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Article

Evaluating the Reality of Teacher Preparation Programs in Colleges of Education from the Perspective of Faculty Members in Light of Curriculum Reengineering Trends

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Abstract: The current study aims to evaluate the reality of teacher preparation programs in colleges of education from the perspective of faculty members, in light of the trend of curriculum reengineering. The researcher adopted the descriptive-analytical method for this study. The research sample comprised 361 faculty members from various Iraqi universities, representing both scientific and humanities specializations. To answer the research questions, the researcher developed two instruments. The first instrument consisted of 24 items distributed across two dimensions: (1) The current status of colleges of education's programs, (2) The obstacles that faculty members face in implementing those programs. After distributing the questionnaire in its electronic form, the data were collected and analyzed statistically using SPSS. The researcher employed suitable statistical methods such as arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t-test, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and percentages. The study's conclusions were as follows: (1) The reality of teacher preparation programs in Iraqi colleges of education, from the viewpoint of the sample, is not at the required level, and there is insufficient satisfaction with the current programs, (2) The obstacles faced by faculty members in implementing these teacher preparation programs are numerous and significant across various domains, (3) Institutions responsible for these programs need to adopt a renewal philosophy that embraces modernity and aligns with contemporary global trends, (4) It is necessary to reconsider the components of teacher preparation programs in Iraqi colleges of education: allocate 55% of credit hours to specialization courses, 40% to pedagogical courses, and 5% to cultural courses, (5) There must be active involvement of curriculum and teaching methods experts in updating and preparing program courses and activities to achieve the best possible outcomes and ensure that development efforts are truly beneficial.

Keywords: Engineering, Teacher Training, Colleges of Education, Contemporary Trends, Curricula

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1. Introduction

Research Background and Problem

Iraqi colleges of education

The advancement of a country is measured by the quality of its academic institutions, their departments, and how distinguished their academic programs or curricula are—both theoretically and practically. Several factors underscore this measurement:

International university rankings compel institutions to excel in one or more academic programs to attain a prestigious academic reputation.

The globalization of higher education requires careful attention to the quality of academic programs offered by colleges, allowing them to attract distinguished students and faculty members [1].

Colleges of education are primarily responsible for preparing teachers who can meet labor market demands, especially with the expansion of schools and the necessity of achieving a competitive advantage. This preparation hinges on offering outstanding, diverse programs that satisfy the needs of educational institutions targeting specific learner profiles. New education models and evolving learner characteristics—shaped by developments—demand teacher preparation tailored to current successfully engage emerging generations, whose perspectives differ from those of previous cohorts [2], [3].

In Iraq, teacher preparation programs remain largely traditional and fail to meet labor market needs to a sufficient degree. Numerous studies and reports have confirmed that poor teacher preparation stems from the quality of the programs, their implementation methods, and the evaluation of their outcomes. The UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Higher Education reported that teacher preparation programs in Arab countries struggle to attract high-achieving students. Additionally, Iraqi colleges of education lag behind regarding quality assurance and academic accreditation, both locally and globally [4], [5]. This situation mandates that program designers in Iraqi colleges of education examine pioneering global practices in teacher preparation programs so that these experiences can be adapted not only to develop the colleges themselves but also to contribute to the nation's socioeconomic advancement [6].

Educational institutions are fundamental to the broader market because they supply qualified educational and administrative personnel. Therefore, if the institutions within a nation's educational system deteriorate, all other institutions inevitably follow suit, leading to the collapse of the educational system and, by extension, negatively impacting every sector [7]. Applying reengineering to rapidly and fundamentally rebuild educational institutions will necessarily reform many other systems, thereby precipitating concurrent economic, social, political, and cultural reforms.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following question:

How do faculty members in Iraqi colleges of education evaluate the reality of teacher preparation programs in light of the curriculum reengineering trend?

Research Objectives

The present research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the reality of teacher preparation programs from the perspective of faculty members in
2. To identify the obstacles that faculty members face in implementing teacher preparation programs in Iraqi colleges of education.

Importance of the Study

Universities are academic institutions that require continuous development in their leadership, systems, and organizational structures. Iraqi universities strive to develop on all levels to keep pace with global challenges in program types, the quality of graduates, and the expansion of student enrollment. Despite the increasing number of students and geographic expansion, there remains a shortage of qualified faculty in many specializations.

Colleges of education, as academic institutions, play a significant role in higher education by preparing future teachers. However, this traditional role, despite its importance, is no longer sufficient. Colleges of education are now called upon to adopt

new roles that contribute to community development and prepare capable graduates who can serve their country and enhance the educational institution and its staff.

Global contemporary trends call for professional and continuous development of teachers using modern, advanced methods, recognizing the critical role teachers play. Teachers stimulate students' motivation and readiness, plan educational situations, master planning, implementation, and evaluation skills, and facilitate holistic personality growth. They also serve as effective liaisons between parents, the local community, and external societal influences.

Given the general importance of education and the teacher's crucial role as both an educator and a social leader, every country has invested efforts in improving teacher quality and preparation methods. This includes identifying the personal and professional competencies that teachers must possess to effectively fulfill their expected roles and responsibilities.

Reengineering, or administrative reengineering, is a novel thinking approach that fundamentally changes core performance measures such as quality. It was linked to a study by Oun , which aimed to identify the impact of reengineering on the development of higher education outcomes from the perspective of female graduates of the College of Education at King Saud University. The study concluded that reengineering plays a direct role in enhancing the quality of higher education by increasing the productivity and efficiency of faculty members. Reengineering administrative processes contributes to streamlining university procedures and reengineering scientific research.

3. Results and Discussion

Theoretical Framework

Historical Origin of Colleges of Education

The first college of education in the world was established in Germany in 1779. It was known as the Pedagogical Academy in Berlin, founded by the philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt. Its purpose was to train and qualify teachers to develop general education and foster critical, independent thinking among students.

In the Arab world, colleges of education emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century to train teachers and educators to enhance the educational system in Arab countries. For example, Cairo University's Faculty of Education in Egypt was established in 1950 and was among the first such faculties in the region [8].

Definition and Purpose of a College of Education

A College of Education is an academic institution dedicated to preparing and qualifying teachers and educators. It offers programs and conducts research aimed at improving educational processes and enhancing pedagogical practices in society. Colleges of education combine theoretical study with practical application in various educational fields. They aim to graduate qualified cadres possessing the knowledge and skills needed for teaching, educational administration, and scientific research [9]. Additionally, they serve society by providing educational consultations and professional development programs for teachers and other educational stakeholders. In summary, a College of Education bridges academic knowledge and societal educational needs, playing a pivotal role in building generations capable of facing educational and developmental challenges.

General Goals for Developing Colleges of Education Programs

Colleges of education aim to prepare a generation of teachers and educational specialists who contribute to developing the educational process and achieving sustainable development in society. Although objectives vary slightly among universities, they generally include:

1. Preparing Qualified Teachers: Qualifying students to become scientifically and professionally competent teachers capable of effective instruction across different educational levels [10], [11].
2. Cultivating Educational and Ethical Values: Instilling ethical and pedagogical values in students so that they become role models for learners.
3. Advancing Educational Research: Encouraging research to address educational challenges and improve teaching and learning methods.
4. Serving the Community: Offering educational consultations and programs to local educational institutions and the broader community.
5. Promoting Critical and Creative Thinking: Empowering students to engage in critical and creative thinking and utilize modern teaching–learning approaches [12], [13].
6. Achieving Sustainable Development: Preparing cadres capable of addressing educational challenges to contribute to sustainable development goals.
7. Continuous Professional Development: Designing programs for teachers and graduates that align with modern educational developments.

Definitions of Key Terms

1. **Teacher Preparation Programs:** A set of organized and intentional experiences offered by colleges of education during pre- and post-graduation to equip future teachers with professional competencies—including knowledge, values, and skills—to work effectively in teaching or educational leadership.
2. **Colleges of Education:** Academic units under the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education whose purpose is to prepare specialized individuals qualified both educationally and scientifically to teach at secondary schools or to hold postgraduate degrees (Master's, PhD) for work as experts and faculty members in the Ministries of Higher Education and Education [14], [15].
3. **Curriculum Reengineering:** Fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of educational systems to achieve substantial improvements in critical performance measures, such as cost, quality, service, and speed. It involves "rethinking and redesigning operational processes and organizational structures to focus on the organization's core competencies, thereby achieving dramatic improvements in organizational performance".

Field Study

Research Method

This study is descriptive in nature, and the researcher employed the survey method and a questionnaire to answer the research questions.

Study Sample

The sample consisted of 361 faculty members from governmental colleges of education in Iraqi universities—covering both Humanities and Pure Sciences, including Colleges of Education for Women. Both genders were represented, and the sampling was random after distributing the electronic questionnaire.

Scoring and Interpretation

To interpret the results and assess the response level of the sample, the researcher used a five-point Likert scale. The ranges for interpretation are
shown in the following table 1:

Table 1. Answering the Main Research Question

Scale Range (Mean)		Relative Weight (%)	Interpretation
4.21	5.00	84%–100%	Very High
3.41	4.20	68%–83%	High
2.61	3.40	52%–67%	Moderate

1.81	2.60	36%–51%	Low
1.00	1.80	20%–35%	Very Low

Question: How do faculty members in Iraqi colleges of education evaluate the reality of teacher preparation programs in light of curriculum reengineering?

To answer this question, a one-sample t-test was used to determine whether the faculty members' evaluation scores of the colleges of education programs differed significantly from the scale midpoint (3.00). The means, standard deviations, relative weights, t values, and significance of each statement in the first axis of the questionnaire were computed, as shown below:

Since all computed t values are statistically significant, the faculty members' evaluations differ from the midpoint (3.00).

3. Statement (1): "The academic objectives of the program align with the college's vision and mission."

   Mean = 4.116; SD = 0.724; Relative Weight = 82.32%.

   Interpretation: High.

   Researcher's note: Most teacher preparation programs in Iraqi colleges of education closely align with their own vision and mission, which is a positive indicator.

4. Statement (2): "Learning outcomes are linked to labor market requirements and needs."

   Mean = 3.656; SD = 1.177; Relative Weight = 73.13%.

   Interpretation: High.

   Researcher's note: All programs in Iraqi colleges of education aim to prepare graduates who meet the Ministry of Education's needs, hence the high alignment.

5. Statement (11): "The university forms committees to follow up on academic programs and identify strengths and weaknesses."

   Mean = 2.265; SD = 1.062; Relative Weight = 45.31%.

   Interpretation: Low.

   Researcher's note: There is a lack of tangible, effective follow-up as perceived by the sample.

6. Statement (12): "Course materials yield easily measurable learning outcomes."

   Mean = 2.099; SD = 0.878; Relative Weight = 41.93%.

   Interpretation: Low.

   Researcher's note: The current curricula are weak and not sufficiently up to date with contemporary changes.

4. Conclusion

1. From the perspective of the sample, the reality of teacher preparation programs in Iraqi colleges of education is not at the desired level, and there is insufficient satisfaction with the current programs.
2. The obstacles faced by faculty members in implementing teacher preparation programs are high in various areas.
3. Faculty members' evaluation of the current programs' suitability for achieving scientific, professional, leadership, skill-based, and cultural integration for preparing teachers—considering global trends—is low.
4. There is a need to analyze the content of current curricula to identify shortcomings and address them to prepare well-rounded teachers across academic, cultural, and professional domains.

5. Adoption of modern evaluation methods is essential to ensure transparency and comprehensiveness, using diverse tools to measure learning outcomes—whether academic achievement, interactive activities, or practical applications related to program courses.
6. Active participation of curriculum and teaching methods experts in updating and preparing program courses and activities is necessary to achieve optimal positive results and ensure that development efforts are truly beneficial.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends:

1. Adopting a philosophy of continuous renewal and creating an academic environment for preparing future teachers, addressing the internal strengths and weaknesses of Iraqi colleges of education, and responding to external challenges.
2. Revising program components—adjusting credit hour distributions to better meet labor market demands.
3. Involving curriculum and teaching methods specialists in all stages of program development and implementation.
4. Employing modern, transparent, and comprehensive evaluation methods that measure both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
5. Analyzing course content to identify gaps and update curricula to align with contemporary educational and societal needs.

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