

Challenges Pre-Service Teachers Face During Teaching Practicum: An Anatomy of Teachers' Education Programs

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at exploring the challenges and difficulties faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum. The current study espoused Quantitative Research Methods and adopted a self-constructed questionnaire as the research instrument. 860 students were selected through convenient sampling as participants of the study and had recently completed their practicum tenure. The findings from the four areas of inquiry demonstrated that pre-service teachers only experienced a moderate or slight level of challenges which include the availability of instructional material from cooperating school, number of students in a class, teaching subject which is not related to the major area, availability of furniture, using methods for different abilities students, identifying, dealing with individual differences, demands from the cooperating school, teaching extra classes other than assigned ones, doing non-teaching duties in the cooperating school, paying transportation charges during teaching practice. The rest of the problems were identified as slight problems and are consistent with the level of classes being taught. Also, students enrolled in B.Ed. programs faced more problems in comparison to the students enrolled in other programs. The findings will be beneficial for pre-service, teachers' training institutes, cooperating schools, and policymakers.

KEYWORDS

Student-teachers, prospective teachers, pre-service teachers, teaching practicum

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice, now also known as teaching practicum, is a fundamental aspect of pre-service teachers' education programs. It enables teachers to experience teaching in real-time (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). If carried out in its true sense, it benefits the student-teachers in innumerable ways and is said to have been a significant determinant of their future careers (Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006). Teaching practice is an opportunity for pre-service teachers to work alongside professional teachers in real classrooms under their supervisor and cooperating teacher (Kasanda, 1995). Pre-service teachers can apply their learned knowledge to their classrooms, can vigilantly spot their strengths and weakness, and ultimately excel in their crafts of lesson planning, designing, and developing teaching material, refining their teaching abilities, understanding jargon, and their application in the field, brushing up their teaching skills and boost their decision-making abilities which are consequential to their robust confidence in their professional lives later on. Nonetheless, the stress and anxieties owing to their problems during their practicum often catch them off guard. It is needless to say that a smooth transition, identification of the challenges, and proposing their practical solutions, however, are momentous for retaining pre-service in the field (Zeichner, 2010).

One of the most common problems that pre-service teachers encounter during their first interaction with schools is their traditional setting and their focus on preparing students for examination (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). Their highly structured routine and pre-defined classroom activities hamper the application of the knowledge they have acquired during their studies. Resistance from cooperating teachers and school administration further impedes their beliefs in practicing modern and interactive pedagogies (Leithwood, 1994; Trent, 2013). Moreover, these pre-service teachers are inept at comprehending their classroom challenges in technical terms and hence are prone to anxiety and stress and are likely to quit their professions even before starting their careers as a professional (Imsa-ard, Wichamuk, & Chuanchom, 2021). Additionally, the choice of the type of school selected by the student-teacher has been found to be a significant contributor to stress among these teachers (Masood, Siddiqui, & Sarwar, 2019).

Teachers' education in Pakistan has relatively scored a hike in recent years, it has become more of a market niche over the period of time. This market acquisition has been inimical to the quality of the program. Not only the requirements and standards are compromised but the credibility is also at stake (Chang, 2014). While ample research literature has addressed the quality issues and challenges of teachers' education, (Rizvi & Khamis, 2020; Sahito & Väisänen, 2018; Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2020), only a few have gauged the perceptions of student-teachers regarding the challenges, they face during their practicum in the context of Pakistan. This study henceforth attempts to fill the prevailing gap in the literature by adding



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to the existing literature gauging the difficulties and challenges pre-service teachers face during their teaching practice in Pakistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching is an overwhelming job that is often characterized by stress and anxiety from the very beginning of the profession (Kyriacou, 2001; Ryan, 2017). Stress and anxiety not only affect the operational capability of teachers but has a negative carry over to their lives apart from their classrooms (Pullis, 1992). This stress though not in all cases but often is an essential concomitant of lack of knowledge and practice in their classrooms. Braod and Evans (2006) further endorsed that the advancement, the teaching profession has witnessed during the last few decades has made it rather complex and thus calls to have highly skilled teachers capable enough to deftly integrate various kinds of knowledge while incorporating modern practices. Fhaeizdhyall, Nazamud-Din, Shabbier, and Ibrahim (2018) explained that teachers' education courses and their training are solely responsible for the provision of knowledge and skills that are applicable in the field, which is why the training they undertake should be collaterally aligned with contemporary teaching trends, its demands and therefore is held closely consequential to their success (Michalle, 2011; Naveed, Muhammad, & Siddiqui, 2022).

Pre-service teachers are likely to face numerous challenges during their practicum. Addressing these problems will particularly elevate much of the burden off the shoulders of pre-service teachers. Moreover, the quality of teachers in classrooms will improve ultimately. A number of studies have been conducted on evaluating the challenges of student-teacher during their practicum. Riesky (2013) studied that student-teachers usually face three major challenges during their practicum i.e. student-related challenges, self-related challenges, and challenges related to the supervisor.

Pre-service teachers are generally required to spend the allocated time practicing teaching with their cooperating teachers in actual classrooms. They usually found themselves in a quandary of whether to apply their theoretical knowledge or to abide by the academic regulations of the schools (Gilani, Waheed, & Shaheen, 2020; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). School management usually remains stringent about their syllabus completion deadlines, thereby discouraging the use of non-traditional and interactive methods of teaching which usually take more time than traditional methods (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). This apathy doesn't only inhibit the provision of required IT facilities but legitimates the unnecessary intervention of cooperating teachers and forceful implementation of their teaching materials (Gilani et al., 2020; Sariçoban, 2010). Supervisors are not any different from school management and the cooperating teachers (Fhaeizdhyall et al., 2018). Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) concluded that supervisor are equally indifferent to the student-teachers. They either provide abortive feedback and solutions to prevailing problems or lack thereof. It is also important to understand that nexus of the problem by and large lies in the pre-service' ability to clearly communicate the goals they are required to achieve and their expectations from management and cooperating teachers (Imsa-ard et al., 2021).

With all the innovations in pedagogies and educational technology, teaching has rather become a tricky, challenging, and more demanding task even for experienced teachers let alone a student-teacher. They are expected to handle multiple roles but never have ample time to plan them properly. Preparing, planning, and executing tasks are daunting for first-timers and lack of time further aggravates the situation (Harun & Samat, 2021). Moreover, pre-service teachers wherein have ample knowledge of teaching strategies, but lack subject-matter knowledge which usually blows the sprouts away (Fhaeizdhyall et al., 2018; Stylianides, Stylianides, & Shilling-Traina, 2013). Planning lesson incorporating interactive and engaging activities is daunting for some (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018; Masood et al., 2019). Whereby others feel incompetent while instructing students (Imsa-ard et al., 2021). Eliciting prior knowledge, working on students' misconception and connecting content to the daily lives of the students were found to be difficult for beginners (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). Desfitri (2018) and Stylianides et al. (2013) concluded that diffident pre-service teachers use amateurish assessment techniques in their classes. They remain dubious if the SLOs have been achieved. Also, such teachers avoid posing complicated questions and show disbelief in their ability to answer students' queries to their satisfaction. Furthermore, promoting higher-order thinking skills is yet another challenge that student-teachers usually find difficult to deal with.

The language barrier is too typical of a traditional classroom setting in Pakistan. Students, whereof have a diverse lingual background but English usually fails to comprehend the conceptual ideas as most of the academic activity is carried out in English. This not only brings down pre-service teachers' morale but also promotes edgy behaviours and dubiousness in their own teaching skills (Gilani et al., 2020). Similarly, students with this hampered understanding of concepts are highly likely to underperform.

Managing disruptive behaviours is particularly another challenging task for beginners. Their unfamiliarity with the classroom environment and lack of understanding of students' behaviours often leads them into hot waters (Masood et al., 2019). Additionally, young teachers often face a hard time maintaining their image as regular teachers owing to their youthful looks (Gilani et al., 2020). Furthermore, their cooperating teachers who generally take them as a threat to their own careers, often fall into unethical practices and defame them among the students, and refrain students from participating in classroom activities (Riesky, 2013). Thus, the problem of disruptive behaviours intensifies particularly in overcrowded classrooms. The irony is schools' principals usually deal pre-service teachers as mere intruders and don't pay much heed to their problems

creating a trust deficit among experienced and student-teachers (Nababan & Amalia, 2020). Disruptive behaviours are not only detrimental for teachers' motivation but also leads to burnout if not timely addressed (D. L. Smith & Smith, 2006). Classrooms with disruptive students are often linked to less academic time consequential to poor grades in exams (Shinn, Ramsey, Walker, Stieber, & O'Neill, 1987). Additionally, while having no corporal punishment law enforced in class have though minimized the physical, emotional and mental consequences, it is reported that even experienced teachers, if not trained otherwise, found themselves clueless while handling the disruptive behaviours (Siddiqui, Arif, & Muhammad, 2020). The challenge is chronically tough for the pre-service teachers to deal with.

Having diversity in classrooms is no less than a blessing. It whereby is known for bringing creativity, innovation and problem solving skills in classroom (Goethe & Colina, 2018), mishandling by the teacher may escalate this into favouritism, non-cohesiveness, vague communication, discrimination and segregation among the students (Goodman, 2007). Similarly, Satisfying and balancing the diverse needs of all the students particularly in inclusive classrooms while approaching a particular curriculum is a significantly exhausting activity for the teachers in general and not just for the student-teachers (Imsa-ard et al., 2021). This when accompanied by low self-efficacy beliefs usually becomes disastrous for aspiring teachers leaving them in a hopeless and miserable condition where they most likely are not aiming at perusing teaching as their career (Goethe & Colina, 2018).

With a wide body of research exploring the challenges of pre-service teachers globally, it is about time to explore more about the challenges of student-teachers in the context of Pakistan to help raise the standards and focus on producing quality teachers. This study, therefore, attempts to fill the prevailing gap by exploring the answers to the following research question:

1. What problems are faced by pre-service teachers during teaching practice related to teaching skills, interpersonal relations, transportation, and classroom discipline?
2. How do demographics (gender, the program of study, and class taught during teaching practice) relate to the problems faced by the pre-service teachers during teaching practice related to teaching skills, interpersonal relations, transportation, and classroom discipline?

3. METHADODOLOGY

This was a quantitative study and a survey was used to get perceptions of pre-service teachers about problems faced related to teaching skills, interpersonal relations, transportation, and classroom discipline during teaching practice by the student teachers.

a. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the study was students enrolled in different teacher education programs being offered by the Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab Lahore. These students were enrolled in MA Elementary Education (MA EE), MA Early Childhood Education (MA ECE), Masters in Educational Research and Assessment (MERA), MA English Language Teaching and Linguistics (MA ELTS), and B. Ed Elementary (BED ELM). The sample of the study constituted 860 students who have completed their teaching practice recently. Questionnaires were sent to all 860 students and the researchers received 400 questionnaires out of which only 323 questionnaires were completely filled and used for data analysis.

b. INSTRUMENT

The researchers developed an instrument for the study which was comprised of 74 items under four categories: teaching skills, interpersonal relations, transportation and classroom discipline. Five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire ranging from: 1 -No problem at all (NP), 2-Slight problem (SI P), 3-Moderate problem (MP), 4-Sizeable problem (SIP), to 5-Great problem (GP). The instrument was pilot tested prior to send in the field for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was .96 and the reliability of its sub-scales were as under:

Table 1. Reliability of the sub-scales

Subscales	Reliability	No of items
Teaching Skills	.962	32
Interpersonal Relationships	.927	25
Transportation	.852	7
Classroom Discipline	.863	10

4. FINDINGS

Table 2. *Opinion of pre-service teachers about problems related to teaching skills*

Statements	M	SD
Availability of instructional material from school	2.52	1.39
Number of students in a class	2.24	1.36
Teaching lesson from subject that is not related to my major area	2.24	1.30
Furniture to be used by you during teaching practice	2.17	1.32
Using methods according to the abilities of different students	2.15	1.21
Identifying individual differences among students	2.10	1.15
Dealing with students' individual differences	2.09	1.19
Managing the time of lesson	1.97	1.21
Copy checking	1.91	1.25
Conducting test	1.90	1.12
Teaching many periods without any complaint	1.87	1.09
Organizing a lesson plan	1.86	1.15
Teaching as per plan given by school	1.83	1.16
Implementation of planner	1.82	1.18
Writing an appropriate lesson plan	1.82	1.05
Instructions about lesson plans by supervisor	1.81	1.17
Developing multiple choice questions for test	1.80	1.02
Marking test of students accurately	1.79	1.12
Writing essay type questions for test	1.78	1.06
Using variety of teaching methods such as direct teaching etc.	1.78	.919
Motivate students to learn	1.71	1.03
Connecting previous lesson with the new lesson	1.65	.983
Explaining facts and principles	1.65	.983
Ending the class in time	1.64	1.02
Writing the specific objective of the subject to be taught	1.60	.917
Summarizing the lesson	1.56	1.04

Starting class in time	1.54	.912
Writing the general objective of the subject to be taught	1.54	.965
Using real example during the lesson	1.50	.868
Directing (passing) the question in the classroom	1.48	.797
Using white/green board during lesson	1.47	.972
Asking questions to students	1.44	.898

According to the table 2, availability of instructional material from cooperating school, number of students in a class, teaching subject which is not related to major area, availability of furniture, using methods for different abilities students, identifying, and dealing with individual differences were identified as moderate problems by the student teachers during teaching practice. Whereas rest of the teaching related activities in class posed slight problems as evident in table 2.

Table 3. Opinion of pre-service teachers about problems related to Interpersonal Relationships

Statements	M	SD
Demands from school	2.14	1.32
Teaching extra classes than assigned	2.08	1.31
Doing non-teaching duties in the school	2.00	1.20
Arrangement duties other than teaching practice	1.99	1.20
Being involved in teachers' meetings	1.94	1.24
Forming a good relationship with the school principal	1.81	1.13
Accepting feedback from the school principal	1.81	1.16
Reinforcement from supervisor in case of good work	1.74	1.18
Being involved in the school's activities	1.74	1.12
Observing the cooperating teacher in teaching	1.74	1.10
Discussing lesson plan with the cooperating teacher	1.73	1.12
Supervisory support during teaching practice	1.71	1.12
School timetable	1.70	.97
Discussion with supervisor about my performance	1.66	1.04
Supervisory feedback about my performance in class	1.65	1.10
Presence of supervisor during teaching in my class	1.63	1.05
Supervisor's behavior during teaching practice	1.62	.98
Forming a good relationship with cooperating teacher	1.60	1.02

Fair evaluation by my supervisor	1.59	1.04
Accepting feedback from cooperating teacher	1.58	1.07
Giving the cooperating teacher the chance to evaluate you	1.56	.97
Observation by cooperating teacher	1.56	.99
Feedback of cooperating teacher on my planner	1.55	.98
Allowing the cooperating teacher to visit my class frequently	1.51	.93
Dealing with the school administration in a good manner	1.48	.91

According to table 3 demands from the cooperating school, teaching extra classes other than assigned ones and doing non-teaching duties in the cooperating school were identified as moderate problems as faced by the pre-service during teaching practice. Whereas rest of the interpersonal relationship related teaching processes from class posed slight problems as evident in table 3.

Table 4. Opinion of pre-service teachers about transportation-related concerns

Statements	M	SD
Use of school transportation (if available)	2.24	1.54
Charges for transportation	2.22	1.47
Use of own transport	2.01	1.42
Availability of appropriate transportation	1.94	1.39
Use of university transportation	1.92	1.37
School location	1.87	1.33
Ease of transportation	1.79	1.32

According to table 4, the pre-service teachers experienced moderate problems in using school transportation, paying charges for transportation, and using their own transport during teaching practice. Pre-service teachers have identified the rest of the transport-related statements as less problematic.

Table 5. Opinion of pre-service teachers about classroom discipline during teaching practice

Statements	M	SD
Using physical punishment to control students' behavior	2.18	1.40
Controlling behaviors of students verbally	1.84	1.17
Solving discipline problems of students	1.80	1.18
Maintaining on-task behavior of students	1.76	1.07
Controlling all students' behavior in the classroom	1.76	1.14
Managing groups effectively	1.72	1.03
Using different reinforcement strategies to develop good behaviors of students	1.69	1.07

Using classroom time efficiently	1.65	.985
Interacting all students in the classroom	1.65	1.04
Using praise to develop behavior of students	1.64	1.02

According to table 5 use of punishment to control students' behavior was identified as a moderate level problem by the student teachers. Whereas, controlling behaviours of students verbally, solving discipline problems of students, maintaining on-task behaviours of the students, managing group effectively, use of different reinforcement strategies to develop good behaviours of students and interaction with the students were identified as slight problems during teaching practice.

Table 6. Independent sample t-test comparing problems faced by pre-service teachers during their practicum on the basis of gender

Dependent Variables	Gender	N	M	S.D	t	p
Teaching Skills	Male	60	63.70	19.75	2.39	.017
	Female	263	57.17	18.93		
Interpersonal Relationships	Male	60	49.05	18.89	3.04	.003
	Female	263	41.92	15.77		
Transportation	Male	60	15.75	7.45	2.05	.040
	Female	263	13.63	7.09		
Classroom Discipline	Male	60	19.95	7.73	2.55	.011
	Female	263	17.23	7.36		

Independent sample *t*-tests were performed to compare the perceptions of male and female pre-service teachers about subscales of the problem faced during their practicum. There was a significant difference among perceptions of male and female pre-service about teaching skills ($t=2.39$, $p=.017$). Male pre-service face more problems related to teaching during teaching practicum as compared to female pre-service.

There was a significant difference between the perception of male and female pre-service teachers about problems faced regarding interpersonal relationships during teaching practice ($t=3.04$, $p=.003$). Male pre-service face more problems related to interpersonal relationships during teaching practicum as compared to female pre-service. There was significant difference between the perception of male and female pre-service about transportation ($t=2.05$, $p=.040$). Male pre-service face more problems related to transportation during teaching practicum as compared to female pre-service. There was a significant difference among the perception of male and female pre-service about classroom discipline ($t=2.55$, $p=.011$). Male pre-service face more problems related to classroom discipline during teaching practicum as compared to female pre-service.

Table 7. ANOVA test comparing problems faced by pre-service teachers during their practicum on the basis of programs

Dependent Variable	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	F	p
Teaching Skills	Between Groups	7122.59	6	3.353	.003
	Within Groups	111884.0	316		
	Total	119006.6	322		
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups	6034.8	6	3.844	.001
	Within Groups	82690.8	316		
	Total	88725.6	322		
Transportation	Between Groups	525.5	6	1.712	.118
	Within Groups	16172.1	316		
	Total	16697.6	322		

	Total	16697.6	322		
	Between Groups	664.0	6		
Classroom Discipline	Within Groups	17420.6	316	2.008	.064
	Total	18084.6	322		

Table 7 shows that there were both significant and non-significant differences in the perceptions of pre-service teachers enrolled in different programs of teacher education about problems faced during teaching practice. Significant differences were recorded in the case of two sub-scales measuring teaching skills ($F=3.353$, $p=.003$), and interpersonal relationships ($F=3.844$, $p=.001$), but there was no significant difference in the case of use of transportation ($F=1.712$, $p=.118$), and classroom discipline ($F=2.008$, $p=.064$). Post Hoc analysis was conducted to identify significant differences among the programs on subscales of a survey instrument.

Table 8. LSD multiple comparisons of teaching skills on the basis of programs

Dependent Variable	(I) Program	(J) Program	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Teaching Skills	MA Elementary Education	B.Ed. Hons	11.371	.006
	MA ECE	B.Ed. Hons	13.35	.005
	MA Elementary Education	B.Ed. Hons	12.44	.000
Interpersonal Relationships	MEERA	B.Ed. Hons	7.12	.009
	ECE	B.Ed. Hons	10.66	.001
	ELTL	B.Ed. Hons	10.57	.004
	B.Ed. Elementary	ECE	-3.84	.013
Classroom Discipline	ECE	B.Ed. Hons	3.69	.010
	ELTL	B.Ed. Hons	3.45	.042

Post Hoc multiple comparisons show significant differences among programs on all dimension regarding problem faced by the pre-service during their practicum Table (8) shows only significant differences on the basis of different teacher education programs in which pre-service enrolled. Pre-service enrolled in MAEE had a better perception of teaching skills as compared to students enrolled in B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff=11.37, $p=.006$). Pre-service who were enrolled in MA Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs had better perceptions about teaching skills as compared to students enrolled in B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff=13.35, $p=.005$). Pre-service from MA EE had better perception about problems faced related to interpersonal relationships as compared to those enrolled in B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff=12.44, $p=.000$).

Pre-service teachers enrolled in Master of Educational Research and Assessment (MERA) had a better perception of interpersonal relationships as compared to those enrolled in B.Eds. Hons (Mean diff= 7.12, $sig=.009$). Pre-service of ECE had better perception of interpersonal relationships as compared to enrolled in B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff= 10.66, $sig=.001$). Pre-service teachers enrolled in MA English Language Teaching had significantly better perceptions about interpersonal relationships as compared to those enrolled in B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff= 10.57, $sig=.004$). Pre-service of ECE had a better perception of interpersonal relationships as compared to B.Ed. Elementary (Mean diff= -3.84, $sig=.013$). Pre-service teachers of ECE had significantly different classroom discipline as compared to B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff= 3.69, $sig=.010$). Pre-service of ELTL had significantly different about classroom discipline as compared to B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff= 3.45, $sig=.042$). Pre-

service teachers of MA EE had a better perception of all dimensions of problems faced by pre-service teachers during their practicum as compared to B.Ed. Hons (Mean diff=28.04, sig=.002)

Table 9. ANOVA test comparing problem faced by pre-service teachers during their practicum on the basis of class level

Dependent Variable	Variance	Sum of Squares	Do	F	p
Teaching Skills	Between Groups	7122.59	6		
	Within Groups	111884.0	316	.005	1.000
	Total	119006.6	322		
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups	6034.8	6		
	Within Groups	82690.8	316	.634	.593
	Total	88725.6	322		
Transportation	Between Groups	525.5	6		
	Within Groups	16172.1	316	.870	.457
	Total	16697.6	322		
Classroom Discipline	Between Groups	664.0	6		
	Within Groups	17420.6	316	.944	.420
	Total	18084.6	322		

Table 5 shows that there were no significant differences in the perceptions of pre-service teachers about problems faced during their teaching practicum in different classes i.e. teaching skills ($F=.005$, $p=1.000$), interpersonal relationships ($F=.634$, $p = .593$), transportation ($F=.870$, $p=.457$), and classroom discipline ($F=.944$, $p= .420$).

5. DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to find the challenges experienced by the pre-service teachers during their practicum. The study found several challenges categorized under the following four major categories (1) Teaching Skills, (2) Interpersonal Relations, (3) Transportation, and (4) Classroom discipline.

Results of the current study delineate that developing teaching skills is challenging for pre-service teachers. The non-cooperative behavior of the schools, management, and cooperating teachers hindered the provision of required facilities such as the instructional material. These findings are consistent with the findings of Fhaeizdhyall et al. (2018); Imsa-ard et al. (2021); Mahmood and Iqbal (2018); Riesky (2013) reported in their studies. Riesky (2013) identified that managing classrooms is rather difficult for student-teachers. Similarly, pre-service teachers facing difficulty in addressing the individual needs and teaching students with different abilities is found to be consistent with prior studies (Harun & Samat, 2021; Imsa-ard et al., 2021; Riesky, 2013). However, contrary to the findings of (Desfitri, 2018; Fhaeizdhyall et al., 2018; Nababan & Amalia, 2020; Stylianides et al., 2013) respondents of the study found motivating the students to learn, connecting previous lessons with their daily lives, connecting prior knowledge to the lesson being taught in class, asking questions and time management as slightly challenging tasks.

Participants of the study reported interpersonal skills comparatively less challenging than the teaching skills. It is evident from the results that meeting the high expectations of the cooperating schools and teaching classes other than assigned ones has been a moderately challenging task for student-teachers. The findings are in coherence with the prior studies (D'Rozario & Wong, 1996; Masood et al., 2019). However, forming good relations with cooperating teachers, principals and schools, feedback from supervisors and the cooperating teachers contradicted with the findings of prior studies (Fhaeizdhyall

et al., 2018; Hamaidi, Al-Shara, Arouri, & Awwad, 2014; Imsa-ard et al., 2021; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018; Riesky, 2013) that reported the aforementioned as challenging for pre-service.

Pre-service teachers found daily commute as a moderate challenge. Availability of coordinating school enroute transportation, bearing the charges of public or personal daily commute, covering long distances were found to be consistent with studies conducted by Frenette (2004); C. W. Smith and Peller (2020). Controlling students' behavior by using physical punishment was found contrary to the findings of prior studies (Siddiqui et al., 2020). Surprisingly, pre-service teachers reported managing the behavior of the students by using techniques other than physical punishment and maintaining their rapport with the students as less challenging and is not consistent with the findings of the previous studies (Gilani et al., 2020; Nababan & Amalia, 2020; Sariçoban, 2010; Stylianides et al., 2013)

The intensity of several challenges were felt differently by the two genders. Males were found to be significantly impacted by the behavior issues and interpersonal communication abilities consistent with the findings of the studies conducted earlier (Kyriacou, 2001; Myles et al., 2006; Shaikat & Chowdhury, 2020; D. L. Smith & Smith, 2006). Similarly, the daily commute is yet another problem faced by male teachers consistent with the findings of Kasanda (1995).

6. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the problems faced by the pre-service teacher during teaching practice and identified that the pre-service teachers did not face any sizeable and great problems during practicum. However, they faced problems that were categorized as slight problems and moderate problems. Moderate problems include the availability of instructional material from cooperating school, number of students in a class, teaching subject which is not related to the major area, availability of furniture, using methods for different abilities students, identifying, dealing with individual differences, demands from the cooperating school, teaching extra classes other than assigned ones and doing non-teaching duties in the cooperating school, paying charges for transportation, and using their own transport during teaching practice. The rest of the problems were identified as slight problems. It was interesting to identify that none of the problems were categorized as no problem at all. The data further revealed that male student teachers faced more problems during teaching practice as compared to their female counterparts. Similarly, student teachers enrolled in the B.Ed. Hons program faced more problems during teaching practice as compared to a student enrolled in other programs of teacher education. Across all classes taught by pre-service teachers during teaching practice in cooperating schools, they encountered similar problems.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Dr. Sajid Masood: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Investigation and Supervision **Malahat Siddiqui:** Writing- Original draft preparation, Writing- Reviewing and Editing **Khadija Arif:** Data collection from the field and helped in analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

It is declared that all authors don't have any conflict of interest. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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