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A Study On Teaching Competency Among Prospective Student Teachers In Dindigul District

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Abstract
This study explores the influence of gender, type of college, locality, and nature of the college on teaching competency among prospective student teachers. Teaching competency encompasses various dimensions, including knowledge mastery, pedagogical skills, classroom management, assessment proficiency, and communication skills. The study utilized a normative survey method with a sample of 150 prospective student teachers selected through simple random sampling. Teaching competency was assessed using a validated Teaching Competency Scale. The findings reveal a significant difference in teaching competency between male and female prospective student teachers, with females demonstrating higher competency scores. Conversely, no significant differences were found based on the type of college (aided vs. self-financed), the nature of the college (unisex vs. co-educational), or the type of locality (urban vs. rural). The significant difference in competency scores between urban and rural prospective student teachers highlights the impact of locality on teaching effectiveness, suggesting that urban areas benefit from better educational resources and opportunities. The study underscores the need for targeted professional development, equitable resource distribution, and supportive environments to enhance teaching competency. Recommendations include promoting inclusive professional development, standardizing training quality, and addressing urban-rural disparities. The study concludes that while gender and locality influence teaching competency, a broader focus on effective student teachers preparation and support is crucial for improving educational outcomes. Future research should explore additional factors affecting teaching competency and investigate strategies to bridge identified gaps.
Keywords: *Teaching Competency, Prospective student Teachers and Dindigul.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching competency refers to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable educators to effectively facilitate student learning. As education systems strive to enhance the quality of teaching, understanding what constitutes teaching competency and identifying factors that influence it are crucial. This study aims to investigate how gender, type of college, location of students, and nature of the college affect teaching competency among prospective teachers.

Meaning of Teaching Competency

Teaching competency encompasses various dimensions including:

- **Knowledge Mastery:** Deep understanding of subject matter.
- **Pedagogical Skills:** Ability to use effective teaching methods and strategies.
- **Classroom Management:** Skills in maintaining a conducive learning environment.
- **Assessment Proficiency:** Competence in evaluating and supporting student progress.
- **Communication Skills:** Ability to convey information clearly and engage students

Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to illuminate the nuanced ways in which gender, type of college, locality, and nature of the college influence teaching competency among prospective student teachers. By exploring these dimensions, the study provides valuable insights into how various factors contribute to or hinder effective teaching practices. Understanding these influences can inform the development of targeted professional development programs, enhance teacher training practices, and guide educational policy decisions. Moreover, this research addresses potential disparities and promotes equity by highlighting how different backgrounds and environments impact teaching effectiveness. Ultimately, the findings can

contribute to improved educational outcomes by fostering a more informed approach to teacher preparation and support, ensuring that all prospective student teachers are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Statement of the problem

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how various factorssuch as gender, type of college, locality, and nature of the college affect teaching competency among prospective teachers. Despite extensive research on teaching effectiveness, there remains a gap in knowledge about how these specific variables influence the development and assessment of teaching skills. Gender differences in teaching efficacy, the impact of college funding sources, the disparities between urban and rural educational environments, and the effects of school type on teaching competency are areas that need further investigation. Addressing this problem is crucial for tailoring teacher training programs, ensuring equitable professional development opportunities, and ultimately enhancing the quality of education provided to students. This study aims to bridge these gaps by providing empirical evidence and actionable insights into how these factors shape teaching competency.

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate whether there is a significant difference in teaching competency scores between male and female prospective teachers.
2. To determine if there is a significant difference in teaching competency scores between prospective teachers from aided college and those from self-financed college.
3. To analyze whether teaching competency scores differ significantly between prospective teachers from urban college and those from rural college.
4. To investigate if there is a significant difference in teaching competency scores between prospective teachers from unisex college and those from co-educational college.

Hypothesis for the study

1. There is no significant difference in teaching competency scores between male and female prospective teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in teaching competency scores between prospective teachers from aided and self-financed college.
3. There is no significant difference in teaching competency scores between prospective teachers from urban and rural college.
4. There is no significant difference in teaching competency scores between prospective teachers from unisex and co-educational college.

METHODOLOGY

The study focused on prospective teachers in Dindigul District. The population for this research consisted of these prospective teachers, from which a representative sample of 150 individuals was selected through simple random sampling. This method ensured that every prospective teacher in the district had an equal opportunity to be included in the study. Data regarding teaching competency was gathered using the Teaching Competency Scale, a validated instrument that measures various dimensions of teaching effectiveness, including knowledge mastery, pedagogical skills, classroom management, assessment proficiency, and communication skills. The research employed the normative survey method, which involved systematically collecting and analyzing data to establish norms and benchmarks for teaching competency. This methodology facilitated a thorough assessment of teaching effectiveness among the sample, allowing for the evaluation of differences and similarities in teaching competency based on factors such as gender, type of college, locality, and nature of the college.

Null hypothesis: 1

There is no significant difference between the male and female prospective teacher in their teachingcompetency withrespect to gender

TABLE:1 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MALE AND FEMALE PROSPECTIVE TEACHER IN THEIR TEACHINGCOMPETENCY WITH RESPECT TO GENDER

Sex	N	Mean	SD	Calculated "t" value	Remarks
Male	61	34.28	16.596	3.866	S
Female	89	44.63	15.765		

(At 5% level of significance the table value of "t" is 1.96)

At a 5% level of significance, the calculated 't' value (3.866) higher than the table value (1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the male and female prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to gender," is rejected. As a result, there is a significant difference between the male and female prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to gender.

Null hypothesis: 2

There is no significant difference between the aided and self-finance college prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to type of college

Table:2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AIDED AND SELF-FINANCE COLLEGE PROSPECTIVE TEACHER IN THEIR TEACHING COMPETENCY WITH RESPECT TO TYPE OF COLLEGE

Type of college	N	Mean	SD	Calculated "t" value	Remarks
Aided	48	40.23	17.409	0.095	NS
Self-finance	102	40.51	16.658		

(At 5% level of significance the table value of "t" is 1.96)

At a 5% level of significance, the calculated 't' value (0.095 lesser than the table value (1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the aided and self-finance college prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to type of college ," is accepted. As a result, there is no significant difference between the aided and self-finance college prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to type of college

Null hypothesis: 3

There is no significant difference between the rural and urban prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to type of college

Table:3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RURAL AND URBAN PROSPECTIVE TEACHER IN THEIR TEACHING COMPETENCY WITH RESPECT TO TYPE OF COLLEGE

Location of students	N	Mean	SD	Calculated "t" value	Remarks
Rural	87	35.48	16.608	4.481	S
Urban	63	47.24	14.758		

(At 5% level of significance the table value of "t" is 1.96)

At a 5% level of significance, the calculated 't' value (4.481) higher than the table value (1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the rural and urban prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to type of college
," is rejected. As a result, there is significant difference between the rural and urban prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to locality of students.

Null hypothesis: 4

There is no significant difference between the unisex and co-education prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to nature of college

Table:4 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE UNISEX AND CO-EDUCATION PROSPECTIVE TEACHER IN THEIR TEACHING COMPETENCY WITH RESPECT TO NATURE OF COLLEGE

Nature of college	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Calculated "t" value**	Remarks
Unisex	48	40.23	17.409	0.297	NS
Co-Education	102	40.51	16.658		

(At 5% level of significance the table value of "t" is 1.96)
At a 5% level of significance, the calculated 't' value (0.297) higher than the table value (1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the unisex and co-education prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to nature of college," is accepted. As a result, there is no significant difference between the unisex and co-education prospective teacher in their teaching competency with respect to nature of college.

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION

The significant difference found suggests that gender may influence teaching competency, with female prospective teachers demonstrating higher competency scores than their male counterparts. This finding aligns with several studies suggesting gender differences in teaching efficacy (e.g., Sadker&Sadker, 1994; Kim & Park, 2005). Research has often found that female educators tend to be more effective in various pedagogical aspects due to differences in teaching styles and attitudes (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Bianchi & Robinson, 2006). However, it is also important to consider the socio-cultural and institutional factors that might contribute to these differences (Woolfolk Hoy & Davis, 2006; Ingersoll & May, 2011). For instance, societal expectations and gender roles might impact how competencies are developed and assessed. Moreover, gender bias in educational assessments could also play a role (Murray & Doughty, 1999; Popham, 2001). Therefore, while the results indicate a significant difference, it is crucial to contextualize these findings within broader gender dynamics in education.

The absence of a significant difference suggests that the type of college whether aided or self-financed does not impact prospective teachers' teaching competency. This result is consistent with studies indicating that institutional type does not always correlate with educational quality or teacher effectiveness (e.g., Coleman et al., 1966; Bryk &Raudenbush, 1992). Previous research has shown that teaching quality is influenced more by factors such as teacher preparation and in-service training rather than the funding source of the institution (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1997). Additionally, the lack of significant difference may reflect that both aided and self-financed colleges strive to maintain similar standards for teacher training, thereby mitigating disparities in teaching competency (Ladd &Murname, 1999; Clotfelter et al., 2007). These findings underscore the importance of focusing on instructional practices and professional development rather than institutional funding.

The significant difference indicates that locality—rural versus urban—affects teaching competency, with urban prospective teachers showing higher competency scores. This finding aligns with research highlighting disparities in educational resources and opportunities between rural and urban areas (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ladd &Murname, 1999). Urban areas often benefit from better educational infrastructure and resources, which may contribute to higher teaching competency (Clotfelter, Ladd, &Vigdor, 2007; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). Studies have also shown that urban teachers may have access to more professional development opportunities and advanced teaching materials compared to their rural counterparts (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

On the other hand, rural teachers frequently face challenges such as fewer resources, isolation, and limited professional development opportunities (Beineke & McBride, 2004; Gray & Wilcox, 2005). These factors could contribute to the observed difference in teaching competency. Some studies suggest that rural teachers often work in less supportive environments, which can impact their effectiveness (Herring, 2007; Johnson,

2006). Therefore, addressing these disparities by improving resources and support for rural college might help in bridging the gap in teaching competency.

The lack of significant difference suggests that the nature of college —unisex or co-education—does not impact teaching competency. This finding is supported by research indicating that educational outcomes and teacher effectiveness are not necessarily influenced by the gender composition of the college (e.g., Lee & Marks, 1990; Dweck, 2000). Studies have shown that other factors such as teacher training, professional development, and college culture are more significant determinants of teaching competency (Goe, 2007; Hattie, 2009). The absence of a significant difference might imply that both unisex and co-education college provide similar environments for teacher development and effectiveness. However, it is also crucial to consider that differences in college type might not be as impactful as other variables such as college resources, administrative support, and teacher qualifications (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1997). Therefore, focusing on these broader factors might be more relevant for enhancing teaching competency than the gender composition of the college.

Recommendations for this study

- **Promote Inclusive Professional Development:** Offer training programs that cater to diverse teaching styles and address gender-specific needs.
- **Standardize Quality Across Institutions:** Ensure consistent standards and quality for teacher training in both aided and self-financed colleges.
- **Enhance Urban-Rural Educational Equity:** Implement policies to balance educational opportunities and resources between urban and rural areas.
- **Foster Supportive Environments for Rural Teachers:** Create initiatives that reduce isolation and provide more robust support networks for rural educators.
- **Encourage Collaboration Across college Types:** Facilitate sharing of best practices and resources between unisex and co-educational college.
- **Invest in Evidence-Based Educational Policies:** Develop and support policies based on research to improve teaching effectiveness across different contexts.
- **Support Gender Diversity in Leadership Roles:** Promote gender balance in educational leadership to model diverse competencies and attitudes.

Suggestions for the study

- **Examine Impact of college Leadership:** Study how college leadership and administrative support influence teaching competency and effectiveness.
- **Explore Teacher Well-Being:** Investigate how teacher well-being and job satisfaction affect teaching competency and student outcomes.
- **Analyze Curricular and Pedagogical Differences:** Research the effects of different curricula and teaching methods on teacher performance and student achievement.
- **Conduct Cross-National Comparisons:** Look at teaching competency differences and similarities in various countries to gain broader insights.
- **Evaluate Technology Integration:** Assess how technology use in classrooms affects teaching practices and competency.
- **Implement Feedback Mechanisms:** Use feedback from teachers and students to continually refine and improve teaching competency evaluations.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights several key findings regarding teaching competency among prospective teachers, including the influence of gender, locality, and institutional type. The results suggest that gender may affect teaching competency, with female prospective teachers demonstrating higher competency scores. This finding aligns with existing literature on gender differences in teaching efficacy and underscores the need for a nuanced approach to teacher training that considers these differences. The lack of significant differences related to college type and school type suggests that institutional funding and gender composition may not

significantly impact teaching competency. Instead, factors such as teacher preparation, professional development, and resources play a more critical role. The observed disparity in teaching competency between urban and rural prospective teachers points to the need for targeted interventions to support rural education. Addressing these disparities through improved resources and professional development opportunities could help bridge the gap in teaching effectiveness. Overall, while gender and locality have been identified as influential factors, a broader focus on effective teacher preparation and support, regardless of institutional or college type, is essential for enhancing teaching competency. Future research and policy should aim to address these areas to improve educational outcomes across diverse settings.

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