3.0   INTRODUCTION

Referring to the available literature cited in the previous chapter, it can be clearly deduced that pedagogy as a major quality indicator tends to bear on several relevant aspects such as teaching-learning practices, curriculum transaction and evaluation. Thus, to examine all these mentioned pedagogical aspects in an all-inclusive way, a method was required with a broad capability through which the researcher could collect comprehensive data in descriptive and extensive form. Consequently, since the aim of the study was to figure out the appropriateness of the daily basis pedagogical practices in connection with the quality of secondary school education in Afghanistan, the descriptive survey was determined as an appropriate method to be employed to answer all predetermined research questions.

The heart of any research embodied in its research methodology, which shares the idea about how the study was conducted step by step. It refers to the action plan and procedures used by the researcher for conducting the study. This chapter deals with the methodology which was adopted in order to obtain answers to the research questions and to attain the objectives of the study. Accordingly, this chapter includes the rationale of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, operationalization of the terms, delimitations of the study, population, sample, design of the study, plan, and procedure, tools and techniques, procedure of data collection and data analysis. The comprehensive detail of the overall methodology concerning the above aspects has been described as under.

3.1   RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

As mentioned previously, Afghanistan came out of the constant war in 2001 but unfortunately this country is still suffering from ongoing political turmoil. At the same time, a legitimate government The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan led by an elected

president is ruling this country now. Over the past nineteen years, a lot of remarkable achievements, particularly in the sector of education were made by the government in partnership with international donors. Despite all these efforts, the quality of secondary school education is poor and not satisfactory to the citizens of this country. One of the deciding contributory factors to the low quality of education, as per the analysis reports, is unqualified teachers and their traditional teaching methods. (Education Sector Analysis Report, 2010; EFA, Review Report, 2015; NESP, 2016; WENR, 2016; CIC, 2016) But still, there was not even a single academic study on Afghan teachers' pedagogical strategies except the above mentioned reports which were published by the Afghan government and some other organizations.

The Afghan education system after a long-lasting war is facing a number of challenges and deficiencies and for this reason, the quality of school education is a considerably high controversial issue for the Afghan public. Hence, experts of education, students, parents and the reports published by governmental and non-governmental organizations have been frequently expressing their concerns attached to the role of poor instruction in the quality of school education in Afghanistan. They have raised a lot of questions on the quality of teaching-learning activities, evaluation and assessment procedures, and curriculum implementation practices in schools. But, as it is mentioned earlier there was not even a single academic study on these mentioned areas, trustworthy evidence was needed to prove whether the pedagogical practices in schools are truly unsatisfying. Therefore, taking the importance of pedagogy as a quality indicator in education and with regard to public dissatisfaction with the quality of school education, the researcher had come up with the idea of carrying out this important study to discover the truth and respond to the questions of Afghan public. Since no research study has been conducted so far on the quality of Afghan secondary education, this study would be valuable work in this respect.

Since the present world is unprecedentedly competitive in every sector of life, quality education is the leading cause of all these rapid advances. Technology is a major instance of this progress which has become an inescapable part of our daily life, today. Therefore, all nations around the globe have shifted their focus from the quantity to quality of education. Nowadays the quality of education is being considered in relation to students' learning outcomes and their abilities to meet society and job-market

demands. There are a number of quality education indicators but knowing the significance of pedagogy as an essential quality indicator, it can be realized that pedagogy is the dominant one. Leach and Moon (1999) explained pedagogy as a joint effort activity. In other words, a set of attempts both teachers and learners make together in order to achieve the anticipated learning goals. Likewise, pedagogy is the set of teaching-learning practices that form the interaction between teacher and students. The educational systems in today's world have discovered more new effective innovations in classroom pedagogical practices. It is commonly believed that quality teaching in schools guarantees the quality of education in general. (Pearce& Husbands, 2012) For this specific reason, more new pedagogical models have been developed such as, student-centered pedagogy, inclusive education, active pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy. (OECD, 2018) Accordingly, a competent teacher is supposed to be aware of all these contemporary developments.

On the other hand, quality instruction has a significant impact on students' academic achievement and it is believed that teacher's pedagogical knowledge has more impact on students' performance than content-related knowledge. Particularly, pedagogical content knowledge is supposed to have an impact on the quality of teaching. (OECD, 2014) Equally, research studies also indicate that there is a strong relationship between teacher pedagogical practices and students' academic performance. (Bird, 2017; Sirait, 2016; Duruji, Azuh and Oviasogie, 2014; Ganyaupfu, 2013; Sisilya, 2012; Marikoviz, Bjekic and Zlatic, 2012; Suwan, 2011; Lata, 2011; Dilshad, 2010 and Heck, 2009) Despite the fact that quality teacher is a significant performance-affecting indicator in the education system, but in the same manner, an unqualified teacher can be a reasonable cause of students' poor performance and even school dropout. A critical literature review on school dropout conducted by De Witte et al. (2013) concluded that the teacher is one of the key factors for this problem. Particularly in Afghanistan, the dropout rate is an issue of concern. The NESP (2016) showed that 18.3 percent of students of the total number were permanently absent in 2014. These children might be enrolled in some other schools or they might be dropped out. Likewise, findings of a study carried out by Noori (2017) on the factors contributing to the girls' dropout in Afghanistan, revealed that teacher and his/her attitude towards students was one of the crucial factors of school dropout. When one considers the teacher as a factor of school

dropout, it refers to his/her teaching methodology, attitude, evaluation strategy and procedures and the way he/she interacts with students.

In view of that, this study was designed to be carried out in Paktia, the south-eastern province of Afghanistan with around one million residents. The province is a primary administrative division which encompasses a number of districts and villages. The geographical area of Paktia province can be seen from Figure 3.1.
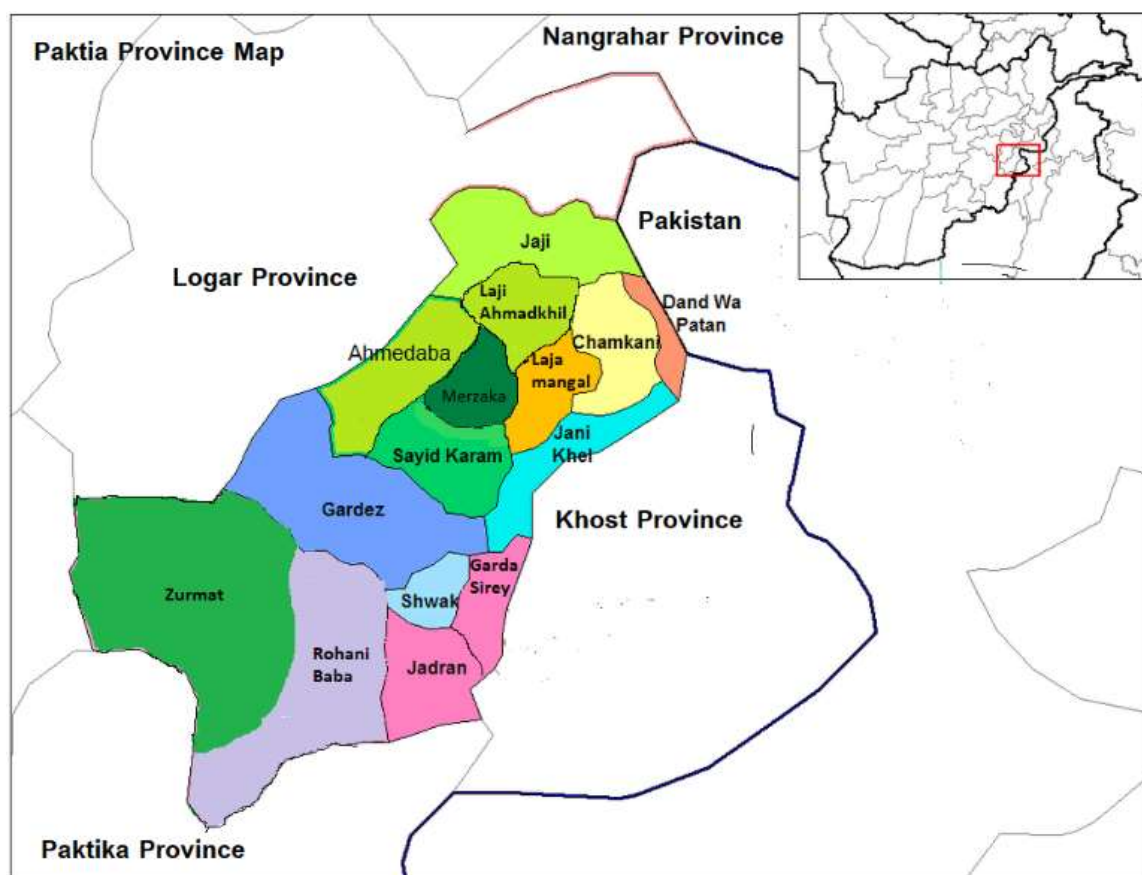

Figure 3.1   Geographical Area of Paktia Province

(*Source:* https://www.mapsofworld.com/afghanistan/provinces/paktiya-map.html)

Paktia province is about 104 kilometers away from the capital city Kabul. At present, there is a total of 352 schools, 16 Islamic studies centers, one main and 8 supportive teacher training colleges plus 15 other private schools. In addition to this, one governmental university, two professional studies institutes, and one private university are also there in this province. The first reason why the researcher has chosen this province for the study is that in this province, non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF, Care International, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank and other responsible organizations for the teacher training programs

alongside the Afghan government have implemented a large number of in-service-teacher training programs. Not only school teachers were the focus of these short term capacity building programs but principals and other administrative staff were also trained. Secondly, the researcher himself worked in an educational project which was conducted by Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC) in 2009-2010 in this province. This project aimed to train secondary school teachers and advance teachers' teaching capacity in all 13 districts of this province. So, the researcher as an insider was already a participant-observer of the situation.

Given the above discussion, the present study has been designed to investigate teachers' classroom performance for his/her pedagogical practices. In other words, it was intended to carry out a detailed analysis of what was happening inside the classrooms in secondary schools relating to classroom teaching-learning practices, curriculum implementation, and evaluation process. Consequently, the present study is considered to be a sincere effort for answering the following important questions especially about the education quality of Afghan secondary schools.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study was intended to answer three specific research questions, stated as below:

(i)   What are the usual teaching-learning approaches/methods the Afghan Secondary School teachers adopted conforming to the quality education?

(ii) To what extent the implemented curriculum and textbooks taught in the Afghan secondary schools are appropriate for quality education?

(iii) To what extent the evaluation procedures used by the Afghan school teachers are appropriate for ensuring quality education?

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been carried out with a view to achieve the following major objectives:

(i) To study the classroom pedagogical practices in secondary schools of Paktia province in Afghanistan with respect to:

- Teaching-Learning process
- Curriculum and text-books
- Evaluation procedures

(ii) To study pedagogy as a quality indicator in secondary schools of Paktia province in Afghanistan as perceived by the students, teachers, and principals.

3.4 EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS

- **Pedagogy**

Simply stated, pedagogy is the art and science of teaching. It is an academic concept commonly used in studies to describe teachers' teaching methods. The teaching method is a description of the way that information or behaviour is carried forward or consolidated during the instructional process. An instructional method is a set of approaches, principles, and techniques which the instructor uses to transfer knowledge and the required skills to students. Consequently, pedagogy is both the theories of various teaching-learning approaches and also the practice of these theories into action in real classrooms.

- **Curriculum**

The term curriculum refers to the academic content, materials or lessons taught in schools, course or an educational program. The term curriculum can also be used for the overall plan or design for a course and how the content for a course is transformed into a blueprint for the teaching and learning process which enables the desired learning outcomes to be achieved.

- **Evaluation**

Evaluation is a process that critically examines the effectiveness of the educational course. It involves collecting and analysing information about educational processes, their characteristics and outcomes. Its purpose is to make judgments about the

educational process, to improve its effectiveness and/or to inform decisions in terms of value judgment.

- **Quality of Education**

Quality of education refers to the degree of the entire educational process managed by the school or any other institution under the consideration of standards of quality i.e. quality of learners, quality of the curriculum, quality of management, quality of materials, quality of evaluation and quality of outcomes for the purpose of the fulfilling learners' requirements, needs or desire, satisfaction or demands and expectations of the community.

3.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to the secondary schools of Paktia province in Afghanistan. Also, pedagogy as a quality indicator was studied under the present study with respect to its three major parameters viz.: (a) the Teaching-learning process, (b) Curriculum and textbooks and (c) Evaluation procedures.

3.6 METHODOLOGY

The present study was all about pedagogy and the effects of pedagogical practices on the quality of education in secondary schools of Afghanistan. Thus, the present study was about what teaching-learning practices and strategies the Afghan secondary school teachers usually carry out in the classrooms. Hence, looking at the nature of the study, the methodology adopted for the present study was based on the Survey method.

3.6.1 Research Design

Once the problem, research questions, and objectives of the study were decided; the next important and consequential matter in research to be determined was the selection of an appropriate research design for the study. Different designs are used for qualitative and quantitative research studies. The present study was descriptive survey research which was conducted for the description of a specific situation (pedagogy) and behavior of a specific group of the participants (teachers and students), which has allowed the researcher not only to present the prevailing situation but also to interpret and report the existing facts on the ground. According to Best and Kahn (2006),

descriptive survey type studies are used to find out '*what is*' and therefore the detailed information is required for answering the research questions. So looking to the study and its objectives, a descriptive survey design was found the most appropriate method to collect detailed information about the current status of school education in Afghanistan with regard to teachers' teaching strategies and classroom pedagogical practices.

3.6.2 Population of the Study

According to Jackson (2009), the population is the total group of the people or objects to whom the results of the study are intended to be generalized. Afghanistan is made up of 34 provinces (*Wilayat-ولایت*) and each province comprises several districts (*wuleswali-ولسوالي*). As it was mentioned earlier, Afghanistan has suffered a long-lasting war and therefore access to reliable data and confidential statistics is still difficult. The Ministry of Education has recently established a central online database for the official statistics on education and school enrollment. Hence, the only source one can refer to at present is the available online data published by the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan on its official website. At the local level access to reliable data is still incredibly harder because the provincial Directorates of Education have not improved the access to their databases yet.

However, based on the statistical official reports and numerical data collected for the present study, the population of this study comprised all 189 schools (90 lower and 99 upper secondary schools in the year 2018), in 13 districts of Paktia province. All these government-funded schools were following a national curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education and the local authorized body. The Directorate of Education is responsible to control and monitor the implementation of the curriculum in the provincial schools. Also, all the principals and teachers along with all the students studying in these schools were the population of the study. It is noteworthy that in Afghanistan, due to the lack of the teaching staff at schools, teachers have to teach both in secondary and primary levels concurrently. According to the report of the Ministry of Education (2019), the national ratio of teacher-student was 1:42 in school education at the national level. The details of the population of the present study can be seen from Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Population of the Study

Districts of Paktia Province	Total No. of schools	Total No. of Principals	Total No. of Teachers	Total No. of Students
Gardiz	50	50	1297	11688
Zurmat	25	25	588	5614
Shwak	1	1	16	191
Waz-e- Zadran	2	2	31	433
Dandi Pathan	11	11	247	2457
Laja Mangal	6	6	133	1144
Jani Khel	10	10	218	2345
Chamkani	12	12	258	2288
Laja Ahmed Khail	10	10	207	2112
Said Karam	17	17	348	3623
Jaji Aryoub	21	21	456	4147
Ahmedaba	18	18	362	4010
Garda Serai	6	6	114	1102
Total	**189**	**189**	**4275**	**41154**

(*Source:* Provincial Directorate of Education, Paktia Province, 2017)

3.6.3 Sample of the Study

A sample is the selected part of the population to collect the required data under the study. In the present study, the researcher adopted a random sampling technique for the selection of the schools from each district. The random sampling technique is used in a variety of studies related to different disciplines but mostly preferred in social science, agriculture, and business. (Lavrakas, 2008) From 13 districts of Paktia province; two schools were randomly selected from each district as the sample for the present study. Accordingly, two schools from each district were selected except *Shwak* district, because there was only one secondary school. Instead, one school inside *Gardiz*, the central district but very close to *Shwak* district and its border with *Gardiz*, was selected as a representative school from *Shwak* district. Thus, the sample for the present study comprised a total of 26 secondary schools, 26 principals and 220 teachers of these 26 schools. Moreover, a total of 210 students were also selected purposively from the selected 26 schools, both from lower secondary and upper secondary classes.

Table 3.2   Sample of the Study

Districts of Paktia Province	Total No. of schools	Total No. of Principals	Total No. of Teachers	Total No. of Students
Gardiz	2	2	25	28
Zurmat	2	2	16	18
Shwak	2	2	07	10
Waz-e- Zadran	2	2	18	16
Dandi Pathan	2	2	18	17
Laja Mangal	2	2	16	16
Jani Khel	2	2	19	17
Chamkani	2	2	16	18
Laja AhmedKhail	2	2	17	14
Said Karam	2	2	18	15
Jaji Aryoub	2	2	18	15
Ahmedaba	2	2	18	14
Garda Serai	2	2	14	12
Total	**26**	**26**	**220**	**210**

(*Source:* Provincial Directorate of Education, Paktia Province, 2017)

3.7   PLAN AND PROCEDURE

Research is defined as a systematic way of collecting and analyzing the information for the aim of understanding a phenomenon under the study. (Leedy and Ormond, 2010) Therefore, before embarking on a research study, the researcher needs to have some considerations and planning about how to conduct the study. From the beginning to the end, all steps and required activities have to be outlined in advance, particularly in connection with the predetermined research questions and objectives. Hence, the researcher has also planned the whole research through a number of stages right from the very beginning, that is from the time of coming up with an idea as the research topic to the process of data collection, data analysis and the final reporting. All these steps related to plan and procedure were predetermined into four major phases and outlined with the help of a figure as shown from Figure 3.2.
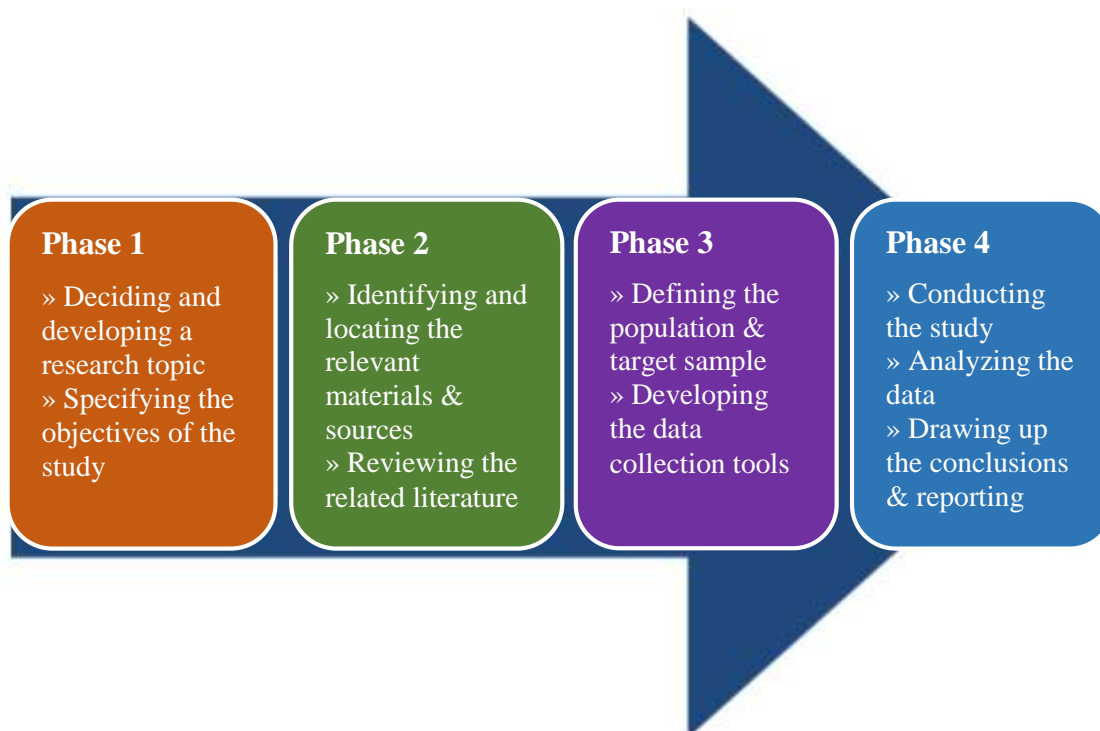
Phase 1

» Deciding and developing a research topic
» Specifying the objectives of the study

Phase 2

» Identifying and locating the relevant materials & sources
» Reviewing the related literature

Phase 3

» Defining the population & target sample
» Developing the data collection tools

Phase 4

» Conducting the study
» Analyzing the data
» Drawing up the conclusions & reporting

Figure 3.2 Phases of the Study Plan

The detailed description related to major steps involved under Phases 1 to 4 has been described in chapters 1 to 3. Description related to the steps Analysis of the data and Drawing up the conclusions and reporting has been given in chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

3.8   TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

For an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, especially in qualitative research, gathering more reliable and comprehensive data is needed. Therefore, the researcher needs to collect the data from a number of different sources and by using multiple methods and this process is called triangulation of the data. (Patton, 1999) To put it simply, it is a cross-checking of data for the aim of credibility and validity. From another angle, the data triangulation technique helps a researcher to verify the reliability of his/her data by referring to multiple information sources and by using several methods. Thus, the researcher has used diverse sources and methods in this study to collect a large amount of data from different participants.

Considering the complexity of the research problem, the researcher had to gather the data from various sources such as school principals, teachers and students. Because, it

is not the only teacher whose behavior and decisions form the nature of the dominant pedagogy in a school, but the students, school administration and school curriculum are also the other key influential factors. Therefore, a variety of information from different sources was to be gathered on the same topic. Teachers and principals as the authorized stakeholders in the study had their perceptions of the teaching-learning process in their schools. In contrast, students had their viewpoints on the topics as they may not be agreed with their teachers and school principals in connection with many aspects. And on the other hand, the variety of these standpoints among participants let the researcher get a deep understanding of the ongoing situation. Moreover, using varied data collection sources and methods minimize the risk of unfairness because the data is to be supported by different groups of people and direct observation. Hence, the purpose of data triangulation in this study was not only the cross verification of the data but also the widening of the understanding of the real scenario of secondary school education. Accordingly, the tools and techniques adopted under the present study are as follows:

(i)   Questionnaire [For the Teachers]
(ii)   Semi-Structured Interview [For the Principals]
(iii)   Focus Group Discussion [For the Students]
(iv)   Classroom Observation Schedule

The brief description of the above tools and techniques along with the process followed for their development has been presented as under:

3.8.1 Questionnaire

The very first thing determined even before developing the framework of the Questionnaire, was defining the target group of respondents. As the involving sources had been already specified, it was decided that the Questionnaire has to be administered to the teachers as they make up the wide cross-section range of larger sample groups of the target population. Thus, a Questionnaire was developed by the investigator to collect information about secondary school teachers' pedagogical knowledge and teaching-learning strategies they were adopting in their classrooms on a daily basis. The Questionnaire consisted of 39 items under three separate parts namely; Teaching-Learning process, Curriculum and textbooks and Evaluation procedure. Questions were both supply type (Yes/No) and open-ended to provide equal opportunity and space

for the teachers to offer their feedback on their teaching strategies, textbooks, and assessment procedures by giving their responses to the frequent inquiries in each part. It is notable that the Questionnaire was translated into the *Pashto* language (formal Afghan language) because English is neither the medium of instruction nor language for social interaction and it is learned as a foreign language in the Afghan context. Therefore, the *Pashto* version of the Questionnaire was used to collect teachers' responses in the *Pashto* language. The English and Pashto versions of the Questionnaire can be seen from Appendix–A.

3.8.1.1 Development of Questionnaire

The Questionnaire was prepared with the help of the Handbook of Recommended Practices for Questionnaire Development and Testing in the European Statistical System. (European Commission Grant Agreement, 2004) Thus, considering the purpose of the study, a Questionnaire was developed by the investigator to collect the exploratory information. The Questionnaire developing process was followed by four main steps, which are described below:

a) Conceptualization

With regard to the objectives of the study, the researcher had developed the items of the Questionnaire in a way that all the questions were arranged under three major parts such as, Teaching-Learning process, Curriculum and textbooks and Evaluation procedures. Thus, looking at the nature of the study and research methodology, it was determined that the questions should be supply type (with the answer Yes/No) as well as open-ended. Plus, It was also decided that the questions and statements should be fallen into three different sections stated above.

b) Questionnaire design

Under this step, the researcher prepared the initial draft of the Questionnaire. The initial draft was prepared in the English language. It consisted of a total of 39 items (statements/questions) under three separate parts mentioned above. The questions and statements were arranged in order of opening questions, questions flow and question variety. Further, for a better conceptualization or to specify the required information for

the respondents to handle all and each question accurately, prescribed instructions were also given.

c) Validation, Testing, and Revision

After the development of the initial draft of the Questionnaire, it was given to a panel of eight (08) experts to judge its validity. After that, all the questions under the given draft were discussed with them with regard to their appropriateness, relevance and capacity to describe the major parts (namely; Teaching-Learning process, Curriculum and textbooks, and Evaluation procedures). Based on the feedback and suggestions of the experts, all those questions requiring modifications were reformed by the investigator and some questions that did not address the objectives of the study were discarded. Then the reformed draft was translated into *Pashto* language and was given to five (05) Afghan experts for its revalidation with reference to its cross-cultural adaptation. After that, the Questionnaire prepared in the *Pashto* language was administered to a small group of 12 secondary school teachers with a view to judge its validity and standardization of the instructions. Few more questions were also added to the Questionnaire based on the feedback received from the teachers during this testing phase. That group of teachers was also considered as experts for the development of the said Questionnaire. The list of all experts involved in the phase of validation, testing and revision can be seen from Appendix–B. Thus, the final Questionnaire consisting of 39 questions was developed. These questions were categorized under three separate parts namely; Teaching-Learning process, Curriculum and textbooks and Evaluation, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3   Categorization of the questions under the Questionnaire

Sr. No.	Parts of the Questionnaire	No. of Questions
1.	Teaching-Learning process	17
2.	Curriculum and textbooks	10
3.	Evaluation procedures	12
	Total	**39**

3.8.2 Semi-Structured Interview

The personal interview is particularly useful when the interviewer is seeking for more detailed descriptions and to get the story behind a participant's experience. For this reason, the technique of the interview is generally used in descriptive studies. The interview must be well prepared because the quality of information collected through this way directly depends on the design of the interview and interviewer. Since a poorly designed interview may not achieve the expected objectives, questions need to be well-organized, relevant to the topic and clear enough to be understood by the interviewee. Also, the interview should be conducted in an effective way and in good circumstances. (Mathers et al., 2000)

With this in mind, in the present study, the Semi-Structured Interview was decided to explore principals' experiences about school instructional policies, particularly the school administrations adopted to safeguard and improve the overall quality of secondary school education. It also included the pedagogical practices mainly; approaches and procedures of curriculum delivery and evaluation and assessment practices. Hence, the researcher had planned and conducted a series of Semi-Structured Interview schedule to obtain the details of principals' practical experience as the leaders that how they consider the issue of quality in education and what are their contribution to improving the quality of instruction. It was a face-to-face individual interview conducted by the investigator, with a time duration of at least 30 minutes.

3.8.2.1 Designing of the Semi-Structured Interview

The researcher has developed a Semi-Structured interview schedule for secondary school principals. As explained by Mathers et al. (2000), a Semi-Structured Interview provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewees to discuss the topics in more detail. This type of interview also let the interviewer to elaborate on the key important issues and pose more frequent inquiries during the conversation. Hence, the Semi-Structured Interview schedule was designed to elicit information about school management and policies with respect to teacher classroom pedagogical practices, curriculum transaction, evaluation strategies and quality improvement activities. All questions were formulated in connection with the research objectives and literature reviewed for the study.

The designed Semi-Structured Interview schedule was shown to a panel of experts in the relevant field for its validation and authentication, prior to its implementation. The *Pashto* transcript of the same was again given to five (05) Afghan experts for the cross-cultural revision. The list of all experts can be seen from Appendix – B. Furthermore, the designed Semi-Structured Interview schedule was also tried out or conducted in one of the secondary schools to judge its effectiveness. The designed Semi-Structured Interview schedule can be seen from Appendix – C.

3.8.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is commonly used as a qualitative approach to gain a thorough knowledge of social issues. (Nyumba et al., 2018) The purpose of FGD is to create a comfortable atmosphere for the people to discuss a topic and express their ideas, experiences and attitude about it. FGD can be used for a variety of purposes such as making decisions, assessment and evaluation, problems finding, planning for the future, etc... (Kruger & Casey 2000) FGD might be perceived as one the same to group interview but the role of the researcher varies in both the contexts. In a group interview, the role of the interviewer is mostly as an investigator who tries to control the discussion, while in FGD the researcher adopts the role of facilitator and moderate the conversation. (Nyumba et al., 2018) Accordingly, in the present study, the researcher used FGD to gather information from the students of all 26 secondary schools of Paktia province.

3.8.3.1 Preparation for FGDs

Looking at the nature of study and objectives, it has been decided that a great deal of information has to be gathered from the students. Students' participation from all different grades, levels and ethnicities was ensured to provide a detailed picture of the ongoing scenario of secondary school education. For this reason, a prior meeting had been held with the principal and teachers in each school for general awareness and sharing all matters of concern about the conducting FGD. Thus, the following steps were taken for conducting the FGDs:

a) Identifying the respondents

However the target participants of the FGD had been already defined, it was needed that the group members should be selected through a systematic procedure. The researcher had decided to invite students from both lower and upper secondary classes for the FGD. Because of that, there were 8-10 students in each FGD from grades 7-12, in such a way that at least one representative from each grade was the participant of the FGD. In some cases, there was more than one class at each grade level. For instance, two or three 12 grade classes (12-A, 12-B, 12- C), if that were the case, one representative from each class would have been selected. It was tried that the students with diverse perspectives and performance levels should be part of the FGD. School administrations and teachers were requested to cooperate in the whole process, especially in the selection of participants to ensure the demographic representation in the FGDs.

b) Preparing the questions for FGD

Now as per the main objectives of the study, the main themes and major points of discussion had to be split into three parts. In the first place, questions to engage students in a lively and free-flowing discussion about teacher classroom instructional strategies and behavior. Second, questions that can generate a fruitful discussion to explore students' perspectives and concerns about school textbooks and daily classroom curriculum delivery practices. And third, questions to encourage participants to speak out on the assessment procedures and evaluation practices carried out on daily basis and in the long term in their schools. Thus, open-ended questions started with 'What', 'Why', and 'How' were formed to generate a detailed and rich conversation among participants. The participants were encouraged to think back to the time in their real classroom situation while their teacher was teaching them and then share their observations in the group. Principally, the entire group discussion was organized into four main phases: the warm-up, explanation of the questions, core discussion, summary and conclusion.

c) Validation

Before all others, the preliminary draft of the framed questions was shared with the guiding teacher for getting his overall feedback on it. Later on, the questions were

discussed with a panel of experts to judge their appropriateness and relevance with respect to the objectives of the study. Finally, the *Pashto* version of these questions was also given to a panel of Afghan experts to ensure the efficacy of its adaptation. The questions used for FGDs can be seen from Appendix–D.

3.8.4 Classroom Observational Schedule

Observation as a data collection tool is used to document the activities, behavior and physical aspects of people directly and without making them answer our questions. (Powell and Steele, 1996) More precisely, on other occasions such as; interview, focus group discussion, filling the questionnaire, the researcher has to depend mostly on participants' willingness and abilities to express their thoughts and insights during a question and answer conversation. For instance, an interviewee consciously or unconsciously may not like to present the real ongoing situation inside a school for whatever reason. Hence, the observation is thought to be an effective data collection technique to obtain authentic information about the behavior and actions of participants. Thus, the researcher had prepared an observational schedule prior to data collection which contained structured aspects regarding teacher's teaching-learning practices and materials, evaluation procedure and students' involvement. Four descriptive ratings namely; 'Effective', 'Somewhat Effective', 'Ineffective' and 'Not Observed' were given to judge each trait under the observation schedule. In light of this, the observation schedule contained a total of 45 aspects under two separate parts mentioned above.

3.8.4.1 Construction of Classroom Observation Schedule

First of all, the content of the Classroom Observation Schedule was developed according to the research objectives and keeping in view the major aspects namely; Teaching-Learning process and Evaluation procedures. The steps followed for the preparation of the Classroom Observation Schedule, are as under.

a) Preparation of the first draft

Concerning the objectives and research questions, two major pedagogical categories were specified into two different sections: teachers' teaching approaches including preparation and use of teaching-learning materials. The second section was devoted to evaluation procedures. Thus, the researcher had prepared a detailed Classroom

Observation Schedule including 45 aspects in a rating scale form with four ratings assigned for each item namely; Effective, Somewhat Effective, Ineffective and Not Observed. The observable aspects in the first part were all about the classroom teaching-learning activities. The second part of this observation schedule included aspects related to evaluation procedures in terms of three learning domains (affective, cognitive, and psychomotor). Also, some other aspects were about encouraging students for self and peer evaluation in the classroom. The first draft of the schedule was developed in consultation with the guiding teacher and then given it to a panel of experts for its final validation.

b) Validation

All components of the Classroom Observation Schedule were verified by the experts with reference to their relevance for the observation of the target behaviors of the participants. The first draft was revised after receiving feedback from the experts. In contrast to the other tools used under the study (Questionnaire, Semi-Structured Interview and FGD), the Classroom Observation Schedule was not translated into the *Pashto* language because the researcher himself has to observe all the classrooms personally.

Thus, with the applying above processes, all the tools were ready to use for the collection of data. The Classroom Observation Schedule can be seen from Appendix– E.

3.9   DATA COLLECTION

The researcher has gathered the data by employing the above tools and techniques. The following section presents the process of data collection through each adopted tool.

3.9.1   Data Collection Through Questionnaire

After the construction of the questionnaire, a pre-implementation action plan was also made by the researcher in which the questions like 'to whom' and 'how' the questionnaire should be administered, were answered. Accordingly, the valid (*Pashto* version) copies of the questionnaire were given in person to the participants. This comprehensive questionnaire was distributed in 26 secondary schools of Paktia

province and all 220 teachers responded to the questionnaire. In order to obtain more relevant information and opinions of the teachers, the hard copies of questionnaires were delivered only at schools and on the day every teacher had his/her teaching session and they were asked, if it is possible, respond to the questionnaire inside their classrooms. Also, teachers were advised to refer to the instructions carefully given in each part of the questionnaire before answering the questions. Thus, the data in terms of teachers' responses were collected with the help of the questionnaire.

3.9.2 Data Collection Through Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-Structured Interview schedules were arranged for all 26 principals of the selected schools with their prior permission. The questions had been given to the participants before the interview to collect the necessary information. The participants were asked to read through it carefully and can ask for any clarification if they need. At the same time, the place and time of the interview were also decided before conducting the interview. Almost all interviews were carried out at schools in a peaceful atmosphere, in a face-to-face and one to one mode. Every interview was lasted in at least 30 minutes, was recorded and some brief notes were also taken during the interview.

The principals were encouraged to speak out of their experiences about their own leadership and classroom observations in their schools. Each principal was asked for his/her particular initiatives in school for creating an effective teaching-leaning environment, especially about classroom pedagogical practices including evaluation procedures. The principals were also asked to describe their school polices about teachers' professional capacity building activities. Furthermore, principals were also requested to express their beliefs regarding the appropriateness and failure of the curriculum and school textbooks with respect to quality education in secondary schools. More importantly, they were asked about what the school administrations can do on their own at the local level to ensure the quality of education in secondary schools of Paktia province. Thus, the data in terms of principals' views regarding the quality in education concerning teaching-learning, curriculum and evaluation process were collected with the help of the Semi-Structured Interview.

3.9.3 Data Collection Through Focus Group Discussions

Since conducting the Focus Group Discussions was the first experience for the students, initiating the discussion was challenging for the researcher as the participants needed to feel free and express their thoughts and perspectives without restrictions. Therefore, the prior moments of the discussions were taken for warming up questions and setting ground rules. Each FGD was conducted based on a schedule in every secondary school. Before conducting the FGD it had been tried to figure out the ideal time for the participants and after that, the time for the session was determined in cooperation with the school administrations. The total number of participants was 210 in all FGDs conducted in 26 secondary schools. At least one FGD was conducted in each school. About 8-10 students from different classes were representing this FGD. Each FGD took about 60-90 minutes and the discussed matter was recorded. All these discussions were carried out in separate rooms inside the schools in the absence of concerned school principals and teachers. Students were encouraged to reflect on their classroom learning experiences in terms of teachers' teaching-learning strategies, school textbooks and assessment activities carried out in their schools. Thus, the data in terms of students' responses were collected with the help of the FGDs.

3.9.4 Data Collection Through Classroom Observation Schedule

Based on a well-organized time table, a prior meeting had been held with every school principal and the teacher who was going to be observed, before the scheduled classroom observation. The researcher explained all about the objectives of classroom observation and how it would be conducted. A total of 65 Classroom Observation Schedules were planned in the all selected 26 schools for the classes of different school subjects. Teachers of different subjects were observed in all 65 classrooms in 26 secondary schools of Paktia province. Every teacher was observed during one full teaching session. Thus, the data in terms of teachers' classroom performance and behavior were collected with the help of Classroom Observation Schedules.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

A researcher may collect all kinds of qualitative data through interviews, questionnaires, and observation, but the data has to be interpreted for drawing conclusions and getting clear-cut results. This process of transformation of data into

some results is called data analysis. (LeCompte, 2000) Accordingly, the data collected through Questionnaires, Semi-Structured Interviews, Classroom Observation Schedules and Focus Group Discussions were qualitative naturally and needed to be analyzed and interpreted descriptively to provide a full narrative of the current situation regarding pedagogical practices in Afghan secondary schools. Basically, three major steps were taken in the analysis process. First, the collected data were organized in compliance with the research questions. Therefore, the data were split up first into different categories. Second, the data were edited into two different forms, the descriptive and frequencies/percentages. Next, the data were cross-tabulated and the results were filtered. Later on, in the third step, the conclusions were drawn on the basis of the data analysis and interpretation. Hence, it can be deduced that the appropriate qualitative techniques were used to analyze the data under the present study and ultimately that has helped to reach up the stage of deriving conclusions on the basis of the made interpretations from the analyzed data.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter covered an all-encompassing strategic plan for the study, especially the operational plan and procedures of the data collection process, plus analysis. It also includes the step by step description of the practical procedure followed for the development of the data collection tools. Further, the population of the study and sample selection procedure has also been explained thoroughly. The chapter also contains a brief introduction to the geographical location of the area in which this study was carried out. Moreover, a detailed rationale is also part of this chapter. In accordance with this, the following chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation.