



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF EDUCATION AND NON-EDUCATION STUDENTS TOWARDS THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN GOMAL UNIVERSITY, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a study that examined and compared the attitudes of students from education discipline versus other disciplines (Physics, Chemistry, Biology and others) of Gomal University towards the teaching profession in Pakistan. The design of the study was quantitative survey. A sample of 292 students (178 males & 114 females) participated in the study. The findings of the study showed that the attitudes of the students towards the teaching profession were generally positive. However, surprisingly no significant differences in attitudes were found with regards to gender but significant difference in attitudes of students offering Education and students who offered other disciplines (Physics, Chemistry, Biology and others) were found towards the teaching profession. Students offering Education reported the most positive attitudes and those with the least positive attitudes were those who offered “other” courses. The other courses are courses other than Chemistry and physics. Implications of the study have been discussed.

Keywords: Attitude, Teaching Profession, students of education, students of other disciplines.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

In general the importance of education and for that matter teaching to the development of nations and the entire world cannot be overemphasized. This is because the developments of many nations are linked to the quality of their education. It is also an undeniable fact that the quality of education depends on the quality of teaching which in turn depends on the quality of teachers and teaching (Chakraborty & Mondal, 2015). The quality of teaching can depend heavily not only on the quality of teachers but also on their mental attitudes to the teaching profession. This is because attitudes have been found to influence behavior in general. Thus, in order to have quality teachers and teaching, it is important to have not only teachers but a population with positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. It is therefore important to assess the attitudes of teachers, students and the general population towards the teaching profession (Maliki, 2013). In some populations, attitudes towards the profession are positive (e.g., Mehmood, Akhter, Ch, and Azam, (2013) while in others it is not (Maliki, 2013). In Pakistan, this phenomenon has not been investigated among university students and thus there is a research gap.

Several factors potentially influence attitudes towards the teaching profession. For example Khurshid, Gardezi and Noureen (2014) stated that insufficient funding for schools, lack of interest from parents and public community and insufficient salaries are the factors which are responsible for negative attitudes towards the teaching profession.

A study of Morison and McIntyre (1984) revealed that if students are asked to choose the teaching profession as a future job then social and economic status, range of employment chances, reputation of teaching profession, conditions of job for teachers and parental involvement will be the significant influencing factors.

Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST, 2006) reported in one of the research report in Australia about the taking up more human capital in teaching career. The report showed that most of the persons who joined the teaching profession were motivated by intrinsic (wanting to make a difference and enjoyment of children) and extrinsic (remuneration, workload, employment conditions and statuses) rewards.

In order to initiate an educational campaign towards forming the right attitudes towards the profession in a given society, it is important to first of all determine whether or not the attitudes in that society are positive.

Evidence from these researchers therefore makes it even more imperative to examine the attitudes of various stakeholders to the teaching profession. According to Chakraborty and Mondal (2015), teachers' professional attitude which they referred to as the feelings, expressions and commitment to the profession is enhanced if the teachers are committed to their profession. Mehmood et al. (2013) explained that in Pakistan the teacher education programmes have started developing the teacher's knowledge, and teaching skills and for this the teacher training institutions are playing an important role. What these training institutions need to do is to focus on improving the attitudes of students towards their profession (Awan, 2015).

Since attitudes have been noted to influence behavior, it is important to examine the attitudes of students of other disciplines rather than education only towards the teaching profession and more so to compare them with students offering education. In Pakistan it is only education students who are being prepared to teach who take Education or pedagogical courses. All other students do not offer courses related to teaching. However, some of these students may sometimes complete school and go into teaching later. Attitudes of students who do not take education courses may be critically very different from that of students of Education who have made up their minds to become teachers. It is therefore important to examine the attitudes of students of education and that of other disciplines in a comparative perspective. Therefore the present study aims at examining the attitudes of university students in a large university in Pakistan towards the teaching profession.

1.2 Theoretical frame work:

McMillan (2000) (as cited in Sharbain & Tan, 2012) defined attitudes as mental predispositions which can be positive or negative. Since attitudes are directly related to the performance of teachers (Trivedi, 2011), some teachers have positive job orientation (Mehmood et al. 2013) while others have negative job orientation (Maliki, 2013) about the teaching profession depending on the attitudes they hold about the profession (Trivedi, 2011). For the professional growth of teachers and improvements in education, the attitudes held by the teachers are very important. It is thus important to assess their attitudes to determine whether they are positive or negative because the performance of a teacher depends on her/his attitudes towards his profession (Trivedi, 2011). So underlying the theoretical foundation of the study, the present study adopts the theoretical conceptualization of Mehmood et al. (2013) who defined attitudes as the specific way of thinking and reacting towards certain concepts, people and things. Based on the conceptualization of Mehmood et al. (2013), the present study seeks to examine and compare the students' feelings, reactions and perceptions towards the teaching profession.

1.3 Statement of the problem

A broad view of earlier studies revealed that a number of studies have been done on the attitudes of various populations to the teaching profession. However, few studies have examined this in Pakistan. Therefore the purpose of the present study is to add to the existing literature by examining the subject in Pakistan. Thus the present study aims at making a comparative analysis of the attitudes of different categories of students with different academic disciplines for example education, physics, chemistry, biology, and others. It seeks to compare the attitudes of students of education (i.e., pre-service teachers) with that of non-education oriented students such as those merely offering physics, chemistry, biology, and other disciplines and do not intend to teach. The researchers believe that the attitudes of all these groups to the teaching profession are important in influencing the quality of teachers and teaching and the education system in general.

1.4 Significance of the study: Knowledge of the attitudes to the teaching profession in Pakistan will help in educating the population if it is found that their attitudes are positive. This will in turn enhance the image of the profession and hence will attract many competent youth to choose it as their life's careers.

1.5 Research Questions:

1. What are the attitudes of students towards the teaching profession?
2. What are the differences in attitudes among students of education and other disciplines like physics, chemistry, biology and other courses?
3. What are the differences in the attitudes towards the teaching profession with respect to the gender?

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the attitudes of students towards the teaching profession.
2. To compare the attitudes of students towards the teaching profession with regards to their disciplines such as education, physics, chemistry, biology and other courses.
3. To examine the attitudes of students towards the teaching profession with regards to the gender.

1.7 Research Hypothesis:

The following research hypotheses were tested.

1. Students will have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession.
2. There will be significant differences in attitude towards the teaching profession with regards to the disciplines of education, physics, chemistry, biology and other courses.
3. There will be significant differences in attitude towards the teaching profession between male and female students.

2 Literature Review

Several studies have been done on the attitudes of students, teachers and other populations. However, as stated in earlier sessions above, the attitudes of students of different academic disciplines have not yet been well understood in Pakistan. Trivedi (2012) studied the attitudes of 117 teachers at different levels like primary, secondary, higher secondary and college in Bhavnagar city of India. Collectively his research findings showed that all these teachers were of positive attitudes towards the teaching profession in which he further stated that the attitudes of secondary school teachers were more stable as compared to the others.

Chakraborty and Mondal (2015) described the attitudes of prospective teachers towards the teaching profession in India with a sample of 1032 prospective teachers in 2013-14 academic sessions. With regards to gender, their research findings showed that there were no significant differences in the attitudes of male and female prospective teachers. Concerning academic discipline, there were no significant differences between science and arts students.

Babu and Raju (2013) came up with important findings about attitudes towards teaching. Their study which was conducted in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, India involved a sample of 437 student teachers. They divided the sample among male (239) and females (198) while discipline wise the sample was divided into 143 Mathematics, 48 Physical Sciences, 134 Biological Sciences and 112

Social Studies student teachers. Their research findings showed that significant differences were found among the attitudes of male and female student teachers. In addition, they found significant differences among the student teachers of mathematics and biological sciences while no significant differences were found in the attitudes of student teachers in other subjects like math and physical sciences, math and social studies, physical sciences and biological sciences, physical sciences and social studies, biological sciences and social studies.

Maliki (2013) examined the attitudes of teachers' towards the teaching profession in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state Nigeria using a sample of 150 teachers. The research findings showed that majority of the teachers possessed the negative attitudes towards the teaching profession but in terms of gender, the attitudes of female teachers were more positive as compared to the male counterparts. This is consistent with Bartan, Oksal and Sevi (2013) who also noted that attitudes of female pre-school teachers were more positive as compared to the male counterparts.

Akbulut and Karakus (2011) also investigated the attitudes of secondary school pre-service teachers in the discipline of science (physics, chemistry and biology) and mathematics with a sample of 239 pre-service teachers in Turkey. Their sample was composed of 4th year and 5th year pre-service teachers taking the content and pedagogical courses respectively. The findings of their study showed that the attitudes of both types of participants were positive towards the teaching profession. Significant differences were found in attitudes of 4th year and 5th year pre-service teachers. Among the 4th year participants no significant differences were found in attitudes regarding the discipline of physics, chemistry, biology and math while significant differences were found in attitudes of 5th year participants regarding the discipline of physics, chemistry, biology and math. This significant difference was clear from their Tukey HSD test. From their Tukey HSD test a significant difference was shown only within physics-biology and within chemistry-biology disciplines while no significant difference was shown in other disciplines.

Oruc (2011) run his study with a sample of 80 trainee teachers studying at a state university's Faculty of Education of English Language Teaching Department in Turkey. The research findings showed that the attitudes of participants towards the teaching profession were very positive.

In Pakistan, Awan (2015) analyzed the attitudes of the students of Bachelor of Education in Government College for Elementary Teachers (GCETs) of the Punjab province in session 2005-06. He analyzed the attitudes of 800 students. He administered the attitude research tool twice in a year i.e in the beginning and at the end of the B. Ed training. His research findings showed that before the training of B.Ed course there was a significant difference in the attitudes of the male and female students while after the conduction of the B.Ed course no significant differences were found in the attitudes of the students.

Shah and Thoker (2013) conducted their study on private and government secondary schools teachers with a sample of 200 respondents consisting of 100 respondents from each sector. In terms of gender their research findings showed that a significant difference was found in the attitudes of male and female government secondary school teachers and that the attitudes of male government secondary school teachers were more positive as compared to the females in government secondary schools.

For the private school, the findings showed that the attitudes of female secondary teachers were more positive as compared to their male counterparts. Similarly, Parvez and Shakir's (2013) study was among the public and private school B.ED prospective teachers with 180 participants. Their findings showed that attitudes of private prospective teachers were more favorable as compared to the public prospective teachers. No significant differences were found in the attitudes of male and female B.Ed prospective teachers. No significant differences in attitudes were found with regards to the disciplines of science and social science.

Kassa (2014) investigated the attitudes of Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) students in Haramaya University, Ethiopia with a sample of 305 PGDT student teachers on various variables. The research findings revealed that mostly the attitudes of student teachers were unfavorable towards the teaching profession. With regards to gender, the attitudes of student teachers were mostly same.

Khan, Nadeem and Basu (2013) examined the attitudes of teachers at a higher secondary level with a sample of 480 teachers from Kashmir province, India. Their study findings showed that most of the teachers' attitudes were moderate and less favorable while on gender variable they found that the attitudes of males were more favorable as compared to their female counterparts. Similarly on the academic variable of science and arts students, they showed that the science teachers show more favorable attitudes as compared to the arts teachers.

Sharbain and Tan (2013) examined the attitudes of primary English language teachers towards the teaching profession among UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) and MoE (Ministry of Education) in the Gaza Strip, Palestine with a sample of 100 teachers with a division of 50 male and 50 female teachers. On gender variable they showed that female participants had more positive attitudes as compared to their opposite sex.

Sharma (2013) also examined the attitudes of Hindi and English medium teachers of higher secondary schools in Raebareli district of U.P, India. The researcher concluded that the attitudes of both teachers were positive towards the teaching profession but the attitudes of Hindi medium teachers were more positive as compared to the English medium teachers.

From the previous studies reviewed, it could be seen that previous studies focused on the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards the teaching profession. These studies did not focus much on students of other disciplines and the another important thing is that the mentioned study has not been well understood in Pakistani society so this matter needs to dig up into more detail because we are not much informed of the nature of the attitudes of students of other disciplines other than Education students (pre-service teachers) in Pakistan. The present study thus helps to fill this research gap and will contribute to the existing literature in the field of education in an efficient way.

3 Methodology

The study was a quantitative survey research design. This study was conducted among the students of education versus non-education students in Gomal University in district Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan. All the students of Gomal University, District Dera Ismail Khan, enrolled in 2015-16 academic session were part of the population. From population the sample was selected by using a simple random sampling technique. The sample of students used was 292 consisting of 178 male and 114 female students of Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan. According to academic discipline, 59 students were from physics, 66 from chemistry, 69 from biology, 25 from education and 73 from other disciplines other than the stated courses.

Research Tool

Data was collected by using an adapted version of Sharbain and Tan (2012) attitude questionnaire. This questionnaire which was published are answered on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire comprised of 34 items with 24 positive items and 10 negative items. The Cronbach alpha reliability and split-half coefficients of the questionnaire as reported by Sharbain and Tan (2012) were .98 and 0.92 respectively. In the present study, a Cronbach alpha reliability of .79 was obtained.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics describing the sample of the study is as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample's Demographic characteristics

Variables	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	178	60.96
Female	114	39.04
Academic Discipline		
Physics	59	20.21
Chemistry	66	22.60
Biology	69	23.63
Education	25	8.56
"Others"	73	25.00

4.2 Hypothesis testing

The first hypothesis to be tested was that students will have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. The mean scores for attitude towards teaching were computed to determine how positive stu-

dents' attitudes were towards the teaching in general. The results are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Attitudes toward the teaching profession scores of respondents

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Item Means	3.368	2.469	3.839

As shown in Table 2, the attitude score ranges from 2.469 to 3.839 with a mean of 3.368 indicating that attitudes towards teaching were generally positive.

The second hypothesis states that there will be significant differences in attitude towards the teaching profession among students of education and other disciplines like physics, chemistry, biology and others. The ANOVA results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Differences in attitudes among various course disciplines/Majors

Discipline	N	Mean	SD	df	F	Sig
Physics	59	116	9.87698			
Chemistry	66	116	13.44657			
Biology	69	118	10.67121			
Education	25	126	15.48569			
Others	73	104	12.49737			
Total	292	115	13.64812	4,291	20.510	.000

Summary of Post hoc analysis by ranking

1st = Education, 2nd = Biology, 3rd = Chemistry, 4th = Physics, 5th - Others

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant omnibus effect of major/course discipline on attitudes towards teaching [($F(4, 287) = 20.510, p < .001$). The post hoc analysis shows that there was a significant difference between students of Physics ($M = 116.12, SD = 9.87698$) and Education ($M = 126.16, SD = 15.48569$), $p < .001$ with students of Education scoring higher; Physics ($M = 116.12, SD = 9.87698$) and "Other" courses ($M = 104.38, SD = 12.49737$), $p < .001$; Chemistry ($M = 116.33, SD = 13.44657$) and "Other" courses ($M = 104.38, SD = 12.49737$), $p < .001$; Chemistry ($M = 116.33, SD = 13.44657$) and Education ($M = 126.16, SD = 15.48569$), $p < .001$; Biology ($M = 117.91, SD = 10.67121$) and Education ($M = 126.16, SD = 15.48569$), $p < .05$; and finally Education ($M = 126.16, SD = 15.48569$) and others "Other" courses ($M = 104.38, SD = 12.49737$), $p < .001$).

In general, the post hoc comparison (using the Bonferroni) indicates that the mean score for students offering Education was the highest followed by those of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and finally "Other" courses. Therefore students offering Education had the most positive attitudes towards the teaching profession and those who had the least positive attitudes towards teaching are those who offer "other" courses. These are courses other than Chemistry and physics.

The third hypothesis stated that there will be a significant difference in attitude towards the teaching profession among male and female students. The independent sample t- test was used to test this hypothesis as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Differences in attitudes among male and female respondents

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig
Male	178	115	12.29830	290	.491	.624
Female	114	114	15.56855			

The result in Table 4 shows that there was no significant differences in attitudes to teaching between males ($M = 115, SD = 12.29830$) and females ($M = 114, SD = 15.56855$), [$t(290) = .491, P = .624$, two tailed]

5 Discussion

The teaching profession is an important profession which is the backbone of the educational system for every nation. In the teaching profession the attitudes of students and teachers is of great significance. The present study investigated and compared the attitudes of the stu-

dents of education and students of other courses such as physics, chemistry and biology.

The first hypothesis of the study stated that students will have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession were tested and accepted. This implies that the attitudes of students towards the teaching profession were positive. This result is consistent with the findings of many previous studies for example Sharma (2013), Akbulut and Karakus (2011), Trivedi (2012), Bartan (2013) et al., Oruc (2011), Mehmood et al. (2013) but at the same time inconsistent with others for example Khurshid et al. (2014), Maliki (2013), Kassa (2014), Khan et al. (2013).

The second research hypothesis which stated that there will be significant differences in attitude towards the teaching profession with regards to the disciplines of education, physics, chemistry, biology and other courses was accepted. The post hoc comparison test indicated that the mean score for students offering Education was the highest followed by those of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and finally "Other" courses. Therefore it is interpreted that students offering Education had the most positive attitudes towards the teaching profession and those who had the least positive attitudes towards teaching are those who offer "other" courses. These are courses other than Chemistry and physics. This finding is somewhat consistent with the findings of Babu and Raju (2013). Chakraborty and Mondal (2015) also did not find significant differences on this variable. Parvez and Shakir (2013) also did not find significant differences on the variable of science and social science. The findings of Akbulut and Karakus (2011) were not consistent in terms of 4th year students while it was consistent in terms of 5th year students regarding the discipline of physics, chemistry, biology and math.

The third research hypothesis which stated that there will be significant differences between the attitudes of male and female students towards the teaching profession was tested but the results failed to support the hypothesis therefore the third hypothesis was rejected. The result of present study was consistent with the results of Khurshid et al. (2014), Chakraborty and Mondal (2015), Parvez and Shakir (2013), Kassa (2014) but was not coincided with the results of Babu and Raju (2013), Maliki (2013), Bartan et al. (2013), Banerjee and Behera (2014), Shah and Thoker (2013), Khan et al. (2013), Sharbain and Tan (2013), Gunduz (2014).

6 Conclusion:

The teaching profession is the leading profession in today's society and is considered as the backbone of the educational system all over the world. In the teaching the attitudes of both students and teachers are of great importance. The present study investigated and compared the attitudes of the students of education and of other courses such as students of physics, chemistry, biology, and others. The present study found that the students had positive attitudes towards the teaching profession which is very significant as this profession is seriously dependent on the attitudes of the students. The present study also found that students offering Education had the most positive attitudes towards the teaching profession and those who had the least positive attitudes towards teaching were those who offered "other" courses. These were the courses other than Chemistry and physics. The study did not find any significant differences between the attitudes of male and females. It means both genders were equally contributed to the teaching profession.

7. Implications: In the light of the results of the present research, the following suggestions / implications for future can be put forward;

1. Following the finding that students of Education have more positive attitudes towards teaching than students of other courses, students of non-teaching department can be supported to develop positive attitudes towards the teaching profession.
2. The results of this study provide several directions for future research. The study has specifically found and compared the attitudes of education oriented students with the non-education oriented students (students of physics, chemistry, biology and others) but this matter should be further investigated with respect to other variables like age, gender, marital status and class / grade level in school / college / university.
3. In this research, the participants were the students of Gomal University of various faculties such as faculty of education, physics, chemistry, biology and others. Similar studies can be done on same or different variables on a much bigger sample than the sample used in the present study in the same setting or in different settings.

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