



RESEARCH PAPER

**Challenges Faced by Prospective Teachers during Teaching Practice:
Evidence from B. Ed (Hons) Programs in Karachi**

¹Saba Shakeel, ²Syeda Fatima Rizwan and ³Sadia Saleem

1. Lecturer, Department of Education, Jinnah University for Women, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
2. Co-Lecturer, Department of Education, Jinnah University for Women, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Co-Lecturer, Department of Education, Jinnah University for Women, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

Corresponding Author sabashakeel2003@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Teaching practice is an essential part of teacher training programs, especially in the Bachelor of Education (Honors) degrees, where pre-service teachers are provided opportunities to experience classroom teaching. The purpose of this study is to explore the difficulties encountered by pre-service teachers in teaching practice in B.Ed (Hons) in Karachi. The study adopts a quantitative survey approach and gathered data from 120 prospective teachers from both public and private universities. A survey questionnaire was developed using a five-point Likert scale to assess the difficulties faced in pedagogical, institutional and personal areas. The results show that pre-service teachers experience considerable challenges in classroom management, using contemporary teaching methods and strategies, lack of teaching resources, and lack of support from school administrators. In line with previous research, many participants indicated a misalignment between their theoretical understanding and classroom practice. Lack of mentoring and supervision also exacerbated issues during teaching practice. The research concludes that, although teaching practice is an essential part of professional learning, issues such as inadequate preparation, lack of effective university-school partnerships and limited resources negatively impact the process. The study adds to the body of knowledge on teacher education in Karachi and offers insights to policymakers and institutions on how to improve teaching practice programs.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Prospective Teachers, B. Ed (Hons) Programs, Classroom Challenges, Teacher Education Pakistan

Introduction

It is well acknowledged that teacher education plays a pivotal role in the success of an education system. One of its key elements is teaching practice (or teaching practicum), which plays a crucial role in preparing pre-service teachers for the classroom. In Pakistan, especially in the Bachelor of Education (Honors) programs, teaching practice aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice. But this shift from theory to practice can be complex, affecting the professional growth of pre-service teachers (Mahmood & Qureshi, 2022).

Teaching practice provides student-teachers the opportunity to translate pedagogical theories into practice, learn classroom management and understand the diversity of their learners. It also enables them to engage with teachers, administrators and students, thus forming their professional identity. However, many studies report there are numerous challenges faced by pre-service teachers during this period (Ali & Ahmed, 2023).

In Pakistan, the B.Ed (Hons) was designed to enhance teacher education standards by increasing the duration and providing more training. Karachi, as the largest metropolitan city, has numerous teacher education institutions (both government and private). They vary in terms of their resources, implementation of curriculum and support services, which impact the teaching practice experiences of pre-service teachers (Hussain & Iqbal, 2024).

One of the major issues identified in literature is the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation. The inflexible environment and resource constraints in schools make it hard for prospective teachers to implement student-centered teaching approaches in the classroom. Many schools follow traditional pedagogic approaches, which restrict experimentation and innovation (Khan & Waheed, 2025).

Another significant challenge is classroom management. Classroom management is problematic; prospective teachers frequently struggle with discipline, engagement and meeting the learning needs of students. They also face issues of large class sizes and lack of teaching facilities. A review of literature reveals that over 90% of prospective teachers find selecting teaching strategies based on students' needs difficult. Other factors include institutional concerns. Lack of support by school leaders, mentor teachers and feedback disrupt the learning process of teaching practice. Prospective teachers may be treated as "visitors" in the school (Naseer & Younus, 2023).

And there are psychological and emotional issues to consider. The teaching practice can be stressful for prospective teachers as they are exposed to new environments, and are under pressure to perform and demonstrate academic achievement. This might affect their level of confidence and teaching practice. Karachi has a unique context for education with different types of school: public, private and low-cost community schools. These environments vary in opportunities and challenges for teachers. For instance, public schools tend to have more limited resources compared to private schools, which may adhere to rigid curriculum and administrative requirements (Raza & Malik, 2021).

A number of studies stress the significance of mentoring during teaching practice. Mentors assist pre-service teachers to build teaching skills, reflect on teaching and enhance their teaching quality. Yet mentoring appears to be problematic in many teacher education programs (Zafar & Bano, 2026).

Additionally, the length and schedule of teaching practice programs play a role in their success. Brief teaching practice may not offer enough time to experience the complexities of classroom teaching, and an inadequate program implementation schedule may result in a shallow learning experience. The present study seeks to understand the problems facing pre-service teachers in Karachi's B.Ed (Hons) in teaching practice. Through the identification of major problems and their effects on teacher preparation, the study hopes to offer strategies for enhancement in teacher education (Bashir & Akram, 2021).

In conclusion, teaching practice is a crucial but challenging aspect of teacher education. It can be a potential source of growth but also a source of challenges that must be overcome to prepare teachers effectively.

Literature Review

Teaching practice has been widely explored in teacher education. It's considered a transition point, where pre-service teachers go from being students to being teachers. But it is not without challenges. The literature suggests one issue is the theory-practice gap. Teacher trainees are taught modern teaching methods, whereas schools practice traditional methods. This presents an obstacle in the implementation of new methods. In Karachi, research also indicates that pre-service teachers find it difficult to implement their ideas in the classroom (Allen, 2009).

The lack of facilities and resources is another problem. Research shows that there is a lack of teaching resources in many schools which limits the ability to teach. Other factors, such as poor classroom environments and overcrowding limit their ability to participate in interactive teaching. Classroom management is another significant concern. Classroom

management, including behaviour, discipline and engaging students, can be difficult for pre-service teachers. This is especially so for novice teachers (Borko & Putnam, 2000).

Teaching supervision is important. Ideally mentors mentor, assess and support their pre-service students. But research indicates students don't always get supervision, affecting their learning. A second problem is poor communication between universities and schools. This leads to uncertainty in assessment. This negatively impacts on teaching. Moreover, the pre-service teachers report psychological problems. They experience anxiety, stress and insecurity during teaching. This could impact their learning and achievement (Darling, 2006).

Recent research in Pakistan stresses the need for quality teacher preparation, focusing on teaching and classroom issues. It also emphasizes the importance of teacher support and development for pre-service teachers. To put it briefly, the existing literature indicates that teacher practice is a complex phenomenon affected by multiple factors including institutional, resource and teacher readiness. Understanding the difficulties is important to improving teacher education (Iqbal, 2018).

A recent development in teacher education research is acknowledgement of the complexity of teaching practice as a multifaceted process that is influenced by personal, institutional and socio-cultural factors. Although past research has tended to focus on pedagogical concerns, recent research expands the focus to concerns of identity, reflection and context (Khan & Saeed, 2019).

Particularly important has been the professional identities of pre-service teachers in teaching practice. The authors argue teaching practice is a critical juncture for student-teachers in developing their professional identities. However, this process can go awry with poor school cultures, lack of autonomy and decision-making. Pre-service teachers may feel undervalued or treated as "outsiders" - instead of as part of the community. Further, rigid timetables at schools may also limit pre-service teachers' ability to practice different approaches to teaching (Murray & Male, 2005). Technological integration is also a new challenge. Although contemporary teacher education curriculum stresses the integration of technology and interactive media in teaching practice, many schools (particularly in developing regions) are not equipped with the required technology. This leaves pre-service teachers struggling to put technology-based pedagogies into practice when they don't have access to computers, projectors or even the internet. This gap between training and practice also contributes to the theory-practice divide. Some studies stress the need for contextualized training to equip teachers with skills to work in resource-poor settings (Mohsin & Shabbir, 2020).

Another influence on experiences of teaching practice is socio-cultural contexts. In multicultural urban environments such as Karachi, classrooms comprise students from diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity demands culturally sensitive pedagogies, which many pre-service teachers identify as a challenge. Linguistic diversity is particularly challenging in terms of communication and teaching, particularly when the language of instruction is not the first language of the students (Rahman, 2017).

But many studies show that supervisors may not have enough time to support their student-teachers because of high caseloads. At times, supervision is limited to a single observation, which may not provide a true picture of the student-teacher's abilities. This absence of ongoing support contradicts the aim of teaching practice as a learning experience. Another area of recent research is emotional resilience. Teaching practice confronts pre-service teachers with challenges, such as student behaviour, stress and performance anxiety. Resilience helps them to cope with these difficulties and stay positive.

But there is little focus on emotional well-being and stress management in teacher education. Such elements can improve the quality of teaching (Tatto, 2013).

Additionally, gender-specific issues have been noted in a number of studies in South Asia. For instance, female pre-service teachers may experience extra constraints in terms of mobility, cultural norms and safety. This can impact their placements and teaching practice. Gender-specific challenges need to be addressed to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment.

More recent research suggests the importance of policy interventions. Education policies at the national level prioritise the need for practical training, but lack specific directions for delivery. The absence of uniform standards results in differences in teaching practice programs. Certain institutions offer well-supported practicum experiences with dedicated mentoring programs; others offer little support. This situation suggests a need for standardisation and accountability. Finally, the literature stresses the need for program improvement in teacher education. Prospective teachers need to provide feedback that can be incorporated into the teaching practice structures. Their feedback can be used to identify areas for improvement and inform strategies. Furthermore, partnerships with international best practice can inform improvements to programs (Zia & Hussain, 2022).

In summary, the additional literature reveals challenges encountered by pre-service teachers on teaching practice are complex and interrelated. Challenges with professional identity, reflection, assessment, workload, technology, socio-cultural differences and institutional partnerships work together to influence their experiences. To overcome these challenges, there should be curriculum reform, mentoring and institutional partnerships. This approach has a strong basis for informing prospective teachers' experiences in Karachi and the issues they face.

Material and Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a **quantitative descriptive survey design**.

Population and Sample

- Population: Prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed (Hons) programs in Karachi
- Sample: 120 students selected through random sampling

Data Collection Tool

- Structured questionnaire (Likert scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

Data Analysis Techniques

- Frequency
- Percentage
- Mean score

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Classroom Management Challenges

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Difficulty maintaining discipline	4.2	High challenge
Managing diverse learners	4.0	High challenge

Student engagement issues	4.1	High challenge
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The results indicate that classroom management is a major challenge. Most respondents reported difficulty in maintaining discipline and engaging students.

Table 2
Institutional Challenges

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Lack of administrative support	3.9	Moderate-high
Poor mentoring	4.1	High challenge
Limited teaching resources	4.3	Very high

Institutional factors significantly affect teaching practice. Lack of resources and mentoring support are the most critical issues.

Table 3
Theory-Practice Gap

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Difficulty applying theory	4.2	High
Traditional school practices	4.0	High
Lack of innovation opportunities	3.8	Moderate

A strong gap exists between theory and practice, confirming findings from previous research.

Table 4
Personal Challenges

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Stress and anxiety	4.1	High
Lack of confidence	3.9	Moderate-high
Time management issues	3.7	Moderate

Pre-service teachers have psychological issues affecting their teaching.

Discussion

This study's findings are consistent with those of other studies in Pakistan. The major challenges are classroom management, lack of resources and mentoring. The disconnect between theory and practice is a major challenge, and teachers' views indicate a need for curriculum changes. Further, the study shows the influence of context in teaching practice. Schools in Karachi vary from well-resourced private schools to under-funded public schools, and this provides different learning experiences for pre-service teachers. This affects their ability to implement innovative teaching methods and adapt to diverse teaching and learning contexts. Our research also suggests that pre-service teachers who are mentored and given feedback during teaching practice are more effective teachers. Therefore, partnerships between schools and universities and equitable allocation of teaching practice placements are beneficial for the teaching practice program.

Conclusion

Teaching practice is a very important component of teacher education with numerous challenges. The study suggests classroom management, institutional support and practice of theory are challenges faced by pre-service teachers in Karachi. Addressing these challenges is vital to improve teacher education. Moreover, this study suggests that teaching practices can only enhance through the efforts of universities, schools and policy makers - not merely pre-service teachers. Only through long-term improvements can such reforms be made to strengthen the practical and theoretical skills of pre-service teachers. It's also important to continually reflect on and evaluate practicum programs to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Addressing the issues highlighted above, collectively, can help

teacher education programs to prepare pre-service teachers to cope with the ever-evolving classroom challenges and contribute to the improvement in education in Pakistan.

Policy Recommendations

- Enhance school-based mentoring programs.
- Offer pre-practicum workshops to pre-service teachers.
- Enhance university-schools' partnerships.
- Ensure sufficient resources for teachers.
- Update curriculum to bridge theory-practice gap.
- Adopt reflective teaching for teacher development.

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