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Research Paper

Teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers, recognizing the critical role teachers play in national development through quality instruction. The research aims to assess the overall teaching proficiency of B.Ed. trainees and explore variations based on demographic and educational factors such as gender, locality, type of institution, educational qualification, and academic stream. Competency in teaching encompasses a combination of subject knowledge, instructional ability, classroom management, communication skills, and ethical practice, all of which contribute to effective learning environments. The study employed a quantitative research methodology involving a sample of 300 prospective secondary teachers from government-aided and unaided institutions. Data were collected using a Personal Data Sheet and the General Teaching Competency Scale, with scores evaluated through descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, and t-tests. The findings revealed that the overall teaching competency among participants was average. No statistically significant differences were found in teaching competency based on gender, type of institution, educational qualification, or academic stream. However, a significant difference was observed based on locality, with rural trainees demonstrating higher competency than their urban counterparts. These results suggest that while teacher training programs produce generally competent graduates, greater emphasis is needed on individualizing pedagogical strategies to address diverse learner backgrounds. The study recommends enhancing pre-service teacher education by incorporating continuous training, modern teaching aids, and inclusive, practice-oriented strategies to improve professional competencies. It also underscores the importance of cultivating a positive attitude towards teaching and modeling best practices during teacher training.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education, a process that involves both the teacher and the taught, is crucial to a country's development. The dedication, concern, and commitment of a teacher are essential to their effectiveness and to improving the educational process as a whole. Without a doubt, the most important elements that contribute to a society's moral and intellectual fabric are the caliber, dedication, skill, and character of its teachers. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also act as role models and facilitators of social change. Their role in shaping young minds and fostering national development is irreplaceable. In this context, the foundation of an efficient teacher lies in robust pre-service teacher education, which helps build a sound knowledge base and develop essential teaching competencies [1].

The quality of teacher education has a direct impact on the professional efficiency of teachers. The training that prospective teachers receive during their pre-service education plays a fundamental role in developing their professional identity and capabilities. The four basic pillars of education learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together are integral to teacher training, and their importance has been emphasized by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (1996) [2]. These pillars underscore the holistic development of teachers, enabling them to handle the multidimensional responsibilities of the teaching profession [3].

Competence, in the educational context, refers to the ability of the teacher to apply knowledge and skills effectively in real teaching situations. It is not simply about acquiring theoretical knowledge but about using that knowledge purposefully in actual classroom environments [4]. Competence encompasses attributes such as enthusiasm, clarity, originality, empathy, adaptability, creativity, and discipline [5]. These qualities help a teacher not only deliver subject content effectively but also inspire and motivate learners [6]. Competency is thus a dynamic and practical quality that must be demonstrated through action, behavior, and outcomes [7].

Moreover, competency-based teacher education focuses on the development of specific, observable teaching skills that can lead to measurable improvements in student learning. It involves structured learning experiences that integrate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, preparing teachers to face the varied challenges in contemporary classrooms [8]. In today's fast-evolving educational landscape, teacher competency has gained even more relevance with the emergence of new pedagogical approaches, technological advancements, inclusive education, and learner-centered practices [9].

Therefore, the need for developing competent teachers through well-structured pre-service teacher education programs has become a key focus of educational reforms globally. A competent teacher not only possesses command over subject matter and pedagogy but also demonstrates a high degree of emotional intelligence, ethical behavior, and a commitment to lifelong learning. This kind of all-encompassing competency eventually helps to raise educational standards and, consequently, the creation of a more knowledgeable and capable country.

1.1. Significance of the Study

Children are our nation's future builders, and as such, they are shaping the destiny of a country in our schools. As a result, educators bear a heavy burden of shaping students' personalities through high-quality instruction. Teachers should be well-versed in the various forms of intelligence that kids possess and how to use them to help each student maximize their learning in a variety of subjects.

The practical teaching component is the most crucial component of the teacher education curriculum. The quality of teacher education is widely acknowledged to have a significant impact on the

level of education provided in schools. According to the National Council of Education Research and Training's (NCERT) "Internship in Teaching" handbook, this program should be appropriately designed to give both teachers and students a wide range of experiences that go well beyond teaching practice in order to develop teaching competency. Much discussion has been and, to some extent, still is surrounding the merits of competency-based education. Training that is competency-based equips students to carry out activities that arise in the course of practice.

In order to develop teaching competency, the prospective teachers have to develop certain skills. The study will ultimately benefit the whole teaching community as it identifies the factors associated with teaching learning process. So, the investigator tries to conduct a study on teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers.

1.2. Objectives

1. To assess aspiring secondary teachers' degree of teaching proficiency.
2. To ascertain the degree of teaching proficiency of aspiring secondary educators in relation to their gender, location, kind of school, level of education, age, marital status, and group.

2. RELATED WORK

Teaching competency has been a subject of significant academic inquiry, given its pivotal role in shaping the educational experiences of learners and, by extension, the future of any nation. Numerous scholars have highlighted that the education quality is directly influenced by the effectiveness and competence of teachers, which is largely cultivated during their pre-service training programs [10]. In order to represent the multifaceted nature of teacher competence, the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century Delors (1996) highlighted the importance of incorporating the four pillars of education—learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together into teacher education curricula [11].

Teaching competency is commonly viewed as a composite of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that a teacher must possess to facilitate effective learning. Wilson (1973) conceptualized teaching competency as encompassing not only cognitive and technical skills but also attitudinal components [12]. Similarly, Biddle (1964) defined it as the ability to achieve agreed-upon educational outcomes through specific teacher behaviors.

This highlights that teaching competency is not merely about subject mastery but includes the ability to communicate effectively, manage a classroom, evaluate student progress, and foster positive interpersonal relationships with students [13]. Various components of teaching competency have been identified in literature. For instance, Aggarwal (1988) emphasized that enthusiasm, originality, fluency, and adaptability are key attributes of a competent teacher. These attributes become operational in the context of actual teaching and must be integrated into behavior to serve a functional purpose [14]. Further, Mangal (2002) underlined that competency training should not only aim at knowledge acquisition but also ensure its application in real classroom scenarios [15]. Therefore, effective teacher education must bridge the gap between theory and practice [16].

In the Indian context, the NCTE has laid down specific teacher competencies to be achieved during pre-service training, including content mastery, pedagogical knowledge, learner-centered teaching, and reflective practices [17]. Studies by Sharma and Yadav (2010) found that teaching competencies significantly influence students' academic achievement and overall classroom engagement. Moreover, the ability of teachers to assess learning outcomes and modify instruction accordingly is seen as a hallmark of a competent educator [18]. Contemporary research also focuses on the dynamic and context-dependent nature of teaching competency. According to Darling-Hammond (2006), teacher competence is an evolving set of skills and knowledge that must adapt to changing educational contexts, student diversity, and technological advancements. Therefore, continuous professional development is essential for maintaining and enhancing teacher competencies over time [19].

The literature underscores that teaching competency is a multifaceted construct essential for effective education. It includes subject mastery, pedagogical skills, emotional intelligence, and evaluative abilities training plays a vital role in nurturing these competencies, thereby certifying that teachers are well-resourced to meet the challenges of modern classrooms. The evolving nature of educational demands also calls for a rethinking of competency frameworks to include adaptability, digital fluency, and inclusive practices in teacher education.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Tools Used

1. Personal Data Sheet
2. General Teaching Competency Scale (GTCS)

3.2. Administration of the Tool

The GTC scale is typically used to assess a teacher's individual teaching competency by a trustworthy observer or group of trustworthy observers who directly monitor the teacher's classroom behavior throughout the whole instructional period. The observer sits in the back to watch the teacher teach. The teacher rates each item on the GTC scale at the conclusion of the instructional period. The teacher can help with this process by marking frequencies or verbally describing each item, which will help the teacher give evaluations that are more objective.

3.3. Scoring

The general teaching competency score of the lesson under observation is the total of the scores for each of the 21 items. The lowest score is 21, and the highest is 147.

3.4. Statistical Techniques Used

The following statistical methods were employed by the researcher for this investigation.

1. Percentage Analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation & t – Test.

3.5. Hypotheses

1. There is no statistically significant difference in teaching competency between male and female prospective secondary teachers.
2. There is no statistically significant difference in teaching competency between rural and urban prospective secondary teachers.
3. Prospective secondary teachers from government-aided and unaided colleges do not differ significantly in their teaching competency.
4. There is no significant variation in teaching competency between undergraduate-qualified and postgraduate-qualified prospective secondary teachers.
5. Teaching competency does not differ significantly between prospective secondary teachers from arts and science streams.

2.1. Delimitations

1. The study has been limited to B.Ed. trainees only.
2. The study is limited to selected variables such as sex, locality, type of Institution, and educational qualification.
3. Within a limited time, it is impossible to administer the questionnaire to a large sample and hence it was administered only to 300 respondents.

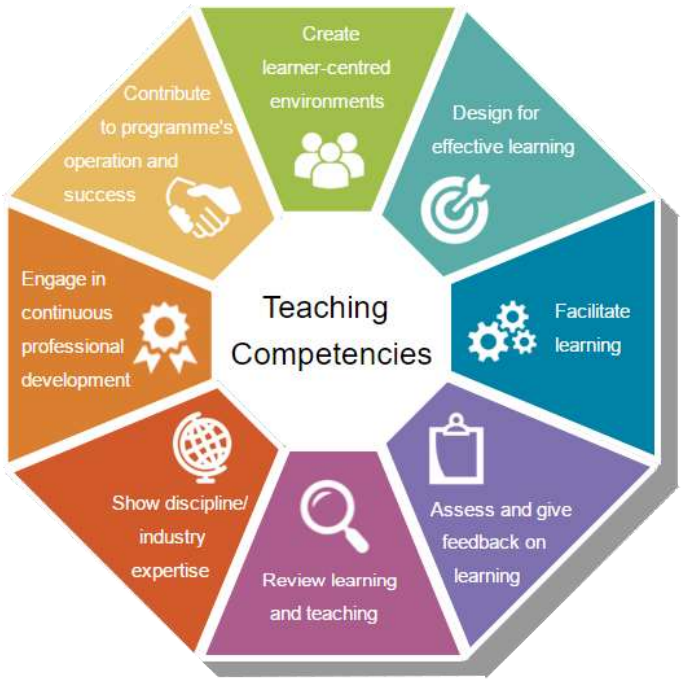

Figure 1. Teaching Competencies

As shown in Figure 1, the general teaching competencies highlight the core components of effective teaching. These include subject knowledge, instructional strategies, classroom management, communication skills, and professional ethics, all of which are essential for enhancing student learning outcomes and fostering a positive educational environment.

1. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Sample Distribution

Variables	No. of Students	Percentage
Gender		
Male	43	14.3
Female	257	85.7
Locality		
Rural	178	59.3
Urban	122	40.7
Type of Institution		
Government aided	60	20.0
Unaided	240	80.0
Educational Qualification		
UG	208	69.3
PG	92	30.7
Group		
Arts	152	50.7
Science	148	49.3

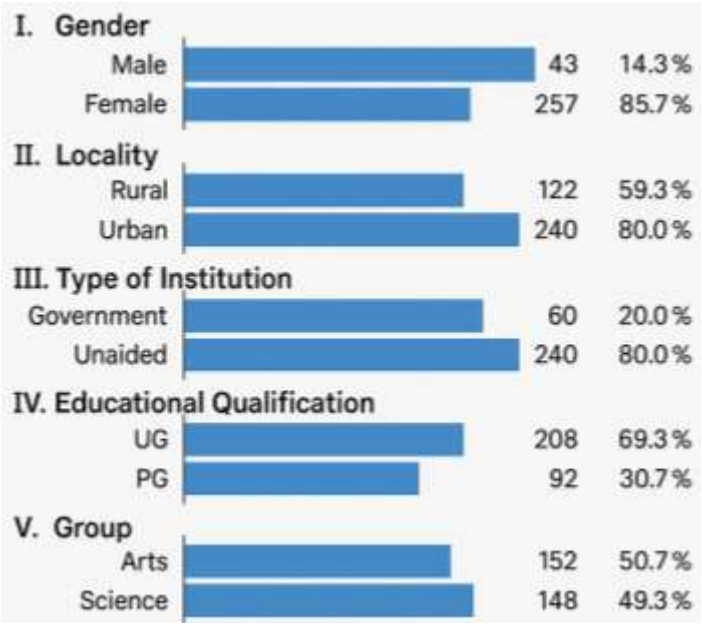

Figure 2. Secondary Teachers and Teaching Competency

As shown in the Table 1 and **Error! Reference source not found.** provides the sample distribution of prospective secondary teachers based on five key variables. Among the 300 participants, a significant majority are female (85.7%), while only 14.3% are male. Most students come from rural areas (59.3%), compared to 40.7% from urban localities. A large proportion of the sample (80%) study in unaided institutions, while only 20% are from government-aided institutions. In terms of educational qualification, 69.3% are undergraduates and 30.7% postgraduates. The group-wise distribution is nearly balanced, with 50.7% from the arts stream and 49.3% from science, ensuring representation across disciplines.

1.1. Hypothesis 1

There is no statistically significant difference in teaching competency between male and female prospective secondary teachers.

Table 2. Teaching Competency Differences between Male and Female Aspiring Secondary Teachers

Variable		N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Table Value	Remark at 5% level
Gender	Male	43.00	100.14	21.26	0.10	1.96	NS
	Female	257.00	99.80	22.32			

(NS – Not Significant)

Table 2 results reveal that there is no significant difference in the teaching competency of male and female prospective secondary teachers because the computed value is smaller than the table value at the 5% level. Thus, the research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

4.2 Hypothesis 2

There is no statistically significant difference in teaching competency between rural and urban prospective secondary teachers.

Table 3. Disparities in Teaching Skill between Aspiring Secondary Teachers in Rural and Urban Areas

Variable		N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Table Value	Remark at 5% level
Locality	Rural	178.00	104.33	19.06	4.16	1.96	S

	Urban	222.00	93.30	24.64			

(NS – Not Significant)

Table 3 shows that the computed value is higher than the table value at the 5% level, indicating a significant difference in the teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers in rural and urban areas. Research hypotheses are so accepted and null hypotheses are rejected.

4.3. Hypothesis 3

Prospective secondary teachers from government-aided and unaided colleges do not differ significantly in their teaching competency.

Table 4. Disparity in Teaching Skill between Aspiring Secondary Teachers at Government-Aided and Unaided Colleges

Variable		N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Table Value	Remark at 5% Level
Type of Institution	Govt. Aided	60.00	103.03	17.94	1.45	1.96	NS
	Unaided	240.00	99.80	23.04			

(NS – Not Significant)

As shown in the Table 4 the results indicates that the calculated value is less than the table value at 5% level and hence there is no significant difference between Govt. Aided and Unaided College prospective secondary teachers in their teaching competency. Research hypotheses are so rejected and null hypotheses are accepted.

4.4. Hypothesis 4

There is no significant variation in teaching competency between undergraduate-qualified and postgraduate-qualified prospective secondary teachers.

Table 5. Teaching Competency Differences between UG and PG-Qualified Aspiring Secondary Teachers

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Calculated't' Value	Table Value	Remark at 5% Level
Educational Qualification	UG	208.00	98.96	22.40	1.06	1.96	NS
	PG	92.00	101.85	21.51			

(NS – Not Significant)

Table 5 shows that there is no discernible difference in the teaching competency of UG and PG qualified prospective secondary teachers because the computed value is smaller than the table value at the 5% level. Thus, the research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

4.5. Hypothesis 5

Teaching competency does not differ significantly between prospective secondary teachers from arts and science streams.

Table 6. Disparity in Teaching Skill amongst Aspiring Secondary Teachers in the Arts and Science Groups

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Calculated't' Value	Table Value	Remark at 5% Level
Group	Arts	152.00	97.94	23.11	1.52	1.96	NS
	Science	148.00	101.80	20.99			

(NS – Not Significant)

Table 6 shows that the computed value is less than the table value at the 5% level, indicating that there is no discernible difference in the teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers in the Arts and Science Groups. Research hypotheses are so rejected and null hypotheses are accepted.

Findings

The findings of the study are based on the analysis of the data collected and the interpretations are given based on the findings. The recommendations and suggestions for replication or for investigation of other closely related problem is also presented.

Percentage Analysis

1. The level of teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers is average.
2. Prospective secondary teachers have an average level of sex-related teaching ability.
3. In relation to their locality, aspiring secondary teachers have an average degree of teaching proficiency.
4. In relation to the type of institution, the teaching competency of aspiring secondary teachers is mediocre.
5. The level of teaching competency of prospective secondary teachers with regard to educational qualification is average.

Differential Analysis

1. The teaching skill of male and female aspiring secondary teachers does not differ much.
2. The teaching competency of aspiring secondary teachers in rural and urban areas does not differ much.
3. The teaching competency of aspiring secondary teachers at government-aided and unaided colleges is not significantly different.
4. The teaching competencies of prospective secondary teachers with undergraduate and graduate degrees do not differ much.
5. There is no significant difference between Arts and Science group prospective secondary teachers in their teaching competency.

5. CONCLUSION

The ability of a teacher to achieve predetermined educational outcomes is known as teaching competency. The notion of teaching competency, therefore, encompasses teacher accountability and duty. It is commonly accepted that teachers are capable of acting in particular ways in the classroom. It increases the teacher's efficiency and self-assurance.

The B.Ed. training course should focus on demonstrating the various techniques and strategies of teaching by teacher educators, which helps the student teacher to imitate the teacher educator as a model in their practice teaching [20], [21]. This will help them to improve their professional competence. Teaching competency is therefore one of the elements of the process of teaching and learning.

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Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu

Dr. G. Sivakumar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

C : **C**onceptualization
M : **M**ethodology
So : **So**ftware
Va : **Va**lidation
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis
I : **I**nvestigation
R : **R**esources
D : **D**ata Curation
O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft
E : Writing - Review & **E**diting
Vi : **Vi**sualization
Su : **Su**pervision
P : **P**roject administration
Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition

Conflict of Interest Statement

No conflicts of interest were reported by the author.

Informed Consent

This study utilized anonymized data, and the need for informed consent was waived by [Alagappa University.

Ethical Approval

Colleges of Education, Alagappa University, Institutional Ethics Review Committee.

Data Availability

Data availability is not applicable to this paper as no new data were created or analysed.

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