

Beliefs Acceptance Model (BAM): A Tokenistic Approach to Reconceptualising Knowledge in Teacher Education Programmes (TEPs)



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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that issues related to pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning can no longer be limited to research findings. There is an urgent need for such findings to inform curricular choices in teacher education programmes. The existence of these beliefs can no longer be ignored in the choices that shape the teacher education curricula. There is a need to acknowledge the important role they play in pre-service teachers' professional identities, and thus require integration into the formation of future teachers' being. Thus, the paper argues that persistence in ignoring pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning may continue to produce unreflective, unprepared graduates who lack confidence both in themselves and in the institutions that produce them. Hence, this theoretical paper proposes the beliefs acceptance model (BAM) which combines elements of the metacognitive and attribution theories as a framework for understanding why it is essential to foreground the beliefs of pre-service teachers in teacher education programmes. The primary aim of this paper is to examine how both theories, conceptualised as a model, can be used to engage with pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in teacher education programmes. This paper will not only contribute to knowledge in the teacher education programmes, but can also be useful for curriculum planners and other stakeholders in higher education institutions in general.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that it is theoretically obnoxious and practically execrated for academics and teacher educators to continually relegate matters relating to pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning to the background. The mistake academics often make lies in the attempt 'to think for them'. Often, tutors remind service teachers (overtly or covertly) that their pre-established beliefs about learning/teaching are baseless and unwelcome at post-school levels. Most of the time they turn a blind

eye to the overwhelming educational challenges pre-service teachers find themselves in, most of which could be mediated by taking seriously their pre-conceived beliefs about teaching and learning and building new knowledge from there. At the expense of bringing ‘their own world’ into the teaching and learning process, teacher educators are too concerned with either acculturating them to the new theories of learning/teaching, or in a rush to quickly cover the syllabus. In the process, there is total sabotaging of the factors that contribute to their strongly established beliefs about teaching or learning they have developed over time. The authors argue in this paper that, until these seemingly insignificant factors are given adequate attention, teacher education programmes may not be able to realise their fundamental objectives of graduating reflective and reflexive graduates. Teacher educators are unintentionally responsible for graduating teachers who lack self-confidence in the profession they have chosen. For Merisi, the most important first step in bringing about positive change in teaching and learning in teacher education programmes is an understanding of what constitutes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning, and how these beliefs can be integrated through their journey to become teachers.¹ Hence, the fundamental questions that the authors sought to respond to in this paper are: 1). How do teacher educators conceptualise knowledge in teacher education programmes; 2). What do pre-service teachers count as authentic knowledge in an actual classroom setting; and 3). How do teacher education programmes integrate valuable beliefs into teaching and learning?

LITERATURE REVIEW

On Recognising Pre-service Teachers’ Beliefs about Teaching and Learning in TEPS

Pre-service teachers’ beliefs are their comforting force (comfort zone) and their point of return when other forces (such as training and theories) are “washed out” or seem ineffective.² Samuel further describes it as:

...a residual force towards which individual teachers often retreat when other external forces begin to exert too forceful a control over their identity. The teacher ‘retreats’ into the safe world of their ‘background’, and their biography, both of which store cultural archetypes of being a teacher.³

Pre-service teachers (PSTs) beliefs are a powerful tool and they play essential roles in their future teaching practices. Hence, Clark-Goff suggests that both the researchers and teacher educators will have a better understanding of how important these beliefs are when they take their time to study and explore them.⁴ For better understanding, he further categorises these beliefs into five dimensions: *modelling, history-based lay theories and cultural myths, implicit, tenacity, and consequentiality.*

Modelling

In terms of modelling, some recent studies have found that pre-service teachers come into TEPs with well-developed beliefs about learning and teaching which are already in place.⁵ Arguably, these beliefs serve as models for future behaviour. According to Bandura, most behaviour is often learned through modelling.⁶ The implication is that students come into teacher education programmes with certain

¹ Peter O. Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar Learning*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2018.

² Michael Samuel, “Accountability to whom? For what? Teacher identity and the Force Field Model of teacher development.” *Perspectives in Education*, 26 (2),(2008): 3-16 ; Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar Learning*.

³ Samuel, “Accountability to whom? For what?” 12.

⁴ Kyla Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers’ Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*, (Doctoral dissertation), 2008. Retrieved from <https://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-2705/CLARK-GOFF-DISSERTATION.pdf?sequence=1>

⁵ Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar Learning* ; Peter O. Merisi and Ansurie Pillay, “Exploring Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Teaching and Learning Grammar: Implications for Teacher Education.” *Journal of Education*, 79, (2020): 31-46.

⁶ Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers’ Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*.

beliefs about teaching and learning that have served them as models over the years, and anything that contradicts these long-held beliefs may be interpreted as an aberration.

History-based Lay Theories

The second dimension of preservice teachers' nature of beliefs, according to Clark-Goff, is their personal *history-based lay theories and cultural myths*.⁷ These beliefs naturally emerge over time and are independent of instructions, but through enculturation and social construction.⁸

Implicitness

Clark-Goff further describes the nature of these beliefs as being *implicit* (the third dimension). This implicitness is what he describes as the "unspoken system of teacher thought."⁹ Hence, he argues that it is important to make these beliefs explicit in every teacher education programme. When these beliefs are made explicit, then they can be valuable for teacher educators to be effective in their teaching practices. In addition, this explicitness can also make teacher educators see the need to investigate their own implicit theories for the overall development of teacher education programmes.

Tenacity

The fourth dimension of pre-service teachers' beliefs is *tenacity*. Pre-service teachers' beliefs have been found to be highly tenacious and resistant to change.¹⁰ Pajares also adds that these beliefs typically endure, except if they are deliberately challenged.¹¹

Consequentiality

Lastly, Clark-Goff adds that the fifth dimension of the nature of preservice teachers' beliefs is *consequentiality*.¹² Scholars have argued that beliefs are the most reliable predictors of behaviours.¹³ In fact, beliefs are a predictor of action and thus, assessing the beliefs that the pre-service teachers bring to the teacher education programmes is important for both the teacher educators as well as the curriculum designers.

Owing to the important role that these beliefs play in pre-service teachers' readiness for future teaching practices, the researchers argue that these beliefs need some serious kind of engagement by the teacher educators and other players in TEPs. Consequently, the next section suggests a framework through which pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning can be engaged with and integrated into the TEPs.

Theoretical Framing

The two theories that underpinned the conceptualisation of the beliefs acceptance model are the metacognitive and attribution theories. Proposed by Flavell in 1979, the metacognitive theory concerns the individual's knowledge about his or her most basic mental states such as desires, perceptions, beliefs, knowledge, thoughts, intentions, and feelings, among others.¹⁴ The theory is grounded in two fundamental elements: knowledge of cognition (metacognitive knowledge and experience) and

⁷ Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*.

⁸ Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*; Merisi and Pillay, "Exploring Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning Grammar."

⁹ Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*, 6.

¹⁰ Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*, 35; M. Frank Pajares, "Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct." *Review of Educational Research*, 62 (3), (1992): 307-332.

¹¹ Pajares, "Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct."

¹² Clark-Goff, *Exploring Change in Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Learning and Teaching*, 35.

¹³ Merisi and Pillay, "Exploring Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning Grammar"; Albert Bandura, *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986).

¹⁴ John H. Flavell, "Theory-of-mind development: Retrospect and Prospect." *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 50 (3), (2004): 274-290.

regulation of cognition. Metacognitive knowledge is the “knowledge about one’s own cognitive strengths and limitations, including the factors (internal and external) that may interact to affect learning.”¹⁵ This knowledge encompasses one’s awareness of his or her personality (person knowledge- cognitive strength and weaknesses) nature of a given task (task knowledge- the difficulty or simplicity/clarity of a given task), and knowledge of useful strategies (strategy knowledge- various strategies for achieving cognitive goals). After Flavell’s and other definitions of metacognitive knowledge, other researchers have also developed frameworks to classify metacognitive knowledge. For instance, Brown and Schraw described metacognitive knowledge as declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge.¹⁶

The difference between these three types of knowledge can be explained in their application as “what” knowledge (*declarative*), “how” knowledge (*procedural*) and “why”, “where”, and “when” knowledge (*conditional*).¹⁷ Thus, this paper is particularly concerned about how this theory can be employed to understand these three facets of pre-service teachers’ knowledge of their subjects during their training. It is believed that this will not only help researchers but will as well help teacher educators in assessing and exploring the actual level of pre-service teachers’ attained knowledge while in training rather than working on certain assumptions about what they ought to have known prior to their arrivals in the TEPs. The argument in this paper is that it is imperative to understand, as teacher educators, what the pre-service teachers know about themselves, as well as their cognition. This knowing ought not to be defined by teacher educators. Instead, it is prudent for them to speak for themselves- what exactly do they know about the subjects they are being trained to teach in the future? The mistake that teacher educators often make is to generalise that all students must have acquired X in school and hence focus on Y, because X, in their view, is no longer of importance and there is no need to waste time teaching it. Thus, this paper maintains that the voice of the PSTs needs to be heard in relation to what they know.

Procedural knowledge is about the use of strategies and processes in learning or teaching. It is about the knowledge of how to apply procedures like teaching/learning strategies or actions to make use of declarative knowledge to achieve goals.¹⁸ Mahdavi describes it as the knowledge about knowing how to do things and procedures such as learning strategies. He adds that it is this knowledge that differentiates skilled learners/teachers from unskilled learners/teachers.¹⁹ Consequently, skilled PSTs can be said to have possessed “...more automatic, accurate, and effective procedural knowledge than unskilled...”²⁰ In application, the knowledge about different methods and strategies in English grammar or Physics learning and teaching of which pre-service teachers are aware can fall under procedural knowledge. However, Merisi’s doctoral study on pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning English grammar, for example, found that the PSTs of English have different beliefs about how grammar should be taught or learned.²¹ Hence, it becomes important for the teacher educators to find out about these varied beliefs about teaching a particular subject so that teacher educators do not continue to teach and encourage the strategies their students are not comfortable with.

¹⁵ Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar Learning*

¹⁶ A.L. Brown, Metacognition, executive control, self-regulation and other more mysterious mechanisms. In F. E. Weinert and R. H. Kluwe (Eds.). *Metacognition, Motivation, and Understanding*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1987), 65–116; Gregory Schraw, “Promoting General Metacognitive Awareness.” *Instructional Science*, 26 (1-2), (1998): 113-125.

¹⁷ Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar Learning*.

¹⁸ Judith Harris, Punya Mishra, Matthew Koehler, “Teachers’ technological pedagogical content knowledge and learning activity types: curriculum-based technology integration reframed.” *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 41 (4), (2009): 393-416. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2009.10782536>; Karen R. Harris, Tanya Santangelo, and Steve Graham, *Metacognition and Strategies instruction in Writing*. In H. S. Schneider and W. Waters (Eds.). *Metacognition, Strategy Use, and Instruction*, (London: The Guilford Press, 2010), 226-256.

¹⁹ Mohsen Mahdavi, “An Overview: Metacognition in Education.” *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research*, 2 (2014): 529-535.

²⁰ Mahdavi, “An Overview: Metacognition in Education.” 531.

²¹ Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar Learning*.

Moreover, it is also important to find out why they may not be comfortable with such strategies. Consequently, it is hoped that metacognitive theory can be employed in understanding the strategy conflicts that students may be struggling with as they receive their training. In applying this theory, educators could ask pre-service teachers specific questions. For example:

- *what strategies do you usually resort to in learning grammar (and other chosen subjects) when you were a learner and now that you are a PST?*
- *Are there any strategies you are much in love with and are there those you are not comfortable with?*
- *Are there strategies you have been taught that contradict or agree with the way you believe that your subject should be taught?*
- *How do you think your chosen subject should be taught by teachers or learned by learners both in schools and in TEPs?*

These questions will to a large extent encourage teacher educators and curriculum planners to identify the PSTs' beliefs about learning and teaching in their subjects and to quickly address areas of conflict in the various strategies these PSTs are presented with. The next level of knowledge to explore is their conditional knowledge.

Conditional knowledge, on the other hand, concerns itself with how, why and in what situations declarative and procedural knowledge may be used. Harris et al. define it as "knowing when, where, and why to use declarative knowledge as well as particular procedures or strategies (procedural knowledge) and is critical to effective use of strategies."²² McCormick argues that "the conditional knowledge of successful learners (PSTs) makes them very facile and flexible in their strategy use."²³ That is, the acquisition of conditional knowledge is what distinguishes a successful PST from an unsuccessful one in that the former can use this knowledge to identify and employ appropriate learning strategies for different tasks, the quality that the latter lacks. There is a need for teacher educators to find out if the PSTs are aware of the conditions in which the two other types of knowledge can be applied. For example, such a condition or situation may include the context in which learning is taking place, the classroom situation, the nature of the students, the type of assessments or instruction, and so on.

Metacognitive experience is any cognitive or affective experience that associates with a cognitive action.²⁴ That is, it encompasses an individual's conscious reflection of intellectual experiences of failure or success. An example could be in grammar learning and other cognitive enterprises, such as having a feeling of satisfaction or frustration during or after a given class.²⁵ It is important to note that Flavell argues that such experiences can take place at any time; before, during and after a cognitive enterprise. Pre-service teachers may have certain feelings about how their subjects should be learned or taught because of their prior or present learning experiences (metacognitive experience). The implication, therefore, is that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in their disciplines may not be attributed to their prior learning experiences alone, but also have to do with how they are being taught in their teacher education programmes.²⁶ Hence, it is hoped that this theory can be useful when engaging with the learning experiences of pre-service teachers, either during their school years or in the TEPs. Understanding this will to a large extent assist teacher educators and curriculum planners to give attention to these experiences in the planning and preparation of relevant and student-oriented curricula. These experiences can be negative or positive learning situations such as availability of learning resources, (un)qualified teachers, the general situation of the school and

²²Harris et. al, "Teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge and learning activity types, 133.

²³ Christine B. McCormick, *Metacognition and Learning*. In W. Reynolds, M. Weiner, GE Miller (Eds.). *Handbook of Psychology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2003), 80.

²⁴ John H. Flavell, "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A new area of Cognitive-Developmental Inquiry." *American Psychologist*, 34 (10), (1979): 906 -911.

²⁵ Flavell, "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A new area of Cognitive-Developmental Inquiry."

²⁶ Flavell, "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A new area of Cognitive-Developmental Inquiry."

present learning experiences in TEPs. The researchers maintain that the knowledge of the prior and present learning experiences and of the factors that surround such experiences may serve as a better tool to understand, explore and analyse current PSTs' beliefs about learning and teaching in their chosen disciplines.

It is worthy of note that the metacognitive theory has been conceptualised in this paper as being relevant for exploring and analysing pre-service teachers' cognition-that is, knowledge of themselves and their knowledge of their chosen disciplines. It was however found that the theory does not address the factors that may have contributed to the formation of PSTs' beliefs about themselves - whether they are prepared to teach subjects or not, as well as their beliefs about how the subjects ought to be taught. Hence, the relevance of the attribution theory to exploring and understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in their chosen disciplines cannot be ignored.

Attribution theory is the systematic study of the perception of causality. The theory places importance on people's explanations of their experiences and the attributions they make through their individual inferences (self-attribution) to understand and interpret the causes they believe are responsible for their behaviour, attitudes, and feelings.²⁷ For this paper, the attribution theory seeks to provide explanations for PSTs' already established beliefs about teaching and learning. While explaining the factors that affect people's belief systems, Heider argued that in "common-sense psychology, the result of an action depends on two sets of conditions; factors within the person (dispositional causes) and factors within the environment (situational causes)."²⁸

From this understanding of the factors affecting the belief system of pre-service teachers, these dispositional causes resonate with Samuel's 'biographical forces', which he described to be residual and relatively permanent.²⁹ Samuel for example, argues that these types of PSTs' beliefs or causes of beliefs are not easy to challenge or change.³⁰ The implication then is that if the way teaching and learning is being done both in primary school and high school has been found to lay the foundation for the formation of certain biographical forces of beliefs about future teaching or learning, then attention should be given to these factors.³¹ Situational causes on the other hand refer to situations outside an individual's control of his or her learning, and these may include the teaching methods employed by the subject teachers, learning environments, and availability of learning materials, among others. The argument, therefore, is that both situational and dispositional causes or factors are powerful determinants of success or failure in the teaching and learning process in TEPs. Thus, these factors need to be carefully considered and well monitored.

Although both theories have been found to be indispensable in the exploration of pre-service teachers' beliefs about how teaching and learning ought to be done in their chosen disciplines, the limitation is that they failed to make explicit how teacher educators, academic developers, curriculum planners and other stakeholders could integrate these beliefs into the TEP curriculum. This, therefore, necessitated the need for the Beliefs Acceptance Model developed by Merisi in 2018.

BELIEFS ACCEPTANCE MODEL FOR TEPs

The pre-service teachers' beliefs acceptance model emphasises the need for the teacher education programmes to take into cognisance the important role that the pre-service teachers' beliefs play in the formation of their professional being. Although this model was theorised from the metacognitive and attribution theories, it went beyond giving a mere explanation of what pre-service teachers' beliefs are and the causality for these beliefs. It brought to the fore the teacher education programme a systemic

²⁷ Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Grammar Learning: Zehra Gabillon*, "A Synopsis of L2 Teacher Belief Research." *Belgrade International Conference on Education* (2013). Available online: https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/file/index/docid/940593/filename/1._Z.Gabillon_A_Synopsis_of_L2_Teacher_Belief_Research_BICE_Conference.pdf.

²⁸ Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. (New York: Wiley, 1958), 82.

²⁹ Samuel, "Accountability to whom? For what?"

³⁰ Samuel, "Accountability to whom? For what?"

³¹ Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Grammar Learning*.

way of not only appreciating and accepting, but integrating these beliefs into the TEP curriculum and pedagogic practices, and provides the pragmatic steps for such integration should it be necessary. The key concepts of the model are thought knowledge, taught knowledge, acquired thought knowledge, nostalgic thought knowledge, acquaintance taught knowledge, didactic taught knowledge, pedagogic and content knowledge.

The thought Knowledge (ThK) relates to how the pre-service teachers conceptualise knowledge. This revolves around their expectation in terms of what they count or label as knowledge. This knowledge type (thought knowledge) is divided into two categories; Acquired Thought Knowledge (ATK), and the Nostalgic Thought Knowledge (NTK). The ATK refers to the knowledge that the PSTs believe that they have already acquired- that is the knowledge in their possession. This type of knowledge could be acquired either explicitly or implicitly. Those who have the feeling that they possess this type of knowledge have a sense of fulfilment in terms of their preparation and readiness for future teaching practices. The Nostalgic Thought Knowledge (NKT), on the other hand, relates to the knowledge type the PSTs deem as highly essential for their preparation for future teaching practices, but they are not in possession of it. They develop an understanding that one cannot become fully prepared for teaching mathematics, physics, or the English language without mastery of this kind of knowledge. It is important to note that this knowledge may not be the entire subject knowledge, but a chunk of knowledge. They may feel that certain topics or aspects of their disciplinary subjects ought to be given priority as it is the knowledge thereof that best profiles the quality of the training they have received. Hence, they have a feeling of frustration and un-fulfilment when they realise that this knowledge is missing in their training and formation into the teaching profession. Thus, they develop some nostalgic feelings whenever they remember that they are lacking in terms of what they count as knowledge which is not being taught or partially taught to them.

The concept of Taught Knowledge (TK) relates to the knowledge type which the TEPs prioritise. This is what teacher educators and TEPs regard as knowledge and thus, it is not only being given priority in the curriculum, but also in pedagogy. This knowledge type sub-divides itself into two; acquaintance-taught knowledge, and didactic-taught knowledge. The Acquaintance Taught Knowledge (ATK) revolves around teacher educators' beliefs about what knowledge the PSTs need to be immersed in and be acquainted with. This is the knowledge about the key concepts and theories that are essential to the field of study. For those studying to become teachers, key concepts in education may include a zone of proximal development, scaffolding, mediation, more knowledgeable others, and pedagogy, among others. This is the general knowledge that is being taught to students in order to acquaint them with the nuances of the field of education or teaching. The second layer of the taught knowledge is Didactic Taught Knowledge (DTK). This knowledge type concerns the beliefs about what disciplines or teacher educators count as specific knowledge for the successful training of their pre-service teachers. This knowledge is discipline-specific and sub-divides into two components: content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

The content knowledge is what the teacher educators deem fit to be taught to the pre-service teachers in their disciplines. The finding from Merisi's study, for example, revealed that the teacher educators did not focus on the teaching of the content knowledge of grammar, but rather focused on the pedagogic knowledge; the focus was on how grammar should be taught rather than knowledge of grammar content.³² Hence, the authors found that there is a mismatch between how these two entities (teacher educators and pre-service teachers) conceptualised grammar and its teaching. The PSTs conceptualised grammar teaching not to be limited to the teaching of mere methods of grammar, but the teaching of its content as well. Their belief was that there is a need for them to be taught grammar content knowledge explicitly to be well prepared as teachers of English grammar (an expert in grammar knowledge) rather than be trained as teachers of grammar methods without content knowledge of this aspect of their subject.

³² Merisi, *English Education Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Grammar Learning*.

The pedagogic knowledge on the other hand is conceptualised as the teacher educators' beliefs about how the PSTs need to be socialised into their specific disciplinary knowledge. The focus of this type of knowledge when being taught is on methods through which the content knowledge can be transmitted. The study revealed, for example, that grammar is being taught through the communicative approach, meaning the teacher educators and the curriculum prioritise it over the explicit grammar teaching approach. On the contrary, it was revealed that although the former is given priority over the latter, the PSTs felt that the best way to teach grammar, particularly to future teachers of grammar is through the explicit approach. This is another mismatch/ disagreement.

Stages of Intervention

Complaisance Stage

The very first stage in the intervention process for valuing the pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning is the complaisance stage. This is the stage of awareness of the existence of the pre-service teachers' beliefs. Teacher educators cannot continue to pretend as if pre-service teachers do not have any belief system they came with into the teacher education programme. At this stage, the teacher educators must realise that the pre-service teachers' beliefs play a significant role in the formation of their professional being. They must recognise the existence of these beliefs and must be ready to engage with their students about them.

Interrogation Stage

This stage requires the teacher educators to be prepared to interrogate not only the beliefs of their students but also their own beliefs. Why do we teach the way we do? Are our pedagogic practices a result of our beliefs? What are these beliefs? How do we believe that teaching and learning should be done? What and how do we legitimate knowledge in our disciplines and what factors influence such legitimation? Is there any link between our beliefs and those of our students? These questions are essentially and fundamentally necessary if educators are serious about engaging with their students' beliefs with the intention of improving teaching practices in teacher education programmes and in ensuring transparency in their teaching and learning processes. Thus, the very first step to take at this stage is to first interrogate their own beliefs and then proceed to engage with the beliefs of students. Such enterprise will not only enable them to explore their students' belief systems but also enable them to identify the differences between these beliefs and their own beliefs and why these differences exist.

Filtering Stage

At this stage, there is a need to come up with an open and transparent filter system that will enable educators to recognise and identify those beliefs that need to be enhanced, groomed, encouraged and sharpened and those that need to be rejected and discouraged. This is the most difficult but essential critical aspect of this process. Educators must ensure transparency at this stage. Having identified those beliefs that have hindered success in the teaching and learning process, they should at this stage be bold to address these factors. However, partnership with the academic developers, instructional designers, curriculum planners and other stakeholders is required. Educators also need to agree on a template that can be useful in addressing these beliefs. The template may be designed to focus on such aspects as students' beliefs about the pedagogic practices in their modules; their beliefs about the module contents; their beliefs about the method modules as well as their major modules; their beliefs about their preparedness to teach upon graduation and so on. This template should also focus on such aspects when filtering teacher educators' beliefs, but most especially it is important to focus on why they teach the way they do; why the curriculum is planned the way it is; etc.

Integration Stage

The filter template should then be used to compare and contrast these beliefs- where do they differ and where do they resonate? This then has to be discussed at a round table comprising the academic

developers, teacher educators, curriculum planners and instructional designers. Each discipline will then use these findings for curriculum review and renewal when and if necessary.

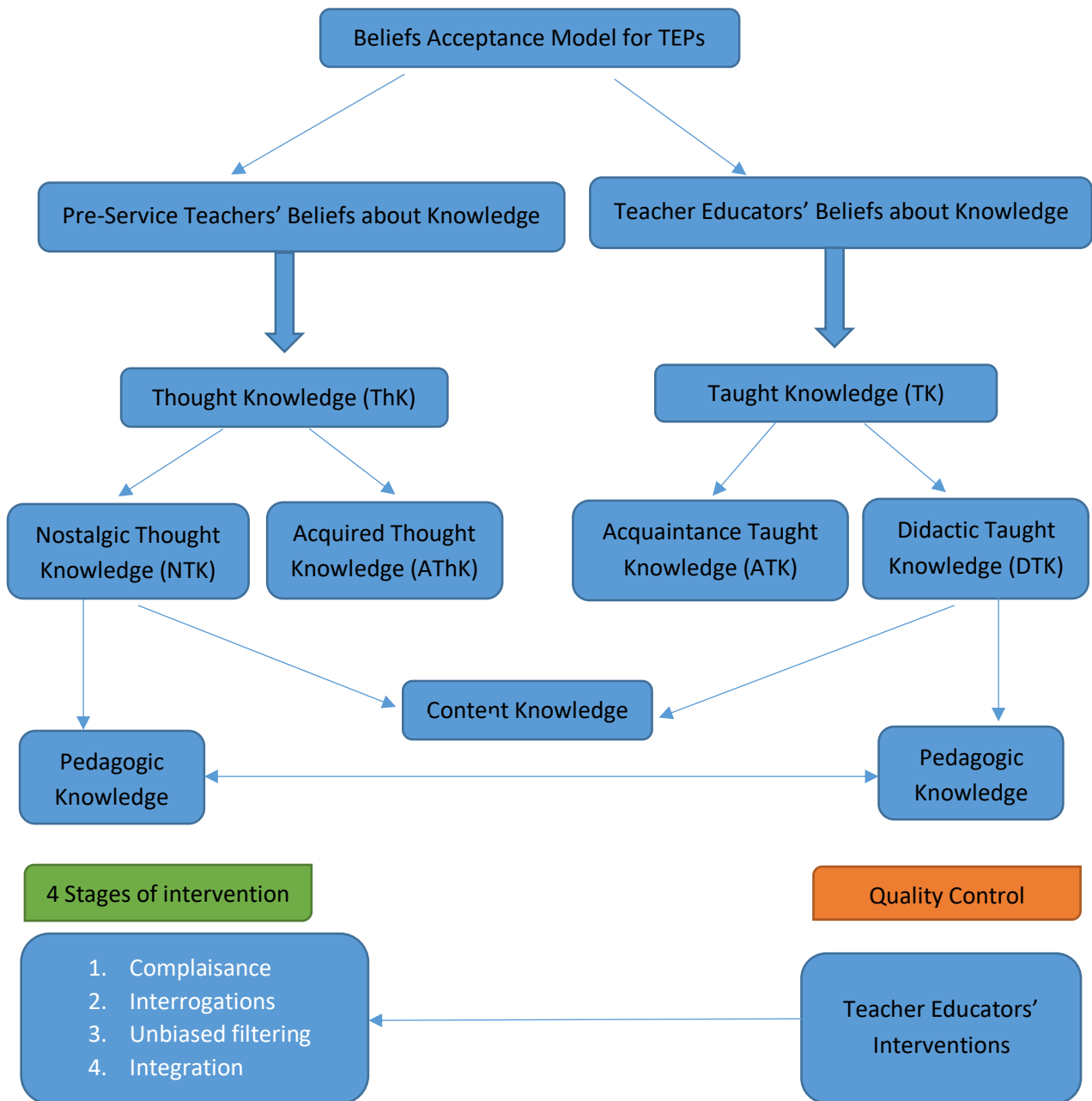


Figure 1.0: Beliefs Acceptance Model for TEPs

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has argued for the need to explore PSTs’ beliefs about teaching and learning, particularly in the TEPs, and has discussed reasons why the concept of beliefs may not be undermined both in TEP curriculum and teacher educators’ pedagogic practices. Furthermore, the paper has also highlighted the importance of the two theoretical frameworks underpinning the conceptualisation of the beliefs acceptance model. It emphasised the need for the use of metacognitive theory in exploring PSTs’ beliefs about learning and teaching in that it caters for the analytical understanding of the PST’s beliefs about themselves as teachers of their chosen subjects as well as their beliefs about their

cognition and experiences of learning and how they think teaching and learning should be done in the teacher education programmes.

The attribution theory on the other hand has been presented in this paper as an analytical tool for explaining the causes of attributions the PSTs may be given for the formation of their current beliefs about teaching and learning. The argument presented in this paper however is that both theories have failed to specifically highlight the process of belief intervention and how these beliefs could be positively manipulated to benefit not only the pre-service teachers but the teacher educators and other stakeholders in charge of curriculum and pedagogical planning and reviews. In summary, this paper has successfully introduced the beliefs acceptance model as a tokenistic approach to exploring and appreciating students' beliefs about teaching and learning (knowledge creation) and the model has presented the four pragmatic stages in which teacher education institutions could explore in valuing and integrating the long-undermined beliefs of their students.

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