

## **Self-Assessed Gap of Acquired and Desired Assessment Skills of Prospective Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

The difference between the skills desired to carry out assessments tasks and the skills actually acquired during pre-service teaching training program by prospective teachers is being referred to as skills' gap. The study draws its basis from 5<sup>th</sup> national professional standards for teachers, which describes necessary assessment skills for teachers. This study intends to find out the assessment skills of prospective teachers. The assessment skills consisting of 39 items and three subscales were used to collect data from 333 prospective teachers selected from four public sector universities of central Punjab. The majority of the prospective teachers acquired a moderate level of assessment skills (Mean= 4.37, SD = 0.96). The average desired level of assessment skills (Mean= 5.45, SD = 0.91) was higher than the acquired level majority of the prospective teachers acquired a moderate level of assessment skills. Positive relationship between acquired and desired level of assessment skills leads to the conclusion that the prospective teachers who desire higher level of assessment skills achieve comparatively higher level and vice versa. Gender differences were found in existing and desired self-assessed assessment skills, knowledge of assessment, dispositions towards assessment and skills of assessment in the favour of female' prospective teachers. The study may contribute to improve the achieved level of assessment skills by sensitizing the prospective teachers and teacher educators about the significance of desired level of assessment skills in improving the acquired level.

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## **Introduction**

Teacher Education is a key to improve the quality of teaching force. Quality teacher education requires standards which result in teachers' competences as learning outcomes of standard based teacher education. Assessment is one of these national professional standards for teacher education in Pakistan. Assessment skills are learning outcomes of assessment standard of teacher education. The present study is about achievement level of assessment skills of prospective teachers who recently completed their pre-service teacher training in four universities of central Pakistan.

Assessment skills are important components of the teacher's effectiveness (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Khan & Saeed, 2009; Korthagen, 2004). The evaluation of classroom activities and disposition of teachers towards remarkable teaching can be effective by using different assessment skills (Shavelson et al., 2008; Waugh & Gronlund, 2013). The performance of teachers in this procedure is linked to setting of knowledge, dispositions and skills of assessment.

Classroom assessment aims at improving students' learning and motivation. It has become a tool for improving learning outcomes of students. Specific criteria of assessing successful performance, timely and detailed feedback to students are the essential requirements of an active assessment. Teachers are required to develop assessment skills that give a clear understanding to the students learning and assessment process (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Stiggins, 2002). This study may contribute to reduce the gap between existing and required assessment skills of prospective teachers by sensitizing the prospective teachers, teacher educators and other stake holders. The focus of the study is to explore gap between the existing and the desired level of assessment skills.

Hence, the proposed study intends to investigate the level of acquired assessment skills, which is the fifth standard of teacher Education.

## **Methodology**

The study uses description and nature. A survey was conducted to determine acquired and desired assessment skilly level of the respondents. Passion correlation way to determine nature and direction of relationships between acquired and desired level of assessment skills. Thus the study followed quantities approach.

## **Respondents**

The respondents of the study were 333 (251 female 82 male) prospective teachers, who were about to complete their Bachelor degree in Education. The respondents were selected from four universities of central Punjab (Pakistan).

## **Assessment of Assessment skills**

Self-assessment procedure was used to assess acquired and desired level of assessment skills of prospective teachers. The alternative assessment procedures were peer-assessment, and authentic assessment. In peer assessment fellows of the same rank assess while in authentic assessment is made in real life situation where assesses actually use their assessment skills. As the both were more time taking; these were not adopted due to constraints of time and resources. Many authors have opined in support of self-assessment of skills as an alternative when other more authentic methods are not feasible (Shah, 2009).

## **Instrument**

To evaluate the self-assessed existing and desired level of assessment skills of B Ed graduates a questionnaire was developed by the researchers on the basis of statements given in the document of “National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan”. This instrument was developed on personality measures scales and bases on the perception of self-assessment which will be supportive for learners in self-awareness, development and growth. It will also be helpful for the narration of their developing requirements in a right way; hence, for the checking of existing and desired level of assessment skills the instrument was used. There were two parts of the instrument: “acquired”, and “desired”.

In the “acquired level” the B Ed graduates were asked to rate themselves that how much they have attained the assessment skills. In “desired level”, the future teachers were asked to rate the desired level of assessment skills having an ideal teacher. A self-assessment seven point likert scale was used for the judgement of these levels. Consequently, the researchers developed a new questionnaire to collect the data from B Ed graduates. The researchers reviewed the document of “National Professional Standards for Teachers by Ministry of Education” completely. There are “ten professional standards for teachers in Pakistan”. Keeping in view the requirements of the study, 39 items were

developed and divided the instrument in three parts i.e. “knowledge, dispositions and skills”, as given in the document of “National Professional Standards for Teachers”. Each indicator of the instrument has two levels for rating i.e., acquired and required level. In knowledge level there were 13 items (e.g., My Current study programme enabled me to understand the term ‘criterion reference test’). In dispositions level there were 7 items (e.g., My Current study programme has developed the ability of doing fair assessment) and in skills level 19 items (e.g., My Current study programme made me able to analyse student performance using multiple sources of data) were developed. Instrument level wise detail of items was as under:

Table 1  
Instrument level wise detail of items

| Sr. No | Indicators of assessment | No of items    |
|--------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1      | Knowledge                | 13 ( 1 to 13)  |
| 2      | Dispositions             | 7 ( 14 to 20)  |
| 3      | Skills                   | 19 ( 21 to 39) |

In order to check the validity of the instrument in terms of content and format, the instrument was discussed with experts of relevant field. The instrument was improved in the light of their comments. Pilot study was conducted on a sample of 50 students, who were not included in the main study. The reliability estimates of acquired and desired levels of assessment skills were 0.920 and 0.972 (Cronbach Alpha) respectively which showed that the instrument was highly reliable.

## Analysis of the Data

After data collection, the incomplete and improperly filled responses were discarded by the researchers. The data were analysed after data editing and correcting aberrant values followed by replacing of missing values. The descriptive statistics was used to measure the level of existing and desired level of assessment skills of B Ed graduates. Paired sample t test was used to determine the gap between existing and desired level of assessment skills of B. Ed graduates. Pearson correlation was calculated to find out the relationship acquired and desired level of assessment skills of B. Ed graduates.

**Table 2**  
**Acquired and Desired Assessment Skills Levels**

| Variables         | Nature   | Mean (SD)   | Interpretation |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|----------------|
| Assessment Skills | Desired  | 5.45 (0.91) | High           |
|                   | Acquired | 4.37 (0.96) | Medium         |
| Knowledge         | Desired  | 5.36 (1.08) | High           |
|                   | Acquired | 4.40 (0.98) | Medium         |
| Disposition       | Desired  | 5.41 (1.08) | High           |
|                   | Acquired | 4.49 (1.07) | Medium         |
| Skills            | Desired  | 5.49 (0.94) | High           |
|                   | Acquired | 4.32 (0.98) | Medium         |

N= 333, 1-3 low, 3-5 Medium, 5-7 High

The table 1 shows the mean score of desired and acquired level of assessment skills. The seven point scale having six intervals was divided into three equal parts: low (1-3), medium (3-5) and high (5-7). The desired level of assessment skills was high while the acquired level of assessment skill was medium of B Ed graduates in total assessment skills, knowledge of assessment, disposition towards assessment and use of assessment skills.

**Table 3**  
**Comparison Acquired and Desired Assessment Skills**

| Variables         | Nature   | Mean (SD)   | Gap  | Df  | T     | P     |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| Assessment Skills | Desired  | 5.45 (0.91) | 1.08 | 332 | 24.16 | 0.000 |
|                   | Acquired | 4.37 (0.96) |      |     |       |       |
| Knowledge         | Desired  | 5.36 (1.08) | 0.96 | 332 | 19.55 | 0.000 |
|                   | Acquired | 4.40 (0.98) |      |     |       |       |
| Disposition       | Desired  | 5.41 (1.08) | 0.92 | 332 | 19.39 | 0.000 |
|                   | Acquired | 4.49 (1.07) |      |     |       |       |
| Skills            | Desired  | 5.49 (0.94) | 1.17 | 332 | 21.67 | 0.000 |
|                   | Acquired | 4.32 (0.98) |      |     |       |       |

N= 333 p< 0.05

The table 2 shows that the desired level of assessment skills was higher than the acquired level of assessment skills. Similarly the desired level was higher in knowledge of assessment, dispositions towards assessment and use of assessment skills of B.Ed graduates. The maximum gap was shown between desired and acquired use of assessment skills and minimum gap was found in dispositions towards assessment.

**Table: 4**  
**Relationship between acquired and desired level of assessment skills**

| Variable                                | Acquired assessment skills | Acquired Knowledge Of assessment | Acquired Dispositions towards assessment | Acquired Skills in assessment |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Desired assessment skills               | 0.622** (p=0.000)          |                                  |  |                               |
| Desired Knowledge Of assessment         |                            | 0.623** (p=0.000)                |  |                               |
| Desired Dispositions towards assessment |                            |                                  | 0.549** (p=0.000)                        |                               |
| Desired Skills in assessment            |                            |                                  |  | 0.622** (p=0.000)             |

N= 333 p < 0.05

Table 3 reflects that there was a significant positive correlation between desired level and acquired level of assessment skills of B Ed graduates. Similarly the positive correlation was found between the desired and acquired level of knowledge of assessment, dispositions towards assessment and use of skills in assessment of B.Ed graduates. The positive correlation leads that the graduates who had acquired high level wanted to get high level of assessment skills. The graduates who had acquired medium level wanted to get medium level of assessment skills.

## Discussion

The main purpose of the study was to find out the gap between desired and acquired level of self-perceived assessment skills of prospective teachers. The desired skill level was high while the acquired skill level was medium based on tripartite division of the scale ranging from low to high and consideration of their corresponding scores. Prospective teachers desired high level of knowledge, disposition and skills of assessment. While their acquired level of knowledge, disposition and skills of assessment was medium. Especially there was a large gap between desired and acquired level of assessment skills and the prospective teachers were not satisfied to the acquired assessment skills.

The assessment skills were measured through self-assessment rating scale and some authors talk about that the used criteria in the self-

assessments tend to ignore the effectiveness of the overall organization of the institution (Pounder, 2000). Some authors also argued about overestimation of skills assessed through self-report method (Bratkovich, 2014; Falchikov & Boud, 1989; Pinner, 2016). The probable reason of over estimation might be due to natural tendency of preferring own work to others'. Secondly, prospective teachers might not have perceived the level actually desired for them by their teachers and other stake holders. But interestingly the present study shows that in spite of the fact that despite overestimation the acquired assessment skill was not as per satisfaction of prospective teachers. So the actual gap may be more than presented in the study.

The gap might have been due to teaching and assessment methods that are lecture and paper pencil respectively, in Pakistan which promotes only knowledge level of learning. Unfortunately in Pakistan the skills are neither taught nor assessed in the teacher education area. Although most of the faculty members and students think that the assessment system needs to be changed from knowledge emphasis to skill emphasis but implementation is hampered by teacher educators lacking skills and hard work as well as un-acceptability on the part of senior management. From teachers' side it may be due to lack of competence, exposure and training of assessment skills. So far as the unacceptability from management side is concerned it may be due to lack of exposure of assessment skills, confidence, standardised practices and departmental/organizational politics.

Due to the above mentioned hurdles the importance of assessment skills is not highlighted. Hence, the students are not able to understand the importance of these skills. The students who were sensitised about the assessment skills desired high level of assessment skills. The findings of the study also indicate that the self-assessed acquired assessment skills had positive relationship with desired level of assessment skills.

The similar study on assessment skills was conducted in Oman (Alkharusi, Aldhafri, Alnabhani, & Alkalbani, 2012). In this study four indicators of educational assessment (dispositions, competence, knowledge and practices) were taken. The results of the study were similar to this study. Another study was also conducted by Ogan-Bekiroglu (2009) which concluded that teachers' knowledge and conceits related to the educational value should be in account when showing an educational policy in system. A study, conducted by (Stiggins, 2002), pointed out low assessment literacy of assessment, which was causing inaccurate assessments of students learning.

## **Conclusions**

1. It was concluded that there is a gap between the self-assessed desired and acquired level of assessment skills of B.Ed graduates. The self-assessed acquired level is less than the desired level of assessment skills of B.Ed graduates. The self-assessed desired level was high in the rating scale but the acquired level was medium in the scale.
2. It was also concluded that there was a positive correlation between self-assessed desired and acquired level of assessment skills of B Ed graduates. It manifests that the students who wanted to get high level of skills acquired higher level than those who desired low level of skills.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of findings and results of the study the researchers put forward some recommendations:

1. The existing level of assessment skills is far below than the optimal level; hence the quality of teaching should be improved. Skill learning requires practical activity, so it is recommended that practical assessment of students, during teaching practice of prospective teachers, should be made part of teaching practice.
2. To increase the desired level of assessment skills the prospective teachers need to be sensitised regarding significance of assessment skills in teaching through lectures and other appropriate techniques. The awards may be announced on the basis of performance in assessment skills for the encouragement of future nation builders having better assessment skills. The seminars and workshops should be arranged to highlight the importance of assessment skills.

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*Received on: August 20, 2016*  
*Revised on: December 05, 2016*  
*Accepted on: December 28, 2016*