A Comparative Study of Teacher’s knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviors towards Evidence Based Practices of Public and Private Universities

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Abstract

The notion of evidence-based practices has its roots in medical sciences. Later on, due to viability of concept, it entrenches number of other disciplines including education. The proponents of evidence-based practices emphasized that every decision taken by practitioners should be based on stringent evidence gathered through rigorous research. Keeping in view the importance and practicality of EBP, a comparative study of teacher’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviors towards evidence-based practices of public and private universities was conducted. Survey research method was used to collect data. Population of the study was all the teachers working in the universities of Lahore. Sample of 300 teachers was selected by using multi-stage random sampling technique. The main objective of the study was to compare the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of public and private sector university’s teachers towards EBP. Findings of the study revealed that public sector universities teachers have better knowledge of EBP as compare to private sectors. Private sector teacher’s behavior is better as compared to public sector teachers. It is therefore recommended that teacher in higher education institution should focused on contemporary researches in their field to improve their knowledge and skills.

Key words: Attitudes, Behaviors, Evidence-Based Practices, Knowledge

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Introduction

The history of evidence-based practice has its root in medicine. It evolved from nursing education and enter into medical physicians’ practice in 1970. It had been started to provide. It began as an idea to provide better results for patients who are suffering from different chronic diseases (Mackey & Bassendowski, 2016). EBP is actually a tool to minimize gape among practice and theory and provide vital path for nursing educators to teach basic knowledge about nursing profession to prospective nurses (ICN, 2012). Later on, it become multi-disciplinary and entrenched other disciplines such as pathology, dentistry, nursing, psychology, social work, education, library and information science.

This term in education was first coined by Hargreaves (cited in Brusling, 2005) in the year 1996 when he was delivering a lecture at a tutor teaching activity. EBP decision making is based on three main components.

a. External evidence
b. Practitioner’s expertise
c. Values and expectations of client

Best external evidence refers to the information gathered through research while using comprehensive research methodology. Expertise means education experience and skills of practitioners and values are the exceptional predilections, and expectations of a client. EBP is now firmly deep-rooted in the educational context. It is quite obvious and logical that classroom practices can improved through use of reliable evidence (Sackett et al., 1996).

EB Strategies of Teaching

There are empirical evidences through various research studies that teacher using EBP greatly influence the performance of their students. There are seven strategies mentioned in literature and supported by research instead of untested theories have direct effect on student’s learning. These are

Clear instructional objectives

No one can deny the importance of this strategy. Teacher should be clear about what he/she wants to teach his/her students. If teacher become unable to state instructional objectives, the goal of your teaching become ambiguous.

Planned demonstration

Whatever you want to teach your student, planned methodically before the start of session. This planning helps you in effective utilization of classroom timing. Demonstrate task effectively in front of
students to enhance their understanding and capabilities. So, be focused and lay emphasis on students learning.

**Appropriate use of question answer**

Teacher needs to ask question to check the understanding of the students, not just to rote memorization of the facts.

**Use flow chart to summarize new learning**

Flow charts can be used to summarize recent learning and to show the linkages and interrelationship between different aspects. Elaborating a graphical summary is a wonderful way to complete your lesson.

**Ample of practice**

There is a famous saying practice makes man perfect. This is very much true in educational context. Guiding student toward right practicing harness their skills and abilities.

**Timely feedback**

If you give feedback to your student regarding their performance along the how it can be improved increased student’s motivation toward learning.

**Flexibility**

Teacher’s method of teaching should depend on how students learn in a better way. Teacher should not stick to a method that create hindrances in students’ learning.

**Evidence-Based Practice and Teaching**

“Evidence-based policies have great potential to transform the practice of education, as well as research in education. Evidence based policies could finally set education on the path toward the kind of progressive improvement that most successful parts of our economy and society embarked upon a century ago. With a robust research and development enterprise and government policies demanding solid evidence of effectiveness behind programs and practices in our schools, we could see genuine, generational progress instead of the usual pendulum swings of opinion and fashion. This is an exciting time for educational research and reform. We have an unprecedented opportunity to make research matter and to then establish once and for all the importance of consistent and liberal support for high-quality research. Whatever their methodological or political orientations, educational researchers should support the movement toward evidence-based policies and then set to work generating the evidence that will be needed to create the schools our children deserve” (Slavin, 2002, p.20).

EBP is a new way of linking research and practice in teaching is recently developed phenomenon. Roots of such development lied in the notion that research-based evidences should be an important source of knowledge and information for teachers. Teaching standards recognized internationally emphasized the importance of research finding to enhance professionalism in teaching. Present discourse in teacher education identified linkage of research and practice as crucial agenda for teacher education and training. Teacher’s training should enable them to use research-based evidences efficiently and to assimilate these findings with personal expertise and teaching experience. This research linkage plays important role in promoting EBP (Diery et al., 2020).
Teacher educators need to engross themselves in critical reading of published research studies and being a professional served as a role model for prospective teachers while engaging with EBP. It is their duty to impart and disseminate research-based knowledge to future teachers for their professional development. Teacher training institutions plan their teaching practice/internship according to scientific and empirically verified principles. (Nelson & Campbell, 2017).

The present study is designed to measure knowledge, behavior and attitudes of university teacher toward EBP and compare the public and private teacher’s perception regarding EBP. It is very crucial to understand the teacher’s perspective for EBP in order to endorse the use of evidence in higher education teaching.

**Methods and Procedure**

The main objective of the study was to investigate teacher’s knowledge, attitude and behavior towards evidence-based practices and comparison of private and public sector universities regarding these variables. Present study followed positivistic paradigm and quantitative research approach to investigate the variables of the study. The reason to use quantitative method is that variables of the study are quantifiable. Depending upon the nature of the study, cross sectional survey research design was used. In a cross-sectional study, researcher collects data to make inferences about a population of interest at one point in time (Setia, 2016; Lavrakas, 2008).

All the teachers from private and public universities situated in Lahore were the population for the study. 300 teachers were the sample of the study.

The sampling process was illustrated through a flow chart.

Adopted questionnaire “Evidence-Based Practice Profile Questionnaire” was used for this study. It was comprised of three parts. One part consisted of statements related to teacher’s knowledge, second was to attitude third part was related to their behavior. “Evidence-Based Practice Profile Questionnaire” was adopted for the study developed by faculty of university of South Australia (2011). It was consisted of total sixty-nine statements that were developed from previously available research work. The instrument was adapted after the modification of some statements by taking expert opinions keeping in mind the local context. Adapted instrument was then pilot tested from fifteen public and fifteen private university teachers. After the reliability analysis through Cronbach Alpha’s, reliability of the instrument came out to be 0.89. Thus, the instrument was selected without the withdrawal of any statements.

**Data Analysis / Findings**

Ho  There is no significant difference between knowledge of public and private sector universities regarding EBP.

**Table 1. Comparison of public and private university teacher’s knowledge regarding EBP.**
Table 1 indicates that there is no significant difference lies between teachers of public and private sector of universities regarding knowledge. The value of t = .767 < 1.96 (critical value) at 0.05 level of significance. The value of 0.04 < 0.05 so, it can be concluded from the above table is that there is a significant difference in public and private sector universities based on knowledge. Public universities have better knowledge of EBP as compare to private sector universities

Table 2. Comparison of attitude toward EBP of public and private university teachers.

Table 3. Comparison of behavior of public and private university teachers.

Discussion

Evidence based practices plays an important role in teaching and learning. The present study designed to compare the difference between public and private sector universities teacher’s knowledge, behavior and attitude towards EBP. Survey research method was used to collect data.
Findings of the previous researches revealed that teachers usually showed positive attitude towards EBP. As far as the university teachers concerned, they mostly involved actively in research and teaching. Interpreting research results and use it in daily practices is routine of faculty member. Some of the teachers involved in certain research projects while some of the conduct research thesis/dissertation to acquired higher degree. Findings of the present study showed that overall use of EBP is not challenge for teachers in higher education institutions (Diery et al., 2020; MacPhail et al., 2018; Reddy et al., 2017; Loughran, 2014).

Beerkens (2018) stated that EBP mentality contribute positively toward quality assurance. Another approach through which universities can encourage EBP is that university’s management should monitor critically their student’s learning. There is also need to evaluate teacher’s effectiveness. “An evidence-based mentality could go down to the level of specific pedagogical practices or assessment methods within a single course” (p286).

The main objective of the study was to compare the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of public and private sector university’s teachers towards EBP. Findings of the study revealed that public sector universities teachers have better knowledge of EBP as compare to private sectors. Private sector teacher’s behavior is better as compared to public sector teachers. Results of present study is bit contradictory to study conducted by Aarons, et al (2009). They stated that type of organization matters in terms of organizational support and developing attitudes toward EBP. Private organizations are more supportive regarding two above mentioned aspects. Most of the studies revealed that type of organization determines the differences regarding knowledge, behavior and attitude of faculty members toward EBP.

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