



PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCIES OF THEOLOGY TEACHERS IN TEACHING MUTALIA-E-QURAN AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Pedagogical competence; Theology teachers; Mutalia-e-Quran; Secondary education; Teaching performance</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Sabih ur Rahman, M. Phil Scholar, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: sabihrahman660@gmail.com</p>	<p>This paper examined the pedagogical competence of theology teachers and their performance in teaching Mutalia-e-Quran at the secondary level. The research design employed a quantitative approach, and survey data were obtained from three hundred and sixty-six theology teachers working in secondary schools. The findings revealed that, although the teachers possessed adequate religious background knowledge, there were notable deficiencies in interactive instructional practices, assessment methods, and student-centered teaching approaches. Formally trained teachers demonstrated significantly higher levels of pedagogical competence compared to untrained teachers. The study highlighted the necessity of professional development models focused on modern pedagogical approaches to theology teaching in order to enhance students' understanding of the Quran. Accordingly, curriculum-based pedagogical training, classroom competency development, and training in continuous assessment were recommended.</p>

INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, religious education has a preliminary role in the formulation of moral, ethical, and spiritual growth of the student. Mutalia-e-Quran is also one of the essential subjects at the secondary level and is meant to improve students' knowledge of the Quranic teachings, its use in their lives as well as how they contribute towards the development of responsible citizenship

basing on the Islamic teachings. Since the lesson is about interpreting religious scriptures and explaining complicated issues, and teaching moral reasoning to teenagers, pedagogical skills of theological instructors may be extremely crucial. Pedagogical competence shows how a teacher is able to combine content based knowledge with proper teaching and learning techniques, classroom management skills, and methods of assessment which enables meaningful learning (Shulman, 1986). In the Pakistani situation, there is a lot of entry of many teachers of theology with great religious knowledge through the education that is offered in madrassas or through the traditional Islamic scholarship. Nonetheless, studies have shown that many of such teachers are untrained in pedagogy or they have not been introduced to the new teaching techniques (Niyozov and Memon, 2011). Consequently, the instructional practice tends to be based on the lecture-based and teacher-centered instruction that lacks proper interaction and encourages the learners to learn more about the Quranic ideas (Rahman, 2020). The discrepancy between content knowledge and the instructional skill may restrict students critical interpretations of the Quranic teaching or be able to apply them to the actual life. Due to the growing significance of effective religious education in modern society, where students have to deal with complex moral and social issues, the evolution of the pedagogy among theology teachers received growing international interest (Hashim and Rossidy, 2019). Thus, the assessment of pedagogical competencies of theology teachers is necessary in the teaching of Mutalia-e-Quran and to provide students with an overall, relevant, and interactive learning process. The given research is supposed to evaluate the level of pedagogical competence of secondary-level theology teachers and to check their effectiveness in providing the Mutalia-e-Quran with the help of the quantitative research methodology. The results of the research will help in the reforms of the education system, education training programs and formulation of policies, aimed at enhancing the quality of Islamic education in Pakistan.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The paper is also important in that it gives useful information on pedagogical competences of the theology teachers involved in teaching Mutalia-e-Quran to the secondary school education. By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers in the knowledge of subjects, teaching practice, classroom management, evaluation proficiencies, and communication, the study provides the necessary evidence that can be used to make changes in the teaching-learning process. The research results can be applied specifically to school administrators, who can use the results to develop specific professional development strategies and supervision plans that could be used to improve the effectiveness of teaching. It is also possible that curriculum developers and education policy makers can use the study to revise religious education curriculum, change teacher recruitment standards, and adopt policies that help in the enactment of pedagogical quality in the Islamic education. The teachers of theology also stand to gain by the study as they are motivated to practice in a reflective manner and develop professionally which eventually leads to improved student outcomes. In addition, filling a gap in the literature, the research adds to the academic sphere and becomes a starting point of future research aimed at making religious education in Pakistan better.

Objective of the Study

- To examine the pedagogical competencies of theology teachers in delivering Mutalia-e-Quran at the secondary school level.
- To find out the effectiveness in delivering Mutalia-e-Quran at the secondary school level.

Research Questions

- What are the pedagogical competencies of theology teachers in delivering Mutalia-e-Quran at the secondary school level?
- What is the effectiveness in delivering Mutalia-e-Quran at the secondary school level?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The instruction of the Mutalia-e-Quran at secondary school level is pivotal in the career of the moral, ethical and spiritual growth of the students. Nonetheless, even being of great significance, there are still fears that theology teachers, who have to provide this subject, are not pedagogically prepared. Although most of theology educators have good religious education through the traditional Islamic education, most of them do not have formal pedagogical training, contemporary instructional methods and assessment skills that can enable them to teach effectively in the contemporary classroom. This vacuum leads to teacher centered, lecture based teaching habits that do not allow students to engage and acquire more knowledge about Quranic concepts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pedagogical competence is a composite of knowledge, competencies, attitudes and dispositions that help teachers to plan and provide effective education (Shulman, 1987). This idea has a basis in the theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) that requires teachers to not only know the subject matter well, but also learn how to render it to be understandable as well as meaningful to various learners. Pedagogical competence, in terms of religious education, concerns the possibility to understand sacred texts, to create interactive classes, and to relate the teachings of the Quran to the life experiences of students, to organize various classes, and employ assessment instruments, which can evaluate cognitive and moral growth (Hashim and Rossidy, 2019). The study of Islamic education has indicated that a high percentage of teachers of theology stick to the memorization approach and the lecture as the most common techniques (Sahin, 2018). Although these methods are applicable in delivery of factual knowledge, they cannot be used to impart the higher order of thinking skills as well as reflective learning and moral reasoning in students. According to Niyozov and Memon (2011), Islamic education must be balanced in terms of incorporation of faith-based education with modern pedagogy in order to satisfy the needs of students raised in fast changing socio-cultural settings. In the absence of this balance, the students can find it difficult to learn the greater applicability of Quranic teachings and limit the transformative power of religious education.

Another common pitfall that is found in the literature is the absence of formal pedagogical training among the theology teachers. Most of them are very knowledgeable about religion and have little experience in growing the curriculum, student-centered pedagogies, or modern assessment practices (Ismail, 2019). This learning gap impacts their capacity to establish classroom interaction, motivate students to ask, or vary learning based on the needs of learners. It has been noted that better pedagogy may contribute greatly to better understanding of Quranic texts by students and attract involvement in religious studies (Rahman, 2020). Professional development programs have been found to be effective in enhancing pedagogical skills. Religious teachers have also experienced significant changes on classroom performance due to training programs on interactive teaching, communication, formative assessment, and reflective practice (Hamdan, 2019). The interventions aided teachers to move away to teacher-centered models to more constructivist, inquiry-based instruction, which aids in learning more and gaining a more critical perspective on religious materials.

Although the research interest has been growing, inadequate quantitative research has specifically been done regarding the pedagogical capability of theology teachers teaching

Mutalia-e-Quran in the secondary level in Pakistan. The gap indicates the significance of the current research, which tends to furnish the empirical evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of the pedagogical abilities of theology teachers and their efficiency in teaching activities. The Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Framework should be part and parcel of any quantitative research paper because it would explain the conceptual framework behind the study as well as theories used to guide the research. Hereby, the two sections, according to your topic, are ready to be used in your research on Pedagogical Competencies of Theology Teachers in Teaching Mutalia-e-Quran.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical model of this research represents the connection between the pedagogical skills of theology teachers and their success in teaching Mutalia-e- Quran at high school. Pedagogical competencies are considered the independent variable, which includes five dimensions, which include the subject knowledge, instructional strategies, assessment skills, classroom management and communication skills. The dependent variable is teaching efficiency in the provision of Mutalia-e-Quran, which is measured in the level of understanding, interest and practice of Quranic rules by students. In the framework, it is assumed that the increased levels of pedagogical competence have a positive impact on the effectiveness of teaching that results in the enhancement of learning outcomes.

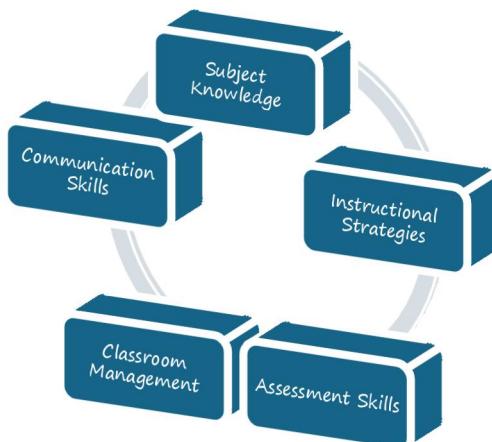


Figure 1:
Pedagogical Competencies of Theology Teachers

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The two theories used to support this study are Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) Theory developed by Shulman and Taxonomy of Educational Objectives developed by Bloom, which are complementary theories.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge PCK Theory (Shulman, 1986, 1987):

The theory of Shulman is focused on the fact that teaching cannot be successfully conducted without both a subject and a pedagogy knowledge. PCK implies that a teacher should not just possess a deeper disposition of the content but should also be aware of how to present it in a manner that the students will be able to comprehend, memorize, and use. When discussing Mutalia-e-Quran, theology educators should combine the knowledge about the Quranic material with the instructional strategies that will lead to the understanding, reflection, and moral

judgment. PCK forms the basis of assessing the competencies of teachers on instructional strategies, assessment practices, and communication skills. Taxonomy by Bloom classifies the learning objectives into cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas. It is employed in this paper to measure the effectiveness of the instruction of theology teachers, especially in the extent to which their instruction develops higher-order thinking abilities, including the ability to analyse, evaluate and apply the principles taught in the Quran. The teachers that have good pedagogical abilities are supposed to take the students to the next step whereby they memorize teachings in the Quran but they also reflect and apply them in practice. The combination of these two theories presents the study with a powerful model of interpreting the role of the pedagogical prowess of theology teachers on the learning outcomes of student in the Mutalia-e-Quran classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative descriptive research design was used in this study since it was aimed at investigating the present condition of variables, i.e. the pedagogical competencies of theology teachers, in this case. The descriptive design will enable the gathering and examination of data that detail trends, perceptions and patterns of a given population in a systematic manner. The selection of quantitative methods was motivated by the fact that this kind of approach allows presenting objective and numerical information that can be processed statistically in order to comprehend the competencies of teachers and their weak points that should be overcome.

Population and Sample

The sample of the present study was comprised of theology teachers teaching Mutalia-e-Quran in secondary schools. The role of these teachers is to provide Quranic education in the national curriculum. One hundred and sixty-six theology teachers were involved in the study. The convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample as there are constraints to accessibility and the teachers are distributed across multiple schools. Nevertheless, the sample size is sufficient to conduct quantitative analysis and represents the significant sample of theology teachers of the secondary level.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire designed on the basis of the known frameworks of pedagogical competence was given to gather the data (Shulman, 1987; Sahin, 2018). The tool had a series of items that measured:

International Knowledge (e.g. knowledge of Quranic themes, historical context, interpretation)

- Teaching Methods (e.g. interactive methods of teaching, involvement of students)
- Evaluation (e.g. creating quizzes, testing the knowledge that is not just memorized)

Previously mentioned: Classroom Management (e.g., the preservation of discipline, the creation of a positive learning environment)

- Communication (e.g., explain clearly, relate to the life of students)

Everything was rated using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The greater the scores the greater perceived pedagogical competency was.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were conducted face-to-face and through email, as per the availability of respondents. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants, and they were given the option of participating in the research on a voluntary basis and guaranteed confidentiality. Accurate completion of questionnaires was done, and this was followed by entry into SPSS to be analyzed.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, mean scores and standard deviations were used to analyze the data to figure out the level of competency in various pedagogical domains. Such statistical tools gave information about the areas where theology teachers are very competent and on areas that require improvement in pedagogy.

RESULTS

This part gives the descriptive statistics concerning the pedagogical competences of theology teachers in teaching Mutalia-e-Quran. A sample size of 116 teachers of theology was used to collect data and analyze it with means and standard deviations, frequency and percentages. The outcomes are the perceptions of teachers concerning their knowledge of the subject, teaching method, test ability, classroom management, and the communicational ability. Generally, the results show that theology teachers are relatively strong in the subject knowledge but their instruction strategies competencies and assessment skills are relatively lower. The frequency and percentages distributions in the areas of competencies exhibit differences in the ways teachers appraise their own practices regarding pedagogy.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Pedagogical Competencies of Theology Teachers (N = 116)

Competency Area	f (Agree + Strongly Agree)	% (Agree + Strongly Agree)	Mean	SD
Subject Knowledge	102	87.9%	4.21	0.53
Instructional Strategies	78	67.2%	3.48	0.71
Assessment Skills	70	60.3%	3.26	0.64
Classroom Management	85	73.2%	3.74	0.68
Communication Skills	94	81.0%	3.91	0.59

DESCRIPTION

The results of this paper reveal that there are dramatic differences in the pedagogical competencies of theology teachers. Subject Knowledge ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.53$) had the highest mean score, which means that theology teachers are well versed with the content of the Quran. This is in line with Niyozov and Memon (2011) who discovered that religious teachers are usually those with in-depth religious knowledge as they are usually trained under traditional training backgrounds. The percentage and frequency of the findings only confirm this as 87.9 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they possess sufficient subject knowledge. On the contrary, Instructional Strategies and Assessment Skills scored moderate to low means. The proportion of teachers who affirmed that they employ various instructional strategies was only 67.2 percent, with only a few (60.3) of them indicating that they are competent in assessment strategies. The results are similar to those of Sahin (2018) and Rahman (2020), who believe that teachers of theology are not exposed to new and student-centered pedagogies. These lower scores indicate that the lesson planning, differentiated instruction and critical inquiry strategies are not common in the classrooms of Mutalia-e-Quran. Assessment Skills, where the mean is the lowest (3.26) is a sign of a significant weakness. According to Ismail (2019), factual recall measures (memorization and closed-ended questioning) are used by teachers of Islamic education very often. This assertion is backed by the present research, which proposes professional growth in formative assessment, authentic assessment, and reflective questioning.

Meanwhile, Classroom Management and Communication Skills scored comparatively more (3.74 and 3.91). This implies that teachers may have weaknesses in regards to instructional design and assessment, but they are usually competent in breeding discipline and dealing well with students. Religious education requires effective communication especially in translating complicated verses of the Quran into comprehensible ideas to adolescents (Hashim and Rossidy, 2019). On the whole, the findings indicate that, the pedagogical competence of theology teachers is imbalanced, as it is good in content and communication, but poor in instructional method and assessment. This disparity may act to obstruct successful introduction of Mutalia-e-Quran at the secondary level.

CONCLUSION

In this quantitative research, the researcher evaluated the pedagogical skills of theology educators in the teaching of Mutalia-e-Quran in secondary schools. The results showed that although teachers have excellent subject knowledge and effective communication skills, they are not competent in some other areas, e.g., instructional strategies and assessment techniques. Such loopholes in pedagogy can restrict the student involvement, critical interpretation and practice of the Quranic teaching in their lives. The paper concludes by finding that pedagogical competencies should be enhanced to improve quality of religious education. The teacher training programs must include interactive instructions on teaching, lesson planning based on curriculum and contemporary assessment procedures which facilitates higher order learning. Educational authorities should focus on filling these gaps using continuous professional development, mentoring by peers, and pedagogical workshops. This research has meaningful implications on the policies of the various stakeholders involved in enhancing the quality of religious education in Pakistan to include policymakers, school administrators, and institutions of teacher education. The development of the pedagogical competencies of theology educators will guarantee the increased interest, relevance, and transformative nature of the teaching of Mutalia-e-Quran to the students of the secondary school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the results of this research, it can be recommended as follows:

- Formative assessment, reflective questioning and authentic evaluation techniques workshops are to be offered to improve the skills of teachers to determine deeper understanding.
- Experienced or very competent teachers can act as mentors so as to foster collaborative learning and enhance the pedagogical practices across schools.
- The qualification in hiring must be based on both pedagogical and theological qualifications in order to balance the competency.

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