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Perceptions of Teachers Regarding US-AID Teacher Education Project on the Development of Elementary Education

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Abstract

The design of the study primarily is that of a survey in nature. The study basically aims at finding the perceptions of Teachers of Teachers Training Institutions (TTIs) regarding the newly established programs following the new roadmap of teacher education. The study focuses three attributes i.e. physical facilities, practicum and refresher courses of ADE and B.Ed (H). The population of the study is based upon all the teachers of RITE and IER across the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is 207 (64 IER + 143 RITE) in total.The size of the sample is 114 (38 IER and 76 RITE). The instrument consists of two parts: demographic variables and research variables.The instrument was made valid and reliable before it was administered on the sample size. Data were analysed through SPSS, mean, one sample t test and independent sample t test were applied. It was significantly proved by the findings and results that all the three attributes of ADE & B.Ed (H) were of very important nature as perceived by the teachers. The responses of the teachers were the same despite the difference of their respective institutions. The study recommends proper implementation of ADE and B.Ed (H) programs in TTIs.

Keywords: Perceptions, Teacher Education Project, Elementary Education

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Introduction

Teacher Education values a lot in overall development of educational set up of a country. It is the profession which creates all other professions. Unfortunately, like most of the Islamic countries, in the field of teacher education, Islamic Republic of Pakistan also lags far behind the developed countries, in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Since the creation of this state on the map of the world, the overall education in general and teacher education in particular, has not been given due importance; and now after seven decades of freedom, its education statistics show a very grim and dismal picture to the world. Various successive governments kept the education on its top priority but this was only lip-service. The promises and claims of amelioration in the field of education were never translated into action. Some sporadic efforts were started but no practical implementation was taken in true sense (Ghafoor, 2000). In this modern era, throughout the world, education is highly focused. Many international organizations like; UNO, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP are also focusing enough on improving education across the world from North to South. In September 2000, all of the 192 member states of UN sat in and adopted a declaration later called as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 for Education for all which the target time limit was to be 2015.Teacher plays a dynamic role in enhancing education ratio in the area. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "I have been sent as an Educator" (Ali, 2011).

The Higher Education Commission in collaboration with the USAID Teacher Education, adopted a new roadmap of teacher education across the country. In order to make the program of teacher education efficient and in accordance with the international standards, the project of USAID was introduced with the powerful involvement of four provinces and AJK. Moreover, all the education secretaries agreed in the very first meeting that this updated program would be given preference during recruitment, while the DIE, CT, PTC programs would be exchanged by two-years ADE program in a phase-wise procedure up till 2018. All the old programs are phased out and the updated programs such as B.ED (H) four years have been launched. Now all Universities throughout the country are offering these new programs as per international standards. The ADE covers 4 semesters,16-18 weeks are duration of each semester. The course load per semester is 15 to 18 credit hours and each semester includes 5-6 (not more than 3 lab/ practical courses).The course credit hours are compulsory courses 16 credit hours, professional courses 21 credit hours, foundation courses 15 credit hours, content courses 09 credit hours, teaching practice 06 credit hours. In this way, total credit hours are 67.The B.Ed (H) covers 8 semesters follows the same credit hours policy. Curriculum of Education, COE (2012).Education policy 2009 has already reinforced that the all programs of teachers education may be updated with the global standards. Provincial Plan on Education (2003) focused on the proper training of teachers and the training in vogue

is ineffective due to having very short duration. Akiba and Tendere (2009) described that it is the need and concern of international community for polishing the teaching skills of the teachers through modern and innovative approaches. Good students proved to get more academic advantages of the teachers' provision of ICT tools during process of teaching learning. Positive impact of ICT on the teachers' pedagogical skills and pupils' academic gains were favored by many of the studies (Blankenship, 1998; Isleem, 2003). Training program should focus on corporate planning and personnel management, (Srinivasan, 1997). "Higher education needs to compete with the progressions and competition" (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002). Twenty-first century learning environments are envisioned as places where the learner is engaged in self-directed and co-operative learning activities; and the physical environment is planned so that it can be routinely re-organized to mediate learning (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2002). Vikneswaran and Krish (2016)focus on improving the pedagogical skills of teachers for positive outcome.

Oyitso (1997) supports that training is of essential nature for enhancing the capacity of the employees, new learning and skills are achieved through well-organized training programs. Zia (2007) focuses on quality of education, ethical values should be incorporated in teaching learning environment. The field of teacher education is shifting towards a more practice-based focus (Ball & Cohen, 1999). Technologies consider essential for teacher education in order to keep the candidates updated with practical activities and skills (Herbst, Chazan, Chieu, Milewski, Kosko, & Aaron, 2016). Farooq (2004) highlighted that the traditional programs were not meeting the requirement of the day and ADE and B.Ed (H) were to be implemented.

The USAID Teach.er Education Project worked on various factors of teacher education. It took seriously the matter of infrastructure for new need of the modern era. The project provided buildings in majority of the universities for faculties of education. In addition, well-equipped laboratories, multimedia classrooms and need based library with all the facilities which are required for the demand of the day. The project extended helping hand for strengthening the capacity of teachers. The curriculum of the newly introduced programs were developed by involving all the faculty members of Teacher Training Institutions. It also worked on with the federal education ministry and provincial education departments in formulating policies and standards that ensure the effective execution of these degree programs. The project helped to strengthen training courses including pre-service as well as in service trainings. The project team also started sending teaching faculty abroad for doctoral studies and arranged short visits aboard to have teaching faculty exposure of aboard. The physical infrastructure, practicum and refresher courses were also polished. The current study is under taken in order to find out the perceptions of teachers regarding provision of physical facilities, practicum and refresher courses by the virtue of this project (COE, 2010).

Objectives

1. To investigate the perceptions of teachers of TTIs regarding the physical facilities provided by Teacher Education Project for uplifting the Teacher Education Program
2. To find out the perceptions of teachers of TTIs regarding the practicum activities provided by Teacher Education Project for uplifting the Teacher Education Program
3. To find out the perceptions of teachers of TTIs regarding the refresher courses provided by Teacher Education Project for uplifting the Teacher Education Program

Hypotheses of the Study

H_1 The perceptions of teachers are of significant nature regarding physical facilities provided by USAID Teacher Education Project

H_2 The perceptions of teachers are of significant nature regarding Practicum component of ADE/B.Ed (H) provided by USAID Teacher Education Project

H_3 The perceptions of teachers are of significant nature regarding Refresher Courses of ADE/B.Ed (H) provided by USAID Teacher Education Project

Significance of the Study

1. The study will be proved helpful for Governmental as well Non-Governmental organizations for streamlining policies about teacher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan.
2. This study will help Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Directorate of Curriculum & Teacher Education, Provincial Institute of Teacher Education & Regional Institute of Teacher Education and Curriculum Bureaus for accommodating its recommendations in their policies.
3. The study may support donor agencies i.e. USAID, UNDP, CIDA and JICA for funding to teacher education area.

Limitation

The study was conducted by applying questionnaire as a research tool for data collection having time constraint and meager resources, it might be better if interview was conducted to get the views of stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of newly launched programs of ADE & B.Ed (H) programs.

Delimitation

The USAID Teacher Education Project covered many areas of teacher education i.e. developing infrastructure, capacity building of teacher educators, foreign trips of teaching staff for their exposure but here the study was delimited only to check the effectiveness of two newly introduced programs ADE and B.ED(H) as perceived by teachers .

There are various factors of ADE/B.ED (H) programs but the study was carried out to check only three attributes of these programs i.e. physical facilities, practicum and training/refresher courses.

The study is delimited to Teacher Training Institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa i.e. Regional Institutes for Teacher Education (RITE) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & TTIs of Public Sector Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Previous Studies:

Alawiye and Williams (2001) argue that faculty staff should base about teaching ability in order to achieve the desired results. Shafqat& Saeed (2009) state that "The frequency of the refresher courses designed for teachers of GCETs at district or provincial levels should be increased. Moreover, in such training courses, emphasis may be given on activity-based and problem solving 'teaching methods' and 'use of audio-visual aids' such as projectors, multimedia and computer for teaching learning process. Farooq and Shahzadi (2006) support Andrew, that knowledge and skills may be focused in teacher education. Rizvi (2007) supports improving and filling teacher competence in Pakistan.

Methodology of the Study

Design of the study

The study was conducted by administering a questionnaire from the respondents to give us quantitative data. A survey research design is adopted for this recent study. Cohen et al, 2007: Gay and Airasian (2003) support survey research design for collecting data from a comparatively large sample size.

Population

All the teachers of RITEs and IER constituted the population of the study. The population was comprised of 207 teachers (64 IER + 143 RITE).

Sample of the Study

Institution	Population of Teachers	100% rule of Gay	Sample size
IER	38	38	38
RITE	76	76	76

Table 3.5 indicates that the sample size of IER and RITE teachers were 38 and 76 respectively. L.R Gay rule was adopted for this matter.

Instrument

Instrumentation is the whole process of collection of data which contains not only the procedures and the conditions but also the selection or design of the instruments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Researcher self-made questionnaire was applied to get responses from RITE and IER male and female teachers. Items of questionnaire were based on five point likert scale. The questionnaire was designed to collect information from teachers about different variables such as physical facilities, Practicum & Training/refresher courses for teachers. It consists of demographic information related to Gender, Age, Educational level and Qualification. The second part covers physical facilities, Practicum and Training /Refresher Courses. Physical facilities cover the requirement of building, classrooms, water supply, electricity computer laboratory, internet facility, library facility and appropriate multimedia technology. Practicum includes items related to foundation modules, developmental portfolio, prospective, triad meetings of the supervisors and cooperative teachers. Teachers were asked about the different refresher courses and training workshops which are held by USAID teacher education project in this module training workshops. These were examined and overall overview of the different workshops were analyzed and observed by the teachers are prompted that either they are beneficial or not.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The questionnaire was properly developed by the researcher and then it was processed for validation by contacting a team of experts. Some items were deleted and some were partially amended. Reliability was determined by applying Cronbach's alpha reliabilities .The alpha value was .93 which was accepted value as it is near to 1.

Analysis of the data

The collected data was properly gathered, it was processed through SPSS. The descriptive statistics and its mean were calculated. The views of teachers were tested by applying one sample t- test whether these are significant to different attributes. Similarly independent sample t test was applied for comparing the difference between views of teachers of RITE and IER

Results and Interpretation of Data

Table 1

Perceptions of Teachers regarding Physical Facilities in TTI

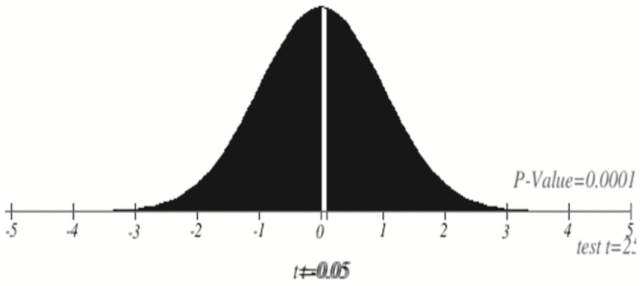
N	Mean	Std. Deviation	D.F	t-value	P-Value
100	3.3825	.33061	99	102.312	.000

The table 1 shows that the perceptions of Teachers are of significant nature regarding physical facilities as the p-value is < .05 which shows that there are significant perceptions related to physical facilities provided by teacher's education project.

Table 2

Perceptions of Teachers regarding Practicum in TTI

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	D.F	t-value	P-Value
100	4.0558	.15699	99	258.347	.000



The table 2 shows that the perceptions of Teachers are of significant nature regarding Practicum as the p-value is < .05 which shows that there are significant perceptions related to Practicum provided by teacher's education project.

Table 3
Perceptions of Teachers regarding Training /Refresher Courses in TTI

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	D.F	t-value	P-Value
100	3.6950	.34739	99	106.364	.000

The table 3 shows that the perceptions of Teachers are of significant nature regarding Training/Refresher Courses as the p-value is < .05 which shows that there are significant perceptions related to Training/Refresher Courses provided by teacher's education project.

Table 4
Perceptions difference of RITE and IER teachers regarding physical facilities

Category	N	Mean	S.Std	t-value	P-Value
RITE Teachers	66	3.4192	.32025	1.557	.122
IER Teachers	34	3.3113	.34348		

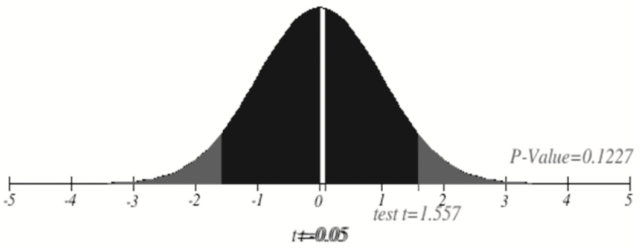


Table 4 indicates institutions wise perceptions difference of RITE and IER teachers regarding physical facilities. Here P. value is .123 which is greater than .05 which shows that there is no significant difference between the views of RITE and IER teachers about physical facilities.

Table 5

Perceptions difference of RITE and IER teachers regarding Practicum

Category	N	Mean	S.Std	t-value	P-Value
RITE Teachers	66	4.0666	.17956	.955	.342
IER Teachers	34	4.0349	.09875		

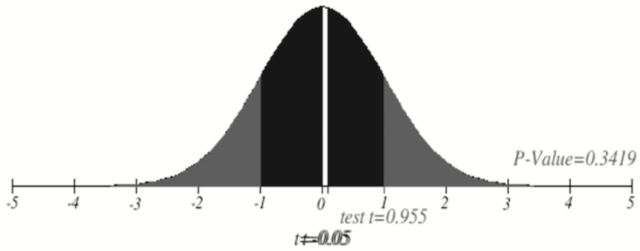


Table 5 indicates institutions wise perceptions difference of RITE and IER teachers that there is no significant difference between the views of RITE and IER teachers regarding Practicum. Here P. value is .342 which is greater than .05 which shows that there is no significant difference between the views of RITE and IER teachers about practicum.

Table 6

Perceptions difference of RITE and IER teachers regarding Training Refresher Courses

Category	N	Mean	S.Std	t-value	P-Value
RITE Teachers	66	3.6970	.34184	.079	.938
IER Teachers	34	3.6912	.36311		

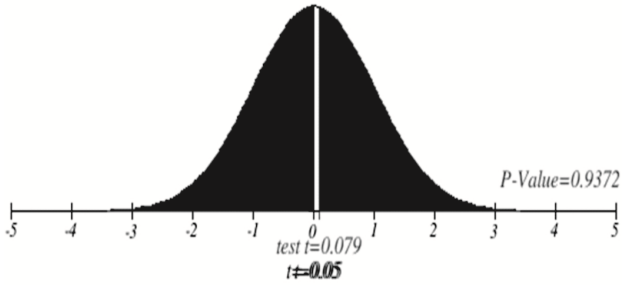


Table 6 indicates institutions wise perceptions difference of RITE and IER teachers that there is no significant difference between the views of RITE and IER teachers regarding training refresher courses. Here P. value is .938 which is greater than .05 which shows that there is no significant difference between the views of RITE and IER teachers about training refresher courses.

Conclusion and Results

The present study was conducted to see the effect of teacher education project on the development of teacher education at elementary level. The study focuses three components of the program physical facilities, practicum and refresher courses. The result shows that these were effective. Institution wise; their views are the same. Therefore it is concluded that due to teacher education project, physical facilities have been improved in TTIs, practical work is more focused and training area of the teachers has also been improved. Shafqat& Saeed (2009) (Ali, 1998; Hussain, 2003; Soon, 2004; Khan, 2004) strengthen the findings, they support the B.Ed (H) in regard to the relevance and effectiveness of the students.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the newly introduced programs of ADE and B.Ed (H) may be continued with new zeal and zest. The Provincial Government may fully adopt it in the entire teacher training Institutes (TTIs). The old program PTC, CT, B.Ed (1year) and M.Ed. may be phased out due to having no relevance with the needs of the stakeholders. Seminars may be conducted for creating awareness among the stakeholders about the importance of these programs.

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