



Prospective Teachers' Anxiety during Teaching Practice in Public and Private Schools

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Abstract: Teacher Education is a platform of strengthening and raising the standard of educational system. Teaching Practice is essential component of Teacher Education program, providing opportunity of putting theoretical knowledge into action. Teaching practice provides valuable opportunities for professional growth, and it can also be a significant source of anxiety and stress for many prospective teachers. The patterns of anxiety may differ with the varied administrative structure of the schools. This study aims to explore the male and female prospective teachers' anxiety during teaching practice in public and private schools. The study focused objectives of exploring the anxiety of male and female prospective teachers at the initial, during and at the end stage of teaching practice in placed in public and private sector schools. For this study descriptive survey research, repeated measures design was used for the longitudinal research. Census sampling technique was used to select the 207 prospective teachers who participated in the Teaching Practice in Semester Fall-2023 at the Institute of Education, University of Sargodha. Prospective-Teachers Anxiety Scale (PTAS) was utilized to quantify student teacher anxiety connected to teaching practice. To analyze the hypotheses of the study, the Independent samples t-test was used. The study found that, the female prospective teachers consistently experienced higher anxiety across all stages of teaching practice, Prospective teachers placed in private schools experienced higher anxiety during the initial and mid-stages of teaching practice as compared to the public schools. It is recommended that for reducing the anxiety of prospective teachers regarding their professionalism and emotional support, the university supervisor may arrange visits to the school at the initial stage and mid stage by scaffolding during teaching practice.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Prospective Teachers, Anxiety during teaching practice, public and private schools

1. Introduction

Teacher education is an essential component for strengthening and raising the standard of the educational system. A teacher education program, linked to the growth of teacher proficiency and competency, would equip and empower the teacher to fulfill the demands of the profession and overcome its challenge (Caena & Redecker, 2019).

Teaching practice is crucial part of teacher education programs. Teacher preparation programs are essential in providing prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become effective educators (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teaching practice is a key component of teacher training where students are assigned to schools to practice how to plan and teach lessons and be involved in other school activities (Grossman et al., 2009). The prospective teachers who are aware of their lacking skills and deficiencies in transforming of theory into practice they may practically learn more from experienced teachers and teacher educators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

During the teaching practicum, prospective teachers are expected to put their theoretical knowledge into practice,

including their understanding of educational psychology, classroom management, subject content, curriculum development, and various educational philosophies. However, this experience can be stressful for some prospective teachers, as they may experience anxiety in areas such as lesson planning, managing the classroom, dealing with a heavy workload, complying to the practicing school schedule, and being evaluated by their supervisor or teacher.

The American Psychological Association (2021) describes anxiety as an emotional reaction that is accompanied by tense feelings, anxious thoughts and several physical changes. The intensity of this feeling can vary from slight unease to extreme fear (Molin, et al., 2021).

Teaching anxiety refers to the emotional tension and anxiety experienced by teachers. However, it is common for prospective teachers' to experience anxieties during their teaching practice, which can impede their professional growth. The most common anxieties that prospective teachers' face include fear of evaluation, challenges in managing the classroom effectively, inadequate training in pedagogy, and difficulties in building positive relationships with colleagues (Hart, 1987; Lindqvist et al., 2017; Paker, 2011; Han & Tulgar, 2019). The prospective teachers' perceive the teaching practicum period as being extremely demanding and difficult because it reflects the variety of experiences that prospective teachers' are exposed to when they work in classrooms and schools (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003, p. 18; Marais & Meier, 2004, p. 221). The challenges they face in classroom management, evaluations, professional preparation, and interactions with school staff can lead to heightened levels of anxiety (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

There is negative association between prospective teachers' anxiety and professional preparation, class control, and school staff relationship (Kamonjo & Nyambura, 2023), hence the sources of anxiety experienced by prospective teachers' during teaching practicum have been commonly studied (Mosaddaq & Barahmeh, 2016). Several studies conducted in different countries have examined the level and nature of anxiety experienced by prospective teachers' due to factors related to practice teaching. Previous studies indicated that prospective teachers' across the globe feel anxious about evaluations and the sources of anxiety related to practice teaching can significantly vary with the changed organizational culture and teachers' demographic background.

1.1 Objectives

Following were the objectives of the study:

- I. To compare the anxiety of prospective teachers' placed in private and public sector schools during the three phases (initial, mid and at the end stage) of Teaching Practice
- II. To compare the males and female prospective teachers' anxiety during the three phases of (initial, mid and at the end stage) Teaching Practice

2. Methodology

In The present study the instrument was the Prospective Teachers' Anxiety Scale (PTAS), a modified version of the Student-Teacher Anxiety Scale (STAS) developed by Ngidi and Sibiya (2003). (PTAS) was made culturally appropriate and refined tool, based on five-point Likert-type scale.

For this study descriptive research, longitudinal survey technique was used. The population of study comprised all prospective teachers enrolled to graduate (M.A., B.Ed. 1.5) and undergraduate (BS) programs during the Fall semester of 2023 at the institute of Education, University of Sargodha. For this research, sample of the all participants (215) of the three programs BS, MA, and B.Ed. (1.5 years). We included in the sample, census sampling technique.

2.1 Data Collection

In this study, the data were calculated in three phases of teaching practice

- Phase 1: 1st week of TP
- Phase 2: 4th week of TP
- Phase 3: Terminal (6/7) week of TP

3. Data Analyses

The analysis was conducted on a sample of 207 available prospective teachers, who completed their before, mid, and end test procedures during teaching practice, 8 were absent, Participation rate was 96%. Independent sample t-test, effect size, were used.

3. Results

Table 1: Schools based comparison of prospective teachers' anxiety during Teaching Practice (TP)

Teaching Practice (TP) Stages	Schools	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
At initial Stage	Private	103	96.42	23.03	205	3.56	0.00	0.49
	Public	104	84.87	23.59				
At mid of TP	Private	103	95.60	23.84	205	2.961	0.017	0.41
	Public	104	86.21	21.73				
At final Stage	Private	103	85.42	21.95	205	0.442	0.659	
	Public	104	84.04	22.89				

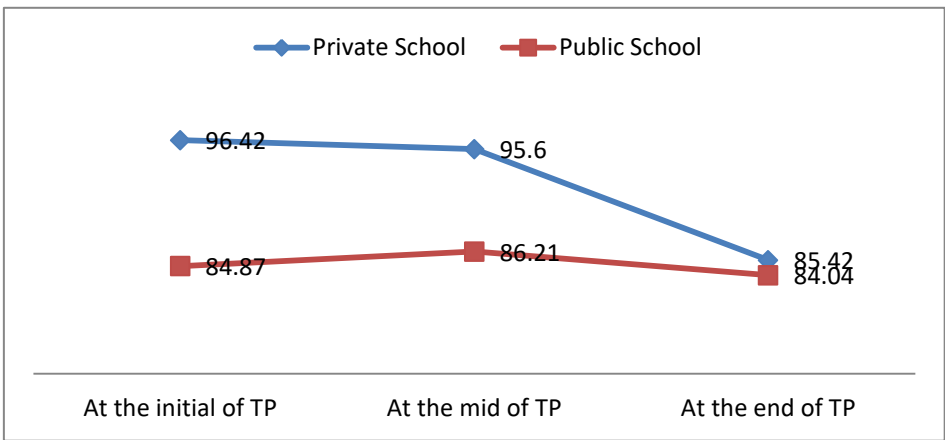
Table 1 shows that there was a statistically significant mean difference between prospective teachers' anxiety placed in private and public sector schools at the initial stage and at the mid stage of teaching practice, and no statistically significant mean difference between prospective teachers' anxiety placed in private and public sector schools at the end stage of TP. The greater mean score of the prospective teachers placed in private sector schools feel more anxiety at the initial stage and mid stage of TP ($M = 96.42$, $S.D = 23.03$ & $M = 96.42$, $S.D = 23.03$) respectively, as compared to prospective teachers placed in public sector schools. This table also shows a Cohen's d values of 0.49 and 0.41 indicate a weaker effect on anxiety during TP.

Table 2: Gender based comparison of prospective teachers' anxiety during teaching practice (TP)

Stage of Teaching Practice (TP)	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Start of TP	Male	45	76.97	23.11	205	4.51	0.00	0.75
	Female	162	94.41	22.86				
Mid of TP	Male	45	81.40	19.40	205	3.162	0.002	0.56
	Female	162	93.51	23.57				
End of TP	Male	45	77.53	21.76	205	2.469	0.014	0.41
	Female	162	86.73	22.20				

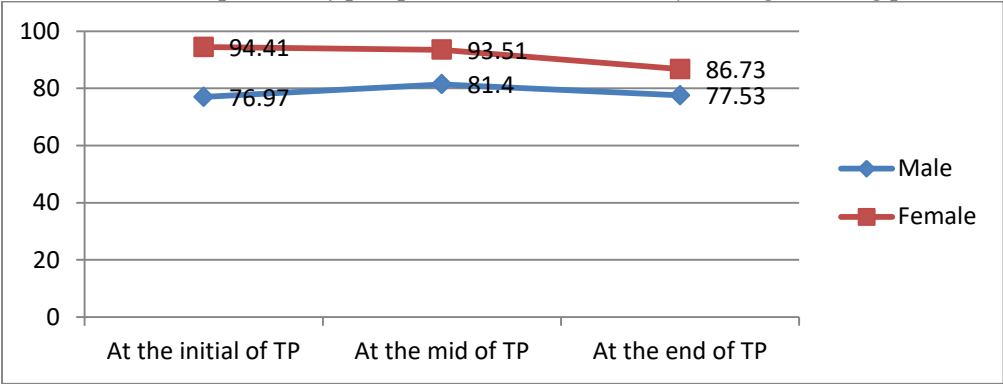
Table 2 shows that there was a statistically significant mean difference between the anxiety of male and female prospective teachers at the initial stage, mid and end stage of Teaching Practice. The greater mean score of female prospective teachers shows that female prospective teachers feel more anxiety at the initial stage, mid and end of TP ($M = 94.41$, $S.D = 22.86$, $M = 93.51$, $S.D = 23.57$ & $M = 86.73$, $S.D = 22.20$) respectively, as compared to male prospective teachers. This table also shows a Cohen's d value of 0.75 and 0.56 indicates a medium effect and 0.41 indicates a weaker effect on anxiety during TP.

Graph 1: *Schools based comparison of prospective teachers' anxieties at the initial, mid, and end stages during Teaching Practice*



This graph shows that, the *schools based comparison of prospective teachers' anxieties at the initial, mid, and end stages during Teaching Practice*. The mean of at the initial of TP and at the mid of TP ($M= 96.42$ & $M= 95.2$) respectively, shows that prospective teachers placed in private schools feels more anxiety as compared to the prospective teachers placed in public schools.

Graph 2
Gender based comparison of prospective teachers' anxiety during teaching practice



This graph shows that, the *gender based comparison of prospective teachers' anxieties at the initial, mid, and end stages during Teaching Practice*. The greater mean of at the initial, at the mid and at the end of TP, shows that female prospective teachers feel more anxiety as compared to the male prospective teacher anxiety.

4. Discussion

Findings regarding the statistically significant differences between male and female prospective teachers' anxiety at different stages of teaching practice give valuable insight into gendered experiences within teacher education. The results of the study, suggest that gender plays a significant role in shaping prospective teachers' anxiety experiences throughout their teaching practice journey.

At the initial stage of teaching practice, female prospective teachers are more anxious as compared to compared to male prospective teachers'. This aligns with previous research indicating that female often experience high anxiety in educational contexts due to factors such as social expectations, lack of confidence, lack of representation (Mwangi, 2015; Parker & Halat, 2009; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). The gender differences in anxiety continue throughout the TP, female prospective teachers consistently experiencing high anxiety at the mid and end stages of TP. Previous studies have highlighted the impact of societal norms and gender roles on female experiences in education, which may contribute to highest anxiety among female prospective teachers (Evans et al., 2018; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The findings observed mean differences in anxiety between prospective teachers in private and public schools at different stages of teaching practice. At the initial stage of teaching practice, prospective teachers in private schools exhibit significantly higher anxiety compared to prospective teachers in public schools. This disparity may be

attributed to various factors, including the expectations and demands associated with teaching in private educational institutions. Previous research has indicated that private schools often have higher academic standards, increased pressure to maintain reputations, and expectations for personalized attention to students, which may contribute to heightened anxiety among prospective teachers (Anwar & Louis, 2017; OCHWADA, 2021).

Similarly, at the mid-stage of teaching practice, prospective teachers in private schools continue to report significantly higher anxiety compared to those in public schools. This suggests that the stressors associated with teaching practice persist throughout the journey, with private school environments posing unique challenges for educators. Factors such as smaller class sizes, greater parental involvement, and the pressure to uphold the institution's reputation may contribute to increased anxiety among prospective teachers in private schools (Wilton et al., 2024).

However, at the end stage of teaching practice, no statistically significant difference in anxiety is observed between private and public school prospective teachers; as prospective teachers gain experience and confidence in their roles, the initial disparities in anxiety between private and public school settings may diminish. It is possible that supportive mentorship, professional development opportunities, and familiarization with the school environment contribute to the convergence of anxiety levels among prospective teachers in both sectors (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Michael, 2014).

5. Recommendations

1. As the research reflected that Prospective teachers at private schools often experience more anxiety. The department head or TP focal person/s may consider arranging a teaching practicum schedule that alternates the placement of prospective teachers in public schools and private schools for the considerable time duration. This approach aims to provide prospective teachers with diverse experiences and environments, potentially easing anxiety associated with teaching in private school settings.
2. Female prospective teachers experience higher anxiety, and it's crucial for the training institute to recognize this and address this issue. The institute may, foster a supportive atmosphere, and provide additional assistance and guidance for female prospective teachers. This approach aims to create an inclusive and empowering environment that helps lighten anxiety and equips female teachers with the necessary tools and confidence to succeed in their careers.

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