



Exploring the Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers on Teaching Licenses in Sindh: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The teaching license plays an imperative role in the professional development of teachers. Teaching licenses are vital in upholding the quality of education by ensuring that teachers meet established standards of competence and professionalism. It aims to assess teachers' knowledge, skills, and abilities required for effective teaching. Several researchers have concluded that teaching with a license is the only way to enhance teaching quality. Those developed nations that developed nations, having quality education and robust educational systems, have strict criteria for teaching licenses before entering the teaching profession. The objective of this study was to explore the perception of secondary school teachers at public schools in Karachi on the first time the teaching license policy in Sindh was introduced. This research used a qualitative approach, and the data was collected from teachers through semi-structured interviews. The research design was phenomenology. The study used purposive sampling, and the sample size was based on 15 secondary school teachers from three public schools in Karachi. The data gathered through the interviews was thematically analyzed. The themes represent positive perceptions of teachers on teaching licenses. This research showed that teachers perceived teaching licenses as a positive initiative to empower teachers and the teaching profession, which are expected to improve teachers' competencies, skills, and practices in the classroom that will ultimately contribute to quality education and achieving student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Teaching License, Professional Development, Teacher Competence, Quality Education



Introduction

Background of the Study

Quality teaching is a predominant source for improving the learning outcomes of students. The impact of effective teaching tends to enhance students' skills, abilities, and academic performance, impacting their whole lives by making them lifelong learners. The developed nations have been evidence of educational transformation; these nations have formulated strict criteria for teachers' education as they believe that their teachers always drive society. The nations that strove in recent years are running efficacious education systems across the world, setting high standards and strict criteria for teacher education in their teacher education policies, mainly including teaching licenses. Students' high achievement highly depends on the quality and effectiveness of teachers (Ghamrawi et al., 2023). This approach has been adopted worldwide, enhancing professional teaching and teaching license.

The Role of the Teacher

The role of teachers is considered a primary source in the development of students, achieving learning outcomes and bringing effective educational change (Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2021). Educational authorities cannot attain the goal of providing quality education for all without ensuring enough teachers for everyone. The teacher's role as a social and economic transformation facilitator is particularly evident in the present era (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). The educational standard developed by the government has been seen as playing a significant role in regulating teachers' education in any country; given that teachers are the primary providers of instruction, the scale, alignment, and distribution of the teaching workforce are crucial factors of the effectiveness of public schools (Dilshad, Shah, & Ahmad, 2023). Therefore, the government of any state is solely responsible for the social and economic well-being of the public and its competition with the modern world. Hence, the authorities and educators are accountable for adequately recruiting competent teachers and public schools' supply and efficient regulation (Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2021; Haider, Ahmad, & Ali, 2024). Many nations are convinced that effective teaching is crucial to student achievement and success. Effective teaching requires strict criteria for teacher preparation and development (Darling-Hammond, 2017).



Importance of Teaching License

Teaching license plays a crucial role in teachers' professional development and job prospects, allowing them to legally work in their chosen area and access better opportunities. An effective education system requires teaching license criteria in educational policies that declare the teaching profession as a profession of knowledge and skills. Teaching licenses tend to improve the learning outcomes of students. Teacher education in countries with strong educational backgrounds revolves around research and practices to provide holistic subject and pedagogical preparation to prospective and in-service teachers before entering classrooms. Those nations struggling with their education system are in dire need of transforming their education system to meet the essential and current education requirements of the contemporary era. Teacher development is the only way forward to education, which requires explicit goals and particular criteria for professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Quality training is driven by different variables, from the substance of training and learning environment to the nature of the educating staff; entering the profession of teaching requires specific academic education and meeting the exact standards required to increase efficiency and the innovation of teachers must be encouraged to develop high achievers (Budimansyah et al., 2017; Thomas, Khan, & Ahmad, 2022). Teacher licensing aims to enhance teachers' potential, behaviour and effectiveness towards sustainable educational improvement (Budimansyah et al., 2017).

A teaching license is an essential step for teacher education and the development of teachers, which are imperative components for quality education to strengthen the educational system. Khan & Ahmad (2021) described that the process of teacher education relies on the preparation of prospective teachers before entering the classroom; teacher education involves the process of teacher training, which satisfies the practical and theoretical needs of teachers required in real-life classroom environments. Ali et al. (2022) stated that the quality of an effective teacher is determined by professional competencies, including multidimensional knowledge, skills, comprehension, attitude, and behaviour they hold and bring into their teaching profession. Teachers with inadequate professional competencies are considered dysfunctional in the education system. An effective teacher imparts information and guides students in developing a deeper understanding of themselves and the world. Teachers' knowledge and skills are not ideally limited to the formation of society by enhancing the quality and efficiency of students through education; it develops innovative and research skills. Khan & Ahmad (2021) highlighted



that teachers are the most integral part of all educational activities, influencing and shaping several dimensions of student life (Oad, Zaidi, & Phulpoto, 2023).

Objective of the Study

- To explore the perception of secondary school Teachers on Teacher licensing in Sindh.

Research Question

- What are secondary school teachers' perceptions of teacher licensing in Sindh?

Significance of the Study

The growth and prosperity of teaching licensing in every nation depends on the quality of their teachers. The teachers can teach effectively when they possess comprehensive knowledge of content and pedagogy. An Effective teacher can play a pivotal role in transforming students' lives by being a part of their learning journey, which impacts their entire lives.

The Sindh government recently introduced a teaching license policy. Teaching licenses have been under debate for an extended period in the academia and teaching community. The teaching license policy initially focuses on public school teachers. This research study explored the perception of secondary school teachers regarding teaching licenses. This study's findings may benefit educational authorities, policymakers and stakeholders.

The gap in the present research study is that there is no research study conducted in Sindh yet in the context of teaching licenses. Several studies have been conducted that demonstrate that in Pakistan, the teaching profession is not recognized. The education system has been compromised due to unqualified teachers. To enhance the quality of teaching and the status of the teaching profession, the Sindh government introduced a teaching license policy in Sindh for the first time, which has been under debate between academia and the teaching community. Before the implementation of the teaching license, this study focuses on evaluating what teachers think and how they perceive the teaching license as the stakeholders of the teachers. The success of a teaching license is based on the teacher's attitude towards licensing.

The limitation of this study involves the research method, which is qualitative; it could be mixed method research. The research focused only on three schools and 15 teachers in Karachi. It doesn't include the perception of teachers of any other district of Sindh. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be generalized to different contexts.



Literature Review

The education system of Pakistan lacks teacher development and student learning, which play a significant role in the acquisition of quality education and the development of an educated nation. In Pakistan's education system, teacher development is one of the most substantial areas of concern. Education policy papers stress on teacher education by proposing measures for improvement. However, these measures were not implemented properly and hence, desired results were not achieved. Education quality of public sectors has declined, providing space for private institutions. These institutions emerged as strong robust competitors by enrolling one-third of students (Tahira et al., 2020; Akram, Khan, & Ahmad, 2022).

Importance of Teacher Education

Educational authorities of Pakistan took multiple initiatives to improve the public education system, which mainly included comprehensive development of teachers along with several other areas. They recently introduced a teaching license policy initially for public sector teachers purposely, strengthening public sector teachers by providing them professional education, which subsequently contributes to quality education and student learning outcomes (Ahmad, Sewani, & Ali, 2021; Akram, Fatima, & Ahmad, 2024). Quality Education remains a significant challenge in Sindh province; it is one area requiring attention to enhance quality education, as discussed in the SDG document. In addition, the literature and the document of standards national professional for teachers highlighted the training program certification of primary teachers based on the 19th-century model. Pedagogical skills promoted passive learning and rote memorization rather than encouraging communication, critical thinking, creativity, reasoning and required knowledge of science, language, mathematics, and arts. Teacher training is declared the most crucial component for implementing teacher knowledge in the classroom (Ulferts, 2019). Previous literature explicitly states the significance of teaching and learning, recognizing teachers' imperative role in imparting equal and quality education to students. Teacher licensing provides teachers with the legal authority to teach in specific areas (Cardichon et al., 2020). Prof Linda-Darling Hammond (2017) emphasized the importance of teachers' development as an essential factor in quality education. Implementation of a teaching license requires strict criteria and particular standards. The teacher licensing exam aims to provide clear differentiation between teachers capable of entering the classroom and those who do not possess the required



abilities (Ali et al., 2022; Khan & Ahmad, 2021). In the views of previous studies, Studies across the globe showed persistent results that teacher quality profoundly impacts student performance (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Jabeen, Ali, & Ahmad, 2023). Teachers' professional development has implications on multiple-dimension of student's learning throughout their academic year and later in their lives, including critical thinking skills, creativity enhancement, language development, research efficiency, and literacy skills; professional development is an imperative approach to promoting quality education (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Various researchers believe that the only way to enhance student performance is by improving teachers' education quality (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Goldhaber et al., 2017). It is globally recognized that quality teachers are essential to spread quality education (Azam et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2017). Goldhaber et al. (2017) stated that student's achievement in education is highly influenced by the one primary source that refers to the teachers. Resultantly, it has been endorsed by the public and the authorities.

Impact of Teachers' Training

Teachers' training programs have a massive impact on students' learning. Teachers who receive good training learn effective teaching methods, making lessons more exciting and understandable for students. Trained teachers know how to manage classrooms well, creating a positive and engaging learning environment. They also understand different students' needs and can adapt their teaching to help everyone succeed. When teachers are well-prepared, students feel more supported and motivated, which boosts their confidence and learning outcomes (Ahmad, et al., 2024).

Simply put, a good teacher training program positively influences how students learn and enjoy their education (Asfahani et al., 2024). Good teachers are trained directly, which affects student's learning. If teachers receive high-quality training, students tend to improve their studies.

History of Teaching License and Certification

The criteria to enter into the profession of teaching, during the early 17th century it was solely concerned with moral education and character. At that time a substantial inconsistency in teaching was observed across the globe. Goldhaber et al. (2017) argued that early educational leaders attempted to incorporate teacher education for the liberal arts institute. A difference of opinion was observed among the professors of science, arts and education; based on



disagreement, a division was made, which still influences academic education. In contrast to the previous research, the modern teaching approaches rely on student-centered classrooms; teachers need to possess certain techniques and competencies to make their teaching effective in classrooms, for instance, pedagogical approaches, personal approaches, professional approaches, intellectual approaches, and moral approaches. The effective professional development of teachers helps them understand different learning styles and multiple intelligences among students and provides specific ways of teaching those (Valente et al., 2020; Naeem, Ali, & Ahmed, 2022). A teacher's overall pedagogical knowledge is a fundamental requirement for delivering high-quality teaching, playing an essential role in achieving educational outcomes for the school and the educational system. The quality of teaching acts as a mediator influencing student outcomes (Ulferts, 2019).

The USA holds a more extensive system that allows multiple pathways for teachers to enter into the teaching profession. Therefore, these criteria ensure that teachers must attain the required skills to meet professional teaching standards before entering into the profession, providing various ways for the teacher to get into the profession legally. Similarly, the licensing system in Pakistan appears suitable and appropriate. The characteristics of teacher licensing separate the teaching profession from other fields and ensure the sustainable quality and standards of the teaching profession. Considerably, specialization in different professional fields such as law, medicine, engineering, and the teaching profession also requires specialized expertise and knowledge, competencies, and skills. Additionally, teaching globally has been declared a respected profession and holds a professional status (Suryani, 2020). The literature explored that teacher licensing assists teachers in demonstrating teaching competencies and efficiencies and acquiring professional status (Afalla & Fabelico, 2020). Teacher licensing manifests that a teacher is highly competent, skilled, trained, and reliable to the public (Amoah, 2020). Through licensing, the state may control the quality of education and teachers.

History of Teacher Education in Pakistan

In the context of Pakistan, teacher education has been the absolute center of focus and discussion. An overview of teacher education is discussed to provide a comprehensive history of the teacher education system in Pakistan. According to previous literature, in 1804, only two training institutions were based in Karachi and Lahore (Imran, et al., 2023). These institutions were tasked with providing non-formal teacher training programs. Later, in 1854, the average



school in Karachi initiated the provision of J.V. certificates, also known as Junior Vernacular (Shah et al., 2011). In 1947, there were 22 teacher training institutions in Pakistan, and the requirements for enrollment were elementary and high schooling; the certificates were given the name (JV) junior Vernacular and (SV) senior Vernacular. JV provided eligibility to primary school teachers, whereas SV provided eligibility to elementary school teachers (Tahira et al., 2020; Khoso, Oad, & Ahmad, 2023; Ali et al., 2023). As per the 1959 commission, teachers were required to undergo both academic and professional training, with a focus on practical recommendations being emphasized. The National Education Policy (1972-1980) proposed and underlined the need for comprehensive teacher education programs at all levels. It also sheds light on introducing innovative techniques and facilities for teacher education, aiming to enhance their status.

In 1976, the teacher education curriculum underwent revision based on the recommendations from 1972 (Khan, 2011). Another research pointed out that the challenge primarily lay in the implementation process. While the recommendation and revision process were commendable, there were issues in practical application. The National Education Policy (1979) suggested that there is a need to increase institutions and proposed the establishment of in-service training centers in provinces. It was recommended that in-service training be provided at Allama Iqbal Open University. In the National Education Policy from 1992 to 2010, there was a proposal to enhance the capabilities of in-service teacher training institutions. From 1998 to 2010, the introduction of a Bachelor in Education (B. ED) was recommended. Additionally, special incentives were suggested for teacher training institutions and rural female teachers to attract talented individuals into the teaching profession. The policy also emphasized the importance of vocational and technical training. In 2001, the Government of Pakistan initiated actions for education sector reform to evaluate the National Education Policy (1998-2010). During this period, the Education Sector Reforms (ESRs) placed particular emphasis on areas such as teacher education, curricula revision, and examination reforms.

Initial Teacher Certification in Pakistan

Under the Education Sector Reforms (ESRs), the Diploma of Education was introduced, replacing the Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) and Certificate of Teaching (CT). As a result of these reforms, 250 teacher resource centres were established, and approximately 175,000 teachers received training across the country (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education,



2003). In 2009, the National Policy recommended phasing out the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC), and Certificate of Teaching (CT) under the stakeholders and federating units. The Pakistan Government has generated a total of seven significant education policy documents aimed at enhancing the quality of education, including teacher education training programs (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021; Aslam, Iqbal, & Ahmed, 2022). Despite these efforts, challenges persist in the ongoing endeavor to improve the quality of education. In teacher education, there are four key components highlighted by Day (2002): the first is teachers' educational perspective, the second is teachers' enhancement of learning and subject, the third includes teachers' pedagogies, and the fourth is teachers' expertise. Professional education enhances the level of teaching, such as skills, knowledge, critical thinking, reasoning, and in-depth understanding of responsibilities in the classroom.

Characteristics of License and Certificate

Previous studies shed light on the consequential differences between licensing and certification, which are often neglected. Licensing is an official and legal process through which an individual is labelled as a professional in their respective fields, further clarifying that the individual is competent and able to practice. Whereas the certification process encompasses strict criteria of high standards developed by the organization's employees to enter that particular profession, certification falls into the category of professional rather than legal process that focuses on knowledge-based assessment (Bhutta & Rizvi, 2022; Ali, Shah & Ahmad, 2023). The characteristics of licensing and accreditation denoted that the smaller systems require certification, whereas the larger systems require licensing. Countries like Singapore and Finland have solid educational systems and have made certification mandatory for prospective teachers. For instance, (The National Institute of Education, Singapore) is a government-accredited institute, and prospective teachers who graduate from this institute get certification. According to the Certificate Condition Act, this specific system and procedure does not allow any other way to enter the teaching profession; without following the procedure, entry into the teaching profession and school is not permitted (Rehan, et al., 2024; Shah, Ali, & Ahmad, 2024; Ali et al., 2023).

License Criteria Globally

The countries that have efficiently achieved their purpose of upgrading education set specific criteria and conditions for prospective teachers in numerous ways, significantly licensing and



certification. The predominant purpose for developing those conditions is to maintain minimum standards and avoid public reservations. Teaching license aimed to assess the teacher's understanding of effective teaching methods and instructional strategies, including knowledge of educational theories, lesson planning, classroom management, and the ability to adapt teaching techniques according to diverse student needs. Goldhaber (2017) highlighted that the licensing process relies on two ways, one is solely based on content knowledge and pedagogical examination and the second is surrounded by performance-based assessment that assimilates teaching practice of prospective teachers, demonstration, and portfolios as teaching evidence. The first is based on marks and screening out with fewer marks. Furthermore, the other is to assess the teaching of prospective teachers' demonstration of their teaching in real-life classroom settings. Acquiring Powerful teaching requires an academic background, Prior preparation, official certification, experience and a training license (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The factors influencing the success of a teaching license are based on the teacher's perception of the teaching license and the enhancement of the teacher's professionalism for better teaching and learning. The Teaching license provides teachers with a recognition and systematic approach to their training along with continuous development courses. Educationally developed countries have formed strict conditions for teachers to teach in the classroom through licensing and certification. Pakistan, in the context of teaching and learning, must ensure the availability of quality teachers in the classroom to achieve desired outcomes. Effective teaching practices have a positive correlation with improved learning outcomes. Quality teachers are significant in achieving curriculum goals. The quality of teachers is more important than any new examination and upgraded curriculum. The teaching license potentially influences the entire educational system and is crucial for achieving students' learning outcomes. The researchers explored the idea that the achievement of learning outcomes is based on quality teachers. Maintaining the quality of teachers requires comprehensive training of teachers prepared through various educational training programs (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ahmad, Sewani, & Khoso, 2024).

Teaching License Policy

According to the Teaching license policy document, education quality is highly influenced, which was acknowledged by the educational policies, professionals and authorities; one of the essential ways to improve teaching quality in classrooms is a licensing system for teachers, which sets particular criteria for teachers to develop professionally resultantly thus, teaching



profession to be considered a recognized profession (Ahmad, Ali, & Sewani, 2021). Teaching license holds global recognition, which ensures the recruitment of highly competent, professional and skilled teachers; the government of Sindh emerged to be improving the quality of teachers by collaborating with multiple other non-governmental, private organizations and other stakeholders affiliated with education, working together to initiate teaching license in Sindh to develop quality teachers. The licensing policy is an ongoing effort to improve teacher quality and potentially enhance teachers' status and career (TLP, 2023). The process of developing a teaching license policy involved various research and consultation with educational experts and stakeholders, re-evaluating previous policies, drafting the first version of the policy, multiple debates and discussions on different forums, dialogues, and final agreements were part of the licensing policy (TLP, 2023).

The teaching license required the teacher to acquire professional education. The professional education for teachers in Pakistan is ADE (Associate Degree in Education), which is B. ed Hons (four years), Bachelor of Education, B.ed Hons (One and a half or two years), M.ed, and Master of Education. Initially, the licensing test aims to assess the pedagogical and content knowledge of teachers. It has been mentioned in the teaching license document that on the basis of consultations, the licensing test criteria will include portfolio assessment, classroom observation and recorded practicum. However, in Pakistan, any individual may teach based on their bachelor's and master's degrees without receiving a professional education (Bhutta & Rizvi, 2022; Ahmad, Mankash, & Sewani, 2024). The previous literature explored that the educational world began to realize that performance-based evaluation was preferable to written assessments for instructional competence tests to ensure that aspiring teachers are prepared to teach.

Teacher's Recruitment Process Globally

Teachers in France are recruited through a competitive system; they hold the status of civil servants. Mandatory requirements are university education and higher education in teaching and education. Typically, teachers with teaching licenses in most European countries are granted the right to teach non-permanently (Abdallah & Musah, 2021). In other countries like Sweden, England, and Spain, unique pedagogical national bodies, such as the General Council of Education of England in the UK, are responsible for teacher registration (Melnik et al., 2020). Furthermore, the previous literature presented the significance of incorporating a time limit in licensing due to the latest advancements in science, coupled with the introduction of innovative



teaching methods and new competencies, which require teachers to affiliate with the latest methodologies (Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, 2024).

Methodology

The purpose of the current study was to explore the perception of secondary school teachers' challenges associated with time-introduced teaching licenses in Sindh. The research uses the qualitative research method, which is the primary source to gather data from participants. The research design of the current study is phenomenology. The phenomenology research design used in qualitative research aims to record the lived experiences of participants. Phenomenology allows for a better understanding of the meanings attached by people to their experiences, events, and occurrences.

The population of the current study is comprised of the secondary school teachers of a three public schools in Karachi. The sample size was selected through purposive sampling techniques based on 15 secondary school teachers at a public school in Karachi. Purposive sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling technique for selecting a small sample size; in this technique, the participants are chosen based on their prior knowledge and experience to get specific types of data depending on the research object and approach. The characteristics of the sample were those secondary school teachers who had prior knowledge regarding teaching licenses.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the current study was collected through semi-structured interviews. According to Heath (2023), The Semi-structured interview provides an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, beliefs, and opinions of participants on a particular topic. The data gathered from interviews represents a positive perception of teaching license. This research study used an interview protocol as a data collection tool.

A thematic analysis approach was used to derive themes and explore significant points within the data. It provides a direction for sequencing and interpreting data to form a holistic understanding of the experiences of participants. Researchers in thematic analysis may conveniently read and revisit the interview transcript. The researchers identify recurring ideas, concepts, or behaviors within the data to discern themes or patterns. This process is repetitive, involving a continuous



refinement of themes as the researcher moves back and forth between the data and emerging patterns.

The qualitative data is specific to each situation and not generalized, so we made sure that responses were reliable by carefully going through them multiple times in order to avoid any confusion. To ensure trustworthiness, we recorded interviews, double-checked the reactions, and had a supervisor review the identified themes.

Before conducting interviews, we made sure to secure the participants' consent and they were mentioned anonymously. We deeply value and respect their time investment. Rest assured, any data shared during the interviews is kept private and confidential (Imran & Akhtar, 2023).

Findings and Interpretations

Positive Initiative

A positive initiative refers to a good and constructive action or effort taken to achieve a specific goal or bring about positive change. Most of the secondary teachers of three public schools perceived teaching licenses as a positive initiative in Sindh.

They considered teaching license as a process of empowering teachers and teacher's profession similarly other professional fields. The initiative of teaching licensing is a positive and wise step towards quality education. Additionally, a teaching license is an essential source for teachers to enhance their professional education, competencies and skills. Most of the teachers stated that:

“I believe that teaching license is very good positive for teachers which aims to prepare teachers for classroom by enhancing their teaching knowledge, skills and empower teaching profession. I appreciate the decision of teacher licensing as it will assess pedagogical Knowledge and content knowledge of teachers, which are imperative for quality education”.

The above statement demonstrates that all the teachers perceived teaching license as a positive initiative towards quality education; teachers who meet licensing requirements tend to be more effective in the classroom. Ghamrawi et al., (2021) stated that teachers consider teaching license one of the most transformative and effective ways to enhancing and build up on quality education. It aims to prepare teachers to deal with classroom challenges and different situations. Another study highlights that the process of teacher licensing must be seen as positively affecting teacher's profession, their value, worth and self-efficacy.



Recruitment Transparency

Transparency in teacher recruitment refers to the hiring process of teachers, based on their abilities, skills, competences, efficiencies, expertise while placing on suitable positions. It is a practice of being open and honest about every aspect of the hiring process, from the criteria used to assess candidates to the timeline for making a decision. It is characterized by clarity, integrity, and fairness from the hiring organization, aiming to ensure that everyone involved understands the process and feels valued. During the interview some of the teachers claimed that:

“Previously the teachers who were not competent enough and did not have professional qualification were appointed as teachers, now at least through teacher licensing, only qualified and efficient teachers will be appointed. In the past, the teachers were appointed on higher and senior posts of sixteen and seventeen grades due to their influential terms with authorities, but they lacked the required abilities for teaching such posts. However, one of the importance of teaching license is that now all the recruitment will be transparent, and teachers' appointment will be merit and competency based”.

The present study revealed that the teacher licensing process profoundly influences fair and transparent recruitment. Teacher licensing is the only way to ensure transparent recruitment of teachers. The initial demand of the teaching profession is to explicit competencies based on evidence. Unfair and unskilled recruitment of teachers decreases student achievement, and the quality of education is being deteriorated due to compromised recruitment.

Quality Education

Quality education is the primary focus of educated nations. The aims of quality education focus on the integration of latest and modern pedagogies, developing a learning environment that supports equity and inclusivity, providing equal educational opportunities to every students regardless of their differences, forming a learning community and make students a lifelong learner. In addition, providing students with an open opportunity where they can apply their theoretical knowledge to their practical life, enhancing their academic skills, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. Teaching license primarily focuses on quality education by educating teachers through professional education. One of the teachers expressed that:



“We are living in 21st century but still unaware of latest teaching pedagogies, last year when I was teaching to grade six and half of the class was unable to read fluently and write even some basic sentences because their base for reading and writing had not been developed properly in early years, teaching license is going to help teachers improving their pedagogies according to individual needs and improve the academic level of students that will ultimately contribute in quality education”.

Recent study demonstrated that the requirements of effective teaching are more consequential in modern times than traditional teaching, teachers having license are more likely to possess essential knowledge, skills, competence required for teaching in classroom to promote quality education (Goldhaber, 2017). The quality education can be increased through Professional development of teachers that supports the growth of a skilled and adaptable teaching workforce, ultimately benefiting students by ensuring high-quality instruction from teachers. In order to adapt and integrate creative teaching approaches in classroom a teacher requires to possess some professional competences, expertise, information, strategies, and use of material to deliver effective knowledge.

Professional Recognition

Professional recognition is the acknowledgement and validation of a person's accomplishments, abilities, and knowledge in a particular field of expertise. When referring to teachers or educators, professional recognition frequently entails recognizing their expertise, dedication to lifelong learning, and contributions to the educational field. Professional recognition encourages a sense of pride, inspiration, and a dedication to upholding high standards of practice within the educational community. One of the teachers expressed that:

“I have been teaching for more than a decade but I never felt valued in my teaching field, and those feeling previously discouraged me, I still remember that there was a time when I decided to quit my teaching profession, but since Sindh government has introduced teaching license policy, I believe that we will be respected and valued, and after getting license I can proudly say that I am a teacher and I can teach. In our society the teaching profession has lost its value and recognition because whoever fails in other fields they become teacher. Teaching license can provide recognition to teachers and teaching field, we can feel empowered within our field, we will be recognized as professionals of our field due to Licensing”.



Teacher profession in Pakistan has less value comparatively to other professions. The previous literature highlights the reason anyone in Pakistan can become teacher based on their simple bachelor's and master's degree and they choose some irrespective and illegal pathways to get into this profession (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Bhutta & Rizvi, 2022) further stated that licensing can be the only way enhancing teaching profession and maintaining its standard.

Filling Teaching Gap

Teaching gaps of teachers represents teaching in competencies due to lack of professional development. To become a teacher not alone content knowledge is sufficient to teach in classroom but the knowledge of teaching specific subject is imperative, teaching preparation is pivotal for effective teaching. During the interview when asked about the importance of teaching license in current education system they expressed that most of the teachers expressed that teaching requires a lot of passion and hard work. One of the teachers described that:

“Teaching license is going to fill the teaching gaps of public school teachers, as we see there is a huge difference in teaching practices of a private school teachers and public school teachers, when a private school teachers teach they are given more value and they are admired because of their teaching practices, but teacher in public School are not seen in that way, they are seen a lazy person in public sector schools. However, through teaching license policy they will be seen as a certified and trained teacher, because their teaching gaps are going to be filled through licensing and they will be considered competent teacher within their field”.

Several researchers' highlights that public school teachers are widely perceived as incompetent, passive, traditionalist, sluggish, demoralized and in vulnerable conditions to change themselves (Ali et al., 2022). They are having varying levels of competence, with some strengths and weaknesses. Teacher education has been a predominant area of focus in Pakistan. According to Tahira et al. (2020), over the time, the quality of education in public sector has been decreased and private education sector has become a competitor holding the admission of one-third students among all educational levels.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The findings of this research study revealed that the teachers perceived teaching license a positive and imperative step towards quality education. Most of the teachers perceived that



licensing process is going to empower teachers and teaching profession as teacher's empowerment is highly associated with teacher's efficacy of teaching and learning in classroom. Teachers feel empowered when they possess content knowledge as well as pedagogical skills. The teachers emphasized that "due to teaching license teacher's competences and skills will improve". Mislia et al., (2021) found a strong connection between teaching license and its impact on teacher's efficacy. Furthermore, the finding of this research explored that teacher demonstrated trust in fair and transparent recruitment due to licensing. Previous studies claimed that recruitment system in public schools has not been according to the merit and competences, unskilled, less competent teachers were appointed due to their influential terms. However, through licensing process only competent and skilled teachers will be appointed. Licensing process aims to assess teaching pedagogies, content knowledge, awareness of individual differences and how individual learn through different techniques.

The research further explored that teaching license potentially contribute in quality education, it initially aims to develop teachers professional qualification which will ultimately support quality education. In the 21st century teachers of public school are unaware of modern teaching and learning pedagogies, due to licensing teachers will receive professional education, become familiar with modern pedagogies, and will integrate them in classroom. Ghamrawi et al. (2023) stated that licensed teachers are more likely to possess required skills, knowledge, competencies which are essential to teach, thus, contribute to quality education. In addition, when teachers were asked about the importance of licensing, they described that the status of teachers and teaching profession are never given importance and value, this profession was never even recognized professionally, however, due to teaching license, teaching profession will be recognized similar to other professions. It has been widely known that in Pakistan anyone can become a teacher when they fail in other fields which the reason teaching profession is lost its recognition. (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Bhutta & Rizvi, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2023) described that anyone can get teaching job in Pakistan on the basis of simple masters and bachelor degree.

In addition, teachers described that licensing is going to fill teaching gaps of public school teachers, teaching gaps were described as lack of teaching skills, lack of instructional skills, lack of understanding of multiple intelligence, lack of student's engagement skills in classroom. Teaching practices of public and private school teachers are entirely different, the private school teachers are more efficient and competent comparatively to the public school teachers. However,



due to the requirement of teaching license teaching skills of public school teachers are going to be improved.

Conclusion

Recapitulating the whole finding of this research explored that the perception of teachers are optimistic and they manifested positive attitude towards teaching license as it is going to contribute in quality education as well as teachers professional development. The finding of another research conducted by Prof Linda-Darling Hammond, (2017) indicated that teaching license is a crucial step for teachers professional development, enhancing educational quality and achieving students learning outcomes. The findings further revealed that teachers demonstrated satisfaction over their professional recognition and societal status after licensing. Another finding explored that the efficacy, efficiency, teaching methodologies, skills, understanding towards diversity and professionalism would improve once the license is implemented.

Recommendations

On the basis of the finding of this research some recommendations are proposed to the government of Sindh, educational authorities and policy stake holders.

1. The policy should include ECE teachers, and the criteria should be one year ECE certification for their eligibility.
2. License should be given on the basis of practical demonstration rather than only written exams the test criteria should be based on practical demonstration of the teachers that how teachers teach in classroom.
3. Apart from teaching license multiple other courses should be initiated as in-service refreshing courses for teachers to introduce them with latest teaching and learning methodologies.

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