Navigating the Classroom: Reflections on Teaching Practice

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Abstract

The teaching practicum aims to address the transition of prospective teachers by providing them with an opportunity to apply their learning in a practical setting. The objective of this study is to investigate the experiences of prospective teachers during their teaching practicum. The sample for this qualitative research consisted of 16 prospective teachers in their final year of the program. Data collection was done through semi-structured interviews, where participants reflected on their experiences. The collected data was then transcribed. The validity of the interview instrument was ensured by experts in the field. The semi-structured interview questionnaire comprised thirteen questions, focusing on six factors. The interview data was manually analyzed using thematic content analysis. Prospective teachers encountered challenges while working with individuals who displayed irritating, arrogant, inflexible, uncooperative, and rude behavior. The research findings also highlight the significance of lesson planning, effective classroom management, and assessment strategies. Additionally, the results shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the participants. The study recommends that researchers engage in discussions about teaching practicum before its commencement, to enhance understanding and preparation.

Keywords: *Prospective teachers, Reflections, Teaching practicum, Teaching profession*

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Introduction

Educational institutions worldwide are dedicated to providing quality education and training for aspiring teachers. These institutions equip teachers with theoretical knowledge and practical skills to enhance their productivity, creativity, and practical abilities. As part of their training, teachers undergo a comprehensive hands-on course called teaching, where they receive real-life classroom instruction and hands-on tutoring under the guidance of highly skilled and experienced educators. Teacher education refers to the period during which prospective teachers receive practical classroom education under the supervision of expert trainers (Mudra, 2018). This encompasses various teaching methods, including the exploration of instructional strategies, understanding students' perspectives, classroom management, and the application of theory in the actual teaching environment (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Trent, 2018). Through teaching training, future teachers are prepared to effectively teach in real-world classrooms. Lysberg (2023) affirms the crucial significance of critical reflection by exposing teachers' assumptions about teaching and learning, making them accessible for collective exploration.

Effective teaching is specifically designed to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their profession. This is achieved through internships, which provide teachers-in-training with practical experience and hands-on learning opportunities. Teaching strategies, which encompass various aspects such as content delivery, instructional techniques, and the incorporation of engaging activities, are an integral part of daily training for teachers. These strategies enable teachers to effectively communicate ideas and methods both within schools and among their peers. Education institutions and their students constantly seek out new ideas, materials, and tools through school applications, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. In Pakistan, there is a significant amount of research focused on reflective practices and the role of practicum in the learning and teaching experiences of prospective teachers. The current study aims to explore the experiences by analyzing the reflections of prospective teachers during their teaching practicum. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the quality of practicum teaching and improve the overall effectiveness of teacher education programs.

Statement of the problem

Students enroll in teaching education programs to acquire a wealth of knowledge about teaching and gain practical experience in a classroom

setting. They are exposed to various teaching theories, enabling them to effectively apply their acquired knowledge in real-life teaching scenarios. Additionally, they learn strategies to foster a positive and strong teacher-student relationship, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine and understand the experiences of these prospective teachers through their reflections.

Research Questions

The study focuses on four research questions. RQ1: How do prospective teachers feel about their interaction with others through their teaching practicum? RQ2: How do prospective teachers understand the classroom discipline and strategies used during the teaching practicum? RQ3: How do prospective teachers think about the instructional skills and assessment during the teaching practice? and RQ4: How do prospective teachers know their strengths and weaknesses during the teaching practicum?

Significance of the study

Practical teaching experience is utilized across different domains. The purpose of teaching training is to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter the workforce, regardless of their chosen field. This training aims to enable students to effectively apply what they have learned to solve real-world problems. Within educational institutions, the act of teaching serves as the initial interaction between students and teachers. During this phase, student teachers are entrusted with greater professional responsibilities and receive guidance from on-site supervisors and mentors. Consequently, this stage serves as an exploration of the teacher-profession relationship, providing a comprehensive overview of the experiences and impact on the growth and professional development of educators.

Teaching Practicum

According to Taneja, various terms are utilized to describe this activity, including practicum teaching, student teaching, teaching practice, teaching practicum, field study, field experience, school experience, and internship (2000; as cited in Gujjar et al., 2011). The term practicum encompasses all the learning experiences of aspiring teachers. A review of the literature reveals a significant amount of research on teaching practicum. Recent studies on teaching practicum encompass a range of topics, such as teachers' reflections on processes of collaborative inquiry in situated teamwork (Lysberg,

2023);quality and effectiveness of teaching practice (Din & Jehan, 2021); strong pedagogical practices, classroom management, and the application of theory to practice (Kamila, 2021); the importance of lesson plans and related challenges during instruction (Amor et al., 2020), the promotion of reflective practices and identity formation among prospective teachers (Mwamakula, 2020); the influence of teaching practice on future teachers' decision to choose teaching as a profession (Kabilan et al., 2020), reflective teaching practices and identity building among future teachers (Mwamakula, 2020), student teachers' reflections on their teaching practice (Köksal & Genç, 2019), the issue of the length and timing of the teaching practicum (Adams et al., 2018).

   The teaching practicum is an essential component of the teacher training program, aiming to ensure a smooth progression of practical experience. Numerous factors, including technical and psychological aspects, can influence the results of student and teacher training. Through the teaching practicum, aspiring educators gradually develop their professional identities by critically analyzing their teaching methods.

Prospective Teachers

   Teacher preparation encompasses the policies and strategies aimed at equipping aspiring teachers with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills to effectively navigate the classroom. Prospective teachers gain practical experience by applying the theoretical knowledge and skills acquired during their time at the faculty. Under the guidance of a supervisor, they encounter various challenges in a real classroom setting, including issues related to control, regulation, and unexpected situations. Prospective teachers must possess the ability to manage and maintain control over the classroom environment. Additionally, they may occasionally need to interact with their parents. However, prospective teachers are often not adequately trained to handle situations where parents inquire about their children's educational programs, leading to confusion.

   A review of the literature on prospective teachers reveals several studies that shed light on their experiences. For instance, future teachers have expressed concerns about the lack of teaching aids and laboratory equipment, which hinders their ability to effectively teach certain subjects (Jin et al., 2020). Other studies have highlighted issues such as the choice of training school, insufficient preparation for teaching, lack of knowledge and training, biased evaluation favoring mentors, and a lack of awareness about mentoring skills (Inarsih et al., 2021). Furthermore, future teachers have been found to experience carelessness and anxiety (Rupp & Becker, 2021). Lastly, there have been analyses conducted on the problems and difficulties encountered by prospective teachers during their teaching practice (Shah et al., 2021).

Prospective educators are bound to encounter various obstacles during their training. By resolving these challenges, a significant portion of the responsibility will be lifted from the shoulders of university instructors. Over time, the competence of teachers in classrooms will witness improvement. Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the difficulties faced by aspiring teachers during their training. Inarsih et al. (2021) discovered that the choice of training institution, unpreparedness of future teachers, lack of knowledge and training, biased evaluation by mentors, and inadequate mentoring skills were among the factors that could contribute to the failure of teaching practice. Similarly, Shah et al. (2021) addressed the issues encountered by prospective teachers during the practical teaching phase, including limited duration, insufficient opportunities to teach all subjects, negligence in selecting lesson locations, unequal allocation of time for theory and practice, and a lack of accountability. It is crucial to provide prospective teachers with the chance to demonstrate lessons in various subjects and with students of different levels to acquire adequate experience and knowledge (Van et al., 2020).

Reflections of Prospective Teachers

Reflective educators are actively involved in continuously analyzing their own thoughts, emotions, prejudices, and perspectives. The reflective practicum provides support for reflective practice in real-life settings and facilitates the growth of teacher candidates' new knowledge, abilities, and perspectives. Reflective teaching practice proves particularly beneficial when students are engaged in studying education within a course (Iman et al., 2024). The term "reflective teaching practicum" has gained significant attention lately and is frequently encountered in discussions surrounding vocational and contemporary education. Reflective teaching, a commonly employed approach, particularly in teacher training, involves contemplating the occurrences within the educational environment and making discerning observations based on these reflections during and after teaching (McCollum, 2002). The level of reflection and the extent of reflective thinking among teachers on various aspects significantly influence their teaching practice (Orakçi, 2021).

Slade et al. (2019) examined the impact of reflective practice on aspiring teachers. Reflective practice proves to be an exceptionally valuable approach in fostering the growth and learning of future teacher candidates. This research aimed to assess the influence of reflective practices on teacher candidates who were enrolled in courses centered on the development sciences in impoverished settings. The findings shed light on the level of research required to equip teacher candidates with the necessary skills to make informed educational decisions and to cultivate

awareness of their perspectives and attitudes toward teaching. According to Karagöz and Rüzgar (2020), effective teaching necessitates flexibility in terms of time, course content, and teaching and learning methods. However, current models of teaching practice are lacking in this regard. This notion has not been widely accepted.

Reflections, Prospective Teachers, and Teaching Practicum

Teachers are increasingly dedicating more time and energy to the critical analysis of their teaching methods and the progress of their students. All educators must embrace the concept of lifelong learning and actively participate in this ongoing process to enhance their teaching abilities. Researchers have identified reflective teaching practice as an inquiry-driven approach that encompasses critical thinking and a personal dedication to continuous growth and development (York-Barr et al., 2006). As a result, teachers have gained a deeper understanding of their professional growth and development.

Köksal (2019) focused on student-teacher reflections on teaching practice, specifically targeting graduate teacher candidates. Iman et al. (2024) discovered that students express their support for the promotion of reflective learning, as they perceive it to enhance their academic achievements. Key components of reflective learning encompass self-awareness, consistent feedback, well-defined objectives, appropriate guidelines, and active participation. Ultimately, the findings of this research underscore the significance of integrating reflective learning into instructional approaches.

In a study conducted by Kaung (2020), the researchers explored teachers' reflective teaching practices and their impact on students' academic abilities. This study aimed to examine how reflective teaching practices contribute to teachers' overall teaching methods and ultimately enhance student achievement and learning outcomes. The results revealed that incorporating real-world teacher-reflective teaching practices had a positive influence on student achievement and measurable academic progress.

Methodology

Research design

The research is qualitative, and the chosen research design for the phenomenological study focuses on the conscious experience of individuals regarding specific phenomena or objects. This study is descriptive and employs a qualitative data collection tool in the form of a semi-structured interview.

Population and Sample

The study's population consisted of individuals aspiring to become teachers in the field of BS education. The researcher employed purposive sampling methods to select a sample of BS education students who had completed their teaching practicum. A total of 16 participants, comprising 12 females and four males, were chosen for the study. These participants were all students who had undertaken the "Teaching Practicum" course in the previous semester and had completed a 16-week teaching practicum.

Instrument

The researcher utilized a self-developed instrument in the form of a semi-structured interview for the study. The purpose of this instrument was to gather the perspectives of prospective teachers regarding their teaching practicum. After conducting a literature review, the researcher carefully selected the factors to be included in the interview protocol and then formulated the questions for the instrument. These questions were adapted and modified to suit the context of Pakistan. The semi-structured interview consisted of six themes, namely "administrators, classroom discipline, classroom management, instructional skills, assessment, and self-reflection". Once permission was obtained, the participants were interviewed to collect information about their experiences in teaching practicum. This type of tool proves to be beneficial, particularly when the participants have undergone similar processes and experiences. A total of 13 questions were posed to the participants. Furthermore, the instrument was divided into three parts. The first part aimed to obtain the participants' consent to participate in the study, while the second part gathered their biographical information such as gender, age, and the name of the school where they gained teaching experience. The last part consisted of questions about how they acquired information for their teaching practicum.

Validity of Instrument

The instrument underwent a two-stage validation process. Firstly, face validity and content validity were ensured through peer review by friends, followed by review from experts. Pilot testing was conducted by five students from a different university who had prior teaching practicum experience. This pilot testing aimed to confirm the reliability of the instrument. The face and content validity of the instrument were further confirmed by two subject experts with extensive experience in the field of education, both affiliated with reputable universities. One expert is a female from the Department of Education at a private university in Pakistan, with eight years of experience. The second expert is a male with

a strong research and educational background, possessing over 12 years of experience. Once the instrument (interview protocol) was validated, it was deemed ready for use in the research.

Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews were utilized as a means of inquiry to examine the experiences of potential teachers, resulting in the collection of qualitative data. Both male and female participants were included in the data collection process, although the study did not specifically address gender-related inquiries. Consequently, the analysis of the data did not consider gender factors. With the participants' consent, their interviews were recorded using the researcher's mobile phone. The data collection process was completed within a week, adhering to the time constraints provided by the participants. Each interview with the prospective teachers lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. Following the recording, the data was transcribed into Word format on a computer.

Ethical Consideration

All ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and privacy, were strictly adhered to throughout this study. Before data collection, permission was sought from the prospective teacher. In line with ethical guidelines, informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting semi-structured interviews for the study. Participants were assured that their correspondence would remain confidential and only accessible to the experts involved in the research. These ethical measures were implemented to prioritize the comfort and privacy of the participants in this research.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected underwent a manual analysis using thematic content analysis, which refers to the process of working with raw data to identify and interpret key ideas and themes (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Each participant's data was treated as a whole, and parallel or related themes were identified. The data was read twice, codes were listed, and the common themes were explored. These codes were then used to generate general themes based on the research questions. The themes and codes emerged from semi-structured interviews conducted with student teachers. Pseudonyms were utilized instead of participant names during the data analysis demonstrations. The recorded data examined various aspects of prospective teachers that were highlighted in the research questions. Analysis tables display the responses of the participants from semi-structured interviews. All participants were assigned a number to identify

them before and after collecting the data e.g. S1 represents participant no1 and S2 as participant no 2 and so on. In the analysis tables, the major categories, associated concepts, and the respondents were mentioned. An analysis of the first research question is given below.

RQ1: How do prospective teachers feel about their interaction with others through their teaching practicum?

Table 1

The participants' responses about their interaction with others

Sr#	Major Categories	Associated Concepts	Respondents
1	Criticism a. Faced criticism	Yes No	S1, S3, S14-16 S2, S4,S5,S7-13
	b. How to handle criticism?	By hard worked Tried it to make it better Improve my teaching strategies	S1 S3
2	Difficult to work with people who are;	Not cooperative, rude behavior Difficult to teach special needs students Who talks back, irritating Everyone because I am not a good communicator Difficulty in handling class Criticize others, not flexible, adaptive Not cooperative, who are not friendly, and behaves like a supervisor Not work as a team, not cooperative and flexible Difficulty working with team members Diplomatic, due standard Arrogant people	S6 S1 S2 S3, S13 S4 S5, S10 S7, S11 S8, S16 S9, S6, S14 S15 S12

Table 1 has two themes; the first theme is criticism, and the sub-themes; facing criticism and how to handle it. The prospective teachers faced criticism and overcame it through hard work andtried to make better and improved teaching strategies under the guidance of the supervisor. The second theme is to face the difficulty of working with different people. Five prospective teachers said that they faced difficulty working with people who behaved rudely, talked back, were introverts, were not cooperative,

were not responding, were not friendly, not flexible and adaptive, did not work in a team, irritating people, and behaved like a supervisor. One prospective teacher faced diplomatic and double standards of people during teaching practicum.

RQ2:   How do prospective teachers understand the classroom discipline and strategies used during the teaching practicum?

Table 2
The participants' responses about the classroom discipline and strategies

Sr#	Major Categories		Associated Concepts	Respondents
1	Classroom discipline			
		a. Classroom controlling factors	Through effective activities	S1, S8,
			Address misbehavior	S2, S10
			Consistency, learning environment, and fun activities.	S3, S15
			Positive relationship with students	S5, S14 S6
			Spacious classroom, making interesting lecture	S7
			Showing ideal behavior, already planned rules	S9, S16
			To model ideal behavior, use non-verbal communication, avoid punishment instead of praise	S11, S12
			Reduction of noise, discipline	
			Maintaining discipline	S1, S16 S2, S8, S12
			Children talk very loudly	S3, S15
	b. Discipline problem		Difficulty in handling the class	S4
			Cross talking	
			Students were going out without permission	S5, S14 S6, S9
			Not easy to handle the class	
			Difficulty in handling a special child in class	S7, S11, S12 S8,
			Shortage of resource create discipline	S10
			Students do not sit in class	S1, S10
			Students not participating in class	S3, S8 S3, S11
	c. Handle the problems		Sit down and give him a pep talk	S4, S14 S5, S9, S12,
			Used praises strategies	S16
			Indulge activities	S6, S15
			Stand outside of class	S7, S13
			Through strict behavior	

		Bring some resources from the house	
		Sit down with them and keep an eye on them	
2	Classroom management strategies	To control class and have discipline	S1, S3, S4, S16
	a. Importance of strategies	To increase the learning environment, reduce disruptive behavior	S2, S9, S14, S12
		Positive learning environment, students feel safe and respected	S5, S10, S15
		To create a learning environment	S6, S7
		prevents disruptive behavior	S8
		Manage the class without any hassle	S10
		Maintain for discipline	S11, S13
			S12
	b. Types of strategies used by the prospective teacher	Both softness and strictness according to the need	
			S1
			S2, S8, S13
		Head down 5 minutes	
		Positive relations with students and encourage students to participate	S3
			S4
		Made a class monitor	S5, S12, S14
		Direct instruction	
		Regular feedback on students' progress, encourages class participation	S6, S9
			S7, S11, S15
		Model ideal behavior, allow students to make rules	S10
			S 16
		Offer praise, use non-verbal communication, and avoid punishing	
		Nothing special just strictness	
		Different tasks	

Table 2 displays two themes, the first theme is classroom discipline with sub-themes; classroom controlling factors, discipline problems, and how to handle discipline problems. Table shows the response of the prospective teachers about classroom controlling factors; througheffective activities, addressing misbehavior, consistency, learning environment, fun activities, positive relationship with students, spacious classroom, making lecture interesting, showing ideal behavior, documenting rules, effective strategies, use non-verbal communication, avoid punish instead praise, reduction of noise and maintaining discipline. Prospective teachers faced discipline problems such as children talking loudly, handling the class, cross-talking, students going out without permission, handling special children, shortage of resources, students not sitting in class, and

participating in the class. For sub-theme three 'handle the discipline problems' the prospective teachers handled such issues by sitting the students, giving them a pep talk, standing them outside the class as a punishment, keeping an eye on them, showing strict behavior, and using motivational strategies like praises.

The second theme is classroom management strategies, and the sub-theme is the importance and type of strategies. According to the prospective teachers' responses, classroom management strategies are important for handling the class, discipline, increasing a positive learning environment, reducing disruptive behavior, managing the class without any hassle, maintaining class decorum, students feel safe and respected. For the sub-theme two prospective teachers used strategies for class management such as; head down for five minutes, positive relationship with students, encouraging class participation, by making them monitor, direct instruction, giving regular feedback on student's progress, showing ideal behavior, creating class rules by the student, give praise, use of non-verbal communication, avoid punishment, use of class activities, creating positive classroom culture, reinforcement and need some strictness.

RQ3:   How do prospective teachers think about the instructional skills and assessment during the teaching practice?

Table 3

The participants' responses about the instructional skills and assessment

Sr#	Major Categories	Associated Concepts	Respondents
1	Instructional skills		
	a. Successful lesson plan	The activity of Magic letters	S1
			S2, S3
		The activity of geometric shapes	S4, S13, S16
			S5, S14
		Math substantiation activity	S6
		Missing letters activity	S7
		Practice on dots	S8, S15
		Fruits and vegetable activities	S9
			S11
		Earth and its natural	
	b. Reason for successful lesson plan	resources	S1, S3, S8,
		Color name activity	S10,
		Depends on the mindset of	S15
		students	S2, S5, S14
			S4, S9, S11
		Students had fun and enjoy	S12,S16
			S6
		Students like that activity	S7
		Students learn actively	
			S8

	c.	Instructional skills for non-achiever	Students happy to do the activity	S1, S6
			Students enjoy engaging in activities of games	S2, S14
			Used many teaching aids	S3
				S4
			Recap things again and again	S5, S15
			Additional support through formative assessment	S7, S16
			Revision worksheet	S8,
			More concentration	S10, S13
			Used different instructions	S11
			Questioning and brainstorming skills used	S12
			Learn through a pep talk	
			Individualized instructions, one-on-one support, small group instruction	
			With motivation	
			Emphasis on reading and writing again and again	
2		Assessment	Formative assessment	S1, S8, S9,
	a.	Assessments used by the prospective teacher	Through whiteboard	S12
			Oral assessment	S2
			Portfolio based assessment	S3
			Through worksheet	S4, S16
			Formative, summative assessment	S5
			Creativity	S6, S7, S15
			Surprise quiz	S10, S11,
				S13
				S12, S14
			Convenient to check	
	b.	Motives to use different types of assessment	To increase students' confidence	S1
			Encourages peer learning	S2, S12,
			Students learn throughout	S3
			Easy, students enjoy writing and increase their motor skills	S4, S5, S13
				S6, S7, S14
			Useful for judging students	
			Quick and get feedback on time	S8
			Evaluation, improvement, real word application, feedback, adaptation	S9
				S10, S15
			To create a strong mind	
			It makes them more attentive	S11
	c.	Effective assessment		S16
				S1
				S2, S8-10,
				S16
				S3, S5,S7,
				S11-14

By the positive ratio of the answer	S4, S6	
Through feedback		
By doing a formative assessment		
Involvement and interactions of students		

Table 3 shows two themes; the first theme is instructional skills with the sub-themes; successful less plan, reason for successful, and instructional skills for non-achievers. Prospective teachers said that their successful lesson plans were the activities about magic letters, the activity of geometric shapes, mathematics activity, missing letters activity, fruits, and vegetable activities, color names activity, model of the earth and its natural resources, and practice on dots. They found the class activities, learning through enjoyment, learning actively, engaging in activities of games, and use of many teaching aids for their successful lesson plans. For sub-theme three 'instructional skills for non-achievers' prospective teachers said they support non-achiever students for their success through recapping things again and again, additional support through formative assessment, revision worksheets, more concentration, using different instruction skills, questioning and brainstorming skills, learning through pep talk, individualized instructions, one-on-one support, small group instruction, motivational strategies, emphasis on reading and writing again and again.

The second theme is assessment with sub-themes; assessments used by the prospective teachers, reason to use, and effective assessment. Prospective teachers replied that they used different types of assessment for assessing the students such as; formative assessment, whiteboard, oral assessment, portfolio-based assessment, worksheet, summative assessment, and surprise quiz. The reasons for selecting such type of assessments were convenient to check, to increase students' confidence, encourage peer learning, increase learning and participation skills, and motor skills, give quick and get feedback on time, and useful for evaluation, improvement, and real-world application, to build a strong mind, to more attentive in the class, giving quick and get feedback on time, useful for evaluation. Prospective teachers assess effectiveness by collecting the ratio of correct answers in assessments, feedback by the students, class teachers, and parents, involvement and interactions of students, and getting positive feedbackfrom the supervisor. The RQ3 in Table 3 addresses five questions that were asked in the interview.

RQ4:   How do prospective teachers know their strengths and weaknesses during the teaching practicum?

Table 4

The participants' responses to explore their strengths and weaknesses

Sr #	Major Categories		Associated Concepts	Respondents
1	Self-reflection			
	a.	My weaknesses	Time management	S1, S4, S12, S13
			Over-friendly with students	
			Limited experience	S2
			Can't teach playgroup children	S3
			Weak lecture skills	S5
			Limited resources	S6, S14
			Handwriting for whiteboard	S7
			Workload	S8
			Lack of spontaneity, shyness, experience	S9, S15 S10, S16
			Sometime softness	S11
	b.	My strengths	Leadership skills, teamwork, communication skills, adaptability	S1, S4, S9 S2, S5, S3, S12
			Skill to how to handle a class	S6
			Positive attitude	S7, S8, S13
			open person	S9, S15, S16
			Patience, working with limited resources, managing time, easily working in tough situations	S10, S12
			Classroom management is good, giving time for every student equally	S11
			Increase patience level and politeness, teach effectively	S14
			Weakness sometimes strength	

Table 4 depicts one theme, i.e., self-reflection with two sub-themes; weaknesses and strengths. In the first sub-theme, 'my weaknesses' prospective teachers found different weaknesses during their teaching practicum. They reported their weaknesses such as time management, being over-friendly with students, being introverted, facing difficulty teaching playgroup children, weak lecture skills, bad writing on a whiteboard, inability to manage the workload, lack of freedom, shyness, and soft nature. For the second sub-theme, 'my strengths' prospective teachers found their different strengths through this practicum teaching experience. Prospective teachers highlighted their strengths as leadership skills, class management skills, teamwork, communication skills, adaptability, development of positive attitude, patience, working with limited resources, managing time, focused and adjustable. The RQ4 in Table 4 leads to two questions that were asked in the interview.

Discussion

The research focuses on the reflective teaching practicum to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the strategies, difficulties, and encounters of aspiring teachers. Consistent with prior research, Din and Jehan (2021) examined the intricacy of the teaching practicum and its efficacy through the lens of teacher-educators, prospective teachers' strategies, challenges, experiences, and student-teachers. Their findings indicate that aspiring teachers require feedback regarding their motivation to acquire teaching skills. This study pertains to ongoing research on aspiring teachers, elucidating the strategies and challenges employed in their teaching practicum.

Köksal (2019) also examined the reflections of students and teachers regarding their teaching practice. This study utilizes the social learning theory as a theoretical framework to gain a comprehensive understanding of the objectives and difficulties encountered by aspiring educators. Additionally, this research delves into the current research endeavors involving prospective teachers and elucidates the utilization of classroom management strategies, instructional skills, and assessment techniques in teaching practice. Hanafi (2019) presents findings on the perspectives and considerations of candidates in primary teacher education programs. His research aligns with the current study. This study incorporates reflections from prospective elementary school teachers and investigates their approach to reflection during practice. The present study aims to explore the teaching practice experience by taking various factors into account. Karagöz and Rüzgar (2020) conducted a study that emphasized the importance of flexibility in teaching methods for effective instruction. They found that current teaching models lack the necessary flexibility required for future educators. In contrast, our research focuses on the reflective teaching practice journey undertaken by prospective teachers. The findings of their study highlighted the significance of flexible time management, course content, and learning methods. Similarly, our study revealed that participants recognized the importance of time management in their teaching practice. Another study by Tok and Ylmaz (2011) explored the reflections of prospective teachers regarding biased and intolerant behaviors exhibited by their cooperative teachers, as well as their indifference during teaching practicum. Our current study also collects reflections from prospective teachers, shedding light on their experiences in terms of classroom management strategies, instructional skills, discipline challenges, and assessment strategies.

Conclusion

Teaching practice holds great significance in teacher education programs as it provides prospective teachers with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings. Consequently, when designing teacher education programs, various factors should be taken into consideration to enhance their effectiveness and functionality. This research aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of prospective teachers to better prepare them for their future professional roles. The study found no significant differences in performance based on gender among prospective teachers. The participants perceived their internship or teaching practicum as a valuable experience that allowed them to envision themselves as more responsible and influential educators in the future. Additionally, the findings emphasized the importance of lesson planning before classroom instruction. Utilizing diverse instructional techniques, classroom management strategies, and assessment methods helps create a conducive learning environment. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen and promote teaching practicum experiences.

Recommendations

Here are a few recommendations:

- Before the start of every new teaching practicum, the management or teachers may discuss the studies on teaching practicum so that they can understand the process of teaching practicum well.

- Proper practice of lesson plans and preparation of A.V. aids might be practiced in their courses to reduce the chances of errors during the teaching practicum.
- Prospective teachers might be helped in controlling class as they didn't have the experience to control the class.
- Supervisors may take an interest in using different assessment strategies for the prospective teachers and guide them properly to implement them in the class and how to provide feedback after each assessment.
- After knowing the strengths and weaknesses of prospective teachers, the supervisors may guide them accordingly.
- Guide prospective teachers to keep a reflective journal with them and note their daily experiences in it.

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