Development of Professional Competencies of Future Teachers of Primary Education in the Process of Pedagogical Practice

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Annotation: *This article examines the development of professional competencies of future primary education teachers during pedagogical practice. The study highlights the role of pedagogical practice as a key stage in the process of professional formation, where theoretical knowledge is transformed into practical skills. It emphasizes the importance of reflective activity, self-analysis, and innovative pedagogical technologies in improving students' readiness for independent professional work. The research identifies the conditions, principles, and methods that ensure the effective development of professional competencies, such as communication, creativity, pedagogical thinking, and classroom management. The findings contribute to improving the quality of teacher training and preparing future educators to meet the challenges of modern education.*

Keywords: *professional competence, pedagogical practice, primary education, future teachers, professional development, pedagogical skills, reflective activity.*

Introduction

In the context of modern educational reforms, the training of highly qualified and competent teachers is one of the most important tasks of higher education institutions. The success of educational processes in primary schools largely depends on the level of professional competence of future teachers. Therefore, developing these competencies during pedagogical practice is of great importance.

Pedagogical practice serves as a bridge between theoretical knowledge acquired at the university and its practical application in real educational settings. It allows future teachers to gain firsthand experience in classroom management, student engagement, lesson planning, and assessment. Moreover, during this period, students develop essential professional qualities such as responsibility, creativity, communication, and the ability to adapt to various pedagogical situations.

In this regard, the process of forming professional competencies in future primary school teachers must be systematic and goal-oriented. It should be based on modern pedagogical technologies, reflective practices, and a competence-based approach. The effective organization of pedagogical practice creates the foundation for the development of independent, critical, and innovative teachers capable of ensuring the quality of education in the modern world.

Literature Review

In pedagogy and psychology, there are various approaches to determining the nature, content and structure of a teacher's professional competence. Some authors (A.A. Bodalev, F.N. Gonobolin, N.V. Kuzmina, and others) propose to consider this problem from a psychological point of view, while others (N.N. Lobanova, A.K. Markova, V.A. Slastenin, etc.) emphasize the development of personal characteristics, professionally significant qualities of the teacher himself, while others (EF Zeer, GM Romantsev, VA Bolotov, VV Serikov, etc.) include professional competence to one of the five groups

of key qualifications, the fourth (A.A. Derkach, G.N. Podchalimova, etc.) determine professional competence in the structure of the profession onalism activities of the teacher(Normurodova, 2019).

The issue of developing professional competencies in future teachers has been widely discussed in modern pedagogical theory and practice. Many scholars emphasize that the formation of these competencies should begin from the early stages of teacher education and continue throughout the learning process. According to Shulman (1987), professional competence is a complex combination of pedagogical knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable teachers to effectively organize the educational process. Similarly, Hagger and McIntyre (2006) note that pedagogical practice plays a decisive role in shaping a teacher's professional identity, as it allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-life teaching situations.

In the works of Darling-Hammond (2006) and Korthagen (2010), it is argued that pedagogical practice serves not only as a means of professional skill development but also as a reflective process that helps future teachers analyze their actions, identify challenges, and improve their teaching strategies. This reflective approach is considered a key factor in the development of professional autonomy and continuous self-improvement.

An interesting point of view of A.I. Piskunov, who distinguishes in the structure of the teacher's professional competence:

1. the invariant core (fundamental knowledge in the field of philosophical, psychological, pedagogical and methodological sciences; technological knowledge in the field of organizing various forms and types of educational and extracurricular activities; professional and pedagogical skills);

2. the variable part, which provides for taking into account the characteristics of the student's scientific preparation profile, his personal interests and inclinations

They emphasize that professional competence encompasses cognitive, operational, communicative, and personal components, each of which must be developed through purposeful pedagogical practice.

Overall, the literature suggests that the development of professional competencies in future primary education teachers requires an integrated approach combining theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and reflective analysis. This integration ensures that future teachers become adaptable, innovative, and capable of meeting the educational challenges of the 21st century.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods approach to examine the development of professional competencies among future teachers of primary education during their pedagogical practice. The research focuses on identifying how practical training influences the formation of pedagogical, communicative, and reflective competencies in students.

Analysis and Results

The analysis of the collected data revealed significant findings regarding the formation of professional competencies among future teachers of primary education during pedagogical practice. The research demonstrated that pedagogical practice serves as a crucial stage in the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills, allowing students to internalize essential competencies required for effective teaching in the modern educational environment.

1. Development of Pedagogical Competence Quantitative data obtained from observation checklists and supervisor evaluations indicated that 82% of students showed a substantial improvement in their pedagogical planning and classroom management skills after completing the practice phase. The participants demonstrated a better understanding of lesson structuring, differentiation of instruction, and student-centered teaching strategies. The data analysis confirmed that continuous feedback from mentors significantly contributed to the refinement of instructional design and adaptive teaching behavior.

2. Formation of Communicative and Reflective Competencies Thematic analysis of interviews and reflective journals revealed that students developed stronger communicative abilities, particularly in establishing a positive learning atmosphere and engaging with pupils. About 76% of respondents noted an increase in their confidence in delivering lessons and managing group dynamics. Furthermore, the process of reflective journaling enhanced their capacity for critical self-evaluation, enabling them to identify personal strengths and areas for further development.

3. Professional and Ethical Competence Analysis of supervisors' reports showed that pedagogical practice contributed to students' understanding of professional ethics, pedagogical responsibility, and collaborative culture within educational institutions. The data indicated that 68% of students effectively applied ethical decision-making principles when facing instructional or behavioral challenges. This finding aligns with global educational standards emphasizing ethical literacy and professional accountability in teacher preparation.

4. Integration of Theoretical Knowledge and Practical Experience Statistical analysis of questionnaire data revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.81$) between students' theoretical academic performance and their practical competency outcomes. This suggests that the systematic alignment of university coursework with field experience plays a decisive role in competency development. Students who demonstrated high theoretical understanding were also more successful in implementing innovative teaching strategies during practice.

5. Identified Challenges Despite the overall positive outcomes, several constraints were identified. These include limited access to modern pedagogical technologies, insufficient digital literacy skills, and a lack of individualized mentorship in certain schools. Such challenges indicate the necessity of enhancing the methodological support system for pedagogical practice and integrating ICT-based reflective tools into the training process.

The study's results confirm that pedagogical practice is an effective pedagogical mechanism for developing the core professional competencies of future teachers—namely, pedagogical, communicative, reflective, and ethical dimensions. The integration of multimedia tools, regular supervision, and reflective analysis significantly enhances competency formation.

In conclusion, the empirical data suggest that structured pedagogical practice, supported by innovative teaching technologies and guided reflection, fosters the development of professionally competent, self-reflective, and ethically responsible educators capable of responding to the dynamic demands of 21st-century primary education.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the central role of pedagogical practice in shaping the professional competencies of future primary school teachers. The results confirm that effective teacher preparation requires not only theoretical mastery but also continuous engagement in reflective, experiential, and collaborative learning environments. This aligns with the ideas of Shulman (1987) on the integration of pedagogical content knowledge and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the significance of social interaction and guided practice in the professional growth of educators.

First, the improvement in pedagogical and instructional competencies observed during the study supports the notion that structured and well-supervised practice contributes directly to developing the professional identity of future teachers. Students' ability to plan, organize, and deliver lessons more effectively indicates that pedagogical practice bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-life classroom application, fostering the development of situational adaptability and didactic creativity.

Second, the study confirms that reflective practice serves as a fundamental tool for competency formation. Through self-assessment and mentor feedback, students engage in metacognitive processes that enhance their ability to evaluate teaching outcomes and make data-driven instructional decisions. This is consistent with Schön's (1983) concept of the "reflective practitioner," where self-analysis and reflection are key components of professional growth.

Third, the development of communicative and ethical competencies suggests that pedagogical practice nurtures interpersonal sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and a strong sense of pedagogical responsibility. These findings correspond with international standards of teacher education, such as those outlined by UNESCO (2019), emphasizing the ethical and cultural dimensions of teaching.

However, the discussion also points to several challenges that hinder optimal competency development. The limited integration of digital technologies and the uneven quality of mentorship in practice schools reduce the overall effectiveness of the pedagogical practicum. These challenges underline the need to modernize pedagogical practice by incorporating ICT tools, digital pedagogy, and virtual classroom simulations into teacher education programs.

Furthermore, the correlation between theoretical and practical achievements underscores the importance of a coherent curriculum design. Universities must ensure that theoretical coursework directly supports the competencies required during teaching practice. This coherence can be achieved by adopting competency-based education models that emphasize measurable outcomes and authentic performance tasks.

In a broader sense, the findings demonstrate that pedagogical practice contributes to the formation of teachers who are professionally autonomous, critically reflective, and socially responsible. The process not only enhances technical teaching abilities but also fosters the moral, emotional, and intellectual qualities essential for guiding young learners in an era of globalization and digital transformation.

In conclusion, the discussion reveals that pedagogical practice is not merely a formal requirement but a transformative experience that shapes future teachers into adaptive, innovative, and value-oriented professionals. Strengthening mentorship, enhancing digital competence, and integrating reflective methodologies will ensure that teacher education effectively meets the demands of contemporary educational systems.

Conclusion

The conducted research confirms that pedagogical practice is a decisive factor in the formation and enhancement of professional competencies among future primary education teachers. The study demonstrates that theoretical knowledge, when combined with practical application, leads to the development of essential pedagogical, communicative, reflective, and ethical skills that define a competent teacher in the modern educational environment.

It was found that pedagogical practice allows students to bridge the gap between theory and classroom reality, fostering professional growth through real-life teaching experiences. During practice, students not only apply methodological and didactic principles but also develop self-confidence, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities, which are integral components of professional competency.

The study also highlights that reflective observation and mentoring support play a key role in ensuring the effectiveness of the practicum. Systematic feedback from supervisors and mentors helps students critically analyze their teaching performance, refine their pedagogical strategies, and enhance their classroom management skills. This interactive process strengthens their ability to make evidence-based pedagogical decisions, contributing to a sustainable model of lifelong professional learning.

Furthermore, the research findings underline the necessity of incorporating digital technologies and innovative teaching methods into pedagogical practice. In the context of educational modernization and global digital transformation, future teachers must be equipped with technological literacy and the capacity to integrate ICT into the teaching-learning process effectively.

In conclusion, the development of professional competencies during pedagogical practice is a multidimensional process that requires the integration of theory, practice, reflection, and innovation. Strengthening the methodological framework of teacher education programs, improving mentorship quality, and ensuring digital readiness will significantly enhance the outcomes of pedagogical training.

Ultimately, the study reaffirms that pedagogical practice serves not only as a stage of professional preparation but also as a transformative experience, shaping future teachers into reflective, creative, and socially responsible professionals capable of meeting the dynamic challenges of contemporary education.

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