

Prospective Teachers' Attitude towards the Improvement of Their Communication Skills in Pakistan

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Abstract

The study aimed at exploring prospective teachers' attitude towards improving their communication skills in Pakistan. The present research study was descriptive and quantitative in nature. The prospective teachers' opinions were taken through a survey using a standardized questionnaire. The present research found a similar general attitude amongst the prospective teachers of Pakistan regardless gender that both did not keep communication skills high in their priorities. Minor variations were there but gender difference did not significantly differentiate their roles on almost all of the variables. Majority of them found less value in refining their communication skills. The study would capture teacher education planners' attention towards reviewing teacher education curricula of Pakistan to bring it in lieu with the growing necessities of the advanced world. A six- legged conceptual model was also devised providing a sound base for the future studies. It will also help in developing a comprehensive questionnaire covering all the possible areas which affect the relationship between teachers' attitude and development of communication skills.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Effective Teaching, Prospective Teachers' Attitudes

Introduction

Communication is merely the information transmitting process between the sender and receiver. The task of transferring the substance is more complicated and demanding than just communication. While transmitting any message, a variety of communication categories may be involved in a parallel manner. Communication is a dual course involving direction and reception of messages and the quality of communication is a necessary condition to both of these phases. The communicator must

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translate the meaning in such an appropriate manner in which the information actually needs to be transmitted, and the person at the receiving end interprets it as required in its desired sense and importance (Need, 2010b).

Effective teaching has become directly dependent upon the effective communication skills. Professional needs of a teacher verily include: good communication skills, effective classroom management, pedagogy and collaboration with the students (Saunders & Mills, 1999). Verbal and oral communication skill of teachers is key to perform effectively in class in front of students and give instructions usefully. It is equally important as written communication, parent communication, or individual communication with pupils (Cavanagh, Bower, Moloney, & Sweller, 2014). Teachers need to feel that their input is as essential as it is (Ungar, 2016). Brilliant communication skills are core to the professional competence and success of a teacher. Multifaceted communication competence is essential for a teacher to enhance students' comprehension of teaching outcomes like; listening, relational, written and verbal communication. It is also significant for a teacher to develop in students an aptitude for the effective fulfillment of their responsibilities (Ihmeideh, Al-Omari, & Al-Dababneh, 2010), and this is eminently probable if the teacher is strong in his communication for which he has to develop constructive and conscious bonding between his other teaching skills and communication skills. Therefore, for an effective teaching a sound interaction of teaching skills and communication skills serves a landmark in achieving the goals of effective education system.

Effective Communication

The outcomes of the research studies on communication skills propose that learners feeling to have proficient communication skills do not give importance to the prospects provided by a communication skills course in a manner similar to that of the students having inferior communication skills (Rees, Sheard, & McPherson, 2002). The course of communication may lead to misinterpretation at any phase, and effective communication reduces the expected chance of any confusion. It overcomes any obstructions in playing communication appropriately at every step of the course of communication. Students' on-going feed-forward should be given due attention as it offers a significant means to evaluate the extent to which the message has been understood and if any confusion is found, the effective communicators can correct it at the spot (Need, 2010b). Communication skills are crucial in all phases of discussion. Dynamic listening skills support the interaction with others by making it simple, continuous and organized. Verbal and nonverbal

communication needs to be appropriate to enhance one's communication patterns. Our verbal communication is largely the substance that we want to communicate, whereas our nonverbal communication reflects our attitudes (Van de Poel, Vanagt, Schimpf, & Gasiorek, 2013).

Accomplishment in any field of life is possible through the acquisition of knowledge as a speediest and secure means (Givens, 1995), which is certain if imparted through its effective communication. Knowledge or know-how of the needs of a profession and of how to convey one's intended message generates better skills to dialogue. In the present era of globalization, professional heads are involved in a continuous discourse in routine tasks in a variety of ways like; formal performances, on-line posts and blogs, mobile messaging, telephonic exchanges, social media interactions, etc. Medium doesn't matter but an active leader must recognize the worth of the way he listens to and persuades others (Fitzpatrick, 2010) through some verbal or non-verbal utterances. A common feature found with most of the people is that they do not intend to listen for understanding but only to respond (Covey, 2014). The correction in this approach can help in listening correctly with its positive results on better communication in response.

Leaders must be familiar with a variety of approaches to check expected obstacles that might reduce the capability to converse, greatly undermining the skills to persuade. Effective communication leads the participants to appropriate conversation and sharing of thoughts. Willingness to listen also supports the useful communication; therefore it is always vital for the leader to assure proactive listening of the listener (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

The effective communication skills include: interaction, transmission of a correct meaning, and how the message has been transmitted. In teaching the communication involves: classroom management, instructional maneuvers and abilities like; decisiveness and listening (Saunders & Mills, 1999), and a deficiency of any level in any one of these may check the overall effective and correct transfer of message. Active discourse involves the ability to address a public context with assurance and precision, which also reflects speakers' own personality (Need, 2010a).

Importance of Effective Communication Skills

Proficiency in verbal communication while speaking and listening is the basic requirement for learners' accomplishment in his educational, private, and professional life. In fact, teachers' major guidance to students for classroom processes is verbal. Students should also need good listening skills to absorb maximum material to which teacher exposed them. When it happens, their difficulties are increased and they

react inaccurately or improperly that is also due to their weak verbal communication. Verbal communication proficiency can help the individuals in their societal adjustment and contribution in adequate interpersonal dealings. Communication skills are prerequisite in most of professions. Managers acknowledge communication as one of the elementary proficiencies a graduate should possess emphasizing upon the value of this skill in winning employment and upholding high performance at job (Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 2000). Higher management including principals and certification experts evaluate communication capability while grading prospective teachers that help them tackle huge variety of student (Simonds, Lippert, Hunt, Angell, & Moore, 2008).

Communication is equally significant for the beginners and the experienced educators. Teacher Education now arranges courses for student teachers as a must to develop in them effective communication skills which help them to play dual roles as students and instructors (Saunders & Mills, 1999). The recent Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) document, the Professional Standards for Teachers, recommends; a collection of verbal and non-verbal communication approaches if to enhance student involvement ((AITSL), 2011).

Effective communication skills are equally useful for making peer tutoring programmes successful as a convenient and useful means to improve teachers' instructions as well as students' learning. If it is carried systematically and peer relationship is built through good communications between the two; peer tutor and peer tutee, the outcome of an educational program can be expected as encouraging. It usually brings progress in students' learning and academic achievement through refining their psycho-social skills opening opportunities for individuals' healthy socialization in their environment.

Peer tutoring has found very encouraging results while used in English as a Second Language Programmes and for improving below average readers (Watson, Bain, & Houghton, 1992). Moreover, peer tutoring offers emotional backing and constructive role models to follow (Martino, 1993) and that is not possible without developing a constructive dialogue or communication of both partners in peer tutoring. Verbalization has proved to be most valuable if to work on the students usually facing complications and accomplish inadequately. Therefore, this very method to improve teaching-learning for its most part, depends upon a useful, meaningful and constructive communication skills of a teacher as mentor as well as peer tutor as a tutor. Thematic investigation of 93 journal and newspaper articles, reports, and surveys reveal the

importance of communication in individuals' complete development, humanizing the scholastic readiness, being an accountable social and cultural contributor in the world, subsequent in one's profession and in corporate sector, improving administrative procedures and administrative existence, and responding many evolving 21st century fears comprising health communication, crisis communication, crime, and policing (Morreale & Pearson, 2008). The involvement of this idea in every field and faculty shows the extent to which the useful integration of such courses has proven beneficial in enhancing the quality of trainings and that of outcomes.

Communication Skills and Teachers' Attitudes

A new perspective on education began to develop as a different paradigm in the later period of the 20th century. This change of ideology appeared due to the development of consciousness about huge and continuous modifications in socio-economic and technical concepts, resulting in the creation of fastly growing quantity of human knowledge. Learning as passive recipients is less but needs learners' efficient and active involvement in the process of knowledge delivery (Bolstad et al., 2012), other than that of the teacher himself. According to the new paradigm efficient learning takes place when effective involvement of the learners is present and message delivery is reciprocally vital as its reception.

Organizational efficiency depends upon a variety of factors. Besides others it may also suffer because of the inefficiency of the employees to communicate with each other as well as with their clients (Northcutt, 2009) and usually in case of even minor miscommunications, misunderstandings with huge disorders in the work environment appear. Communication skills are central to several careers but are fundamental to educators and instructors. Teachers use to converse to many stakeholders including; students, their parents or guardians, coworkers and managers in routine. The dialogue can be one-on-one or in other modes of communication like on telephone, posts, memos, e-mails, or through public speaking, therefore, the message must be created wisely and conveyed clearly so that it is surely and rightly received. Like other modes of communication, written communication is equally important. Eligible hand script, spelling and grammar are basic ingredients of any appropriate and effective written communication (Silver). The organizational environment depends upon its communication culture and on the type of training programs cataloged for the employees. The mother professions like teaching are core to acquire a dialogue-operative field where the success of whole educational operations depends upon the communication standard. Professional communication along with

pro-active dialogue building is a key to secure constructive and accommodating approach of education.

Teachers are regularly in some sort of interaction with their students for the sake of; collecting, categorizing, examining and clarifying information to them. They are not only in contact with the learners but also with other stakeholders like; internal and external clients, and also have to make a lot of effort for the fulfillment of procedural tasks. They need to communicate proficiently and excellently by going through all these phases. Clear and unhidden communication strokes will reduce the scope of unpleasant feelings throughout the teaching course. The succeeding phase is to pay needful attention to the respondent to comprehend correctly for a correct every next response. Teachers' communication does not need to be developed with a defensive attitude but rather realistic and sensible for a better communication outcome (Ungar, 2016). Teachers' intelligibility and precision are also supplementary to student's achievement and promote encouraging student-teacher associations (Goodboy & Myers, 2008). Teachers using suitable eye contact, body language purposefully roaming around the class, pleasing students, bringing variation in his voice and its tone, and also using purposeful sense of humor have been considered as the most vibrant, competent, and successful teachers who were successful in capturing students' maximum and best attention (Hsu, 2010). All this had been valued before as the part of teachers' motivation, passion, or intellectuality (Abrami, Leventhal, & Perry, 1982). In the instructional process, attending doctors train residents to improve their clinical skills; by becoming role models. It helps them learn qualified behaviors by seeing and imitating (Jochemsen-van der Leeuw, van Dijk, van Etten-Jamaludin, & Wieringa-de Waard, 2013) and it is equally useful for the trainers of the prospective teachers if to get maximum benefits of the training programs of communication skills.

Real and impressive communication is also said to be well associated with enhanced pupil learning products such as constructive attitudes, exemplary motivation, accomplishment, and sensitivities of self-control (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001). A teacher may encounter some sensational situations that may get public. It is where a teacher has to play the leaders' part to address the issue with effective competencies where verbal communication plays instrumental. Therefore, teachers should be prepared in advance to encounter any such difficult situation vigilantly through applying their purposeful and productive communication (Stephen Northcutt, 2012). Communication, and explicitly the education of oral communication, appears essential to pupils' future individual and specialized accomplishment (Morreale,

Valenzano, & Bauer, 2017). Prospective teachers seem lagging behind in awareness needed for a deep analysis of their communication engagements (Hunt, Simonds, & Cooper, 2002). It is so because of their more attention paid only on their own communication performances as compared to giving importance to their effect on students (Cavanagh et al., 2014). Interaction leads to the interpretation of individuals' messages which decides teachers' impression on others, their status at work, development of attitude and extent to which the desired goals are achieved. The interaction is mainly through verbal communication which needs to be developed as the major priority especially amongst the prospective teachers. It is to establish them as more productive instructors which accommodate the basic potentials of teaching in their personality through their effective communication skills.

In a multilingual social setups like Singapore, selection of the type of English is a difficult task for the teachers, including other dimensions of English like; the standard excellence of their English, their English language talent and how effective communication skills they have (Bee, 2012), same as in Pakistan. The prospective teachers while enrolling them in a teacher education course bear some level of communication skills (Saunders & Mills, 1999) which need to be developed to the extent needed for becoming a successful teacher. Student teachers must exhibit the skill to identify the association between their teacher education courses' theoretical knowledge and its applied perspective, and how to perform as effective teachers (Saunders & Mills, 1999). Previous studies revealed that spirit in conducting duties in teaching or training serves as an ideal qualification of not only virtuous teachers but also of role models in the field (Sutkin, Wagner, Harris, & Schiffer, 2008). One of the features of teachers as leaders is that they realize and recognize the importance of language (Stephen Northcutt, 2012) and always strive to achieve some level of language competency if to become influential. Teachers need to be capable of applying good communication skills in developing a strong relationship between the two when in the field to perform as actual teachers. Zhang, Ludenberg, Koehler & Eberhardt (Zhang, Lundeberg, Koehler, & Eberhardt, 2011) introduced a useful approach amongst others as to watch the videos of their teaching sessions. It would be helping a lot to gain deeper understanding and awareness of their communication engagements and skills. A previous study was carried on 26 science instructors who watched their own and colleagues' teaching sessions' videos for the sake of improvement in their teaching practices. The teachers were able to diagnose their mistakes and improved themselves to employ in developing their class reflection.

Communication skills hold an all-embraced importance in achieving success in the current work setting (Ihmeideh et al., 2010). The drive to program communication training is always same to that of training, which is to create prospects of responding and developing better skills of thoughtfulness on some ignored areas (JR, 2005). Previous researches have revealed the fact that educational schools have been less active in opting and promoting new programs of communication skills in their curricula, whereas managers of the other organizations seem keener to acquire their organizational competency through recognizing these skills (Ihmeideh et al., 2010). According to the important overviews the application of the communication skills programmes seem a sensible approach. Communication skills educators' may play a significant role in not only evolving but also in interrelating the aims with program's background, which would help in mind making for the cause (JR, 2005). Administrations need to organize special trainings and improvement programmes for everyone having leadership role that would improve individuals in such a role to communicate successfully being conscious of their deficient areas. This would encourage them to work on such shortfalls and progress themselves while performing in their particular administrative setup (Bornman & Puth, 2017). Therefore, prospective teachers as future performers would learn how to remain continuously engaged in their professional uplift through better communication skills in terms of better reception and effective conveying of message.

The results of analyses in previous researches reflected that in most of the educational scenarios, motivation of prospective teachers for communication had not been a distinguishing aspect to make student teachers successful in their teacher education courses. Instead, prospective teacher's knowledge of content and teaching had been considered central in the assessment of their teaching on the whole (Rubin & Feezel, 1984), that's why a sound outcome of such a courses and trainings remains unachieved. Educational performers are the most sensitive factors which receive changes, but their participation in this change is desired as performers and mediators, if to improve changes in educational set up all over the society (Constantinescu, 2014) that while reviewing a communication skills training, practical approaches were found more operative and useful in instructing communication skills as compared to instructional methods. He further finds that female learners had much encouraging approach than that of male students as far as the refinement of their communication skills is considered (Koponen, Pyörälä, & Isotalus, 2012). Arrangement of some special trainings for communication skills may address positively some clinical outcomes for females, but not for men (Lonsdale et al., 2017). Female teachers being

sensitive to varied stimuli usually tend to accept and follow what they are taught and trained in their trainings. This is how following some practical approaches of trainings modifies their attitudes better than those of males.

Yamashita and Nakajima [36] have developed a system based on the idea of ICT welcoming the prospective teachers groups or classes to share actual assessment of their fellows' performances opting student response technology, including added thoughtful opinion on discussion boards. It can also make the prospective teachers more involved not only in identifying their communication shortfalls but also would be able to work effectively for its conscious improvement.

Previous researches propose a complete theoretical structure of the prospective teacher trainings that is based on knowledge, abilities, and approaches which they require, along with the groundwork that teacher education courses offer, and the program presentation measures (Casey & Childs, 2017). Presently, the educational setup of the developing world is in a state of transition from their traditional teacher education programs to those acceptable by the developed world in terms of their practicality and productivity to assure effective teaching and learning. Priority of effective communication courses needs to be realized to take necessary steps towards increasing potential of not only teacher education programs but also that of student-teachers.

Hypotheses

H⁰¹: The attitudes of male and female prospective teachers are not significantly positive towards improving their communication skills.

H⁰²: The attitudes of male and female prospective teachers on their communication skills do not have any significant difference.

Methodology

The research study was descriptive in nature as prospective teachers' opinions were collected through a survey. The population for the conduct of survey was 33 universities of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the universities having the department of education and out of total 33, only 11 universities were offering the subject of Education.

The purpose of survey was to take the views of male and female prospective teachers gender wise on communication skills so that a snapshot of their attitudes, and difference in the attitudes of male and female prospective teachers could be identified. The male and female student (prospective teachers) sample was addressed through stratified random sampling and the opinions were collected from the male and female students of the education departments of the 11 universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. A standardized questionnaire was used to

collect the relevant data. It contained 42 items altogether, 7 addressing each of the 6 variable covering prospective teachers' attitude. The gathered quantitative data was coded, tabulated, and calculated through SPSS by the application of the Independent sample t-test. It was then interpreted and analyzed for results.

Research Results

The data was calculated through independent sample t-test. The difference of means for the two groups was computed and p-value was worked out. The attitudes of male and female prospective teachers were identified on the calculated p-value. The results of the statistical calculations showed the lack of positive attitude towards developing communication skills amongst the male and female prospective teachers on the whole. It was also shown that the attitudes of both genders were almost similar towards the improvement of their communication skills.

Table 1 Communication skills are beneficial

Gender	Variable	N	M	STD	DF	T	P-V
Male & Female	Benefit A1 –A7	100	2.920	1.871	96.143	.855	.395
			2.620	1.627			
			3.140	1.493	97.309	.738	.462
			2.920	1.324			
			3.160	1.493	96.616	.283	.777
			3.040	1.324			
			3.160	1.283	97.526	.827	.410
			2.940	1.376			
			3.129	1.349	97.631	.502	.617
			2.980	1.435			
			3.140	1.244	97.635	.389	.698
			3.040	1.324			
			2.800	1.245	94.828	-.218	.828
			2.860	1.498			

According to Table: 1, p-value for all the responses against 'benefit' which the prospective teachers found in such a courses, was higher than the 0.05 level of significance which showed that null hypotheses were accepted. It also reflected that the result was statistically insignificant and male-female prospective teachers' attitudes were not positive in enhancing their communication skills. It also related the absence of a significant difference in male-female prospective teachers' attitudes, on identifying any benefit in improving their communication skills.

Table 2 Priority to communication skills

Economics, Business and Management (EBM 2017)

Gender	Variable	N	M	STD	DF	T	P value
			2.860	1.0103	95.77	.000	1.00
			2.860	1.1782			
Male & Female	Priority B1 –B7	100	3.020	1.4913		.559	
					97.307		.578
			2.860	1.3703			
			3.200	1.2777		.476	
					97.925		.635
			3.080	1.2427			
			3.040	1.0682		-.310	
					89.169		.757
			3.120	1.4796			
			2.840	1.0759		-.693	
					96.317		.490
			3.000	1.2289			
			2.780	1.0933		.229	
					89.642		.820
			2.720	1.2137			
			2.420	1.0896		.000	
					96.883		1.00
			2.420	1.2137			

Table: 2 shows the p-value of all the responses for ‘priority’ which was also higher than the 0.05 level of significance accepting null hypotheses. It also revealed the result as statistically not significant, confirming that the attitudes of male and female prospective teachers were not positive in developing their communication skills. It also communicated the absence of any significant difference in male-female prospective teachers’ attitudes, on giving priority to the development of their communication skills.

Table 3 Find interest in communication skills

Gender	Variable	N	M	STD	DF	T	P-V
			2.800	1.049	97.237	-1.364	.176
			3.100	1.147			
Male & Female	Threat E1 –E7	100	2.600	.9689	91.327	-.529	.598
			2.720	1.278			
			2.633	.9258	88.200	.882	.380
			2.400	1.309			
			2.260	.9216	85.676	-1.111	.269
			2.520	1.373			
			2.560	1.090	94.043	.082	.935

Economics, Business and Management (EBM 2017)

	2.540	1.343			
	2.320	.9570	83.008	-.079	.937
	2.340	1.506			
	2.580	1.162	96.306	.481	.632
	2.460	1.328			

In Table: 3, p-value of every response for ‘interest’ was again greater than the 0.05 level of significance. It confirmed the acceptance of null hypotheses. It also showed that the result was statistically insignificant and the attitudes of male and female prospective teachers did not have positive trend towards improving their communication skills. It also related the absence of significantly different male and female prospective teachers’ attitudes regarding taking interest in developing their communication skills.

Table 4 Communication skills are important

Gender	Variable	N	M	STD	DF	T	P-V
			3.260	1.321	97.887	1.769	.080
			2.800	1.277			
Male & Female	Importance D1 –D7	100	3.340	1.349	97.601	3.975	.000
			2.300	1.265			
			3.040	1.244	97.664	.857	.393
			2.820	1.320			
			2.980	1.269	95.619	.723	.471
			2.780	1.488			
			2.700	1.035	90.678	1.144	.255
			2.420	1.386			
			2.760	1.318	97.540	2.489	.014
			2.080	1.411			
			2.400	1.069	93.281	.412	.681
			2.300	1.343			

P-value of second and sixth response of ‘importance’ is below the significance level 0.05 in Table: 4 whereas the rest of responses in Table: 4 revealed a higher p-value than the 0.05 level of significance approving the null hypotheses. It also reflected the result as statistically not significant and confirmed male-female prospective teachers’ attitudes not positive in improving their communication skills. Significant difference was also not found in the attitudes of male-female prospective teachers on the level of importance they gave to the development of their communication skills.

Table 5 Communication skills are threatfull

Gender	Variable	N	M	STD	DF	T	P-V
			3.500	1.015	94.647	2.041	.044
			3.400	1.228			
Male & Female	Trust F1 –F7	100	3.080	1.121	91.438	.534	.595
			2.940	1.476			
			3.160	1.201	89.382	2.143	.035
			2.540	1.656			
			2.860	1.088	98.208	2.360	.020
			2.240	1.505			
			2.860	1.324	96.629	2.621	.010
			2.120	1.493			
			2.940	1.284	96.810	3.377	.001
			2.020	1.465			
			2.640	1.273	97.921	1.592	.115
			2.240	1.238			

According to Table: 5, p-value of all the responses on finding communication skills as a ‘threat’ for them was greater than the 0.05 level of significance thus approving null hypotheses. It made the result statistically insignificant and approved the absence of positivity in both genders of the prospective teachers towards improving their communication skills. The difference was also significantly not found in male-female prospective teachers’ attitudes who took communication skills a threat for them.

Table 6 Communication skills are trustworthy

Gender	Variable	N	M	STD	DF	T	P-V
			2.800	1.049	97.237	-1.364	.176
			3.100	1.147			
Male & Female	Threat E1 –E7	100	2.600	.9689	91.327	-.529	.598
			2.720	1.278			
			2.633	.9258	88.200	.882	.380
			2.400	1.309			
			2.260	.9216	85.676	-1.111	.269
			2.520	1.373			
			2.560	1.090	94.043	.082	.935
			2.540	1.343			
			2.320	.9570	83.008	-.079	.937
			2.340	1.506			
			2.580	1.162	96.306	.481	.632
			2.460	1.328			

Table: 6, p-value of second and seventh responses for ‘trust’ was higher than the 0.05 level of significance but for the rest lower than the significance level. It clarified the rejection of null hypotheses as majority of responses under ‘trust’ showed downward trend in their p-value. It showed the result statistically significant in confirming the attitudes of male and female prospective teachers as positive towards improving their communication skills. Mostly they found the sources of developing communication skills trustworthy but the results also clarified the presence of a significantly different male-female prospective teachers’ attitude on the view mentioned above. Males appeared to have more trust than females in the available and provided resources to improve their communication skill.

DISCUSSION

As communication skills are considered core to the success of teaching in the west, the present research was carried to identify the trend of this very aspect of teacher education amongst the prospective teachers in Pakistan. The findings drawn from the data reflect that no doubt courses of communication skills have been introduced in the teacher education programs but still a lot of attention is needed in the teacher education sector to make the student-teachers realize the importance of such skills.

Teachers as professionals hold expert knowledge which, if organized suitably, can enrich their decision-making as well as helps in effective in- class preparation (Bush, 2015). A vital factor of training includes an emotional commitment of the educational performers if to enhance and employing intelligible educational modifications (Constantinescu, 2015). It is essentially required to be successful in the field of education as a well -versed and well-understood teacher. Teachers' verbal-nonverbal behaviors are noticeable for the learners. Students’ understanding of their teachers’ communication forms are associated with their insights on teacher’s reliability. Lastly, students link their opinions with their assessment of the teacher as well as their personal learning (McCroskey, Valencic, & Richmond, 2004), and they call it as direct association between teacher communication, proficiency, and pupil learning.

The present research found a general attitude amongst the prospective teachers of Pakistan regardless of the gender that they do not keep the area of communication skills high in their priorities. They mostly take it an additional burden on them while studying in teacher education program. They feel it important but do not find it important in their educational setups so mostly show lack of interest in such courses

and opt them just as a compulsory credit requirement of the program. They also do not find any specially provided benefit if qualify such courses, therefore ignore their importance and are not much bothered to develop any real competency in communication skills especially in the public-sector institutions of Pakistan. One of the significant reasons in finding low interest level is also low priority of teacher trainers given to such courses and more student-teacher effort expected in content knowledge.

The present research has also tried to explore whether any significant difference is found between the attitudes of both genders regarding the development of their communication skills and both have shown almost similar trends. Minor variations were there but gender difference has not significantly differentiated their roles on almost all of the variables. This shows the need of bringing improvement in the teacher education program objectives and in their true reflection through the effective exhibition of the courses of communication skills.

Conclusions

The research study ended with a set of conclusions given as under:

1. The attitudes of the male and female prospective teachers are not found significantly positive towards the improvement of their communication skills.
2. There is no difference found in the attitudes of both genders for all sub-variables of the communication skills except 'trust'.
3. Most of the responses of both genders are not in the favor of developing communication skills.
4. Majority of them find less benefit in improving communication skills.
5. Majority of male and female prospective teachers do not give priority to this area of their development because they had never been sensitized on the matter.
6. They find it less important than other factors like the subject knowledge.
7. Most of them do not consider it interesting to learn communication skills as they do not find it directly linked to their field or subject of study.
8. Prospective teachers have no threat to get disqualified just because of weak communication skills.
9. The male prospective teachers trust more on formal as well as informal means of learning communication skills than the females.

Recommendations

Research findings along with the conclusions highlight the deficiencies in Pakistan's educational environment mainly in public

sector which causes lack of attention in developing students and future teachers' communication skills. On these bases the following recommendations can be drawn for future reference:

1. Special steps should be taken to inculcate the concept of communication skills learning in education from the root gross level.
2. Special emphasis should be laid on the development of communication skills during teaching and training of the prospective teachers at all levels can be put.
3. Integration of such skills in the curricula of teacher training programs should be ensured through its effective assessment and evaluation.
4. Production and publishing of the quality material and books on the topic should be arranged as an influential strategy so that their convenient learning can be ensured.
5. Annual or term-wise award of special incentives or certificates for competent people in the field should be introduced and can be an effective policy. It will keep the teachers motivated to work with enthusiasm and to show readiness for learning new skills.
6. Communication skills programs or courses should be made compulsory at all levels. Effective steps should also be taken to make them more interesting, practical, and field-based for effective results.

A conceptual model is devised on the findings of the study as below. This six- legged model is structured on six major components which help in developing prospective teachers' attitude towards improving their communication skills. It will provide a sound base for developing a comprehensive questionnaire, covering all the significant structural components of the relationship between teachers' attitude and development of communication skills.

The BPIIT model reflects its structural components; Benefit, Priority, Interest, Importance, Threat, and Trust.

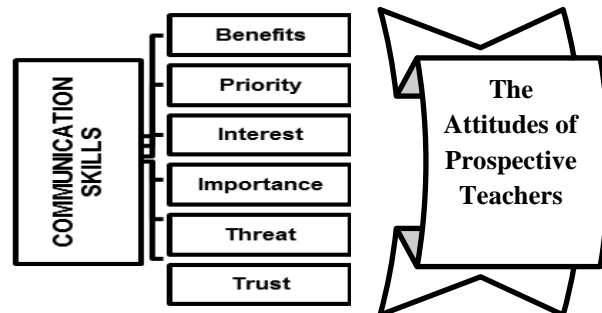


Figure 1: BPIIT Model

Practical Implications

The research findings will be productive in:

1. Reflecting the ground reality of the traditions followed in the education sector of Pakistan especially in the Public sector.
2. Realizing prospective teachers to work on their communication skills for becoming effective teachers in the field.
3. Bringing attention of the teacher education planners towards reviewing their teacher education curricula according to the growing needs of the developed world.
4. Developing healthy competition between male and female teachers to enhance their language proficiency to set better standards of teaching especially in Pakistan's public sector.

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