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Psychological Wellbeing of Pre-Service Teacher Trainees- An Exploration

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Abstract

Teaching is a demanding and dynamic profession that involves addressing learners' diverse needs and fostering global citizenship with a strong sense of pride. Teachers' wellbeing is impacted by various stressors, including heavy workload, lack of administrative assistance, lack of parental support, lack of career advancement opportunities, participation in educational reform, lack of autonomy, unstable working conditions, and low self-esteem. Pre-service teacher trainees face constant exposure to various contextual and personal stressors, which is not different from the regular work environment. The emergence indication towards high levels of stress, burnout, and attrition faced by pre-service trainee teachers and hindered psychological wellbeing which is a substantial influencing factor for the teacher's performance in schools draw the desired attention to explore the current status of Psychological Wellbeing of trainees teachers enrolled in 4 years Integrated B.Sc./B.A.-B.Ed. teacher education programme in Balasore district, analyse the contribution of theory and practicum/internship program of the curriculum in psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees, and investigate teacher educators' opinion about the current scenario of Pre-service teacher trainees' Psychological Wellbeing. Data were collected from both Pre-service Teacher trainees and Teacher Educators (n1 = 214, n2=10) through simple random sampling techniques. A Psychological Wellbeing Scale was developed and standardized for Pre-Service Teacher trainees, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability score .859, ensuring its potentiality. The result shows that around 73.68% of pre-service teacher trainees had acceptable psychological wellbeing whereas the status of psychological wellbeing of both male and female trainees were same. Additionally, the internship/practicum portion of curriculum affect more to their psychological wellbeing rather than theoretical/teaching learning environment. Teacher educators of TEIs also gave their significant contribution in drawing a remarkable conclusion related to the present study.

Keywords: *Psychological Wellbeing, Pre-service teacher trainees*

Introduction

Teaching is one of the most demanding and challenging professions as it assigns teachers with the task of addressing learners' multidimensional needs (Chirico et al., 2020). Additionally, to play the dynamic role in installing Indian pride in learners, develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support human rights, sustainable development, and global well-being, fostering a global citizen with a deep-rooted sense of pride in order to make India 'a global knowledge superpower' mentioned in the document of National Education Policy, 2020 is absolutely not an easy task for a teacher and the professional trainees who carry a vision to pursue 'teaching as a profession' of the present era. As the central stakeholder in the educational process, teachers need excellent psychological well-being (Gunathilaka et al., 2022; Honskusová et al., 2022; Kossybayeva et al.,2022). But, currently researchers explored that Teachers' wellbeing is impacted by various stressors including heavy workloads (Agyapong et al., 2022; Wahab et al., 2024), lack of administrative assistance in schools and parent relations (Gearhart et al., 2022), lack of career opportunities, participation in educational reform discussions, unstable working conditions, and low self-esteem that contributing to a negative work environment (Ortan et al., 2021). Moreover, the pre-service teacher trainees face constant exposure to various contextual and personal stressors, which is not different from their regular work environment (Zaimoðlu & Dagtas, 2023).

Studies have highlighted the importance of emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, self-awareness, and physical aspects of well-being (Alluru & Suneela, 2023) where Dreer-Goethe (2023) has linked teacher well-being to mentoring quality. As, teachers' wellbeing is significantly influenced by educational reforms, yet systematic research on this topic is scarce (Aoetal., 2023). Hence researchers in the present study focused on the psychological wellbeing of pre-service trainee teachers, who are preparing themselves for 21st-century classroom. Moreover, Zaimoðlu & Dagtas (2023) explored pre-service teachers' wellbeing during practicum. Rachmawati and Lidyasari's (2023) have found that 44 Indonesian pre-service training teachers had excellent well-being but struggled to improve their quality over time. Social support and lifestyle variables significantly impact the psychological well-being of 410 pre-service teachers in Turkey, with marriage being the most significant predictor (Sezer, 2022). Zaki's (2019) study found moderate levels of psychological well-being across genders, highlighting implications for teacher education programs. Zadworna-Ciešlak & Kossakowska (2018) explored the impact of stress and psychological logic on teacher well-being. Currently, in the process of making 21st century teacher, the attention is dragged by the trainees as Corcoran & O'Flaherty (2022) found learning to teach is stressful as like as teaching and highlighted that Pre-service teacher encountered academic, social, and emotional difficulties during their learning to teach (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022). Thus, the emergence indication towards hindered psychological wellbeing which

is a substantial influencing factor for the teacher's performance in schools (Rachmawati & Lidyasari, 2023) draw the desired attention to explore the current status of Psychological Wellbeing of pre-service trainee teachers, those who chose and enrolled in Integrated teacher education programmes just after finishing their higher secondary education. Moreover, Researchers can never ignore the immature career decision making ability of the adolescents (Subhrajyoti, 2023) for those who although take admission into integrated TEPs, but feel hard to exist.

Research Question

1. What is the current status of Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees?
2. Which portion in the curriculum (Theory and Practicum/Internship) affect more to the Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees ?
3. What do the teacher educators perceive about the Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees?

Objective of the study

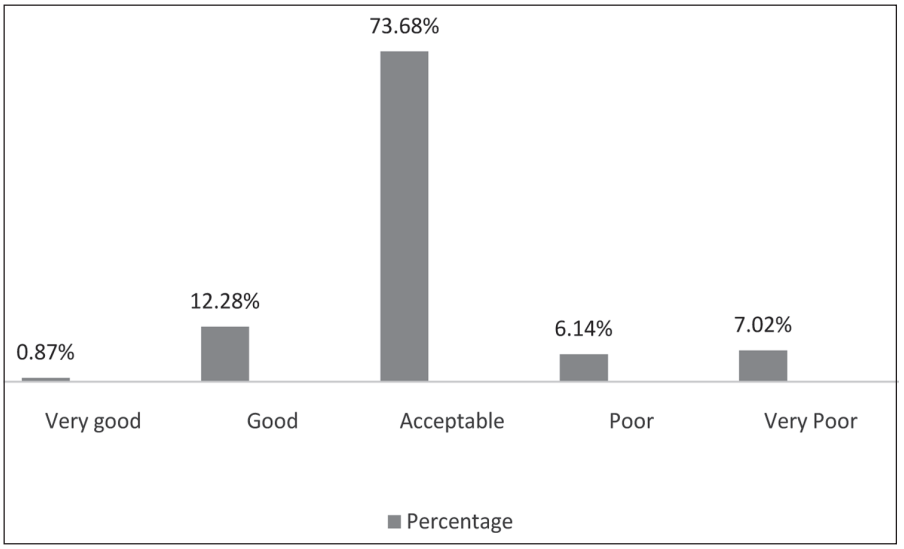
1. To explore the current status of Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees.
2. To analyze the contribution of theory and practicum/internship portion of Curriculum in Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees.
3. To investigate the teacher educators' perception about the current scenario of Pre-service teacher trainees' Psychological Wellbeing.

Methods

Data were collected from both Pre-service Teacher trainees and Teacher Educators (n1 = 214, n2=10) through simple random sampling techniques, those who are currently enrolled and joined in Teacher Education Institutions for Integrated B.Sc.-B.Ed./B.A.-B.Ed. Programmes. Researcher developed a Psychological Wellbeing Scale for Pre-Service Teacher trainees with proper standardization in the present context to collect data from the trainees and used an interview schedule to collect the opinion of all the faculty members those who are serving as Teacher Educators in several TEIs based upon their lived experiences related to PSW of their student trainees. The Cronbach's alpha reliability score for the Psychological Wellbeing scale is .859 which ensures the potentiality of the tool.

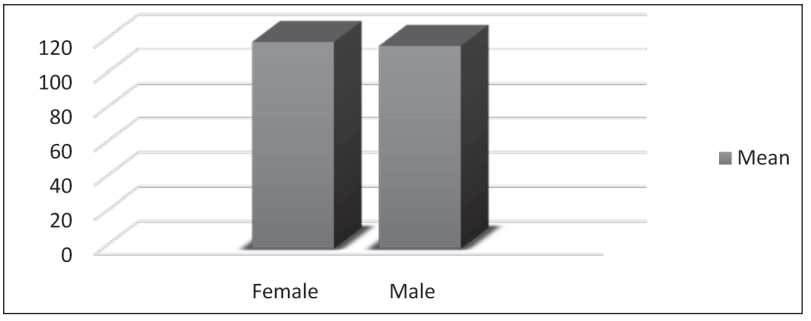
Result

To explore the current status of Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees



[Fig. 1 Status of PSW of Pre-service teacher trainees]

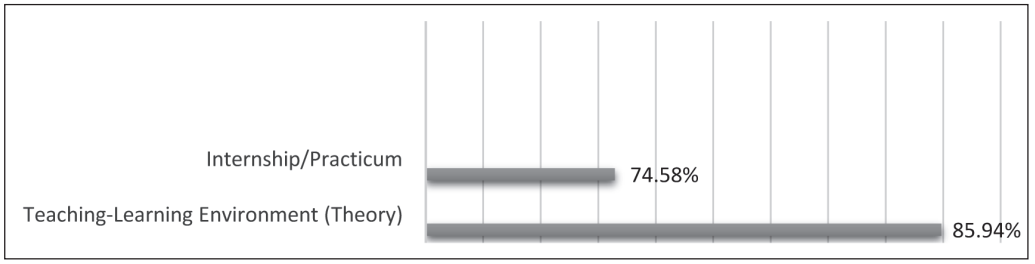
From the above figure, it is found that 73.68% Pre-service teacher trainees of integrated TEPs had acceptable and 12.28% had good psychological wellbeing. Whereas, only 0.87% had very good psychological wellbeing. The percentage was more in case of degraded psychological wellbeing which showed around 14% trainees were coming below the acceptable range. It might be due to the parental pressure to join in the integrated programme rather than individual's own interests and choice. Further, the Institutional climate might be improper to address the needs regarding career growth in teaching profession.



[Fig. 2 Mean difference between Female and Male trainee teachers w.r.t their PSW]

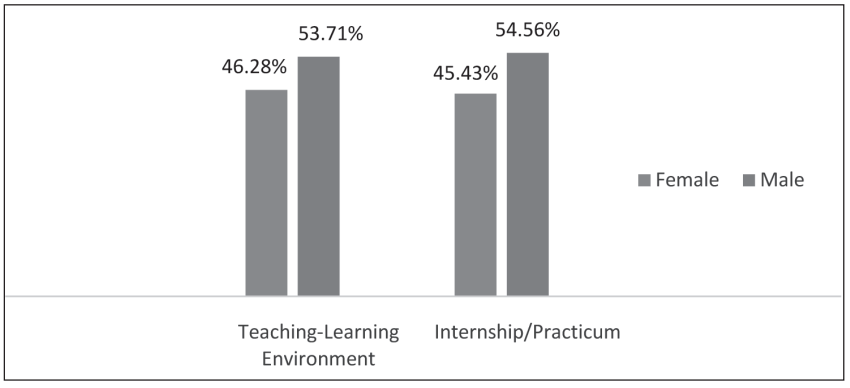
From the above figure, it is resulted that there was no statistically significant difference in the psychological wellbeing of male and female pre-service trainee teachers of integrated TEPs. Both the gender were having same status of wellbeing in psychological perspectives which might be due to the uniform selection procedure of the state for admission.

To analyze the contribution of theory and Practicum/internship portion of Curriculum in Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees.



[Fig. 3Psychological wellbeing of Pre-service teacher trainees w.r.t Teaching-Learning Environment (theory) and Internship/Practicum]

The result depicted that internship/practicum portion (74.58%) in curriculum affect the psychological wellbeing of pre-service trainee teachers of Integrated TEPs rather than the theoretical teaching-learning portion (85.94%). Pre-service trainee teachers possessed great psychological wellbeing during theoretical transaction but felt distressed during internship/practicum. It might be due to lack of orientation and practice before pre-internship which leads to poor confidence. Further, absence of microteaching lesson, simulation in the syllabus ultimately affect the interpersonal and communication skills of pre-service trainee teachers what make them psychologically distressed during internship.



[Fig. 4Psychological wellbeing of Female and Male Pre-service teacher trainees w.r.t Teaching-Learning Environment and Internship/Practicum]

The above figure 5 designed very clearly Gender related Psychological wellbeing differences with respect to different learning conditions. In both theory and practicum portion, Female trainee teachers had low psychological wellbeing than their Counterparts. If both the portions of curriculum is analysed, female trainees felt more psychological distress during practicum/internship than theoretical transaction but male trainees had better psychological wellbeing during practicum/internship than theoretical transaction. During internship, the female interns were advised to wear sarees which might be an additional burden for the females to carry and maintain it for almost 6hrs during the internship every day. Further, the distance of the schools and transport facility somewhere might be the possible cause of their psychological distresses during internship.

To investigate the teacher educators' opinion about the current scenario of Pre-service teacher trainees' Psychological Wellbeing

Q1. Do you think Enrolment in B.Ed. after several attempts causes a poor mental health for a pre-service teacher trainees?

Surprisingly, there were equal number of responses in support of both yes and no. In support of 'yes', respondents opined that, "*somehow multiple failures makes an individual feel psychologically inferior*". Whereas, half of the teacher educators replied thatentering into the teaching profession is still a backup plan for an individual.Only few numbers of students comes to B.Ed. after several attempts and mostly there is no role of several attempt rather than the interest and teaching aptitude of the trainee teacher is concerned if the causes of the poor mental health will be analysed.

Q2. Do the pre-service teacher trainees have any scope after completing this course in the present era?

All the TEs wholeheartedly welcomed and agreed that, *"Integrated teacher education programmes carry the responsibility of those individuals who have dreamt only about teaching as their profession"*. They opined that several opportunities are now available by both govt. and private sector for B.Ed. degree holders. The Pupil teachers can able to create a special identity in their pedagogical performance and will definitely get the better opportunity and so on.

Q3. Do you think the practical components is burdensome for the trainees?	Teacher Educators gave priority to the existence of practicums in the curriculum but somehow in the integrated situation, it might be burdensome for the trainees.
Q4. Previously it was a notion that teaching profession is the last choice- what is your opinion about this from the societal point of view?	The Educators believed that in present scenario the 'teaching profession' is the best choice for building a nation, as it carries the same value as other professions and is a lucrative and prestigious career. *"Aspirants should choose teaching as a profession based on their interest, rather than pressure, as it contributes to the nation's growth"*. Though somewhere the stereotypical thought of society still exists, but will be diminished soon.
Q5. Would you expect the students after passing senior secondary will choose teaching rather than medical as a profession through ITEP for secured life?	All the Educators expected that, *"there might be a great tussle between medical and teaching profession"*. In the coming days, a huge rush in the field of teaching can be seen after the completion of senior secondary.
Q6. Which type of Teacher education programmes are more reliable in the context of 21st century and why? Integrated or Single?	There was a mixed response for both integrated and single course structure. Educators preferred integrated courses as it saves time in the competitive world where fraction of second matters. Those who preferred to single course structure, they believed that Single teacher training courses are more reliable and provide maximum exposure for practical aspects rather than integrated courses.

Discussion

The study found that 73.68% of pre-service teacher trainees in integrated TEPs had acceptable psychological wellbeing, while 14% had below acceptable levels. This aligns with previous studies by Zaki (2019) and Mohsinally (2024), which found majority in moderate levels of psychological

wellbeing in both genders. These studies suggest the need for programs to enhance psychological well-being for future educators, while Rachmawati & Lidyasari (2023) and Muqodas et al., (2019) found high levels of psychological well-being in 73%-78% of trainees. However, Both the gender were having same status of wellbeing in psychological perspectives which was strongly supported by Zaki (2019). Zaimoðlu & Dagtas (2023) explored factors like motivation, students, their appreciation of the profession, feelings of inadequacy, relationship management, their multiple roles, technical concerns, and future perceptions affect the psychological well-being that pre-service teachers perceived during their practicum, Masood et al. (2022) mentioning factors like the availability of instructional materials, class size, teaching subjects not related to major areas, furniture availability, methods for different abilities, dealing with individual differences, demands, teaching extra classes, non-teaching duties, and transportation charges which supported the result of the present study that is Pre-service trainee teachers felt more distressed during internship/practicum than theory learning and the females suffered more during practicum than males.

Conclusion

Psychological well-being is crucial for preservice teacher trainees in the 21st-century educational context. As, Integrated Teacher Education Programme is designed for the individuals, who choose 'Teaching as a Profession' by choice after completing higher secondary education to create a sustainable Teacher Education System, the essence of 'Psychological well-being' must be valued to handle stress, prevent burnout, and maintain motivation and passion for teaching, effective classroom and instructional management, fostering a positive learning environment and addressing behavioural issues constructively. Focusing on the pre-service trainee teachers' psychological wellbeing may not only influence their long-term career satisfaction but also reduce the likelihood of career dissatisfaction and turnover.

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