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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TO STUDY THE TEACHING IMPACT OF UNTRAINED TEACHERS ON MONTESSORI STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

In education, Montessori system of education plays an integral role. A child education is a foundation and the need ought to be given to this foundation. The Montessori system of education is like a foundation of a house as strong building can be built only on strong foundation such as on the basis of Montessori education the whole life of a child depends. This study has been led on 80 teachers of Montessori schools of the Gulshan town Karachi. The fundamental purpose behind this study was to evaluate the impact of Montessori untrained teachers in the Montessori schools and to spread awareness about their consequences and also to analyze the need of the trained teachers and their effectiveness in the grass root level of the education as the future of any country or nation depends upon its young generation. A comprehensive structured questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the data. The collected data was processed and then its analysis was made through chi-square method. The finding suggests that there is an approaching need of teacher training courses and workshops for Montessori untrained teachers and it should be mandatory for them to be trained.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the exercise and an activity by which individuals' innate capabilities, attitudes or skills can be flourished which help them to their survival in their life. In education, Montessori system of education plays an integral part. Maria Montessori was the pioneer of this education system. She was the first woman in eighteenth century who studied medicine in Italy after a great struggle and effort. As a doctor she worked mostly for the poor and particularly their children. The turning point of her life was when she involved with the national league for the education of retarded children and shifted her professional identity from Physician to educator. "Some difference we can find between Montessori's method and the traditional method are; firstly, the traditional education has Schedules and frequent interruptions while in Montessori Method children are not tied to a schedule. Instead, they learn through their own experience. Secondly a Montessori classroom education can have children from different ages, but the traditional education separates children by ages. Thirdly in contrast to the traditional education, in a Montessori school there are no grades in what children do"¹. Maria Montessori has secured a lot of fame and recognition in the educational field because of the formation of her method.

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She formulated the method to change the practice of the ancient teachers which they used to teach their students. Education begins from Montessori level which was started first by Maria Montessori. Most of the primary schools in Pakistan have Montessori level but the teachers are flying by seats of pants. Untrained teachers have many challenges that they face each day while teaching. They are not completely prepared for every issue as they are lacking in the methods or knowledge according to the students or environment especially in Montessori system of education. For that reason a Montessori teachers should have proper training and she should be aware of all the problems and the solution during the education process of the child. At Montessori level, students are unaware of their own talent and potentials and the ways to overcome their weaknesses. A teacher plays a pivotal part in developing a child's personality or character, and untrained teachers seem to fail in this regard. To comprehend the child's inner potentials and hidden talent teachers can get benefit by different teaching courses. It will help them to solve their issues. Montessori level is the base of children's educational life span. It revolves around 3 years (2-5 years) in which children are prepared to move on to the next stage i.e. primary stage. Their psychological, social and emotional needs are catered through their educational system. Therefore, it is mandatory for teachers to be fully trained. In this study the researcher will try to evaluate the impact of untrained teachers. "If teaching is to be effective with young children, it must assist them to advance on the way to independence. It must initiate them into those kinds of activities which they can perform themselves and which keep them from being a burden

¹Stevens, Tekera. "Montessori vs Traditional Education." *Montessori vs Traditional Education*.

to others because of their inabilities. We must help them to learn how to walk without assistance, to run, to go up and down the stairs, to pick up fallen objects, to dress and undress, to wash them, to express their needs in a way that is clearly understood, and to attempt to satisfy their desires through their own efforts. All this is part of an education for independence.²

Responses: There are language and organization issues.

You can arrange Introduction in the following order:

- Definition of education concisely
- What is Montessori education systems and who developed it and why
- Difference between traditional and Montesso education systems
- Challenges for teachers in Montesso education systems and need areas to better address those challenges.
- Rational and Objectives of this study.
- Hypothesis

Review of the related literature

The Montessori Method is a way about thinking about which children are. Montessori Method focused on child's exceptional individuality as per development of these materials by Maria Montessori, her accept was in the value, quality and significance of kids. "I have studied the child. I have taken what the child has given me and expressed it and that is what is called the Montessori Method".³ By Dr. Maria Montessori. It is also an approach to education that takes to heart the needs, talents, gifts, and special individuality of each child. The main concept of Montessori is to foster the delight of learning. This can form a well-adjusted person who has a purpose and direction in his or her life. Those children who practice this are happy, confident, fulfilled children. Basically, Montessori delivers the endowment of every child. Furthermore, Montessori Method additionally assembled the aptitudes of self-reliance and independence in children which help them to take in their life skills that is practical life. Montessori children learn to dress themselves, help cook, put their toys and clothes away and take an active part of their household, neighborhood and school. Montessori works methodically. Each step leads to the next level of learning. When a child plays, they learn ideas for conceptual learning. This method stresses on the repetition of activities. For young children Montessori is a hand on approach to learning. This approach strengthens the children's observation skills through many activities which they have been doing. Such activities require five senses- kinetic movement, spatial refinement, small and large motor skill coordination, and concrete knowledge which start their next abstraction. According to Montessori, the goal of education is "to be able to find activities that are so intrinsically meaningful that we want to throw ourselves into them"⁴. For a grade school child, Montessori enables him/her to proceed at his or her own pace to abstract thinking, writing, reading, science, mathematics, and most importantly, it helps to absorb his or her culture and environment. Culture includes interaction with nature, art, music, religion, societal organizations and customs.

2 Montessori, M. (12 aug 1978). The discovery of the child. Ann Arbor, Michigan, United State: Ballantine Books

3Alan H. Humphreys, T. R. (1981). "Interdisciplinary methods, a thematic approach". Goodyear Pub. Co.

4Montessori, M. (1967). The discovery of the child . New York, N.Y. Ballantine Books. Pg. 14

"The purpose of the classroom was to create a "prepared environment" where the student was free to explore and advance his or her unique power while disciplined enough to stay focused on a specific series of tasks. With this progressive approach, learning becomes "a complex process of making sense of new information through reflection and interaction"⁵Weiss glass, (1999). "One underlying premise of the Montessori Method is that each child possesses an inner power that motivates them to seek out specific activities and interactions."⁶(Crain, 2004). For child's better future or strong base Montessori system of education has a prominent role. Following are some significance which shows their effectiveness.

- It Focuses on Key Developmental Stages of the child. Curriculum focuses on development in children between the ages of three and five-years-old. Because younger children focus on large muscle and language skills.
- It encourages cooperative play because teachers does not run the classroom they only guide them for activities so as a result children cooperatively learn or help with each other. It creates sense of community among them.
- Montessori Method brings learning as child centered. It allows them to choose activity according to their need.
- Teachers in the Montessori classroom are "guides" that are there to facilitate the learning experience, rather than determine what it will look like.
- Learning method inspires creativity. Children work at tasks for the joy of the work, rather than the end result, which allows them to focus more on process than result – a natural path to creativity.
- It may be more effective in developing certain skills.
- This method helps children to naturally learn self-discipline.

Maria Montessori understood the importance of the natural world's influence on child development and its impact on learning. Current research suggests that "the [growing] disconnection from nature .has enormous implications for human health and child development"⁷. Maria Montessori observed that a child can learn easily in the prepared environment where a range of physical objects that are organized and made available for free, independent use, to arouse their natural instincts and interests for self-directed learning. Maria Montessori executed the unique way in which children learn and understood the notion of a child's absorbent mind. "Realizing the absorbent nature of the child's mind, she has prepared for him a special environment; and then, placing the child within it, has given him freedom to live in it, absorbing what he finds there"⁸. Standing (1998) describes that the aim of the prepared environment is to "render the growing

5Weissglass, J. (1999). Curriculum and society. EducationWeek, 18(32), 45-47. Retrieved January 2, 2007 fromEBSCO Online Database Academic Search Premier.<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=1811742&site=ehost-live>

6Crain, W. (2004). Montessori. Encounter, 17(2), 2-4. Retrieved December 20, 2006 from EBSCO Online Database Education Research Complete. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=13936267&site=ehost-live>

7Louv, R. (2005). Last Child in the Woods. In Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit (p. Pg. 43). Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

8Standing, E.M. (1998). Maria Montessori: Her life and work. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam, Inc. p. 265

child independent of the adult. That is, it is a place where he can do things for himself – live his own life – without immediate help of adults... In doing so, [the child] becomes conscious of his own powers⁹”. The method provides a range of materials in the environment to stimulate the child's interest through self-directed activity. The environment is established as a link between the home and the wider world. Montessori called this place a Casa dei Bambini or Children's House. In the first plane of development (0-6), these materials are commonly formed into four basic categories; practical life, sensorial, math, and language. It contains material that aid independence. The material themselves invite activities. There are bright arrays of solid geometric forms, knobbed puzzle maps, coloured beads, and various specialized rods and blocks. All the materials which are designed in a Montessori environment is for maximum independence in the child

“Happiness is not the whole aim of education. A man must be independent in his powers and character; able to work and assert his mastery over all that depends on him.¹⁰” Just as important as the physical environment and its contents, is the functioning of the environment. The Montessori environment provides the children the tools they need, but they must also have the freedom to use them and to manifest their tendencies to repeat, to explore, or to manipulate. It is that freedom which leads to discipline. Montessori believed that “it is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may be always ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.”

"The vision of the teacher should be at once precise like that of the scientist, and spiritual like that of the saint. The preparation for science and the preparation for sanctity should form a new soul, for the attitude of the teacher should be at once positive, scientific and spiritual. Positive and scientific, because she has an exact task to perform, and it is necessary that she should put herself into immediate relation with the truth by means of rigorous observation... Teacher should be Spiritual, because it is to man that his powers of observation are to be applied, and because the characteristics of the creature who is to be his particular subject of observation are spiritual.” (Dr. Maria Montessori)¹¹,

The key role of a teacher in Montessori classroom is:

1. In the Montessori classroom children should be the center of learning rather to make a teacher as a center of attraction for children. And she should not give a large group lessons many of times.
2. The new ideas should be comprehensive but concise, not like 1 or 2 hour continues lecture like in conventional school system
3. Teacher needs to define in an easy way for every new activity to do or every new material to be used. Afterward a child can do practically what they observe with freedom.
4. Montessori teacher should have an ability to understand child's need and facilitate and guide accordingly.

5. Teacher should strengthen self-learning in children. By giving chances of being self-learner freedom of choice should be the best policy. Proper prepared environment also help them in learning by themselves.
6. In Montessori classroom, teacher is dealing with a group of students at a time. Her duty is to monitor each child. Teacher should be equipped with the best material/ effective activity/ appropriate instruction/advice and give new lessons to children. She has to be polite and must aware of each children sensitive period.
7. There should be a need of establishing a best learning environment in which children can learn easily and effectively. The Montessori materials are properly arranged and their availability should be adequate
8. The teachers vigilantly monitor each child and assess their progress. There should be the daily evaluation of environment too.
9. A Montessori teacher has to be polite and friendly with their students and has to give her time to learn everything. No need to force students for anything just give them time and respect.
10. It's very important that teacher to be friendly and supportive in nature. Students want a frank environment by which they can ask anything. She should not be judgemental or partial.
11. Teachers are communicator. Communication is both receptive and expressive. Teachers must be skilled at listening to their students as well as explaining things clearly.
12. A teacher has to discuss achievements of students in school staff or with their parents to encourage students for better work. Because students need motivation and the best motivator is a teacher.
13. Montessori educator should be a role model.
14. Teachers play an act of an investigator.

“Montessori teachers are not servants of the child...to wash, dress and feed him – they know that he must do these things for himself in developing independence. We must help the child act for him; will for himself, think for himself¹²”.

The teacher in the Montessori Early Childhood classroom entices the children to activities and lessons and awakens the child's interests. She remains enthusiastic about the subjects presented while continually keeping up the art of observation. Observation of the child is a critical element in the role of a teacher in the Montessori setting.

“A teacher, therefore, who would think that he could prepare himself for his mission through study alone, would be mistaken. The first thing required of a teacher is that he be rightly disposed for his task. The way in which we observe a child is extremely important. It is not sufficient to have a merely theoretical knowledge of education. We insist on the fact that a teacher must prepare himself interiorly by systematically studying himself so that he can tear out his most deeply rooted defects, those in fact which impede his relations with children. In order to discover these subconscious failings, we have a need of a special kind of instruction. We must see ourselves as another sees us.¹³”

9Standing, E.M. (1998). Maria Montessori: Her life and work. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam, Inc. p. 265

10Montessori, M. (1964). The Absorbent Mind. Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Press.

11M., M. (1991-1995). The advance Montessori Method. In *Montessori. M. The advance scientific pedagogy as applied to the education of children from seven to eleven years*. Oxford : Clío,

12Standing, E Montessori, M. (1989). Education for a New World. In Volume 5 of The Clío Montessori series (p. 69 pages)

13Montessori, M. (01-Dec-1998). The Secret of Childhood. Johns Hopkins University Press.

“And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.¹⁴”

Methodology of the study

The objective of the study is to reveal information to society about the impact of untrained teachers and to evaluate the flaws of untrained teachers on a child’s carrier and the role of Montessori trained teachers. A questionnaire was used to collect information from 80 teachers from Montessori schools who were selected through random sampling technique. Descriptive research was used as a research type which is defined as:

“Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study”. It involves collecting data to test hypothesis or to answer questions about people’s opinions on some topic or issue. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. Sometimes it is named as, non-experimental research because it is concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic, information, conditions, and procedures. Descriptive data rare usually collected through a questionnaire survey, interview or observation. The descriptive research has to control over ‘what is’ and can only measure what already exist.¹⁵”Some types of descriptive research methods include surveys, analyses, case studies, observation and review of published reports or results. Questionnaire was used for the purpose of collecting data regarding Montessori schooling. A questionnaire was prepared which covered the aspects of the problem under study i.e. the impact of poorly trained teachers for Montessori schooling. To avoid ambiguity, the questions were constructed in simple and clear words. The teachers were required to tick mark the appropriate one. It was finalized after a detailed discussion, consideration and re-arrangement and after checking its relevancy to the topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Montessori trained teacher may be more capable to achieve the educational objectives for Montessori schooling.

Table 1.

Question no.	Calculated value	Table value
1- Do you think that educational objectives fulfill the educational needs of the students?	155	5.99
2- Do you think the classroom environment should ensure the children needs and interests?	142.54	5.991
3- Do you know about the activities that are related with the fine motor skills development?	96.41	5.991
4- Do you have the students learning outcomes of every subject and activity?	88.23	5.991
5- Do you think training courses help teachers to achieve learning goals of student?	82.83	5.991

14Montessori, M. (1949). The absorbent mind. Madras, India. Theosophical publishing house.

15 Gay, Lorraine R., Mills, Geoffrey E., Airasian. Peter W. (2011).Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications (10th Edition). Addison Wesley. Pg. 183-185.

The above result shows that the calculated values are greater than the table value therefore, it is concluded that:

“Montessori trained teacher may be more capable to achieve the educational objectives for Montessori schooling”

Hypothesis 2: Montessori trained teacher may be effective for Montessori schooling

Table 2.

Question no.	Calculated value	Table value
6- do you observe and assess each child individual progress?	142.57	5.991
7- Do you face any difficulty while assessing each child’s progress?	13.29	5.991
8- Can you easily point out the restlessness of students during class?	96.42	5.991
9- Do you know the technical use of audio visual aids in Montessori level?	54.92	5.991

The above result shows that the calculated values are greater than the table value therefore, it is concluded that:

“Montessori trained teacher may be effective for Montessori schooling.”

Hypothesis 3: Montessori teacher may be able to develop the balance personality of the student.

Table 3.

Questions	Calculated value	Table value
10- Do you think that Montessori method is helpful for the children to be social?	91.97	5.991
11- Do you think the Montessori teacher is responsible to build the child’s personality?	106.31	5.991
12- Do you face difficulty to tackle the individual differences of children?	10.22	5.991
13- Do you think the children who are extremely hyperactive, insecure, and disturbed need additional care and observation?	100.99	5.991

The above result shows that the calculated values are greater than the table value therefore, it is concluded that:

“Montessori trained teacher may be able to develop the balance personality of the student”.

Hypothesis 4: Montessori teacher make the student able to prepare for future adjustment.

Table 4.

Questions	Calculated value	Table value
14- Do you think that child psychology is better understood at Montessori level?	60.33	5.991
15- Do you think that the activities you conducted in the class are according to the theories of child development	59.28	5.991
16- Are the class activities inculcating the physical and mental development?	100.98	5.991
17-Do you think that freedom in classroom effect negativity on the student?	37.97	5.991

The above result shows that the calculated values are greater than the table value therefore, it is concluded that:

“Montessori trained teacher make the student able to prepare for future adjustme

Conclusion

In our study it has been observed that most of the untrained teachers support my study that they are less effective for Montessori level of education. According to the findings of the researcher majority of the untrained teachers do not understand the basics and necessary aspects of the children's needs for education. They do not know about the principles and strategies use for Montessori education. The greater number of trained teachers support the research about understanding the Montessori methods of freedom for child in learning as a child cannot learn in restriction or restricted environment they need freedom in learning to grasp, understand and learn more easily, conveniently and practically. Whereas, Majority of the untrained teachers do not understand the importance for freedom that children are free to choose and work on activity at their own pace. Some of the untrained teachers are not fully aware about the technical use of audio visual aids which help children to learn more effectively and it brings learning last longer. During the survey the researcher observed that some of the untrained teachers are well aware of the needs and necessities of a child at the Montessori level of education due to their greater experience which help them to understand the psychology of a child and the principles of the Montessori Method. Survey also showed that few untrained teachers understand the method well because their heads provide them guidance and training vigorously. Therefore, the outcome of the research is that the impact if untrained teachers for Montessori schooling is not much effective. For teaching to be effective, teachers have to be trained. This may be done into two ways. Either, the teacher is trained by a professional institution or on job training is provided by the school.

Recommendations

Researcher has given the following recommendations regarding this issue.

- Teachers training courses should be compulsory for Montessori educationalist.
- Institutional head should facilitate audio visual aids in classroom for better learning.
- Teacher should know about the technical use of audio visual aids so that children's can learn more easily.
- Head for the Montessori section should be well qualified, trained, and competent.
- Schools must arrange workshops or training courses for untrained teachers for refreshing the teachers' knowledge.
- Montessori school heads must have the knowledge of Montessori principles and methodologies.
- The activities should be balanced according to the child's development.
- The directress should have up to date knowledge.
- Government should take some serious measures for providing training to the candidates interested in Montessori level education teaching which should be affordable.

- Teacher should give attention towards individual differences. Understand each child's needs capabilities, and interest.
- School management must follow class management principles by keeping appropriate number of students in class.
- Schools should arrange different monthly/yearly assessment/test for teachers to judge their teaching styles or effectiveness of their teachers.
- Teacher should maintain less restricted environment in the classroom for children and act as a facilitator for them.
- Teacher should retain an atmosphere in which child can easily adjust.

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