



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

Effectiveness of Teacher Education: Trainee Teachers' Perspective from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Teacher education provides schools with teachers that determines educational standards for children. This study investigated the effectiveness of teacher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Objectives of research were to find out effectiveness of teacher education and recommend strategies for improving teacher education. Study's population comprised 359 trainee teachers from teachers' training institutes of KP. A sample of 300 participants was selected through stratified random sampling. A questionnaire was developed, validated and piloted for reliability. Data were gathered through self-visits to respondents and analyses was done with mean scores, standard deviation and chi-square test. The study found that teacher education doesn't satisfy trainee teachers' needs, curricula is limited in scope, content courses are in-appropriate, teaching practicum is not linked with practical school experiences. However, teacher education develops teachers' teaching, assessment and research skills. The study recommended the revision of teacher education curricula with focus on practical exposure of schools for trainee teachers.

Key words: Effectiveness, Teacher Education, Trainee Teachers, Perspective, KP, Pakistan

Introduction

Teacher education contributes to the educational quality and support teaching competencies in forming teachers capable of engaging with students to help them learn and develop their society. The system of teacher training in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) does not keep up with global standards and needs of the market regarding teachers, therefore; needs reforms in all aspects (Ali, 2023). In KP, Pakistan, teacher education has to solve the challenges of poor students' performance, insufficient school structure and staffing (Idris et al., 2021). Though government agencies attempt to improve training of teachers by organizing programs such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE), but the level of success achieved is in doubt (Khan et al., 2023). The education system of KP is challenged by the political interference, lack of funding, and inability to overcome the cultural barriers which influences the quality of teacher training (Qureshi & Kalsoom, 2022). The existing literature



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

reports that there is lack of facilities and political will for appropriate training of teachers (Aslam et al., 2024). Additionally, the devolution of education under the 18th constitutional amendment has transferred the responsibility to the provinces and thus a localized assessment on the effectiveness of teacher education is required but this process is not there in the provinces (Ara et al., 2025).

To achieve desired teaching learning process and quality education among in schools, the requirements of teachers are content knowledge, pedagogy, personality traits, professional competencies and responsiveness (Rowan & Townend, 2016). In the current context, teachers lack adequate preparation through pre-service teacher education training programs and professional skills are low to discharge their functions in the schools (Dotger, 2010). There have been studies which indicated the necessity of making reforms and innovations in teacher education programs by delivering quality curricula, teaching skills and quality induction of students (Aksoy & Gozutok, 2014). Having a consideration to the production of quality teachers in the country, National education policy of Pakistan (2009) proposed to have standardized process of establishing, accreditation and award of degrees in the teacher educational institutes. It also advised on the re-alignment of teacher education curriculum according to the demands of the school and the national standards of the curriculum. Further, the curricula of teacher education should be learner-centered pedagogies-oriented and co-curricular competencies-oriented. As it was in the similar vein the Policy and planning wing ministry of Education, Pakistan in (2009) came up with the national professional standards of a teacher with the assistance of UNESCO and USAID. These standards were; command of the content knowledge, the knowledge of the human growth and development, understanding of ethical values of the Islam and knowledge of the social skills, plans of institutes, assessment and evaluation, knowledge of the learning environment, effective use of communication and information and communication technologies, professional development on life-long basis, code of conduct and lastly, teaching English language as a second or foreign language.

Education of trainee teachers in teacher educational institutions has many implications on the teaching ability of teachers today and a lot of emphasis is given on offering quality teacher education by means of teacher education programs. Various nations have defined how the education of teachers should be done in carrying out this duty (Greenberg et al., 2013). In modern times, developed nations are also giving emphases on the availability of learning conducive environment for learning, collaboration, research and development of quality teacher education. In order to have a trainee teacher with quality teaching skills that can be used to teach in schools, great emphasis placed on the trainee teachers to develop good professional teaching skills (Evans, 2011). A lot of attention is paid to the reformation of the education and study of teachers and researchers have concentrated on the effectiveness of teacher education programs (Rowan, 2015). It is increasingly becoming evident that the quality of teachers taught in schools is low after they have been trained at teachers training institutes (Eret, 2013). The graduates in teachers training institutes lack all the skills necessary as far as teaching and learning among students are concerned (Greenberg et al., 2015). There is the lack of continuity in the introduction of reforms in the teachers' education. There is the lack of research and evaluation of



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

the existing teacher education programs (Ok & Eret, 2012). Studies reveal insufficient exposure of the schools, hands-on teaching, teamwork, society contact to take care of the needs of the learners and the incorrect entry requirements to be part of the teacher education programs (Arkun-Kocadere & Aşkar, 2013).

The quality of education of prospective teachers is poor, and that is why this field of study has to be investigated to realize the strengths and weaknesses of the education programs of the pre-services teachers so that corrective measures can be given (Richardson, 2005). In order to enhance the teacher education programs of the future teachers, research is needed that could revolve around identifying the areas where it should focus on promoting education of teachers for future (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). The education of pre-service teachers requires research to see the reasons behind low standard and point out corrective action that can be done to improve education of teachers (Senemoglu, 2011). Research studies have identified the need for research on trainee or prospective teachers' education programs, as it is a means for the preparation of quality teachers and ultimate quality of education in schools. Therefore, the research study aimed to investigate trainee teachers' beliefs regarding teacher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Literature Review

Teacher education programs are an essential factor in determining the quality of education, especially in places where the problem of systemic issues in the sphere of education remains like KP Pakistan (Khan and Haider, 2024; Rizwan and Taniguchi, 2022). Teacher education sets out to provide pre-service and in-service training to educators that enable them to support student learning and development through their attained knowledge, skills, and competencies (Idris et al., 2021). The challenges that the education system in KP has to deal with, such as the lack of infrastructural development, teacher motivation concern, and the influence of socio-political factors affect the effectiveness of teachers' education system. Therefore, there is the need of research on the effectiveness of teacher education in KP taking into account teacher competencies, professional development (PD) programs, systemic barriers, and their outcomes related to students (Ashraf, 2022). The effectiveness of educational systems revolves around teacher competencies which are the directly related determinants of the quality of the instruction and performance of students. According to this Aliy and Haider (2017), divided teachers' competencies that needs to be developed with teacher education into instructional, professional, and personal. Instructional competencies refer to the pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum and the skills to provide timely feedback, which are essential to induce engagement and learning, among students (Blazar, 2015; Hill & Chin, 2018). Professional skills include beliefs, motivation, and self-control of teachers whereas, personal skills concern those of interpersonal and flexibility. In KP, teachers have not been provided with sufficient training to cover such areas, especially to implement the appropriate pedagogical practices in their classrooms (Idris et al., 2021).

A study by Depaepe and King (2018) and its follow-up by King and Pflanzl (2016) reveals a significant link between instructional quality of teachers and student performance which can be very relevant to KP. As an example, an assessment of teacher competencies in government schools in Pakistan has



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

recommended that standardized PD initiatives tend to fall short of assessing the needs of teachers especially in pedagogical interventions that use classroom diversity as a focal point (Khan & Haider, 2024). This implies that teacher education initiatives in KP are much more context-specific to relieve the native burden of local issues, including lingual variety and financial limitations. Teacher education includes professional development as its central aspect aimed to improve the quality and performance of the teacher. There are PD programs in KP that have attempted to improve the lack of teacher preparedness but the programs are controversial. Reflectively, a study conducted by Khan et al. (2020) regarding the perceived integrity of teacher training in KP revealed the problems where despite its flexibility, online in-service teacher training is not considered applicable in practice due to the access to technology scarcity, and follow-up. In the same light, a study found that PD activities aimed at early-grade reading were effective with strong supervisory and managerial systems in place, although the expansion of this initiative continues to be prohibited by a lack of resources (International Rescue Committee, 2023).

Keeping in view the poor quality of teacher education programs, Rizwan and Taniguchi (2022) recognized that the school-based recruiting and local PD programs at KP have potential to retain quality teachers in isolated regions, yet these programs are affected by a lack of consistency and political manipulation. In order to increase the effectiveness of PD, various training modules should focus on individual competencies, including classroom management, technology integration, with respect to the socio-cultural environment of KP. According to Ashraf (2022), low teacher motivation and poor salaries affects the entry of quality graduates into teacher education programs of KP also there is also a lack of adequate funding in education system in KP, where teacher training facilities and school buildings are deprived of funds (Khan & Haider, 2024). These are compounded by political interference and corruption. In a critical analysis of government secondary schools in KP, the researchers were able to establish that low performing teachers are often recruited on political grounds, hence poor learning outcomes and ineffective teaching practices are observed as a result (Ahmad et al., 2013). These structural challenges bring about the necessity of policy changes to facilitate more meritocratic approaches to hiring teachers and provide them with sufficient support (Ashraf, 2022).

Provision of quality education in schools is the ultimate aim of efficacy in teacher education. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that among the school variables affecting student achievement, one of the most important ones is the background and competence of teachers (SpringerLink, 2019). In KP, research has proved that when competencies, especially instructional strategies, in teachers are enhanced, student performance in such subjects as mathematics and science is improved (Ur Rahman & Aajiz, 2021). Nevertheless, the gains are hindered by the irregularity of teacher training and resources. The availability of favorable conditions coupled with efficient teacher training led to a tremendous increase in academic achievement scores (Weiss, 2024). The issue of gender imbalance also has an effect on the success of teacher preparation. The KP teachers are predominantly female; they receive poor training in knowledge and skills on how to become a good teacher owing to cultural obstacles and a lack of training opportunities (Shah et al., 2018). Focused teacher education would help in reducing these differences and lead to improved provision of education across



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

the region. Educational technology implementation in teacher education has started to become a necessity in KP, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, when educational institutions were closed and replaced by online classes, it was seen that there were major discrepancies in the technological skills of teachers (Zeeshan et al., 2020). KP requires technology as part of teacher education, to overcome the issue, teacher education should focus on the power of digital literacy and engage in practical training on the use of such tools as learning management systems (LMS) and virtual teaching platforms (Khan et al., 2024). For the enhancement of teacher education in KP, teacher education programs need to be improved to satisfy the needs of teachers, ensure practical exposure to schools and development (Khan & Haider, 2024). There is also need for attracting quality graduates for training in teacher training institutes and incentives for teachers to motivate youth for teaching profession (Rizwan & Taniguchi, 2022). Regular assessment of teacher training programs is needed to keep these in line with the needs and demands of the teaching profession (World Bank, 2016).

The effectiveness of teacher education in the context of KP, Pakistan is determined by multiple factors like the curricula, teaching practicum and linkages with schools. Studies have identified gaps in teacher education and the demand of teachers in the market and there exists a gap in the development of trainee teachers' skills in teachers' training institutes and the skills of teaching needed in schools. Therefore, the study investigated the effectiveness of teacher education provided to trainee teachers in teachers' training institutes of KP. This will investigate how far the teacher education is successful in satisfaction of demands from teachers in school education and recommend strategies for improvement of teacher education for trainee teachers.

Methodology

The design of the study was quantitative survey for finding out trainee teachers perspective on teacher education of KP. Population of the study was 359 trainee teachers in B. Ed (Honors) program at university of Peshawar (IER), University of Malakand (Education department) and University of Swat (Center for education). These teacher training institutes are situated in KP. The researchers selected a sample of 300 participants through stratified random sampling procedure for participation in the study. A questionnaire was developed for the collection of data from the respondents about effectiveness of teacher education. The tool was about the main components of the teacher education. The tool was validated with experts' opinions and pilot tested for the reliability. The reliability for the instrument was 0.814. The reliable instrument was administered to participants for the collection of data. The researchers personally administered the tool to trainee teachers for collecting data. Data were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation and Chi-square with SPSS. Research ethic were fulfilled in the project.

Results

Table 1 Trainee Teachers' Perspective of Teacher Education

Statements	N	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Curricula satisfy needs of trainee teachers	300	1.44	.727	81.68	.000



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

Content of subjects' courses are appropriate	300	1.48	.782	83.12	.000
Pedagogy courses develops teaching skills	300	2.56	.879	53.52	.000
The scope of teaching practicum is appropriate	300	1.46	.641	94.00	.000
Link of training with school experiences	300	1.38	.989	27.68	.000
Appropriate courses on school management	300	1.27	.830	48.56	.000
Adequate courses on classroom management	300	1.43	.568	73.84	.000
Training in assessment practices	300	2.64	.743	30.48	.000
Participation in co-curricular activities	300	1.45	.754	22.56	.000
Research activities	300	2.62	.747	77.84	.000

Table 1 demonstrates trainee teachers' perspective of teacher education in KP. The mean scores 1.44, 1.48, 2.56, 1.46, 1.38, 1.27, 1.43 and 1.45 highlighted that trainee teachers disagreed that teacher education fulfill the training needs of teachers, subjects of content courses were appropriate, pedagogical skills developed, scope of teaching practicum was proper, link with schools' practical exposure, appropriateness of school and classroom management courses and participation in co-curricular activities. However, the mean scores 2.64 and 2.62 proved that teachers agreed that teacher education developed their assessment and research skills. With chi-square test findings were significant.

Discussions

The study found that in view of trainee teacher, the teacher education in KP, didn't fulfill the training needs of teachers, subjects of content courses were inappropriate, pedagogical skills were not developed, scope of teaching practicum was not proper, training lacked schools' practical exposure, school and classroom management courses were not appropriate and trainee teachers had no participation in co-curricular activities. However, teacher education developed the assessment and research skills of trainee teachers. The findings are in line with Khan and Haider (2024); Rizwan and Taniguchi (2022), who found issues and challenges in teacher education of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similar findings were also reported by Idris et al. (2021), who found challenges in teacher education of the province of KP. Therefore, he recommended that there is the need of research on the effectiveness of teacher education in KP taking into account teacher competencies, systemic barriers, and their outcomes related to students. In the same vein, Ashraf, (2022) also found issues in teacher education of the country. Aliy and Haider (2017), also found that through teacher education, teachers have not been provided with sufficient training to cover such areas, especially to implement the appropriate pedagogical practices in their classrooms (Idris et al., 2021). In the similar manner, Khan et al. (2020) regarding the perceived integrity of teacher training in KP, revealed the problems in lack of technology in teachers' training. Similarly, keeping in view the poor quality of teacher education programs, Rizwan and Taniguchi (2022) recognized that the school-based recruiting and local PD programs at KP have potential to



Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

retain quality teachers in isolated regions. In order to increase the effectiveness of PD, various training modules should focus on individual competencies, including classroom management, technology integration, with respect to the socio-cultural environment of KP. Similarly, Ashraf (2022), found that low teacher motivation and poor salaries affects the entry of quality graduates into teacher education programs of KP also there is a lack of adequate funding in education system in KP, where teacher training facilities and school buildings are deprived of funds (Khan & Haider, 2024).

Conclusion

The study established that teacher education in KP, didn't fulfill the training needs of teachers, subjects of content courses were in-appropriate, pedagogical skills were not developed, scope of teaching practicum was not proper, training lacked schools' practical exposure, school and classroom management courses were not appropriate and trainee teachers had no participation in co-curricular activities. However, teacher education developed the assessment and research skills of trainee teachers.

Recommendations

On the basis of objectives and findings of the study, these recommendations were made:

1. There may be orientation sessions for trainee teachers in the beginning of programs to identify the training needs of trainee teachers and then focus on fulfilling such needs with teacher education by teacher education institutes.
2. The curricula of the teacher education may be revised with particular focus on practical exposure of trainee teachers to schools' experiences.
3. The content courses may be enriched with matter taught in schools.
4. The courses of school and classroom management may be developed to provide assistance in the administration of school and management of classroom issues.
5. Trainee teachers may be provided with ample opportunities for the development of their social skills through participation in co-curricular activities.
6. Qualitative research studies may be conducted on the same issue to identify the nature and causes of issues in teacher education programs.

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Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 8 (August) (2025)

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