



RESEARCH PAPER

Investigation of Teachers' Practices through National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate teachers' practices through National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan at secondary school level in Lahore. Practices of teachers investigated through NPSTP (National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan), delimited to four standards including human growth and development, instructional planning and strategies, assessment and professional development and code of conduct. Data were collected through two questionnaires, filled by teachers and their students. Sample was 539 (241male and 198female) teachers and 1044 students of 9th and 10th classes from 72 boys and girls secondary schools of Lahore. An observation conducted for twenty eight classrooms to investigate the practices of teachers in classroom. The statistical techniques as chi square, Cramer's V value and percentage were applied for data analysis by using SPSS (Version20). Major findings of study indicated that though the teachers were aware of NPSTP to some extent but they were not practicing these standards in their classrooms efficiently. It was suggested that the teachers should be trained according to the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS National Professional Standards for Teachers, Secondary School Teachers, Teachers' Practices

Introduction

The quality of teacher education has always been emphasized by the Pakistani government in its policy texts (Govt. of Pakistan, 1947, 1959, 1972, 1979, 1992, 1998, 2002 and 2009). The government established National Professional Standards for Teachers in 2009 to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment of teacher preparation with global trends. Thus, with the financial assistance of the United States Agency for International Development, the Policy and Planning Wing of the Ministry of Education launched the Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP) Project in cooperation with UNESCO (USAID). By developing National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan, the STEP initiative significantly influenced the teachers' professional growth. These guidelines were created with elementary school teachers in mind, but secondary school teachers can alter them and apply them as well.

Continuous professional development comes under the area of practice which unfolds new ways linking the ideas regeneration in profession and reproduction of knowledge about profession refer that community participate for continuous professional development in shifting to more better and practical field (Snow-Gerono, 2005). More valuably the ideas will be effective by discussions and can be sustained by

efforts for teachers. These are linked with positive and beautiful image and helps to renew the reforms for schools. It also enhances the professional and action for school reforms (Little, 2001). Bookover, (1979) agreed this concept that the schools can make difference, to the child's success. The teachers therefore expected to play vital role and are focus or instruments of effectiveness in schools (Biddle, Good & Brophy, 1975).

Research in the knowledge, skills and standards of teachers suggest that the teachers are changing as the time is passing and also developing the skills as designing, planning and the assessment techniques which help the students by reflective teaching, effective feedback, assessment techniques, professional commitment, and applications of the knowledge, what they attained to improve their practices (Siddiqui, 2007).

There are three components in the National Professional Standards for teachers in Pakistan. So, the stem of the instruments were formulated at these three levels. Though there are definite elementary practical necessities that teachers must fulfill, the lesson plan will not be pooled till the use of the knowledge has been deliberated and combined into a wider exercising proposal that flourishes in starting a close relation among skill and the syllabus (Zhao, 2002).

Teachers are our new nation builders. If we have maximum hardworking, trained and dedicated teachers in educational institutions, then we can educate the good nations for tomorrow. So, this depends on effectiveness that how they were being educated by their personal teachers in their classrooms (Shami, 1970).

Pakistan hopes to strive successfully in universal knowledge thrift and converts its blue talents of individuals into the fruitful assets. So, there is a need to produce such a universal system of education from pre-school to the postgrad levels. The universal educational system is not conceivable without the world class educators, supremely at rudimentary classes of Katchi to tenth. Who tell, educate and stimulate the concerned students for worth learning. The quality or worth learning is now depending upon the quality of teaching by the professionals who are committed to moralities of the persistent professional development in the areas, like; attainment of latest knowledge of the subjects they are teaching, using broad knowledge about the instructional strategies, skills and pedagogical instruments, monitoring and assessing learning outcomes of students ethically and cultivating ethical learnt dispositions in students.

To produce effective educators and to empower them to teach the coming generations of intellectuals/learners, fundamental provisions have been distinctly characterized in the literature about profession. They comprise the standards of what teachers required to know and will be able to do that. Approaches based on the standards to develop teachers and the new professional educators need attention to broad scholarly prepare in the natural, and social sciences, deep knowledge about subject, familiarize with the design of curriculum, Know about learning stages, theories of the human development and motivation strategies, dispositions and skills of assessment of others and self (Policy and planning wing, Islamabad, 2009, p-9).

Like other countries, in Pakistan there are also professional standards for teachers which are the parameters for teachers to build their competencies and then make them practices. So, following are the teachers' professional standards in Pakistan presented in the draft in Feb. 2009.

- I. Subject matter knowledge
- II. Human growth and the development

- III. Knowledge about Islamic ethical Values/ social life skills
 - IV. Instructional planning and strategies
 - V. Assessment
 - VI. Learning Environment
 - VII. Effective Communication and proficient use of information communication Technologies
 - VIII. Collaboration and the partnerships
 - IX. Continuous professional development and the Code of Conduct
 - X. Teaching of English as second/ foreign language
- From all of these standards every standard has 3 parts as:
- A. Knowledge and understanding (subject matter, content), that teachers know
 - B. Dispositions Behaviors, Attitudes
 - C. Performances (abilities) skills, the teacher can perform and be able to perform (Policy and planning wing, Islamabad, 2009, p-9).

With the national education policy, which ran from 1998 to 2010, teachers' professional development issues received significant attention. Teacher's professional development was handled with more focus, with critique of the system and implementation of plans provided to make better issues related with governance (Ministry of Education, 1998).

From the above-mentioned, it emerges that this is by the competent teacher, that we may improve teaching through their healthy practices, which is gateway to know, learn and teach.. The teacher educational programs are also directed to furnish them with professional expertise and motivate them to encourage the students to secure the knowledge and attitudes about society, where they live and practicing their professional standards for teachers which are the requirements from the teachers. The practice is expected to upshot in the teachers which have required qualities of an effective teacher. In other countries as England, Australia etc., the teachers are required to qualify the requirements of standards and then license provided to them. Through these necessities, the educator teaching undertakes an important part in the scholastic practice which deals through the acquirement of the actual education techniques and skills. The improvement then development of the teaching of the state needs that with very important essentials there will be collection of competent and professionally competent educators. They do so because they view improving education in the country in order to make it competitive with other countries as a religious mission. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate teaching strategies that may lead to an improvement in the teaching and learning process for school effectiveness, bearing in mind the relationship between professional standards and teachers that has been established above. The standards provide the best knowledge and practices to the teachers to be equipped and practiced in classrooms.

This research was executed to examine the practices of secondary school teachers in light of the National Professional Standards for teachers in Pakistan. The study on their actual practices will be helpful for planners in field of teacher education to refocus the needs of the teachers and are useful for teachers to revisit their teaching practices in the classrooms.

National professional standards for teachers in Pakistan are the core components for the teachers in the country. If educators practice them, the teaching learning process will be more effective. So, the research was intended to explore the teachers' practices in light of National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan at secondary schools in Lahore.

Material and Methods

The nature of this study was descriptive having quantitative approach of research. Survey and observation method was used to collect the primary data about practices of teachers compared with professional standards for teachers. Population of this study consisted of all the Govt. secondary school teachers (male and female) who were working in secondary schools in district Lahore and their students (boys and girls) who were studying in the year of (2012-13) in secondary schools (9th and 10th classes). Two Questionnaires for teachers and students, observation protocol for teachers during teaching were prepared as research instruments for collection of data. A sample of 539(241male and 198 female) teachers and 1044students from high schools were selected for questionnaire. Twenty eight classrooms were selected for observations. Samples were selected by simple random and convenience sampling. Data collected were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using statistical tools.

Sample of the Study

It was difficult for the researcher to approach all schools of the city to collect data, so, the schools were selected by convenience sampling technique. Lists of the Govt. High schools of district Lahore were acquired from the Executive District Officer's office (EDO). The 72 secondary schools were selected conveniently from the whole population of 368 Govt. High schools. The selected sample was consisted of 539 (241 male and 198 female) teachers and 1044 students of secondary schools of Lahore city for filling of questionnaires. Questionnaires were filled by the teachers and their respective students. Researcher selected male and female secondary school teachers and their students of 9th and 10th classes for data collection. of Lahore city. To observe the practices of teachers regarding their standards twenty eight classroom observations were conducted.

Questionnaires for Teachers and Students

Keeping in view the nature of research, questionnaire was considered as the appropriate instrument for the collection of data. Four standards as given in the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan were chosen to solicit teachers' practices. Practices on the base of each standard were solicited through a question followed by the standard statements. There are three sub parts (knowledge and understanding, Disposition, performance and skills) of each standard. There were forty competency questions soliciting teachers' opinions. So, one questionnaire was prepared for secondary school teachers and one for the concerned students of ninth and tenth classes. The questions (40) were developed to investigate the practices of teachers in light of professional standards for teachers mentioned in the document published by the efforts of policy and planning wing, Ministry of Education, Pakistan. The questionnaire of students also containing questions in match with the questions asked to the teachers. The practices of teachers counter checked by the responses provided by the students.

Following parameters were seen in the questionnaire;

1. Demographic and Professional Information
2. Professional Competencies

Classroom Observations

Classroom observation checklist was prepared keeping in view the selected four professional standards. This research instrument was developed to observe actual

practices in classroom. These statements were also matched with the indicators mentioned in guide book of DTEs' (District Teacher Educator) at DSD (Directorate of Staff Development) (A Guide Book of DTEs'). The observation checklist was the effective instrument to collect data about practices. There were twenty one items of the observation sheet.

Reliability

The pre-testing was conducted on 40 teachers and the 50 students separately for questionnaires. After completing the survey, the reliability was assessed using SPSS(Statistical package for social sciences). For the 40 items in the student questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was 0.842, whereas it was 0.895 for the teachers' questionnaire. This survey was conducted for the sample with further approval from the supervisor. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, pre-testing was done on the instruments. So, the final version of instruments prepared in consultation with supervisor and experts.

Data Analysis

Teachers and students completed questionnaires were collected, and the total replies for each item were reviewed and calculated. To determine any discrepancies between teachers' and students' reactions to teachers' practices, the Chi square test was used. The association of answers was determined using Cramer's V.

Results and Discussion

Following findings were drawn from analysis of data;

Findings from Questionnaire

Comparison of Responses of Teachers and Students for human growth and development

The chi square test was used to determine the differences between teachers' and students' opinions on knowledge, attitude, and practices. Consequently, the following discoveries were made;

- 1- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for knowledge of teachers that acquiring of knowledge is influenced by family and social values, acquiring of knowledge is influenced by language and culture, to identify learning abilities of students. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers. But both agreed at knowledge of teachers about diverse styles of learning.
- 2- Male and female teachers' responses were significantly different to give value that all students bring talents and abilities in field of knowledge, to appreciate the multiple ways of knowing and thinking and to treat all students equitably. Male teachers' responses were prevalent more as compared to the female teachers.
- 3- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for practices of teachers to engage in activities to apply learning theories, to accommodate differences in students and engage in activities to apply the learning theories, to accommodate differences in the student's intelligence and achievement level. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers. But both agreed that teachers engage in activities to solve the problems of students by cooperation and collaboration.

- 4- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for knowledge of teachers that teachers know the goals and objectives of education and curriculum of subject, know that how to plan lesson for students' needs and previous knowledge, know the general methods of teaching and class room management, know the pedagogy for teaching. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers for first two statements and Teachers' responses were prevalent more as compared to the Students for last two statements.
- 5- Male and female teachers' responses were significantly different for attitudes of teachers to give value to attain goals and objectives of curriculum, to help students in teaching and to collaborate and cooperate. Females' responses were prevalent more as compared to the male teachers. But both agreed that teachers give value to solve problems in multiple ways.
- 6- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for practices for Instructional planning and strategies to engage in activities to recognize and plan instruction that are appropriate to student's improvement, to plan the homework and the out of class activities that speed up student's learning. Teachers' responses were prevalent more as compared to the students for the second statement. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers for the first statement. But both agreed that teachers engage in activities to identify strategies so that students attach them with their own interests.
- 7- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for knowledge of teachers that teachers know different types of assessment for evaluating how students learn and what they learn, know the assessment results for evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning, know assessment related problems as to get marks without biasness. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers.
- 8- Male and female teachers' responses were significantly different for attitudes of teachers to give value to believe that the students' learning results are the heart for growing and to Fair and objective assessment. Female teachers' responses were prevalent more as compared to the male teachers. But both agreed that teachers give value to report results to students and their families.
- 9- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for practices for engaging in activities to develop and use the teacher made test for the continuous internal assessment of the students' performance, to improve students' learning, to develop accurately document of assessment and to report results of assessment data to parents. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers.
- 10- Teachers' and students' responses were significantly different for knowledge of requirements of the professional code of conduct, how to use creativity and innovation in teaching methods, and how to build and sustain a personal professional skill set. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers.
- 11- Male and females teachers' responses were significantly different for attitudes of teachers to give value to cooperate with classmates, share effective specialized experiences with others and to determine specialized ethics. Male teachers' responses were prevalent more as compared to the female teachers.

12- Teachers' practices for participating in learning activities through professional educational organizations or institutions, to transform the entire school setting into a creative learning environment by taking part in collegial activities, and to uphold ethical behaviors in teaching and learning received significantly different responses from teachers and students. Students' responses were prevalent more as compared to the teachers for the first statement and teachers responses prevail for other two statements.

Table 1
Summary of Percentage Values of Observations of classrooms

Sr. no	Checklist	Themes	Category	F	%
Teachers were:					
1	Dealing different learning abilities of students giving examples from practical life.	learning abilities		15	54
2	Involving students with different talents and abilities by questioning/activities.		Human growth and development	3	11
3	Involving students with different talents and abilities by discussion/activities.			12	43
4	Appreciating the students' questions showing multiple ways of knowing and thinking.			18	64
5	Treating all students equitably.			11	39
6	Accommodating differences in students by teaching in simple language.			1	03
7	Solving the problems of students by cooperation and collaboration.			4	14
8	Following lesson plan.	lesson plan		12	43
9	Discussing objectives of the topic taught.		Instructional Planning and Strategies	18	64
10	Checking previous knowledge of students.	previous knowledge		9	32
11	Managing Class room properly.	Management		10	36
12	Giving homework to students.			16	57
13	Assessing students learning by questioning and discussion.			8	29
14	Questioning students without biasness.		Assessment	18	64
15	Providing equal chance to all students for answering.			8	29
16	Not giving hints to special students.			15	54
17	Writing reports for parents in diaries.	Writing reports		8	29
18	Talking with students in ethical way.		Professional Development & Code of Conduct	4	14
19	Maintaining discipline and ethics in class.	Maintaining discipline		12	43
20	Trying to make classroom environment more interactive and inventive.			9	32
21	Upholding ethical behaviors in class.	Ethical behaviors		7	18

Observations of twenty eight classes at secondary school level give following findings.

- 1 Fifty four percent of the teachers were trying to deal different learning abilities of students giving examples from practical life.
- 2 Eleven percent teachers found involving students with different talents and abilities by questioning/activities
- 3 Forty three percent teachers involving students with different talents and abilities by discussion/ activities
- 4 Sixty four percent teachers appreciating the students' questions showing multiple ways of knowing and thinking
- 5 Thirty nine percent teachers treating all students equitably.
- 6 Three percent teachers accommodating differences in students by teaching in simple language.
- 7 Fourteen percent teachers were solving the problems of students by cooperation and collaboration.
- 8 Forty three percent teachers were following the lesson plan.
- 9 Sixty four percent teachers were discussing objectives of the topic taught in the class.
- 10 Thirty two percent teachers were checking previous knowledge of student.
- 11 Thirty six percent teachers were managing the class room properly.
- 12 Fifty seven percent teachers giving homework to students.
- 13 Twenty nine percent teachers were assessing students learning by questioning and discussion.
- 14 Sixty four percent teachers were questioning students without biasness.
- 15 Twenty nine percent teachers were providing equal chance to all students for answering.
- 16 Fifty four percent teachers were not giving hints to special students (as favorite).
- 17 Twenty nine percent teachers writing reports for parents in diaries.
- 18 Fourteen percent teachers talking with students in ethical way.
- 19 Forty three percent maintaining discipline and ethics in class.
- 20 Thirty two percent teachers trying to make classroom environment more interactive and inventive.
- 21 Eighteen percent teachers were upholding ethical behaviors in class.

Discussion

On the whole, the findings and conclusions revealed that teachers were practicing some of the standards as revealed by the questionnaire the teachers have knowledge about diverse styles of learning. They were solving problems in multiple ways, reporting results to students and their families. Teachers were engaging in activities to identify strategies so that students can attach them with their own interests and engaging in activities to solve the problems of students by cooperation and collaboration. But they were not following the lesson plan. As research revealed that majority of teacher educators strongly believed that preparation of lesson plan; writing objectives of the lesson and sharing these with students; orientating the students with lesson; student centered approach for teaching are important for a teacher, While their classrooms practices on these beliefs were poor (Akbar et al., 2013). In another research, majority of teachers no longer prepare lesson plans, schemes of work, records of work, teaching notes and administer only one continuous assessment test in a term. Lack of adequate preparation was found to be a major reason why some teachers failed to attend classes though being in school (Boniface, 2014). Traditional assessment has often caused

great deal of psychological discomfort and elements of 'unproductive competition' reflecting on extrinsic reward in schooling (Shamatov, 2007).

During this time, teachers' classroom conduct was closely observed in the context of studies on teaching. Rarely did the findings of these observations reveal a connection to student outcomes (Lortie, 1973). In other words, the relationship between observed teacher conduct and student learning outcomes received greater explicit emphasis. This is coincided by Black and Wiliam (1998) and other authors in assessment that assessment is used primarily for reporting and placement purposes rather than for feedback and diagnosis of students' learning needs. Teachers' use of informal formative assessment such as rich questioning and eliciting of evidences of understanding through making thinking visible, oral and written feedback as well as clarity of task and quality criteria, are more common than formal formative assessment but less than that of summative assessment. The statistically significant links between instructors' assessment techniques and knowledge are in accordance with Sadler's (1998) theory that feedback has to be directly linked with defined performance and standards that are combined with improvement initiatives. Weakest area of secondary school teachers is to make the subject matter applicable to the real world situation (Ghazi et al., 2013). The assessment is perhaps most criticized part of the teaching and learning process in the schools. These are the frequently consequences for its association with sorting and ranking the students, through external examination, league table, standardized test and through various reporting systems, judging performance of teachers and restriction and through containment of the teacher practices (Hayes, 2006).

Through observation it was revealed that the teachers deal the students with different learning ability and talent, appreciate the students' questions, discussing objectives of the topic, questioning students and giving homework to students.

Conclusions

The above findings indicate the practices of teachers. These practices were investigated by using questionnaires for teachers and students for teachers. These practices were also observed during the classroom observations. Opinion of teachers and students for the knowledge and male, female teachers' attitudes about teachers' practices were investigated through questionnaire. It was found that the teachers treat the students of different mental levels, solve their problems and report the results to administration and parents. Through observation this was observed that teachers discussed objectives of the topic and give homework to students.

Recommendations

It is recommended from the study that the teachers in the schools should be trained according to the National Professional Standards for Teachers so that they can practice them properly in the classes. For this purpose time to time seminars and workshops would be better tool to develop the required skills in the school teachers. Further studies may be conducted to explore the problems of the teachers in implementing their knowledge and skills in the classrooms in reference to the National Professional Standards Teachers.

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