

Perception of Working and Prospective Teachers about the Application of their Professional Knowledge at Secondary Level

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Abstract

This study intended to explore perception of teachers about professional knowledge of educator and its exercise at secondary level. The objectives of the study were to explore the teachers' professional abilities and its exercise at secondary level and to compare the opinions of working and prospective teachers about teachers' professional knowledge and its practice. Population of the study was comprised of 210 prospective teachers of Northern University Nowshera and all the 750 male working teachers of district Swabi. Sample of 105 prospective teachers were selected through convenient sampling technique from Northern University Nowshera and 120 working teachers were chosen through random sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaire and Chi-square was applied to decide findings from the collected data. It was found that only professional teachers apply their professional knowledge in teaching and also keep in mind the individual needs. Therefore, it is needed that those teachers should be recruited who have strong professional knowledge. Further the content with regard to individual differences must be more enriched in teacher education programs that may enable the teachers to teach according to mental level of students and may help to make the learning process easy.

Keywords: working and prospective teachers, Professional Knowledge, Practice.

Introduction

The origin of the term “*professionalism*” occurs in the term “*profession*” which connotes precise knowledge, good experience and training in a field of any choice of an individual (Larson, 2014). Professionalism characterizes an individual Professional development is an evolution process which develops gradually with experience if an individual has good contents knowledge in the relevant field (Van, Beijsaard, & Verloop, 2001). Buczynski and Hansen (2010) mentioned that successful teachers use their professional experiences and knowledge in daily teaching process.

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Further Fishman et al. (2003) added that professional development programs mold positively the behavior of the teachers in classroom and ensure effective teaching which ultimately may cause good academic outcomes on the part of students. In general, a teacher is a person irrespective of age, gender, cast and creed as well as religion who conveys or transfers knowledge to others (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner 2009). A teacher is a person who guides, counsels and leads learners in the process of learning (Hatton & Smith, 1995). The teachers who are trained and work in schools are called working teachers while the teachers under training are called prospective teachers. In order to become working teacher, prospective teachers need professional knowledge and training to become a professional one. On the part of a teacher, he must be equipped with good professional knowledge, in order to ensure conducive environment for instructional activities.

Goodson (1997) explored that teacher having professional knowledge can play a significant role in developing of education standard. He added further that the outcome may be enhanced if we teach professional course on activity base. Advanced level of professional training works on subject knowledge, teaching experiences and evaluation procedure for good results. Development of professional abilities of teachers requires special training in training institutions. The training period of teachers or their professional education make them able to teach effectively and this is how they become an asset for the society. During this period, they equip themselves with methods and techniques that help them in their teaching profession. The knowledge that is acquired in these training programs needs to be implemented; and furthermore, they use appropriate skills and strategies to transfer their knowledge efficiently.

Vanes and Sherin (2002) stated that if prospective teachers get sufficient knowledge of classroom issues, they will surely be good at assessing the learning situation. Thus, it is highly requisite to constitute such an environment which is conducive and supportive for teacher's training. In order to think about teaching and learning in a more deep and considerate way, we need to prioritize the addition of this proficiency in the courses of teachers' curriculum.

Those teachers who are well qualified are always good at handling different situations (Meijer, Verloop & Beijaard, 1999). They are good just because they implement their knowledge or what they have in their minds. Similarly, the work of the teachers is a representation of the knowledge that they have gained are learnt in their respective professional trainings. Teachers ensure modifications in quality and thus play a significant role in enhancing education standard that guarantees the development of a nation (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). To ensure the achievement of quality in

education, the teachers must be equipped with latest professional trainings and procedures. The relevant knowledge in the field of adopted profession makes a person aware of his field. While in case of teaching profession the quality affects multidimensional outcomes like it affects the academics of students, quality of society and all other fields of medical and technology is associated with quality of teachers (Rollnick et al., 2008).

Good communication abilities are very important for a teacher, because all activities like instruction, discussion and other nonverbal expression are the major aspects of communication. Therefore, a due weightage must be allotted to the development of communication skills of teachers in teacher education program (Spiegel, 2006).

Improvement in education system is only possible through reforms in teaching profession. Secondly highly qualified and energetic candidates should be attracted to the profession of teacher education through making the profession respectable and future oriented. Further advanced level of professional trainings is extremely needed for ensuring quality base changes in education system. Moreover, proper and sufficiently trained teachers will ensure to provide quality and standard teaching (Handler, 1993).

Statement of the problem

The aim of the study was to explore Perception of Working and Prospective Teachers about the Application of their Professional Knowledge at Secondary Level. Professional knowledge of teachers is very helpful in classroom during teaching/learning experiences. It is a roadmap towards target achievements.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the teachers' professional abilities and its exercise at secondary level.
2. To differentiate the opinions of working teachers and prospective teachers about their professional knowledge and its practice.

Significance of the Study

The success of learning process depends upon teachers' professional knowledge and its practice. This study may help to distinguish prospective and working teachers and may expose their role in achieving their instructional objectives. The study may also help the planners of teacher education programs in contents selection for teacher education.

Methods and Procedure

This study is quantitative in nature and falls in the category of descriptive studies and has adopted survey design to look the responses of both prospective and working teachers.

Population

Population of the study included of all the 210 male prospective teachers of B. Ed and M.Ed., classes of Northern University Nowshera and all the 750 male working teachers at secondary level of Government Secondary Schools for boys of District Swabi (EMIS, 2016).

Sample and sampling technique

Both Random and convenient sampling techniques were used to select the sample. The sample of 105 prospective teachers of B. Ed and M.Ed. classes from Northern University Nowshera were selected through convenient sampling technique and 120 male working teachers from twelve boys Government Secondary Schools of District Swabi were selected through random sampling technique.

Data collection Instrument

For collection of data a questionnaire was used. Questionnaire composed on 12 items for getting information about prospective and working teachers.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was tested for finding its validity and reliability. The questionnaire was presented to discussion of educationist and each item was discussed and the opinions of the experts were incorporated in the final draft and then it was subjected to pilot testing for finding the reliability through test-retest method and the scores achieved from both tests were correlated and test-retest reliability co-efficient was calculated which was found 0.92. It indicates that the reliability level of the test was satisfactory.

Data analysis

In order to find the difference between observed and expected observation an inferential statistical tool chi-square was used for data analysis. Further for measuring the significant differences between the two groups mean, S.D and t-test for independent sample were used for analysis (Ary et al., 2010).

Data analysis and interpretation

The following tables present an analysis of the data obtained for this study.

Table 1: Working teachers' professional knowledge and its practice

s. n	Statements of Working Teachers	Mostly	To some extent	Not at all	χ^2	P-value
1	I apply my professional knowledge in teaching	93	25	2	111.9	0.00
2	Professional education is the source of change in Behavior	73	45	2	63.95	0.00
3	I know student's psychology.	91	28	1	106.6	0.00
4	I involve my students in learning process.	93	25	2	111.9	0.00
5	I encourage the students for discussion	46	69	5	52.54	0.00
6	I involve my students in discussion	49	61	10	35.57	0.00
7	I adopt new and innovative teaching	30	74	16	45.8	0.00
8	I give and examine home assignment	31	64	25	22.04	0.00
9	I arrange co-curricular activities	40	62	18	24.2	0.00
10	I know individual differences of students	39	60	21	19.04	0.00
11	I discuss class room problems with students	38	63	19	24.34	0.00
12	I discuss students' problems with them.	36	74	10	51.8	0.00

Significant at 0.05 df = 2

table value=5.99

In table no.1 the values against each statement are tested through chi-Square and the value obtained is elevated than table value ($\chi^2=5.99$) at 0.05 level of significance, this elevation falls in the support of each statement and hence accepted. The working teachers replied that they should use their professional abilities in teaching. Majority of the respondents were of the view that Professional education is the source of change in behavior. Most of them hold the view that working teachers know students' attitude in the classroom. The working teachers affirm the statement that they involve their students in learning process. The respondents supported that most of the working teachers involve and encourage the students for discussion. The respondents supported that most of the working teachers adopt new and innovative teaching methods and examine home assignment. The working teachers agreed to the statement that

they should arrange co-curricular activities. Most of the respondents were agreed that working teachers know individual differences of students. The working teachers responded that they should discuss classroom problems with students and share student’s problems with them.

Table 2: Prospective teachers’ professional knowledge and its practice

s. n	Prospective Teachers Statement	Mostly	To some extent	Not at all	χ^2	P-Value
1	I apply my professional knowledge in teaching	52	51	2	46.67	0.00
2	Professional education is the source of change behavior	86	18	1	115.5	0.00
3	I know the psychology of students.	38	55	12	26.78	0.00
4	I involve my students in learning process.	57	39	9	33.58	0.00
5	I encourage the students for discussion	37	56	12	27.82	0.00
6	I involve my students in discussion	34	51	20	13.75	0.001
7	I adopt new and innovative teaching methods	45	54	6	37.18	0.00
8	I give and examine home assignment	36	50	19	13.75	0.001
9	I arrange co-curricular activities	48	49	8	31.24	0.00
10	I know individual differences of students	34	52	19	15.58	.0004
11	I discuss class room problems with students	42	53	10	28.50	0.00
12	I discuss students’ problems with them.	36	49	20	12.04	0.002

Significant at 0.05 df=2

Table value=5.99

Same like above in table no.2 the responded values against each statement were tested through chi Square and it was observed for each statement that elevated value of chi-Square recorded against each statement and hence each statement falls in acceptance region. Prospective teachers replied that they should apply their professional knowledge in teaching. Prospective teachers opted that Professional

education is the source of change in behavior. Respondents were in favor that prospective teachers should be aware of Psychology of students. Prospective teachers agreed that they should involve their students in learning process and encourage them for discussion. Most of the prospective teachers were agreed that they should adopt new and innovative teaching methods and examine home assignment. The prospective teachers were in favor to arrange co-curricular activities, and should keep in view the individual differences in mind. Prospective teachers were in favor to provide timely feedback for the teachers to discuss class room problems with students and share students' problems with them.

Table 3: Comparison of the opinions of working teachers and prospective teachers about their professional knowledge and its practice

S. N	Statements	Working Teachers (Mean)	Prospective Teachers (Mean)
1	I apply my professional knowledge in teaching	2.75	2.47
2	Professional education is the source of change in behavior	2.59	2.79
3	I know student's psychology.	2.75	2.25
4	I involve my students in learning process.	2.75	2.45
5	I encourage the students for discussion	2.34	2.23
6	I involve my students in discussion	2.32	2.13
7	I adopt new and innovative teaching	2.11	2.50
8	I give and examine home assignment	2.05	2.05
9	I arrange co-curricular activities	2.10	2.36
10	I know individual differences of students	2.15	2.14
11	I discuss class room problems with students	2.15	2.30
12	I discuss students' problems with them	2.21	2.15
	Mean of Mean values	2.36	2.32

In order to compare the opinions of working and prospective teachers about their professional knowledge and its practice, the mean

values calculated against each statement of both working and prospective teachers by using Likert scale, awarding values to the response scale like mostly=3, to some extent=2 and Not at all=1. The values in table 3 against each statement are greater than 2 which fall in the acceptance region. Hence both working and prospective teachers were in favor of use of professional knowledge in the teaching learning process. The mean of mean values is almost similar which further indicate that the responses of both working and prospective teachers fall in the same category. Further to generalize the results the use of inferential statistics is necessary. As it is a comparison of the mean of 12 mean values hence then N=12 so in this case t-test for independent sample is the most appropriate test to decide the nature of comparison.

Table:4 Significance difference between the opinions of working and prospective teachers

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Value	P
Working Teachers	12	2.36	0.27			
Prospective Teachers	12	2.32	0.20	22	0.37	.05

The t-value, 0.37417 is less than table value, 2.07 which denies the difference between the two mean values. Hence it may be stated on the basis of this evidence that there is no difference between the opinions of working and prospective teachers about their professional knowledge.

Findings

Findings noted from the responses of working teachers are different in some areas as compared to the findings received from the responses of the prospective teachers. It was found out that, majority of the working teachers have different views in some areas from prospective teachers. It was found that teachers are beneficial in their teaching experiences having good professional knowledge. Therefore, professional qualified teachers must be preferred for teaching. It was evident from current study that professional education is the source of change in behavior therefore, professional qualification is necessary for the teachers to change their behavior. Most of the respondent teacher were aware from the psychology of students, shows the application of professional knowledge in teaching hence the teachers must be equipped with latest professional knowledge that may enable them to aware from the students' psychology. The present study revealed that teachers adopt new and an innovative teaching method in teaching process also shows the application of professional knowledge in teaching in order to improve students' results. Therefore, professional knowledge is necessary for the teachers in

order to use novel and advanced instruction methods. The findings were also in favor that the teachers arrange co- curricular activities and provide guidance regarding students' motivation and participating in co- curricular activities. Keeping in view the apparent difference in calculated χ^2 value in both cases the working teachers were found a little more significant as compared to prospective teachers. But on the basis of t-test no significant differences were found between the responses of working and prospective teachers.

Discussion

The study revealed that professional knowledge and its practice of working and prospective teachers has great role in teaching learning process and improves teachers' efficiency in teaching learning process. Actually, professional qualification of teachers is the back bone of the learning process. The study exposed the factors that it is beneficial to both the teachers and students. It provides timely feedback to them to keep them on track towards the goals. It enhances the performance of the teacher and student to make them aware of the flaws during the learning process. Majority of the respondents both working and prospective teachers were of the view that teachers applied their professional knowledge in teaching. The same idea is supported by Rollnick et.al (2008) and Kulgemeyer & Riese, (2018) that "the teachers apply their professional knowledge in classroom while teaching to students. The study revealed that there was behavioral change of teachers while teaching in the classroom. Same like Backfisch et al. (2020) and Young et al. (2011) have also admitted the idea of behavioral change due to professional education. Majority of the respondents both working and prospective teachers expressed that the teachers know the students' psychology due to professional knowledge.

The finding of the study is also matched with the views of Shulman, (1986) and Nousiainen, et al. (2018). The present study explored that teachers implement new and advanced teaching methods in teaching process. The study results showed that both working and prospective teachers arrange co- curricular activities. The present study showed that teachers encourage student's participation and gives due attention to individual needs. The same idea is supported by Spiegel, (2006) and Taimalu, & Luik (2019). Majority of the respondents both working and prospective teachers were of the view that teachers discuss and share students' and class room problems with them. By comparing the views of both the groups through t-test, no significant alterations were recorded. In contrast a significant difference was noted by Tarman, (2012) in perceptions about

professional knowledge among the prospective teachers when they entering and exiting teacher education program.

Conclusions

Based on the findings and empirical studies the following conclusions of the study were drawn;

1. It was concluded that both working and prospective teachers depend on their professional knowledge in classroom activities.
2. It was found that professional education brings desirable changes in the behavior of teachers.
3. Professional knowledge enables teachers to understand psychological and individual needs of the students.
4. The knowledge of professional education helps in choosing new and advanced teaching methods in teaching process.
5. With the help of professional knowledge teachers can manage proper co-curricular activities.
6. Professional knowledge enables teachers to utilize the art of discussing and solving student's problems.
7. Both working and prospective teachers had same views about professional knowledge.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations are made for consideration in future;

1. It was found that only professional teacher applies their professional knowledge in teaching. So those teachers should be recruited who have strong professional knowledge.
2. The present study also exposed that the teachers keep in mind students' educational needs (individual differences) during teaching. So, the contents in this area of teacher education should be more enhanced that teacher may better address the individual differences among the students and enable the teachers to teach according to the mental level of the students.
3. Current programs of teacher education may be revisited to ensure the availability of recent research on psychology and individual needs of the students.
4. The organizers and planner of both in-service and pre-service teacher education programs should ensure diverse contents that may cover multidimensional needs of students.

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