boards for their secondary and higher secondary education. Therefore, the transfer rate from PYP to MYP was found to be low.
8. It was found from the study that the majority of the teachers (85%) have the knowledge and positive attitudes toward the IB curriculum. This was observed through their practices in creating a positive classroom environment, developing age-appropriate inquiries, differentiated teaching and assessment, concept-based learning, and collaborative-activity-based learning cultures.
9. The study revealed that teachers with more years of experience in PYP and IB professional development had a positive perspective on curriculum management in PYP.
10. Transdisciplinary approach to teaching was found as a core element of the PYP curriculum; however, significant variations were observed in making connections across and beyond subject areas to bring out the human commonality. These variations were due to teachers' diversified disciplinary backgrounds and orientations.
11. It was observed and perceived by the teachers that in the name of transdisciplinary approach, an interdisciplinary approach was predominantly found. Transdisciplinary learning in terms of transcending the subject boundaries to bring out human commonalities needs more focus and there is a scope for improvement.
12. It was found from the study that the holistic development of students in PYP was through integrating Learner Profile and Personal Social Physical Education (PSPE) in daily school practices.
13. The majority of the teachers perceived that the cultural context plays a vital role in nurturing Learner Profile among students. Though teachers plan and implement activities on each Learner Profile attribute; risk taker, reflective and inquirer were found to be challenging to implement.
14. It was found from the study that a host of assessment tools and techniques were used to study the learning outcome of the students. The prominent approaches for student

assessment were multimodal performance assessment and peer assessment. The use of portfolios, rubrics, role plays, reflective journals, and anecdotal records were prominent.

15. was found from the study that the majority of the students in the sample schools perceived that the pedagogical process was engaging, enjoying, and empowering because of the collaborative and inquiry approaches. However, diversity in students' scholastic attainments was observed.
16. The study found that there was a systematic program evaluation done both by IB and the school itself at specific time intervals to monitor the quality outcomes of PYP.
17. It was found from the study that a decentralized management approach through distributed leadership models was adopted for managing academic and administrative tasks in the schools in which principals and PYP coordinators play leadership roles at different levels. Moreover, teacher leadership was perceived as an important factor in the pedagogic leadership of the school.
18. The study also revealed that the priorities of the school administration in terms of economic viability, student enrolment, and sustainability, the focus was more on marketing and public relations than creating opportunities for teacher development.
19. The study identified the following major challenges for the effective implementation of the PYP curriculum in schools.
 - High teacher attrition
 - Professional training and development
 - Teacher experience
 - Academic planning
 - Parental awareness of PYP and involvement in student's learning
20. It was found that there is a great degree of flexibility and autonomy in the development and implementation process of the PYP curriculum; the pedagogical leadership was found to be most significant in making the PYP curriculum effective. The study revealed that institutional accountability and conviction is the key to translating the IB PYP framework into effective educational practices in schools.

5.3 DISCUSSION

International Baccalaureate emerged in India in 1976 and started gaining momentum in the last two decades. The IB schools emerged as a response to the demand from the parents of high socio-economic groups who aspired to get their children a different kind of education that

ensures success in the global market. The proliferation of IB and its far-reaching impact on curriculum, pedagogy, and educational policies in several national systems was the stimulus for this study.

This research mainly focused on the contextualization of IB PYP in the Indian context. The mixed method study produced notable findings on how the schools developed, implemented and evaluated the PYP curriculum and how pedagogical leadership supported the curriculum management process. Further, the study illuminated the strategies, processes, practices and conditions created by the schools that enabled the successful implementation of the PYP program in the Indian context. In addition, several challenges in implementing PYP were also delineated. The findings of the study are discussed under three main themes- a) Growth and assimilation of IB PYP in the national context, b) Curriculum management for relevance, coherence and consistency, and c) Pedagogical leadership for effective curriculum management.

Growth and assimilation of IB PYP in the national context

The study's findings shed light on the various factors that fueled the assimilation of IB programs, especially the PYP program in the Indian context. This section discusses the role of educational policies at the national level, IB's strategies, parental aspiration and acceptance and processes of contextualization at the school level as driving factors for the growth and assimilation of the PYP program in the national context.

In a national context, generally, education, schooling and curriculum are governed and operationalized within a nation. With the widespread neo-liberal policies in India, many transnational educational organizations are percolating into national education systems. The IB is one of the transnational educational organizations where the education programs and curriculum is governed and regulated beyond the nation. The IB have demonstrated greater acceptance and resilience over time to embed itself within a variety of national setting effectively. Many researchers (Cambridge, 2002; Mathews & Hill, 2005; Phillips & Pound, 2003) have studied the feasibility of IB curriculum implementation in different national settings and alignment with the national curriculum to explain the flexibility and success of IB models. In many cases, IB has succeeded in becoming a significant alternative in several national education systems (Resnik, 2012). It indicates that the neo-liberal education policies and lenient regulations at the macro level have encouraged the growth of IB programs in India.

The high brand name of IB at the global level and its innovation and flexibility to contextualize IB curriculum to the local context have attracted many private schools in India to get IB affiliation. Among all the programs, PYP is growing at a high rate; in this study, it was observed that many national schools with the national curriculum for middle and high school are adopting PYP for early and primary-level for pedagogical approaches. Moreover, unlike other IB programs, the operation is feasible, and acceptance is higher for PYP. Further, as Guy (2010) pointed out in his study, many schools in India with anyone IB program affiliation cross-brand to increase their market value in the highly competitive international school market. This may imply that many schools opt for PYP and cross-brand their schools as IB schools to achieve distinctiveness in the market.

The growth of PYP can also be attributed to the greater assimilation into the national education system. Contextualization of the curriculum is crucial to assimilating the IB PYP program into a national context. Schools hold the sole responsibility of developing the curriculum taking into consideration of the local community and national needs. Lauridsen (2003) and Mayer (2010) found that parental influence and the community influenced curriculum development. The schools aligned to the state and national curriculum and standardized tests to gain credibility in the community. Similarly, the findings from the study indicate that the schools extensively mapped the national curriculum with the PYP curriculum for a smooth transition from IB to other national boards and to gain acceptance in the larger community. This is consistent with the findings from the study conducted in India (Pushpanadham, 2013). The flexibility and autonomy provided in the PYP framework enabled a higher degree of contextualization of the PYP curriculum in the school context. For instance, the transdisciplinary themes, Learner profile attributes, and key concepts of PYP were interpreted by teachers based on local needs and their socio-cultural educational experiences. In addition, the cross-national study conducted by Wright et al. (2016) indicated the opportunities PYP and MYP curricular frameworks provide to contextualize the curriculum based on the needs of the schools and students.

While the PYP curriculum is contextualized to a greater degree to cater to the local and national demands, some of the core features like international mindedness and intercultural education are often given less emphasis in bringing the global perspective. The study found that the Learner Profile, which is the embodiment of international mindedness, was interpreted by the teachers to suit the local context; similarly, Cause (2009) found that the demonstration of LP was expressed based on the practitioners' beliefs and experience than on the global normative

sense. Many scholars suggest that international-mindedness in IB is defined at a high level of generality, leading to diverse interpretations (Gunesch, 2007; Haywood, 2007).

Further, implementing the Profile in non-western contexts was problematic for educators, particularly when learner attributes clash with the socio-cultural norms of the local context. For example, in the present study, teachers identified critical thinking and risk takers as attributes that do not easily fit within the traditional Indian culture of learning as its underpinning assumptions about individuality and action clash with the more collective mindset of the teaching context. Similarly, Elkay (2011) identified risk-takers as an attribute clashing with the Middle-Eastern learning culture. This results in cultural discontinuity when 'western' values are implemented in non-western contexts (Elkay, 2011; Haywood, 2007; Rizvi et al., 2014; Van Oord, 2013).

In addition, it was found that the focus on intercultural understanding from a global perspective was limited in the curriculum. The inclusion of global/ intercultural education revolved around activities related to food, flags, festivals and music from various countries. Although these activities brought intercultural awareness among students, such superficial notions of cultures might lead to stereotyping and over-generalization of cultures.

The school needs to focus on contextualizing and providing a considerable global perspective in the curriculum; in other words, schools need to promote international mindedness whilst embracing national mindedness. IB needs to provide further guidance on interpreting international mindedness within a non-western national context and including intercultural education in the PYP curriculum.

Curriculum management for relevance, coherence and consistency

The PYP curriculum is rigorous and challenging for both students and teachers. The findings indicated that the school had standardized processes and procedures involving various stakeholders at different levels and degrees to achieve relevance, coherence and consistency in the curriculum. Collaboration among stakeholders was identified as the key factor that facilitated curriculum management. All participants stated that collaborative planning was a necessity, not just a requirement, for effective PYP implementation. These findings were consistent with the previous studies that highlighted collaboration as the most crucial element in organizing and implementing curriculum (Lauridsen, 2003; Coppersmith, 2013) to bring coherence and quality in IB schools (Sillisano et al., 2011; Lester & Lochmiller, 2014).

Effective curriculum management ensured the curriculum relevance in written, taught and assessed curriculum. Curriculum relevance in this context refers to the applicability and appropriateness of a curriculum to the needs, interests, aspirations and expectations of learners and society in general. It was found that parental expectations, national demands, student needs, and IB guidelines were strictly considered for developing the written curriculum. Since teachers were involved in the curriculum development, they brought in the knowledge of learners' needs and interests. These aspects indicate that learners' and society's (local and global) needs and expectations were taken into account, increasing the curriculum's relevance.

Relevance was also achieved by adopting learner-centric pedagogies. Teachers' commitment to a learner-centric approach and pedagogical competencies impacts teaching-learning. The study found that most teachers in PYP adopted inquiry approaches in classrooms. Other studies (Twigg, 2010; Bergeron & Dean, 2013; Sillisano et al., 2010; Lochmiller, Lucero, & Lester, 2016) also showed that IB teachers' belief was aligned with learner-centric approach and more likely to adopt inquiry methods compared to other teachers. Also, the study's findings indicated that most teachers used differentiated instruction and assessment to make the PYP curriculum relevant and interesting for students.

Coherence and consistency in the curriculum were achieved through internal and external mechanisms. Curriculum coherence in this context refers to the characteristic of the curriculum which indicates the extent to which the curriculum aims, content, learning material, pedagogical practices and assessments are aligned and reinforce each other. The extensive review (horizontal and vertical) during the curriculum development phase ensured that the aims, content, pedagogical, and assessment practices were aligned to support the developmental progression and balance of all PYP elements. Further, the PYP coordinators continuously reviewed the PYP planners and other learning materials to check the coherence and consistency with the written curriculum (POI). In addition, the coordinators conducted a series of classroom observations to ensure the teachers translated the written curriculum effectively.

The study found that the schools conduct an internal assessment of curricular and pedagogical practices and their outcomes – this is called self-study. The self-study was a collaborative process involving the school head, principal, PYP coordinator, teachers, students and parents to assess the curriculum and its impact on student learning. Most teachers had a positive perception of self-study as it helped them increase the consistency in the curriculum and

improve their performance. Apart from the internal mechanism, the PYP schools underwent external IB evaluations. As a part of the program evaluation, the IB conducted an evaluation visit to verify the assessment carried out by the school to ensure PYP standards were followed and sustained. Most of the teachers had positive experiences with IB evaluation. Overall, the internal and external mechanisms of curriculum evaluation seemed to enhance curriculum coherence and consistency in PYP and also motivated teachers and administrators to improve their performances.

Pedagogical leadership for curriculum management

Pedagogical leadership is identified as one of the key components in curriculum management in PYP. The findings indicated that principals as pedagogic leaders exercised leadership to enhance curriculum, teachers and learners.

The pedagogical leadership team was responsible for procuring and sustaining quality resources and developing favorable conditions, strategic processes, and competency to implement PYP in the schools. Findings indicated that all the schools had availability and accessibility to good infrastructure and a wide range of facilities. Also, it was found that the teachers utilized the resources efficiently in teaching-learning.

One of the main activities of the pedagogical leadership team was teacher selection and professional development. The schools put in a great effort to select and develop teachers. In India, access to quality teachers is constrained by the supply, and there is a shortage of IB-trained teachers; also, the constraint is due to the paradigm shift that teachers need to be able to make in a system like PYP. Student teachers in teacher education in India are not exposed to the different educational approaches and realities. As such, not many pre-service teacher training programs adequately prepare teachers to contribute to the IB curriculum (Pushpanadham, 2013). IB provides professional development and training opportunities to promote consistent standards across schools and countries to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared, keeping in mind that IB programs require a substantial shift in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and teachers trained in national contexts are generally exposed to the traditional teacher centered approaches (Hill, 2001). It was found that the schools sponsored the teachers to attend IB workshops for professional development. Although many teachers gave positive feedback on IB workshops, some senior teachers expressed that IB workshops were vague and did not directly cater to their teaching requirements in a particular school or student body, especially with regard to the practice of transdisciplinary curriculum and Learner Profile implementation. This was similar to the findings from the previous study (Drake &

Savage, 2016), where the teachers reported that the IB workshops were too broad and lacked depth.

It was found that many schools conducted in-house teacher development programs and encouraged teachers to participate in regional-level workshops, as providing continuous IB workshops was expensive for the schools. Principals and teachers in the study suggested that IB provide cost-effective and need-based workshops.

School-community partnerships were also identified as an essential component of pedagogic leadership. Around 80% of participants indicated that their principals engaged in community development. Since most schools do not have an international student and teacher population, the schools need to establish international academic partnerships to create authentic international culture and diversity where students and teachers develop international mindedness and global citizenship through intercultural understanding.

The study found that the distributed leadership approach to leadership practices enhanced and sustained PYP practices in the school. According to Harris (2004), distribution leadership is where leadership roles and responsibilities are shared and distributed among staff; with pedagogical leadership, the leaders are responsible for creating a learning community of teachers, students, parents and a larger community (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

Distributed leadership in PYP schools was observed predominantly in terms of the distribution of roles and responsibilities. However, leadership is about decision-making rather than the delivery of decisions that have been made (Covey, 1992). Pedagogical leadership not only invites teachers to make decisions in their classrooms as advocated in teachers' leadership (Emira, 2010) but also encourages teachers' participation in organizational decision making including the broader community (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). The study found diverse and contrasting teacher autonomy practices, especially regarding the power of making decisions at the classroom, organizational and community levels. While some teachers expressed they had a certain degree of autonomy in curricular and pedagogical decision-making in planning lessons, other senior teachers shared contrasting experiences where they reported that they are mandated to follow a set of teaching and assessment schedules pre-decided by the higher leadership team. In general, participants did not provide evidence of involvement in decision-making at the organizational and community levels. However, it is essential to note that teachers reported involving in leadership roles such as mentoring, supervising peers and providing professional development; all these components are identified

under distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006). The study revealed the limitation of distributed leadership practices by evidencing that the teachers' willingness and competencies are significant for the commitment to pedagogical leadership. As noted in previous studies, distributed leadership requires teachers to take on additional responsibilities but not all teachers and staff are willing or capable of leading. Some researchers also have noted that the hierarchical nature of leadership in education in the past can challenge the notion of principals sharing leadership roles with teachers and other faculty members. Further, it was found that lack of training and experience for teachers to take on leadership responsibilities (Torrance, 2013) and lack of training for principals using distributed leadership models in school (Vlachadi & Ferla, 2013) limited the practice of distributed leadership. These findings suggest that schools need to create favorable conditions and empower teachers and principals to take the roles of pedagogic leaders. In this direction, IB needs to provide greater support through workshops and conferences.

The study has come out with significant findings and initiated pertinent discussions on how international curriculum/education can be adopted nationally and how such an adoption impacts the micro and macro education systems. In particular, the study identified several vital components and processes of curriculum development, implementation, evaluation and pedagogical leadership in PYP schools. Curricular and leadership models evolved based on this empirical study. School leaders and education practitioners can utilize these models to develop a learner-centric school-based curriculum effectively. Further, the findings have paved the way for discussions and discoveries on the impact and consequences of IB education in the Indian education system.