

Level of Satisfaction among Students of Practical Education with Professional Diploma in Teaching at, Al-Ain University

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Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the level of satisfaction among students of practical education with the Professional Diploma in Teaching at Al Ein University. The population of the study consisted of all student teachers currently enrolled in the practical education for the second semester of the academic year 2020. A sample of 100 students, male and female, was selected, and a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part included general information, while the second part consisted of 36 items divided into the following subsets: speaking, listening, writing, and mentoring. A statistical analysis was conducted and it involved identifying arithmetic means, standard deviations, and the t-test. The results of the study indicated that the level of satisfaction with the practical education program was average, but it also showed that there are different points of view among students related to the gender variable, with female students being more satisfied with the program.

Keywords: Practical education, Professional Diploma, AL Ein University, Mentoring.

Introduction

Modern societies have increasingly been interested in the topic of job satisfaction in all aspects of life. The significance of job satisfaction stems from its direct connection with the general principles governing the community and for being one of the primary features of social interaction and organizational cohesion in various educational and professional contexts. It is also important for individuals and groups as the employee's satisfaction is necessary for achieving psychological and social harmony. Satisfaction is associated with success at work, and professional success is the objective measure by which the society evaluates its members. (Al-Zahrani, 2013).

To examine the situation in the faculty of education, we focused on the programme of practical education. The focus was on identifying the level of satisfaction among the students in the Professional Diploma in Teaching. This is because they are the future teachers and they are the ones who train students at school. A special interest should be given to them and to identify how satisfied they are with the program.

Given the importance of student teachers, tireless efforts have been dedicated to providing them with a professional, comprehensive training. The increase in the number of education colleges offering bachelors and graduate degrees reflects the need to achieve diversity and expansion in national higher education institutions and the importance of standardizing teacher training resources and making it integrated and comprehensive on the professional, cultural, and speciality-related levels. This is why education faculties are considered among the most important faculties in universities. (Al-Awadi, 2002).

A lot of things have to be taken into consideration for the professional teaching program to be successful and highly effective. This includes planning, precision, and clarity of goals for all parties involved in the program. They must have a teamwork spirit, and they have to exhibit collaboration, dedication to work, and good relationships between all participants in the program. (Nawfali, 2003).

The practical education program is created and executed by a set of human, social and material capabilities and inputs. Therefore, this program cannot be developed unless these inputs develop and interact in a highly competent manner (Khattabiyah, 2002). Practical education helps future teachers acquire positive trends in the teaching profession. It helps them become acquainted with potential problems and difficulties that might face them and attempt to find the proper solutions. (Beck, 2005).

Since the student is the primary beneficiary of these services provided by educational institutions, the issue of student satisfaction is, therefore, considered a significant indicator for measuring the value and strength of any educational institution at any educational system in all societies. Student satisfaction is a factor through which we can predict whether the given institution can continue to achieve education quality which involves improving student satisfaction, increasing their trust, and improving the status of the university on the local and international levels. (Khalil, 2015) The absence of student satisfaction, however, indicates low academic and administrative quality at the educational institution.

The problem

The college of education is constantly working on giving special attention to practical education with all its various components: the supervisor, the student, and the teacher. It works on improving practical education so that it keeps pace with the recent developments in our world. The practical education program is the foundation of education colleges as it is the practical aspect of the theoretical expertise, skills, and strategies acquired at the college. It is through this program that the university produces well-prepared student teachers. Given the significance of such programs, this study was conducted so that we can examine the level of satisfaction among practical education students with the Professional Diploma in Teaching. We did this through answering the following two questions:

- **Question 1:** How satisfied are practical education students in the Professional Diploma in Teaching with the given program?
- **Question 2:** Are there statistically significant differences (significant at $\alpha = 0.05$) between students' levels of satisfaction with Professional Diploma in Teaching at Al Ein University, that are attributed to the gender variables?

Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. Finding the level of satisfaction among students of practical education at AL Ein University with the Professional Diploma in Teaching
2. Finding about differences in opinion, related to the gender variable, among student teachers in the practical education program at AL Ein University concerning their satisfaction with the Professional Diploma in Teaching

Significance of the study

The significance of this study can be summarized in the following:

1. The significance of the study stems from the fact that it is one of the most recent in this field. It focuses on the practical education program and reveals its significance and the level of satisfaction with it among students.
2. Examining the status of practical education in teacher training curricula and its role in honing teachers' skills.
3. Identifying the difficulties facing student teachers while undertaking and executing the practical education program.
4. Providing feedback for the faculty on the practical education program and its objectives and methodologies so that the faculty can enhance points of strength and address points of weakness.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study involve the following:

1. **Limitations related to place:** The study was applied to all students enrolled in the practical education track at Al Ein University.
2. **Limitations related to time:** This study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2020.
3. **Limitations related to participants:** The population and sample of the study were restricted to students of practical education at Al Ein University.
4. **Limitations related to methodology:** The results of this study are determined by the accuracy of the answers provided by the sample members. They are also determined by the implications of the study instrument, in terms of instrument validity, instrument reliability, and other measures used by the study.

Terminology

1. **Practical education:** this is an organized, academic program delivered by education colleges with the purpose of equipping student teachers with professional and behavioral skills they need in order to practice their teaching skills, inside and outside of the classroom. The objective is to prepare them for the teaching profession under the supervision of the faculty and staff. (Al-Khalili, 1999)

2. **Student satisfaction:** this is defined as "an internal feeling reflected in the student's behavior and response, indicating his acceptance of his educational specialty in the past and present. It indicates the student is optimistic about his future, recognizing and accepting his environment and interacting with the skills it provides." (Addib, 2001, p.56)
3. Our operational definition of satisfaction is that is a feeling reflected by the level of satisfaction, among the study sample of the practical education program, according to the designated research instrument.

Literature Review

The researchers reviewed previous studies on the subject and here is what they found:

- **Al-nimran, 2018.** This study aimed at identifying the level of satisfaction by practical education students at Al-Zarqa University with supervisors of the practical education program. The sample consisted of 101 students, male and female. One of the primary findings of the study is that the level of satisfaction was average.
- **Hasha'i, 2018:** The aim of this study was to examine the role of practical education programs in acquiring teaching skills by students at the Institute of Sciences and Technologies of Physical and Sports Activities at the University of Baskara. The population of the study comprised 204 students. One of the primary findings was that the program has a great role in acquiring these skills. It also found that the level of acquiring these skills varied depending on the gender variable, with female students being better at these skills.
- **Safar (2017)** conducted a study under the following title: The Level of Performance in the Practical Education Program and its Relationship with Student Satisfaction at Um Al Qura University The sample consisted of 218 students. The findings indicated that the level of performance was high while the satisfaction was average.
- **Iyad (2016)** conducted a study under the title: The Situation of Practical Education Programs at Higher Education Institutions in the West Bank, from the Perspective of Student Teachers. The sample of the study consisted of 143 students, male and female. One of the most important findings of the study was that the situation was average. It also found that there were differences between student perspectives related to the gender variable, in favor of female students.
- **Al-Shahri (2004)** conducted the following study: The Role of The Supervisor of Practical Education in Art Education from the Perspective of Trainee Students at the Faculty of Education, King Saud University. The sample consisted of 97 male and female students, all enrolled in the track of practical education. The results of the study showed that, from the perspective of students, the primary role of the supervisor is to mentor, guide, and teach students the skills related to collaborative communication with their classmates and inside the classes they teach.
- **Verloop (2007)** conducted the following study: Student Teachers' Beliefs about Mentoring and Learning to Teach During Teaching Practice. The study was conducted on a sample of 34 students, male and female, all enrolled in the practical education program. The results indicated that practical education students expected from the supervisor to perform several tasks like guiding them towards finding their mistakes on their own and building friendly relationships with their classmates and their supervisor.

Evaluation of previous studies

Through a review of the previous studies, we noticed that they focused on practical education programs and attempted to evaluate it in terms of reality, level, and role. Our study, however, focuses on identifying the level of student satisfaction according to the gender variable. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that we benefited from previous studies. They helped us carry out the discussion, interpretation, and analysis of our study.

Method and procedures

The authors used a descriptive research method in the form of a survey, as it better suits the nature of the study and its objectives

Population and sample

The population consists of students enrolled in the program of practical education at Al Ain University, for the second semester of 2020. The sample comprises 100 students, male and female. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample according to the gender variable.

Table 1: distribution of sample members according to the gender variable

Variable	Variable level	Number
Gender	Male	48
	Female	52
Total		100

Study instrument

After reviewing literature, the researchers designed a research tool which is a questionnaire consisting of 4 subsets and 38 items and covering all aspects of practical education. The tool was designed according to 5 Point Likert Scale (Very little, little, average, high, very high) The highest positive response is given 5 points and the lowest response is given 1 point. The level of satisfaction was calculated as follows:

- The maximum numerical value is 5 and the minimum is 1. Subtracting the minimum from the maximum, we get 4. $4/5$ is 0.8. The five options are: very little, little, average, high, and very high. When the minimum value is one point, ten was added to eight for each item. Thus, the numerical values are as follow:
- 1-1.8: happens to a very small degree
- 1.81-2.6: happens to a small degree
- 2.61-3.4: happens to an average degree
- 3.41-4.2: happens to a high degree
- 4.21-5: happens to a very high degree

Instrument validity

To measure the face validity of the research instrument, a first draft was given to a group of faculty reviewers at various Emirati universities. They were asked to decide about the suitability of the items in the questionnaire to the main objective of the instrument and the clarity and correctness of the language used. They were also asked to recommend any revisions, add more items if necessary, or omit any unnecessary items.

The researchers edited the questionnaire based on the recommendations of the reviewers, so the final draft of the questionnaire adopted included 36 items divided into 5 subsets as follows:

Subset No.	subset	Number of items
1	Speaking	12
2	Listening	11
3	Writing	6
4	Mentoring	7
Total		36

Instrument reliability

To measure the reliability coefficient for the instrument, the authors used the split-half method whereby the items were split into two groups: odd numbers and even numbers. The response score for each student in odd- number items were calculated, then the responses for even numbers were calculated. After that, the correlation coefficient between the two scores was calculated. The value of the coefficient was found to be high (0.86).

Statistical analysis

The arithmetic means and standard deviations were found and the paired sample t-test was used to examine the effect of gender variable (male, female).

Results and Discussion

Question One: How satisfied are practical education students in the Professional Diploma in Teaching with the given program?

To answer this question, we extracted the means, standard deviations, and rank for students' estimations of their satisfaction with the practical education program. We did this for each subset separately and for all subsets as a whole. Table 2 illustrates this.

Table 2: means, standard deviations, and ranks for the performance of sample members and for each subset separately and all subsets as a whole

Subset No. in the survey	Rank	Subset	Mean	Std Dev
2	4	Speaking	2,68	0.88
3	1	Listening	2,90	0.69
4	2	Writing	2,82	0.75
1	3	Mentoring	2,75	0.81
Total subset			2,79	0.70

Table 2 indicates that the Listening Subset came in the second place while Mentoring Subset came 5, making it the last one. It also shows that the mean for the total subsets reached 2.79. When comparing it with the equation used in the study, we notice that students' satisfaction with practical education was average. This perhaps indicates the existence of some sort of satisfaction, on the part of students, with the program, its objectives and methodology. We hope that the level of satisfaction would increase and that the objectives would become clearer and more likely to be achieved. The results of our study are in line with those of Al-nimran (2018) and Iyad (2016) which both showed that the instrument was average. Our study results, however, differ from the results of Safar's study (2018) and Hasha'i's (2018) which both indicated that the instrument was high.

To reveal the content of the items in each subset, we calculated the means, standard deviations, and rank for each subset. This is explained below:

Subset 1: Speaking

This subset, which is made up of 12 items, seeks to highlight the level of students' satisfaction with the practical education program, as explained in table 3.

Table 3: In descending order, the means and standard deviations of items in Speaking Subset according to the members of the study sample

Rank	Item No.	Item	Mean	Std Dev
1	9	Teaches me to speak in a clear and proper language	2.81	1,07
2	7	Teaches me to call students by their names when talking to them.	2.78	0,86
3	4	Teaches me to speak in a humble manner and avoid arrogance	2.73	0,87
4	5	Teaches me to focus on creating a fun atmosphere during class discussions and stay away from psychological stress	2.73	0,97
5	3	Teaches me to avoid using a boring style	2.71	0,87
6	8	Teaches me to maintain equal eye contact with all students when speaking to them	2.67	1,05
7	6	Teaches me to use body gestures and movements that enhance my way of speaking	2.66	1,14
8	2	Teaches me to present ideas in a logical sequence and avoid randomness and dispersion	2.63	0,85
9	12	Teaches me to repeatedly use special words when speaking	2.63	0,91
10	11	Teaches me to discuss various topics objectively and away from intellectual suppression	2.62	1,13
11	1	Teaches me to present main ideas in a brief way	2.61	1,04
12	10	Teaches me to use proper synonyms for certain unclear words	2.55	1,05
Total subset			2.68	0,68

The results from table 4 indicates that the mean of the subset items ranged from a maximum of 2.81 as in item 9 (*Teaches me to speak in a clear and proper language*) and a minimum of 2.55 as in item 10 (*Teaches me to use proper synonyms for certain unclear words*). The table also shows that the subset as a whole has an arithmetic mean of 2.68, and an average level of satisfaction. We attribute this to the existence of some sort of transparency and disclosure with regards to faculty announcements, as there are some brochures and manuals. We also hope that corporate governance will be properly implemented.

The mean for the total subset is 2.68. We believe that this average level, which is close to low, indicates a level of satisfaction with the speaking component of the practical education, related to the methodology of the speaking and its steps and implementation. Because of this, students' answers came as average.

Subset 2: Listening

This subset includes 12 items which reflect the level of student satisfaction with the practical education program, as explained in table 4.

The results from table 4 indicates that the mean of the subset items ranged from a maximum of 2.98 as in item 10 (*Teaches how to summarize general main points raised by the students*) and a minimum of 2.82 as in item 9 (*Teaches me to give a chance for students who have questions about things they find ambiguous*). The table also indicates that the subset as a whole has an arithmetic mean of 2.90, and an average level of satisfaction.

We attribute this to the level of satisfaction with the listening component of the practical education program. The harmony in listening and paying attention as well the artistic and professional aspects pertinent to the listening component honed their personality. Thus, their answers carried a great deal of satisfaction with this component.

Subset 3: Writing

This subset includes 6 items which reflect the level of student satisfaction with the practical education program. Table 5 illustrates this.

The results from table 5 indicate that the mean of the subset items ranged from a maximum of 2.89 as in item 1 (*Continuously encourages*

Table 4: In descending order, means and standard deviations of items in listening subset, according to the study population.

Rank	Item No.	Item	Mean	Std Dev
1	10	Teaches how to summarize general main points raised by students	2.98	1,02
2	8	Teaches me to stay away from prejudices based on generalizations and inaccurate timings	2.97	1,09
3	1	Teaches taking notes while listening to students' discussions	2.95	1,12
4	4	Teaches avoiding getting distracted with papers and other tools while listening to students	2.93	0,89
5	3	Teaches listening to students' problems related to their education	2.91	1,21
6	5	Teaches me to pay attention to students' features and movements while talking to me	2.90	0,98
7	2	Teaches me to avoid interrupting students and to give them enough time to finish their talk	2.88	1,06
8	7	Teaches me to avoid ignoring students' feelings when they express them	2.86	1,21
9	6	Teaches me to listen carefully for students when they talk	2.85	0,95
10	11	Teaches me to be aware of the importance of what I say while talking to students	2.83	1,04
11	9	Teaches me to give a chance for students who have questions about things they find ambiguous	2,82	1,08
Total subset			2.90	0.74

using legible handwriting) to a minimum of 2.75 as in item 2 (*Teaches how to write summaries related to the educational track, taking into consideration the use of proper language and grammar*). The table also indicates that the subset as a whole has an arithmetic mean of 2.82, and an average level of satisfaction. We attribute this to the fact that the sample members are satisfied with the writing component of the practical education program as it increases their knowledge about writing in a clear manner that reduces errors and increases effectiveness in teaching and what they transfer to their students

Table 5: In descending order, means and standard deviations of items in Writing Subset, according to the study sample.

Rank	Item No.	Item	Mean	Std Dev
1	1	Constantly encourages using legible handwriting	2.89	1,04
2	5	Teaches how to write student-related announcements in a clear wording and style	2.85	1,21
3	3	Teaches avoiding the use of disorganized and random style of writing	2.83	1,02
4	4	Teaches using drawings and illustrations if needed	2.79	1,19
5	6	Teaches how to write brief, important notes about students' written homework	2.78	1,05
6	2	Teaches how to write summaries related to the educational track, taking into consideration the use of proper language and grammar	2.75	0,92
Total subset			2.82	0,79

Table 6: In descending order, means and standard deviations of items in mentoring subsets according to the members of the study sample.

Rank	Item No.	Item	Mean	Std Dev
1	2	Constantly directs to the use of proper language when reading what is written	2.79	1,01
2	5	Constantly directs to reading students' written homework with objectivity and concentration	2.78	1,03
3	3	Constantly directs towards reading out-loud and clearly on the part of students	2.77	1,02
4	4	Constantly directs towards reading students' written suggestions with concentration and understanding	2.75	1,11
5	6	Helps create positive relationships with students inside the classroom	2.73	1,03
6	1	Constantly directs towards identifying the main points of the given text when reading	2.73	1,05
7	7	Constantly directs towards learning novel educational subjects and techniques that are relevant to their specialty	2.68	1,15
Total subset			2.75	1,02

Table 7: Results of t-test for determining the significance of the difference in students' perception of and satisfaction with the practical education program in each subset and all subsets as whole, depending on the gender variable.

Subset	Gender	No.	Mean	Std Dev	T-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Speaking	Male	48	2.74	.567	.527	98	0.000
	Female	52	2.85	.543			
Listening	Male	48	2.76	.578	.020	98	0.011
	Female	52	2.83	.654			
Writing	Male	48	2.70	.621	.588	98	0.000
	Female	52	2.89	.478			
Mentoring	Male	48	2.77	.684	.992	98	0.033
	Female	52	2.82	.690			
Total subsets	Male	48	2.74	.552	.560	98	0.000
	Female	52	2.85	.561			

Subset 4: Mentoring

This subset encompasses seven items which reflect the level of student satisfaction with the Professional Diploma in Teaching. Table 6 illustrates this.

The results from table 6 indicate that the mean of the subset items ranged from a maximum of 2.79 as in item 2 (*Constantly directs to the use of proper language when reading what is written*) to a minimum of 2.68 as in item 7 (*Constantly directs towards learning novel educational subjects and techniques that are of relevance to their specialty*). The table also indicates that the subset as a whole has an arithmetic mean of 2.68, and a level of satisfaction deemed average. We attribute this to the fact that the practical education guides the students on how to deal with students on the ground, manage the classroom, get students' attention and keep the class active.

Results related to question 2 which states: Are there statistically significant differences (significant at $\alpha = 0.05$) between levels of satisfaction, on the part of students of practical education at Al Ein University, which are attributed to the gender variables?

To answer this question, we used the t-test as explained in table 7 below:

As table 7 shows, there are differences related to gender in each subset separately and in all subsets as a whole, in favor of female students. The arithmetic mean for female students is 2.85 while the mean for male students is 2.74. We think that these differences are due to the fact that female students have a stronger connection and commitment to the program, compared to male students. They have a better attendance rate and they are interested in understanding the program, its methodology and method of implementation. This explains why female students are more satisfied with the program than male students. These results are in line with the study of Iyad (2016) which found that the gender variable has a role in the variations of students' views on the program, in favor of women. They are also in line with Hasha'i's study (2018) which found variations regarding the acquisition of teaching skills attributed to the gender variable and in favor of female students.

Recommendations

In accordance with the study objectives and results, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Supporting the practical education program with theoretical and practical activities which equip students with the required skills

and contribute to preparing them professionally, culturally, and socially.

2. Carrying on regular student satisfaction studies as this is necessary for improving academic life at the faculty level.

Developing the satisfaction survey through adding subsets and items that examine all aspects of the program in order to enhance points of strength and improve points of weakness.

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