

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHING AND TEACHER COMPETENCIES OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to quantitatively analyse the level of attitude towards and teacher competencies of prospective teachers in the colleges of teacher education under University of Kerala and the relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of these prospective teachers. The investigator conducted a survey in four colleges of teacher education on a sample of 112 prospective teachers by administering a scale of attitude towards teaching and a teacher competences rating scale. The study found that the level of attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of majority of the prospective teachers is average. The relationship analysis using Pearson's product moment correlation revealed that there is significant positive correlation between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of teachers. Some recommendations to enhance the attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of prospective teachers are provided.

Keywords:

Attitude towards teaching, teacher competencies, prospective teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teacher competencies refer to the combination of knowledge, skills and attributes that educators possess, enabling them to effectively perform their roles in the classroom and contribute to the overall success of the educational process. These competencies encompass a wide range of elements, including pedagogical knowledge, subject matter expertise, instructional strategies, classroom management skills, communication abilities and the capacity to engage and motivate students. Additionally, teacher competencies extend beyond the academic realm to encompass interpersonal skills and a commitment to on-going professional development. Competent teachers not only possess a solid foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge but also demonstrate the ability to apply that knowledge in diverse and evolving educational settings. As education continues to adapt to new challenges and opportunities, teacher competencies evolve to incorporate the skills and qualities necessary for fostering student learning, critical thinking and overall development.

Attitude is one of the prerequisites in succeeding in any profession. Attitude of teachers towards teaching is no exception. Attitude is defined as "a state of mental and emotional readiness to react to situations, persons or things in a manner in harmony with a habitual pattern of response previously conditioned to, or associated with these stimuli (Good, 1945). A teacher's attitude towards teaching plays a pivotal role in shaping the learning experience for students. A positive and enthusiastic attitude can inspire and motivate students, fostering a love for learning. Teachers who approach their work with passion, patience and a genuine desire to help students succeed create a supportive and conducive learning environment. An empathetic and understanding attitude helps teachers connect with students on a personal level, creating a sense of trust and open communication. On the other hand, a negative or disinterested attitude can have detrimental effects on the learning process, hindering students' engagement and enthusiasm. Therefore, fostering a positive and student-centred attitude is not only crucial for effective teaching but also for nurturing a lifelong love for learning in the individuals they guide.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies is a dynamic interplay that significantly influences the effectiveness of the educational process. A teacher's attitude towards their profession can serve as a driving force behind the development and enhancement of their competencies. A positive attitude fosters a genuine passion for teaching, leading educators to continuously seek ways to improve their skills, adapt to new pedagogical approaches and stay abreast of the latest developments in education. On the contrary, a negative attitude may hinder the motivation to invest time and effort in professional development, potentially impeding the acquisition of essential competencies. Thus, a teacher's attitude towards teaching acts as a motivational factor that either propels or hinders the acquisition and application of competencies crucial for effective education.

Teacher competencies, in turn, contribute to shaping and reinforcing a positive or negative attitude towards teaching. Competent teachers are better equipped to manage classroom challenges, engage students effectively, and adapt their instructional strategies to diverse learning needs. When teachers possess a comprehensive set of competencies, including pedagogical knowledge, classroom management skills and the ability to assess student progress, they are more likely to experience success in their teaching endeavours. This success reinforces a positive attitude, creating a cyclical relationship where competency-building and positive attitudes towards teaching mutually reinforce each other. Conversely, a lack of essential competencies may lead to frustration, decreased job satisfaction and a negative attitude towards teaching. Therefore, the interdependence of attitude and competencies highlights the importance of fostering a positive mindset and continuously enhancing skills for teachers to excel in their profession.

A study on the relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies holds significant implications for the field of education. Firstly, understanding this relationship can benefit teacher training programmes to tailor their curricula to foster positive attitudes among aspiring educators. By identifying the specific competencies associated with positive attitudes, teacher preparation can be enhanced to equip educators not only with technical skills but also with the mindset crucial for effective teaching. This insight can contribute to the development of more comprehensive and targeted professional development initiatives for in-service teachers, promoting continuous growth in both attitude and competencies throughout their careers.

Secondly, the findings of the study can influence teacher recruitment and selection processes. Educational institutions can use this knowledge to identify candidates who exhibit not only the requisite competencies but also a predisposition towards positive attitudes in teaching. By considering attitude alongside competencies during hiring processes, schools can build a teaching workforce that is not only highly skilled but also passionate, resilient, and committed to the holistic development of students. This approach aligns with the growing recognition that effective teaching extends beyond the mastery of subject matter to include qualities such as enthusiasm, adaptability and a genuine concern for student well-being.

Furthermore, the research outcomes can contribute to the on-going discourse on teacher retention and job satisfaction. Understanding the interplay between attitude and competencies can help educational policymakers create supportive environments that nurture positive attitudes and provide opportunities for teachers to continually enhance their competencies. This, in turn, may positively impact teacher job satisfaction, reduce burnout and contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of education. Considering the above aspects, the investigator felt that a quantitative analysis of the level of attitude towards teaching and teacher competence of prospective teachers and the relationship between these variables will of immense value for our educational policymakers, teacher educators and everyone who is concerned about moulding quality teachers from these novice aspirants. A review of the related studies also revealed that such studies are very few in the Kerala context.

There are very few studies on the relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of teachers. Some of the recent studies are provided here.

Jaya and Hidayat (2020) studied the relationship of teacher attitudes and teachers' professional competency of vocational education teachers and found that there is significant relationship between attitude of teachers and their professional competency. Deepa and Vasudevan (2022) found that there

is significant relationship between teaching competence and attitude towards teaching profession of B.Ed. students. Prince, Ngozi and Celestina (2022) found that there is significant positive relationship between attitude towards teaching profession and teaching competence of primary school teachers. Vidushi (2023) in her study on “attitude towards teaching among secondary school teachers in relation to teaching competence, locale and teaching experience” found a significant positive relationship between attitude towards teaching and teaching competence of secondary school teachers. These studies provide ample evidence that attitude towards teaching has significant influence on teacher competencies of teachers. But studies on the relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of prospective teachers are very few in Kerala context. Hence, the investigator decided to conduct a study on the relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of prospective teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of teacher competencies of prospective teachers;
2. To assess the level of attitude towards teaching of prospective teachers;
3. To find out the relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of prospective teachers;

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted among 112 prospective teachers from 4 teacher institutions under the University of Kerala. Due representation was given to management of the institution and subject of specialisation. A Teacher Competencies Rating Scale prepared by Elizabeth Baby & Sreelekha (2020) and a Scale of Attitude Towards Teaching Profession by Abraham & Vijayalekshmi (2008) were the tools used for collection of data.

The details of the analysis of the collected data are given below.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Level of Teacher Competencies of Prospective Teachers

The level of teacher competencies of prospective teachers was analysed by calculating the mean and standard deviation of the scores of obtained through the teacher competency rating scale. Based on the responses of prospective teachers, they were classified into three groups, namely, prospective teachers with high teacher competencies, prospective teachers with average teacher competencies and prospective teachers with low teacher competencies. The details of the analysis are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Level of Teacher Competencies of Prospective Teachers

Level of Teacher Competencies	No. & %
High level of Teacher Competencies (Above $M + \sigma$)	27 (24.10%)
Average level of Teacher Competencies (Between $M + \sigma$ and $M - \sigma$)	71 (68.40%)
Low level of Teacher Competencies (Below $M - \sigma$)	14 (12.50%)
Total	112 (100%)

Mean = 118.11

Standard Deviation = 7.84

Table 1 shows that majority of the prospective teachers (68.40%) have average level of teacher competencies.

Level of Attitude towards Teaching of Prospective Teachers

The level of attitude towards teaching of prospective teachers was analysed by calculating the mean and standard deviation of the scores of obtained through the attitude towards teaching scale. Based on the responses of prospective teachers, they were classified into three groups, namely, prospective teachers with high attitude towards teaching, prospective teachers with moderate attitude towards teaching and prospective teachers with low attitude towards teaching. The details of the analysis are given in Table 2.

Table 2 Level of Attitude towards Teaching of Prospective Teachers

Level of Attitude towards Teaching	No. & %
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High level of Attitude towards Teaching (Above $M + \sigma$)	20 (17.85%)
Moderate level of Attitude towards Teaching (Between $M + \sigma$ and $M - \sigma$)	78 (69.65%)
Low level of Attitude towards Teaching (Below $M - \sigma$)	14 (12.50%)
Total	112 (100%)

Mean = 312.05

Standard Deviation = 18.49

Table 2 shows that majority of the prospective teachers (69.650%) have moderate level of attitude towards teaching.

Relationship between Attitude towards Teaching and Teacher Competencies of Prospective Teachers

The relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competence of prospective teachers was found out using Pearson's product moment correlation and the coefficients of correlations were found out. The details are given in Table 3.

Table 3 Relationship between Attitude towards Teaching and Teacher Competencies of Prospective Teachers

Groups	N	r	SEr	Confidence Interval at 0.01 level
Total sample	112	0.515**	0.069	0.336 to 0.694
Aided	58	0.575**	0.088	0.348 to 0.802
Unaided	54	0.481**	0.105	0.211 to 0.751
Science	71	0.378**	0.102	0.116 to 0.640
Humanities	41	0.696**	0.081	0.488 to 0.904

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows that the coefficients of correlation obtained between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies is positive and significant for the total sample of prospective teachers as the obtained r-value is significant at 0.01 level ($r = 0.515$; $p < 0.01$). This means that there is significant positive relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of prospective teachers. That is, higher the attitude towards teaching higher will be the teacher competencies of prospective teachers and vice versa.

The relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies is positive and significant for the prospective teachers when they were classified based on management of the institution (aided, unaided) and subject of specialisation (science, humanities) as the coefficients of correlation for these groups are significant at 0.01 level. This means that irrespective of the type of management of the institution and subject of specialisation, there is significant positive relationship between attitude towards teaching and subject of specialisation for all prospective teachers.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of data revealed that majority of the prospective teachers have average level of attitude towards teaching and the teacher competencies of majority of the prospective teachers are also average. The analysis also revealed that there is significant and positive relationship between attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies of prospective teachers. This relationship was evident in all categories of prospective teachers based on the management of the institution and subject of specialisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the study found that majority of the prospective teachers have only average level of attitude towards teaching and teacher competencies, the teacher education curriculum should give emphasise to instil the right attitude towards teaching and to provide essential teacher competencies to prospective teachers to make them vibrant and effective teachers who can provide the essential qualities to their students to meet the challenging requirements of the present fast-paced world. Seminars and workshops could be conducted by teacher education institutions focusing on the

importance of right attitude towards teaching for a successful teaching career and steps can be initiated in the realisation of this goal by teacher education institutions.

Teacher competencies of prospective teachers can be enhanced by introducing them to the new technology oriented teaching-learning methodologies and providing them with ample opportunities to master these technologies as this will enhance the confidence of prospective teachers and create a positive attitude towards teaching in them. For cultivating a positive attitude towards teaching in prospective teachers, they should realise that teaching is not a mere livelihood but it is one of the noblest professions and teachers are primarily responsible in shaping the destiny of a nation. Our teacher education institutions can create this awareness in prospective teachers and it is the duty of every teacher educator to work towards attaining this objective.

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