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Providing an Optimal Model for the Elementary Teacher Education System at Farhangian University in Iran, Based on the Experience of Japan, Canada, and Australia

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A B S T R A C T

Purpose: The main objective of this research is to adapt appropriate models from Japan, Canada, and Australia, aligned with the culture and education system of Iran, for developing students in the teacher education programs in Iran.

Methods: The research approach is mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative), with an applied purpose, utilizing George Brady's deductive research model. Data analysis was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through the Smart PLS software. This study employs the four stages of description, interpretation, proximity, and comparison in George Brady's model to examine and compare the main elements of the curriculum (objectives, content, teaching-learning strategies, materials and resources [human and equipment], teaching-learning opportunities, learning environment conditions, and evaluation) in the selected countries to improve Iran's curriculum. Subsequently, after achieving a consensus score, a framework for the curriculum was proposed.

Findings: The most important findings indicate that improving the quality of the teacher education system is the main goal, and lifelong learning is the specific objective of this system in the studied countries. Additionally, based on the strategic model for Iran's teacher education system, and considering the performance of leading countries and the findings from interviews using the Delphi method and model fitting, it can be concluded that teaching-learning opportunities, with a factor loading of 4.578, had the greatest influence on the curriculum, while content, with a factor loading of 2.788, had the least impact. Other components—materials and resources (human and equipment), learning environment conditions, teaching-learning strategies, evaluation, and objectives—ranked second to fifth, with factor loadings of 4.060, 3.059, 3.288, 2.801, 2.788, and 2.469, respectively.

Conclusion: Startups that prioritize fostering an innovative and collaborative culture, adopt inclusive leadership, and leverage both employee-driven and data-driven innovation are better positioned for long-term success. External support through incubators and accelerators provides valuable resources and networks that further contribute to the scaling and sustainability of startups. This study highlights the importance of organizational culture, leadership, and innovation as central components in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, offering practical insights for startup founders and managers.

Keywords: *curriculum, employment, professional development of teachers, strategic model.*

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1. Introduction

Teacher education plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality and effectiveness of educational systems across the world. It is essential to develop a robust and dynamic teacher education system that adapts to global best practices while aligning with the unique cultural, social, and educational contexts of each country. In Iran, the teacher education system, particularly for elementary education, faces several challenges in preparing future educators to meet the evolving needs of society. As the educational landscape continues to transform, driven by advancements in technology and shifts in educational paradigms, the development of an optimal model for teacher education has become a priority (Delghandi et al., 2024; Esmaili et al., 2024; Mohammadi Fomani et al., 2024).

A well-structured teacher education program must not only equip prospective teachers with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills but also prepare them to face the challenges of a rapidly changing educational environment. The inclusion of global best practices in teacher training programs has been shown to enhance the quality of education in various contexts (Oztabay, 2017; Page & Jones, 2018). However, it is equally important to ensure that these practices are adapted to the specific cultural and institutional realities of each country. For Iran, a country with a rich educational heritage and distinct cultural norms, developing a contextually relevant model for teacher education is critical to fostering a new generation of educators capable of promoting lifelong learning and academic excellence (Sadeghi et al., 2021).

The foundation of a high-quality teacher education system lies in its curriculum, which must be designed to balance theoretical knowledge with practical application. Theoretical instruction provides prospective teachers with the cognitive tools they need to understand complex educational theories and pedagogical approaches (Lutzker, 2024; Salimi, 2023; Tirri, 2021; Uysal, 2017). On the other hand, practical training allows them to apply these theories in real-world classroom settings, thus developing the skills needed to manage diverse learning environments and address students' individual needs effectively. In countries such as Japan, Canada, and Australia, teacher education programs emphasize the integration of theory and practice, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of modern classrooms (Şahin et al., 2024; Shariati et al., 2024; Sotoudeh Moghadam et al., 2024).

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of reflective practice in teacher education. Reflective practice, which encourages teachers to critically examine their teaching methods and make continuous improvements, has been identified as a key component of successful teacher training programs (Bezi et al., 2024; Karkhaneh et al., 2024; Sadat Mousavi & Ebrahimi, 2024). Countries such as Canada have integrated reflective practice into their teacher education programs, promoting a culture of lifelong learning and professional development among educators. This focus on reflection allows teachers to adapt to new educational challenges, such as the increasing diversity of student populations and the growing use of digital technologies in the classroom (Frei-Landau et al., 2023; Nickl et al., 2022).

Japan's teacher education system, known for its rigorous standards and emphasis on moral and character education, offers valuable insights for Iran's teacher education reform efforts. In Japan, teacher training programs place significant importance on developing teachers' ethical and moral responsibilities, alongside their pedagogical skills. This holistic approach to teacher education ensures that teachers are not only effective instructors but also role models for their students, fostering a sense of community and social responsibility (Hoque et al., 2023; Lin & Brummelen, 2021). In Iran, where moral education is a key aspect of the national curriculum, incorporating elements of Japan’s approach could help strengthen the ethical and character-building components of teacher education programs.

Australia's teacher education system is another valuable source of inspiration for Iran. Australia is known for its focus on professional standards and continuous professional development for teachers. Teacher education programs in Australia are designed to meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, which outline the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers must demonstrate to be effective in their roles. This standards-based approach provides a clear framework for assessing the competencies of teacher education graduates and ensuring that they are well-prepared for the demands of the teaching profession (Cao et al., 2023; Mandić, 2022; Owusu-Addo, 2022). Additionally, Australia has placed a strong emphasis on fostering inclusive education, ensuring that teachers are equipped to support students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Hoque, 2018; Karimi et al., 2023; Miri Rami et al., 2022; Pourjaberi et al., 2023). This focus on inclusivity is particularly relevant for Iran, given the country’s diverse population and the need for teachers who

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can address the needs of all students, regardless of their background.

Canada's teacher education system is recognized for its flexibility and emphasis on experiential learning. Canadian teacher education programs often include extended periods of student teaching, allowing prospective teachers to gain hands-on experience in classrooms under the guidance of experienced mentors (Chatterji et al., 2019). This practical experience is invaluable in helping teachers develop the confidence and competence needed to succeed in the classroom. Furthermore, Canada's teacher education programs emphasize the importance of collaboration and teamwork, encouraging prospective teachers to work together to solve educational challenges and share best practices (Felipe et al., 2017). This collaborative approach not only enhances the learning experience for teacher candidates but also fosters a sense of professional community, which can be beneficial throughout their teaching careers.

To develop an effective teacher education model for Iran, it is essential to consider the socio-cultural context in which education takes place. While the experiences of Japan, Canada, and Australia offer valuable insights, these must be adapted to align with the unique educational and cultural realities of Iran. In particular, Iran's teacher education programs must address the specific challenges faced by educators in the country, such as the need for greater integration of technology in the classroom and the importance of promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students (Abbas, 2024; Delghandi et al., 2024). By drawing on the strengths of international teacher education systems while remaining grounded in local needs and values, Iran can create a teacher education model that is both globally informed and locally relevant.

The proposed model for Farhangian University's elementary teacher education system should focus on several key components: curriculum design, teaching and learning strategies, resources and facilities, learning opportunities, and assessment and evaluation. These components are informed by the experiences of Japan, Canada, and Australia, as well as the specific needs of the Iranian educational system. For instance, the curriculum should integrate both theoretical and practical elements, ensuring that teacher candidates receive comprehensive training that prepares them for the complexities of the classroom (Awonuga, 2024). Teaching and learning strategies should emphasize active learning, reflective practice, and collaboration, while resources and facilities must be updated to support the use of digital technologies and innovative teaching methods (Behl, 2020; Khosravi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, learning opportunities should be designed to provide teacher candidates with real-world experience, including opportunities for student teaching and collaboration with experienced educators. Assessment and evaluation processes must be rigorous and aligned with professional standards, ensuring that graduates of Farhangian University are fully equipped to meet the demands of the teaching profession (Chatterji et al., 2019; Cho et al., 2021).

This study aims to provide a strategic model for the teacher education system at Farhangian University, which is responsible for training elementary school teachers in Iran, by drawing on the experiences of three countries with advanced educational systems: Japan, Canada, and Australia. These countries were selected for their distinctive approaches to teacher education and their success in developing highly skilled, reflective, and adaptable educators. By conducting a comparative analysis of these systems, this research seeks to identify key elements that can be adapted to improve Iran's teacher education programs.

2. Methods and Materials

In this study, a comparative analysis method was used to examine and compare the components of the teacher education systems in Iran, Japan, Canada, and Australia, to identify suitable strategies for developing a strategic model for Iran's teacher education system, based on the performance of leading countries. In the first step, the components, objectives, and methods of teacher education in Iran, Japan, Canada, and Australia were described based on the evidence and information collected. In the next step, the objectives and methods of teacher education in these countries were explained, interpreted, and reviewed. In the third step, the collected information about the components, objectives, and methods of teacher education in Iran, Japan, Canada, and Australia was categorized and placed side by side to form a framework for the next stage. In the final step, the similarities and differences, as well as the merits of each country concerning the components, objectives, and methods, were examined and compared.

In the second part, the Delphi method was employed, using purposive sampling to select experts and specialists in the relevant field. Individuals selected as samples were those related to the topic. Initially, relevant centers, fields, officials, and specialists concerning the research topic were

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identified. Then, according to their willingness, they were invited to participate in the study. The extracted components were sent to them, and the Delphi method was completed in two stages.

In the third part, to validate the factor analysis model, a constructed questionnaire was randomly distributed among all individuals, including experts and secondary school teachers, with a sample size of 310.

3. Findings and Results

The questionnaire developed from the qualitative model in the second section was randomly administered among teachers and educators in secondary schools, and the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model of the curriculum derived from the comparative study was developed as a comprehensive model.

Table 1

Summary of Main Component Information

Component	Code	Indicator	Completely Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderate (3)	Unimportant (2)	Completely Unimportant (1)	Score	Status
Objective	q1	Preparing students for optimal performance in their profession	1	2	3	4	5	3.733	Desirable
	q2	Teaching professional skills related to the subject to students	0	2	4	5	4	3.467	Desirable
	q3	Integrating theoretical discussions with practical and job realities	6	3	1	2	3	3.933	Desirable
	q4	Providing knowledge and the ability to work within legal frameworks	10	2	1	1	1	4.467	Desirable
	q5	Improving student life through content offered by the professor	0	1	1	3	10	3.067	Desirable
	q6	Efforts to train graduates capable of playing a more active role in society	4	3	1	2	5	4.333	Desirable
	q7	Preparing students for community service	1	0	1	4	9	3.667	Desirable
	q8	Skill-based education	2	1	2	5	5	3.733	Desirable
Content	q9	Developing course content to familiarize students with the job realities of their field	1	1	4	4	5	3.867	Desirable
	q10	Including sufficient exercises to learn the presented content	7	5	1	1	1	3.267	Desirable
	q11	Developing content aimed at demonstrating how to perform a task	15	0	0	0	0	3.667	Desirable
	q12	Including sufficient exercises for learning the presented content	2	1	1	3	8	3.867	Desirable
Teaching-Learning Strategies	q13	Using integrated content in the classroom	2	1	1	4	7	4.333	Desirable
	q14	Using an exploratory model at the community level to present course content	6	0	0	4	5	3.467	Desirable
	q15	Group-based and collaborative teaching methods using learning environment issues in the learning process	14	0	1	0	0	3.667	Desirable

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Resources and Equipment	q16	Encouraging reflective discussion among students to understand how to apply course subjects	8	3	2	1	1	3.667	Desirable
	q17	Using models and simulations to present course topics	2	3	1	1	8	4.400	Desirable
	q18	Using experts and experienced colleagues to present practical topics in the classroom	1	0	0	5	9	3.133	Desirable
	q19	Using skilled and specialized human resources	7	1	1	4	2	3.400	Desirable
	q20	Using research projects for students	4	1	1	3	6	4.067	Desirable
	q21	Presenting content by an instructor with practical experience	0	3	0	5	7	4.400	Desirable
	q22	Using educational tools and media to align course content with the work environment	1	0	1	3	10	3.733	Desirable
Teaching-Learning Opportunities	q23	Providing learning opportunities for students toward experiential learning	3	1	1	2	8	4.867	Desirable
	q24	Providing opportunities for independent work on course topics	0	0	0	2	13	3.467	Desirable
	q25	Providing learning opportunities through workshops	1	3	4	2	5	3.933	Desirable
	q26	Encouraging students to engage in internships and workplace activities	6	6	1	1	1	3.467	Desirable
Learning Environment Conditions	q27	Creating learning opportunities through the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge	3	2	1	3	6	3.467	Desirable
	q28	Providing practical facilities and equipment for learning	3	2	1	3	6	3.200	Desirable
	q29	Providing a learning space beyond the classroom	1	3	5	4	2	4.333	Desirable
	q30	Creating a clinical learning environment in the classroom	6	3	1	1	4	3.200	Desirable
	q31	Creating flexibility in class timings	5	1	1	2	6	2.800	Relatively Desirable
Evaluation	q32	Emphasizing practical work and projects in student evaluation	5	3	1	2	4	3.267	Desirable
	q33	Emphasizing competency-based assessment	0	1	1	3	10	3.733	Desirable
	q34	Using a systemic evaluation	3	1	1	2	8	3.000	Desirable
	q35	Creating a space for peer evaluation of student work projects	5	1	1	5	3	3.267	Desirable
	q36	Using evaluation of student activities at every stage of teaching	4	0	4	2	5	4.467	Desirable

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The estimated values in Table 2 indicate that the factor loadings related to all the indicators in the comprehensive model are in a favorable state (greater than 1.96). In other words, the correlation between these indicators and their related constructs is estimated to be high, confirming the factorial validity of the measurement tool. The graph of the estimated values related to the model and its general fit indices, along with the main parameters (the factor loadings of these components), is reported below.

Table 2

Factor Loadings of the Comprehensive Model

Curriculum Elements	Code	Components	Factor Loadings
Objective	q1	Optimal performance	34.643
	q2	Professional skills	82.809
	q3	Integration of theoretical discussions with practice	55.831
	q4	Knowledge and ability to work	39.084
	q5	Improving student life	61.333
	q6	Capability to play a more active role in society	66.149
	q7	Preparing students	49.599
	q8	Acquiring skills	46.191
Content	q9	Familiarizing students with realities	75.806
	q10	How to perform tasks	124.779
	q11	Learning presented content	102.928
	q12	Using integrated content in the classroom	73.298
Teaching-Learning Strategies	q13	Using an exploratory model	70.389
	q14	Group-based learning	152.315
	q15	Encouraging reflective discussions	70.926
Resources and Equipment (Human and Material)	q16	Using models	40.085
	q17	Using expert experiences	48.291
	q18	Using specialized human resources	55.846
	q19	Using research projects	64.174
	q20	Presenting content by instructors	74.096
	q21	Using educational tools	54.033
	q22	Learning opportunities	42.173
Teaching-Learning Opportunities	q23	Independent work opportunities	14.204
	q24	Educational workshops	16.738
	q25	Workplace learning	18.355
	q26	Integrating theoretical and practical knowledge	16.192
Learning Environment Conditions	q27	Providing learning facilities	44.593
	q28	Learning spaces beyond the classroom	47.468
	q29	Dynamic and interactive learning spaces	64.691
	q30	Clinical learning environment	40.800
	q31	Flexibility in class times	45.338
Evaluation	q32	Emphasizing practical work and projects	51.221
	q33	Competency-based evaluation	78.589
	q34	Systematic evaluation	44.441
	q35	Peer evaluation of work projects	79.741
	q36	Evaluating student activities	33.131

Figure 1

Comprehensive Factor Model of Components and Subcomponents

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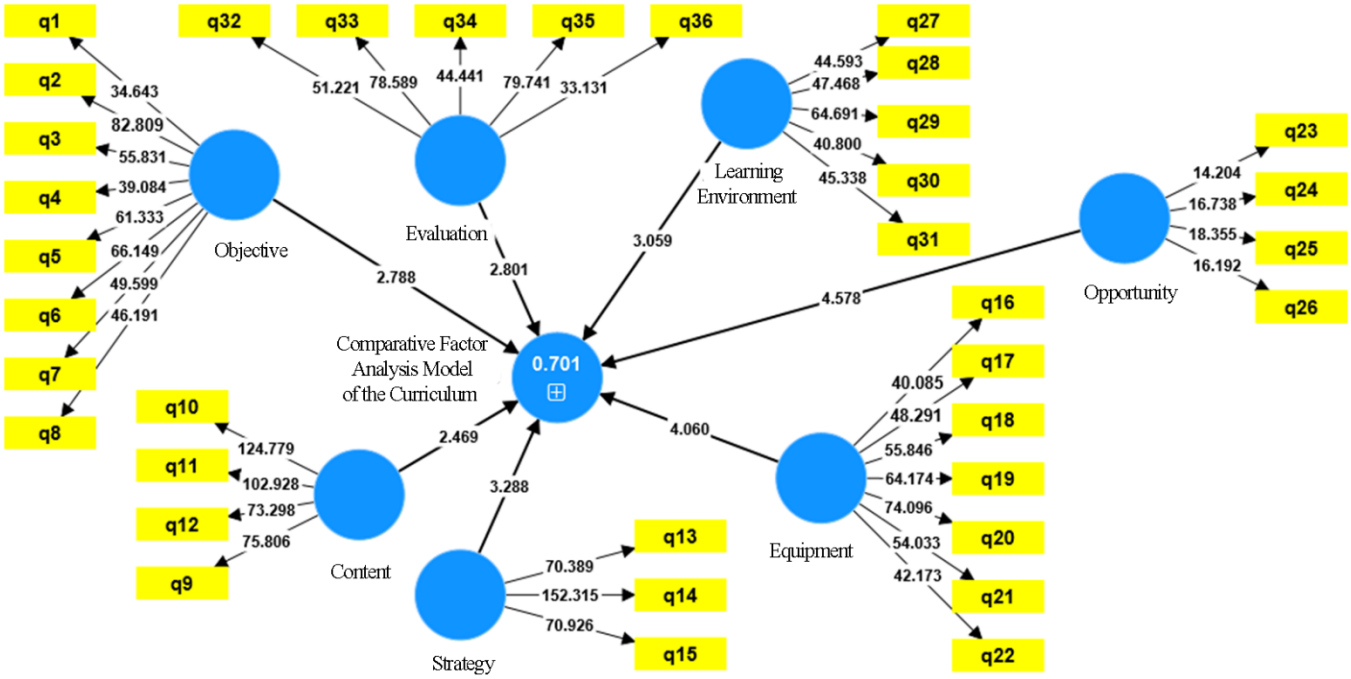

The results indicate that all factor loadings are above 1.96 and are acceptable.

The estimated values in Table 3 show the influential factor loadings between components in the proposed curriculum model. The results show that all factor loadings are above 1.96 and are acceptable.

Table 3

Evaluation Indices of the Comparative Factor Analysis Model of the Curriculum

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (Alpha > 0.7)	Composite Reliability (CR > 0.7)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.5)
Objective	0.959	0.960	0.778
Content	0.948	0.950	0.866
Strategy	0.918	0.918	0.859
Equipment	0.956	0.957	0.792
Opportunity	0.941	0.951	0.849
Learning Environment	0.928	0.931	0.777
Evaluation	0.934	0.936	0.791

Since the appropriate value for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) is above 0.7, and as these criteria are adequately reflected in the variables based on the findings in the table above, the reliability of the research can be confirmed. Moreover, since the appropriate value for the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is above 0.5 and this criterion is adequately reflected in the variables, the convergent validity of the research is confirmed. Overall, the comprehensive model fit is confirmed as strong.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study, which focused on developing an optimal teacher education model for elementary education at Farhangian University in Iran, indicate several key findings that align with the experiences of Japan, Canada, and Australia. The study's comparative analysis highlighted the importance of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, fostering reflective practice, and emphasizing moral and professional development in teacher education programs. These findings support the need for a comprehensive, contextually relevant teacher education model in Iran that incorporates global best practices while addressing the specific cultural and educational needs of the country.

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One of the most significant results of the study is the strong influence of teaching-learning opportunities on curriculum effectiveness, as indicated by the highest factor loading. This finding aligns with previous research, which has consistently shown that experiential learning and hands-on opportunities are crucial for developing competent and confident educators. In Canada, for example, teacher education programs that include extended periods of student teaching have been found to significantly enhance the readiness of teacher candidates for real-world classroom environments (Lutzker, 2024). Similarly, Australia's focus on professional standards and continuous professional development underscores the value of practical experience in shaping effective teachers (Nickl et al., 2022; Sadeghi et al., 2021; Tirri, 2021). The emphasis on teaching-learning opportunities in the present study suggests that Iran's teacher education programs could benefit from providing more practical training, particularly in real-world classroom settings.

Another notable result is the relatively lower influence of content development on curriculum effectiveness compared to other components. This finding may reflect the need for greater alignment between the theoretical content of teacher education programs and the practical realities of teaching. While the theoretical foundations of pedagogy are essential, the results suggest that content alone is insufficient without practical application and contextual relevance. This aligns with research from Japan, where teacher education programs place a strong emphasis on integrating theory with practice, particularly in the areas of moral and character education (Mandić, 2022; Sadeghi et al., 2021; Salimi, 2023). The lower impact of content in the present study highlights the importance of revising the curriculum to ensure that theoretical instruction is closely tied to the practical challenges faced by teachers in Iranian classrooms.

Reflective practice emerged as a key component of teacher education in this study, consistent with global trends in education. Reflective practice allows teachers to critically examine their teaching methods and adapt to the changing needs of their students and educational contexts (Cao et al., 2023; Owusu-Addo, 2022). In Japan and Canada, reflective practice is embedded within teacher education programs, encouraging teachers to engage in continuous professional development and lifelong learning (Mandić, 2022; Tirri, 2021). The study's findings suggest that incorporating reflective practice into Iran's teacher education model could significantly enhance the ability of future educators to adapt to new challenges and improve their teaching effectiveness over time.

Furthermore, the results highlight the critical role of resources and facilities, particularly human and material resources, in enhancing the quality of teacher education programs. In both Canada and Australia, the availability of up-to-date teaching materials, access to digital technologies, and well-equipped learning environments are essential components of successful teacher education programs (Page & Jones, 2018; Tirri, 2021; Uysal, 2017). The present study confirms that similar resources are crucial in Iran's context, where access to modern teaching tools and facilities may be limited. Enhancing the resources available to teacher candidates, including access to technology and digital learning platforms, could improve the overall effectiveness of teacher education programs in Iran.

The results also underscore the importance of fostering moral and ethical development in teacher education programs, particularly in relation to preparing teachers to be role models for their students. In Japan, the focus on moral education as a core component of teacher training ensures that teachers are not only effective educators but also leaders in promoting social responsibility and ethical behavior (Mohammadi Fomani et al., 2024). This emphasis on moral and ethical development is highly relevant in Iran, where teachers play a critical role in shaping the moral character of their students. By integrating moral education into the teacher training curriculum, Farhangian University can help ensure that future teachers are equipped to fulfill their responsibilities as both educators and moral guides.

Additionally, the study's findings regarding the role of evaluation in teacher education programs align with previous research on the importance of competency-based assessments. In Australia, teacher education programs are aligned with professional standards, and rigorous assessments are used to ensure that graduates meet the required competencies (Mohammadi Fomani et al., 2024; Şahin et al., 2024). The present study indicates that a similar approach could be beneficial in Iran, where current evaluation methods may not adequately assess the full range of skills and competencies required of effective teachers. Developing more comprehensive evaluation methods that assess both theoretical knowledge and practical teaching skills could enhance the overall quality of teacher education programs in Iran.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relied on a comparative analysis of teacher education

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systems in Japan, Canada, and Australia, which, while informative, may not fully capture the unique cultural and educational nuances of Iran's teacher education system. The transferability of practices from these countries to Iran may be limited by differences in societal values, educational priorities, and resource availability. Second, the study's sample size, particularly in terms of the number of participants in the Delphi method and confirmatory factor analysis, may limit the generalizability of the findings. A larger sample of experts and teacher educators could provide more robust insights into the key components of an optimal teacher education model. Lastly, the study focused primarily on the structural and curricular aspects of teacher education programs and did not explore other important factors such as the role of government policies, teacher recruitment practices, and the impact of broader educational reforms on teacher education.

Future research should address some of the limitations of this study by expanding the scope of comparative analyses to include additional countries with diverse educational systems. For example, exploring teacher education models in countries with similar socio-cultural contexts to Iran, such as Turkey or India, could provide more contextually relevant insights. Moreover, future studies should examine the impact of government policies and educational reforms on the implementation and effectiveness of teacher education programs in Iran. Research could also explore the long-term outcomes of teacher education graduates in Iran, including their career progression, teaching effectiveness, and contributions to student achievement. Additionally, future research should investigate the role of technology in teacher education, particularly in light of the increasing use of digital tools and online learning platforms in education. This would provide valuable insights into how technology can be integrated into teacher training programs to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be made for improving the teacher education system at Farhangian University. First, the university should prioritize the integration of practical teaching experiences into the curriculum, ensuring that teacher candidates have ample opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world classroom settings. This could include partnerships with local schools to provide student-teaching placements and internships. Second, the university should invest in upgrading its resources and facilities, particularly by providing access to modern teaching tools, digital technologies, and well-equipped learning environments. This will help ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to use the latest educational technologies and methodologies in their teaching practice. Third, Farhangian University should embed reflective practice and continuous professional development into its teacher education programs, encouraging future educators to engage in ongoing learning and self-assessment throughout their careers. Finally, the university should emphasize the importance of moral and ethical education in teacher training, preparing educators to be both effective instructors and role models for their students. This holistic approach to teacher education will ensure that graduates are not only skilled in pedagogy but also equipped to contribute to the moral and social development of their students.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were under the ethical standards of the institutional and, or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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