Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 4, Issue 5 (2026)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

Professional Competence of Teachers and Its Contribution to Students' Academic Excellence

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ABSTRACT

To investigate the impact of professional education of teachers on student performance in the secondary level, paying attention to the differences between professionally trained and untrained teachers. The study used descriptive mixed method design. Study was conducted in public and secondary schools (Rawalpindi, Pakistan). The research was to be conducted to gather both secondary-level students and teachers with the help of structured interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation checklists. The target group comprised of both teachers and students in the public and private secondary schools. Convenience sampling was used to select a sample of 100-150 students and 30 teachers. Questionnaire-based data analysis was proposed to use descriptive analysis and SPSS. The reviewed literature in this research suggests that teacher education at the professional level enhances the pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, lesson planning, assessment practices and application of effective teaching strategies by teachers. These professional competences are associated with increased student engagement and student achievement especially at the secondary level. Professional education of teachers is significant in enhancing academic performance of students. The teachers who are professionally trained have the higher chances of employing the right teaching techniques, teaching materials and assessment tools, which facilitate learning. The report suggests that teacher preparation and training should be strengthened to enhance the standards of teaching and learning in the secondary schools.

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Keywords: Teacher Professional Education, Student Achievement, Secondary Education, Teacher Training, Professional Development.

INTRODUCTION

Professional education of teachers is a factor that is significant in enhancing teaching and learning. Professional training programs assist teachers know how to teach in a more effective manner, how to plan the lessons, how to manage the classes and how to apply the appropriate assessment methods. There are usually two kinds of teachers in schools: teachers with content knowledge of a certain subject and those with subject knowledge and teacher training. Not only does a professionally trained teacher know the subject, but she also knows how to teach, educational psychology, assessment instruments and classroom management. These teachers can more readily provide innovation in their instruction and generate learning experiences that can have a positive influence on the achievement of students. Contrastingly, untrained teachers could possess good content knowledge but could be lacking in the pedagogical skills that are necessary to deliver the content. In the current article, the authors are concerned with the impact of professional education among teachers on the achievement of students in secondary levels. It emphasizes the need of teacher preparation as a profession and discusses the impact that trained and untrained teachers can have on the learning outcomes of students.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Professional education of teachers became the issue of this study due to the question of whether this kind of education influences the achievement of students. Professional education has been termed to be very crucial to teachers as they are equipped on how to apply the proper methods of teaching and learning. Teachers who are not professionally trained in teaching are however, also engaged in classroom teaching in most schools. Thus, the question of whether professional teacher education can be noticed as influencing the academic achievement of students deserves attention.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

To determine the effect of professional education of teachers on the student performance of secondary level students.
To test the influence of untrained teachers on the performance of students in secondary school.
To understand what students, think of the instructional methods of their favorite teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does professional education of teachers affect the performance of students at the secondary level?
What is the impact of untrained teachers on the achievement of students in the secondary level?
How do students feel about the teaching style of their favorite teachers?

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HYPOTHESIS

The core hypothesis of the study is that professional education of teachers positively influences achievement of students. The independent variable in this study is the professional education of teachers whereas the dependent variable is the achievement of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional education of teachers comprises of subject knowledge, curricular knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. According to Collinson (1999), professional knowledge of a teacher is composed of subject matter knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical understanding. Likewise, Rice (2003) and Wayne and Youngs (2003) also stressed that the performance of students relates to teacher traits, qualification and training in education. Darling-Hammond (2000) posited that the quality of teachers is also a significant determinant of the student success particularly in reading and mathematics. Her review of the national data sets revealed that teacher preparation and certification are closely related to academic performance of students. Rice (2003) further discovered that teacher professional preparation and student achievement have a significant relationship especially at the secondary level. The teacher preparation programs vary in effectiveness. Boyd et al. (2009) examined teacher preparation programs and discovered that programs that centred on classroom practice, real classroom situations and final projects were more effective in producing effective teachers. Through such programs, teachers are taught how to effectively teach various subjects and enhance student learning outcomes. According to Rahaman (2010), teachers should be trained professionally to be able to deliver instruction in an effective way. To teach and learn successfully, teachers ought to make lesson plans, create instructional books and follow suitable teaching techniques to meet the instructional goals. The professional education assists teachers in obtaining these skills. According to Nataša (2011) professional competence is defined as the set of subject knowledge and awareness of the learning styles of students, how to teach, classroom management and assessment. An effective teacher can assist students who have varying levels of achievement. Wright et al. (1997) further reiterated that teachers can be improved as far as education is concerned, improvement of teacher's competence is achieved through professional education. In some studies, Blank and De Las Alas (2009) discovered that there were positive correlations between teacher professional development and student achievement. Wallace (2009) also indicated that professional development not only influenced the practice of teachers but also in some instances small but significant impact on student achievement. These results confirm the notion that teacher professional development and education could lead to better academic results.

METHODOLOGY

It was a mixed method and descriptive study. The primary objective was to examine the impact of the professional education of teachers on the performance of students in the secondary level in Pakistan. The researcher was going to employ the structured interviews, questionnaires and observation checklists to gather the data among teachers and students of the primary and secondary schools that were public and

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

private. The study population comprised of students and teachers of both public and private secondary schools in Rawalpindi. The suggested population was a minimum of 200 students and 50 teachers. The researcher aimed at studying schools that had both professionally trained and untrained teachers and hence one could make a comparison. One hundred and fifty students, and thirty teachers were chosen in terms of the public and private secondary schools of Rawalpindi. The sampling was convenient due to the reason that the participants were taken based on their availability and accessibility. A pilot study would be conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire prior to the actual data collection. Structured interviews were used as the primary research methods with students, questionnaires with teachers, and classroom observation checklists. The proposed questionnaire was a Likert scale questionnaire, which would gauge the perceptions on the impact of the professional education of teachers on the achievement of students. Data analysis was to be done using descriptive analysis and SPSS was suggested as the primary tool of data analysis.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was ethical. The researcher was to gather data with a formal consent of Fatima Jinnah Women University. The participants would be treated with respect, consideration and concern. The research process was to be conducted with informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. To record, or transcribe any conversation, permission was also to be sought.

DISCUSSION

The literature reviewed indicates that professional teacher education positively affects the achievement of the students. Professionally trained teachers are better placed to implement teaching strategies based on the learning needs of the students. They are also in a better position to plan their lessons, create teaching resources and utilize evaluation resources. Being professionally trained teachers, they can develop more meaningful learning environments since they are aware of how students learn and how classroom activities can be structured to facilitate student learning. Their professional experience allows them to control the classroom, inspire students and employ new methods in the classroom. These can lead to better performance of the students. Conversely, teachers with limited knowledge on teaching academic subjects might encounter challenges in explaining concepts or applying teaching techniques. The subject knowledge is important but might not be effective without the pedagogical knowledge. Thus, the teaching process and the academic performance of students require professional teacher education to be enhanced.

CONCLUSION

The concluding point of this article is that professional education of teachers plays a significant role in enhancing the performance of the students in secondary level. Teachers who are trained professionally are also better as they have got both the knowledge of the subject and the skills on how to teach. They can plan lessons, apply relevant approaches, control classes and evaluate the learning of students better. The research proposes that in both government and non-governmental schools, teacher

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

professional education and lifelong learning must be enhanced. The training programs are to be based on practical teaching skills, learning in the classrooms, methods of assessment and implementation of innovative teaching methods. When teacher competence is enhanced, it can lead to improvement in student learning.

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