



Original Article

Effectiveness of Prior Professional Training on Prospective Teachers' Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of prior professional training on academic performance among prospective teachers enrolled in M.A. Education programs within five public universities in Punjab province. Through a quantitative approach, the research examined performance differences between pre-trained and untrained teachers on the basis of gender and educational background. Data was collected through an adopted five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. Results revealed that untrained prospective teachers generally demonstrated better academic performance compared to their trained counterparts, particularly at the F.A. level. Untrained respondents attained a higher mode CGPA (3.09) compared to trained candidates (2.98), representing a statistically significant difference ($t = 2.974, p = 0.003$). This pattern was especially noticed among female F.A.-level participants, where untrained respondents achieved a mean CGPA of 3.08 compared to 2.96 for trained teachers ($t = 2.953, p = 0.003$). However, at the B.A. level, no significant performance differences were examined between trained and untrained teachers of either gender. The study concludes by advocating for a restructuring of teacher education programs to better integrate theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experience, thereby enhancing preparedness for classroom challenges. It is suggested that the effectiveness of pre-professional training may differ by educational level, with particularly significant effects among F.A.-level female teachers.

Introduction

Teaching is not a profession but a complex process of getting an idea and putting it to use well. Maximum education application is realized by adopting different teaching methods,

techniques and skills. Teachers use these methods to act as a means of working towards creating ‘changes’ that are both meaningful and desirable in their students’ learning experiences. Only teachers who are professionally trained enough are able to successfully implement diverse teaching strategies to meet the educational objectives (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023; Howard et al., 2021).

Teaching is a vehicle of knowledge acquisition and responsible, civic-mindedness. Academic growth here is not only an end, but it enables contributing positively to society. Shodiq and Madjid (2021) emphasize that teaching has a major role in passing culture, knowledge, core values and heritage of society to successive generations, thus helping keep the continuity of the society’s core values. The modern educational landscape requires teachers to learn and enable learning in their students of skills relevant to the 21st century (Schleicher, 2021). Critical thinking and life skills have been focused on in the current literature to be developed among twenty-first-century learners (Jamil, Chohan et al., 2024; Jamil, Hassan et al., 2024; Jamil, Mehmood et al., 2024; Jamil, Muhammad, et al., 2024; Jamil & Muhammad, 2019; Jamil, Zahra, et al., 2024; Naseer et al., 2021).

Now, it is necessary to move the teachers’ educational experience to facilitate the student’s success on the basis of the teachers’ comprehensive characteristics in the contemporary heterogeneous classroom environment. This means giving all learners equal opportunities for learning, supporting students’ varied ways of learning and students with problems such as disabilities, cultural, socioeconomic, gender differences etc. (Cerna et al., 2021). Teachers should produce inclusive and supportive classroom settings for social and academic learning.

Teacher preparation programs are at the forefront of figuring out how to respond to the challenges of modern teaching. Inclusive pedagogies and the capacity to teach students from diverse backgrounds are important things to teach in teacher training (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022). While the need for these competencies is understood worldwide, there are very few studies on whether and to what extent prospective teachers are prepared to implement these inclusive teaching practices in such regions as Pakistan (Iqbal & Afzal, 2024; Siddiqui et al., 2021).

The demand for the modernization of teaching practices has increased in Pakistan. The need for reform in educational frameworks, which include tools for recruiting, training and induction of teachers, makes this a challenge. Recruitment systems must be designed to attract talented candidates, and he/she must be ready to enter the classroom ((Mohamed & Ab Rashid, 2023). While administrative mandates put the responsibility of fostering educational outcomes on their shoulders, teachers see themselves as change agents (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015).

Educational institutions are comprehensive systems made up of students, teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, educational technologies, and physical and financial resources (Budak & Şişman, 2024). Within these components, the teachers’ role stands out in reaching educational objectives. Different factors heavily influence the effectiveness of a teacher: like job satisfaction of the teachers (Anwer et al., 2015; Jamil et al., 2024), the quality of

professional training, the teacher's qualifications and their alignment with the teacher's role expectations (Judge & Robbins, 2017). Positive job attitudes on the part of teachers and higher teacher satisfaction means that productivity, commitment and the quality of education will be higher (Liu & Sammons, 2022). As the focus is primarily on the efficiency of professional training of upcoming teachers, it is apparent that education should not be supplied only with theoretical knowledge but practical and flexible skills that match the needs of present classes.

Finally, the significance of teaching for producing academic development and civic responsibility more than ever before in changing educational landscapes. Against a backdrop of an increasingly diverse and spacious range of classroom environments, teachers need professional training focused on inclusive pedagogies and adaptive teaching strategies. Therefore, effective teacher preparation programs in the areas of lack of teachers' preparedness to implement modern, inclusive educational practices are ever essential in regions like Pakistan. Additionally, academic institutions can put teachers to the test and bring forth continuous professional development, for them to have theoretical knowledge, which is not enough for them to adapt in the context of the 21st-century demands. Research indications show that the integration of well-prepared, satisfied, motivated teachers at the classroom organizational level, in turn, leads to the improvement of students' learning outcomes as an integral measure to enhance societal progress and educational equity.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the performance of prospective teachers in relation to their professional competencies and teaching practices.
2. To compare the academic performance of prospective teachers with prior professional training to those without such training, focusing on key performance indicators based on gender.

Literature Review

The concept of effective teaching is bound very much to teacher performance, but this does not necessarily mean the two are the same. However, teacher performance is not simply about effective teaching, which is but one of the factors that comprise a teacher's overall performance. The current research shows that teacher performance is the ability to use different types of teaching strategies, control classroom dynamics, and constantly improve through professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). While central, teaching efficacy is only one indicator of teachers' performances, which includes different factors such as student outcomes, engagement, and use of best teaching practices (Hattie, 2023).

Students' achievement does not fully reflect the effectiveness of a teacher's performance. It is influenced by several factors, including the socio-cultural environment, available resources and the individual needs of students (Schleicher, 2021). Teachers are indeed important to student learning outcomes, but student achievement as a composite of these is due in part to factors rooted in teacher quality, family support, and peer interactions (Ibrahim & Yew, 2023).

Teacher performance is being increasingly seen through the competencies and qualities which are of result in effective teaching. It has been found that effective teachers who have

strong subject knowledge can build good relationships with students and create a stimulating learning environment (Day et al., 2016; Karlberg & Bezzina, 2022). These teachers with their students, do not only teach through traditional methods but also consider collaboration, provoking them emotionally and socially with critical thinking (Frenzel et al., 2021). They have a growth mindset where they hold themselves accountable for closing the gap through reflection and development, always working on growing their skills (Ganti et al., 2024).

In this area of study, there are numerous current studies about teacher performance, including instructional strategies, lesson planning and use of technology. For instance, it was found that implementing A.V. aids and technology in the lessons was successful in helping the students to become engaged and understand the lesson (Early, 2020; Ganti et al., 2024; Jackson, 2023; Sullivan, 2018). Formative assessment strategies allow effective teachers to get this data and to change their teaching the way they see fit (William, 2020) in this wide variety of learning. Collaborative learning and learning with peer feedback practices help students and teachers move closer to the objective of making the classroom environment an accessible and interactive one (Mertler, 2021).

Teacher performance is multi-dimensional and not only related to the delivery of lessons. Research on teaching effectiveness has recently reported several factors: teachers' capacity to interact with students, stimulate cooperative learning, differentiate instruction, and conduct formative and summative assessments (Andrews et al., 2022; Cochran-Smith, 2009). Preparing teachers to serve the needs of students in today's classrooms requires high-quality teacher preparation programs strongly focused on these attributes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). Therefore, teacher performance involves teachers' capacity for student engagement, employing the best teaching methods, and producing positive results with new pedagogical challenges.

Teacher performance is a multi-dimensional and dynamic phenomenon and needs to be continuously evaluated, and the teachers are to keep on professional development. If it does not include the application of good teaching methods, it encompasses the creation of an environment that is supportive and inclusive of student success. It uses a range of instructional strategies, from using technology to following adaptive teaching practices. In addition, the professional development of teachers is correlated with how teachers' performances are when teachers are to respond to the changing needs of students for quality education (Abbas et al., 2021). Finally, student academic, social and emotional outcomes progress rely upon the performance of teachers. As a result, contemporary educational research continues to be an area of interest and is of considerable significance for the practice of teaching and student achievement.

Research Methodology

In this study, a quantitative research design with a survey method was employed to collect data. The study's target population included prospective teachers studying in the M.A. Education (2nd and 4th semesters) programs at the public sector universities of Punjab. The population with reference to this study consisted of 588 male and female prospective teachers registered in the M.A. Education program for the academic sessions 2012-14 and 2013-15 in five

public sector universities in Punjab. A multistage random sampling technique was employed to ensure appropriate representation in the sample. Five out of seven public sector universities in Punjab were randomly identified. All students enrolled in the M.A. Education program of these selected universities for the 2012-14 and 2013-15 sessions were included in the study using a census sampling technique. For data collection, the Questionnaire for Attitudes Towards the Teaching Profession (QATTP) developed by Sharbain & Tan (2012) with proper permission was used to assess the performance of prospective teachers. The content of the key areas covered included teaching practices, classroom management, student engagement, professional competence and technology integration. The questionnaire data was analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 25 software and mean scores were calculated for the participants on the Questionnaire on Assessment of Teacher Performance (QATP) scale and its various domains to generate overall performance. T-tests were applied to explore if demographic factors and prior professional training could lead to significant differences in performance among categories. Data were also encoded into mean and standard deviation, t and significance (p) values.

Findings of the Study

The following table summarizes the findings of the study

Sr. No.	Category	Mean Yes	Mean No	SD Yes	SD No	t-value	Significance (p-value)
1	Comparison of prospective teachers' performance (M.A. level)	2.9829	3.0953	0.41990	0.41077	2.973	0.003
2	Comparison of prospective teachers' performance (B.A. level)	2.9787	3.0578	0.43919	0.39386	2.287	0.023
3	Female prospective teachers' performance (B.A. level)	2.9871	3.0649	0.44550	0.39634	2.035	0.042
4	Male prospective teachers' performance (B.A. level)	2.9287	3.0247	0.40067	0.38439	1.186	0.239
5	Comparison of prospective teachers' performance (F.A. level)	2.9598	3.0684	0.41532	0.41830	3.159	0.002

6	Female prospective teachers' performance (F.A. level)	2.9686	3.0807	0.42184	0.42152	2.953	0.003
7	Male prospective teachers' performance (F.A. level)	2.8850	3.0227	0.35237	0.40600	1.680	0.098

The above table summarizes the t-values and significance (p-values) comparing the performance of prospective teachers with and without prior professional training at different educational levels (M.A., B.A., and F.A.) for both male and female teachers.

The results suggest that prospective teachers with prior professional training seem to perform better than those without such training, in the above table. The analysis of results also revealed that prospective teachers without prior professional training scored better in their M.A. Education level than those with prior professional training: The mean CGPA of M.A level candidates was 3.09, and the mean CGPA of candidates with prior professional training was 2.98; $t = 2.973$; $p = 0.003$. Additionally, the prospective teachers with no prior professional training (Mean CGPA = 3.06) were more competitive than those with prior professional training (Mean CGPA = 2.97), where t -value = 2.287 ($p = 0.023$). Finally, the study established that the B. Prospective teachers with training gave better performances than their counterparts without training means CGPA, and they had a t value of 2.035, $p < 0.042$). However, the t -value of 1.186 and $p = 0.239$ for prior professional training is not a significantly influential variable in analyzing male prospective teachers' performance at B.A level. This follows at the F. A level, teachers who did not have any prior teaching training also scored higher (Mean CGPA=3.08) than those who had been through the training (Mean CGPA=2.96) for the female teachers tested; these showed highly significant difference (t -value = 2.953; $P = 0.003$). Male prospective teachers performed no differently from each other at the F.A level ($p < 0.098$), $t = 1.680$ ($t < 1.8$; $p < .098$). Generally, the previous professional training does not particularly depend on the stage of education, but in the case of female prospective teachers, the previous professional training has a great effect.

Conclusions

1. The results indicated a significant difference ($P = 0.003 < 0.005$) between the performance of prospective teachers with and without prior professional training. Significantly, while trained teachers had slightly higher results (Mean CGPA = 2.98) than those without training (Mean CGPA = 3.09), non-trained teachers (induction teachers) performed considerably better on average (CGPA = 3.09).
2. There was no significant difference ($P = 0.023 > 0.005$) in the performance of prospective teachers having or not having prior professional training at the B.A. level.
3. Similarly, there was no significant ($P = 0.042 > 0.005$) difference in performance between female prospective teachers with or without training at the B.A. level.

4. No significant difference ($P = 0.239 > 0.005$) in the performance of male prospective teachers with or without prior B.A. level training was found.
5. Significantly ($P = 0.002 < 0.005$), better performance was seen among prospective teachers without prior professional training at the F.A. level.
6. A significant difference ($P = 0.003 < 0.005$) was observed for female prospective teachers at the F.A. level, with those who did not go to training performing slightly better (Mean CGPA = 3.08) compared to those who did go to training (Mean CGPA = 2.96).
7. There was no significant difference ($P = 0.098 > 0.005$) between male F.A. level prospective teachers with and without prior professional training as regards their performance.

Results show that both prospective teachers with and without antecedent professional training are slightly better at lower educational levels in comparison to those with training (F.A.). At the higher level (B.A.), this difference becomes less prominent.

Discussion

As supported by literature in the relevant field, this study sought to gain further understanding of prospective teachers with and without acquired prior professional training. Results indicate that, while generated from narrower resources, the characterizations of world mental models by prospective teachers with no professional training follow from slightly better performance compared to those with. The findings are consistent with Tarnanen et al. (2024), who find that while teacher training programs are often designed to enhance teacher performance, they do not do so consistently, and this is possible because of varying levels of program quality or implementation challenges.

Analysis of these results suggested a statistically significant difference in performance between prospective teachers with lower levels of training (F.A. level) and those with higher levels of training (B.A. level), suggesting that the impact of training may depend on the educational stage. This finding agrees with the findings of other studies as more recent work (Johnson et al., 2023; Mohin et al., 2022; Patel & Becker, 2022) about the effect of the content of the teacher training program, its hands-on application and its relevance to present-day teaching needs.

This difference in training programs can also explain some of these differences, i.e. by focusing on pedagogical skills, classroom management and scenarios of real-life teaching. For instance, studies (Kabilan et al., 2024; Vu & Nguyen, 2023) show that reflective practices and active teaching strategies are proven to be better sounding when compared to theoretical training programs. This leads us to the need for education policymakers to rethink or re-look at how knowledge is imparted in the case of teacher education so that teacher education does not become a way for teachers to contribute less to teaching and learning of students' outcomes.

These findings open the need for a rethinking of teacher training frameworks that allow the balance between theoretical and practical knowledge by experience so that anyone who decides to become a teacher is ready to deal with the real world of challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- To improve the effectiveness of teaching at lower educational levels, there should be facilitation of student achievement and readiness at higher academic levels.
- Decreased weight should be given to compulsory educational courses during the selection of teachers as they do not appear to make a meaningful positive contribution to long-term academic success.
- The teacher education content and subject matter should be aligned to international standards and refined to produce competent and globally competitive educators.
- The integration of modern teaching methodologies in teacher education programs should be made with a view to preparing future teachers for teaching challenges in today's classrooms.
- The teacher education courses should prioritize the development of practical teaching skills to strengthen overall teaching quality and effectiveness.
- Elements of gender-based bias in educational settings should be avoided, especially at the elementary education level, as the difference between the performance of either the teacher or a student does not vary significantly.

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