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# Development of Criteria for the Evaluation of Initial Elementary Teacher Education Programs of SAARC Countries

## ABSTRACT

This study has been designed to develop a valid, reliable criterion to evaluate the Initial Elementary Teacher Education Programs (IETEP) of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). It was necessary to judge the worth of these countries' IETEP and to provide equal job opportunities to their expatriate teachers.

To conduct this study, a list of input indicators was prepared from multiple sources. Research based multiple values were assigned to indicators, included in the instrument and presented to faculty of teacher education. They were request to amend and select the best value of each indicator in the pilot study. This instrument was presented to fifty experts of technically advanced and two hundred of SAARC countries for final selection of indicators and their values.

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Percentages of responses were calculated for clarification and comparability. Chi-square was applied to examine the relationship. Statistical analysis was performed by latest version of SPSS. The level of significance was set at P <0.05 for all analysis. In the light of overwhelming-majority (above 80%) opinions of two groups of experts, forty-six indicators were selected under five categories (admission, curriculum, faculty, practice teaching and evaluation) of IETEP.

**Key Words:** Initial Elementary Teacher Education Programs (IETEP), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Evaluation, Criteria

## Introduction

Korporowicz (1997) defined evaluation as a systematic survey of values or feature of a given program, activity or an object, taking into consideration the adopted criteria to enhance, improve or understand them better. It is the "identification, clarification and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit), quality, utility, effectiveness or significance in relation to those criteria"(Fitzpatrick, J. L., Sanders, J. R., & Worthen, B. R., 2004). Evaluations lead to guarantee the products regarding validity and reliability.

Evaluation requires a criterion. It is central to all evaluation studies (Scriven, 1967; Jill Van den Brule, 2008). Despite its importance, a lot of disagreement exists among experts about the constituents of evaluation criteria. This gap is bridged to some extent by input indicators associated to programmatic standards. Accreditation agencies of

developing countries use input indicators in the norm and standards of IETEP accreditation. Contrary to developing, developed countries prefer process and output indicators in accreditation. They measure the efficacy of IETEP through the impact it has on student's attitude towards educational inclusions, (Sosu, Mtika and Colucci-Gray, 2010), pupil results on test (Seidel and Shavelson, 2007), comments from potential stakeholders (Stronge, 2007), (Khan and Saeed, 2009), job placement etc.

In USA, Teacher education units that want to be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) must exhibits a system that collects, analyzes, and uses data about student performance and unit operations (NCATE, 2008). Robert M. Boody, Tomoe Kitajima, (2012) stated that most states have incorporated similar standards (student performance and unit operations) into state accreditation even for those institutions which are not affiliated to NCATE. Same is the case in UK and many other European countries.

## Background of the Problem

Evaluation criterion and its components are generally a bone of contention among experts. Their opinions are quite contradictory about its constituents. This gap is bridged to some extent in norms and standards of IETEP accreditation. These norms and standards generally based on input indicators associated to programmatic standards. Since accreditation has global acceptance and the research is about developing countries of the globe so components of evaluation criteria for the present study has been chosen

from the input indicators associated to programmatic standards.

Now a day's almost all countries have accreditation agencies. They design standards by selecting quality indicators of their own choice keeping in view their own specific circumstances. But in the regional and international perspective, there is a gap. This gap is apparent among SAARC countries as well, who have shared historical, cultural and economic background. No effort is seen in SAARC countries as for as the development of regional criteria is concern despite similarities of IETEP related problems. Researcher in this context took the imitative to develop a regional criterion to meet the demand of global market and to provide level field to all the stakeholders at international places like UAE.

## Tool development

The researcher explored the popular trend of evaluation, accreditation standards of SAARC and advance countries, research about quality indicators exploration, academic objection to teacher education programs, characteristic of quality teacher and quality teacher education program, international practices, experts' aspirations and need analyses of the stakeholders. The needs were noted by semi structured interviews run in the schools of SAARC countries situated in the capitals of UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Expert's aspirations were derived from the wish list presented by the participants of workshops and symposiums held in Pakistan and UAE about of characteristics of teacher education programs' components.

All these practices were for the development of simple, reliable and ready to use evaluation criteria that can act as a yard stick to check the status of any IETEP and provide a quick fix styled solution by addressing the requirements of all stakeholders. Components of evaluation criteria, collected from multiple sources were consolidated in the research instrument of multiple choices formats and administered to fifteen faculty members of University of Education Lahore. They critiqued the format, language and content. Changes were made as suggested by faculty and named this research instrument as "Questionnaire to set standards for the evaluation of IETEP of SAARC countries"(QSSETEP).

**Piloting of Instrument**

A pilot test of this questionnaire was run. Ten faculty members from two campuses of University of Education participated in the pilot survey. A second survey was given to the same faculty members after forty days. The responses were compared to assess the reliability of the instrument. The responses were found similar. These results and factual nature of data affirmed the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

**Population and Sample of the study**

Population of the study was faculty members of teacher education institutions across the globe, who have more than twenty year experience in the elementary teacher education and its associated fields or holding a rank of Assistant professor or above level. From this population sample of two hundred and fifty experts were drawn. Two hundred experts were taken from SAARC and fifty were taken from developed countries. This sample size was approved by local and foreign experts, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Khalid

Director University of Education, Lahore and Professor Dr. Divya Jindal-Snape of University of Dundee.

**Sampling technique**

Convenient sampling technique has been adopted for expert's selection. Most of the experts were the participants of different symposiums and workshops held in Pakistan and UAE about teacher education. Few were contacted by available e-mail addresses from web sites.

## Composition of Sample Selected / Responded at Criteria Development Stage

It is presented in the following table

**Table 1: Composition of Sample Selected / Responded at Criteria Development Stage**

| Nature, No & frequency | Afghanistan | Bangladesh | Bhutan | India | Maldives' | Nepal | Pakistan | Sri Lanka | Advance | Total | Respondents % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 3/**0** | 3/3 | 3/**0** | 52/36 | 3/**0** | 3/3 | 55/40 | 3/3 | 25/**20** | 150/**105** | 70 |
| Female | 3/**0** | 3/3 | 3/**0** | 28/24 | 3/**0** | 3/0 | 29/**25** | 3/3 | 25/**16** | 100/**71** | 71 |
| Total | 6/**0** | 6/**6** | 6/**0** | 40/**35** | 6/**0** | 6/**3** | 124/**90** | 6/**6** | 50/**36** | 250/**176** | |

**Demographic features of respondent**

**Gender**; Male 150, Female 100, **Age range** all above 45 years, **Qualification** , At least master degree, **Work experience**; More than ten years

Experts fulfilling the criteria were identified and requested to select the indicators and value of the indicators used in the "Questionnaire to set standards for the

evaluation of IETEP of SAARC countries" to constitute the evaluation criteria. These experts include members of academic council, accreditation committee and board of advance studies, consultants, deans, directors, reactors, recruiters, researchers, managers, evaluators, principals, teacher educators, subject specialists, textbooks writers, curriculum coordinators and controllers of examination associated with the teacher education institution.

The population of the study was highly educated professors and faculty members, whose ware about were up to date. They were unbiased and willing to contribute so there were minimum chances of bias, coverage, non-response and item non response errors. Special features of respondents involved in this research and general characteristic of questionnaires provide the rationale to use it in this research. Researcher personally presented the questionnaire to individuals available at symposiums and workshops. Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Embassies of SAARC countries at UAE sent the instrument to outside researchers.

Data collected through questionnaires were recorded, categorized, converted into percentages for clarity and comparability. Two overwhelming majority experts (above 80 %) groups from SAARC and European countries were separated. The components and their values supported by these two groups were selected as component of evaluation criteria. Their responses were depicted with the help of tables. (Tables2-5).

Data were analyzed through percentage method. Percentages were calculated with calculator. The opinions of two groups of experts (SAARC and Developed countries) about the components of evaluation criteria and their values

concerning to admission requirement, curriculum, resources, faculty qualification, policy and procedure of teaching practice and evaluation were taken and compared. Opinions of experts from both group are categorized as simple majority (50.1-65%), high majority (65.1-80%) and overwhelming majority (above 80%).

Statistical analysis was performed by using latest version of SPSS and the level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses. Percentage values were calculated and Chi-square test was applied to examine the relationship/association. The components of criteria supported by overwhelming majority of experts framed the evaluation criteria.

## Findings and Discussion on Findings

The study aimed at developing an evaluation criterion for the evaluation of (IETEPs) of SAARC countries. The analysis (Tables 2 to 5) showed significant similarity between the opinions of both experts' group about various aspects of IETEP and that has been used to establish the evaluation criteria. A discussion of the results from each of the five aspects follows:

## Admission Criteria and Procedure

The study found on the basis of experts opinions (Table2) that admission should be conferred to candidates having teaching aptitude, secured 50% score in (HSSC) and proved their linguistic and numeric competencies. Keeping reserve seats for minority, ex-service men, kin ship and co-curricular

activities, preference should be given to fresh, younger and extra qualified candidates.

Characteristics selected by high majority of experts (Table 2) for the selection of candidates proved the admission proposal of Jabeen, F. (2010); findings of Casey and Childs (2007); Casey (2005), admission policy of excellence achieving countries, norms introduced for Architecture students by Pakistan council for Architecture and Town planning[1] (assess the aptitude of the student in Architecture/ Town Planning typically in the form of aptitude for creative thinking, mathematics and writing skills of students), National Education Commission (1986) and National council for Teacher Education (NCTE) India.

Casey and Childs (2007) determination that teacher preparation programs continue to use grade point average (GPA), standardized test scores, performance in individual and group interview, letters of reference and written profiles to make decision about which students to select into their teacher education programs support the findings of the study.

Experts recommended that basic qualification should be graduation. This is supported by worldwide trend towards the generalization of pre-service teacher training at the level of tertiary education, either in university or non-university equivalent level institutions like college of education. Advance countries select students of teacher education from the top third layer.

The experts recommended the existence of accreditation council to act as watchdog and coordinator among different quality controlling agencies (Table 2). This is

[1] http://www.pcatp.org.pk/images/pdf/accreditation-manual.pdf

common practice all over the world. The study of teacher education program of advance and advancing countries affirm this demand. The presence of NAAC and NCTE (India), NAEM, NIE (Sri Lanka), NCATE (USA), Ofsted (UK), NZQA (New Zeeland) and NACTE (National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) in Pakistan confirmed its importance.

## Curriculum design, delivery and revision

The experts' endorsements about curriculum composition is uniform but to duration dedicated to subjects included in the curricula showed diversity. The high majority of experts proposed 30 % of programs' total duration for Practical part, 20 % for school subjects or subjects of specialization, 10 % for languages, 7% for I.T and 5 % for expressive art/ moral or religious education. For foundation and pedagogy part less than 75 % consensus has been seen in (Table 3).

Uniformity about curriculum components and diversity in dedicated duration to selected subjects and incorporation of languages is supported by ETS (2004), and expressive art by NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education)-India. Tatto, Nielsen and Cummings (1991) supported 20% for school subjects or subject of specialization.

Uniformity in curriculum components is due to the common expectation from IETEP and the teachers, it produces. Diversity in selected subjects and dedicated duration to selected subjects is due to goals assigned to IETEP by each society and level of its development. The goal can be to prepare trainees to teach across the primary curriculum i.e. to be able to teach all subject areas. It can be to provide a degree of specialization, especially for upper primary teachers. In both the cases no of school subject offered for study will be different. If the numbers of the

subjects are more, allotted duration to each subject will be less and consequently quality will be low. Again as cited in Çubukçu (2010), that, teachers need to be proficient in teaching skills, management skills and communication skills. Okpala & Ellis (2005) administrated Teacher Qualifications Survey to 218 business students to determine four characteristics observed in effective teachers. These qualities, listed in order of importance, consist of; teaching skills, learning centeredness, subject content knowledge, and verbal skills.

The 30 % duration selected by experts for teaching practice is supported by Saeed (2007). He surveyed the opinions of teacher educator and proposed that ratio of practical part to theoretical part should be 30:70 %. The recommendation of Farooq and Saeed were the result of feedback from trainee, trainer and the supervisors associated with the IETEP.

**Faculty qualifications, professional development and system of Evaluation**

The study found out that school experience, academic and professional qualification of faculty and chief executive is of prime importance. According to Beeby (1966) and many others, the quality of education mostly depends upon the quality of the teaching staff, their academic and professional qualifications, commitment to work and experiences. This finding is supported by NCATE, which for teacher educator in USA has recommended the doctorate degree or exceptional expertise; contemporary professional experiences in school setting at the levels they supervise. In India, commission about elementary teacher education recommended that qualification for teacher educators should be a post graduate

degree with B. Ed training and experience of work at primary schools. This concept is supported by Shami, P. A., & Hussain, K. S. (2006) who concluded that higher the level of education a teacher has received, the higher his/her academic status will be.

The need for 'authentic' assessment is often invoked in TEIs. According to Darling-Hammond, L., & Snyder, J. (2000), authentic assessment comprises "Opportunities for developing and examining teachers' thinking and actions in situations that are experience based and problem oriented and that includes or simulates actual acts of teaching". Examples of such types of assessment include: action research, portfolios, case studies and peer assessment. Secondary Education Commission (1952), India recommended that external examinations at the undergraduate level should be eliminated from the professional preparation of teachers. Teachers in training colleges should evaluate the work of their students in general education courses. But since democratic process is not well establish in these countries so intervention of undemocratic forces is always expected. To intercept such adventures and to overcome public pressures, it is advisable for such communities to have a mix type of assessment that consist of both internal and external examination.

Again the question should also be of mixed style. Both subjective and objective style should be asked in the exam papers. The exam must spread over the whole curricula and it should discourage the selective study style.

According to Jabeen, F. (2008), Assessment of practice teaching should be based on practical work undertaken during the terms (observation, discussion preparation of

lessons, teaching) 100 marks and the final four lessons given at the end of term 25 marks each.

## Policy and Procedure of Teaching Practice

The professional experience or practicum is part and parcel of all initial teacher education programs. It is often regarded as the most important component of the pre-service teacher education program (House of Representatives: Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007). Majority of student teachers claim that the best part of their education program, where they learn more is the practicum (Hoban, 2005b). The characteristic selected by the experts (Table 5) for the policy and procedure of teaching practice is supported by the practices of the advanced countries. The criteria is also supported by Iqbal (1996) who was of the view that practice teaching may be improved through more and larger periods of contact with children, the combining of methods courses with student teaching, the provision of observations of "master teachers" both before and after student teaching and the inclusion of a wide variety of teaching situations at different grades levels.

Jabeen, F. (2008) in the context of practice teaching in Pakistan proposed that it should include observation of classroom teaching, special demonstration lessons, criticism lessons and full time teaching practice. Laboratory schools should be attached to all the training institutions for practical work and experimentation.

All of Jabeen, F. recommendations support the expert's endorsements about teaching practice. The expert's endorsements about length, the structure and design of the practicum are also supported by Darling-Hammond, L., &

Bransford, J. (2007). Both in teaching practice scenario propose that length, the structure and design of the practicum experience is pivotal to the teacher candidate's development. Regarding daily duration of practice session Indian commission about elementary teacher education proposed that the trainees may start with one or two lessons a day but should gradually be expected to stay for whole day and take on the full responsibilities of a regular teacher. As for as the experts endorsements about heavy number of demonstration lessons, more practice in micro teaching and low pupil teacher ratio in the teacher education programs is concerned, it is supported by Rajameenakshi, P. (1998). She at the end of her research about effectiveness of teacher education program recommended measures to be taken to improve teaching competency of the prospecting teachers by organizing more number of demonstration lessons, more practice in micro teaching and low pupil teacher ratio. Howitt, C. (2007), found that modeling of effective teaching strategies by the teacher educator was one of the biggest influences on the pre-service teachers' confidence in teaching science. According to the students, they learn more from their peers than anybody else. This situation affirms the survey findings of Shah, M. (2002). He evaluated the teacher education programs of forty-six teacher education institutions and concluded that criticism lesson were not impressive at all.

It is widely acknowledged that the mentor teacher/cooperating teacher/supervising teacher plays a key role in the professional experience of pre-service teachers. The activities assigned by experts to teacher educators in Table 4 are supported by seven principles extracted by Singh

R. (2006) from the research of different scholars about the functioning of teacher educators. Seven principles are:

1. The teacher educators should model and illustrate a variety of teaching methods, techniques and processes and for this they need to be educated well in pedagogy.
2. They must have school level experience. Five years of teaching experience in secondary schools was proposed by Secondary Education Commission (1952).
3. The teacher educators along with teaching must indulge in research directly related to their areas of experience.
4. Teacher educators must thoroughly understand the institutions: where they work and where their students will work.
5. They must know the national education system, its international standing and the context in which curriculum is implemented
6. Teacher educators must know how to work in teams and how to collaborate in their work with other colleagues.
7. They must enjoy teaching the prospective teachers. This disposition will generate positive attitude towards teaching their students, which can be role model by them.

## Recommendations

The developed criteria should be tried for the evaluation of IETEPs of different regional countries to access their comparative worth and the worth of criteria.

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