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An Assessment of the Provision of Professional Competencies for Secondary School Teachers in B. Ed (01-Year) Program in Teacher-Training Institutions

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess the provision of professional competencies for secondary school teachers in the B.Ed (one year) programme in teacher-training institutions. This study was conducted in four districts (Mansehra, D. I. Khan, Sawat, and Mardan) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All the teacher educators and prospective teachers in teacher training institutions constituted the population of the study. Questionnaire for teacher educators and for prospective teachers was administered, exploring the professional competencies reflected in B.Ed. program curriculum. Data analysis revealed that B.Ed curriculum of training institution provides all the professional competencies required for SSTs. The findings of the study revealed that B.Ed curriculum reflect the following professional competencies: personal classroom management philosophy, classroom management skills, administrative skills, classroom organization and environment, application of culture based approaches, effective teaching, proper lecture delivery in the classroom, continuous assessment in training program, assessing student problems, use of ICT, communication skills, execution of suitable skills to meet goals. Teachers were enabled to be change agents, reflective and critical thinkers. The study suggested further research with same variables on a variety of population.

Key words: training, professionalism, curriculum, competencies, curricula

Introduction

Education plays a determining role in the progress of any country. Hence, a network of efficient educational institutions with qualified, competent and well informed staff is a prerequisite. Those countries that have attached top priority to the expansion of education secure higher returns in terms of innovative scientific concepts and technologies for reshaping economic, social and educational infrastructure. It is pertinent to mention here that the knowledge and teaching skills of a teacher become outdated and need to be

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refreshed and updated (Sulemani, 2007). One of the common method of updating skills and abilities is professional training.

The utility and importance of training for teachers can be understood from the assertion of Mahmood (2009) who thinks that training is carried out for the improvement of the personal and professional development of the teaching staff so as to academically strengthen students, classroom and the school. Therefore the fundamental purpose of education is to enhance the teaching learning environment and to enable the system to address the emerging changes in the field of education.

Viewing in this context activities-based curriculum was developed for class 9th and 10th so as to make the system relatively more compatible and coherent with the fast emerging challenges of the 21st century. Such change requires professionally sound teachers at its back together with the adoption of the latest approaches and methodologies of teaching. The secondary school teachers need to be endowed with the knowledge skills and attitudes for the new curriculum (Wamokhela, 2012).

In this Arora (2000) asserts that latest researches reveal that for establishing a better academic relationship there is a dire need of equipping the teachers with the skills of using the latest sources of information such as the internet, access to and use of research journals and research articles coupled with. Shakoor, Ghumman and Mahmood, (2013) perceived that developing a strong and effective linkage between B.Ed program curriculum, the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude is a prerequisite on behalf of the teachers for maintaining an accurate discipline between the teacher and the taught for proper implementation. This means that competence is necessary in this connection. Competence in the views of researchers is the attainment of the relative knowledge, skills, and attitude for confronting the emerging challenges in the teaching-learning process (General Directorate of Education, 2011). Government of Pakistan under the Ministry of Education, Islamabad, in

collaboration with the provincial governments, and other funding agencies, has started numerous initiatives for improving the standard of secondary school teachers which were carried out by the USAID Teacher Education Project, in (2013). One of the most general training program for secondary school teachers is B.Ed (01-year program).

The problem under investigation was, "An assessment of the provision of professional competencies for high school teachers in the B.Ed (01-year) program in teacher-training institutions". This study comprised the following objectives: to highlight professional competencies required for high school teachers; to access the provision of professional competencies for high school teachers in the curriculum of B.Ed. program in the training institutes for teacher.

Review of literature

As per the details given by the teacher education programme of the University of Northern Iowa in2013, the professional competence refers to the general abilities, level of comprehension, and related potentials of teachers regarding professional growth and development. In this regard the American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) put forth ten areas of professional competencies with appropriate relative detail for each competency. All these competencies wee categorized in three broad levels ranging from the fundamental level, to the secondary, and the advanced level. These competencies comprised of: advising and helping, assessment, evaluation, and research; equity, diversity, and inclusion; ethical professional practice; history, philosophy, and values; human and organizational resources; law, policy, and governance; leadership; personal foundations; and student learning and development.

It is pertinent to mention here that teachers were imparted trainings so as to enhance their professionalism with reference to the concerned culture.

The total competencies were 12 in number as reported by Martinet, Raymond & Gauthier, (2001).Many researchers have studied professional competencies with reference to B.Ed curriculum. Some important researches are mentioned. for instance researchers like Rainsbury, Hodges, Burchell and Lay, (2001) found in their study that professional competencies presented the in B.Ed program curriculum were accurate for the workplace needs of the secondary school teachers and that these competencies provided practicable and workable solutions for ushering relatively better performance by the secondary school teachers.

A similar conclusion was drawn by Finegold and Notabartolo (2011) in their investigation the same competencies remained fruitful and effective as long as the teachers were on job. Such competencies included: simple and understandable pattern of material presentation in the teaching-learning process; relevance of material; proper motivation of the learners; tactfully addressing learners' problems and issues; planning the lessons; developing communication and relationship with the learners, teachers and parents; classroom management related skills, rubric-based and relatively apt assessment of the learners' academic performance; the use of ICTs in the learning process; carrying out individual as well as team work; cultural familiarity together with ethics; and developing and maintaining proper behavior patterns in the classroom.

Reporting from the Pakistani context the professional competencies usually imparted in B.Ed Program in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa consisted of: lesson planning in the classroom; the ability to access qualitative contents; creative thinking; numeracy together with life skills; grasping and handling classroom problems; teaching methodologies; applying theory into practice; contacts with parents; context-oriented or cultural based approach and group work—besides other skills (Reba et al, 2013). However, contrary to this some findings show that the mentioned competencies are not observed in the

actual classroom situation despite being taught in the institutions. The same phenomenon is reflected in many research findings exhibited in a number of research papers and conference presentations (Reba, Parveen, Inam-Ullah & Ali, 2013).

Research Methodology

The data was collected from teacher educators and prospective teachers from universities located in the four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These districts were: Mardan, Swat. D. I. Khan and Mansehra. Questionnaire was used as data collection tool. This tool consisted of 20 statements which were addressing the quality of training imparted to the prospective teachers in B.Ed program. The tool was meant for measuring the provision of professional competencies under three categories. These categories were: preparation and planning the lessons, instructional competencies and classroom environment. The data was analyzed using various statistical techniques through SPSS. The data was interpreted accordingly. The finding paved way for drawing pertinent conclusions. This led the researchers to offer practicable recommendations for the improvement of the training process. The detail of the data analysis is presented in the following section.

Table No. 1: Preparation pertaining to planning and teaching

S. N.	Statements	Responses (%)					Mean
		S.A	A	U.D	D.A	S.D.A	
1	Mastery over instructional planning	26 (65)	14 (35)	---	---	---	4.65
2	Teaching resources and curriculum materials evaluation	14 (35.0)	23 (57.5)	3 (7.5)	---	---	4.27

Analysis about the preparation pertaining to planning and teaching shows that 100% of the respondents were agreed with the statements: “mastery over instructional planning”; and 92% teachers were in favor of the statement “teaching resources and curriculum materials evaluation” as professional competency provided in B.Ed program.

Table No. 2: Instructional competencies taught at the institutions

S. N	Statements	Responses (%)					Mean
		S.A	A	U.D	D.A	S.D.A	
1	Command over subject-matter	34 (85)	6 (15)	--	--	--	**4.85**
2	Knowledge of human psychology	27 (67.5)	13 (32.5)	--	--	--	**4.67**
3	Information of Islamic ethical values and social life skills.	21 (52.5)	17 (42.5)	2 (5)	--	--	**4.47**
4	Proficiency in assessment	21 (52.5)	19 (47.5)	--	--	--	**4.47**
5	Efficiency in ICTs	30 (75)	10 (25)	--	--	--	**4.75**
6	Community partnership	12 (30.0)	23 (57.5)	5 (12.5)	--	--	**4.17**
7	Continuous professional development and code of conduct	14 (35)	23 (57.5)	3 (7.5)	--	--	**4.27**
8	Control over English language	28 (70)	11 (27.5)	1 (2.5)	--	--	**4.67**
9	Use of Information technology	26 (65)	14 (35)	--	--	--	**4.65**

The statistical analysis of dimension instructional competencies indicates that most of the respondents were agreed including: 100% for the statement command over subject-matter, 100% for information of human psychology, 95% for Information of Islamic ethical values/social life skills,100% for Expertise in assessment, 100% for efficiency ICTs, 87.5% for establishing community partnership, 92.5% for Constant professional development and code of conduct, 97.5% for control over English language and 100% for utilization of information technology respectively reflected as professional competency in the B.Ed program.

Table No. 3: Maintaining class room environment

S. N	Statements	Responses					Mean
		S.A	A	U.D	D.A	S.D.A	
1	Creating learning environment	27 (67.5)	12 (30.0)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.65
2	Students participation	20 (50.0)	19 (47.5)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.47
3	Students involvement in academic activities	23(57.5)	17(42.5)	--	--	--	4.57
4	Developing students' critical	23 (57.5)	16(40)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.55

	thinking						
5	Shaping students' belief in cultural diversity	22 (55.0)	17 (42.5)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.52
6	peaceful co-existence	23 (57.5)	16 (40)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.55
7	Fostering cooperation and collaboration for collective problem solving	15 (37.5)	23 (57.5)	2 (5)	--	--	4.32
8	Development of social life skill	14 (35.0)	25 (62.5)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.32
9	Organizational code of conduct	20 (50.0)	19 (47.5)	1 (2.5)	--	--	4.47

The analysis of professional competencies included in category 'maintaining class room environment' revealed that most of the respondents were agreed with the professional competencies included in the 'classroom teaching-maintaining class room environment' such as: 92.5 % for constructing an environment of learning, 97.5% and 100% for students contribution in the classroom discussions and in academic activities, 97.5 % for improving students' critical-thinking abilities, 97.5 % for enhancing students' belief in cultural diversity, 97.5% for peaceful co-existence, 95%for fostering teamwork and cooperation for collective problem-solving, 97.5 % for improvement of social life skills, and 97.5 % for organizational code of conduct respectively.

Findings and Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the collected data it was found that the suggested professional competencies for B.Ed program include: teachers' personal philosophy, sound administrative skills, learning environment, effective teaching, and continued assessment, assessing student problems, the use of ICTs, communication and skills. Prospective teacher were prepared at least supposedly to be real change agents for the society. Furthermore, these trainers had their own personal philosophy teaching and learning. Their training consisted of: discriminating administrative skills, classroom management skills coupled with the latest approaches to teaching. Prospective teachers had the opportunity to grasp culture base approaches to the teaching

process. Similarly monitoring system remained effective inside the training institutions. Other aspects of the prospective teachers that were developed were: effective teaching skills, asking relevant questions, assessing learners' problems, ICTs related training, communication skills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Curricula need to be relevant coherent and congruent with the international standards so as to strengthen students' reading, writing and numeracy skills. Furthermore at the time of devising specific objectives care may be taken to keep the objectives very clear and above all achievable.
2. Teachers be imparted requisite and continued training and orientation sessions for strengthening their competence in teaching methodology.
3. Secondary school teachers are teaching at such a stage that highly influences the character and personality of the learner, hence Islamic values be made part of the curricula with a strong emphasis on practical work.
4. Inculcation of social life skills is very important for the teachers. Our (the researchers') classroom observations showed that majority of the respondents were weak in standard human growth and development. They were to de imparted training regarding the value of respect for diversity, justice and human rights.
5. Similarly a rubric-based just and precise measurement for students' professionalism may be fostered for further research.

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