

Weaknesses in Evaluation of Teaching Practice in the Formal and Non-Formal Teacher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This research study was performed to explore the weaknesses in existing evaluation techniques of teaching practice of formal and non-formal teacher education institutions. The main objective was to find out the issues of evaluation of teaching practice and to recommend the ways for improvement of both the systems; in Punjab. For the sample of study, three formal while one non-formal including four regional campuses were selected. The questionnaire was used to get the responses of teaching practice supervisors. Two hundred teaching practice supervisors were selected randomly in which 100 from formal institutions and 100 were selected from non-formal institutions. The problems and weaknesses of evaluation of teaching practice were found out by open ended items in the questionnaires which were analyzed by using ENVIVO. Majority of respondents said that duration of teaching practices is less and not sufficient. Few respondents expressed that prospective teachers are not being evaluated properly. Lack of qualified, experienced and expert supervisor is another major weakness in the current teaching practices in formal and non-formal system. Majority of teaching practice supervisors of formal system supposed that teaching practice supervisor involved the cooperating teacher in the evaluation while supervisors of non-formal system didn't. Major Suggestions were that time period of teaching practice should be increased up to 3 months; financial support (i.e. scholarship) should be provided. It was recommended that evaluation of teaching practice must be internal as well as external by experts. There is a need of continuous methods of evaluation of teaching practice for both institutions.

Keywords: Teaching practice, Teaching practice supervisors, Evaluation

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Introduction

The quality of education is linked with the quality of instruction in the classrooms. Teacher is the most important factor in implementation of all educational reforms in the masses. The academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching-learning process. Recognizing the deteriorating quality of education at various levels, efforts need to be intensified to accord adequate priority to the effectiveness of teacher education programs in the country. The basic purpose of pre-service education is to prepare prospective teachers to meet challenges that they have to face in future in the classroom. Keeping in view the nature of job, status and future responsibilities, teacher is to carryout pre-service training programme comprising of three components:

- i. Academic Preparation
- ii. Pedagogical Skills
- iii. Teaching practice (Arends, 1994).

According to Smith and Lev-Ari. (2005), the teaching practice plays important role in reducing gap between theory and practice, it also provides the context for prospective teachers to develop their personal teaching competencies

The evaluation of teaching practice for the purpose of certification is a demanding and challenging issue. Prospective teachers are unavoidably graded according to the criteria held by supervisor or particular institutions and the criteria are not made explicit all the times (Ali, 2005).

Teaching practice supervisors are normally given evaluation schedule according to which prospective teachers are to be evaluated on a five-point range: i.e. 5 to 0 or A to F, from outstanding to poor. Most of the supervisors when they are evaluating their lessons will expect from the prospective teachers:

- i. Punctuality of prospective teacher.
- ii. A well-written lesson plan and precisely presented.
- iii. Dress code and behavior, they must show an amusing personality exclusive of being overconfident and shy.
- iv. Versatility in teaching and instructional methods.
- v. Mastery of subject matter for accurate answering of unforeseen questions.

Evaluation of teaching practice has always been a challenging task for education institutions. There was a dire need to explore the strengths and weaknesses in assessing the teaching practice component of teacher education programmes of both formal and non-formal education system. Therefore, this study was aimed to investigate the weaknesses in evaluation methods of teaching practice of both the

systems i.e. formal and non-formal systems prevailing in the country and also suggests the ways for its improvement.

Objectives

1. To find out the issues of evaluation of teaching practice of formal and non-formal teacher education systems.
2. To recommend the ways to improve the component of evaluation of teaching practice for both.

Literature Review

Teaching practice time spent in schools is recommended as the central pillar & integral part of education programs. It allows prospective teachers to provide a scaffold of support, mentoring & learning that progressively builds the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. The percentage of total marks and teaching practice ranges between 90:10 and 70:30. So it is clear that weight age of teaching practice in terms of percentage marks in relation to total marks of teacher education program have been decreasing with the passage of time all over the teacher education institutions in Pakistan (Murtaza, 2005).

According to Taneja (2000), there are different terminologies used for teaching practice that are field study, internship, infield experience, teaching practicum, field based trainings and practice teaching.

It is a pre-service professional training for interested persons, aspiring to become teachers with a credible vision for sustainable human development (Oyekan, 2000).

The teaching practice plays a foremost role to bridge theory and practice. It also offers the field environment to develop the personal and teaching competencies in the prospective teachers (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005).

Laurentian University (2011) and university of Newcastle (2010) addressed that teacher education programmes aims to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to employ knowledge, information, and theories that they gained during their course work in the real classroom setting. In additions, teaching practice experience enables them to achieve the combination between the theoretical and the practical knowledge.

Morgan, Perry, and Reilly (2004) stated that evaluation or feedback of prospective teachers in the teaching practice is used as a means to improve accountability for effective practices and for improving teaching practice. It also provides documentation for accountability and promotion procedures. The most commonly used methods of evaluation are:

- Using formative or summative evaluation.
- Obtaining student feedback.
- Seeking input from other stakeholders.

- Developing evaluation tools.
- Analyzing the evaluation data.
- Reporting the evaluation outcomes.
- Using information from evaluative process to improve assessment practices.

The following studies conducted in Pakistan and other countries indicated the importance of teaching practice in teacher education programmes. These research studies focused on the issues and the problems of evaluation of prospective teachers during teaching practice, and also suggested and recommended for its improvement to enhance the quality of education and teaching.

Akbar (2001) conducted a research entitled “A study of practice teaching of prospective teachers of secondary schools”. The study was aimed to examine the rules and regulations for practice teaching to know the practices of supervision of practice teaching and to highlight the problems faced by administration, teachers & students of teacher training institutions & practicing schools during practice teaching. The major findings of the study revealed that there was a little variation in the practices of practice teaching in all the teacher training institutions in Punjab. It was also found that some imported elements of practice teaching i.e. demonstration lesson, criticism lesson, participation of cooperating teachers and active involvement of supervisors is missing.

Ali (2005) conducted a research study entitled “Comparative study of teaching practice in formal and non-formal systems and development of a model”. Analysis of data exposed that teaching practice in both systems of teacher evaluation program was considered to be least important. Therefore, it is need of time to give more focus and importance to teaching practice for improving the teacher education programmes.

Gujjar et al. (2011) researched on the topic “An evaluation of teaching practice: practicum”. The main findings of the study were that: the demonstration lessons are not given to the prospective teachers, time period of teaching practice is inadequate, and the evaluation component is unsatisfactory. It was suggested that demonstration lessons may be given before sending them in schools; the length of teaching practice may be greater than before.

According to Saifi, Sherzaman, Shafqat, and Zaman (2013) investigation, if school were to provide weekly conferences, regular triad meeting, and daily meeting with cooperative teachers and supervised classroom teaching, it will have great impact on academic and professional skills of the prospective teachers.

According to Mapfumo, and Chitsiko, (2009). “Teaching practice is an integrated learning that is defined as a time period in which students worked together to receive particular in-service instruction and guidance to apply the studied theory into practice”.

Teaching practice is a positive experience that causes prospective teachers to increase reflection on how to refresh their teaching. Teaching practice also increases self-efficacy among prospective teachers. On the other hand, teaching practice is also the most stressful part of the teacher education program. In teaching practice, most prospective teachers are not able to develop teaching skills depending on various situations. (Gujjar, Ramzan, & Bajwa, 2011).

Method and Procedure

Sample

From the population, the sample was drawn by convenient random sampling. Two hundred supervisors were randomly selected from the sample universities, One hundred from formal and one hundred from non-formal system. Punjab University Lahore, University of Education and Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi were selected as Formal Teacher Education Institutions and AIOU was selected as Non-Formal Teacher Education Institution.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was prepared by considering the objectives of the research study and related literature in consultation with the supervisor. The problems and weaknesses of evaluation of teaching practice were found out by open ended items in the questionnaires which were analyzed by using ENVIVO and it was improved with the professional input of ten experts in the field of educational research and teaching practice. Expert's view was collected for the judgmental validity of the instruments. For content and construct validity, the scale was administered to prospective teachers and supervisors for pilot testing.

Data Collection

After pilot study data was gathered through the validated questionnaires. The researcher personally travelled through the target areas of Islamabad, Lahore, Multan and Attock, visited the formal and non-formal institutions which were selected as a sample and distributed herself the questionnaires with the letter of supervisor.

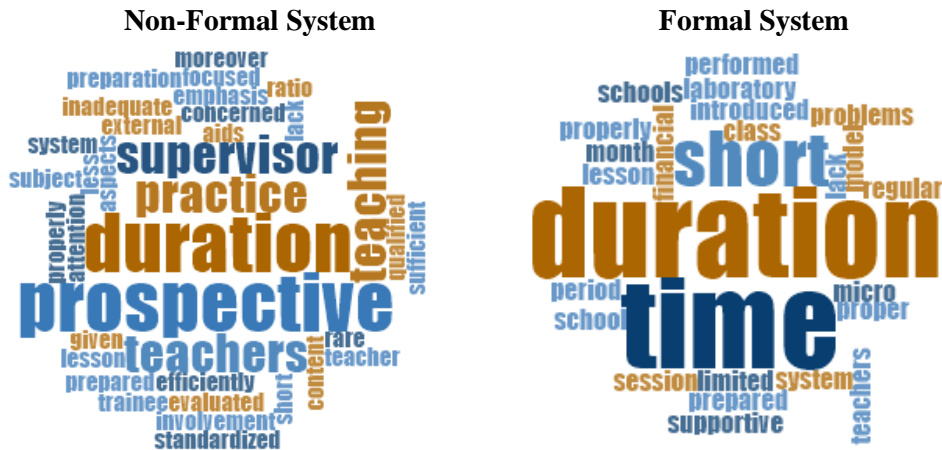
Analysis of Data

As the questionnaire teacher educators have open ended items. These open-ended items responses were analyzed by using ENVIVO and the results were shown diagrammatically indicating the weaknesses of evaluation of teaching practice and ways to improve them.

Results

Non-Formal and Formal Supervisors' Responses

Major weaknesses in existing teaching practice I



The above diagrams show the major weaknesses that currently existing in teaching practices in formal and non-formal system. Majority of respondents expressed that prospective teachers are not being evaluated properly. Lack of qualified, experienced and expert supervisor is another major weakness in the current teaching practices in formal and non-formal system. The list of major weaknesses that were prominent by respondents is given below.

Non-formal System Major Weaknesses

- Improper lesson planning (43%)
- Ratio of supervisor and prospective teacher is inadequate (55%)
- Emphasis on concerned subject content is rare (69%)
- Lack of qualified supervisor. (32%)
- Duration of teaching practice is less. (95%)
- Prospective teachers should be given more attention on preparation of A.V aids. (71%)
- Prospective teachers are not evaluated properly. (64%)
- There is no external system involvement in evaluation. (41%)
- Evaluation method is not standardized. (23%)
- All aspects of evaluation were not focused. (42%)

- Duration of teaching practice must be increased or it must be 15 days in each semester. (91%)
- Some external evaluators should be involved. (31%)
- Standardized system of evaluation must be introduced. (15%)
- Each aspect required for effective teaching must be focused in evaluation of teaching practice. (36%)

Major Suggestions of Formal System

- Duration of teaching practice should be increased to up to 3 months. (79%)
- Micro teaching should be included in curriculum. (18%)
- Establishment of laboratory schools. (56%)
- Financial support (i.e. scholarship) should be provided. (77%)
- Proper model class system should be introduced. (60%)
- The respective principal and cooperating teachers should not allow the prospective teachers to remain absent for more than two days during teaching practice. (41%)

Discussion

Teaching practice plays a vital role for in developing personal ability, teaching ability in prospective teachers' and also bridges the gap between "theory and practice". Throughout the teaching practice, the prospective teachers are supervised by the cooperating school principal, class teachers and their supervisor. During teaching practice prospective teachers have the opportunities to involve and participate in schools curricular and co-curricular activities. Through this experience they learn new knowledge, facts and also linked their experience with theories (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2006).

Evaluation of teaching practice is quite challenging as well as time consuming task. In this particular study, it was evident from the results that both the systems i.e. the formal and non-formal teacher education system needs improvement in evaluation of prospective teachers during teaching practice. Time period of teaching practice for both the systems may be increased. The cooperating schools must be selected with the consent of prospective teachers. There must be some incentives for the heads of schools like certificates of appreciation or some financial support.

Evaluation must be both i.e. internal by the teaching practice supervisor or head of the school and also external by some expert teacher educators. It will help to main the objectivity. Moreover, the criteria of evaluation should be discussed with the prospective teachers, so that they may be clear that what aspects of their personality and profession will be evaluated. Continuous assessment of this component will make it more effective and productive.

Conclusions

The major conclusions drawn were as under:

Supervisors of both the system viewed that time period of teaching practice was inadequate to train the prospective teachers. School for teaching practice was not selected with the consent of prospective supervisors. The evaluation criterion of teaching practice was not the single base of supervisor internal evaluation. Supervisors of formal system intended that evaluation criterion of teaching practice was on the basis of recommendations made by supervisors and also some other experts while supervisors of non-formal rejected it. Supervisors of both formal and non-formal universities opined that they were provided with evaluation criteria of teaching practice. Supervisors of formal universities informed this criterion to prospective teachers while supervisors of non-formal universities did not inform about the criteria to prospective teachers. Supervisors of both the system were not satisfied with the evaluation criteria.

Majority of supervisors of formal universities maintained the record of evaluation of prospective teachers on daily basis while majority of supervisor of non-formal universities maintained the record on weekly basis.

Majority of both formal and non-formal universities supervisors held that they maintained the record of evaluation of prospective teachers on weekly basis.

Recommendations

The recommendations made were as under:

Supervisors of both institutions opined that the length of their teaching practice was inadequate. It is therefore recommended that it should be more than two months. Presently in both formal and non-formal universities prospective teachers are required to undertake one-month teaching practice during one year or two-year course of study. Beside course work the teaching practice should be given equal time. In this way they will be able to become good teacher after their training.

Intentions of respondents of non-formal universities showed that they were not satisfied with the quality of existing teaching practice. It is therefore, recommended that it may be improved by giving due consideration to all elements of teaching practice. The major elements include duration of teaching practice, teaching of different allied subjects and opportunities to prospective teacher to use different methods of teaching in a real classroom setting.

Respondents of both formal and non-formal universities concluded that cooperating teachers and heads of practicing schools did not show interest in evaluation of teaching practice. It is therefore, recommended that cooperating teacher and heads of teaching practice schools should be involved in evaluation process of prospective

teachers. The concerned authorities of the university should be authorized to take their part.

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