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EXPLORING THE ATTITUDE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION

Abstract

Teachers are the cornerstone in educational system. The traits and behavioral patterns of teachers have remained a critical concern while determining the influences that shape their choices of personal action with the decision of choice of a profession. This study aims to explore attitude of prospective teachers towards teaching profession. An "Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession (ASTTP)" questionnaire by Umme Kulsum (2001) was adapted to measure the attitude of prospective teachers in this descriptive study. Data were collected from 300 prospective teachers (Male= 28, Females= 272) studying at the three campuses of a public university. Data were analyzed by running t-test and ANOVA with the help of SPSS. The findings indicated that there is no significant difference in the attitude on the basis of program and gender of pre-services teachers. Whereas campus wise difference existed. This study can be more elaborative when some in-depth qualitative study will be conducted to investigate the sensitivity of teaching attitude by adding possible other factors that determine the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards teaching profession.

Keywords: *Teaching attitude, Prospective teachers, gender, program, campus*

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Introduction

Teaching is a profession that is yet an angle of debate when it is compared with some other established professions such as medicine, law, engineering, and others (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008). Whenever a work is labelled as a profession, it requires a certain standard in qualification such as a system of licensing and training. The professionals work according to the requirements of their profession where training helps to develop appropriate job attitude among them. Teacher training institutes are also playing their role in developing the attitude of pre-service teachers towards teaching profession.

Srivastava (1989) found that teacher education institution managed to shape positive attitude towards teaching in prospective teachers. The study also revealed that the training helps to inculcate high expectation from the prospective teachers. Similarly, Yadav (1992) also discovered that teacher pre-service training contributes to positive attitude by enhancing efficacy and morale towards teaching.

It is observed that among the elements of the process of education, teachers occupy a vital place. Unless the traits and behavioral patterns of teachers are not worth modeling, the contribution of other elements of process of education fails. Teaching is such a profession that is not chosen by choice in Pakistani context (Parvez & Shakir, 2013) although the bases of teaching are found respectable with regard to our religious view point. The reasons that work behind opting teaching profession are many including personal, psychological, social, administrative, and economic. Among those reasons attitudes are the guiding forces that do not only help in developing career choices but also keep teachers remain attached with this profession by showing their full inspirations.

Attitude develops over the period of times and appears in varied degrees. The initial definition was broad and encompassed

cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral components. For example, Allport (1935) defined an attitude as “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (p. 810). After few decades, the concept of attitude lost much of its breadth and was largely reduced to its evaluative component. Eagly & Chaiken (1993) defined attitude in a highly influential textbook, as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (p. 1). The varied definition describe attitude as a response which can be in favor or disfavor to any situation, event, or entity.

Attitude has been found a compelling power that improves tasks’ proficiency. It is assumed that attitude of prospective teachers of B. Ed and M. Ed programs differ due to the varying practices of programs. The time duration, courses, nature of assignments and the prime component i.e. teaching practice (TP) make these degrees varied with each other; similarly, the attitude of the prospective teachers of those programs develops and differs. B. Ed students go for teaching practice that provides them a chance to practice the profession for a short period before service, whereas the M. Ed students do not attend teaching practice as compulsory requirement of their degree. It may be one contributing factor towards the difference of attitude among them.

There prevails a vast evidence of research findings that supports the idea of varying attitudes between male and female teachers (Ustuner, Demirtas, & Comert, 2009), and it will not be wrong to say that teaching had long been considered as a female profession due to its sensitive nature of handling children and young students.

Teaching attitudes vary and they have impact on other components of teaching too. Due to the central position of teacher

in educational system, the auxiliary aspects just like selection of teaching methods seem dependent on the attitudes of teachers.

Literature Review

Khamari & Tiwari (2015) studied the difference of attitude of teachers towards teaching profession based on tribe and gender in a descriptive survey research. They found gender and tribe as not contributing factors towards the direction of attitude towards teaching.

Similarly, in a study conducted on the attitude of pre-service teachers, (Pervez & Shakir, 2013) found that gender, religion, and discipline did not determine the attitude of pre-service teachers whereas sector of university worked having varied attitude of pre-service teachers towards teaching.

Hussain, Jamil, Noor, Sibtain, & Shah (2011) found strong correlation between teaching attitude and behavior of teachers in a study. Behavior is that observable form of actions that is considered a counterpart of attitude.

Babu, & Raju (2013) found in their study that gender and subjects determine teachers with varied attitudes towards teaching profession. Findings suggested on the aspects of attitude that can improve the interest and attitude of prospective teachers.

A correlational study was conducted by Andronachea, Bocoua, Bocoua, & Macri (2014) to explore the aspects of attitude and their relationship with teaching profession. Some aspects of attitude were strongly correlated with teaching profession and suggestions on understanding the dimensions of attitude were reported.

An effort has been made to make the role of teacher clearly pictured with regard to the credit, respect, and responsibility that are attached with this profession, owing to the idea that the concepts, inspirations, and views regarding profession highly determine actions (Ahsan, & Anjum, 2012).

Ustuner, Demirtas, & Comert (2009) explored the attitude of teachers towards their job and found the variables like gender, department, SES, and motivational level contributes in varied degree of attitude among teachers towards teaching profession.

Rao (2012) determined the contribution of age, gender, marital status, and SES of teachers in relation to different attitudes among them. In his study, he gave importance to determine the role of teachers regarding their inspiration in teaching profession.

Bhargava, & Pathy, (2014) undertook a study that explored the attitude of prospective teachers influenced by gender, age, and experience. Only the education level of teachers was found influential towards having positive attitude in teaching profession when the difference in attitude towards teaching was investigated on the basis of gender, area, and religious affiliation. The assumption behind measuring the attitude of student teachers remained the high expectation of performance in form of having positive attitude towards teaching profession (Chakraborty, & Mondal, 2014).

Bademcioglu, Karatas, & Alci (2014) conducted a descriptive survey to measure the attitude of prospective teachers in relation to the variables of gender, experience and program. The more time teachers spend in teaching, the more positive attitude likely they have towards teaching.

The factors that contribute in developing attitude towards teaching profession are surrounded within schools. Attitude of teachers is dependent on administrative support from school as well (Divya, 2014).

Huge evidence from research has been reported for support of the hypothesis of the study in the relation of self-efficacy and self- competency beliefs of prospective teachers. On the basis of having strong correlation of competency and efficacy beliefs, the attitude towards teaching can be well predicted (Yesilyurt, 2014).

Trivedi, (2012) found grade level wise difference in attitude of working teachers. In a study comparison of public and private institute was made among prospective teachers on the basis of having varied attitude towards teaching. Findings reveals no significant difference in the level of professional attitude of prospective teachers enrolled in public and private institutions but male prospective teachers of private sector have less positive professional attitudes than that of male and female prospective teachers of public sector (Riaz, Habib, Riaz, & Hassan, n.d.).

Attitude of teachers towards their profession was found different when they were compared on the basis of choosing this profession and the problems associated with teaching help molding behavior and attitude of teachers (Merdassa, 2012).

The contribution of variables related to the context and background of teachers were investigated in relation to the development of attitude towards teaching profession. Gender, family income and educational level of father were found impacting variables (Gunduz, 2014).

Since the nature of attitude is hidden in the sense that only observable actions of individuals can determine the direction of behavior (Green, 1959), it is important to study the latent variable that contribute in shaping attitudes of future teachers who have not stepped in profession practically but their inspiration towards teaching can help in forecasting the level of their interest as well as the performance of their school teaching.

Objectives of the study

The study aimed the following objectives to:

1. Explore the attitude of prospective teachers towards teaching profession

2. Calculate the gender, program, and campus wise mean difference of attitude towards teaching among prospective teachers

Methodology

The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature. The quantitative research is the process of explaining phenomena in the form of numerical data or information that can be converted into numbers. Through this survey, the information was collected to draw the current status of the attitude of prospective teachers towards teaching.

Sample

The sample of the study was drawn by using convenient sampling technique. A list of total student teachers in B. Ed and M. Ed programs was obtained. The sample consisted 300 prospective teachers studying in three campuses of a public university.

Instrumentation

The survey tool was consisting on two parts. First part was related to demographic variables such as program, gender, and campus. The second part "Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession (ASTTP)" by Umme Kulsum (2001) was adapted to fit to our local context. The content of instrument was comprised the administrative, social, and economic factors of teaching. This scale has largely been used to assess the attitudes of teachers towards teaching. The scale consists of 50 statements. Responses were made on a five-point scale i.e. strongly agree 5; agree 4; slightly agree than disagree 3; slightly disagree than agree 2; and strongly disagree 1. The questionnaire was pilot tested producing the reliability value as ($\alpha = .80$). The validity of the research

instruments was ensured through taking experts' opinion. Data were collected by observing research ethics.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using SPSS 22. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the attitude of prospective teachers

Score on attitude	No. of items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total attitude score	50	185.46	17.588
N=300			

For the summary of continuous variable (attitude), mean and standard deviation were calculated. Table 1 shows the (M=185.46, SD=17.588) of attitude where attitude was measured as the degree to which teachers were found inclined towards social, administrative, and economic factors that help develop the image of school teaching among prospective teachers.

Table 2: Comparison of mean scores of the attitude of prospective teachers on the basis of gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig
Attitude Scores	Female	272	185.38	17.585	-.238	298	.812
	Male	28	186.21	17.916			

N=300

Independent sample t-test was applied to compare the mean score of female and male teachers about the attitude

towards teaching profession. Table 2 indicated that there was statistically no significant difference (Mean difference=.83) in female ($M_{\text{female}} = 185.38$, $SD=17.585$) and male teachers ($M_{\text{male}} = 186.21$, $SD=17.916$) on attitude $t(298) = -.238$, $p=.812$, (two-tailed). It is concluded that female teachers were not found different with their attitude towards teaching profession when compared with male teachers.

Table 3: Comparison of mean scores of the attitude of prospective teachers based on program

Variables	Program	N	Mean	SD	<i>t-value</i>	df	Sig
Attitude Scores	B. Ed	150	186.36	19.259	.886	298	.376
	M. Ed	150	184.56	15.754			

N=300

Independent sample t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of prospective teachers of B. Ed and M. Ed programs about the attitude towards teaching profession. Table 3 indicated that there was statistically no significant difference in B. Ed ($M_{\text{B. Ed}} = 186.36$, $SD=19.259$) and M. Ed teachers ($M_{\text{M. Ed}} = 184.56$, $SD=15.754$) on attitude $t(298) = .886$, $p=.376$, (two-tailed). It is concluded that B. Ed teachers were not found different with their attitude towards teaching profession when compared with M. Ed teachers. The Mean difference ($MD=1.8$) was attributed to some arbitrary reason other than program.

A one-way between ANOVA was conducted to compare the impact of campuses on attitude scores of prospective teachers. Participants were divided into three campuses (Campus 1, Campus 2, and Campus 3).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics in one-way analysis of variance to compare mean scores of three campuses for attitude

Campuses	N	M	SD
Campus 1	100	181.43	17.832
Campus 2	100	189.67	19.159
Campus 3	100	185.28	14.659
Total	300		

Table 5: One-Way Analysis of Variance of three campuses and attitude score

Sources	df	SS	MS	F	P
Between groups	2	3399.740	1699.870	5.667	.004
Within groups	297	89090.780	299.969		
Total	299	92490.520			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 indicated that there was a statistically significant difference $P=.05$ for three campuses for attitude score, $F(2,297) = 5.667$, $p=.004$. Post-hoc comparison using Tukey's test indicated that mean scores for Campus 1 ($M_{\text{Campus1}} = 181.43$, $SD=17.832$) was significantly different from Campus 2 ($M_{\text{Campus2}} = 189.67$, $SD=19.159$). It is concluded that the prospective teachers of campus 2 had more positive attitude towards teaching than their counterparts from campus 1.

Discussion

The study was guided with the main objective to explore the attitude of prospective teachers towards teaching. Further the difference in attitude of prospective teachers towards teaching profession about gender, program, and campuses was measured.

One finding of the current study revealed that male and female prospective teachers were not found different in attitude towards teaching. It is a similar finding like previous studies where gender did not put teachers at varied attitude towards teaching profession, (Khamari & Tiwari, 2015; Parvez & Shakir, 2013; Chakraborty, & Mondal, 2014; Bademcioglu, Karatas, & Alci, 2014; Merdassa, 2012). Whereas some contrary findings have also been found that differentiated male and female teachers with attitude of teaching with varied levels (Babu, & Raju, 2013; Gunduz, 2014; Ustuner, Demirtas, & Comert, 2009). The second finding of the study was not supported with the assumption of researcher based on the findings of previous related studies (Ustuner, Demirtas, & Comert, 2009) that prospective teachers of M. Ed and B. Ed differ in attitude towards teaching profession. Gender and program of prospective teachers did not contribute conclusively towards the attitude of prospective teachers.

Findings disapproved the assumption of research study. By raising the standards and prestige of school teaching in society, the attitude of teachers can be developed. Teaching profession is not confined to gender and program. The reason behind these findings is the trend of entering male prospective teachers in teacher education institutes with no emphasis of female teachers only to become teachers. Another reason may be that the courses of teaching theory in B. Ed and M. Ed programs have resemblance, albeit the differences of teaching practice (TP), prospective teachers were not found different with each other across two programs.

Campus wise difference in attitude of teachers was found when prospective teachers belonging to three campuses were compared. It may happen due to the difference of emphasis on content and assignments that also help in developing the attitude of teachers. The environment, culture and practices across the campuses differ to further contribute towards varying attitudes among prospective teachers. It implies to plan and implement similar practices in the different campuses of universities. At societal level, school teaching needs improvement and respect so to be taken as an encouraging profession.

The conditions of teaching with regard to administrative, social and economic factors can be improved to make this profession attractive and prestigious that will ultimately develop a sense of responsibility and positive attitude among teachers. The contribution of factors that develop attitude among pre-service teachers can be studied by employing different variables and methodologies in future.

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