



## A Comparative Analysis of Teacher Practice Programs in Teacher Education Curricula of Iran, Finland and Hong Kong

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 23 April 2025 Revised: 27 May 2025 Accepted: 05 December 2025 Online: 19 March 2026</p>	<p>This study conducts a comparative analysis of the teacher practice component within the teacher education curricula of Iran, Finland, and Hong Kong, employing the Bereday method. The research population comprises universities in these countries that offer teacher education programs. Teacher practice structures were systematically extracted and analyzed using tables and checklists to facilitate comparison. Findings indicate notable similarities among the three countries, particularly regarding the mandatory nature of teacher practices and the duration allocated for their completion. However, significant differences emerge in aspects such as the number of teacher practice units and the expectations for student performance across disciplines. In both Hong Kong and Finland, teacher practice programs are characterised by extensive collaboration between universities and schools, with a strong emphasis on the integration of technology and electronic content, which is comparatively less developed in Iran. Furthermore, Hong Kong's teacher practice framework provides student teachers with greater autonomy in undertaking creative and independent initiatives within schools, a feature less prominent in the Iranian context. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Iranian teacher education policymakers undertake a comprehensive review of existing teacher practice programs. This should include revisions to the duration and quality of teacher practices, a strengthened role for supervising mentors, and an increased integration of electronic content. Additionally, fostering stronger collaboration between universities and schools, encouraging active student participation in various school activities, and implementing robust oversight mechanisms are essential steps towards enhancing the overall effectiveness of teacher practice programs in Iran.</p>
<p><b>KEYWORDS</b></p> <p>Curricula Student Participation Teacher Practice Teacher Training</p>	

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## **1. Introduction**

Undoubtedly, the advancement of societies today is closely linked to the development of their human resources, which is significantly influenced by the quality of education and schooling. Schools, as the primary institutions of formal education following the family environment, play a crucial role in cultivating skilled and competent individuals, thereby contributing to the realization of an ideal society (Jabbari and Rahbar, 2016). As a fundamental agent in the socialization process, schools should be regarded as a cornerstone of national educational systems. The higher the level of students' trust in their school, the greater its influence on shaping their social attitudes and perspectives (Jahan Tigh & Abbasi, 2018). Aali (2003) asserted that there is a direct relationship between schools and society, with societal excellence being a reflection of the quality of education. The level of development within schools serves as a predictor of societal progress across cultural, political, and economic domains. Thus, after the family, the school represents the most significant environment in preparing individuals for life. While students acquire foundational behaviors within the family setting and develop aspects of their personality, these characteristics remain malleable and subject to change (Di Paolo & Walter Thomas, 2003). Upon entering the school community, students reassess their behaviors and habits, ultimately refining and solidifying their personal and social identities. Furthermore, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' educational experiences and personal development. According to Manafi Sharafabad and Zamani (2012), teachers are the most influential figures within the school environment, serving as key role models for students. Their strengths and weaknesses directly impact students and, by extension, society as a whole. Therefore, the quality of teaching and the role of educators must be prioritized to ensure positive educational outcomes and the holistic development of students.

Teacher behavior significantly influences students' conduct and temperament. While numerous individuals within educational systems contribute to student development both directly and indirectly, teachers hold a particularly prominent role. As individuals who engage in the highest levels of interpersonal interaction with students, teachers serve as visible and accessible role models for future generations of leaders (Khalidi, 2016; Mousavi et al., 2015). Students often regard teachers as exemplars of ethical behavior and moral integrity, striving to emulate their virtues and incorporate their qualities into their own character and conduct (Hosseini Dehshiri, 1991; Jones et al., 2013). According to Izadbakhsh (2013), the impact of educational goals, curricula, instructional materials, and teaching methods is ultimately mediated through the teacher. Therefore, any reforms or revisions within the education system must prioritize the teaching and learning process, with particular emphasis on the role of the teacher. Nian (2022) further asserts that the quality of

teachers plays a crucial role in societal development, exerting both positive and negative effects on communities. The effectiveness of teachers is largely contingent upon the education and training they receive. Thus, the more comprehensive and meticulous the teacher preparation process, the greater the overall quality of teachers and, consequently, their influence on society. Given this, teacher training programs serve as essential frameworks for the professional and pedagogical development of educators, playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of education (Valdi Alashti et al., 2021).

Teacher training is one of the most effective and essential methods for preparing future educators, as it involves the design, organization, and implementation of both theoretical and practical programs to equip individuals with the necessary skills for the teaching profession (Piske et al., 2017; Soleimani et al., 2021). According to Zheng, Guo, Tang, and Wu (2022), teachers must undergo systematic training to fulfill their professional responsibilities effectively. The preparation of teachers is primarily conducted through structured teacher training systems, which play a critical role in their professional development (Shamshiri, 2017; Kokinos, 2022). Teacher training programs integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience, equipping future educators with the skills necessary for effective knowledge transmission. This integration ensures that teaching practices are refined through various instructional methods while also addressing and correcting potential misconceptions in the learning process (Farahani et al., 2010). Consequently, teacher training programs in different countries typically consist of both theoretical and practical components, with their integration serving as a fundamental objective of teacher education. Among the various components of teacher education, the teacher practice period is considered the most crucial practical element, as it represents the application of theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings. The teacher practice experience serves as a bridge between theoretical learning and professional practice, exerting a significant impact on the quality of teaching after graduation (Kigonda & Naimoli, 2009). Furthermore, the teacher practice phase consolidates pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills, allowing pre-service teachers to develop a deeper understanding of educational principles and methodologies. Therefore, it can be asserted that the teacher practice is the most critical component of teacher training, with far-reaching implications for the professional competence of future educators (Habibzadeh, 2014; Zhao & Zhang, 2017; Dosti et al., 2018).

Several researchers, including Mehrmohammadi (2014), Mohammadian et al. (2015), Ghorbani and Mirshah Jafari (2016), Arab and Karimi (2018), and Arabzadeh et al. (2023), argue that despite efforts and research aimed at enhancing teacher practice programs in Iran's teacher training

system, significant challenges persist. Although initiatives were undertaken to improve teacher practice programs in 2015, various issues remain evident within Iranian teacher education. Therefore, a critical analysis of these challenges, along with the development of strategies to address both educational and practical deficiencies, is essential. According to Soleimani et al. (2011), comparative studies and the localization of their findings are highly effective in addressing educational challenges. Similarly, Pasalari, Azizi, and Gholami (2023) emphasize that comparative studies are among the most effective research methods in the behavioral sciences, as critical thinking and academic inquiry are inherently linked to comparative analysis. Furthermore, researchers suggest that by conducting comparative studies, innovative and progressive educational approaches from advanced countries can be adapted and applied to replace outdated methodologies and address existing educational challenges in Iran (Danesh Dehkordi and Tayyibi, 2002; Madandar Arani, 2016; Ilfianto and Fukuzawa, 2022). Thus, the application of comparative studies represents a valuable approach for resolving issues related to the implementation of teacher practice programs in Iranian teacher education. Zakeri (2017) highlights that for a comparative study to be effective, the selected country must hold a distinguished and superior position in the field under investigation, with sufficient documentation available to justify its suitability as a model. Similarly, Andresova and Chadi (2019) assert that the teacher education system of the country being compared must meet an internationally recognized standard of quality within the global academic community.

According to the TIMSS International Study Center, the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) rankings indicate that Iran occupies a highly unfavorable position, ranking 55th out of 64 participating countries (TIMSS Website, 2022). In contrast, Hong Kong achieved one of the highest rankings globally, second only to Singapore, with its students demonstrating superior academic performance compared to their international counterparts. Aali (2003) and Khalidi (2016) argue that well-trained teachers play a crucial role in student success. Additionally, Finland is widely recognized as a global leader in teacher education, particularly in terms of the quality and effectiveness of its teacher training programs (Hansen et al., 2023). Iranian researchers acknowledge that a significant factor contributing to the country's poor performance in TIMSS is the quality of teacher education and professional training (Kesiani and Zarei, 2019). Wong (2018) similarly attributes Hong Kong's exceptional academic outcomes to the high quality of its teachers, who undergo rigorous theoretical and practical training as part of their teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, Haar (2015) and Wong and Labinowski (2020) assert that the success of Hong Kong's schools is largely due to the effectiveness of its teacher practice programs,

which provide prospective teachers with extensive practical experience. Doyle and Pitzner (2023) emphasize that Finland's teacher training model exemplifies the successful integration of theoretical instruction and practical application, particularly during teacher practice periods. Given the strong emphasis on teacher training in both Hong Kong and Finland, examining the structure and quality of teacher practice programs in these two countries presents a valuable opportunity for comparative analysis with Iran's teacher education system. By conducting such a comparative study, insights can be gained to address challenges and misconceptions surrounding teacher practices in Iran. Mollainejad (2012) highlights that despite similarities in teacher education structures across Iran, Finland, and Hong Kong, the latter two countries achieve significantly higher outcomes in international academic competitions. Comparative studies on teacher training and teacher practice programs have been conducted between Iran and countries such as Singapore and Australia (Hejazi and Bakhtiari, 2020), Japan (Rabiei et al., 2019; Kamali et al., 2022), and Turkey (Saffar Heydari and Saffar Heydari, 2019). However, aside from Singapore, these countries rank lower than Hong Kong in international assessments such as TIMSS and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and fall behind Finland in overall education quality. Therefore, further comparative research focusing on the teacher practice programs of Hong Kong and Finland could provide valuable recommendations for improving teacher training in Iran.

Bereday (1969), along with Ghorbani (2009), Aghazadeh (2000), Mirchi and Salimi (2010), Sharafi et al. (2019), and Bagherianfar et al. (2019), emphasize the effectiveness of George Bereday's comparative study method over other approaches to comparative research. Bereday's method is structured around four key stages: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison (Bereday, 1969). This methodological framework serves as a valuable tool for analyzing and enhancing the Iranian *Karvarzi* (teacher practice) program. The present study employs Bereday's comparative model to conduct a descriptive-comparative analysis of the teacher practice curriculum within teacher training programs in Iran and Hong Kong. Through the application of this method, the study examines the structure and implementation of teacher practice courses in both countries, offering insights and recommendations for improving Iran's teacher education system.

## 2. Research Method

The present study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of teacher education teacher practice curricula in Finland, Hong Kong, and Iran. According to Zandi and Farahani (2008), one of the primary functions of comparative studies is to examine the curricula of different countries

through scientific exchange and the localization of findings. This approach enables curriculum modification, improvement, or the development of new curricula based on international best practices. In this regard, comparative studies serve as a rational method for utilizing the experiences of other nations. To achieve this objective, the study employs a comparative research methodology based on Bereday's approach, which consists of four stages: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison (Bagharianfar et al., 2019). A fundamental requirement for conducting a comparative study is the presence of at least some similarities between the countries under investigation. In this context, Iran and Hong Kong are both located within Asia—Iran in West Asia and Hong Kong in East Asia—while Finland, situated in Europe, is internationally recognized for its excellence in education, particularly in teacher training. Thus, Finland serves as an appropriate benchmark for this comparative study. From a socio-economic perspective, all three countries are considered to be on the path of development (Shirzadi, 2013). Additionally, Hong Kong and Iran share a centrally managed higher education system, meaning that teacher training programs and university curricula are standardized nationwide. In contrast, higher education institutions in Finland operate with a degree of autonomy in curriculum design while still adhering to overarching centralized regulations applicable to all universities (Mehrmohammadi, 2014; Haar, 2015).

The research community in this study comprises primary documents, including the National Curriculum for Teacher practice in Teacher Education in Iran, Finland, and Hong Kong. These documents outline the teacher practice programs offered by universities in each of these countries as part of their teacher education courses. The study relies on these primary documents and references as essential sources for comparing the teacher practice programs in Iran, Finland, and Hong Kong, utilizing the documentary method for analysis. Specifically, the study examines the new syllabus of the Iranian teacher education curriculum, approved by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology in 2015, for implementation at Farhangian University. Additionally, the syllabus for the undergraduate and graduate teacher practice courses for teacher education students in Hong Kong, implemented at the Faculty of Education of the University of Hong Kong in 2022, is analyzed. In Finland, the curriculum of the Faculty of Education at the University of Helsinki is considered, as it closely aligns with the programs of other Finnish universities. In Iran, Farhangian University's teacher practice curriculum was selected as it is the primary institution for teacher training (Mehrmohammadi, 2014). For Hong Kong and Finland, the teacher practice programs at the University of Hong Kong and the University of Helsinki were chosen, as these

programs are representative of the teacher training teacher practices offered at other institutions in these countries (Baiotista et al., 2022).

For the purpose of comparison and comparative study, George Bereday's method is employed, which consists of four stages: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison.

### **3. Findings**

The first and second stages of George Bereday's comparative method are description and interpretation. In this approach, the two communities under study are initially described with respect to specific topics, followed by an interpretation of the information. In this study, the teacher practice programs within the teacher education curricula of Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland are first described. Subsequently, an interpretation of these conditions is provided, as presented in this section.

#### *A) Description*

The Iranian teacher practice program in teacher education is offered exclusively within the undergraduate curriculum and is structured as a series of four courses across the final four semesters of the program. This program, central to the activities at Farhangian University, is designed to train thoughtful, effective, capable, and progressive teachers. It is organized into four stages: teacher assistance, participation in teaching, experimental teaching, and independent teaching (Rafiei et al., 2017). According to the 2010 undergraduate curriculum at Farhangian University, the teacher practice program emphasizes reflective observation, narrative expression, and the use of narrative research tools, such as action research and lesson study. These methods are integral to the reflective teacher training approach, providing a foundation for developing reflective teaching skills, including observation, teamwork, communication, judgment, and decision-making for student teachers.

According to the curriculum chapters for the secretarial and teaching majors (Farhangian University Headings, 2019), the teacher practice course at the undergraduate level of teacher education at Farhangian University follows a common framework across various majors and is offered during the final four semesters of study. Out of the 150 total credits required for the degree, 8 credits are allocated to the teacher practice, which is distributed over the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth semesters. Each semester's teacher practice is a prerequisite for the subsequent one (Mehrmohammadi, 2014). The teacher practice program in Iran is structurally and content-wise uniform across all majors, meaning that student teachers in elementary education, counseling,

physical education, and various secondary education fields follow similar teacher practice structures. In the final four semesters, students from all majors attend school one day per week, amounting to a total of 58 days throughout the academic year. Specifically, students attend school for 17 days in both the fifth and seventh semesters, and for 12 days in the sixth and eighth semesters (Ahmadi et al., 2019).

In Teacher practice 1, the student acquires skills in reflective observation and problem-solving techniques, which are applied to analyze educational and training situations at the school and classroom levels. The student then presents their perceptions through narratives, diaries, and personal experiences. These narratives, drawn from various situations, are analyzed, and the identified issues are documented and reported using scientific evidence. In Teacher practice 2, the student identifies and recognizes problems or individual needs, both for small and large groups. The student then designs, implements, and evaluates activities aimed at addressing these issues or learning needs. Participation in teaching and solving the identified problems are among the key objectives of this teacher practice.

In Teacher practice 3, the student identifies key concepts and skills by analyzing the curriculum content and textbooks. The student designs, implements, and evaluates a learning plan, assessing its impact on students' ability to transfer learned knowledge to new situations. The student then reports the outcomes of this process—design, implementation, evaluation, review, and reflection—by relying on practical rationality, presented in the form of individual action research. This teacher practice is essentially an experimental teaching experience combined with action research (Ahmadi et al., 2019). In Teacher practice 4, the student continues to analyze the curriculum content and textbooks, designing, implementing, and evaluating a learning unit aimed at acquiring the competencies outlined in the curriculum. This process is carried out with the collaboration of school-level teachers and is focused on improving student performance. Independent teaching, combined with case study analysis, is a key feature of this stage. The student records and analyzes their experiences throughout the research process, ultimately reporting the findings of their professional performance at the school level (Teacher practice course heading, undergraduate curriculum, Farhangian University, 2015).

Teacher education in Hong Kong spans five years. According to the Teacher Education Curriculum of the University of Hong Kong, a total of 167 credits are offered in Hong Kong's teacher education programs, with 11 credits allocated specifically to teacher practice courses (University of Hong Kong, 2022). The teacher practice in Hong Kong's teacher education program at the undergraduate level is conducted over a maximum of four semesters, with variations depending on

the specific discipline. This teacher practice serves as a reflective and flexible period, facilitating an exchange between theory and practice. It is important to note that technology plays a significant role in the structure and implementation of the teacher practice (University of Hong Kong, 2021). Additionally, teacher practices are offered at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of teacher education in Hong Kong, across various teaching disciplines, and these are compared in this study at both educational levels (Wong and Wong, 2003).

According to the approved syllabus for teacher practices in teacher education at the University of Hong Kong in 2022, teacher practices are offered during the fourth and fifth years of undergraduate studies in disciplines such as English, Chinese, and various sciences, including mathematics and physics. In the humanities, teacher practices are provided in the third, fourth, and fifth years. Specifically, for English and Chinese, an teacher practice package is offered in primary schools during the fourth year, followed by an teacher practice package for secondary schools in the fifth year. In various science disciplines, teacher practices are conducted in secondary schools each year. For humanities students, third-year students complete two one-month teacher practice programs along with a school-based extension program. In the fourth and fifth years, students undertake one teacher practice package each semester in schools.

To bridge the gap between university-acquired knowledge and real-world school experience, Master of Education students are required to complete a core teaching practice period, which consists of two stages: the School Attachment Scheme and Professional Practice. The first stage, the School Attachment Scheme, serves as an introductory phase for the main teaching practice. This stage typically occurs in the second semester, usually between January and February, during which students visit schools at least one day per week to observe classrooms and other teaching support activities. The primary objective of this scheme is to familiarize students with the daily teaching practices in Hong Kong international schools. The specific format and duration of the scheme may vary depending on the needs and convenience of each participating school. The second stage, Professional Practice, is the core component of the teaching practice. This stage spans six to seven weeks, typically from February to April. During this period, student teachers are expected to undertake approximately six hours of independent or semi-independent teaching per week. The primary aim of this stage is to provide students with hands-on teaching experience in Hong Kong international schools. The duration and format of each lesson may vary across schools. Additionally, students are expected to engage in typical activities of the school's full-time staff, including teamwork, student counseling, and staff meetings (University of Hong Kong, 2022).

In the humanities program, the teacher practice begins during the first and second semesters of the third year with an introduction to the teaching profession. During this phase, students are guided and supported by a professional mentor for approximately one month, with the aim of helping them understand the roles and expectations of teachers and build their professional identity and mission. This period also facilitates the transition from student to teacher. The duration of this one-month teacher practice is determined by the faculty professor and supervising teacher, typically spanning four weeks, with five days of participation each week. During this time, students observe the classroom alongside the supervising teacher, assist with administrative and educational tasks, and engage in various school activities. They also participate in lectures, camps, and conferences under the supervision of the mentor, serving as assistant teachers.

In the first semester of the third year, the student primarily becomes acquainted with the administrative and educational responsibilities within the university and the organizational structure of the schools. During this time, the student observes the activities of the guidance teacher and participates in general school and classroom functions, assisting the guidance teacher as needed. In the second semester of the third year, the student becomes more involved in specialized teaching within the classroom. While the student continues to serve in an auxiliary role and is not yet responsible for independent teaching, they gain practical experience by teaching under the supervision of the guidance teacher. Additionally, the faculty professor attends two classroom sessions, providing necessary feedback and reports to both the student and the university. The professor also consults with the guidance teacher to address areas where the student may need to strengthen or improve their teaching practices.

In the second semester of the fourth year, the first teacher practice, referred to as Teacher practice Package 1, is implemented in schools over an 8-week period. This teacher practice is complemented by an experiential learning course and a professional training package, which includes small group training designed to support and encourage students' active participation in field experiences. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, students receive both group and individual guidance throughout this process. As part of their professional development, students are required to produce an electronic portfolio, which serves as a collection of evidence of their learning and supports reflection and growth. Additionally, students participate in various activities, such as scientific round tables, Teacher's Day, Parents' Day, and Mentors' Day, further enriching their practical experience (University of Hong Kong, 2022).

In the first semester of the fifth year, the second teacher practice, referred to as Teacher practice Package 2, is implemented in schools over an 8-week period. This teacher practice is

accompanied by a professional learning package that includes small group training and individual guidance, aimed at deepening students' understanding of the teaching profession. It emphasizes the teacher's role as a caring nurturer, an inspiring builder, and a committed role model for students. Throughout the semester, students continue to develop their electronic portfolios, reflecting more deeply on their experiences and documenting their professional growth. During this semester, students observe the teaching practices of another teacher in different subject areas under the supervision of their mentor teacher, with opportunities for collaboration in certain cases. It is important to note that the teacher practice activities are conducted in local schools, which may vary in the medium of instruction depending on the school's policy. Students must demonstrate proficiency in Cantonese, English, and Putonghua (for teaching Chinese in some schools) to undertake the teacher practice. To graduate from the Bachelor of Teacher Education program, students are required to complete the teacher practice based on satisfactory school experience and supervision by the Hong Kong Department of Education (University of Hong Kong, 2022). At the conclusion of the semester, students are also required to submit a final teacher practice report to the Faculty of Professional Development. The teacher practice program in the Hong Kong Teacher Education program is characterized by its diverse content in the humanities, while the teacher practice program for languages and sciences is more streamlined. For Chinese, English, and basic sciences, students complete two teacher practice packages over two semesters. These teacher practices maintain a quality comparable to those in the humanities, with students expected to complete these courses at the university.

Fieldwork is a crucial component of the Hong Kong teacher practice program (Yun et al., 2018), consisting of two main components: School Experience (SE) and Supervised Teaching Practice (STP). School Experience typically lasts 3–4 weeks and is designed to familiarize student teachers with the teaching environment and the role of educators in schools. During this period, students engage in observation, reflection, participation in school activities, and classroom teaching. Supervised Teaching Practice spans two semesters across two academic years (Wong and Wong, 2003). Depending on the assessment of the supervising teacher and faculty member, the duration of STP in the final years of the undergraduate program typically ranges from 6 to 8 weeks. This stage allows student teachers to integrate educational theories and teaching methodologies with real-world practice. To facilitate the exchange of educational ideas and provide support, the host school assigns a mentor to guide student teachers throughout their fieldwork. During both SE and STP, students are visited by supervisors from the Department of Education Studies to ensure their progress and offer feedback. Detailed requirements for SE and STP, along with assessment

guidelines, are provided to students in separate handbooks prior to the commencement of the teacher practice (University of Hong Kong, 2022). It is important to note that teacher practices for language, mathematics, and science disciplines such as physics and chemistry are conducted over two semesters, typically in the fourth and fifth years of the program.

Since 2005, teacher education in Finnish universities has followed a 2+3 model. However, this structure differs for students training to become primary school teachers compared to those preparing for subject-specific teaching roles in areas such as mathematics, science, and physical education. Prior to 2018, student teachers participated in three teacher practices: basic, intermediate, and advanced. From 2018 onwards, these teacher practices have been consolidated into two longer-duration teacher practices. For primary school teacher training, the program consists of 300 European Standard Credits (ECTS), with each credit representing approximately 27 hours of teaching. According to Finnish law, a student teacher aspiring to teach in primary schools must complete around 300 credits and graduate with a Master's degree. The specific composition of these 300 credits may vary slightly between universities in Finland. At the University of Helsinki, for instance, these 300 credits include 140 credits of specialized courses in educational sciences, 60 credits of courses related to subject teaching, 25 credits in communication and computer studies, and 75 credits of optional studies in a specific area or sub-topic (Tang et al., 2017). Teacher practices are classified as part of the specialized courses in educational sciences. Within the 140 credits of specialized courses, 20 credits are allocated to teacher practices, 15 credits to cultural studies, 15 credits to psychology, 20 credits to educational or training courses, and 70 credits to methodology courses (Mikkilä Erdmann, Warinowski, & Iskalä, 2019).

The curriculum for subject teacher programs, particularly the teacher practice component, is largely consistent across Finnish universities. Subject teacher candidates are required to complete 60 credits in their specific field of study, including teacher practice credits, in addition to their specialized courses. The program generally comprises 40 credits, which include approximately 13 teaching and learning subjects and 20 teacher practice credits (University of Helsinki, 2024). Subject teachers typically begin their studies by applying for teaching positions early on and start accumulating teaching-related credits from the beginning of their academic journey (Mikkilä Erdmann, Warinowski, & Iskalä, 2019). Similar to primary education student teachers, subject teacher students are required to complete two teacher practices: an introductory teacher practice and an advanced teacher practice. The structure of the curricula for student teachers across various disciplines is largely uniform. However, a notable distinction is that primary education student teachers complete their first teacher practice during the third year of study, with the second

teacher practice taking place at the Master's level. In contrast, subject teacher students typically complete their advanced teacher practice in the fourth year of their program.

In Finland, two teacher practice courses are offered within the teacher education program: the introductory teacher practice and the advanced teacher practice. These teacher practices span two semesters, typically during the third and fourth years of study. The introductory teacher practice is worth 10 credits and lasts between 6 to 7 weeks. It is an interdisciplinary unit that covers a broad range of subjects. The advanced teacher practice, also worth 10 credits and lasting 6 to 7 weeks, focuses primarily on the main subject area, with an emphasis on examining topics related to the overall role of the teacher in that specific subject.

### *B) Interpretation*

At this stage, the components of the teacher practice curricula in Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland have been interpreted. In Iran, teacher practices are designed with perspectives drawn from narrative research, action research, lesson study, and content analysis. Narrative research, as a qualitative research method, aims to describe an individual's life and experiences, which are collected in anecdotal form and reported narratively (Khanifer and Moslemmi, 2018). Action research, another qualitative research method, is employed to develop and expand new skills or approaches, and to solve problems through the direct application of methods and skills in educational settings or real-world professional environments (Delavar, 2018). Lesson study, utilized as a method within teacher practices, is a professional development process in which teachers systematically examine teaching and learning methods. The primary goal of lesson study is to enhance the effectiveness of the educational experiences provided to students (Kuramoto and Shi, 2012).

The teacher practice process in Iran is a general framework that is not thoroughly detailed in the curriculum. The quality of the relationship between the student and the supervising teacher is not explicitly addressed across the four semesters, and the extent to which the student can work independently remains unclear. The student's autonomy in decision-making regarding the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the teacher practice is limited, as they must strictly adhere to the prescribed framework and submit reports to their supervisor. Maleki (2018) and Ahmadi et al. (2019) highlight the lack of clarity in the goals set for the teacher practice program at Farhangian University, noting that the stakeholders (supervisors, students, and supervising teachers) have often been confused about the program's objectives. Consequently, there is ambiguity regarding the specific developmental outcomes and areas of improvement the

program aims to foster in students. In the Iranian teacher education teacher practice at Farhangian University, three levels of reflection are emphasized: technical reflection, practical reflection, and developmental reflection (Ahmadi et al., 2019).

Technical reflection occurs early in the teacher practice, where the student relies on prior experiences and knowledge when confronted with new situations. At this stage, the student tends to apply previously learned techniques and seeks immediate solutions to challenges. In practical reflection, the student gradually develops personal practical knowledge through unique experiences and reflective processes. Rather than seeking immediate answers, the student begins to recognize and analyze the complexities within the classroom, engaging in more extended cycles of reflection, such as action research, to enhance their teaching practice. In transformational reflection, the student critically evaluates the ethical implications of their decisions and actions. At this level, the student's practices and decisions become deeply rooted in ethical considerations (Ahmadi et al., 2019).

In the Hong Kong pre-service teacher education program, teacher practices play a crucial role in allowing student teachers to apply their learning in real-world settings. Throughout this process, student teachers have the opportunity to design learning tasks, either by adopting assignments from the textbook or by taking the initiative to explore the subject matter further. A key focus of the teacher practice program in Hong Kong is self-examination and reflection on pedagogical possibilities to improve learning outcomes. In general, educators and researchers in Hong Kong agree that reflection is an essential component of teacher development. Reflection involves a critical examination of classroom dynamics, enabling student teachers to interpret underlying assumptions and question accepted practices. This process allows them to evaluate their teaching in context, aiding in the selection of appropriate teaching strategies to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Calderhead and Gates, 1993; Loughran, 2002; Ward and McCotter, 2004).

In Hong Kong, the primary goal of the teacher education teacher practice is to help future educators develop a reflective practice through careful planning, implementation, and evaluation of lessons. This process allows student teachers to gradually cultivate an awareness of how to build their professional knowledge through reflective teaching. As a result, there is greater freedom during teacher practices, with students encouraged to develop their own ideas and strategies to bridge the gap between theory and practice. However, Floredo (1999) notes that the earlier version of the Hong Kong teacher practice program emphasized strict adherence to textbooks and pre-designed instructional plans. In contrast, the current program offers students more autonomy, with the added benefit of incorporating technology into their teaching practice. An important feature of

the teacher practice in Hong Kong is the presence of students from diverse disciplines, particularly in humanities, English, and Chinese, within both primary and secondary schools. This exposure prepares students for more specialized teaching roles at both educational levels, where they engage in and analyze the challenges and complexities of real-world teaching experiences.

In Hong Kong, the teacher practice program is structured in a way that some semesters do not include an teacher practice unit, allowing students time to address the challenges and shortcomings they faced during their previous teacher practices. This gap semester provides students the opportunity to complete any outstanding prerequisites and better prepare for the subsequent teacher practice. While some majors do not offer a final teacher practice semester, this period should be considered as an opportunity to address any deficiencies and ensure students are fully prepared to enter the teaching profession. The emphasis on technology within the Hong Kong teacher practice program reflects the importance of integrating modern science and resources into education and teaching practices. After the third year, students have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss challenges and misunderstandings with their professors, returning to school for further teacher practice experiences in the following semester. In the Master of Education program, both stages of the teacher practice are closely supervised by school instructors, teachers, and university practical training officials. Throughout their practicum, students are required to compile a self-directed portfolio that documents the data and experiences encountered during their time in schools. This portfolio includes a journal, lesson plans, teaching materials developed by the participants, critical evaluations of the lessons taught, and feedback from their supervisors. Additionally, participants are expected to undertake a research project focused on international teaching practices.

In Hong Kong, where most students in various subjects attend school full-time for an entire semester (i.e., five days a week), reflective practice has been widely embraced as a crucial method for the professional development of student teachers (Maok, 2010). Numerous studies have highlighted the significance of reflective practice for both novice and experienced teachers during their teaching practice, employing different frameworks to support various research objectives. For instance, Chipin et al. (2008) conducted an empirical study of pre-service teachers and argued that a self-directed reflective approach helps pre-service teachers navigate complex issues during their practice. The concept of reflection is not new, and many scholars refer to John Dewey's ideas as foundational to the practice of reflection in education (Stanley, 1998; Ward and McCotter, 2004). In Hong Kong, reflection in teacher education and practice is not merely a sequence of ideas, but rather a process with a structured, sequential order where each reflective step builds upon the

preceding one to produce a coherent outcome. Successive stages of reflective thinking develop from and reinforce one another, rather than occurring in a disorganized manner. Mauk (2010) suggests that this process in Hong Kong's practice involves reflection, thinking, and evaluation based on one's knowledge, perceptions, and experiences accumulated during student practice. Reflection is deeply connected to practice, as teachers and other professionals interpret and respond to their situations in ways that cannot be reduced to rigid rules or fully encapsulated by educational theory (Ward and McCotter, 2004).

In Finnish universities, students participating in teacher practices are guided to develop the characteristics that are essential for a Finnish teacher. Therefore, it is critical that the teacher practice approach aligns with these goals. While the content of the teacher practice is generally consistent across programs, the implementation of teacher practices varies depending on the approach taken. One model involves mentors providing a role model for students to imitate, making the presence of exemplary teachers and mentors crucial for the success of this approach. The second model emphasizes guiding students through the observation, interpretation, and analysis of classroom activities, thereby fostering the development of their personal professional wisdom. In this model, students require a variety of experiences to cultivate their reflective capabilities (Porsianen et al., 2019). Mentor teachers play a significant role in enhancing the reflective skills of student teachers. If the primary objective of teacher education is to prepare teachers to function effectively in specific classroom contexts and current educational environments, the teacher practice approach will adopt a skills-based, apprenticeship model, which aligns with the first approach. In this framework, a good teacher is one who demonstrates proficiency in applying technical skills. However, if the aim of teacher education is to prepare thoughtful teachers capable of operating in diverse contexts and addressing future challenges, the teacher practice approach will emphasize reflection, providing opportunities for student teachers to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. The teacher practice model in Finnish universities is more closely aligned with the latter approach, where a good teacher is one who independently makes decisions based on thoughtful, high-level reflection. This approach cultivates a sense of autonomy, which is one of the distinctive features of Finnish teachers. This independence is largely nurtured through teacher education courses, particularly during the teacher practice phase.

In their meta-study of the Finnish approach to teacher practices, Annala, Linden, and Mäkinen (2016) emphasized the importance of student agency in relation to the teacher practice curriculum. Within the five-year Finnish teacher education program, most students engage in multiple teaching teacher practices and work with various mentors. According to recent graduates of Finnish teacher

education programs, teacher practices were considered a crucial component of their education and had a more significant impact on their professional preparation than other aspects of their academic training (Kanderman et al., 2013). Students in Finland perceive teacher practices as a period during which their professional skills are developed rapidly and intensively; however, for some, it is also a stressful experience. Furthermore, teacher practices in Finland serve as a means of integrating learning, providing a space where theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experience are synthesized (Leadbeater, 2021).

In Finnish teacher practices, students receive dual instruction and guidance: one from an experienced mentor teacher at the school and another from a university lecturer serving as a supervisor. The mentor observes the student's lessons, engages in reflective discussions, and provides feedback. Typically, the mentor visits the school hosting the teacher practice, observes several lessons, and conducts a teaching session with the student. Students benefit from adequate support, positive feedback, and strong cooperation with their mentors. Effective mentoring and supervision are characterized by creating opportunities for the development of teaching methods, flexibility in adapting to diverse learning styles, fostering a high level of student autonomy, and cultivating a positive relationship between the mentor and the student (Fritt, 2020). The role of the supervisor in Finland includes continuous feedback and discussion throughout the teaching practice period. Moreover, the Finnish teacher practice program underscores that teaching practice encompasses more than just classroom instruction; students are also expected to perform administrative tasks, contribute to student welfare teams, and collaborate with colleagues. Notably, the Finnish approach to teaching practice no longer involves grading, allowing students to experiment with various methods and approaches without the pressure of evaluation. Instead, the practice is assessed using a pass/fail scale.

### *C) Juxtaposition*

In this section, the relationship between the two stages of proximity and comparison, as outlined in the Bereday method (Bagherianfard et al., 2019), is explored. The proximity of the characteristics and features of teacher practices across Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland is examined and compared in relation to the teacher training programs of each country, as implemented across different academic semesters. This analysis aims to highlight both the similarities and differences in how teacher practice programs are structured and executed within these diverse educational contexts.

The juxtaposition is conducted to facilitate the subsequent stage, which involves comparing the similarities and differences of the educational phenomenon under investigation (Bereday, 1969). During the juxtaposition stage, the information gathered from the teacher practices in Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland—previously examined in the descriptive and interpretive phases—are categorized and organized to establish a coherent framework. In Iran, the teacher practice within the four-year teacher training program spans four semesters: the first and second semesters of the third year, as well as the first and second semesters of the fourth year (Mehrmohammadi, 2014; Almasi et al., 2017). In Hong Kong, the formal academic teacher training course for a bachelor's degree spans five years, with teacher practices offered across the third, fourth, and fifth years, while the master's degree course lasts one year, with teacher practices occurring in the second semester (University Curriculum for Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, 2021). In Finland, teacher practices are conducted in two semesters: the third and fourth years for thematic field students (e.g., secretarial studies), and in the third year and master's level for elementary education students. This section, taking into account the description and interpretation of the teacher practice data from these three countries at both the undergraduate and master's levels, outlines the proximity of teacher practices in terms of semester arrangement, objectives, attendance requirements, content provided, and individual responsibilities. Table 1 presents a comparison of the proximity based on semester arrangement.

Table 1. Juxtaposition in teacher practice semester arrangement of the three countries

<b>Cases</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>Iran</b>
Duration of Teacher Training in Bachelor's Degree	5 Years in Primary Education 4 years in Secretarial courses	5 Years in Primary Education 4 years in Secretarial courses	4 Years
Duration of Teacher Practic in Bachelor	Primary Education: First semester of the third year and first semester of the Master's level. Teaching Majors: First semester of the third year and first semester of the fourth year	For Chinese and English language majors: 2 full semesters (7th, 10th). Basic sciences: 2 semesters (8th, 10th). For humanities majors: 4 semesters (5th, 6th, 7th, 10th)	For all majors: 4 semesters (5th, 6th, 7th, 8th semesters)
Duration of Teacher Training in Master's Degree	2 semesters	2 semesters	This course does not exist in Iran
Duration of Teacher Practic in Master	One Semester (First semester of Master)	One Semester (Second semester)	This course does not exist in Iran

Table 1 illustrates the alignment of teacher practice programs across the three countries, detailing the semester arrangements and the sequence of teacher practice terms within undergraduate and graduate curricula. The subsequent table (Table 2) presents an analysis of the undergraduate teacher practice course objectives in the two countries, employing the contiguity method grounded in the Bereday model.

Table 2. Juxtaposition in the goals of teacher practice in undergraduate level

Content of Teacher Practic	Finland	Hong Kong	Iran
<b>First Semester</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Understanding the curriculum</li> <li>✓ Analyzing and designing lessons</li> <li>✓ Paying attention to student learning</li> <li>✓ Reflecting on and evaluating the teaching and learning process</li> <li>✓ Identifying professional challenges and finding ways to develop professionally</li> <li>✓ Connecting theory and practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Begin an introduction to the teaching profession.</li> <li>✓ Adapt to the role change from student to teacher</li> <li>✓ Familiarity with the pillars of the school and their duties</li> <li>✓ Participation in lectures and camps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Based on narrative writing and narrative research</li> <li>✓ Gaining skills in applying reflective observation methods and techniques</li> <li>✓ Identifying different problems using evidence</li> </ul>
<b>Second Semester</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being sensitive to student learning</li> <li>• Recognizing the diverse range of students and having a plan for each range</li> <li>• Integrating theoretical and practical knowledge</li> <li>• Collaborating with colleagues</li> <li>• Analyzing one's own activities as a professional</li> <li>• Understanding the importance of school as part of society</li> <li>• Conducting practical research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To an appropriate extent, the teacher identity is developing in them</li> <li>• Awareness of how to change the role</li> <li>• Practice teaching generalities</li> <li>• Reaching the position of teaching assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on action research</li> <li>• Identifying problems, individual needs, small or large groups</li> <li>• Designing learning activities to solve problems</li> </ul>
<b>Third Semester</b>	Finland only has two semesters of teacher practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Providing an teacher practice package in schools</li> <li>➤ Practice teaching in small groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work based on lesson research</li> <li>➤ Analyzing the content of the curriculum and textbook</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Active participation of students in field experience</li> <li>➤ Connecting theory and practice through group and individual guidance</li> <li>➤ Production of an electronic portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implementing and evaluating the learning plan</li> <li>➤ Reporting the results of the evaluation based on action research</li> </ul>
<b>Fourth Semester</b>	Finland only has two semesters of teacher practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing an teacher practice package with a professional training package</li> <li>▪ Accepting the role of the teacher as an inspiring creator and a committed role model</li> <li>▪ Implementing independent teaching</li> <li>▪ Implementing, evaluating and modifying the electronic model</li> <li>▪ Writing an teacher practice report and submitting it to the professor and faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyzing the content of the curriculum and textbook, a learning unit for</li> <li>▪ Acquiring the expected competencies in the curriculum with the participation of teachers</li> <li>▪ Designing, implementing and evaluating the teaching program to improve student performance</li> <li>▪ Recording and analyzing experiences in the lesson research process</li> <li>▪ Reporting the findings of the student's professional performance</li> </ul>

As illustrated in Table 2, the details of teacher practice programs in Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland are presented alongside the objectives of undergraduate teacher practice courses. In Hong Kong, although teacher practices for language and basic sciences majors are offered across two semesters, their objectives align with those outlined in Table 2. At the master's level, the alignment of teacher practice objectives across the three countries is depicted in Table 3. In Finland, master's-level teacher practices are comparable to the second teacher practice at the undergraduate level, typically designed for teacher education programs.

Table 3. Juxtaposition in the goals of teacher practicum in master level

Item	Finland	Hong Kong	Iran
<b>First Semester</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitivity to student learning</li> <li>• Identifying the diverse range of students and having a plan for each range</li> <li>• Integrating theoretical and practical knowledge</li> <li>• Collaborating with partners</li> <li>• Analyzing one's own activities as a professional</li> <li>• Understanding the importance of school as part of society</li> <li>• Conducting practical research</li> </ul>	There is no teacher practicum courses.	There is no teacher practicum courses.
<b>Second Semester</b>	There is no teacher practicum courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing the school attachment plan</li> <li>• Professional practice</li> </ul>	There is no teacher practicum courses.

In Tables 1, 2, and 3, the semester arrangement and teacher practice objectives in the three countries are analyzed using the Bereday model adjacency method. Additionally, Table 4 presents the school attendance rates of students across various teaching disciplines within teacher education and teacher training programs in the three countries. These rates are examined at both undergraduate and graduate levels on a semester-by-semester basis using the adjacency method.

Table 4. Juxtaposition in the attendance rate of students in schools during teacher practicum in three countries

Item	Finland	Hong Kong			Iran
<b>First semester teacher practice (Bachelor)</b>	There are 10 units and they attend school for 6 to 7 full weeks.	Humanities Majors	Basic Sciences	Chinese and English Language Major	Attendance one day a week for 17 weeks
		Full weekly attendance (two weeks)	There is no teacher practicum courses.	Attending elementary schools 5 days a week for 3 months	
<b>Second semester teacher practice (Bachelor)</b>	There are 10 units and they attend school for 6 to 7 full weeks.	Full weekly attendance (two weeks)	Attending 5 days a week for 3 months	There is no teacher practicum courses.	Attendance one day a week for 12 weeks

<b>Third semester teacher practice (Bachelor)</b>	There is no teacher practic cours.	Attending 5 days a week for 3 months	There is no teacher practic cours.	There is no teacher practic cours.	Attendance one day a week for 17 weeks
<b>Fourth semester teacher practice Bachelor(</b>	There is no teacher practic cours.	Attending 5 days a week for 3 months	Attending 5 days a week for 3 months	Attending high schools 5 days a week for 3 months	Attendance one day a week for 12 weeks
<b>First semester teacher practice (Master)</b>	There are 10 units and they attend school for 6 to 7 full weeks.	There is no teacher practic cours.			There is no teacher practic cours.
<b>Second semester teacher practice (Master)</b>	There is no teacher practic cours.	One day a week for two months			There is no teacher practic cours.

Table 4 shows the proximity of students from various fields to schools for teacher practice placements, in accordance with the teacher training and teacher practice curricula of the three countries. Additionally, Table 5 presents the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, including students, supervisors, and mentors, as well as the content they engage with during the teacher practice period. This information is analyzed using the proximity method for Iran and Hong Kong.

Table 5. Juxtaposition in the content provided and the tasks of individuals in teacher practices in three countries

<b>Item</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>			<b>Iran</b>
<b>First semester teacher practice (Bachelor)</b>	The first week is planning and the rest of the weeks are teaching. Students come to class in pairs. They have lessons in subjects such as Finnish, mathematics and two other subjects. In addition to group lessons, each student	Humanities Majors	Basic Sciences	Chinese and English Language Major	This course is based on narrative writing and narrative research. Acquiring skills in the application of reflective observation methods and techniques, educational and training situations at the school and classroom levels are studied, and the student's perceptions are presented in the form of narratives,
		Preparing a work folder, getting to know the school environment, people, and duties, observing the guidance teacher's work in full, assisting the guidance	No teacher practic cours.	Preparing a portfolio, designing a student's attendance and teaching schedule at school, getting to know the environment and people and their responsibilities at school,	

	<p>must have 4 individual lessons in different subjects. Planning is done in groups. Students discuss their plans with their tutor, supervisor and other students before implementing them.</p>	<p>teacher in teaching the lessons that the guidance teacher teaches, participating in school programs, and the guidance teacher's extracurricular activities at school.</p>		<p>observing the work of the guidance teacher, being a helpful person in appropriate situations, designing electronic content</p>	<p>diaries, and personal experiences. Student narratives from different situations are analyzed and the identified issues are reported using scientific evidence and documentation.</p>
<p><b>Second semester teacher practice (Bachelor)</b></p>	<p>The first week is dedicated to selecting a research topic and planning. The next 5 to 6 weeks are spent on teaching and practical research.</p>	<p>Designed to teach in a class for 6 subjects as an assistant teacher, the teacher-in-charge must observe at least two of the student's subjects, give feedback to the student, and talk to the teacher-in-charge, participate in school activities</p>	<p>Preparing a portfolio, getting to know the school environment and people and their responsibilities, designing a student attendance and teaching schedule at school, observing the work of a teacher assistant, designing an electronic content, being an assistant teacher, participating in extracurricular school activities,</p>	<p>No teacher practic cours.</p>	<p>Action research. The student identifies or recognizes problems, individual needs, small or large groups, and designs, produces, implements, evaluates, and reports on activities to address the problems or learning needs.</p>
<p><b>Third semester teacher practice (Bachelor)</b></p>		<p>Designing attendance and teaching schedules, holding a roundtable discussion with the supervisor and the</p>	<p>There is no teacher practic cours.</p>	<p>No teacher practic cours.</p>	<p>It is a narrative study. The content analysis of the curriculum and textbook is conducted, and the basic concepts and skills are identified, and the learning plan is designed,</p>

		supervising teacher, holding a seminar with the supervisor and the supervising teacher, teaching with the help of the supervising teacher for 8 to 10 sessions.			implemented, and evaluated, and its effects on the results of the students' ability to transfer what they have learned to a new situation are assessed. Finally, the results report the student's experiences of the process of design, implementation, evaluation, review, and reflection, relying on practical rationality in the form of individual action research.
<b>Fourth semester teacher practice Bachelor</b>		Designing attendance tables, teaching 8 to 10 sessions independently, supervision by the Ministry of Education, submitting reports and portfolios to the faculty	Holding seminars and lectures, implementing and evaluating the produced electronic content, trying to teach 6 to 8 lessons, supervision by the Ministry of Education, submitting reports and portfolios to the faculty	Holding a roundtable discussion by the student, the tutor, and the relevant professor, implementing and evaluating the produced electronic content, trying to teach 12 to 14 lessons in two different grades, supervising the Ministry of Education, submitting a report and a work folder to the faculty teacher practice center,	Content analysis of the curriculum and textbook, the learning unit for acquiring the expected competencies in the curriculum is designed, implemented and evaluated with the participation of teachers at the school level and its impact on improving student performance is assessed. By recording and analyzing experiences in the course study process, the findings of the student's professional performance at the school level are reported by the student.
<b>First semester teacher practice (Master)</b>	The first week is dedicated to selecting a research topic and planning. The next 5 to 6 weeks are				There is no teacher practice courses.

	spent on teaching and practical research.		
<b>Second semester teacher practice (Master)</b>		Compiling a portfolio, attending school one day a week, observing the classroom and other teaching activities, familiarizing the student with daily exercises in the teaching process, 6 hours of independent or semi-independent teaching during the period of attendance, evaluating the portfolio, and submitting the complete research project to the faculty.	No teacher practice courses.

This section examines the proximity of teacher practice-related information across Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland in terms of semester arrangement, objectives, attendance rates, content delivery, and individual responsibilities. These aspects are systematically presented in Tables 1 to 5. Given the research objectives and the proximity of teacher practice information among the three countries, and in accordance with the Bereday model, the research questions should be articulated within the proximity framework. Accordingly, this study seeks to address the following key questions:

- What are the similarities and differences in the teacher practice curricula of Hong Kong, Finland, and Iran?
- Based on the experiences of Finland and Hong Kong, what recommendations can be made for improving the teacher practice component of the Iranian teacher education curriculum?

#### *D) Comparison*

At this stage of the research, building upon the findings from previous phases and utilizing the collected and analyzed data, the conditions for conducting teacher practice programs in teacher training across Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland are compared. The similarities and differences across various dimensions are examined, thereby addressing the first research question.

#### *Similarities*

The similarities in the implementation of teacher practice programs within the teacher education curricula of Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland can be observed in quantitative aspects. In all three countries, teacher practice courses are conducted in a face-to-face format, are mandatory, and, in the final years of study, are full-time. Their primary objective is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Additionally, the teacher practice programs are typically completed within a

maximum of four semesters. In all three countries, teacher education students begin their teacher practices by prioritizing observation, carefully examining school activities and events. As this marks their first experience in schools as teacher education students, they undergo a transition in their professional identity from student to teacher, gradually adapting to teaching responsibilities. Upon entering the school, students are introduced to the school staff and provided with a structured work plan. Furthermore, to qualify for the teacher practice, students must have successfully completed the prerequisite courses, which must be verified and approved by a supervisor in all three countries.

Another common aspect of teacher practice programs in the three countries is the process of reporting and analyzing challenges with a supervisor. In Iran, students discuss and analyze the issues and challenges they encounter during their daily teacher practices in meetings held on the same day with their supervisor and peers at the faculty. In Hong Kong, such discussions and analyses take place either during the weeks following the completion of the teacher practice or in the subsequent semester when students are not engaged in teacher practices. In Finland, students participate in full-time teacher practices for approximately seven weeks, after which they review and analyze their experiences with professors and peers in the following weeks of the semester. While the depth and quality of these analyses may differ, the overall structure of this practice remains similar across the three countries. Additionally, all three countries incorporate active teaching methods and dynamic assessment strategies in structuring their teacher practice curricula. The scope of the teacher practice curriculum is not confined to the classroom or school environment; students engage in alternative teacher practice activities beyond these settings. Furthermore, in all three countries, the teacher practice curriculum is selected, organized, and refined based on predefined objectives, ensuring a structured and goal-oriented learning experience.

All three countries emphasize the identification of teacher competencies, the establishment of infrastructure to develop the skills, perceptions, and knowledge of teacher education graduates, and the integration of creative and critical thinking in goal-setting. Additionally, the significant role of mentors, school coaches, and other key stakeholders in the teacher practice process is recognized in all three systems. Furthermore, all three countries highlight the importance of gaining teaching experience through active participation in various teacher practice programs. The focus on preparing future educators by fostering professional skills and competencies represents another shared objective of teacher practice programs in Hong Kong, Finland, and Iran. Additionally, the requirement for students to compile a teacher practice report is a common

feature across the three countries. Table 6 presents an overview of these similarities in teacher practice programs.

Table 6. Similarities between the teacher practice programs of the three countries: Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland

<b>Iran</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>Finland</b>
Completing an teacher practice is mandatory.	Completing an teacher practice is mandatory.	Completing an teacher practice is mandatory.
The teacher practice is offered for at least 2 semesters (2 semesters in Finland).	The teacher practice is offered for at least 2 semesters (Hong Kong 4 semesters).	The teacher practice is offered for at least 2 semesters (Iran 4 semesters).
Observation is the first step in starting the teacher practice.	In the first step, the student does most of the observation work.	In the first step, the student is an observer.
The student and the supervisor submit reports to the supervisor, which are very important.	Student reports are very important to the professor	Students report to the professor.
The evaluation of the teacher practice is based on the activities and dynamics of the student.	The most important evaluation indicator is the student's activity.	Student dynamics are important.

### *Differences*

The differences in teacher practice implementation across the three countries have been examined and analyzed within the areas outlined in the proximity section (Section 3.1). A comparative analysis has been conducted on semester arrangement, objectives, attendance rates, content delivery, and the responsibilities of program personnel. These differences are also presented in Table 7, providing insights from the teacher practice programs in Hong Kong and Finland that may offer valuable recommendations for adaptation and localization within the Iranian teacher practice curriculum.

Table 7. Differences between teacher practice in Iran and Hong Kong, Finland

<b>Difference criteria and countries</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>Finland</b>
<b>Duration of study for Bachelor's degree in teacher education</b>	4 Years	5 Years	4 Years
<b>Master's degree in teacher education</b>	1 Years	1 Years	No teacher practic courses.
<b>Semester structure</b>	Elementary course: First semester of the third year First semester of the master's degree course for elementary Secretary courses: First semester of the third year	Chinese and English language: 7th and 10th semesters Basic Sciences: 8th and 10th Humanities: 5th, 6th, 7th and 10th semesters	For all majors, last two years  Master: There is no teacher practic cours.

	and first semester of the fourth year	Master's: 2nd semester	
<b>Attendance rate</b>	In all semesters: 7 full weeks, i.e. 5 days a week	Basic Sciences, Chinese and English language: 3 months full-time, 5 days a week Humanities: 2 full weeks in the fifth and sixth semesters, and 3 months full-time, 5 days a week in the seventh and tenth semesters Master's: 2 full semesters, 5 days a week	Fifth and Seventh Semesters: One day per week for 17 weeks Sixth and Eighth Semesters: One day per week for 12 weeks
<b>Objectives and content of the curriculum provided</b>	The objectives are general. The method is very free and based on the supervisor and the mentor. Research is very important and covers a large part of the activities in the second teacher practice. Two-person work occurs in teaching. Instead of focusing too much on theory, practical teaching is practiced. The role of the mentor is very prominent. The use of electronic tools and technology is very important.	The objectives are clear and operational. The topics of discussions and actions are very clear. Complementary activities such as lectures, camps, scientific activities, etc. are specified. The content is chosen more freely and the student can be creative. Electronic content is produced by the student. The roles of the student and the teacher are clearly defined for each semester and the tools for their implementation are introduced.	Objectives and content are predetermined and very general and have a theoretical aspect and it is very difficult to operationalize it based on narrative research, action research, lesson study and content analysis. The duties of the student and the teacher guide are not exactly clear and the student is more of an observer and has little role. The content is not given much attention.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Student is active and at the center of the program. Supervisors from the university and school monitor the teacher practice process. Evaluation is based on the student's activity and reports from the supervisor and the student to the supervisor. Activities are freely prescribed by the supervisor and the supervising teacher according to the individual characteristics of the student, and of course teaching is a large part of these activities, the type of implementation of which is not the same for everyone.	The student is active and at the center of relevant activities. There is close, even daily, supervision from the education department. Evaluation is based on the content produced, lectures, and academic and extracurricular activities, and the report is submitted to the university.	The student is passive. Education supervision over teacher practices is very weak. Evaluation is based on the duration of attendance at school and a final report that is prepared only for presentation to the professor.

Significant differences exist in the semester arrangement of teacher practice programs across the three countries. In Iran, the standard duration of undergraduate programs is four years (eight semesters). Teacher practices are integrated into the final four semesters—specifically, the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth semesters—and are offered in each of these semesters. In contrast, undergraduate programs in Hong Kong typically span five years, with teacher practice structures varying across disciplines. For Chinese and English language majors, teacher practices are conducted in two semesters—the seventh and tenth. Similarly, for basic sciences majors, teacher practices are also offered in two semesters, but in the eighth and tenth semesters. In the humanities disciplines, teacher practices are integrated into the teacher training curriculum over four semesters, specifically the fifth, sixth, seventh, and tenth semesters. At the master's level, Hong Kong offers a one-year Master of Teacher Education program, in which teacher practices take place in a single semester (the second semester). This structure differs from Iran, where no equivalent master's-level teacher education program exists. In Finland, teacher practices occur over two semesters, typically in the third and fourth years for teacher education programs in clerical fields and in the third year of the undergraduate program and the first year of the master's program for primary education. During each of these semesters, students spend seven full weeks in schools, gaining hands-on teaching experience.

The second key area of comparison in teacher practice programs across the three countries is the objectives of the teacher practice curriculum. While the overarching goal in all three countries is to prepare students for entry into the teaching profession, there are notable differences in the design and articulation of these objectives. In Iran, the objectives of the teacher practice curriculum are stated in a broad and theoretical manner. A general framework based on narrative research, action research, lesson study, and content analysis has been established, making it difficult to operationalize these goals effectively. For instance, objectives such as acquiring competencies, identifying problems, and designing activities are presented in a vague and theoretical manner, without specifying their practical implementation. Additionally, there is no clear guidance on how these objectives should be achieved in practice. In contrast, the teacher practice curriculum in Hong Kong defines objectives in a more operational, clear, and transparent manner. Specific activities, such as assisting the supervising teacher, participating in small group discussions, attending lectures, and presenting seminars and roundtable discussions, are explicitly outlined. Moreover, the participants involved in these activities are clearly specified. Unlike in Iran, where action research is mentioned as a goal without reference to tools or methods of implementation, the Hong Kong curriculum provides a structured and contextualized approach to goal-setting. The objectives in

Hong Kong are explicitly linked to the school, students, and mentors, whereas in Iran, the stated objectives tend to be more general and slogan-like, lacking a defined implementation framework. Furthermore, the Hong Kong curriculum requires students to become fully acquainted with the various elements of the school environment before beginning classroom-based teacher practices—an aspect that is not explicitly addressed in the Iranian teacher practice program. At the master's level, a direct comparison between Iran and Hong Kong is not feasible, as Iran does not offer a structured teacher training program at this level. In Finland, while the objectives of the teacher practice curriculum are broadly defined, the implementation is characterized by greater flexibility. Students carry out their teacher practice activities under the supervision of a mentor and in coordination with a supervisor. A significant emphasis is placed on individual differences among students, resulting in varying activities and implementation quality based on each student's unique learning trajectory.

Another key element in comparing teacher practice programs across the three countries is the duration and frequency of teacher education students' attendance at schools during their teacher practice period. In Iran, students attend schools for 17 weeks during the fifth and seventh semesters and for 12 weeks during the sixth and eighth semesters, with attendance limited to one day per week. In contrast, the structure in Hong Kong varies by major. For Chinese and English majors, full-time school attendance for three months is mandatory in both the seventh and tenth semesters, requiring students to be present all five working days each week. Similarly, for basic science majors, students participate in full-time teacher practices during the eighth and tenth semesters, attending school for three months per semester, five days a week. Humanities majors in Hong Kong follow a different structure: during the fifth and sixth semesters, they engage in teacher practices for two full weeks, working according to pre-designed programs and objectives. However, in the seventh and tenth semesters, they transition to a full-time teacher practice model, attending schools for three months per semester, five days a week. At the master's level, Hong Kong students participate in school teacher practices during the second semester, attending one day per week for two months, aligned with the course objectives. In Finland, teacher practices take place over two semesters, with each semester consisting of a seven-week full-time school placement. The curriculum is implemented with a high degree of flexibility, allowing for the development of content tailored to students' individual learning experiences.

The next critical aspect of comparison among the teacher practice programs in Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland is the content provided during the teacher practice and the roles and responsibilities of key individuals involved, including the student, mentor, and supervisor.

Significant differences exist in this regard across the three countries. In Iran, the content of the teacher practice program is predetermined, and students are required to focus on specific topics. However, similar to the objectives of the program, the content is defined in broad and ambiguous terms, lacking clear guidelines for practical implementation. The extent of student involvement in classroom teaching and other school activities—whether as an assistant teacher or in an independent role—is not explicitly stated. Furthermore, the integration of technology and electronic tools in content development is not addressed in the Iranian teacher practice curriculum. The role of the student in classroom and school activities remains undefined, with no clear indication of their responsibilities in school programs. For example, while students are required to identify a problem and design, implement, and evaluate a solution, the program does not specify how this process should be carried out, whether students should act independently, or whether the mentor should oversee and implement the solutions. Additionally, the nature of interactions between students, mentors, and supervisors is not clearly outlined. In contrast, the teacher practice program in Finland takes a more flexible and student-centered approach. While the objectives remain broad, the implementation process is highly open-ended and depends largely on the interactions between the student, mentor, and supervisor. Research plays a significant role, particularly in the second teacher practice, where it constitutes a major portion of student activities. Collaborative teaching, where two individuals share teaching responsibilities, is a common practice. The Finnish teacher practice program prioritizes practical teaching experiences over theoretical discussions, ensuring that students gain hands-on experience in the classroom. Additionally, technology is widely integrated into the teacher practice program, with electronic tools playing a central role in teaching and learning activities.

In the comparative analysis of teacher practice programs based on content and individual responsibilities, Hong Kong demonstrates a more flexible and dynamic approach. The selection and introduction of content are more open-ended, allowing students to exercise creativity in content development while aligning with the objectives of the teacher practice. Each semester clearly defines the student's role, specifying the extent to which they can actively engage in the educational process within the classroom. A defining characteristic of the Hong Kong teacher practice program is the emphasis on the production, implementation, and evaluation of electronic content. Given the increasing role of technology in global education, this aspect is particularly essential for contemporary teacher education. The number of teaching sessions in both assistant and independent teaching roles is explicitly stated, ensuring a structured and progressive transition into teaching responsibilities. Additionally, the Hong Kong program strongly emphasizes

professional development activities such as roundtable discussions and seminars—elements that receive comparatively less attention in Iran. Beyond enhancing professional teaching qualifications, the Hong Kong teacher practice curriculum also prioritizes multilingual teaching and learning experiences as well as environmental education. The concept of reflective teaching is integrated into the teacher practice through methods that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and discovery, granting students greater autonomy in their learning process. In contrast, Iranian students often assume a more passive role, primarily serving as observers rather than active participants in teaching. Supervision and assessment of student performance also differ significantly between the two systems. In Iran, student activities are primarily monitored by the school and, to a limited extent, by the supervising teacher. In Hong Kong, however, students' work is closely overseen by the Hong Kong Department of Education, ensuring more structured and comprehensive feedback. Furthermore, Hong Kong's teacher practice framework fosters extensive collaboration between schools and teacher training universities, establishing a well-defined connection between students, instructors, schools, and universities. In contrast, these connections in Iran are weaker and less clearly articulated. At the master's level, Hong Kong's teacher practice program also maintains a structured approach, clearly defining the student's role while emphasizing school attachment and professional practice as key components of teacher education.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In addition to summarizing and drawing conclusions from the comparative study, this section addresses the second research question. While undergraduate teacher practice programs in Iran, Hong Kong, and Finland share certain structural similarities, significant differences exist in their implementation quality and content delivery. In Hong Kong, there is a strong emphasis on creative content production, particularly through the use of electronic and technological resources. Additionally, practicing the role of a teacher under the guidance of a mentor, along with active participation in both curricular and extracurricular activities, distinguishes the Hong Kong teacher practice model. In Finland, research plays a central role in the teacher practice experience, and students are granted considerable autonomy in content presentation and instructional methods. The findings indicate that teacher education institutions in the three countries have demonstrated similarities in certain aspects of teacher practice implementation. However, a broader analysis reveals substantial differences in their teacher practice curricula. These differences primarily stem from the greater emphasis placed on addressing the diverse educational needs at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in Hong Kong and Finland. This focus has led to the development of

more innovative and dynamic teacher practice curricula within their teacher education systems. Despite these differences, there are notable similarities in the structural characteristics of teacher practice programs across the three countries. In all cases, teacher practices are conducted in person, are mandatory, and transition to full-time placements in the final stages of the program. However, key distinctions emerge in areas such as teacher practice scheduling based on the educational needs of teacher candidates at different school levels (primary, secondary, and high school), the incorporation of effective teaching models, and the degree of internationalization of the teacher practice program. Furthermore, Hong Kong and Finland integrate teacher practice-related courses and seminars into the curriculum and ensure continuity of teacher practice experiences throughout the academic years. In contrast, the Iranian teacher education system offers a more rigid and standardized approach, with teacher practices conducted full-time over a two-year period and limited flexibility in program implementation. A distinguishing feature of Finland's teacher practice program, compared to those in Iran and Hong Kong, is its strong emphasis on research, the freedom granted to students in selecting content, and the consideration of students' individual abilities and differences in both curriculum design and teaching practice. These factors contribute to a more student-centered and research-driven approach in Finnish teacher education, setting it apart from the teacher practice models of the other two countries.

An analysis of the teacher practice program content reveals that Hong Kong incorporates several creative and innovative practices, including the use of active teaching methods, dynamic assessment strategies, and an approach that extends beyond the classroom and school environment. Additionally, the selection and adaptation of course content are guided by predefined educational goals. Furthermore, Hong Kong's teacher practice program demonstrates several advantages over Iran's, such as the development of a flexible curriculum that integrates diverse educational knowledge across primary and secondary levels, the inclusion of dissertation projects and seminars related to teacher practice experiences, thematic diversity within the program, and the allocation of appropriate time and resources for practical training. In contrast, the content of the teacher practice program in Iran's teacher education system follows a rigid, linear structure, with a strong emphasis on sequencing courses according to predefined prerequisites, strictly enforced by program planners. Unlike Iran, where teacher practices are continuous throughout the semester, the teacher practice programs in Hong Kong and Finland incorporate intermittent placements. This approach allows students to return to the university for supplementary coursework, where they can reflect on their experiences, address previous challenges, and engage in discussions with supervisors and peers before proceeding with the next teacher practice phase. A

notable limitation of the Iranian teacher education system is the relatively low credit allocation for teacher practice courses. The ratio of teacher practice credits to other coursework is approximately 1:70, which is disproportionately low for a teacher training program. In Finland, the credit and hourly allocation for teacher practices is nearly twice that of Iran, underscoring a stronger emphasis on practical teacher preparation. Additionally, aspects such as relative autonomy in the classroom under the supervision of a mentor, participation in extracurricular activities, and opportunities for independent teaching are far more pronounced in Hong Kong and Finland than in Iran. Another key distinction is the integration of technology and electronic content within teacher practice programs. In Iran, the use of digital tools and technological resources is notably underemphasized by students, professors, supervisors, and schools. In contrast, Hong Kong places significant importance on digital pedagogy, equipping students with essential technological skills for modern education. Moreover, Hong Kong offers a Master's degree in teacher education with a dedicated teacher practice program, whereas Iran lacks such a specialized field at the graduate level. Additionally, teacher practices are not incorporated into other education-related disciplines at the undergraduate level in Iran. In terms of duration, undergraduate teacher practices in Hong Kong typically last for one month per semester in the third year, while in Finland, teacher practices span approximately seven weeks. In Iran, however, teacher practices extend throughout the entire semester, which can lead to a repetitive and monotonous experience for students, limiting their exposure to varied teaching environments and approaches.

The outstanding performance of students from Hong Kong and Finland in international competitions is a testament to the effectiveness of their teacher training systems. These achievements have been made possible by educators who, during their teacher education programs, underwent rigorous and modern training. Their preparation included a structured yet flexible approach to observation, assistant teaching, and independent instruction, along with active participation in both academic and social aspects of school life during their teacher practices. The success of this teacher training model is evident in student outcomes and can serve as a valuable reference for other education systems, particularly Iran. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance the teacher practice program in Iran. First, the methods of monitoring and evaluating teacher practice implementation should be reviewed and improved to ensure more effective oversight and guidance. Second, teacher education students should be granted greater autonomy to explore their creativity during teacher practices, rather than being constrained by rigid, predetermined frameworks. Finally, Iran's approach to setting teacher practice objectives should be revised. Currently, these objectives tend to be overly idealistic,

abstract, and ambitious, whereas in Finland and Hong Kong, teacher practice goals are designed with a greater focus on practicality, adaptability, and real-world application, allowing for a more meaningful and effective teacher training experience.

This study also highlights the necessity of integrating technology into teacher practice programs in a more comprehensive and strategic manner. It is recommended that technology be utilized boldly to facilitate content creation during the teacher practice period. Additionally, foundational technology courses should be incorporated into teacher practice training to enable students to assess firsthand the effectiveness, strengths, and limitations of the digital content they produce in real classroom settings. Furthermore, the inclusion of structured discussions, knowledge-sharing sessions, and academic engagements—such as scientific panels, seminars, and lectures—should be reinforced and institutionalized within Iranian teacher practice programs and schools. Teacher practice curricula should also be tailored separately for different disciplines, recognizing that the educational needs and teaching methodologies vary across subject areas. A critical aspect that requires attention is the emphasis on research during the teacher practice period. Research activities should be integrated into the teacher practice framework, reinforcing their significance in teacher education. Additionally, teacher practice opportunities should be extended to master's degree programs in teacher education to ensure a more comprehensive and progressive training experience. Based on the findings of this research, it is also recommended that Iranian teacher education programs encourage students to actively participate in extracurricular school activities, including seminars, roundtables, and field camps. Engaging in school administrative affairs can provide teacher candidates with a deeper understanding of school operations and organizational structures. Finally, this study advocates for the implementation of these recommendations through applied research within the context of teacher education in Iran, particularly in teacher practice programs. Conducting further applied research in this area can facilitate the development of more effective and dynamic teacher practice models, ultimately enhancing the quality of teacher training in the country.

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