

A Study of Prospective Teachers' Perceptions Towards Skill Enhancement in Chandigarh

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ABSTRACT

Context: The Indian job market has undergone significant transformation, marked by the emergence of new employment avenues, intensified competition, changing employer expectations and evolving policy frameworks. In this dynamic context, employers increasingly value individuals who possess relevant and adaptable skills that contribute to organizational effectiveness. Skill enhancement has thus become a crucial determinant of employability, supporting both professional success and overall life development. Although a growing number of students enroll in teacher education programmes, only a limited proportion succeed in securing employment in government or private institutions, while many remain unemployed. This study focuses on the various activities currently implemented within teacher training programmes that can serve as avenues for skill enhancement among prospective teachers. Understanding the perceptions of prospective teachers regarding these activities can assist policymakers and educational authorities in deciding which practices should be strengthened, modified, or excluded to make teacher education programmes more responsive to employment demands.

Aims: This study was conducted to examine the perceptions of prospective teachers towards skill enhancement. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The sample comprised 80 prospective teachers drawn from the Government College of Education, Sector 20-D, Chandigarh and GRIID, Sector 31-C, Chandigarh. To assess

perceptions of skill enhancement, the researchers used a self-developed inventory. The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, *t*-test and ANOVA. The findings revealed that prospective teachers from rural and urban backgrounds, female participants, students from both institutions (GCE-20 and GRIID), age groups 22–27 and 28–35 years, all income categories, graduates and postgraduates and all levels of teaching experience exhibited an excellent level of perception regarding skill enhancement. In contrast, male prospective teachers, those below 21 years of age and those above 35 years demonstrated an above-average level of perception. Furthermore, the results indicated that there was no significant difference in perceptions of skill enhancement based on locality, age group, educational qualification, income group, or teaching experience. However, a significant difference was observed on the basis of gender and institutional affiliation among prospective teachers.

Keywords: Skills, Training, Professional development, Employment, Demographic variables.

Introduction

Skill development of a nation's working population is a critical prerequisite for economic growth and sustainable development. Scholars have emphasized that continuous skill enhancement enables individuals to acquire, retain and advance job-specific competencies, thereby strengthening their position in the labour market. Well-developed skills not only improve

employability but also contribute to individual success as part of a competent and productive workforce. In this context, responsive education and systematic training play a vital role in enhancing workforce adaptability and meeting the changing demands of the employment sector. Theoretical perspectives on skill development offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by students during their educational journey. In recent years, skills have emerged as a strategic priority within academic institutions to align educational outcomes with industry requirements and to foster higher-order cognitive abilities among learners. However, the growing demand for a highly skilled workforce, coupled with increasing competition, has also contributed to rising unemployment levels. Although a substantial number of vacancies exist for graduates, many positions remain unfilled due to a mismatch between available skills and market expectations.

Employability skills encompass an individual's ability to communicate effectively and interact productively with colleagues and clients. Both soft skills and hard skills are equally essential for professional success. Training programmes play a crucial role in equipping students with these employability skills before they enter real-world professional environments. In teacher education, practices such as microteaching have been found to be particularly effective in developing essential teaching competencies and improving instructional effectiveness. Teaching skills include a wide range of competencies such as questioning techniques, reinforcement, variation in teaching methods, explanation skills, lesson initiation and closure, classroom management and small-group instruction. Through these skills, teachers are able to effectively transmit subject knowledge and facilitate meaningful learning experiences. It is

important to distinguish skill enhancement from mere content enrichment, as the former focuses on the practical application and development of professional competencies. To achieve this, experts from diverse fields such as education, psychology and research collaborate to design comprehensive frameworks for teacher training programmes. Basic teaching skill models often identify a structured set of core skills essential for effective teaching. The development of skills is influenced by several factors, including the structure of education systems, availability of vocational pathways, exposure to career options and strategic collaboration with educational partners. Skill development directly enhances employability and increases opportunities for both domestic and global mobility of human capital. Students may initially excel in specific skills, which can later be expanded and refined through targeted training and experiential learning, ultimately contributing to their professional competence and adaptability.

Significance of the Study

Keeping learners at the centre of education, there is a growing need to emphasize teachers' 21st-century skills and to reconceptualize the ways in which teachers are trained and evaluated. Teacher education plays a crucial role in developing a competent pool of school teachers who will shape future generations and the evolving educational landscape in India demands well-prepared and skilled teachers. Despite having a large teaching workforce, marked gender disparities persist and concerns regarding the quality of teaching outcomes continue to emerge. Declining pass percentages in national board examinations and consistently low success rates in teacher eligibility tests highlight serious shortcomings in teacher preparedness and foundational knowledge. These challenges point not to a lack of employment opportunities, but rather

to a shortage of relevant skills among teachers. Existing skill development policies and training frameworks require urgent reform to address gaps in quality, capacity and effectiveness. Skill training programmes must therefore focus on developing both technical competencies and transferable skills that enable adaptability in diverse educational contexts. Teachers need to recognize their professional potential, adopt new roles and cultivate higher-order thinking skills to meet contemporary classroom demands. Furthermore, limitations in training infrastructure and output quality weaken the overall effectiveness of teacher education programmes. When there is a mismatch between a teacher's area of specialization and the tasks assigned in professional settings, the ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively is compromised. Adequate teaching practice is essential to transform pupil teachers into effective professionals, while aligning teacher education curricula with school-level curricula can further enhance teaching relevance and effectiveness. Innovative approaches such as blended learning have also shown promise in strengthening teaching skills among student teachers. In this context, developing competent teachers equipped with modern resources, pedagogical techniques and adaptable skill sets is imperative. Therefore, examining the perceptions of prospective teachers towards skill enhancement becomes essential, as it can provide valuable insights for improving teacher education programmes and aligning them with contemporary educational and professional requirements.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the perceptions of prospective teachers towards skill enhancement.
2. To compare the level of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on gender, locality,

age, income, qualifications and teaching experience.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers on gender basis.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers on locality basis.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among graduate and postgraduate prospective teachers.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among GCE 20 and GRIID prospective teachers.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different age groups of prospective teachers.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different income groups of prospective teachers.

H₀₇: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different teaching experience groups of prospective teachers.

Material and Method

The study adopted a descriptive research methodology. The population comprised all prospective teachers enrolled in Colleges of Education in Chandigarh. From this population, a sample of 80 prospective teachers was randomly selected from the Government College of Education, Sector 20-D, Chandigarh and GRIID, Sector 31-C, Chandigarh. The sample was categorized on the basis of variables such as institution, age, gender, locality, educational qualification and teaching experience.

Procedure

A self-developed inventory was employed to assess skill enhancement among the respondents. Data were collected online through a Google Form, which included all necessary instructions and guidelines for the participants to ensure accurate and informed responses.

Measures

A researcher-constructed inventory was used to measure skill enhancement among the respondents. Data were gathered online using a Google Form, in which clear instructions and guidelines were provided to facilitate accurate and informed participation.

Statistical Techniques Used

In the present study, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, Shapiro–Wilk test, percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, *t*-test and ANOVA were employed as statistical techniques for data analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The results of the present study were analyzed in the following two sections:

Section I: Level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers.

Section II: Normality of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education.

Section III: Comparison of the level of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on gender, locality, age, income, qualifications and teaching experience.

Section I: Level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers.

1. To study the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers of Chandigarh.

Table No. 1: Perception of Skill enhancement among prospective teachers of Chandigarh.

Sr . No .	Level of Skill enhancement	Range of Scores	No. of Students	Percentage
1	Excellent	121-150	48	60.00
2	Above Average	91-120	32	40.00
3	Average	61-90	00	0.00
4	Below Average	31-60	00	0.00
5	Poor	1-30	00	0.00

2. To study the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on locality, gender, institution, age, income, qualifications and teaching experience.

Table No. 2: Perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on locality, gender, institution, age, income, qualifications and teaching experience.

Sr. No.	Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	B.Ed. Students	124.76	10.03	Excellent
2	Rural	124.66	11.25	Excellent
3	Urban	124.69	9.76	Excellent
4	Male	113.00	2.82	Above Average
5	Female	125.06	9.97	Excellent
6	Institution Type GCE 20 GRIID	125.87 120.31	10.15 8.40	Excellent Excellent
6	Age			

	Below 21	117.4	13.0	Above Average
	22-27	125.2	6	Excellent
	28-35	8	9.72	Excellent
	Above 35	128.2	8.42	Excellent
		5	0.0	Above- Average
		111		
7	Income			
	0-1 Lakh	123.2	10.3	Excellent
	1-3 Lakh	3	5	Excellent
	3-5 Lakh	124.5	9.08	Excellent
	5-10 Lakh	6	10.2	Excellent
		125.1	0	
		8	11.9	
		127.4	6	
		6		
8	Qualifica tion	123.2	8.86	Excellent
	Graduati on	3		
	Post Graduati on	126.1	10.9	Excellent
		4	6	
9	Teaching Experien ce	124.3	9.39	Excellent
	Fresher	6	15.4	Excellent
	1-2 Years	128.1	8	Excellent
	2-5 Years	2	00.0	
		126.0	0	
		0		

Section II: Normality of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education.

Table No. 3: Normality of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.

Percep tion of skill enhanc ement	.07 4	80	.17 4	.06 8	80	.05 9
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Table No. 3 described that the calculated p-values of perception of skill enhancement for the Kolmogorov-Simrnov (K-S) test and the Shapiro-Wilk test were 0.074 significant at .174 and 0.068 significant at .059, all these calculated values were found greater than level of significance 0.05. So, it was found that data followed normal distribution in this study.

Section III: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on locality, gender, institution, age, income, qualifications and teaching experience.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers on gender basis.

Table No. 4: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on gender.

Sr No.	Variabl e	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- value	Interpretati on
1	Fem ale	7	125.	9.9	7	5.2	Signific ant
		8	06	7	9	52	
2	Male	0	113.	2.8			
		2	0	2			

*Level of significance 0.05 level

Table 4 indicates that the female prospective teachers obtained a mean score of 125.06 with a standard deviation of 9.97, whereas the male prospective teachers recorded a mean score of 113.00 with a standard deviation of 2.82. The higher mean score of the female group reflects a comparatively stronger perception of skill enhancement than that of their male counterparts. Further analysis revealed that the

calculated t value (5.252) exceeded the critical table value of $t = 1.99$ at 79 degrees of freedom and at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the difference between the two groups is statistically significant. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated that there is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers on the basis of gender, is rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers on locality basis.

Table No. 5: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on locality.

S r. N o.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Absolute t-value	Interpretation
1	Rural	18	124.66	11.25	79	-0.042	0.042	Insignificant
2	Urban	72	124.69	9.76				

*Level of significance 0.05

It is found in Table No. 5 that the rural counterpart had a mean score of 124.66 and SD 11.25 and the urban counterpart had a mean score of 124.69 and SD 9.76. It is found that urban counterpart had a high mean score than rural counterpart of perception of skill enhancement. It is also found that the calculated t value is 0.042, which is less than the table value of $t = 1.99$ at $df = 79$ at a level of significance .05 and hence found insignificant. So, H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill

enhancement among prospective teachers on locality basis is accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among graduate and postgraduate prospective teachers.

Table No. 6: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on qualification.

S r. N o.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Absolute t-value	Interpretation
1	Graduate	39	123.30	8.86	79	-1.276	1.276	Insignificant
2	Post Graduate	41	126.14	10.96				

*Level of significance 0.05

Table 6 shows that graduate prospective teachers obtained a mean score of 123.30 with a standard deviation of 8.86, while postgraduate prospective teachers recorded a higher mean score of 126.14 with a standard deviation of 10.96. Although the postgraduate group demonstrated a comparatively higher mean level of perception of skill enhancement than the graduate group, the difference was not statistically significant. The calculated t value (1.276) was lower than the critical table value of $t = 1.99$ at 79 degrees of freedom and at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}), which states that there is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement between graduate and postgraduate prospective teachers, is accepted.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among GCE 20 and GRID prospective teachers.

Table No. 7: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on institution.

S r. N o.	Variable	Mean	N	SD	D f	t-value	Interpretation
1	GCE-20	125.87	64	10.15	79	2.265	Significant
2	GRIID	120.31	16	8.40			

*Level of significance 0.05

Table 7 reveals that prospective teachers from GCE-20 obtained a mean score of 125.87 with a standard deviation of 10.15, whereas their counterparts from GRIID recorded a mean score of 120.31 with a standard deviation of 8.40. The higher mean score of the GCE-20 group indicates a stronger perception of skill enhancement compared to the GRIID group. Further analysis shows that the calculated t value (2.265) exceeds the critical table value of $t = 1.99$ at 79 degrees of freedom and at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{04}), which stated that there is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers of GCE-20 and GRIID, is rejected.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different age groups of prospective teachers.

Table No. 8: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on age.

S r. N o.	Source of Variation	SS	D f	MS	F	P-Value	F crit
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1	Between Groups	528.2518	3	176.0839	1.80155	0.15404	2.72494
2	Within Groups	7428.236	76	97.73994			
3	Total	7956.488	79				

It is analysed from Table No. 8 that calculated F value is 1.801, which is less than the table value of ' F ' df at 3/76 (2.72) also ($p = 0.154 > .05$), so it is found insignificant. Hence, H_{05} : There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different age groups of prospective teachers, is accepted.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different income groups of prospective teachers.

Table No. 9: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on income.

S r. N o.	Source of Variation	SS	D f	MS	F	P-Value	F crit
1	Between Groups	161.1237749	3	53.7076103320	0.519815	0.66994	2.726589
2	Within Groups	47910.17	75	7			

3	Tota l	7	7 8				
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Table 9 indicates that the calculated F value (0.519) is lower than the critical table value of F at 3/75 degrees of freedom (2.72). In addition, the obtained p value (0.669) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, confirming that the result is statistically insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{06}), which states that there is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers across different income groups, is accepted.

H_{07} : There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different teaching experience groups of prospective teachers.

Table No. 10: Comparison of the level of perception of skill enhancement among prospective teachers studying in colleges of education based on teaching experience.

S r N o.	Sour ce of Vari ation	SS	D f	MS	F	P- Valu e	F crit
1	Bet wee n Gro ups	103. 133 6 78.3 5	2	51.5 668 1 101. 991	0.50 559 9	0.60 513 3	3.11 536 6
2	With in Gro ups	4	7 7	6			
3	Tota l	795 6.48	7 9				

It is analysed from Table No. 10 that the calculated F value is 0.505, which is less than the table value of ' F ' df at 2/77 (3.11) also ($p = 0.605 > .05$), so it is found insignificant.

Hence, H_{07} : There is no significant difference in the level of perception of skill enhancement among different teaching experience groups of prospective teachers, is accepted.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the study reveal that prospective teachers belonging to rural and urban areas, female respondents, students from both GCE-20 and GRIID, age groups 22–27 and 28–35 years, all income categories, both graduate and postgraduate qualifications and all levels of teaching experience demonstrated an excellent level of perception regarding skill enhancement. In contrast, male prospective teachers, those below 21 years of age and those above 35 years exhibited an above-average level of perception of skill enhancement. Further analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in perceptions of skill enhancement with respect to locality, age group, educational qualification, income group and teaching experience. However, a significant difference was observed on the basis of gender and institutional affiliation among prospective teachers.

The outcomes of the study have important implications for schools and teacher training institutions, particularly in planning and strengthening skill enhancement programmes during pre-service training and internship periods. The findings can assist institutions in selecting, organizing and evaluating workshops, seminars, lectures and conferences aimed at skill development in teacher education. The analysis highlights several core components of skill enhancement, including transactional leadership, negotiation skills, adaptability to changing situations, understanding group dynamics, effective use of ICT, metacognitive skills, acquisition of higher qualifications, addressing individual differences, time management, self-esteem development, team teaching, professional

writing, interpersonal skills, self-evaluation, critical thinking, problem-solving ability and adherence to the recommendations of the National Skills Qualification Framework. Additionally, experiential learning, open professional opportunities, effective assessment tools and strategies, guidance and counselling services, language and science laboratories, training by external experts, communication skills, active participation in academic events, effective e-materials and innovative training modules were identified as essential elements of skill enhancement. These components may be effectively utilized by various stakeholders to strengthen skill development initiatives in teacher education. Supporting evidence from earlier studies also reinforces these findings. Cooperative learning has been found to be more effective than simple group learning in enhancing interpersonal and communication skills. Virtual courses have been shown to significantly improve communication competencies, while learners who place equal value on both soft and hard skills tend to achieve higher levels of overall skill development.

Implications

Perceptions play a crucial role and can be effectively utilized to reform teacher education programmes with the aim of enhancing teaching skills and reducing unemployment at both national and international levels. In light of the findings of the present study, essential soft and hard skills can be systematically integrated into teacher training programmes to better prepare prospective teachers for the demands of the profession.

Strengths

The study was carried out using a Google Form, which ensured smooth data collection without causing any disturbance to the respondents and maintained ethical standards throughout the process. All statistical

techniques were applied responsibly and the data analysis was conducted in an ethical manner. The inventory comprehensively covered all relevant curricular and co-curricular components included in teacher training programmes.

Delimitations

Perceptions were collected through a Google Form and the study was limited to a sample of 80 students. The instrument did not include any open-ended items. Additionally, teachers from the respective institutions could have been included to provide a broader perspective.

Suggestions for further study

1. The present study included only 80 respondents while other studies can be conducted over a large sample.
2. Qualitative data may be used in future research.
3. Some experimental studies can be conducted to improve skill enhancement among students.
4. Some standardized tools can be used for the verification of my findings.

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