

Bridging the Gap: The Relationship Between Teacher Educators' Attitudes and Constructivist Practice Adoption

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Abstract: *Constructivism has emerged as a cornerstone of modern educational reform as it is shifting the focus from passive knowledge transmission to active, learner-centred construction of meaning. However, a significant "theory-practice gap" remains prevalent in teacher education as the attitude of teacher educators may vary in different ways and different variables. While many teacher educators express favourable attitudes toward constructivist principles for the classroom teaching learning practices but their actual classroom adoption often lags behind due to its transactional approaches and wide area of curriculum. This article explores the intricate relationship between teacher educators' attitudes and their adoption of constructivist practices. It identifies that psychological, institutional, and pedagogical factors which influence this relationship, including the role of institutional support, professional development, and reflective practice in their way of delivering and creating new knowledge and concepts to the learner. By synthesizing recent research findings, the article proposes a framework for bridging this gap between the teacher educators on various level as on the basis of gender, age, academic qualifications, etc. It emphasizing the need for systemic change in education policies, targeted training, and the cultivation of a supportive academic administrative and collaborative culture within teacher education institutions.*

Keywords: constructivism, attitude, psychological, pedagogical, teacher educator

1. Introduction

The 21st-century educational landscape demands a paradigm shift from traditional classroom teaching to teacher-centred models that foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong continuous and comprehensive learning for the learners. Constructivism, rooted in the works of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's theory of constructivism which offers such a guided framework for modern teaching learning practices for the teachers, learners, academician and policy makers. For the curriculum designer it provides a tough task to design and frame any curriculum by keeping in mind to the modern need of the learners and the educators as well. In teacher education, constructivist approach practice is twofold: educating future teachers using aspects of constructivist methods and modelling those very methods for them to adopt. Despite the widespread theoretical acceptance of constructivist approach empirical studies consistently reveal a disconnect between what teacher educators believe and what they actually do in the teaching learning process. Inclusion of constructivist approach may simply change the educators and learners' perspective each. This "gap" is not merely a lack of skill but is deeply connected to the attitudes and psychological orientations of the educators themselves. Understanding this concept and acceptance of constructivist relationship is critical for the success of educational reforms and the preparation of a new generation of effective teacher and learner.

2. Definitions of Key Concept

- a) **Constructivism:** it is a learning theory which states that individual construct their own knowledge through experiences, reflection and social interaction, rather than passively absorbing information.
- b) **Attitude:** In terms of constructivism, it is described as an educator or learners' internal active disposition, set of

beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies that determines how they perceive, approach, and engage with the construction of knowledge.

- c) **Psychological:** It refers to the mental, emotional, and cognitive factors of educators and learners that influence their behaviour, experiences, and overall wellbeing in perspective of learning.
- d) **Pedagogical:** It is the method, theory, and practice of teaching which act as the framework that guides how to instruct the educators and facilitate learning and interacts with students to achieve the desired goal.
- e) **Teacher educator:** Those professionals who teach, coach and mentor pre-service and in-service teachers focusing on professional development and developing pedagogical skill.

3. The Constructivist Paradigm in Teacher Education

Constructivism poses that learning is an active, internal process where individuals construct their own knowledge through experience, reflection, and social interaction in active classroom concept. In a constructivist classroom, the teacher's role shifts from a dictator to a facilitator, guide, and coach.

Key elements of constructivist practice in teacher education include:

- **Active Engagement:** Involves student-teachers in hands-on activities, experimentation, and authentic problem-solving.
- **Social Interaction:** Uses collaboration, peer discussion, and scaffolding to co-construct knowledge.
- **Reflective Practice:** Encourage learners to critically examine their experiences, prior beliefs, and teaching strategies.

- **Authentic Tasks:** Design learning experiences that are relevant to real-world classroom situations.

4. The Role of Educator Attitudes

Attitude is a complex psychological state of a particular person which is characterized by cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dispositions toward a particular feelings or idea. This study indicates that positive teacher attitudes are strongly correlated with higher levels of student engagement and improved learning outcomes.

Specifically, in the context of constructivism adoption:

- 1) **Belief-Practice Alignment:** Educators who are deeply convinced of the effectiveness of constructivist way of teaching and learning are more likely to overcome barriers and implement these methods consistently.
- 2) **Self-Efficacy:** Constructivist approach pre service training and in-service training has been shown to improve educators' perceptions of their own teaching competencies, leading to changed positive attitude by increased confidence in adopting new practices with the adaptation of new education policies.
- 3) **Epistemological Growth:** Engaging in the constructivist design of teaching and learning environment which shift an educator's fundamental beliefs about knowledge and the process of how it is acquired.

5. The Reality of the Gap: Empirical Findings

This study highlights a significant disparity between attitudes and adoption rates of the teacher educators and learners. Researcher found that while 67% of teacher educators held positive beliefs about constructivism in the teaching learning practices while only 40% consistently implemented these practices in their regular classroom teaching- learning process.

Aspect	Findings
Attitude Levels	Majority of prospective and current teacher educator show moderate to high favourable attitudes toward constructivism in classroom practices.
Demographic Variables	Most study find significant difference in attitudes based on gender, age, and locality.
Adoption Barriers	Institutional constraints, such as lack of support and resources, are cited by over 73% of educators as major hurdles.

6. Barriers to Adoption

The failure to adopt constructivism for the teaching and learning practices, despite favourable attitudes, can be attributed to several "dilemmas":

- **Conceptual Barriers:** A superficial understanding of inclusion of constructivism that doesn't translate into deep pedagogical change.
- **Pedagogical Barriers:** Difficulties in managing curriculum according to time-intensive activities, large class sizes, and complex group assessments.

- **Institutional Barriers:** Rigid curriculum, lack of administrative support, inadequate resource allocation, and heavy workloads leads to a vast barrier in adoption.
- **Student-Related Barriers:** Student preferences for traditional presumption for better learning by "note-taking" methods and a reluctance to take responsibility for their own learning.

7. Bridging the Gap: Strategies for Success of positive attitude towards constructivism

To foster a genuine transition to constructivist practice for learners, a multi-faceted approach is required:

- **Systemic Institutional Change:** Aligning institutional policies according to the current need, schedules, and resource allocation with constructivist principles.
- **Targeted Professional Development and training module:** Continuous, hands-on training for the required that focuses on the practical application of constructivist strategies in real classroom environment rather than just theory.
- **Cultivating Reflective Practice for educators:** Integrating reflective teaching into teacher education programs to help educators bridge their own belief-practice gaps.
- **Collaborative Communities:** Encouraging the environment for sharing of experiences and strategies among colleagues to reduce the isolation often felt when adopting new methods by peer teaching or team teaching.
- **Modelling Constructivism:** Teacher educators must practice and make teaching practical and relevant to the learners what they preach by using constructivist methods in their own classrooms, thereby providing a powerful model for their students.

8. Conclusion

The relationship between teacher educators' attitudes and the adoption of constructivism in teaching learning practices is complex and mediated by various external and internal factors. While favourable attitudes are a necessary starting point for the educators and the learners as they are insufficient on their own to overcome the entrenched traditions of teacher-centered education. Bridging the gap requires a continuous and concerted effort to provide educators with the institutional support, practical skills, and reflective opportunities needed to transform their beliefs into meaningful classroom action and concrete lifelong learning. Inclusion of positive attitude towards constructivism in the classroom can change learners in a positive way for the development of critical thinking, analytic behaviour modification and rational approach for their future development. Only then, teacher education programs can truly prepare a new generation of teachers capable of meeting and will satisfy the challenges of the modern world.

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