



Reflective practices of teaching at University level: A Gender-wise discrimination

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ABSTRACT

The current study was designed to differentiate gender-wise uses of reflective practices in teaching at the university level in public sector universities of Balochistan. Reflective practices play a significant role in the teaching-learning process in higher education because they contribute to teachers' professional and personal growth. The nature of the study was descriptive. The target population of the current study was the faculty members of 08 public sector universities in Balochistan. Four universities were chosen using a stratified random sampling technique. The total number of respondents was comprised of 83 male and female professors and lecturers. To obtain valid and relevant data, a questionnaire was adapted. The required data was collected online through the google survey method. The collected data was inferred through SPSS, mean score, *t*-test and ANOVA. The major findings were less awareness about the uses of reflective practices and a lack of professional development. A few recommendations were made based on the findings.

Keywords: *Reflective, Practices, Gender-wise, Discrimination*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the modern methodologies for professional development and grooming related to teachers is the main concept of reflective practices in teaching. It differs from the typical approach to teacher professional development because it places a greater emphasis on dialogue with students and colleagues. Moreover, teachers' reflective practices include sharing experiences, considering various philosophies, valuing coworkers' (colleagues') viewpoints, and thinking critically. Reflection can be a purposeful search; this is not shiftless traveling or activity of daydreaming, but a besieged and meaningful activity (Boud et al., 1985). Reflective practices assist teachers in challenging and analyzing their own teaching assumptions. Reflection is a complex practice in which cognition and emotion are intertwined (Arshad and Malik, 2018; Erdemir and Yesilcinar, 2021). According to Boud et al., (1985), reflection can be a purposeful activity because it is not a wandering or idle activity like daydreaming but a meaningful and targeted activity.

According to Rashidi and Javidanmehr (2012), reflection can be a thinking procedure that occurs in our daily life, which may be more cherished than conventional knowledge. Reflective practices help teachers to improve themselves along with career development. According to John (1995), reflection is a technique for thinking about something to reveal certain differences and seek clarification and answers to various questions. The most important objective of reflection can be depicted from inner thoughts determining a person's daily practice. Along the same line, Brookfield (1995) discovered that people react and act based on reasonable internal reflection, a process known as instinct reasoning.

Gender differences are made up of both psychological and biological characteristics. Arshad and Malik (2018) state that thinking of a teacher as a reflective practitioner assumes that a teacher may address and raise difficulties related to his educational practices. The current study is entirely focused on differences in reflective practices among teachers in terms of gender differences. Few psychologists believe that, compared to their male counterparts, female instructors have more experience in discussion, interpretation, and thinking about their internal feelings and thoughts (Belenky et. al., 1986; Lee and Mori, 2021). They conclude that female reflects more than males. According to Afshar and Farahani (2015), on the other hand, they found gender differences among teachers when it came to reflective teaching and reflective thinking, with male teachers outperforming female teachers in terms of thinking and reflective teaching.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify reflective practices of teachers at the university level.

2. To explore the difference between the uses of reflective practices of male and female teachers at the university level.

Research Questions

1. What are the reflective practices of teachers at the university level?
2. What is the difference between the uses of reflective practices of male and female teachers at the university level?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word "*reflection*" is derived from a Latin word "*Reflectere*" which means to turn around, to turn backward, or to bend back (Rushton and Suter, 2012). According to Finlay (2008), "*reflective practice*" has a range of meanings extending from an independent or autonomous reflection by experts to a vivid critical conversation with others, adding that overall, experts may periodically accept clearly and formally. Moreover, different grounds and knowledge societies have different perspectives on "reflective practice". For Moon (2005), reflection is a completely intellectual process that may be used to attain goals or achieve desired outcomes. It can be useful to comprehend comparatively complex notions fully. It is built mostly on the re-use of information, possibly and thoughtfully, the sentiments that individuals have previously held.

Habib (2017) stated that reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's activities as part of a continuous learning process. In addition, reflection can be a form of mental dispensation that is employed to achieve the desired outcomes. Senior or qualified teachers and novice teachers must begin the practice of ongoing career or professional development from the beginning of their training. Above all qualities that constitute a successful teacher is an ability to reflect on how, why, and what questions in daily life to build and adopt the reflective practice for lifetime learning. Moreover, reflective practice is regarded as a tool for teachers to think about their thoughts, enhance their abilities, and judge their quality of work primarily based on evidence (Habib, 2017). According to Smyth (1993), "Reflective practice in teacher education," reflection should not be confined to investigating only technical skills. Still, it should also consider the social, ethical, and political context in which teaching happens.

Sellars (2012) stated that the eminence of educational reforms that instructors have the opportunity and ability to implement would be only as good as the educators' specific capacity for self-knowledge and reflective practice. According to Habib (2017), reflective practice is an ongoing, vibrant process of thinking carefully, honestly, and critically about all aspects of professional practice. They argue that reflective practice is an activity of organized awareness to self-assessment and self-analyzation through which teachers develop new teaching strategies and techniques. In addition, reflective practice enables teachers to understand their students; thus, reflection is a key to successful learning both for learners and teachers.

Mortari (2015) revealed that reflection is a mainly mental process, both in professional and private life, and knowledge of reflective practice is central since it permits the public to participate in a solicitous relationship with their existing experience as 'Reflection' can be a critical cognitive and intellectual practice in the teaching-learning process. Boud et al., (2000) affirmed that the word reflection emerged in the pedagogical and instructional debate in 1980s, and has progressively been an essential instrument in experience-based education and learning. Mezirow (1990) stated that reflection is adopted both in school education and in grown-up or adult learning. Reflection is particularly promoted in teacher education, which explains the strategies for transforming new teachers into reflective practitioners (Black, 2001; Choy et al., 2021), and so a special type of reflective and deep training, such as grave and critical reflection, is advised (Brookfield, 1995). Pallascio and Lafourture (2000) stated what nature of the experience would be established to support reflectivity in teacher education. They stated that the experiences of the qualified and professionally groomed teachers would ensure great support for the reflective practices, which makes the learning environment in the institution. Brookfield (1995) continued the reflective practice by introducing a few ways to enlighten reflective learning, focusing on inquiring into crucial incidents, writing autobiographies, and connecting with others to assess and analyze problems collaboratively.

In the opinion of Dewey (1933), the formation of reflection should be action-oriented. Moreover, reflective thought, in his opinion, is extremely beneficial since it converts just appetitive, impulsive, and blind action into intellectual action. In the concept of '*Democracy and Education*' he established an association between "*learning from experience*" and reflection. Reflective thinking is the psychological and mental process that makes such kind of connections. Moreover, it cannot be possible to comprehend the meaning from practice and experience "*without some element of thought*" (Dewey, 1933). In this regard, Dewey likened two kinds of experience on the basis of the level of reflection they recommend: when people act performing to a "*trial and error*" criterion, they can have "*unreflective experience*", whereas when they deliberately raise a kind of thinking and rationale intended at determining the relations between their activities and their consequences, they can have a "*reflective experience*" (Colomer, et al., 2020).

Schön (1983) introduced two concepts of reflection; i) *reflection-in-action*, and ii) *reflection-on-action*. He believes it is a valuable instrument that professionals may use to respond to an event as it occurs, instead of thinking about what

occurs and will make changes later. Moreover, '*reflection-on-action*' comprises thinking about modifying the practices after an incident. We need to reflect on actions and recall what has been done to figure out how our information and understanding of our actions may have contributed to unexpected consequences. Reflection-on-action also includes thinking back on what has been done to figure out how one's knowing-in-action possibly has contributed to the resolution of the issue or problem (Huah, 2021; Schön, 1987). Wilkes and Chapman (2015) affirmed that teachers might take instant action based on situations because this can be valued as the approach to thinking and learning about actions. He added that teachers need to reflect on actions aimed by an additional thoughtful and sympathetic practice.

METHODOLOGY

After studying the related literature, two necessary objectives were set for the current study; to identify the reflective practices of teachers at the university level, and to explore the difference between the uses of reflective practices of male and female teachers at the university level.

The nature of the current study was descriptive, in which the survey method was applied. All faculty members comprised of 08 public sector universities in Balochistan province were the population of the study. Through a simple random technique, 04 universities were selected. The total number of subjects included 63 male and 20 female faculty members. To obtain valid and relevant results of the current research, it was essential to choose an appropriate research instrument for determining the respondents' ideas. The investigator has adapted '*Reflective Practice Assessment Instrument of Wilkes and Chapman*' (2015) to collect data from professors/lecturers to find gender-wise characteristics of reflective practitioners at the university level. Data has been collected online through the google survey. The collected data were analyzed through SPSS and the mean score, *t*-test and ANOVA.

RESULTS

It is evident that the majority of participants (49%) were lecturers. Whereas, Assistant Professors had the second-highest number of participants, with 23 (27 % of total respondents). Similarly, Associate professors and Professors accounted for 8 and 3 percent of total responders, respectively (4 % of total participants). The number of Associate Professors and full Professors is quite low due to the inception of newly established universities in Balochistan. Mostly, fresh and local candidates for the Lecturer post are preferred.

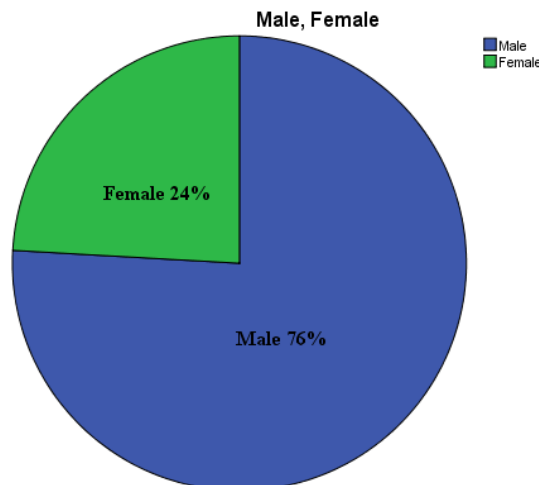


Figure 1: Survey participants

The above pie chart shows that the majority of participants were male. They were 63 in number (76% of total participants), while the female were 20 (24% of total participants).

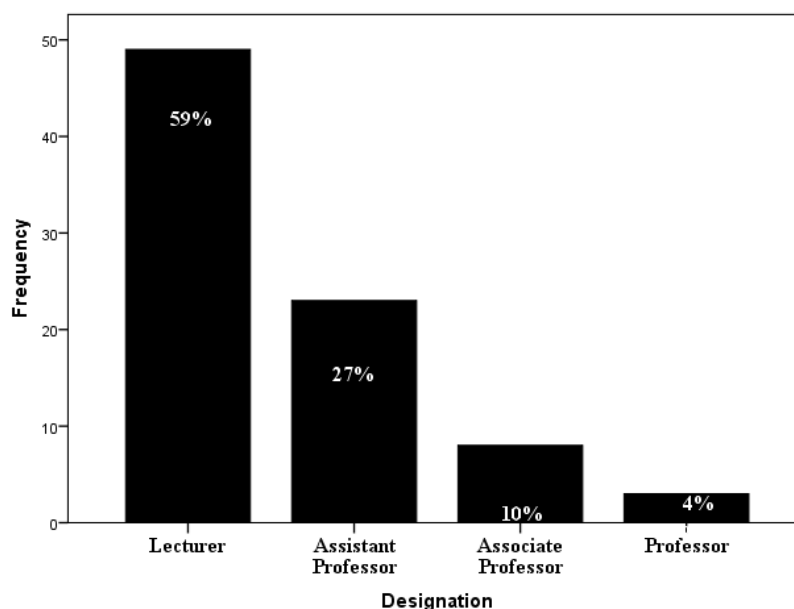


Figure 2: designation-wise description of faculty members

RQ 1: What are the reflective practices of teachers at the university level?

Table 1: What are the reflective practices of teachers at the university level?

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reflective Practices	83	1.00	2.29	1.8788	.31036

The table shows the mean and standard deviation regarding participants' responses about reflective practices during their teaching. Mean 1.8788 with a standard deviation 0.31036 shows a very low level of reflective practices of faculty members during teaching. Results show that majority of faculty members do not use reflective practices during teaching at public sector universities in Balochistan.

RQ 2: What is the difference between the uses of reflective practices of male and female teachers at the university level?

Table 2: Difference among the perceptions of Faculty members regarding reflective practices during teaching on gender basis

Variable	Groups	N	M	SD	Df	t-value	sig(p)
Perceptions Ref. Practices	Male	63	1.9244	.230	81	2.445	.017
	Female	20	1.7353	.462			

* $p < 0.05$

The above table depicts that the t -value (2.445) with df (81) is significant at $p < 0.05$. It indicates that male ($M=1.92$, $SD=0.23$) and female ($M=1.73$, $SD=0.46$) differs significantly in perceptions regarding reflective practices. Thus, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of males and females regarding using reflective practices during their teaching at public sector universities in Balochistan.

Difference on designation-basis

Table 3: Difference among the perceptions of Faculty members regarding reflective practices during teaching on the basis of designation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.275	3	.092	.951	.420
Within Groups	7.623	79	.096		
Total	7.899	82			

* $p < 0.05$

The above table indicates that the F (0.951) is insignificant at $p < 0.05$. It shows that faculty members do not differ in their perceptions regarding using reflective practices during teaching based on different designation groups at public sector universities in Balochistan.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Professional development and grooming of teachers make the teaching-learning process more advance at the university level. In addition, the educational system employs innovative and modern teaching methodologies. Reflective practices in teaching are one of the latest and most effective teaching styles among these strategies and techniques, especially at the university level. In the discourse of reflective practices in teaching at the university level,

gender-wise discrimination among the professors and lecturers in the uses of reflective practices in public sector universities in Balochistan was targeted.

The literature review regarding reflective practices depicted that among other teaching strategies, reflective practices guide teachers to self-improvement. Kılıç (2022) found that through the usage of reflective practices, teachers carry out various student-centered activities starter to the lesson, assessment process, particularly to their lesson, and they are trying to apply these processes more effectively in their classrooms. Moreover, some studies have shown that reflective teaching practices are an important and vividly intellectual activity in the educational system. These types of practices are equally significant for the most senior Professor as well as for the novice. According to Mohamed et al. (2022), reflective practices have become a dynamic, cyclical, and participatory process in higher education, giving educators personal growth and professional development. They have tried to re-conceptualize the complication of reflective practices in educational settings. In addition, they have divided these approaches into four central components in common: (a) reflecting, (b) acting, (c) planning for future action, and (d) evaluating the outcomes.

In Balochistan province, the ratio of female professors/lecturers is too less as compared to male faculty members in public sector universities. Therefore, the respondents in the current study are 76% male and 24% female. In addition, according to the bar graph, 59% of the total respondents were Lecturers; 27% were Assistant Professors, 10% were Associate Professors; while 4% were Professors. Thus, the mean value of the RQ 1 responses was 1.8788, with a standard deviation of 0.31036, which revealed a low degree of faculty members' reflective practices during their teaching. It revealed that most professors and lecturers did not use reflective practices while teaching at public sector universities in Baluchistan.

In response to RQ 2, regarding the uses of reflective practices among male and female faculty members significant because it showed that the t-value (2.45) with df (81) is significant as $p < 0.05$. The mean value showed that male ($M = 1.92$, $SD = 0.46$) differed significantly in perception regarding reflective practices. It has been revealed that a great difference was found in the perceptions of male and female faculty during the teaching-learning process at public sector universities in Balochistan. Moreover, on the basis of designation applying ANOVA (F), the result showed that $F(.951)$ was not significant at $p < 0.05$. As a result, no differences in perceptions about the use of reflective techniques were discovered among faculty members, whether they were professors, associate professors, assistant professors, or lecturers during teaching at public sector universities in Balochistan.

In various studies, it has been concluded that mentors or peers can help afford different perceptions in discovering alternative behavior and interpretations. Having said this, reflecting with others may not always be practicable as it frequently needs the investment of energy and time from others (Karnieli-Miller, 2020). Thus, teachers should know how to frame their fundamental values, thoughts, attitudes and emotions, and critically encounter and evaluate assumptions of day-to-day practice on their own (Mohamed et al., 2022).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is strongly recommended that professors and lecturers need to keep themselves up to date with the latest teaching strategies to improve their teaching methodology. They should evaluate their competencies by reflecting on their teaching methods. It is strongly recommended that the concerned authority should ensure professional development programs for the faculty members teaching at public universities to impart quality education to students. These professors and lecturers should update their skills so that they can teach through the latest methods, technology, and modern reflective practices. Moreover, the number of associate professors and professors is quite low in the universities of Balochistan due to newly established universities in far-flung areas of the province. Mostly, fresh and local candidates for the post of lecturer are preferred in these universities. Therefore, it is recommended to encourage professors from other provinces to join these universities to ensure quality and research-based teaching in the aforementioned universities.

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