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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING APPROACH AND THEIR COMPETENCIES

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ABSTRACT

Constructivist teaching approach is one of the best approaches in the learning process. For a teacher to successfully perform the constructivist teaching approach in the classroom, he/she must possess specific skills and efficient professional competencies. The main objective of the study is to find out the relationship between the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies amongst prospective teachers. The Student-teachers' Attitude towards Constructivist Teaching Approach Scale (Self-standardised) and Teachers' Competencies Measurement Scale (Pandey, 2009) were administered to 600 prospective teachers. Findings of the study revealed that the prospective teachers have average attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and moderate competencies respectively. The study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies amongst prospective teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

In constructivist approach, knowledge involves mentally constructed knowledge from previous knowledge. Constructivist teaching approach is based on the constructive learning theory in which the teachers help the students to learn constructing their own knowledge according to their interests, needs and at their own pace as contrasting to traditional methods of teaching. As per the National Education Policy 2020, education is for holistic development of the learner, to achieve this aim there is a need to allow learners to discover and explore their learning. The teachers play a very crucial role in initiating discovery and exploration of knowledge in and outside the classroom for holistic development of the child. Teacher Education Institutions prepare student-teachers from being transmitters of knowledge to facilitators of knowledge. They also prepare prospective teachers to master the necessary teaching skills so that they can effectively execute them in their profession. Competencies in this context includes the ability and skills of prospective teachers which they possess and bring to the learning process. One of the aims of education is to realise the potential of the children and help them realise these potentials.

For this to take place, education must be of high quality and this can be realised through quality teacher education programme such as enhancing the skills and competencies of prospective teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The constructivist approach of teaching is learner centred whereby knowledge is actively constructed on the basis of previous knowledge (Akkus et al., 2003; Mogashoa, 2014; Kalpana, 2014; Mir & Jain, 2016). The attitude of prospective teachers in using constructivist approach in their teaching differs from being favourable to unfavourable. Studies revealed that prospective teachers have favourable attitude towards constructivist approach of teaching (Metin, et al., 2010; Mir& Mir, 2016; Swain & Mahanta, 2023). Study conducted by Rahman & Chavhan (2021) revealed that the prospective teachers have moderate range of attitude towards constructivist approach of teaching. However, Lyngdoh & Sungoh (2017) in their study found that the prospective teachers have an unfavourable attitude towards constructivist approach of teaching.

The competencies of the prospective teachers is moderate. Several studies revealed that prospective teachers have moderate competencies (Morallos et al.,2014; Harun, 2025). A study conducted by Aslan and Bakir (2017) showed high level of competencies amongst prospective teachers.

RATIONALE

Constructivism emphasizes active learning and student-centered method of learning (Alam, 2023). Understanding prospective teachers' attitudes towards constructivist approach of teaching helps to assess the readiness to adopt and implement it in the classroom which is linked to enhancing their competencies. Competent prospective teachers with constructivist mindsets create more dynamic learning environments (Zajda, 2021). Currently, teacher-centred approach is mainly used in the classroom situations. The teacher would play the active role and the students would listen and produce what the teacher has taught (Al-Zu'be, 2013). In general, there is a lack of implementation of the constructivist approach of teaching in the classroom. The traditional methods of teaching are passive in nature in which the teachers are actively giving information and students would be the passive listeners.

It has been found that this teacher-centred education does not produce desirable outcomes. In addition, it would lead students to become passive, losing interest and in turn would lead to their poor mental health. Thus, it is very important to understand the importance and value of the constructivist teaching approach. It is also important to help prospective teachers inculcate right attitude and positive competency towards constructivist teaching approach. Examining the relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies is essential to determine whether a favourable attitude is associated with higher levels of professional teaching skills among teachers. This reason made the investigator to choose the topic for study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The title of the problem is named as "**The Relationship between Prospective Teachers' Attitudes towards the Constructivist Teaching Approach and Their Competencies**".

DELIMITATION: The study was delimited only to prospective teachers studying in CTEs and DIETs in four districts of Meghalaya. These are East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi, and East Jaintia Hills Districts.

OBJECTIVES

To assess the level of attitude towards constructivist teaching approach of prospective teachers. To assess the level of competencies of prospective student-teachers. To find out the relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers.

HYPOTHESES

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers.

METHODOLOGY

METHOD

The descriptive survey method was used in the study of the relationship between attitude towards constructivist approach and competencies of prospective teachers.

POPULATION: The population of the study included all the prospective teachers studying in CTEs and DIETs in East Khasi Hills District, Jaintia Hills District, Ri-Bhoi District, and West Khasi Hills District in Meghalaya. The total population of student-teachers included in the study is 900. This is shown in Table No. 1.

Table No. 1. Population of the study

Class / Institutions	1st Year	2nd Year	Total
CTEs	100	100	200
DIETs	350	350	700
Total	**450**	**450**	**900**

SAMPLE: The sample of the study is 600 consisted of prospective teachers from various College of Teacher Education (CTEs) and District Institute for Education and Training (DIETs) in Meghalaya. This is shown in Table No. 2.

Table No. 2. Sample of the study

Class / Institutions	1st Year		2nd Year		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
CTEs	16	81	19	16	132
DIETs	64	199	67	138	468
Total	**80**	**280**	**86**	**154**	**600**

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: For the selection of the sample, simple random sampling technique was employed in the study.

TOOLS: To study the relationship between attitude towards constructivist approach and competencies amongst prospective teachers, the investigator constructed and standardised a tool named Student-teachers' Attitude towards Constructivist Teaching Approach Scale and a standardised tool named the Teachers' Competencies Measurement Scale (TCMS) by Pranay Pandey (2019).

FINDINGS

The data collected from 600 prospective teachers is analysed in order to find out the relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies amongst prospective teachers. Descriptive statistics regarding the levels of attitude and competencies are presented first, followed by the correlation analysis.

Level of Attitude towards Constructivist Teaching Approach of Prospective Teachers: From Table No. 3, results showed the levels of attitude of prospective teachers towards constructivist teaching approach. It has been observed that 0.17% of prospective teachers have very high favourable attitude and 6.50% have high favourable attitude towards constructivist teaching approach. Very high unfavourable attitude was found among 1.33% and high unfavourable attitude among 4.83% of prospective teachers. Prospective teachers with above average attitude constitute 20.83% and those with below average attitude constitute

Table 3. Level of attitude towards constructivist teaching approach of prospective teachers

Sl. No.	Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Description
1	217 and below	8	1.33	Very High Unfavourable Attitude
2	218-233	29	4.83	High Unfavourable Attitude
3	234-249	158	26.33	Below Average Attitude
4	250-265	240	40.00	Average Attitude
5	266-281	125	20.83	Above Average Attitude
6	282-297	39	6.50	High Favourable Attitude
7	298 and above	1	0.17	Very High Favourable Attitude

Table 4. Level of competencies of prospective teachers

Sl. No.	Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Description
1	171 and above	49	8.17	High Level of Competencies
2	140-170	500	83.33	Moderate Level of Competencies
3	139 and below	51	8.50	Low Level of Competencies

Table 5. Correlation between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers

Category	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated 'r'	Critical 'r'
Attitude towards Constructivist Teaching Approach	600	256.95	16.13	598	0.285	0.073
Competencies	600	154.16	11.20			
Level of Significance: Significant at .05 level						

26.33%. The majority of prospective teachers (40.00%) were found to have an average level of attitude towards constructivist teaching approach.

Level of Competencies of Prospective Teachers: From Table No. 4, results showed that 8.17% of the prospective teachers fall within the range of score of 171 and above which indicates the high level of competencies. Again, 83.33% of the prospective teachers fall within the range of score of 140-170 which indicates the moderate level of competencies. It is also further observed that 8.50% of the prospective teachers fall within the range of score of 139 and below which indicates the low level of competencies.

Testing of Hypothesis

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers.

From Table No. 5 it has been found that the calculated r-value with df=598 is 0.285. The table r-value (critical value) with df=598 is 0.073. Here, the calculated r-value is greater than the table r-value which indicates that there is a significant relationship between the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers. Therefore, the stated null hypothesis, "There is no significant relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers" is rejected. Hence, there is a positive correlation between the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the study showed that prospective teachers' level of attitude towards constructivist teaching approach is average. This corresponds to the findings of Metin, et al. (2010), Jain and Mir (2016), Rahman and Chavhan (2021) and Swain and Mahanta (2023) which revealed moderate range and favourable attitude among prospective teachers towards the approach.

However, this study contradicts the findings conducted by Lyngdoh and Sungoh (2017) which revealed an unfavourable attitude among prospective teachers towards constructivist teaching approach. The study revealed that, in general, the student-teachers from CTEs and DIETs have average attitude towards constructivist teaching approach. The reason for this is because majority of the prospective teachers come from the traditional method of teaching as well as lacking knowledge and skills to practice constructivist teaching approach in the classroom. The findings similarly revealed that the student-teachers have moderate level of competencies. This finding corresponds to the findings of Morallos et al. (2014)., which showed prospective teachers' level of competencies was moderate. However, this finding contradicts the findings of Aslan and Bakir (2017) which indicated that prospective teachers have high level of pedagogical competence. As stated from the title of the study, "Relationship between Attitude towards Constructivist Teaching Approach and Competencies amongst Prospective Teachers", the objective of the study is to study the relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers. The result of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers. Significant positive correlation ($r = 0.285$, $p < .05$) has been observed between the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers. This positive correlation means that if there is a simultaneous increase or decrease in the attitude towards constructivist teaching approach there will be a corresponding increase or decrease in competencies and vice versa. The finding underscores the importance of fostering favourable attitudes towards constructivist approaches in teacher education programmes, as such attitudes are associated with higher teaching competencies among prospective teachers.

CONCLUSION

Teaching is the noblest profession among all professions. It is a career that shapes the minds of future generations. In the

present context, the concept of teaching-learning process has shifted from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes on learning by discovery and exploration. Through discovery pupils are given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge by incorporating new ideas and concepts to previous learning experiences. The teachers play a very crucial role in initiating discovery and exploration of knowledge in and outside the classroom for holistic development of the child. From the findings, the study showed that there is a significant positive relationship between attitude towards constructivist teaching approach and competencies of prospective teachers. Teacher-Education Institutions have to prepare their prospective teachers from being transmitters of knowledge to facilitators of knowledge. Thus, Teacher–Education Institutions must prepare and build future teachers who will be able to meet the demand for Constructivist teachers by fostering both favourable attitudes and strong competencies.

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