

EXPLORING THE PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SUPERVISORS' FEEDBACK IN TEACHING PRACTICEBushra Haleem¹, Bilqees Khanum², Ahsaan Siddique³**Original Article**

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Abstract

Teaching Practice is an important part of a prospective teachers' professional development. Teacher education programs are no exception in university of the Punjab, Lahore. Teaching practice includes the application of practical teaching skills. As a method of training teachers to perform efficiently, establishing teaching practise is valuable. The importance of feedback in teaching and learning cannot be overstated. The main purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of prospective teachers about supervisors' feedback in teaching practice in schools. For achieving the objectives, fifteen female prospective teachers studying at department of educational research and evaluation, were selected by using convenient sampling technique. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview protocol, each interview lasting from 30-35 minutes. The recorded interviews and discussions were translated into meaningful language. The key ideas were identified and codified, then organized into themes. The findings of the current study have shown that the majority of the participants agreed that supervisors' feedback on prospective teachers is very essential for their knowledge, skills and attitude in their teaching practice. The supervisors' feedback helps to improve the performance, boost the confidence and motivation of prospective teachers in teaching practice in school. The research may be beneficent for teacher trainers, supervisors, school teachers and principals. The study recommends instant feedback by their supervisors to their respective prospective teachers.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Prospective Teachers, Supervisors, Feedback, Skills

Introduction

The term "teaching practice" refers to the process of preparing student teachers to teach via hands-on experience (Al-Mahrooqi, 2011; Kiggundu & Nayimul, 2009; Nwanekezi, Okoli & Mezieobi, 2011). It reflects a variety of experiences to which student teachers are exposed throughout their internships in classrooms and schools (Marais & Meier, 2004). Teaching practice is essential for the

development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes connected to a teacher's professional and personal competency (Margetts & Ure, 2007). The school context makes it possible for pre-service teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development, as well as to adopt a range of perceptions and behaviors that lead to active changes in the competency environment. And increased professional and personal competence, and

enhanced student accomplishment in the school setting (Margetts & Ure, 2007; Tillman, 2005). For example, the effective preparation of teachers for the school system requires that these teachers have theoretical and practical knowledge (Nwankezi, et al., 2011). During their teaching practice, students felt involved, opposed and even empowered. This exercise represents a range of experiences that students encounter when meeting teachers in the classroom and at school (Kiggundu & Nayimul, 2009; Morris & Meier, 2004).

Teachers should be effectively taught and supported. Supervised teaching practice is the practical supervision of teaching under the leadership of an established teacher. Is there any evidence that teaching practice in our day and time has a good impact on pre-service teachers' professional competences? What are the concerns of trainee instructors who participate in structured teaching practice? Without a doubt, monitoring and evaluation of trainee instructors present obstacles. Supervisors' incorrect grading practices, as well as supervisors' mistreatment of trainee instructors, are common complaints among trainee teachers. As a result, some of them have developed resentment toward certain supervisors. Such issues can have a significant impact on the overall quality of teaching practice supervision and evaluation.

Importance of Teaching Practice

Student teaching is important and worthwhile in the professional development of teachers (Kersh, 1995). It is a necessary and valuable part of pre-service education. The term "teaching practice" suggests active participation in the work of a teacher hence the emphasis is on experience. This is because it provides the student teacher the opportunity to put into practice their theoretical knowledge and acquire 'real-life' experience in regular classroom situations and in the school routine. As Clark and Starr (1976) point out other teacher preparation experiences, such as simulations, mini-lessons, and micro-

teaching do not match the reality one finds in student teaching. In view of the above observations, Ondiek (1978) notes that the functional opportunities that teaching practice affords student teachers make them more ready to meet the demands of an actual classroom situation of their own hence its value. It is critically important to the growth and development of a teacher so that even a bad experience contributes (Ribich, 1995).

Teaching practice is regarded as the most powerful intervention in the teachers' professional preparation in study and after study, pre-service teachers indicate it as the most valuable and helpful experience during their entire teacher preparation program (Slick, 1995). In emphasizing the importance of teaching practice, Ribich (1995) argues that there should be opportunities for student teachers to interact with professionals and pupils in diverse settings and require a strong connection between the university programme and the real world of the schools. According to Otieno-Alego (1990) teaching practice is based on the hope that the student teachers will acquire teaching skills and develop positive attitudes and commitment to the teaching service and acquaint him with the teaching profession to which he or she will later become a member and increase his self-confidence (Mayo cited by Andambi, 1985). It is for this reason that teacher education programs the world over consider the teaching practice exercise an important contributory component to the overall teacher training exercise. However, Kemp (1997) notes that student teachers' expectations and perceptions of achievement in practice teaching were significantly different from those of their cooperating teachers and college based supervisors.

Role of Supervisor in Teaching Practice

The supervisor's job is to make this experience (all phases of teaching practice) result-oriented by not only evaluating the lessons of teaching practice but also by

employing all of his or her talents. He or she should have completed all of the necessary preparations ahead of time. He or she should meet with teacher educators, experienced institution teachers, educationists, concerned school head teachers, and other teachers for consultation and conversion. Before student teachers go for their practicums, introductory lectures should be held to inform them about the development of lesson plans and other related activities. During teaching practice, supervisors are responsible for supervising their classes, other assigned activities, mentoring and counseling, as well as providing feedback to student teachers and enabling them to critique and change themselves. Student teachers should not be scolded in front of the practicing school personnel and students during their teaching practice. If necessary, all student teachers should be convened and reprimanded and cautioned without the need to nominate or ask for names. The job of the supervisor is to train teachers for the future, thus he or she should work as a facilitator.

Importance of feedback in Teaching Practice

The importance of feedback in teaching and learning cannot be overstated. It is the "lifeblood of learning," according to Rowntree (1987, p. 27). While the value of feedback is well recognised, there appears to be variation in the quantity, quality, and timeliness of feedback given to clinical students. Feedback is critical for a student's development since it gives guidance and boosts confidence, motivation, and self-esteem (Cahill, 1996; Gray & Smith, 2000; McNeill, Parry, Cohran, Curtis & Ransom, 1998; Nordgren, Richardson, & Laurella, 1998; Pertab, 1999; Raftery, 2001). Another factor to consider while preparing to provide feedback to students is the need to learn how students react to feedback.

Due to supervisor-related considerations, feedback to students may be

hampered on occasion. Despite thorough preparation, fear and discomfort with the procedure might prevent the student from receiving feedback. For fear of a bad response or overreaction to criticism, the supervisor may postpone or cancel an evaluation appointment with a student. This is especially true when dealing with a new supervisor or when giving unpleasant comments (Clynes & Raftery, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of prospective teachers about supervisors' feedback during their teaching practice in schools. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Do prospective teachers find their supervisors' feedback essential for their teaching practice?
2. Does supervisors' feedback encourage prospective teachers in their teaching practice?
3. In what way supervisors' feedback helps to improve the performance of prospective teachers in teaching practice?

This study would hopefully determine the value of supervisors' feedback on prospective teachers in order to consider the improvement that can be made towards supervisors' feedback in teaching practice in school. The research may be beneficent for teaching trainers, supervisors, school teachers and principals.

Methodology

The study was qualitative in nature and conducted in University of the Punjab, one of the public universities in Pakistan chosen due to its unique teaching practice program. Teaching practice could influence the value of student teacher attaches to teaching practice of one and half month during the full term session. Based on convenience sampling technique, the researchers selected the fifteen students from the department of educational research and evaluation, in the institute of

education and research, University of the Punjab Lahore. Convenience sampling involves choosing persons who were accessible and willing to participate in the study at the time the data was collected. According to Gay (1996), this strategy was appropriate since it saved time and allowed the researcher to complete their task without wasting time for those who were unavailable.

The semi-structured interview protocol was used as the study's tool. After researching the literature, three questions for a semi-structured interview protocol were created. The instrument was evaluated by professionals from the institute of education and research, University of the Punjab Lahore. Before beginning this research work, the participants' willingness and prior permission to participate in the study were obtained from the head of the institution. In order to protect the participants' privacy, their real names were also kept hidden. While interviewing the participants, the researchers have not imposed their own personal ideas or beliefs. In order to maintain the ethics of this research study, researchers made it a top priority to ensure that all of the collected data from all the respondents were kept totally confidential. For data collection researchers personally visited the department. All of the interviews took place in Urdu, the native language, as well as English. Each interview took about 30-35 minutes to complete. The researchers not only used the audiotapes for talks, but they also took the prospective teachers' written notes. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, and the researcher used tape-recorded interviews and conversations, which were then transcribed and examined thoroughly by the researchers in order to evaluate trends in respondents' opinions. In addition, the researchers identified significant concepts, organized them, and then condensed them. The major concepts that had been found were codified and arranged into themes.

Data Analysis

The prospective teachers' responses on each of the three interview questions were transcribed word for word and translated into English language. These responses reflected the view point of the prospective teachers regarding the supervisor feedback in their teaching practice in schools. For validation of transcribed data, the initial write up was discussed with the participants and improved according to their suggestions. According to emerging themes, classification of data was done into these categories and reported directly in relation to the responses. From the interview with the school prospective teachers, the following themes were revealed. The detailed views of the participants are presented as under:

Supervisor's feedback is essential

The first objective of the study sought to explore whether prospective teachers find their supervisors' feedback is essential or not for their teaching practice. All the Prospective teachers gave a strong response 'yes', and stated that Supervisors' feedback is very essential for their knowledge and skills in their teaching practice in school. Without their feedback they cannot complete their teaching practice effectively. These findings were consisted with the study conducted by (Margetts & Ure, 2007) stated that teaching practice is essential for the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes connected to a teacher's professional and personal competency. Ten prospective teachers' said that their feedback gives guidelines and directions about their teaching. While teaching they need guidance and directions for lesson plans. When supervisor gives feedback they improve their lesson plans. Only one participant stated "*Prospective teachers do not have much understanding about teaching, so that's why supervisor give instruction for teaching training*". Eleven prospective teachers' said that during teaching practice

they face many problems related to their teaching in classroom and others daily life problems. Supervisor feedback helps to overcome these problems. Supervisors' feedback necessary to tackle daily problems occur in classroom.

Supervisor's feedback encourage Prospective Teachers

The second objective of the study sought to know that supervisors' feedback encourage prospective teachers in their teaching practice. All the prospective teachers gave a strong response 'yes', and stated that supervisors' feedback encourage prospective teachers in their teaching practice. Furthermore, nine participants said that supervisors' feedback encourage prospective teachers' to understand the teaching strategies in their teaching practice. Six prospective teachers' stated that from Supervisor's feedback they become more conscious about their performance. Fourteen prospective teachers said that after getting Supervisors' feedback they complete task at time in their teaching practice in school. About twelve Prospective teachers said that supervisors' feedback encourage to fulfill their task and motivate to make good teachers in their teaching practice. When supervisors give feedback they become motivate and try to do best in teaching practice. Furthermore, eleven those prospective teachers said that they follow their instructions to become a good teacher in future. Only one participant stated *"Prospective teachers expect from their supervisors to get appreciation, and then they try to do hard work for good teaching"*. Feedback is critical for a student's development since it gives guidance and boosts confidence, motivation, and self-esteem (Cahill, 1996; Gray & Smith, 2000; McNeill et al., 1998; Nordgren et al., 1998; Pertab, 1999; Raftery, 2001).

Improve their performance

The third objective of the study sought to find out that supervisors' feedback help to improve the performance of prospective teachers in teaching practice. All the prospective teachers gave a strong response 'yes', and stated that supervisors' feedback

helps to improve the performance of prospective teachers in teaching practice. Mostly participants thirteen out of fifteen said that supervisors' feedback encourage prospective teachers to do work better and improve their performance in their teaching practice. The views of seven prospective teachers' were that they develop their teaching methods according to their feedback. About five prospective teachers' said that during their teaching practice they easily understand their drawbacks in their teaching styles in classroom. Eleven prospective teachers said that supervisors' feedback helps them to improve their teaching styles. Prospective teachers said that from their feedback they get better chance to make better in their attitudes. About twelve participants said that supervisors' feedback helps to become more professionally and got to know how to deal with students and behave like teachers in classroom. Most of the participants thirteen out of fifteen said that from supervisors' feedback prospective teachers know their weakness and strength in their teaching practice. When supervisor highlight their mistakes then they try to improve all the mistakes. When supervisors highlight their positive aspects then they become more happy and ambitious to perform better. Only one participant stated *"supervisors' feedback helps to make a good teacher in future and to improve the education quality"*. According to Otieno-Alego (1990) teaching practice is based on the hope that the student teachers will acquire teaching skills and develop positive attitudes and commitment to the teaching service and acquaint him with the teaching profession to which he will later become a member and increase his self-confidence.

Follow the suggestions of Supervisors

The study sought to know that prospective teachers follow the suggestion of supervisors in their teaching practice. All the prospective teachers gave a strong response 'yes', and stated that they follow the suggestion of supervisors in their teaching practice. About thirteen participants said that supervisors' feedback is important for the betterment in their teaching practice. Ten prospective teachers said that they follow their suggestions because it helps to improve the

quality of teachers in teaching practice. Some of participants fourteen out of fifteen said that from their suggestions we can perform better in teaching practice. Only one participant stated *“sometime the expectations of supervisor are very high and it became difficult to follow, but prospective teachers’ try their best to improve and follow the suggestions by their supervisors”*.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of prospective teachers about supervisors’ feedback during their teaching practice in schools. The findings of the current study have shown that the majority of the participants agreed that supervisors’ feedback on prospective teachers is very essential for their knowledge, skills and attitude in their teaching practice in school. Moreover, the study also concluded that supervisors’ feedback encourage prospective teachers’ in their teaching practice in school. However, certain research evidence has shown that prospective teachers follow the suggestion of supervisors in their teaching practice in school. Furthermore, study also found that supervisors’ feedback helps to improve the performance, boost the confidence and motivation of prospective teachers’ in teaching practice in school. As a result, the majority of respondents had a good attitude toward supervisors’ feedback on prospective teachers’ teaching practice in school, as evidenced by the study’s conclusion. As a result, it would be helpful for quality education to attain the intended outcomes.

Recommendation

Collectively, the study indicates the positive attitude of prospective teachers towards supervisors’ feedback in teaching practice in school. However, the study’s findings reveal some direct and indirect implications. The following are some

recommendations that may be useful for future research.

1. The university supervisors should visit student teacher much earlier during the practice.
2. To increase the quality of supervision, the teaching practice unit should look into involving supervisors in specific subject areas, so that less qualified supervisors are not faced with evaluating trainees in teaching practice.
3. Increase the number of visits by the university supervisor to student teachers for adequate assessment and feedback for interns to develop the necessary skills they need in the teaching profession.
4. Feedback should be given immediately since student teachers think that immediate feedback is more beneficial than delayed feedback.
5. The importance of feedback should be highlighted. Both the bad and good comments of the situation should be addressed.

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