

# Exploring Pupil-Teachers' Perceptions of Quality in Teacher Training Programs: A Comparative Analysis

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## Abstract

Quality in pre-service teacher training programs is paramount for preparing educators to meet the demands of the profession effectively. This study explores pupil-teachers' perceptions of quality across primary teacher training institutions, specifically District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and Elementary Teacher Education Institutes (ETEIs), in Balangir Municipality, Odisha. Using a descriptive and quantitative research design, data was collected from 50 pupil-teachers, with 25 each from DIETs and ETEIs, and 25 from the first and second years, utilizing the HEdPERF scale. The analysis revealed that while academic aspects received high ratings, non-academic aspects, access, reputation, and program issues showed areas for improvement. Institution-wise comparisons indicated variations in perceptions across dimensions, with DIETs generally scoring higher. However, no significant differences were found between perception scores of DIETs and ETEIs or between first-year and second-year student-teachers. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance overall program quality and better prepare future educators. Further research is recommended to explore additional variables and extend comparisons to other contexts for a more comprehensive understanding of quality in teacher training institutions.

**Keywords:** Pupil-Teachers' perception, Quality in Teacher training, D.I.E.T, E.T.E.I.

## Introduction

Quality, a multifaceted concept with both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, is individually defined by each person. The American Society for Quality encapsulates this diversity in its definition, citing examples such as "meeting committed service or product requirements and expectations" and "pursuing optimal solutions leading to confirmed successes and fulfilling accountabilities." Across various spheres of life, quality takes precedence, particularly in education, where the quality of teaching directly impacts learning outcomes for all students. The design and execution of pre-service teacher training programs significantly influence the preparedness of educators, emphasizing the critical need for high-quality training. Despite numerous policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of teacher training programs, practical gaps persist, particularly in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application. In assessing quality, it's essential to recognize that each stakeholder may perceive it differently, driven by their unique experiences, needs, and expectations. In the context of pre-service teacher training, prospective teachers or pupil-teachers emerge as the primary stakeholders. Understanding their perceptions of the quality of teacher training institutions and their experiences therein becomes imperative.

The trajectory of Indian teacher education, evolving from British-style normal schools to contemporary accreditation mechanisms, reflects a complex journey marked by shifts in educational paradigms. However, amidst these transformations, a gap persists in aligning teacher education with national and international perspectives, leading to compromises in quality.

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and Elementary Teacher Education Institute (ETEI) both integral components of the elementary teacher education landscape, play vital roles in shaping the quality and effectiveness of teacher training programs. DIETs were originally conceptualized by the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and the Programme of Action (PoA) 1992 to ensure the supply of qualified prospective teachers to the elementary education system and to equip the existing teaching workforce with enhanced professional competencies and skills. These institutions were established at the district level to provide onsite academic support to teachers for effective pedagogical practices and to be more responsive to district-specific issues and concerns in elementary education. On the other hand, ETEI (Erstwhile Government Secondary Training Schools (GSTSs)) offer pre-service Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education (D.El.Ed) courses and also conduct in-service training programs for elementary school teachers. While DIETs receive joint funding from the Government of India (GOI) and the respective state governments, ETEIs are solely funded by the state government. Despite their shared objective of enhancing teacher education, ETEIs often face challenges such as poor physical infrastructure, limited human and academic resources, and financial constraints, which may impact the quality of teacher training provided. Therefore, understanding the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding the quality of teacher training offered by DIETs and ETEIs is crucial for identifying areas of improvement and ensuring equitable access to high-quality teacher education.

Quality in education, including teacher education, encompasses multifaceted objectives, methodologies, and outcomes, with a profound impact on the teaching-learning process. Despite numerous recommendations for reforming Indian teacher education, the realization of quality improvement remains elusive, attributed partly to the vastness and diversity of the nation and the challenges in implementing reforms effectively.

Central to the pursuit of quality in education is understanding the needs of stakeholders, with students occupying a primary position as consumers of teacher training programs. However, other stakeholders, including employers, communities, organizations, and governments, also influence program design and content. Effective processes must be established to address these diverse needs, incorporating tangible and intangible inputs, such as infrastructure, curriculum, teaching methodologies, and feedback mechanisms. Quality teacher education relies on a holistic approach, considering inputs like student characteristics, teacher competence, infrastructure, and institutional culture. Each component requires meticulous attention and adherence to standardized policies and procedures to ensure reliability and effectiveness.

Quality assessment in teacher education institutions is a collaborative effort involving organizations like NAAC and NCTE, focusing on process-oriented evaluations. Despite various initiatives to improve teacher education, including the establishment of DIETs, CTEs, and IASEs, challenges persist in ensuring quality across diverse contexts and objectives.

Evaluation criteria encompass curricular aspects, teaching-learning methodologies, research initiatives, infrastructure, student support mechanisms, organizational management, and institutional practices, highlighting the multifaceted nature of quality assurance in teacher education.

### **Need of the study**

In understanding quality in pre-service teacher training programs, it's crucial to acknowledge the subjective nature of quality, shaped by stakeholders' perceptions and experiences. Prospective teachers, or pupil-teachers, represent the primary consumers of such programs, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives on teaching quality, infrastructure, curriculum, and practical experiences. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring pupil-teachers' perceptions of quality across primary teacher training institutions, building upon previous research to provide a comparative analysis.

### **Literature review**

Khandpur (2018) delves into the intricacies of operationalizing the quality of teacher education institutes, analyzing challenges and proposing a developmental framework for assessment. The article provides a comprehensive review of issues surrounding the quality of teacher education in India, emphasizing efforts towards assessment and accreditation by bodies such as the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

Das (2017) contributes to the discourse on teacher education by evaluating secondary teacher education programs in the North-eastern region of India. Employing a descriptive survey method, the study examines various aspects of program organization and offers recommendations for qualitative improvement.

Kohli (2017) advocates for reimagining pre-service teacher education programs to enhance engagement with schools, bridging theory and practice effectively. The article proposes a restructuring of school observation and internship programs to prepare teachers for the complexities of the educational landscape. Vinita (2017) explores student-teachers' perceptions of quality in primary teacher education programs, comparing government and self-financed colleges. Using normative survey methods, the study highlights differences in perception based on college type and underscores the importance of understanding student perspectives for program enhancement.

Tiwari (2016) conducts a comparative study on the impact of teacher training through formal education versus distance education on teaching competence and attitudes. Through a descriptive survey method, the study finds no significant differences in teaching competence and attitudes based on gender, stream, or mode of training.

Ghosh (2015) advocates for reflective practices in teacher education, emphasizing the importance of cultivating reflective prospective teachers to navigate the complexities of the education field effectively.

Zachos (2017) examines teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards pupils of Roma origin in Greek schools, shedding light on multiculturalism responses and educational implications for policymakers and administrators.

Dicker and Garciaet (2017) investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of quality in higher education, revealing low satisfaction levels with academic staff contact and support services, emphasizing the need for clarity and enhancement in support provision.

Bhattacharjee and Deb (2016) explore the role of ICT in 21st-century teacher education, highlighting its significance in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes.

Zeki and Guneyli (2014) analyze student teachers' perceptions of their experiences in a student-centered course, emphasizing its positive impact on cognitive and affective skills development.

Bicaj and Treska (2014) assess the effect of teacher professional development on teaching quality, emphasizing the role of professional advancement in enhancing teaching practices.

Allen and Wright (2013) investigate the integration of theory and practicum in pre-service teacher education, highlighting the significance of theoretical understanding and practical application in professional development.

Jamwal (2012) examines issues and remedies in teacher education, emphasizing the importance of addressing structural, societal, and pedagogical challenges for quality enhancement.

Cheng and Cheng (2009) explore pre-service teacher education students' epistemological beliefs and conceptions of teaching, highlighting the influence of beliefs on teaching practices.

Ferguson (2009) investigates student perceptions of quality feedback in teacher education, emphasizing the importance of effective feedback processes in enhancing learning outcomes.

Ozdemir and Guneyli (2008) raise awareness of the challenges faced by pre-service teacher educators and the need for increased professional development opportunities.

### **Overview and Rationale of the Study**

The existing literature presents a multifaceted understanding of issues and challenges in teacher education, ranging from program organization and delivery to perceptions of quality among stakeholders. While extensive research has been conducted nationally and internationally, a gap remains in understanding pupil-teachers' perspectives towards quality in pre-service teacher education programs in the Indian context.

This study aims to address this gap by focusing on the perceptions of pupil-teachers towards the quality of pre-service teacher training programs using the Higher Education Performance (HEdPerf) tool. By employing a comprehensive and universally accepted tool, the study seeks to provide insights into pupil-teachers' perceptions across various dimensions, including curriculum quality, teaching practices, infrastructure, and overall program satisfaction.

The rationale for this study lies in the importance of incorporating student perspectives to inform program enhancement and quality assurance efforts. Understanding how pupil-teachers perceive the quality of their training programs is crucial for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Moreover, as prospective educators, their perceptions can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of teacher education programs in preparing them for the demands of the profession.

By synthesizing findings from national and international literature, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on teacher education quality and inform evidence-based practices for program improvement. Ultimately, this study seeks to advance knowledge and understanding of quality assurance mechanisms in pre-service teacher education, facilitating informed decision-making and policy development in the field.

### **Statement of the problem**

The present study seeks to investigate "Exploring Pupil-Teachers' Perceptions of Quality in Teacher Training Programs: A Comparative Analysis" aiming to understand and compare the quality perceptions of pupil-teachers in primary teacher training institutions.

### **Operational definition of the key term used**

#### **Pupil-Teachers' Perception**

In this study, "Pupil-teachers' perception" refers to the perspectives and viewpoints of individuals enrolled in teacher training programs at D.I.E.T. (District Institute of Education and Training) and E.T.E.I.

(Elementary Teacher Education Institute).

### **Quality of Pre-Service Teacher Training Program**

The term "quality of pre-service teacher training program" is operationally defined in this study across five dimensions: academic aspect, non-academic aspect, reputation, program issues, and access. It pertains to the overall standard, effectiveness, and attributes of the teacher training program offered at the aforementioned institutions. The dimensions include factors such as the educational content, support services, institutional standing, program structure, and ease of interaction and engagement with academic and non-academic staff.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To study the pupil-teachers' perception towards quality in teacher training programme.
2. To find out difference between the perception of students-teachers' toward quality in primary teacher training programme.
3. To find out the difference between the perception of 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student teacher toward quality in teacher training institute.

### **Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>-There is no significant difference between perception of pupil-teachers of D.I.E.T and E.T.E.I toward quality in primary teacher training programme

H<sub>02</sub>-There is no significant difference between perception of 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year pupil-teachers toward quality in teacher training programme.

### **Research Design**

The study utilized a descriptive and quantitative research design, employing cluster sampling to collect data from teacher training institutions in Balangir Municipality. The population included D.I.E.T (District Institute of Education and Training) Balangir and E.T.E.I. Balangir, totaling 200 individuals. A sample of 50 pupil-teachers were selected, with 25 from D.I.E.T and 25 from E.T.E.I, and 25 from the first year and 25 from the second year. The HEdPERF scale was used for data collection, focusing on five dimensions: non-academic aspects, academic aspects, program issues, reputation, and access.

### **Tool**

Data collection involved administering the HEdPERF scale to elementary pupil-teachers in Balangir Municipality. The scale comprised 41 statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

### **Scoring Procedure**

Responses to the HEdPERF scale were scored based on a 5-point Likert scale, with options including strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. All positive statements regarding quality teacher education were scored accordingly.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis involved computing mean values to describe perceptions and using standard deviation to

study variation. Additionally, t-tests were conducted to compare perceptions between primary and secondary institutions and between first-year and second-year pupil-teachers.

### Analysis of Student-Teachers' Perception Towards Quality in Teacher Training Programme

In this study, investigator aimed to gauge the perception of pupil-teachers' towards the quality of their pre-service teacher training programme. Utilizing a standardized scale, investogator assessed various dimensions of this perception to gain insights into areas of strength and areas that might require improvement.

**Table-1.1 Perception of Student Teachers in Different Dimension.**

	Mean(N=50)	Standard deviation
Academic aspect	4.16	0.54
Non-academic aspect	3.82	0.54
Access	3.67	0.67
Reputation	3.65	0.53
Programme issue and understanding	3.60	0.85
Overall quality	3.97	1.13

The academic aspect of the teacher training programme received notably high marks from student-teachers, with an average score of 4.16 out of 5. This suggests that student-teachers generally perceive the academic components of the programme quite positively, indicating a strong foundation in theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practices.

While still favorable, the perception of the non-academic aspect of the programme was slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.82. This dimension encompasses aspects beyond the curriculum, such as administrative support, facilities, and extracurricular opportunities. Although still positive, there is room for enhancement in these areas to further enrich the student-teaching experience.

The access dimension, which includes factors like approachability and accessibility of staff, received a mean score of 3.67. This suggests that student-teachers perceive some challenges or limitations in accessing support and resources within the programme. Addressing these accessibility issues could contribute to a more conducive learning environment.

Perceptions regarding the reputation of the programme were moderate, with a mean score of 3.65. While not overwhelmingly positive, this indicates that student-teachers have a reasonable perception of the programme's standing within the educational community. Enhancing the programme's reputation could further attract high-quality candidates and resources.

This dimension received a mean score of 3.60, indicating some concerns or challenges related to the structure and understanding of the programme. It suggests that there may be room for improvement in areas such as curriculum design, flexibility, and clarity of program objectives.

The overall quality of the teacher training programme, as perceived by student-teachers, was moderately positive, with a mean score of 3.97. While generally satisfactory, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.13 indicates greater variability in perceptions among student-teachers regarding the overall quality of the programme.



In conclusion, while this study revealed several strengths in the teacher training programme, such as the academic aspect, there are also areas identified for improvement, including the non-academic aspect, access, reputation, and program issues. By addressing these areas of concern, teacher training institutions can strive to enhance the overall quality of their programmes and better meet the needs of aspiring educators. Further research and targeted interventions may be necessary to address specific challenges and ensure continuous improvement in teacher education.

**Analysis of Institution-Wise Perception Towards Quality in Teacher Training Programme**

In the study conducted to assess the perception of student-teachers towards the quality of their pre-service teacher training programme, an analysis was performed to examine the differences in perception among institutions. Utilizing a standardized scale, various dimensions of this perception were evaluated to gain insights into institution-specific strengths and areas that might require improvement.

**Table 1.2 Dimension Wise Mean Comparison of Pupil-Teachers’ Perception of D.I.E.T And E.T.E.I**

	Type of Institution	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Aspect	D.I.E.T.	4.30	0.48
	E.T.E.I.	4.06	0.71
Non Academic Aspect	D.I.E.T.	4.10	0.42
	E.T.E.I.	3.60	0.55
Reputation	D.I.E.T.	4.07	0.58
	E.T.E.I.	3.27	0.69
Access	D.I.E.T.	3.92	0.65
	E.T.E.I.	3.42	0.90
Program Issue and understanding	D.I.E.T.	3.92	0.51
	E.T.E.I.	3.57	0.44

In terms of the academic aspect of the teacher training programme, the analysis revealed that DIET had a slightly higher mean score of 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.48 compared to ETEI (Elementary Teacher Education Institute), which had a mean score of 4.06 with a standard deviation of 0.71. This indicates that student-teachers at DIET perceived the academic components of the programme slightly more positively compared to those at ETEI.

Regarding the non-academic aspect of the programme, DIET again showed a higher mean score of 4.10 with a standard deviation of 0.42, while ETEI had a lower mean score of 3.60 with a standard deviation of 0.55. This suggests that student-teachers at DIET perceived the non-academic aspects, such as administrative support and facilities, more favorably than those at ETEI.

In terms of access to resources and support within the programme, DIET had a higher mean score of 4.07 with a standard deviation of 0.58, while ETEI had a lower mean score of 3.27 with a standard deviation of 0.69. This indicates that student-teachers at DIET perceived greater ease of access to resources and support compared to those at ETEI.

The analysis also revealed differences in perception regarding programme issues and understanding. DIET had a higher mean score of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.65, whereas ETEI had a lower mean score

of 3.42 with a standard deviation of 0.90. This suggests that student-teachers at DIET had a better understanding of the programme structure and objectives compared to those at ETEI.

Finally, perceptions regarding the reputation of the programme differed between DIET and ETEI. DIET had a slightly higher mean score of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.51, while ETEI had a lower mean score of 3.57 with a standard deviation of 0.44. This indicates that student-teachers at DIET perceived the programme's reputation slightly more positively compared to those at ETEI.

In conclusion, the analysis of institution-wise perception towards the quality of the teacher training programme highlights variations in how student-teachers perceive different dimensions of the programme across institutions. Understanding these differences can inform targeted interventions and improvements to enhance the overall quality of teacher training programmes across institutions. Further research may be necessary to explore the underlying factors contributing to these variations and to identify strategies for addressing them effectively.

**H<sub>01</sub>- There is no significant difference between perception of pupil-teachers of D.I.E.T. and E.T.E.I toward quality in primary teacher training programme**

**Table 1.3 Mean Comparison Of D.I.E.T. And E.T.E.I Training Institute Pupil-Teachers' Perception Toward Quality Education**

Type of Institution	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Sig(2 tailed)
D.I.E.T.	50	3.85	0.52	48	1.10	0.27
E.T.E.I.	25	3.72	0.45			

A comparison was made between the mean perception scores of student-teachers from D.I.E.T. (District Institute of Education and Training) and E.T.E.I. (Elementary Teacher Education Institute) regarding the quality of their education. The analysis aimed to discern any differences in perception between the two types of institutions.

The mean perception score of student-teachers from D.I.E.T. was 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.52, while those from E.T.E.I. had a mean score of 3.72 with a standard deviation of 0.45. These measures provide an indication of the average perception and the variability of responses within each institution.

A t-test analysis was conducted to evaluate the significance of the difference between the mean perception scores of student-teachers from D.I.E.T. and E.T.E.I. The analysis yielded a t-value of 1.10 with 48 degrees of freedom, resulting in a p-value of 0.27. This suggests that the observed difference in mean perception scores between the two institutions was not statistically significant.

The findings indicate that there was no significant difference in the perception of student-teachers towards the quality of education between D.I.E.T. and E.T.E.I. training institutes. Both types of institutions were perceived similarly by the student-teachers participating in the study.

In conclusion, the comparison of mean perception scores provides insight into the consistency of perception towards quality education across different types of elementary teacher training institutes. Understanding such comparisons can help identify areas for improvement in the delivery of teacher education programmes, contributing to the enhancement of overall quality in teacher education.



**Analysing the difference between the perception of 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student teacher toward quality in teacher training institute.**

**Table1.4 -Dimension Wise Mean Comparison of Perception of First Year And Second Year Student**

	Student status	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Sig(2 tailed)
Academic Aspect	1st year	4.29	0.45	48	0.04
	2nd Year	4.04	0.58		
Non-Academic Aspect	1st year	3.79	0.59	48	0.72
	2nd Year	3.84	0.51		
Reputation	1st year	3.54	0.61	48	0.12
	2nd Year	3.73	0.46		
Access	1st year	3.69	0.66	48	0.76
	2nd Year	3.65	0.69		
Program Issue & Understanding	1st year	3.60	1.00	48	0.95
	2nd Year	3.59	0.71		

A comparative analysis was conducted to assess the perception of first-year and second-year student-teachers across various dimensions of teacher education. The findings revealed notable differences in their perceptions regarding the academic aspect of teacher training, with first-year student-teachers holding a significantly higher mean perception score compared to their second-year counterparts (4.29 vs. 4.04,  $p = 0.04$ ). However, no significant differences were observed in their perceptions of non-academic aspects, reputation, access, and program issues and understanding. First-year student-teachers reported mean perception scores of 3.79, 3.54, 3.69, and 3.60 respectively, while second-year student-teachers had scores of 3.84, 3.73, 3.65, and 3.59. These findings suggest that perceptions of student-teachers may evolve as they progress through their training programs, with implications for targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of teacher education. Further exploration of the factors influencing these perceptions could provide valuable insights into improving the effectiveness of teacher training initiatives and better preparing future educators for their roles in the classroom.

**H<sub>02</sub>-There is no significant difference between perception of 1<sup>st</sup>year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student-teachers toward quality in teacher training programme.**

**Table 1.5 Mean Comparison of Perception of 1<sup>st</sup> Year and 2<sup>nd</sup> student-Teachers' Toward Quality Education**

Student status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Sig(2 tailed)
1st year	33	3.82	0.52	48	0.74	0.94
2nd Year	42	3.80	0.49			

The table 1.5 revealed that there is no significant difference found between perception of student-teachers' of 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year toward quality education as the calculated  $p$  value (0.94) is higher than 0.05. Hence, the stated Null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the perception of 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup>

year pupil- teachers' toward quality in teacher training programme was accepted. (As  $t(0.74) < T(1.99)$  at degree of freedom 48 in 0.05 significant level)

## Conclusion

The research findings offer valuable insights for enhancing the quality of pre-service teacher training programs. By focusing on various dimensions of teacher training institutions, improvements can be made to ensure that student-teachers receive the highest quality education. Administrators of these institutions can utilize the data collected to refine their programs and provide students with optimal learning experiences. Ultimately, the aim is to cultivate better-equipped teachers for the future, contributing to the overall improvement of education standards.

Moving forward, there are several suggestions for further research in this area. Firstly, studies incorporating a broader range of variables would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. Additionally, extending investigations to other universities and geographical areas would offer valuable insights for comparison and generalization. Comparisons between government and self-financing institutions could shed light on differences in service quality. Moreover, exploring additional dimensions and indicators to measure quality in teacher training institutions would offer a more holistic perspective.

In conclusion, while the mean value of overall service quality is moderate, there is room for improvement across various aspects such as non-academic, reputation, access, and program understanding. Enhancing these areas alongside the already commendable academic aspect would contribute to producing better-prepared teachers. Notably, the study found no significant differences in perception between primary and secondary teacher training institutions or between first-year and second-year students, highlighting the consistent need for quality improvement efforts.

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