

An Evaluation of National Professional Standards of Public Sector School Teachers at Primary Level in District Peshawar

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the teaching practices of the public sector primary school teachers in light of the national professional standards (NPS) approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) on 23rd February 2009 in collaboration with the financial support of the USAID. The program was named as STEP which stands for strengthening Teacher Education Program. The study was delimited to National professional standards for teachers which are by and large related to classroom instruction and can be observed in the natural setting. For data collection, a criteria based observational checklist was constructed. Data was collected from 360 public sector primary school teachers of District Peshawar. Collected Data, for each standard, was analyzed through mean score. Findings of the study showed that majority of the teachers didn't perform as per National Professional Standards. So, it was recommended that Education department should chalk out a widespread program for the training and supervision of public sector primary school teachers regarding National Professional Standards.

Keywords: Teaching practices, National professional standards, Classroom instruction.

Introduction

Education is the process through which a nation holistically develops its individuals and the teacher, as a social engineer, shapes the destiny of the succeeding generations towards the desired direction. As quality education is considered as the panacea for all social ailments which cannot be attained without a quality teacher. According to the American Commission on Teacher Education,

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“The Development of a nation depends upon the development of its citizens. The development of its citizens depends upon the development of their education; the development of their education depends upon the development of their teachers.”¹

“The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. The teacher is considered the most crucial factor in implementing all education reforms at the grassroots level. It is a fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching-learning process. Recognizing the deteriorating quality of education at various levels, efforts need to be intensified to accord adequate priority to the effectiveness of teacher education programs and professional development of the in-service teachers in the country.”²

Teacher is the hub of the whole educational system and the most significant agency to bring basic and prolific changes in the teaching-learning process.

All-round efforts are needed to produce reflective and artistic teachers who are holistically trained through a continuing professional development process. The fact remains that teachers are the agents of change, as they transform and reform the entire education structure through integrated and innovative approaches in their classrooms. Professional development of a teacher is as important as sustenance for living. As body without soul is defunct, so teacher without desirable training is defunct. Late American President, Kennedy, has declared teacher as the main pillar of a society. He said, “If you ignore professional development of a teacher in fact you ignore the whole nation.”³

Teaching profession, being bedrock of all remaining professions, holds a prominent position in a society that’s why there is a burning need to make the teacher well equipped with the latest instructional strategies to meet the growing demands of this profession. To fulfill the increasing demands of the teaching profession world has initiated bold steps for professional development of teachers. Standard based improvement of teachers is the main agenda of international movement.

As Primary education occupies the most important place in holistic and all-round development of an individual and

achievement at higher levels depends upon the effectiveness of the primary education.

So, to improve primary education, the Ministry of Education, with the financial support of USAID, developed ten National Professional Standards for primary school Teachers in Pakistan. These standards were allowed to practice on the 23 February, 2009. These standards are as given:

- Knowledge of subject matter
- Human Growth & Development
- Knowledge of Islamic Values
- Instructional Planning and Strategies
- Assessment
- Learning Environment
- Effective communication and proficient use of ICT
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Continuous Professional Development
- Teaching of English as a second language

These standards are, in fact, the main pillars of quality instruction but the question arises whether they are followed with the same spirit and interest as expected. That's why an effort has been made to evaluate the teachers in light of the mentioned standards at the eight selected circles in district Peshawar of KP.

Objectives of the study

The following were the core objectives of the study

- a) To evaluate the instructional performance of public sector teachers in light of National Professional standards at boys' primary school level in district Peshawar
- b) To provide recommendations for effective execution of National Professional standards.

Research Methodology

Being descriptive study, the given method was applied to carry out this research paper.

Population

The population for the present study encompassed all the Government Boys primary school teachers of eight circles of district Peshawar. According to Electronic Management System of

Education Department,⁴ the total population of primary schools in the entire district of KP is 3465 teachers from 647 schools.

Sample size

The size of sample was rationalized by Robert V. Krejcie & Darylew W. Morgan and online Raosoft sample size determining formula.⁵ Sample of the study was limited to 360 teachers from 120 schools of the total population in which 135 teachers from 45 schools were observed in urban areas while 225 teachers from 75 schools were observed in rural areas in district Peshawar of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sampling technique

Single stage Cluster Sampling Technique was exercised to select the sample from each circle. In each circle 45 teachers were observed by selecting 15 schools having at least 6 teachers in which 3 teachers were observed in each school.

Instrument of the study

The problem was explored in qualitative term. To evaluate the teachers' teaching, an observational rubric with a four level coded rating scale, (Outstanding=1, Good=2, Satisfactory=3 and Unsatisfactory=4), was developed. National professional standards based Criteria, for each area of observational rubric, was defined.

Data collection

After piloting on 8 teachers, The Observational rubric was personally exercised to collect data from the sampled population in each circle of the district. Passive form of observational technique was used by researcher, being human instrument, for the present Research. Each standard and area was critically and keenly observed in natural classroom setting and the evidences of observations were properly recorded. Prior to data collection, permission, both from the head of the concerned school and teacher was sought to fulfill the ethics of research and collect data properly.

Data analysis

After collection of the required data, Software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 16 was used to analyze data by using statistical formulas of simple percentage, mean and significance value through Chi-Square. The evaluation of

primary school teachers' competencies were analyzed standard-wise and as a whole as well. Following are the results of the study.

Table 1: Evaluation of Teachers Teaching in light of National Professional Standards

Standards	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total	X2	p-value	
	1		2		3		4					
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
Subject Matter Knowledge	1	0.3	42	11.7	105	29.2	212	58.9	360	100	281.4	.000
Human Growth & Development	0	0.0	13	3.6	50	13.9	297	82.5	360	100	397.3	.000
Knowledge of Islamic values	17	4.7	96	26.7	192	53.3	55	15.3	360	100	188.8	.000
A. Instructional Planning	3	0.8	25	6.9	55	15.3	277	76.9	360	100	533.2	.000
B. Instructional strategies	2	0.6	44	12.2	103	28.6	211	58.6	360	100	274.1	.000
Assessment	4	1.1	40	11.1	166	46.1	150	41.7	360	100	214.1	.000
Learning Environment	13	3.6	66	18.3	114	31.7	167	46.4	360	100	144.5	.000
A. Effective communication	7	1.9	52	14.4	153	42.5	148	41.1	360	100	174.0	.000
B. Use of ICT	2	0.6	5	1.4	33	9.2	320	88.9	360	100	790.2	.000
Collaboration & partnership	0	0.0	2	0.6	48	13.3	310	86.1	360	100	460.0	.000
Continuous professional development	0	0.0	7	1.9	46	12.8	307	85.3	360	100	443.4	.000
Teaching of English as a second language	1	0.3	18	5.0	64	17.8	277	76.9	360	100	541.6	.000

Interpretation of data

The first standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' performance is related to subject knowledge. The analysis of assorted levels showed that highest numbers of teachers were at level- 4 (unsatisfactory) which were 58.8% of the total observed teachers. It indicates that most of the teachers are by and large unaware of national curriculum framework.

The second standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is concerned to Human Growth and Development or knowledge of individual differences. The Data in table shows that maximum number of the teachers were rated at level- 4 (unsatisfactory) which were 82.5% of the total observed teachers. The analysis indicates that most of the teachers are unaware of Human growth and development.

The third standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is related to Knowledge of Islamic/ Values and Social Life Skills. Data indicates that almost half (53.3%) of teachers were found at level-3 (satisfactory). This analysis reveals

that about half of the teachers are cognizant with basic knowledge of Islamic values.

The fourth (4-A) standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' proficiency is related to instructional planning. Data shows that majority of the teachers (76.9%) were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). The analysis indicates that more than 70% of the teachers don't plan their lessons for instruction. Similarly fourth (4-B), being part of the same standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' proficiency, is related to instructional strategies. Data shows that more than half of the teachers (58.6%) were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). Here the analysis indicates that nearly 60% of the teachers don't apply appropriate instructional strategies.

Another important standard (5) of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is related to assessment. The concerned data indicates that less than half of the teachers (46.1%) were evaluated at level-3(satisfactory). The analysis reveals that almost half of the teachers know how to assess the students.

The sixth standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is associated to learning environment. Data indicates that less than half (46.3%) of teachers were found at level- 4. The significance value indicates that about half of the teachers are capable to create conducive learning environment.

The seventh (7-A) standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is effective communication. Data shows that 42.5% of the teachers were rated at level-3 (satisfactory). The analysis indicates that more than 40% of the teachers are capable to communicate effectively. Similarly (7-B), being part of the same standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' proficiency is related to use of Information communication Technologies (ICT). Data shows that majority of the teachers (88.8%) were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). The analysis shows that nearly 90% of the teachers don't use information communication technologies in their teaching-learning process.

The eighth standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is related to collaboration & partnership. Data (86.1%) shows that there is a wider gap between teachers and parents. The analysis shows that most of the teachers have no skill how to involve parents and the wider community to contribute students in their learning.

The ninth standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is related to continuous professional development. Data shows that most of the teachers (85.2%) were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). The analysis indicates that more than 85% teachers have weak adherence to professional development.

The tenth and the last standard of National Professional Standards of teachers' competency is related to Teaching of English as a second language. Data indicates that majority of the teachers (76.9%) were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). The analysis indicates that more than 70% of the teacher neither teach in target language nor teach English as a foreign language.

Overall result shows that 1.5% teachers were rated at level-1(Outstanding), 9.4% teachers were rated at level-2 (Good), and 26.1% teachers were rated at level-3 (Satisfactory) while 63.2% teachers were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). This analysis indicates that more than 60% teachers don't teach according to National professional standards.

Findings

After analysis of each individual standard, the following findings were noted

- The finding of the first standard that is subject matter knowledge shows that most of the teachers have partial understanding about their subject knowledge usually they teach without proper preparation and they were at level-4 (unsatisfactory).
- The finding of the second standard that is Human Growth and Development shows that majority of the teachers showed low degree of sensitivity to individual differences and were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory)
- Regarding standard-3, finding shows that more than half of the teachers were rated at level-3 (satisfactory)
- Finding of standard fourth (4-A) shows that majority of the teachers don't plan their lessons for instruction and were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). Similarly finding of standard fourth (4-B), being part of the same standard, shows that more than half of the teachers don't apply appropriate instructional strategies and were found unsatisfactory.
- Standard-5 was rated at level-3(satisfactory) which shows that nearly half of the teachers use a few assessment strategies to assess students' on a planned pattern.

- Finding of standard-6 shows that good number of teachers tries to create healthy learning environment in the classroom.
- Finding of standard seventh (7-A) shows that more than 40% of the teachers were capable to communicate effectively. Similarly standard (7-B), being part of the same standard shows that majority of the teachers were rated at level-4 (unsatisfactory). Which shows that most of the teachers don't use any technology of ICT to reinforce learning?
- Finding of standard-8 shows that most of the teachers have no skill how to involve parents and the wider community to contribute students in their learning.
- Finding of standard-9 shows that majority of the teachers have weak adherence to professional development and basic evidences of professional development were missing.
- The last standard shows that more than seventy percent of the teacher neither teach in target language nor teach English as a foreign language.

Discussion

The objective of the study was to evaluate the instructional performance of public sector primary school teachers in light of the prescribed standards in selected eight circles of district Peshawar. Results, on the basis of analysis, show that majority of the teachers were rated at level-4 which shows unsatisfactory performance as per national professional standers' criteria. While a rare portion of teachers partially demonstrated according to national professional standards. The results of the study is supported by Khan (2014)

"Teachers possess subject matter knowledge but below average level as the new textbooks are mainly in English which the teachers unable to teach due to lack of subject matter and content knowledge".⁶

About human growth and development, teachers Showed limited understanding of individual differences as during observation it was observed that slow learners were ignored and even instructional strategies were not according to learning styles of the students. Majority of the teachers neither planned nor used lesson plans. Regarding learning environment, the classrooms were found overcrowded. No concept of using ICT was observed during teaching learning process. Teachers were observed with lack of

assessment techniques. On the other hand, teachers were observed rarely engaged with parents and the wider community. Most of the teachers showed weak link to professional development as no evidence was observed regarding individual development plan, performance evidence log, professional portfolio, self-reflection or detail of instructional studies. Results of the study further indicate that majority of the teachers cannot communicate in target language due to lack of command on communication skill. Majority of primary school teachers don't know about national professional standards. During research when the teachers were asked about national professional standards, most of the teachers not only didn't know about national professional standards but even they remained unable just to tell the names or total number of standards which shows lack of command and awareness regarding national professional standards.

Conclusion

On the basis of findings it was concluded that National Professional standards are not fully practiced and most of the public sector teachers at boys' primary school level in district Peshawar are unaware of the national professional standards.

Recommendations

As a result of findings and discussion, the following recommendations were made.

- Findings of the study showed that National Professional Standards are not being thoroughly followed, so it is recommended that education department should chalk out a wide-ranging plan for the awareness, holistic training on each individual standard and supervision of school teachers in light of the approved Standards
- Conferences, Seminars, Workshops, refresher courses, Electronic and print media are recommended to be used for generating awareness among teachers.
- Teacher, being an agent of change, holds a central role in education system. So, the professional development of teachers must be based on qualitative aspects instead of quantitative factors. For sound professional development of the teacher it is recommended to be focused on conceptual, pedagogical and attitudinal level as only spotlighting change at instructional level will not work.

- It is also recommended to compose all standards on Panaflexes and frame in instructional classrooms so that to be inculcated by the teachers.
- Standards based performance appraisal system is recommended to be introduced to ensure overall comprehension and application of the standards.
- As a collaborative approach, a four tier model, for continuing professional development (CPD) is recommended which include self-Reflection, Teacher Group Meeting, classroom observation and supervision and need based annual professional development training.
- On the part of administration, it is also recommended to conduct regular research to evaluate the implementation of standards so that to update and upgrade them according to the required changes in National and international standards.
- A Teacher Performance Management Wing (TPMW) is recommended to be established to motivate the teachers towards quality instruction. Instead of seniority, Promotion must be conditioned to teacher's professional excellence. The TPMW should assess the teachers against set learning outcomes of the curriculum. Teacher Performance Management Process should include; Appraisal Policy, Professional standards for teaching , Job Description and Specification, Personal credentials Entry form, teaching Observation Checklist for supervisor, Students' Feedback Checklist on teachers performance, Performance Evidence log, individual development plan and teacher professional portfolio.

Notes & References

¹ K.M. Ibrahim, *Tarbiat-e-Asateze* (Islamabad: Pakistan Education Foundation, 1997), 127

² National Education Policy 1998-2010, p.47

³ K.M. Ibrahim, *Tarbiat-e-Asateze*, *op.cit.*, 326

⁴ Electronic Management Information System (EMIS-2014). Education Department District Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan.

⁵ Robert V. Krejcie & Daryle W. Morgan, "Determining sample size for research activities", *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 30, no. 3 (1970): 607-610.

⁶ Rahim Khan, *A Comprehensive Approach To Educational Psychology: The more you learn the better you teach* (Germany: Lambert Publishing Agency, 2012).