

A Comparative Study of Differential Characteristic Practices of Reflective Practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Reflection is a procedure of learning and professional preparation that delivers the chance to critically examine and assess knowledge. The problem under exploration was to determine the reflective characteristic practices of practitioners on the basis of sector at university level. Theoretical framework of the study consists of the Reflective Practices Model (2015) given by Linda Lawrence Wilkes and Alan Chapman. Objective of the study was to compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners on the basis of sector at the university level. Study was descriptive in nature and comparative analysis was involved. Population of the study comprised of 5404 faculty members working in 2017 in 27 public and private sector universities of Islamabad. Reflective Practice Assessment instrument developed by Wilkes and Chapman (2015) was adapted. Data was analyzed by applying t-test through SPSS. Findings

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revealed that teachers of private sector reported to be better in their reflective practices (reflection in-action and on-action, tools for reflection, examining others and own perspectives, questioning assumptions, freedom to reflect) as compared to public sector teachers. It is recommended that public sector education administration may organize workshops and seminars to raise teachers' awareness of the importance and use of reflective practices in their teaching.

Keywords: Comparison, Reflective Practitioner.

Introduction

Due to the complexity of the education process and the ambiguous skills required for future work, the reform of the existing education system has become a concern of countries in the world which are going through the phase of social changes and technological transformation (Kayapinar, 2013). Reflective practices facilitate teaching by observing and thinking about own practices for further improvement and development of teaching learning process (Mathew, Mathew & Peechattu, 2016). Reflection is a matter of concentration; reflective practice is a specific consideration of individual behavior, especially professional behavior.

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However, this kind of reflection is far from being a leisurely speculation of success or failure, far exceeding the pursuit of knowledge. Instead, practice of reflection is a challenge, focus, and assessment of one's own behavior for creating and improving one's own craft. Although thinking is definitely important to this procedure, the practice of reflection is a dialectical procedure where ideas and actions are linked.

Archer (2010) argues that reflection is a requisite in at least three ways. The first is to provide a feeling of self that is necessary for the correct appropriation of the rights and obligations, second it can monitor people's performance and finally it is also crucial to note that reflection allows people to take into account the actual situation gap between reality and ideal. In a professional learning environment, reflective practice is essential and individuals learn from professional experiences in the field rather than from only formal learning or knowledge transmission.

This is the utmost significant basis of personal development and advancement. This is a central way in

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which the theory relates to reality; through reflection, one can see and label ideas and theories in his or her work. Instead of merely reviewing past actions and events, a person who is reflective throughout the practice contemplates a conscious observation of experiences, behaviors and emotions and uses information to augment his/her present knowledge to improve understanding. Reflective practice can be extended to create theoretical perspectives or analysis that can be clearly explained if needed. The practice of reflection is designed to inspire insight and help to learn new personal understandings, knowledge and actions to improve our self personally and professionally (Mathew, Mathew & Peechattu, 2016).

Conducting a study for investigating reflective teaching as one of the areas of change in sector disparity is a fruitful contribution. This study describes the status quo of reflective practice and provides the basis for future planning for teacher's professional development. This study was conducted to bring into light different aspects of reflective practices and their importance. The study will play a significant part in cultivating the efficiency of

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teacher's teaching. The research would be instrumental in exploring and developing effective reflective characteristics among teachers at higher level expecting that the awareness would be helpful for a large number of teachers and educationists in their professional development as well.

Wilkes (2015) gave model of reflective practices for reflective teachers by giving five characteristics which a reflective practitioner may possess who can be assessed by keeping in view these characteristics. This model is chosen because it was the most recent model designed for reflective teachers and it covers all those reflective characteristic practices which researcher wanted to examine.

Reflective practices model includes the following practices:

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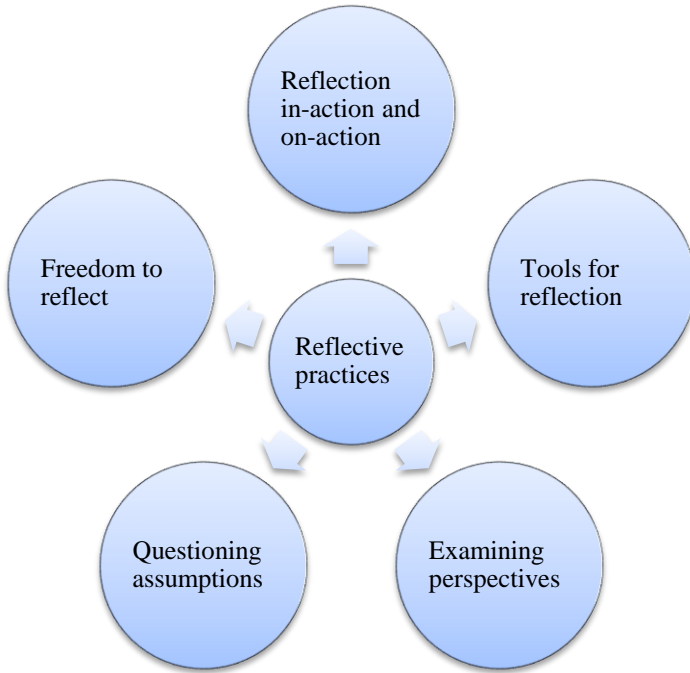


Figure 1. Wilkes Reflective Practices (2015)

Review of the related Literature:

Teachers are the largest asset of any educational system. They stand on the interface to disseminate knowledge, values and skills. The complex nature of teaching needs teachers to question their own professional development and to improve the performance of learners.

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Reflection is the skill to reflect on an act in order to carry out nonstop learning process. Some of the considerations in the process of reflection may be what is being done, why this does, and the student's learning situation. By collecting information about what is happening in the classroom and by analyzing and evaluating the information teachers identify and explore their own practices and potential beliefs. This could lead to changes in their teaching and improvement. Reflective teaching is the beneficial process of teacher career development, both in pre and in-service teachers. The first and most important basis for professional progress is only the teacher's own reflection on the daily classroom activities, emphasizing personal progress by reflecting their own activities and practices that occur in class (Ur, 1999).

Ghaye and Lillyman (2000) explain that reflective practice is not only an academic or intellectual effort, but also a complex procedure involving individuals as a whole. Raelin (2002) expresses his point of view on the practice of reflection, believing that what has been done recently is the

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basis of future approaches; it mainly provides a research opportunity to understand the occurrence of events. Bolton (2010) expressed his view that reflective practice meant focusing attention on the day-to-day actions that led to professional development. Reflective practice is an up-to-date term, a developmental outline for antique methods of self-improvement, a method of considering our own opinions and behaviors, aiming at learning and personal growth. For the most persons, reflection is a regular and instinctive act. This concept may be utilized for training, development, learning and self-improvement. If we take an example, then reflective practice is vastly applicable and accommodating to continuing professional development. It is accommodating in educating and developing adolescents and children; it makes possible future personal growth and solves our thinking and feelings about ourselves and our circumstances, as well as our thoughts and feelings about ourselves and our past. Reflective practice may also be referred to as a process of critical appraisal of individuals with or without personal reflection, self-criticism, self-assessment, self-awareness, self-assessment, interpersonal

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cognition, personal cognition, self-analysis of our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, manifestations etc. Reflection is an essential human activity, people redeem experience, contemplate, re-examine and assess. This is a significant experiential work in study.

Research over the past two decades has shown that reflective practice is important for continuous professional development. Wlodarsky and Walters (2006) found that the reflection among teachers is an internal cognitive process with brain as the main tool; participants' opinions about their peers are open. It seems that this informal setting provides a comfortable environment in which teachers accept positive and negative feedback from their peers without being defensive. They found that reflexivity was mostly motivated by a judgmental frame of reference and teachers seemed concerned with finding value or judging the value of their teaching.

A study was conducted by Tabassum (2014) to explore private and public higher secondary teacher's attitude towards reflective practices. The study found that

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as compared to the teachers of public higher secondary, teachers of private sector higher secondary were more concerned about trainings of reflection and using reflection to understand their student's difficulties and they are well aware about the need of reflective practices in their professional development. Sharar (2012) conducted a study about introducing and improving reflective practices of teachers in a school at Chitral, it was found that reflective practice is a big challenge for the teachers to practice because of lack of knowledge about reflective practices and due to lack of time, professional development and pedagogical issues. Ashraf and Rarieya (2008) in Karachi, Pakistan conducted research with the purpose to know and explore the process and the significances of engaging teachers in the reflective dialogue. It involves two teachers and one reflection coach who talked about their practice through reflection. The survey results show that under such circumstances, if teachers' practices need to be improved, they need to engage in reflective dialogue.

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An important thing to keep in mind is that only experience alone in reflective practice does not lead towards learning, but thinking plays an essential role. Reflective practice is an important tool in a professional learning environment based on practice. Professional's improvement and learning process take place when they learn from their professional experience, not only from formal learning or knowledge transfer. It is also an important way to combine theory with practice. Through reflection, a person can see and mark the thought and theoretical forms within his scope of work. Teachers who reflect in practice must not only review past behaviors and events, but also consciously observe emotions, experiences, behaviors and reactions, and use them to increase the existing knowledge base to achieve a higher level of understanding (Radzuwan, 2017). In his research paper, Tuan (2016) explores the use of reflective practice by critically reviewing recent research and other relevant literature to promote teacher professional learning. This paper argues that due to the theoretical gap in practice, the gap in research practice, the limitations of the development

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of professionalism in management, and the instability of teaching career, reflection and reflective practice are essential for teacher professional learning.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, more and more attention has been paid to teacher's reflective practices, emphasizing the constant search for the importance of improving their work. This has led to a shift from a focus on the technical areas of teaching to a more in-depth reflection on the social, moral and political aspects of teaching. The problem under study was to determine the reflective characteristic practices of reflective practitioners on the basis of sector at the university level.

Objectives of the study

Following were the major objectives of the study:

1. To compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners on the basis of sector at the university level.

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- 1.1. To compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners regarding reflection in-action and on-action on the basis of sector at the university level.
- 1.2. To compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners regarding tools for reflection on the basis of sector at the university level.
- 1.3. To compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners regarding examining perspectives on the basis of sector at the university level.
- 1.4. To compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners regarding questioning assumptions on the basis of sector at the university level.
- 1.5. To compare difference in reflective characteristic practices of practitioners regarding freedom to reflect on the basis of sector at the university level.

Hypothesis of the study

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H01 There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of

practitioners on the basis of sector at the university level.

H01a. There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘reflection in-action and on-action’ on the basis of sector at the university level.

H01b. There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘tools for reflection’ on the basis of sector at the university level.

H01c. There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘examining perspectives’ on the basis of sector at the university level.

H01d. There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘questioning assumptions’ on the basis of sector at the university level.

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Hole. There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘freedom to reflect’ on the basis of sector at the university level.

Research Design

The present study sought to compare different reflective characteristics of public and private sector reflective practitioners at university level. The present study was based on a quantitative approach. The study was descriptive in nature in which survey technique was used. Further comparative analysis was also involved.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 5404 faculty members teaching in 27 public and private sector universities (main and sub-campuses) of Islamabad. The population was divided in two major strata, i.e. public and private sector. There were 4040 practitioners in public sector and 1364 practitioners teaching in the universities of Islamabad in year 2017.

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Sample of the Study

Stratified random sampling technique was used in this study to get data from two main strata; public and private sector teaching faculty. In the present study, proportional stratified sampling technique was adopted for the collection of data. The number of public sector faculty members was greater than that of private sector faculty members. For the purpose of giving appropriate share to each division, 12% of both sectors were selected for sample. Through this technique, 650 teaching faculty was selected from both public and private universities which included 485 public and 165 private sector teachers.

Research Instrument

To get relevant and valid results of the present study it was important to pick an applicable research tool for measuring opinions of the respondents. The researcher adapted Reflective Practice Assessment instrument of Wilkes and Chapman (2015) to gather data from teachers to identify the characteristics of reflective practitioners. This

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instrument was developed by Wilkes and Chapman for the reflective practitioners at higher level education and believes that reflective practices can be used as professional learning of teachers.

Results

Table 1

Reflective Practices (Comparison between Public and Private Sector)

Variable	Sector	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d
Reflective Practices	Public	41	3.4	.62	3.8	53	.001	0.39
	Private	12	3.7	.65				
		5	3	2	3	8		

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Table 1 above shows that t value (3.83) was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. It reveals that there was significant difference found between public and private sector respondents. Private sector respondents (Mean=3.73) were found better as compared to respondents of public sector universities (Mean=3.48). The effect size was found 0.39 that shows the large effect size between the two means. So the Ho2 ‘There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners on the basis of sector at the university level’ is rejected.

Table 2

Reflection In-action and On-action (Comparison between Public and Private Sector)

Variabl	Secto	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig	Cohen
e	r						(2- taile d)	's d

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Reflecti on action and on- action	Publi c	41	3.4	.78					
		5	8	6	2.4	53	.001	.24	
					5	8			
	Priva te	12	3.6	.75					
		5	7	4					

P<0.05P<0.01*

Table 2 above shows that t value (2.45) was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there was significant difference found between public and private sector respondents on the subscale ‘Reflection in-action and on-action’. Private sector respondents (Mean=3.67) were found better as compared to respondents of public sector universities (Mean=3.48). The effect size was found 0.24 that shows the medium effect size between the two means. So the Ho1a ‘There is no significant difference between mean reflective

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characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘reflection in-action and on-action’ on the basis of sector at the university level’ is rejected.

Table 3

Tools for Reflection (Comparison between Public and Private Sector)

Variabl e	Secto r	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig (2- taile d)	Cohen 's d
Tools for reflecti on	Publi c	41 5	3.3 3	.69 6				
	Priva te	12 5	3.5 8	.77 9	3.2 1	53 8	.001	0.32

P<0.05P<0.01*

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Table 3 above shows that t value (3.21) was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there was significant difference found between public and private sector respondents on the subscale 'Tools for reflection'. Private sector respondents (Mean=3.58) was found better as compared to respondents of public sector universities (Mean=3.33). The effect size was found 0.32 that shows the large effect size between the two means. So the Ho1b 'There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding 'tools for reflection' on the basis of sector at the university level' is rejected.

Table 4

Examining Perspectives (Comparison between Public and Private Sector) (N=540)

Variable	Sect	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig	Cohe
	or						(2-taile d)	n's d

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Examini	Publi	41	3.5	.72				
ng	c	5	7	6	4.0	53	.001	0.43
perspecti					1	8		
ves								
	Priva	12	3.8	.67				
	te	5	7	1				

Table 4 above shows that t value (4.01) was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. It shows that there was significant difference found between public and private sector respondents on the subscale 'Examining perspectives'. Private sector respondents (Mean=3.87) were found better as compared to respondents of public sector universities (Mean=3.57). The effect size was found 0.43 that shows the large effect size between the two means. So the H_0 'There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding 'examining perspectives' on the basis of sector at the university level' is rejected.

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Table 5

Questioning Assumptions (Comparison between Public and Private Sector)

Variable	Sect or	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig (2- taile d)	Cohe n's d
Questioning assumptions	Public	41	3.5	.74				
	Private	12	3.7	.79	2.79	53	.001	0.28

Table 5 above gives t value (2.79) which is statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there was significant difference found between

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public and private sector respondents on the subscale ‘Questioning assumptions’. Private sector respondents (Mean=3.79) were found better as compared to respondents of public sector universities (Mean=3.57). The effect size was found 0.28 that shows the medium effect size between the two means. So the Ho1d ‘There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding ‘questioning assumptions’ on the basis of sector at the university level’ is rejected.

Table 6

Freedom to Reflect (Comparison between Public and Private Sector)

Variab	Secto	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig	Cohen
le	r						(2-	's d
							taile	
							d)	
Freedo	Publi	41	3.4	.72				
m to c		5	9	0	3.6	53	.001	0.37

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reflect			2	8
Priva	12	3.7	.72	
te	5	6	0	

The above table shows that t value (3.62) was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there was significant difference found between public and private sector respondents on the subscale of 'Freedom to reflect'. Private sector respondents (Mean=3.76) were found better as compared to respondents of public sector universities (Mean=3.49). The effect size was found 0.37 that shows the large effect size between the two means. The Ho1e 'There is no significant difference between mean reflective characteristic practices scores of practitioners regarding 'freedom to reflect' on the basis of sector at the university level' is rejected.

Findings

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1. There is a significant difference found among teachers of public and private sector of education regarding their reflective practices.
2. Teachers of the private sector reported to be better in reflection on-action, reflection in-action, have well informed about tools of reflection and their utilization, examine others and own perspective regarding their teaching, question assumptions and have more freedom to reflect on different matters as compared to teachers of public sector universities.

Discussion and Conclusion

Reflection is a most important process for continuous development and improvement of an individual's personal and professional life. All over the world reflective process is getting attention of researchers. In a profession of teaching possessing reflective characteristics create a positive impact on daily activities of teachers which help and assist the practitioner to plan and improve present and future practices. Present study depicted that there was significance difference in reflective

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practitioners of public and private sector about their reflective practices at the university level. Reflective practitioners of private sector were more concerned about practicing reflection which includes reflection on-action, reflection in-action, are well informed about tools of reflection and their utilization, examine others and own perspective regarding their teaching, question assumptions and have more freedom to reflect on different matters as compare to the reflective practitioners of public sector universities. Findings of the study are in-line with the findings of the study conducted by Tabassum (2014) on 300 teachers teaching at private and public higher secondary level in which teachers of private sector were found more concerned about reflective practices as compared to the teachers of public sector. The findings are also consistent with the study conducted by Moradkhani and Shirazizadeh (2017) on 85 Iranian teachers; results revealed that private sector teacher are significantly more active in reflection as compared to public sector teachers.

Results of the study were contradictory to the study conducted by Tabassum and Malik (2014) in which they

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investigated teacher attitudes toward reflective practice in the public and private sectors of high school. As a result, they found no difference between teachers of both sectors, teachers in the public and private both sectors did not realize the need for reflective practices. Most teachers were not aware of the practice of reflection. This is because university teachers do not provide any pre-service teaching skills training, and university teachers generally use traditional teaching methods for teaching. The reason behind findings of present study may be that there is more competition in private sector as compared to public sector universities and teachers teaching in private sector work more towards their continuous professional development. Most of the teachers in private sector are on contract basis. On the other hand, in public sector, most of the teachers are permanent faculty members and have job security which create more environment of collaboration among teachers. Another reason may be about the environmental and cultural differences of public and private sector organizations, private sector universities provide more exposure and have no hard and fast rules for their faculty

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but public sector has set rules and regulations for their faculty members which minimize their circle of exposure to new things.

Recommendations

Following recommendations has been given on the basis of findings of the study:

1. By keeping in view the findings of study it is recommended that public sector education administrations may organize workshops and seminars to raise teachers' awareness of the importance and use of reflective practices in their teaching.
2. Collaboration among public and private sector universities faculty members regarding sharing of information related with day to day reflective practices may be promoted by using different formal and informal means and platforms like arranging conferences, short courses, using social media etc.

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3. It is suggested for the professional development of the teachers, universities may upgrade the practice of reflection, and may carry out professional development plans.

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