A Review on Impact of Teacher Training Programs on the Attitude of Teachers

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Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to look into the impact of teacher training programs on the attitude of teachers. The preservice and in service programs were considered. Various aspects were looked at such change of attitude towards inclusion, use of ICT, teaching profession, micro teaching and so forth. The results show that teacher training impacts positively on the attitude of the teachers. Notwithstanding individual teachers have particular temperaments and personality traits that influence how they approach new ideas and situations. Thus, learning outcomes in teacher education are a function of both what programs offer and what teacher trainees bring to the training course. It is also worth noting that at times experienced teachers did not have a change of attitude but they had an improvement in their efficiency. In some cases teachers change in attitude did not translate to a change in behavior due to lack of facilities in the schools.

Key Words: Attitude, pre service training, in service training, teacher trainee

Introduction

Education is undergoing transformations across different parts of the world including Africa. The reform impulse has seen the rise and construction of new learning standards and assessments which will only work if there is investment in the capacity of educators to work together effectively. It’s time to clear away non-essential demands and build capacity in our schools for smarter teaching and learning. Educators are ready for it, students deserve it, and our future prosperity and security require it (Valerie Strauss, 2013). Improving teachers by building their capacity in their professional and personal life is important in the process of reforming education.

Today, students need to learn how to transfer knowledge and skills to real-world problems by communicating and collaborating in groups locally, nationally, and globally to find creative solutions that are innovative, efficient, and sustainable (Valerie Strauss, 2013). Instead, we have 21st century learners being taught by 20th century teachers in a 19th century educational system (Asia Society, 2012). Because of the globalized world’s new demands for careers and life in the 21st century, international educational leaders are transforming outdated educational systems to reflect a variety of instructional strategies and assessments that will engage multicultural and diverse student populations.

According to Trorey and Cullingford (2002), teachers are central to the capacity of schools to perform and no amount of policy
reform will make education more effective unless teachers are part of the change. One of the fundamental facts that educators and teachers have to bear in mind is to know how important it is to have the ability to stay current and utilize the most up to date information. Continuous provision of teachers needs through different forms of support such as training and other forms of career development are a crucial component in nearly every modern proposal for educational improvement. Regardless of how schools are formed or reformed, structured or restructured, the renewal of staff members’ professional skills is considered fundamental to improvement.

Global trends show that majority of our teachers have had opportunities to attend well developed and thoughtful workshops on how to transform teaching and learning. However, the enthusiasm engendered by the workshops wane when they return to the classroom and the reality of the thousands of other things that have to be done in order to achieve effective teaching and learning (Joyce and Showers, 2002).

**Attitude on Inclusion**

There is some evidence that an important predictor of successful integration of students with disabilities in regular classrooms is the positive attitude of teachers (Sharma, Florin, Lowerman & Earle, 2006; Al-Khatteb 2004; Avramidis, 2001; Mowes, 2000; Elloker, 1999; Gadium, 2002; Dover, 2002; & Mekeskey & Waldrom, 2002). Research evidence also suggests that positive teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion often begins during pre-service teacher preparation (Jung, 2007; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2001; Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003; Shippen et al.,2005). Subban and Sharma (2007) pointed out that if teachers leave from the university with negative attitudes then those attitudes are difficult to change. Consequently, positive attitudes can and need to be fostered through both training and positive experiences with students with disabilities.

The effect of teacher preparation for inclusion is known to have significantly affected pre-service teachers’ attitudes in both Jordan and UAE. Teacher efficacy in implementing inclusion directly affects their practices and attitudes toward including students with disabilities in general education (Sharam, et al., 2006; Pace, 2003). Both males and females had negative attitudes towards people with disabilities in both Jordan and the UAE. One reason for the negative attitudes of males and females could be that pre-service teachers in this study had not been informed that students with special needs would be included in their classrooms and that, as general educators, they do not prefer to be responsible for teaching students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Other reason could be attributed to the fact that the number of male students in this study was small (Al Zyoudi M., Al Sartwai A. & Dodin H.2011).

Jordanian pre-service teachers had more positive attitudes than their counterparts in UAE. This result could be attributed to the fact that UAE as a nation is relatively new, having been established in 1971; hence, much of its effort has been devoted to creating new programs and services in all aspects, particularly in education. These efforts are still in early
stages and need more time to prove their effectiveness. In contrast, Jordan has a long history of providing education for all students. Education in Jordan has received much attention and improvement including preparation of teachers, programs and curriculum. These developments play a major role in improving the quality of services and programs which reflects on improving pre-service teachers attitudes towards inclusive education. This interpretation seems supported by Sharam et al., (2006) who concluded that pre-service teachers from Western countries (i.e. Australia, and Canada) had more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities than their Eastern counterparts (i.e. Hong Kong and Singapore).

Pre-service teachers in the UAE considered the absence of appropriate materials and equipment as barriers to successful inclusion. Pre-service teachers in this study were critical of the services provided for students in general education classrooms. On the other hand, in Jordan, pre-service teachers showed positive attitudes towards inclusion, because they found appropriate resources that facilitated successful inclusion. This result is supported by Alzyoudi (2006) who found a strong relationship between sufficient resources and successful inclusion. Pre-service teacher education must, therefore, be concerned with the promotion of teacher attitudes as well as instructional competences (Andrews, 2002; Reinke and Moseley, 2002).

Pearson (2009) says that teacher education is a context in which changes in attitudes, beliefs and values do occur. Atkinson (2004) and Forlin et al. (2009) note that if the negative attitudes of pre-service teachers are not addressed during initial teacher education, they may continue to hamper the progress of inclusive education efforts in schools. Training in special/inclusive education has consistently been found to have influenced educators’ attitudes (Campbell et al., 2003; Cook, 2002). Lancaster and Bain (2007) agree that in general, there is a positive change in attitudes after undertaking an inclusive/special education unit of study and this is the case across a number of contexts and countries (Ching et al., 2007; Kyriakou et al., 2007).

However, Molina (2006) found research evidence to demonstrate that theoretical classes and reading are not sufficient to modify teachers’ and students’ negative attitudes towards pupils with special educational needs. Loreman et al. (2007b) conclude that if pre-service teachers are going to develop positive attitudes towards inclusive education, they need opportunities for direct interaction with people with disabilities, instruction on policy and legislation relating to inclusive education, and opportunities to gain confidence in practical teaching situations with students with disabilities.

Johnson and Howell (2009) also show that attitudes are amenable to change through a course and an assignment that involve the analysis of case studies in inclusive education. Elhoweris and Alsheikh (2006) suggest that attitudes can be improved by increasing students’ knowledge about learners with disabilities and ways to meet their learning needs and suggest that teacher education programmes may need to include more alternative learning styles and instructional strategy.

Lambe (2007) found that successful teaching practice in the non-selective sector had the most positive influence on perceived competency and on general attitudes
towards inclusion. A study by Yellin et al. (2003) however, concluded that mere exposure to students with additional needs may not be enough to change attitudes in a positive way—it is the quality of experiences which produces real change. Campbell et al. (op. cit.) provided a one semester course on human development and education and field work with learners with Down syndrome. Following this, students felt significantly less discomfort, uncertainty, fear and vulnerability when interacting with people with disabilities. They also reported feeling less sympathy, an outcome also noted by Tait and Purdie (2000) which may indicate a more relaxed approach to disability as opposed to an overly sympathetic view.

Studies overseas have found that many teachers have less than positive attitudes towards students with disabilities and their inclusion in general education classrooms (D’Alonzo, Annemaree Carroll and Giordano, & Cross, 1996; Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Anne Jobling, Slusher, & Saumell, 1996). In a study of teachers in rural British Columbia, it was established that both their in service and preservice education had inadequately prepared them for the realities of inclusion (Bandy & Boyer, 1994). Teachers reported a high percentage of children with special needs in their classrooms who had a wide range of disabilities. They revealed a grave concern pertaining to the lack of support services available to the students and themselves, and disclosed a perceived inability to provide optimal educational programs to children with special needs because of inadequate teacher preparation and lack of adequate resources. Of 231 teacher trainees in Northern Ireland and Scotland, 96 percent indicated that they did not believe their professional training had prepared them to meet the challenge of inclusive education (Wishart & Manning, 1996). Another study conducted in 45 states in the U.S.A. concerning inclusion reported that respondents did not feel prepared to meet the needs of their students with disabilities (Lombard et al., 1998).

Hickson, (1995) asserts a positive attitude change towards people with disabilities was noted on completion of a mandatory disability course component. In addition, attitude formation and change were also linked to contact with people with disabilities. In an Australian study, Forlin, Jobling, and Carroll (2001) identified several factors that were related to interactions with people with disabilities for a group of preservice teachers. It was found that preservice teachers had a high level of sympathy toward people with disabilities, were fearful of being disabled, and felt vulnerable in interactions with people with disabilities.

A survey of teachers undertaken by the Queensland Government (Disability Services Queensland, 1999) further reported that 86 percent of the respondents considered that others would not feel relaxed and comfortable when interacting with people with a disability. Annemaree C., Chris F. & Anne J, (2003) observed that the most noticeable improvement regarding interactions with a person with a disability was that preservice teachers felt less ignorant, more able to act normally and surer of how to behave, once they had completed the course. They also demonstrated less pity and a greater focus on the person rather than the disability.
Attitudes on Computer Information Technology (ICT) Usage

Teo, T., Lee, C. B., & Chai, C. S. (2007) study shows that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and subjective norm were significant determinants of pre-service computer attitudes. Facilitating conditions did not influence computer attitude directly but through perceived ease of use. These findings demonstrate that social norm and facilitating conditions are potential variables that may be used to extend the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) for research on computer attitudes.

Wong et al (2005) examined the use of the Internet among 310 pre-service teachers using questionnaire survey method. They found that pre-service teachers’ use of the Internet was influenced by support from friends, confidence level, attitude towards the Internet and perceived usefulness (PU).

Khine (2001) studied 184 pre-service teachers to examine their use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) through studying their attitudes towards computers and found a significant relationship between Computer Attitudes (CA) and its use in the institution. Yuen & Ma (2001) administered the Chinese Computer Attitude Scale for Teachers to 216 secondary teachers in Hong Kong to examine the factors that influence the instructional use of computers and their results revealed that affective attitudes, general usefulness, behavioral control and pedagogical use were significant in determining the use of ICT among teachers, accounting for 37% of the model specified.

A key reason for studying teachers’ CA is the ability of attitudes to predict computer usage. Research has shown that a teacher’s attitude towards the computer is a major predictor for future computer use (Myers & Halpin, 2002) and their need for learning computing skills that in turn will lead to computer literacy (Zhang & Espinoza, 1997). For example, Yildirim (2000) found that teachers who used computers more would tend to develop positive attitudes that promote further use of the computer in their daily teaching tasks and conduct activities that require computers to play a major role in, for example, computer-mediated forums.

Attitude on other Variables

In a study in Iran, Shahmohammadi (2014) noted the short in service training course significantly affected the teachers’ attitude in the learning environment which includes: Relationship with Students, Presentation and Culture and Adjustment and not in Individuals and Activity. The reason being, they had already developed a positive attitude towards the same during their teaching practice and teaching experience. According to Senior (2006) it is nearly impossible for teacher to implement all the principles of teaching that they have been taught in training courses since these courses are overloading teachers with a plethora of methods, and teaching skills. This may account for the high number of mistakes in the two areas of presentation and execution/method.

Shahmohammadi (2014) also asserts that in some cases there was a mismatch between the student teachers’ attitude and their teaching practice in class. That is to say they failed to put into practice what they valued .The researchers are of the opinion that the reason why the teachers did not follow some of the training guidelines might be due to their being overwhelmed with a surplus of principles on the one hand and
being new to the atmosphere and inexperienced on the other. This might have made it difficult for them to make on the spot decisions in spite of their willingness to do so. This finding supports Ajzen’s (1988) claim that teachers’ attitudes may be something and their actual behaviors may be something else based on the opportunities and resources available to them. This point is consistent with the common observation that some teachers who agree with particular types of activities do not carry them out in their classrooms. For these teachers, attitude is not predictive of their behavior. The point to remember is that teachers’ inadequate performance should not be considered as an indication of their incompetence. If they are given enough time and practice they would probably gain the confidence to be more judicious in their decision making.

Researchers have observed that some experienced teachers also did not follow the training course guidelines. The reason might be the incompatibility of what the teachers had gained through years of experience and what was introduced as sound practice in the training course. Their experience might have convinced them that what the training course introduced as effective practice was not feasible. This case is also in line with what Hollingsworth (1992) has theorized. He claims that prior knowledge and experience serve as a filter to pedagogical learning during the pre-service years, altering how pedagogical instruction is learned and enacted by teachers. This was actually observed in this study since some teachers who had a few years of experience in teaching did not follow exactly what was prescribed to them in the training course and preserved their previous beliefs and personal theories. As individuals, teachers have particular temperaments and personality traits that influence how they approach new ideas and situations. Thus, learning outcomes in teacher education are a function of both what programs offer and what teacher trainees bring to the training course.

Srivastava (1989) attempted to study the impact of teacher education programme of Lucknow University on pupil- teachers’ attitude and teaching efficiency. The findings of study were: Most of the trainee groups changed their teacher attitude positively and significantly after training. However the experienced male trainees did not show any change in their teacher attitude, there was no significant change in the teacher-aptitude of the male postgraduate student-teachers and the experienced female trainees as a result of the training. All the trainees showed significant and appreciable improvement in their classroom teaching performance, after the completion of the training, the females showed better teacher-attitude and aptitude than the male trainees. Male trainees showed better teaching efficiency than female trainees, and the trainees teaching social sciences showed better teaching efficiency than those teaching science and mathematics.

Roy (1991) examined the impact of the elementary teacher education programme on attitudinal change of the elementary teacher-trainees of Orissa towards community involvement. The elementary teacher education programme with the elements of community involvement, both in theory and practice, positively affected the change in attitude of the student-teachers towards community involvement. Both the categories of student-teachers were almost equally prone to change in their attitude towards community
involvement. Previous teaching experience had no role to play in the change in attitude of student-teachers towards community involvement. The degree of interest in teaching was responsible for accelerating the development of attitude towards community involvement.

Ramachandran (1991) attempted to conduct an enquiry into the attitude of student-teachers towards teaching. The findings of the study were: Regular college teacher-trainees had a more favorable attitude towards teaching than the correspondence course teacher-trainees, female teacher-trainees had a more favorable attitude towards teaching than male teacher-trainees, the sons and daughters of teachers had a highly favorable attitude towards teaching. Post Graduate (PG) teacher-trainees had a more favorable attitude towards teaching than undergraduate teacher-trainees; the nature of the course did not influence the attitude of teacher-trainees towards teaching.

Yadav (1992) studied the impact of teacher training on certain personality characteristics of trainees. The findings of the study were: All the dimensions of self-concept increased through teacher training except the feeling of inadequacy which decreased. Social maturity of the teacher-trainees increased in all the dimensions except for self-direction, personal adequacy and enlightened trust; the teachers' training had a significant influence on their self-concept, social maturity and attitude towards the teaching profession.

Fortune, et al. (1965) designed a questionnaire to assess attitudes of students towards micro teaching technique in Stanford summer micro technique clinic. The result was quite encouraging. It was found that 60 percent of the participating students reported their micro teaching experience either very or extremely valuable. Dhadwal (1981) in his study of attitude of B.Ed. trainees towards teaching profession found that trainees belonging to urban areas have more favourable attitude as compared to those belonging to rural areas. Men have less favourable attitude as compared to women towards teaching profession. Raina (1990) found that there was no significant difference in attitude towards teaching profession. Between the in-service education science, arts and commerce teachers differed significantly in their attitude to teaching.

Shukla (1997) conducted a study on the attitude of the college teachers towards their profession and found that majority of teachers show favourable attitude towards their profession. Female teachers show greater positive attitude than male teachers.

Sali (2003) studied the attitude of teachers towards four aspects of in-service training programme i.e. content enrichment of school subject, teaching methods, new trends in education and innovation in education and interpreted favorable attitude towards different aspects. Depaul et al. (2003) studied the difference in the attitude of elementary school teachers towards in-service education in between non graduates, graduates and post-graduate, married, unmarried, urban and rural. The result showed that there is no significant differences between the mean attitude score towards the in-service education with regard to different variables.

**Conclusion**

The review shows that the teacher training programmes have an impact on teachers’
attitudes towards various aspects in the teaching profession. Both preservice and in-service programs were looked into. It is also notable that not only do the programs influence the attitude of the teachers but also their past experiences and personality traits. Moreover, the attitudes of the teachers do not always translate to behavior change due to lack of equipment and materials.

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