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Practicum students' educational competencies of the postgraduate professional diploma program in teaching

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the extent to which practicum students in the Postgraduate Professional Diploma Program in Teaching are practicing educational competencies. The sample consisted of 275 students who were randomly selected. The study sought to assess the current level of competency among these students in various domains of teaching, including planning for teaching, teaching skills, personal characteristics and classroom management, and evaluation. A questionnaire consisted of 50 items distributed over four domains of teaching: planning for teaching, teaching skills, personal characteristics and classroom management, and evaluation. The collected data were statistically analyzed through SPSS. The study results showed that the average scores for all domains combined were high, with the highest average score in the planning for teaching domain and the lowest average score in the evaluation domain. It also indicated that there were no significant differences in responses between respondents based on specialization or in the field. However, the study did find significant differences based on the cumulative average variable, with students who received an excellent rating having higher scores than those who received a good or very good rating. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the level of educational competencies among practicum students.

KEYWORDS: educational competencies, practicum students, postgraduate professional diploma

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1. Introduction

The education system provides a structured framework for delivering education, focusing on curriculum development, teacher training, student assessment, and related activities. Its primary goal is to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for success and positive societal contributions. Teachers are crucial in this framework, as they design educational programs, create inclusive environments, assess student progress, and support skill development. Effective teachers foster a culture of learning and achievement, making them integral to the education system's success (Hudson et al., 2020).

Effective teachers also need strong interpersonal skills to communicate with students and families, collaborate with colleagues, and build community relationships. In a rapidly evolving world, they must adapt to new technologies and educational policies (Filiz & Durnali, 2019; Ismail et al., 2018; Stronge, 2018; Al-Momani & Maqableh, 2024).

Professional development for teachers includes workshops, seminars, online courses, and mentoring. These opportunities help teachers stay current with research, develop new skills, and network with peers. Tsvetkova et al. (2021) note that training aims to understand the scientific foundations of practice and cultivate essential competencies. Investing in ongoing professional development fosters a skilled workforce capable of meeting the education system's evolving needs. Rrustemi and Kurteshi (2023) highlight that factors such as practical training hours, relevant topics, challenges faced, and satisfaction with studies contribute to student teachers' preparation.

Educational institutions prioritize teacher preparation to keep up with scientific and technological advancements. Today's landscape requires teachers to select effective methods, use diverse tools, motivate students, and create conducive environments (Frass et al., 2017). In summary, teachers are vital to the education system, and their training and continuous development are crucial for student success. They possess diverse skills that engage students and facilitate knowledge acquisition. As their roles evolve, educational institutions must continue investing in their professional growth.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), universities and colleges of education prepare trainee teachers across cognitive, performance, and behavioral dimensions. One initiative is the practicum program in the Postgraduate Professional Diploma in Teaching, which equips trainee teachers for both public and private education. This program combines theory with practical experience, allowing for deeper integration. Boutros (1994) emphasizes teachers' pivotal role in imparting knowledge and shaping perspectives, asserting that curriculum and methods cannot succeed without qualified teachers. They must be professionally prepared to address challenges in the learning process. Therefore, institutions must prioritize practicum training and ongoing support to ensure teachers deliver high-quality education.

Outstanding teachers may also assume leadership roles, creating conditions for effective teaching and learning, ensuring material availability, and fostering positive environments (Ellis et al., 2023). They guide students, serve as role models, and recognize their influence on shaping minds and characters. Committed to enhancing their capabilities, they strive to fulfill classroom responsibilities with dedication (Ngui & Lay, 2020). Al-Abadi (2004) underscores the need for adequate teacher preparation to navigate the evolving education landscape. He argues that universities must equip teachers with the necessary cognitive and professional skills. A teacher's success depends on their preparation and competencies, documented in literature. As education becomes complex, teachers must foster higher-order critical thinking skills (Staddon, 2023). Thus, well-prepared teachers are essential.

According to Al-Ghishan and Al-Abadi (2013), practical education involves realistic experiences, trial and error, guidance, and supervision for student teachers. Its objectives include instilling professional responsibility, applying theoretical knowledge, and gaining classroom management experience. Wyss et al. (2012) emphasize the importance of practical education in teacher preparation programs and recommend prioritizing practicum training with adequate support. Shatanawi and Alimat (2008) highlight practicum training's significance for prospective teachers, noting its impact on teaching readiness. To become effective educators, teachers must cultivate skills that enable them to adapt to educational advancements. Evaluating programs against quality standards is vital for societal development goals. Wenger et al. (2002) explain that practical education aims to provide experiences in planning, evaluation, classroom management, and understanding student needs, which are essential for building effective teaching competencies. UNESCO stresses enhancing teacher competencies

through pre-service and in-service training, focusing on sustainable education that improves teaching quality, crucial for nurturing a knowledge-based economy (Khazali & Momani, 2010; Toom et al., 2010).

Additionally, Shatnawy and Alimat (2008) assert that practicum training is essential for acquiring necessary knowledge and skills. Practical experience enhances teachers' abilities, allowing interaction with students and tailoring strategies. It helps teachers understand education's various elements, including curricula and administrative processes. Farrell (2001) notes that real experience under supervision is vital for growth, as it provides feedback and guidance. This feedback helps teachers identify strengths and weaknesses, enhancing their methods. In conclusion, while practicum training equips teachers with knowledge and skills, practical experience is equally vital for their development. The interplay between teachers and educational elements, along with supervision and feedback, fosters their effectiveness.

2. General background

2.1. Literature review

Several studies have dealt with the topic of educational competencies among practicum students in the field of education and related it to several variables, like the research of Shatnawi (2007) who aimed to identify the most prominent competencies available to female student-teachers as a "Field Teacher" at the College of Education in the Sultanate of Oman, from the point of view of cooperating female teachers. The results showed that the most prominent competencies available to female student-teachers were the ability to formulate behavioral goals and deal with content, while personal skills were the least of the educational competencies available to them. Furthermore, the study found no statistically significant differences in cooperative teachers' estimations of student-teachers' possession of educational competencies based on qualification and experience. The study's recommendations emphasized the importance of continuous evaluation of practical education programs to ensure that they adequately prepare and rehabilitate student-teachers. These findings highlight the need for teacher training programs to prioritize the development of critical competencies necessary for effective teaching, such as formulating behavioral goals and dealing with content, while also emphasizing the importance of personal skills in the classroom setting.

Al-Shudaifat et al. (2011) conducted a study aimed at measuring the degree of importance and practice of competencies necessary for teaching Islamic education in the basic stage, from the point of view of student-teachers as class teachers at the Hashemite University during their field training period. The results showed a statistically significant relationship between the degree of importance of competencies required for teaching Islamic education and the degree of their practice in the third domain of "competencies of human relations and class management" and the fourth domain. However, the study found no statistically significant relationship between the degree of importance of competencies required for teaching Islamic education and the degree of their practice based on the variable of cumulative average levels. The findings highlight the importance of incorporating competencies related to human relations and class management into teacher training programs, particularly for teaching Islamic education in the basic stage. Additionally, the study's results suggest that importance should be given to the practical application of these competencies during teacher training, regardless of the students' cumulative average levels.

A study conducted by Bhargava and Pathy (2011) aimed at investigating the teaching competencies that student-teachers need to succeed in the teaching profession from their point of view. The study results showed that the most needed personal competency by student-teachers is self-confidence, while the most needed professional competency is knowledge of the content of the subject they will teach in the future. In light of these findings, the researchers recommended the activation of micro-teaching models in universities and increased attention to student-teachers through comprehensive and continuous evaluations during practical education programs. These recommendations aim to improve the teaching competencies of student-teachers and prepare them for successful careers in the teaching profession. Overall, the study highlights the importance of developing both personal and professional competencies in student-teachers to ensure their success as educators.

Al-Freihat (2013) also conducted a study aimed at identifying the extent of the contribution of practical education in acquiring teaching competencies for female students majoring in Child Education at Ajloun University College from their point of view. The study sample included (100) female students studying child parenting. There were (75) undergraduate students and (25) intermediate diploma students enrolled in the

course of practical education. The researcher employed a tool that included 42 items that assessed the following educational competencies: educational planning and objectives, implementation of the educational situation, use of educational materials, management of the educational situation, evaluation of the educational situation, and personal characteristics. The study discovered statistically significant differences in the opinions of female students in the field of child education at Ajloun College regarding the extent of practical education's contribution to the acquisition of teaching competencies by child education students on all axes of the tool, and the total score of the evaluation tool is attributed to the academic level. In a quantitative study, Hamaidi et al. (2014) explored the experiences of student-teachers during their practicum experience. The study found that the practicum experience was crucial in developing teaching competencies, but students faced various challenges, such as the lack of a structured learning environment, limited interaction with students, and insufficient feedback from supervisors. The authors suggested that addressing these challenges could enhance the practicum experience and improve the quality of teaching competencies developed by students.

Al-Tarawneh (2015) conducted a study to identify the teaching competencies of student-trained teachers in cooperating schools, as perceived by cooperating teachers. The results indicated that student-teachers possess competencies in four domains: planning for teaching, personal characteristics, implementation of teaching, and evaluation of teaching. Significant differences were found in cooperating teachers' perspectives based on years of experience, favoring those with more experience. The researcher recommended focusing on teaching evaluation and implementation competencies in university courses. Another study by Kaldi and Xafakos (2017) investigated Greek student-teachers' experiences in a four-year Bachelor of Primary Education Degree Program. Their research revealed connections between external motivation, support, and student-teachers' self-efficacy perceptions, highlighting the importance of institutional and social support networks in developing teaching skills. Furthermore, Niu et al. (2021) examined student-teachers' perceptions of their readiness for 21st-century competencies in the classroom. Results showed they felt effective in developing these competencies, with 'Collaboration' as the strongest area and 'Global connections' as the weakest. The research emphasized that courses with collaborative learning and quality support enhanced these competencies. Similarly, Onotere et al. (2021) explored students' perceptions of their competence in four language skills and teachers' approaches to teaching English. Results indicated that teachers addressed all skills, and appropriate methods facilitated understanding. The study recommended considering class size, subject matter, and students' proficiency when selecting teaching methods for optimal outcomes. Finally, Alghamdi (2022) examined the impact of practicum experiences on postgraduate professional diploma students' teaching competencies, finding significant enhancements in classroom management, communication, and assessment skills. The author recommended expanding the practicum to include a broader range of teaching competencies for increased effectiveness.

To conclude, practical education or practicum training is an essential component of teacher preparation, training, and qualification programs. It provides student-teachers with opportunities to develop their teaching skills, abilities, and practical competencies, which are critical for their success as teachers. Practical education enables student-teachers to learn how to apply teaching methods, use teaching aids and activities, manage classrooms, and understand the school system. It is crucial to pay attention to the practical education program and continuously develop it to ensure the achievement of goals in preparing qualified teachers in the field of education. This can be done by providing a well-structured and comprehensive practical education program that covers all aspects of teaching and learning. The program should be designed to enable student-teachers to acquire practical skills and competencies that are relevant to their future teaching career. Moreover, it is essential to ensure that the practical education program is aligned with the current educational trends, policies, and practices. The program should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the educational landscape, emerging technologies, and innovative teaching methods. This can enable student-teachers to be adequately prepared to meet the challenges of modern education.

Additionally, the rapid scientific and technological development in various fields requires the preparation and qualification of teachers educationally and scientifically (Khatatbah & Ashour, 2024). Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of societies by preparing the new generation to adapt to scientific and cognitive progress and continuous technological development. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and competent authorities have a responsibility to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and qualified to carry out their roles effectively. The practical education also provides student-teachers with the opportunity to apply what they have

learned in the classrooms and gain practical experience in teaching. This experience is crucial for the student-teacher to identify the aspects of the educational process, remove their fears, and develop their professional competencies and skills. The success of the practical education program is vital, as it can increase the student-teacher's desire to pursue a career in teaching and provide them with the necessary competencies and skills required for the teaching profession. These competencies include planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Therefore, due to the importance of the practical education program in preparing teachers and providing them with educational skills, this study conducted to identify the degree to which practicum training provides students with the educational competencies, by surveying the opinions of students enrolled in this program in the first semester of the academic year 2022/2023. The aim of the study is to gain a profound understanding of how practicum field enhance professional competencies among postgraduate professional diploma student-teachers at Al Ain University.

2.2. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to help teachers identify essential areas of education. It may highlight the additional educational skills and competencies needed for male and female participants in professional diploma programs in teaching that have been neglected. This study could enhance the competence of teachers who entered the profession without adequate preparation. It may also assist those responsible for diploma programs in designing competency-based training programs to improve teacher performance. Additionally, the educational supervision apparatus may benefit from this study in refining the evaluation of teachers' performance, and the Ministry of Education may use the results to plan and design in-service teacher preparation programs through courses and workshops.

2.3. Statement of the Problem

The study problem appears because some practicum student-teachers postgraduate professional diploma program in teaching at Al-Ain University complained about practicing the teaching profession at schools and requesting for more continuous development of practicum program, through providing workshops for students during training as well as coordinating with other parties such as in-service teachers. Therefore, the problem of the study is determined by answering the following questions:

1. To what extent do practicum students of the postgraduate professional diploma program in teaching at Al Ain University practicing educational competencies?
2. Are there statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the estimates of the study sample degree in the Postgraduate Professional Diploma program in teaching at Al Ain University for educational competencies attribute to cooperating teacher's experience, specialization, and cumulative average?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

This study follows the descriptive research methodology, which aims to investigate the Practicum Students' Educational Competencies of the Postgraduate Professional Diploma Program in Teaching at Al-Ain University. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection to achieve the study's goal. The study population included all postgraduate professional diploma students in teaching who were registered for the practicum training course in the diploma program at Al Ain University, a total of (960) male and female students. The study sample consisted of 275 students was chosen at random based on the study's variables, as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentage of the Participants according to the Study Variables

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Experience	1- 5 years	62	22.5
	6- 10 years	114	41.5
	11 years and more	99	36.0
Total		275	100

Specialization	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Islamic studies	25	9.1
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Arabic language	60	21.8
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - English language	25	9.1
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Islamic studies	30	10.9
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Mathematics	60	21.8
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching -Science	25	9.1
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Information Technology	50	18.2
Total		275	100
Cumulative Average	Good	67	24.4
	Very good	145	52.7
	Excellent	63	22.9
Total		275	100

3.2. The Instrument and Procedures

A questionnaire with 50 elements divided into four domains was developed: planning for teaching, teaching skills, personal characteristics and classroom management, and evaluation. To correct the research tools, a five-point Likert scale was used, with each of its paragraphs given a score. One degree out of its five degrees (very high, high, medium, low, very little) and it represents numerically (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) accordingly, and the following scale has been used for the purposes of assessing the results: from (1.00 - 2.33) (low), (3.67 - 2.34) middle, and (5.00 - 3.68) high. The study tool was designed and developed using educational literature from the fields of education and practical education, previous studies, the researchers' teaching experience, the opinions of the arbitrators who judged the questionnaire, and the opinions of educational specialists.

To validate the study tool, the researchers presented it to a group of specialized and experienced arbitrators in the subject of the study, who were asked to make any comments related to the suitability and clarity of the questionnaire through the method of deletion, addition, or modification, as well as the extent to which the paragraph belongs to the field under which it falls. In response to the arbitrators' comments, the study tool was revised and now has (50) paragraphs separated into four sections. In order to extract indications of the validity of the scale's construction, the researchers extracted the correlation coefficients for each paragraph and the total score, as well as between each paragraph and its connection to the field to which it belongs, and between the fields to each other and the total degree, from an exploratory sample of (30) male and female students drawn from outside the study sample. The collected data were statistically analyzed through SPSS. The correlation coefficients of the paragraphs with the instrument as a whole were between (0.38-0.80) and (0.37-0.81), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlations between the Domains, Tools and their Items

No	Correlation coefficient with the domain	Correlation coefficient with the tool	No	Correlation coefficient with the domain	Correlation coefficient with the tool	No	Correlation coefficient with the domain	Correlation coefficient with the tool
1	.50**	.43*	18	.79**	.80**	35	.40*	.45*
2	.73**	.66**	19	.47**	.46*	36	.45*	.46*
3	.72**	.71**	20	.63**	.62**	37	.42*	.46*
4	.53**	.50**	21	.56**	.47**	38	.71**	.77**
5	.62**	.59**	22	.40*	.47**	39	.59**	.58**
6	.66**	.47**	23	.60**	.56**	40	.65**	.71**
7	.74**	.61**	24	.47**	.41*	41	.66**	.61**
8	.72**	.74**	25	.65**	.68**	42	.44*	.40*
9	.68**	.71**	26	.61**	.61**	43	.72**	.77**
10	.37*	.38*	27	.74**	.67**	44	.75**	.63**
11	.76**	.72**	28	.40*	.46*	45	.54**	.51**
12	.43*	.43*	29	.71**	.72**	46	.39*	.47**

13	.76**	.76**	30	.68**	.63**	47	.79**	.71**
14	.78**	.77**	31	.44*	.50**	48	.42*	.38*
15	.68**	.70**	32	.42*	.39*	49	.51**	.50**
16	.62**	.63**	33	.68**	.59**	50	.81**	.77**
17	.75**	.74**	34	.40*	.45*			

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

It should be emphasized that all of the correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant, hence none of these paragraphs were removed. The field correlation coefficient was retrieved together with the overall degree and the correlation coefficients between the domains, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients between Domains and the Overall Score

Item	Planning for Teaching	Teaching Skills	Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management	Evaluation	Overall degree
Planning for Teaching	1				
Teaching Skills	.786**	1			
Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management	.804**	.880**	1		
Evaluation	.635**	.920**	.864**	1	
Overall score	.844**	.938**	.949**	.933**	1

*Correlation is significant at the (a=0.05) level
** Correlation is significant at (a=0.01) level

Table 3 demonstrates that all correlation coefficients were satisfactory and statistically significant, showing adequate construct validity.

Additionally, the test-retest approach was used to ensure the tool's reliability, which was applied to a similar sample of thirty male and female students from outside the study community with an estimated time difference of three weeks between the first test and the second re-test, and then it was calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient. The reliability coefficient was also determined using the Cronbach alpha equation and the internal consistency approach. Table 4 displays the internal consistency coefficient calculated using the Cronbach alpha equation, as well as the repetition stability of the domains and the tool as a whole, which totals (0.88). These values were deemed suitable for the objectives of this investigation.

Table 4: Internal Consistency and Consistent Reliability for the Domains

Domain	Consistent Reliability	Internal Consistency
Planning for Teaching	0.84	0.82
Teaching Skills	0.80	0.75
Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management	0.83	0.79
Evaluation	0.81	0.80
Overall score	0.88	0.83

4. **Results**

In order to respond to the study's first question, "To what extent do practicum students of the postgraduate professional diploma program in teaching at Al Ain University practicing educational competencies?", the arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted for the degree of practicum students in the Postgraduate Professional Diploma Program in Teaching at Al Ain University for teaching competencies as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations of Students Teaching Competencies

No	Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	1	Planning for Teaching	4.03	.562	High
2	3	Teaching Skills	3.92	.561	High
3	2	Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management	3.90	.591	High
4	4	Evaluation	3.82	.637	High
Overall score			3.91	.562	High

According to Table 5, the averages varied from (3.82-4.03), with the domain of "Planning for Teaching" ranking the highest with a mean of (4.03) and the domain of "Evaluation" ranking the lowest with a mean of (3.82). For the teaching competences as a whole, the mean of the degree of practicum students was (3.91). The means and standard deviations of the research sample's estimations were computed separately for each domain, and they were as follows:

4.1. Planning for Teaching Domain

Table 6 shows means and standard deviations of planning for teaching domain.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations of Planning for Teaching Domain

No	Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	8	Selecting appropriate teaching methods for the content	4.22	.818	High
2	1	Formulate specific learning objectives for lesson content	4.17	.909	High
3	6	Choosing appropriate assessment methods to achieve the objectives in the light of the learning outcomes	4.13	.876	High
4	4	Determining the various teaching and learning activities for the lesson that motivate students to learn	4.10	.762	High
5			4.05	.885	High
2					
Analyzing lesson content					
6	5	Distributing class time appropriately according to objectives	4.01	.922	High
7	7	Determining appropriate educational means that contribute to the achievement of science products	3.80	.888	High
8	3	Planning educational activities that take into account the individual differences among students	3.73	1.074	High
Overall score			4.03	.562	High

According to Table 6, the arithmetic means varied from (3.73- 4.22), with item (8), which specifies "selecting appropriate teaching methods for the content," ranking the highest with an arithmetic mean of (4.22), and item (3) ranking second. With an arithmetic average of (3.73), the text "planning educational activities that take into account individual differences among students" scored lowest.

4.2. Teaching Skills Domain

Table 7 shows means and standard deviations of teaching skills domain.

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviations of Teaching Skills Domain

No	Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	12	Using a variety of teaching methods	4.11	1.075	High
2	14	Reinforcing students' responses in an appropriate manner	4.06	.888	High
3	17	Distributing time to cover all parts of the lesson	4.05	.866	High
4	19	Using the board during the explanation process	4.05	1.006	High
5	20	Using school equipment (library, laboratories)	4.03	.885	High

6	25	Connecting the subject of the lesson to the reality of students' lives.	4.03	.887	High
7	26	Organizing the classroom environment in an appropriate manner	4.01	.924	High
8	13	Asking specific and thought-provoking questions	3.96	.893	High
9			3.93	.971	High
15					
Displaying the educational material in sequential logical steps					
10	16	Developing students' self-learning methods	3.92	.969	High
11	18	Teaching some issues that are not related to specialization	3.91	.919	High
12	27	Developing a remedial plan for low achievers	3.89	.966	High
13	9	Preparing the lesson with an interesting introduction that raises the interests and motives of the learners	3.86	.903	High
14	24	Using more than one evaluation method	3.85	.936	High
15	21	Taking into account the psychological characteristics of students and their mental abilities	3.84	1.030	High
16	23	Summarizing the lesson	3.71	.971	High
17	22	Observing the continuity of evaluation	3.68	.963	High
18	10	Using sound language appropriate to the level of the students	3.64	.927	Medium
19	11	Taking into account individual differences among students	3.64	1.109	Medium
Overall score			3.90	.591	High

The competencies in the "Teaching skills" domain came in second place among the teaching competencies possessed by the student-teachers, as the arithmetic averages ranged between (3.64- 4.11), where item 12 came in first place, with an average of (4.11), while items 10 and 11 and their texts "Using sound language appropriate to the level of the students" and "Taking into account.

4.3. Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management Domain

Table 8 shows means and standard deviations of personal characteristics and classroom management domain.

Table 8: Means and Standard Deviations of Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management Domain

No	Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	29	Investing time effectively in the classroom	4.03	.889	High
2	30	Maintaining order in the classroom	3.97	.908	High
3	31	Using appropriate types of reward and punishment during the educational situation	3.97	.926	High
4	33	Dealing with students with kindness and respect	3.96	.927	High
5	37	Establishing good relationships with students	3.95	.911	High
6	38	Interested in creating a safe classroom environment	3.95	.827	High
7	39	Adhering to the ethics of the teaching profession	3.93	.930	High
8	40	Instilling in students the spirit of cooperation and teamwork	3.92	.906	High
9	28	Using the appropriate method to guide students' behavior	3.87	1.024	High
10	32	Identifying students' problems and work to find appropriate solutions	3.87	.956	High
11	34	Moving in front of students to the extent that serves the educational situation	3.84	1.052	High

12	35	Managing student activities efficiently	3.83	.905	High
13	36	Managing the classroom according to democratic principles	3.82	.910	High
Overall score			3.92	.561	High

The results also revealed that among the teaching competences acquired by student-teachers, the competencies in "Personal Characteristics and Classroom Management" domain placed third. Table 8 shows that the arithmetic averages ranged from (3.82-4.03), with item 29, "Investing Time Effectively in the Classroom," ranking first with an average of (4.03), and item 36, "Managing the Classroom According to Democratic Principles," ranking last with an average of (3.82).

4.4. Evaluation Domain

Table 9 shows means and standard deviations of evaluation domain.

Table 9: Means and Standard Deviations of Evaluation Domain

No		Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	41	Linking the evaluation process to the educational outcomes and goals to be achieved	3.95	.935	High	
2	45	Preparing various tests (essay, objective, etc.) that measure students' achievement	3.92	.909	High	
3	43	Considering the continuation of student evaluation	3.87	.866	High	
4	44	Encouraging students to use self-evaluation.	3.85	1.003	High	
5	46	Formulating the questions accurately and clearly, making it easy for the student to understand	3.84	1.003	High	
6	47	Developing scientific thinking among students	3.84	.957	High	
7	49	Sequencing the assessment aspects such that they are basic at first and subsequently fall in line with the gradation of concepts in a way that matches the students' perceptions and backgrounds	3.84	.894	High	
8	50	Detecting students' mental abilities (deduction, analysis, application, synthesis, understanding, etc.)	3.84	.917	High	
9	42	Providing feedback to students in a timely manner	3.63	.936	Medium	
10	48	Taking into account questions for individual differences among students	3.63	1.111	Medium	
Overall score			3.82	.637	High	

According to the study's findings, the "Evaluation" domain ranked fourth and last among the teaching competences acquired by student-teachers. Table 9 shows that the arithmetic averages ranged between (3.63-3.95), as item 41 came, which states: "Linking the evaluation process to the educational outcomes and goals to be achieved," ranking first with an average of (3.95), while items (42 and 48) and their texts "Providing feedback to students in a timely manner" and "Taking into account questions for individual differences among students" ranking last with an average of (3.63).

To answer the second question "Are there statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) between the estimates of the study sample degree in the Postgraduate Professional Diploma program in teaching at Al Ain University for educational competencies attribute to cooperating teacher's experience, specialization, and cumulative average?", the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the degree of practicum students in the Postgraduate Professional Diploma Program in Teaching at Al Ain University for teaching competencies based on the variables of cooperating teacher's experience, specialization, and cumulative average as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Means and Standard Deviations of Practicum Students Competencies According to the Variables of the Cooperating Teacher's Experience, Specialization, and Cumulative Average

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Experience	1- 5 years	3.76	.506
	6- 10 years	3.84	.641
	11 years and more	4.09	.447
Specialization	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Islamic studies	3.79	.565
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Arabic language	3.79	.581
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - English language	3.90	.630
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Islamic studies	3.99	.518
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Mathematics	4.05	.500
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching -Science	3.98	.508
	Post Professional Diploma in teaching - Information Technology	3.87	.606
Cumulative Average	Good	3.70	.521
	Very good	3.89	.593
	Excellent	4.17	.412
Total		275	3.76

Table 10 shows an apparent disparity in the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the degree to which practicum students for teaching competencies are affected by the different categories of the cooperating teacher's experience, specialization, and cumulative average. To demonstrate the significance of statistical discrepancies between arithmetic means, Triple discrepancy was utilized, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Multiple Triple Variance Analysis on the Degree of Practicum Students for Teaching Competencies

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Experience	2.687	2	1.343	4.775	.009
Specialization	2.712	6	.452	1.606	.146
Cumulative Average	4.046	2	2.023	7.191	.001
Error	74.274	264	.281		
Total	86.604	274			

Table 11 shows statistically significant differences at the level (α= 0.05) due to the influence of the experience variable, with the value of "F" being (4.775) and a statistical significance of (0.009). Moreover, as shown in Table 11, there were no statistically significant differences at the level (α = 0.05) due to the effect of specialization, as the value of "F" was (1.606), with a statistical significance of (0.146). The Scheffe technique was utilized for the dimensional comparisons, as indicated in Table 12.

Table 12: Post-Comparisons of the Influence of Experience on the Degree of Practicum Students' Teaching Competencies Using the Scheffe Method

Experience	Mean	1- 5 years	6- 10 years	11 years and more
1- 5 years	3.76			
6- 10 years	3.84	.07		
11 years and more	4.09	.32*	.25*	

*Correlation is significant at the (a=0.05) level

Table 12 shows that there are statistically significant variations at the level (α = 0.05) related to the cooperating teacher's experience. The findings show that the arithmetic mean of the study sample responses indicates that cooperating teachers with 11 years of experience or more reached (4.09), which is greater than the arithmetic mean of the study sample responses with (6-10) years of experience, which reached to (3.84). It is also higher than the arithmetic mean of the study sample's replies with years of experience (1-5), which was (3.76).

In order to show the statistically significant pairwise differences between the arithmetic means, the dimensional comparisons were used using Scheffe's method, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Post-comparisons of the Effect of the Accumulative Average on Practicum Students of Teaching Competencies Using the Scheffe Method

Cumulative Average	Mean	Very good	Good	Excellent
Good	3.70			
Very good	3.89	.20		
Excellent	4.17	.48*	.28*	

*Correlation is significant at the (a=0.05) level

Table 13 shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level (α= 0.05) due to the accumulative average variable between excellent on the one hand and both good and very good on the other.

5. Discussion

The study sought to investigate the practicum students' educational competencies of the Postgraduate Professional Diploma in Teaching Program at Al Ain University. The findings revealed that the overall mean for all of the tool items was high. For investigating students- teachers' perceptions of practicing educational competencies, the means and standard deviations were computed separately for each domain. For "Planning for Teaching" domain as a whole was (4.03), indicating that the participants had a high degree of acquisition. This conclusion is based on the fact that competencies in the domain of "Planning for Teaching" are one of the program's primary goals and are among the essential competencies that are focused on in the majority of the theoretical specialized courses taught by student-teachers in the Professional Postgraduate Diploma Program in Teaching. Furthermore, the regular follow-up of each cooperating teacher and educational supervisor of student-teachers in the domain of "Planning for Teaching" as well as providing them with appropriate and continuous feedback on this process contributed significantly to students' possession of competencies in this domain. These findings are consistent with studies of Shatnawy (2007), Al-Shudaifat et al. (2011), Al-Tarawneh (2015), and Niu et al. (2021), which found that the ability to formulate teaching objectives and select appropriate teaching methods for the content are the teaching competencies most possessed by student-teachers during the training field.

Furthermore, Table 7 shows the mean for the "Teaching Skills" domain as a whole was (3.90), indicating a high level of acquisition. This result is attributed to the benefit that students-teachers gain from studying theoretical materials related to the design and implementation of teaching, the use of various teaching methods, and also to the follow-up carried out by academic supervisors through emphasizing on the importance of competencies related to the teaching skills domain. The result additionally attributed to the role of the collaborating teacher in terms of guiding and guiding the educated students, as well as the implementation of teaching positions in front of them by teachers with long scientific and practical experiences, which contributed to the acquisition of various teaching skills over a sufficient period of time. The findings of this study agree with those of Shatnawi (2007) and Al-Freihat (2013).

Additionally, Table 8 revealed that the overall arithmetic mean for this domain was (3.92), indicating a high degree of acquisition. The researchers credit this finding to student instructors benefiting from the concepts and theoretical underpinnings of current teaching trends, which demonstrate that the learner is at the center of the educational process. The researchers attribute this result to student-teachers benefiting from the principles and theoretical foundations of current teaching trends, which confirm that the learner is at the center of the educational process and that these competencies are among the basic duties that the teacher should fulfill. Academic supervisors, cooperating teachers, and school principals who train student-teachers to carry out these competences with students. The study's findings agree with those of Al-Shudaifat et al. (2011), Al-Freihat (2013), and Al-Tarawneh (2015), who found that student-teachers practice these competencies to a high degree, while they disagree with Yeung (2001), who found that students lack motor skills and their application, as well as the ability to organize time and control behavior in the classroom. The sufficiency of personal skills is one of the teaching competences acquired by student-teachers, according to the findings of Bhargava and Pathy (2011), who discovered that the most personal competencies required by student-teachers is the adequacy of

self-confidence.

Moreover, Table 9 shows the arithmetic mean for the evaluation field as a whole was (3.82), indicating a high degree of acquisition. This outcome is due to the fact that students and teachers study theoretical courses and units that contain the evaluation process in many courses, which serves to give students with assessment abilities and competences during their academic preparation. As students-teachers, they are considered as trainees, and the testing procedure is only carried out by the original teachers. As a result, student-teachers are not permitted to perform official evaluations. Furthermore, student-teachers must have adequate expertise in developing examinations, proper evaluation tools, cross-out lists, and assessment scales, and this experience is not readily available to students' dependents. The findings of this study agree with those of Al-Shudaifat et al. (2011), Al-Freihat (2013), and Al-Tarawneh (2015), whose findings indicated that the least teaching competencies possessed by students-teachers are those in the evaluation domain, as benefited by the findings of Shatnawi's study (2007). It ranked sixth and last among teaching abilities obtained by student teachers.

In response to the second question, Table 11 showed there were no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of specialization. This might be explained by the fact that student teachers' reactions to the variable of specialization were comparable to a large extent since they take the same courses, have the same professors, and are in similar university environments. They also get training at the same cooperating schools and under the same management, allowing them to achieve the same level of teaching competency in each specialty. Table 11 also shows that there are statistically significant changes at the level of ($\alpha= 0.05$) owing to the cumulative average effect, as the value of "F" was (7.191) and the statistical significance was (0.001).

While Table 12 shows that there are statistically significant variations at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) related to the cooperating teacher's experience. The findings imply that the teaching competences exhibited by student-trained instructors in cooperating schools fluctuate according to the cooperating teacher's years of experience, with greater experience favoring teachers. This result is attributed to collaborating teachers' increasing capacity to train and qualify student-teachers and provide them with the necessary teaching competencies and abilities. This result also came because teachers with long experience have sufficient ability to provide the student-teachers with the competencies and teaching skills necessary for them, due to their dealings with many trainee students in previous years.

Moreover, this means that experience plays an important role in possessing the competencies and skills for preparing plans, formulating goals, implementing the lesson, managing the class, conducting evaluation, and other skills. The study's findings are congruent with those of Alghamdi (2022) and Onotere et al. (2021). Whereas, these findings contrasted with the findings of Shatnawi 's (2007) study, which found no statistically significant changes in cooperating teachers' estimations of student teachers' teaching skills owing to varying years of experience.

Finally, Table 13 shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha= 0.05$) due to the accumulative average variable between excellent on the one hand and both good and very good on the other. The differences favored the excellent. This is a logical consequence of the existence of a significant association between academic success and the degree of acquisition and practice. A rise in the rate of academic accomplishment adds to an increase in the degree of acquiring and exercising educational competencies. The study's findings are consistent with those of Alghamdi (2020); Kaldi and Xafakos (2017); Niu et al. (2021) and Onotere et al. (2021).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigates the level of practicing educational competencies among practicum students of Al Ain University's Postgraduate Professional Diploma Program in Teaching. It also added to the literature by identifying areas for courses that might be taught to improve practicum students' practicing educational competences. The replies of the respondents are ascribed to the influence of specialization in all sectors, and the results also revealed that there were statistically significant variations owing to the effect of the cooperating teacher's years of experience, which favored instructors with more experience. The study also found statistically significant differences between excellent on one hand and both good and very good on the other due to the cumulative average variable. The differences favored excellence. Additionally, the findings also assist instructors in focusing

on abilities in the areas of teaching assessment, personal traits, and classroom management via theoretical courses given by student-teachers at the university.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- Emphasizing competences in teaching assessment, personal traits, and classroom management through theoretical courses provided by the student/teacher at the university.
- Adopting a method of micro-teaching in the university to train students-teachers, during their enrollment in the practicum program.
- The requirement for student teachers to attend training courses in order to stay up with contemporary scientific and technological developments in teaching.
- Conducting studies similar to the current study on the perspectives of academic supervisors and principals of cooperating schools on the teaching competencies possessed by student teachers, while controlling for variables such as cooperating school type (public, private), and location (city, countryside). Other teaching abilities include self-development, gender, topic knowledge, and others.

7. Limitations

There are some limitations to this study that may inspire further research in this area. The study is limited to students of the professional diploma in teaching who are enrolled in the practicum course in the College of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at Al Ain University for the academic year 2022/2023 for the first semester. The study was also limited to the teaching competencies necessary for the teacher, which were included in the study tool, which are: planning for teaching, teaching skills, personal qualities, classroom management, and evaluation.

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Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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All authors contributed to the research of the literature, collection of data, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data.

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