



Teachers' and Education Managers' Perceptions and Practices Regarding National Professional Standards for Teachers: A Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

Quality education is the birthright of every individual and this can only be possible when our teachers are adequately aware of and equipped with the National Professional Standards for Teachers. The current qualitative multiple case study explores this phenomenon by using purposive sampling technique with four cases (from rural and urban districts) alongwith eight teachers from each compulsory subject i.e. (English, Urdu, Islamiat and Pakistan Studies) as well as the EDO's and CEO's of both districts. All research requisites were duly fulfilled such as improvement and validation of instrument; triangulation of data etc. The results revealed that some teachers practiced those standards unknowingly while others knew a little but were curious to get themselves professionally improved. This study recommends that there is a dire need for raising awareness among teachers and education managers. The government should enhance the quality of education through teacher appraisal and evaluation.

Key Words: NPST, Teachers, Head Teachers, Secondary level, Multiple Case-Study

Introduction

Education is the key factor and the integral variable which pronounces about the status of a nation or country as developed or progressive in the world. Education offers us a profound understanding of how to enhance or improve a nation on academic and intellectual grounds. What's more, the educator is the founding stone whom the entire process of education counts upon and he, along with the other managing academicians, is solely responsible for the entire process of nation building in the true sense of meaning (Minhas, 2012).

The ever-increasing interest of the educational world has expected to be geared up for the professional development of teachers. The idea of engaging teachers has been changed throughout the world and an entirely new concept has been introduced for presenting teacher assessment and accreditation, a framework to evaluate the individual and expert skills of the educators. Teacher effectiveness in enhancing students' learning potential and achievement fosters a solid link with the research studies produced during the last twenty years. (Darling Hammond, 2003).

Objectively speaking, the main essence of professional standards for a teacher is to ensure commitment to student learning capacity and potential, enhancement of professional knowledge and practice, shared experiences, subject-based and objective learning, collaborative learning and kinship. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that the impact of teacher's quality education could be observed upon student's learning for the years to come even if not having direct contact with an individual teacher (Mendro, 1998). For this reason, drastic measures have been taken up to guarantee optimum quality in educating and learning.

Ample research studies on the global level, have proven that teacher quality, being one of the paramount school components, casts a domineering effect on student achievement. (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2001; Santiago, 2002). Several developed and developing countries of Europe, North and South America including England, New Zealand, United States, Chile and Argentina have come up with certain educational reforms triggered by standard-based education and all these above-mentioned countries have heavily stressed on developing even far more effective professional standards which positively garner educational reforms. (Gordon & Whitty, 1997; Hursh, 2001; Phillips, 1998).

Undoubtedly, the professional standards ascertain quality teaching and they are equally crucial and conducive to lots of national education policy development but there is still an unanswered question that is how these professional standards play their part and work out well within these systems? (Tuinamuna, 2011, p. 72). Though in Pakistan, Professional Teachers Standards found its origin in 2009, yet there are many things going against the odds as how to put an end to the uncertainty

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regarding the implementation and practice of these standards. Another uncertainty lies in the form of whether these standards are sufficiently studied before their implementation and whether they can achieve the desired quality of education while keeping in view the interests of both the stakeholders. (Tuinamuana, 2011).

The standards sketched out by UNESCO (2008), covering professional knowledge, certain expertise and dispositions, determine and specify competencies, acquired skills and strengths thought to be indispensable for teachers, channelize the prolonged and long-lasting development of pre- and in-service teacher-education programmes, formulate policies, develop effective procedures and systems for assigning teacher education programmes and institutions offering them; and also take the public in confidence about the quality of their teachers, teaching outputs and learning outcomes of both the teachers and the students. (as cited in Shakir, 2012).

Messo (2010) states that in Pakistan a project under the title "Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP)" was launched in Pakistan on October 12, 2005. The primary objective of this revolutionary project was to enhance the government's capacity to ensure better teacher education by improving policy framework, coordination and standard-setting. One of the most significant activities of this groundbreaking project was to formulate culturally viable national professional standards for teacher accreditation and certification and also to form workable strategies for enhancing the potential and improving the status of teachers and their profession.

Pakistan's Ministry of Education, in close collaboration with UNESCO and the monetary assistance of USAID, sketched out and implemented the National Professional Standards for Teachers only a decade ago on February 23, 2009.

These Standards are

1. Subject Matter Knowledge
2. Human Growth and Development
3. Knowledge of Islamic/Ethical Values/Social Life Skills
4. Instructional Planning and Strategies
5. Assessment
6. Learning Environment
7. Effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies
8. Collaboration and Partnerships
9. Continuous Professional Development and Code of Conduct

Standard-based improvement of instructors and different teachers are fine instances of the worldwide development of value affirmation in numerous fields of human attempt. With a basic point of view, quality confirmation in training dissects the variables that add to the instructive quality, screens their nearness in the framework, and assesses the effect they have on under studies learning (Government of Pakistan, 2009). Each standard comprises three parts;

- a. Knowledge (content, what the teacher knows about his subject).
- b. Disposition (behavior, attitude, values).
- c. Performance and skills (what the teacher can do and should be able to do).

Significance of the Study

Teacher's professional standards state knowledge, skills and competencies of teachers which enhance student learning (i.e. effective teachers). Although the content is important, some thought must be given to how the standards will be measured (norms and assessment). The specified area requires in-depth research as the previous research studies, in this regard, are few and far between in our regional setting. There is hardly any research studies that (Akram & Zepeda, 2015; Messo, 2010; Shakir, 2012) have been conducted in Pakistan on National Professional Standards for Teachers. In Pakistan, no in-depth research studies have been conducted to analyze and assess teachers' awareness and practices in accordance with NPST.

Therefore, it is needed to evaluate this crucial aspect regarding NPST to achieve the quality embedded outcomes of teachers. This study considers to include education head teachers and secondary school teachers in this research who are directly or indirectly involved in applying those standards. The key focus of the study is to explore the precipitations and practices of NPST among head teachers and secondary school teachers. This study might be beneficial for the school managers to strategies on how to improve the performance of the teachers by making them aware of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). The present research may also be helpful in bringing drastic and positive changes in the practice of teaching and it also be conducive in improving awareness and practices of standards.

Objectives of the Present Research

1. To explore the teachers' and education managers' precipitation and practices about National Professional Standards for teachers at secondary school level in urban and rural district of Punjab.
2. To find out the similarities and differences between urban and rural secondary school teachers regarding NPST.

To achieve the above-stated research objectives, these research questions were formulated

1. What are the teachers' and education managers' perceptions about National Professional Standards for Teachers?
2. What are the similarities and differences between urban and rural secondary school teachers concerning the implementation of NPST?

Delimitation of the Study

As the researcher found these standards to be more in practice in the secondary schools, therefore, the present study was delimited to the following NPSTs i.e. subject-matter knowledge, learning environment, knowledge of Islamic values, instructional planning and strategies and assessment.

Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative case study design to understand settings in which teachers are practicing National Professional Standards for Teachers. Within the case study design, it was a multiple case study to explore and compare different strategies and approaches between the cases that are employed for the implementation of those standards. Since the study aims to explore context-specific practices thus it is a kind of empirical inquiry that explores the current phenomena in their real-life (Yin, 1994).

Purposive criterion sampling technique was used to select the sample. Here the researcher first chooses two districts of Punjab on a convenient basis. From each district, two well-established schools were selected through purposive sampling as a case. From the developed district, two secondary schools and two schools from underdeveloped district, chosen. These two districts were chosen to explore a variety of practices and strategies for an in-depth understanding of the topic. District one is well developed and metropolitan district of Punjab province while the second is underdeveloped district of Southern Punjab. Eight secondary school teachers (two teachers from each school) by using purposive sampling technique. The education managers' (head-teachers', DEOs & CEOs') were selected by using purposive sampling technique, as per their willingness

and availability. Semi-structured interviews and observations were developed by the researcher with the help of the supervisor to collect the data. This instrument was validated and improved in the light of experts' opinions. Research ethics were observed during the study and before the data collection. Themes were generated and interpreted which were relevant to the research questions of the study.

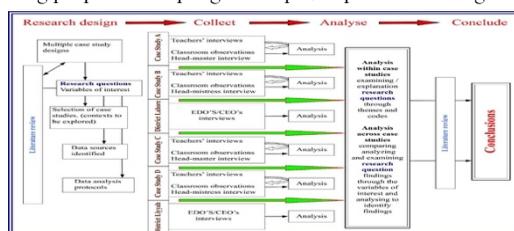


Figure 1: Research Design

Cross Case Studies Analysis

The cross-analysis of the four schools under study revealed awareness and practices of National Professional Standards for Teachers among teachers and education managers. According to Aristotle, the “whole is more than some of the parts.” This cross-analysis offered an insightful view of all four cases to the readers in an elaborate manner. Of course, it shed ample light on the rationale of all the case studies with its entirety. Additionally, it also tended to explore the similarities and dissimilarities across the participants for the same data. Semi-structured data are gathered from the participants of all four case studies in the form of interviews and then, the researcher presented those data in true letter and spirit outlining general themes, self-determination need themes, and protective factor theme needs. The data collected was carefully examined and then synthesized to filter out the findings across all the case studies. The common demographics for each school were all the headmasters and headmistresses who got training on NPSTs from DSD office. The strength of all four schools was slightly above 1500 and these sampled schools were selected from Central and Southern Punjab i.e. two from metropolitan areas of much developed city of Lahore and the other two from the remote areas of Layyah. Interestingly, all the sampled schools rose to eminence in their respective areas due to their dedicated staff and outstanding academic records. Most of the teachers had earned at least a Master degree whereas a few had also done M.Phil. in their respective subjects. There were certain similarities in between the responses gathered from various participants which aimed to reveal their awareness and practice of the NPSTs. Cross case analysis, analyze the responses of all the participants concerning each standard prescribed in the NPSTs just to know how much the participants were aware of the major themes and sub-themes of these standards across the case studies.

Table 1. Demographics of the Schools

Categories	School A	School B	School C	School D
Region	District Lahore	District Lahore	District Layyah	District Layyah
City Classification	Urban	Urban	Remote	Remote

City Population	11.13 million	11.13 million	26,798	26, 798
School Level	Gov. secondary schoolboys	Gov. secondary school girls	Gov. secondary school boys	Gov. secondary school girls
Faculty-staff size	47	26	28	44
Principal's year at school	5years	8 years	10 years	9 years
Students strength	1500	700	1350	1550

Findings of the Study

Findings have revealed several shocking discoveries that are sufficient enough for the concerned authorities to take solid steps towards those unheeded areas and unsolved issues. As in all the four cases, the head-teachers and head-mistresses were found to be trained from the DSD office and they had a practical approach towards NPST but it was quite strange that they never prompted their teaching staff to get training on it or sent a recommendation to the Govt. office for the teachers' training on these standards. Only the headmistress, among one of the four cases mentioned above, took pains in making her staff members aware of these standards to let them work more efficiently. The researcher gathered teachers' responses on each standard and concluded that most of the participants were unconsciously practicing these standards without having proper knowledge of these standards. The researcher also found out that fairly a large number of participants had a bit awareness about these standards but they weren't practicing them due to their casual attitude. They were also shy of getting proper training on these standards from any Govt. institution.

Results and Discussion

Teachers' professional standards state knowledge, skills and competencies of teachers which enhance student learning (i.e. effective teachers). Although the content is important, some thought must be given to how standards will be measured (norms and assessment). The specified area requires an in-depth research as the previous research studies, in this regard, are few and far between in our regional setting. There are hardly any research studies that (Akram & Jadda, 2015; Messo, 2010; Shakir, 2012) have been conducted in Pakistan on National Professional Standards for Teachers. In Pakistan, no in-depth research studies have been conducted to analyze and assess teachers' awareness and practices following NPSTs. Therefore, there is a dire need to evaluate this crucial aspect regarding NPST to achieve the quality embedded outcomes of teachers. This study tends to include secondary school teachers in this research who are directly involved in applying those standards. The categories or themes that encompassed the objectives of the present study are discussed below.

Subject Matter Knowledge

Though well-equipped still lacking in practice

It goes without saying that 'Subject matter knowledge' opens up a new vista to check the application, balance, competency, depth and exposure of subject-related knowledge of the teachers and; how they apply it per the national curriculum standards and make use of everyday examples to make learning an easy and enjoyable experience for the students. The interviews with the participants revealed some of the most shocking results as only a few of the participants exhibited a fairly good range of subject-related knowledge but they showed casual attitude in the classroom while practicing these standards and thus unable to meet the learning objectives of the students. As one of the participants from School A narrates:

"Well, I do feel that it fairly caters to the needs of our students and I also don't feel that they are lacking somewhere as our students are endowed with sufficient potential to vie with anyone either on the National or international level."

Results of the study show that more than 70% of the secondary school teachers from all case studies (teachers) did not know about the national curriculum framework while a very few teachers were found having updated their subject knowledge in accordance with the three instruments included in each standard prescribed by NPST. This appears to support the views of (Safia, 2005;) that majority of the education managers opined that most of the secondary school teachers needed a comprehensive training session to have a desirable command over the content they had to teach.

There has been quite a wide gap between the practicability and the implementation of these standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The findings of the study further indicate that less than half of the secondary school teachers knew how to relate subject knowledge with other disciplines of studies and were using different examples from other subjects. It was observed that approximately half of the teachers rarely facilitated their students in their learning process by using different teaching techniques and related the knowledge in real world situations.

This situation well reflected in a couple of interviews conducted with the participants of sampled school B where one of the teachers said blatantly "Right techniques, basic equipment and time are the primary requisites that count while teaching

subject matter knowledge.” On the other hand, T2 also added the same thing in different words, “Basic concepts and theories of the subject influence the subject matter knowledge.” T2 seems to be more realistic and pragmatic than that of T1.

It was quite a commendable thing that the researcher found most of the teachers well-versed in their relevant subject and had adequate knowledge about major contents of their subject and all had desirable command on it. Certainly, there were a few newly inducted teachers from both districts who were quite curious to update their knowledge in line with the modern trends. The senior teachers required a bit of motivation to synchronize their knowledge with the current times. But only a fraction of teachers tried to develop confidence among the students so that they may apply the acquired knowledge more confidently in their practical life. The results revealed that more than 70% of the teachers in all four cases were found to have little know-how or understanding about the process of upgrading or acquiring their subject-related knowledge whereas the remaining participants occasionally updated their subject knowledge. These findings are in close affinity with Shakir’s (2012) findings who also conducted elaborate research on evaluation of teachers’ professional efficiencies and competencies based on NPSTs. His study unearthed this phenomenon that most of the teachers were found to have a weak grip on subject matter knowledge.

Most of the teachers (school C and D) in remote areas during classroom observation hardly value the diverse talents of all students to stimulate their understanding, explaining of content knowledge in multiple ways and using appropriate inquiry tools according to the student’s prior knowledge. So, after a careful analysis of the first standard, we can conclude that the newly inducted teachers showed better command, competency and application of their subject matter knowledge in the wider social context than their veteran colleagues.

NPST 2 Human Growth and Development

“Claim more – know little” Human growth and development were considered the second standard for the professional development of teachers. The researcher investigated the teachers’ awareness and knowledge about this standard across the case studies and found out that the teachers from the case A and D i.e. from the metropolitan area of Lahore were a bit cognizant with the students’ academic needs but they were not taking prudent measures to make it an added advantage for the students’ academic progress and development. Some of the teachers from both case B and case C i.e. from the remote district of Layyah also bothered to look positively into this matter with no significant progress whereas all the teachers across the case studies were actively engaged in motivating their students for personal grooming and academic growth. Though the teachers were not properly trained on this particular standard of NPSTs yet most of the teachers were unconsciously applying various methods of teachings in the classroom to promote learning skills among the students.

The majority of teachers in urban and remote district had a point of view during face to face interview. Case A, T remarked, “Teachers should provide chances to present themselves in class and teacher should appreciate every little effort made by students, through this way, teacher can help the students in unraveling their hidden abilities.” From case B, T commented, “After parents, the teacher is the only person who plays a key role in students’ character building. We, as teachers, are a changing agent to change the mindset of the students.”

Case C and D, T had this view, “Teachers usually rely on the rectification of the students’ academic mistakes and errors rather they should also be active in rectifying any moral lapse of the students. Generally, I provide my students comfort level in the class so that they could express themselves where necessary and it gives them a sense of self-esteem and I also respect their opinions to build their confidence level.”

Data revealed that the majority of the teachers teaching at secondary schools were not as competent as they were deemed to be. They had slight knowledge of how to construct student’s knowledge. Another most important element of human growth and development was the assumed understanding of individual differences. According to Hinchliff, (2009), an indispensable role played by the knowledge of individual differences is the way of how and what we learn and apply our acquired knowledge accordingly. During the result filtering process, it was found that 24 out of 32 teachers were not well-versed in their understanding about the individual difference of students, the diverse styles of learning and using motivational strategies. It was also revealed that 20 out of 32 teachers were drastically found poor in appreciating multiple ways of getting knowledge while a negligible number of teachers were found who were appreciating the multiple ways of getting knowledge. The further results of the study showed that more than half of the secondary school teachers seldom committed to developing lifelong skills e.g. critical thinking, self-confidence, problem solving creative thinking and increased subject matter competency among the students. The performance of teachers was not up to the mark during the classroom observation.

It was observed that in all four cases, more than half of the teachers almost never committed to develop lifelong skills e.g. critical thinking, self-confidence, problem solving creative thinking skills among students, a few teachers were gauged that treat all students with equality hence most of the teachers were dealing with inequality.

Most of the teachers were treating the students without any bias with an exception of a few. Numerous teachers regularly appreciated the students for their high achievements through verbal and written expressions. They also believed that the learners could achieve higher goals only through extensive efforts and positive attitude and a few teachers also motivated them on how to attain higher distinction. Most of the teachers across the cases were reluctant to promote creative and thinking

skills among the students rather they were inculcating in them the run-down system of cramming which has crept deeper into our educational system so they were doing it. Most of the teachers were also unaware of the merits and benefits of communal and commercial activities that's why they were mostly unaware of the social collaboration and academic cooperation between the school, community and the teachers. Most of the teachers were motivating their students to use instructional technologies such as the internet, social media etc. to enhance their learning potential.

NPST 3 Knowledge of Islamic Ethical Values/Social Life Skills

"Mostly well-aware – a bit deficient in practice" is the axiom that truly reflects the essence of this standard. In the interviews, majority of the teachers said "knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills is very important for teachers. A teacher should know Islamic code of conduct and try to inculcate moral values among students. In the light of the observation, it is concluded that majority of secondary school teachers have very limited knowledge on how to promote general values among students while a very few teachers know the importance of peace in the society. T2 commented in detail, "They include our religious duties (Namaz, Roza, etc.) and other values like telling truth, avoiding evils, building up the qualities of tolerance, patience and brotherhood, we can promote a peaceful and harmonious culture free from any prejudice or bias."

T3 had a view that "It has been my routine since my induction that I write a moral lesson on the board, and then deliver a short lecture on it so that the students might be able to learn ethical virtues to be taught through that moral lesson with a few instances from the practical lives."

T4 had a pragmatic view on it, "I practice Islamic codes myself first, convincing through dialogue and informing students about Masnoon Ahadith on daily basis to enhance their awareness about the core Islamic values."

According to the results of the studies, it was concluded that 25 out of 32 teachers were not competent enough to exercise their knowledge of Islamic values and social life skills both in and out of the classroom activities. This situation was further supported by Safia (2005) as most of the secondary school teachers did not know how to promote Islamic values among the students. Though the researcher probed deeply into knowing their practices regarding it but she found that only a fraction of the teachers (4 or 5 out of 32 teachers) were imbuing the moral values in their students by demonstrating the practical examples of our Holy Prophet (SAWW). Their knowledge about ethical values and its impacts was also inadequate. Data also revealed that majority (90%) of secondary school teachers had very limited knowledge on how to promote ethical and social values among the students hence a very few teachers knew the importance of peace in the society. This lack of knowledge resulted in their poor understanding about the Holy Quran and the Islamic values such as tolerance, cooperation, celebration of diversity, equality, justice, fairness, etc. which could help them attain peace, progress and prosperity in various domains of the society. It was also observed that more than half of the teachers seldom solved conflicts through Islamic teaching.

The cross-case analysis of all four cases has brought this phenomenon on the surface that most of the participants are well-acquainted with the Islamic code of life that comprises core values, ethical precepts and religious dogmas. Knowledge and practice of Islamic and ethical values, precepts and dogmas were common to almost all the teachers across all the case studies and the researcher found that all of them were quite sufficiently aware of the Islamic code of life. Most of the teachers from all the case studies were not only aware of these core ethical values and moral virtues but they were not regularly promoting them in their classroom through short lectures carrying moral themes such as tolerance, brotherhood, empathy, patience, perseverance and some of the teachers were taking pains in preaching these values as their lectures were supplemented by lucid examples from the glorious lives of the great Muslims of the past who shaped the history of the world through their meritorious works. A large fraction of teachers across all the case studies were trying to demonstrate these values by their behaviour in and outside the classrooms so that the students might tread on their heels and regard them as their role models.

The results of the observation also revealed that most of the teachers know the impact of bias on student's learning hence approximately the same number of teachers showed poor performance regarding practicing moral values in school, Islamic teaching to create harmony and development of learning community in which individuals are respected.

It was also observed that more than half of the teachers rarely tended to sort out conflicts through Islamic teaching.

NPST 4 Instructional Planning and Strategies

Scarce knowledge – Rare Practice

The use of different methods and techniques remains an issue during the entire classroom observation indicated the majority of the teachers did not know even the objectives of the curriculum; a very few teachers knowing curriculum objectives.

The study has revealed that most of the teachers occasionally value the pedagogy of collaboration, developing problem solving skills among students, team work and cooperative learning. It was concluded that more than half of the teachers seldom organized instructional activities while very few were found competent who frequently organized instructions for an effective lesson. It was evident from the words of a participant when he says:

“It has been my routine since my induction as a teacher that I try to design instruction as per the caliber and capacities of my students so that they might feel comfortable and focused during learning process. In this way, the students’ confidence, learning style, academic potential and strengths can also be boosted.”

Another participant was of this view, “Instructional Planning is extremely important in the entire academic process as it ensures better learning among the students and he further added that I usually apply the simple and easy-to-understand method and also give examples from everyday life so that the students’ concepts regarding some specific topic could be clarified and improved properly.”

T3 said emphatically, “I always try to develop collaborative skills among my students so that they could master the collaborative skills in order to figure out everyday problems concerning their subject more drastically. I also give them hints where necessary so that they could easily tackle complex issues more effectively and efficiently.”

This standard empowers the teachers to formulate dynamic and effective instructional strategies and map out appropriate lesson plans so that the learning objectives could be achieved in the true sense of meaning. It also checks how much the teachers are aware of various instructional strategies that enable them to enhance the learning skills of the students. A close analysis of all the four case studies revealed that most of the teachers were partially or fully unaware of these instructional strategies and even they were not fully aware of various teaching methods as they were just using the old talk and chalk method in the classrooms and were a bit reluctant to use other instructional and teaching methods. The researcher also found that the teachers were just maintaining their teachers’ diaries to use it as proof what they taught what is left to be taught. The teachers in most of the cases did not have proper know-how what to do with instructional planning or mapping out effective teaching strategies and how to use teaching or instructional material and resources in the classroom to make learning effective for the students. Contrarily, the teachers from the urban district of Lahore were using a few modern instructional methods such as laptops, tablet computers even smartphones etc. to clarify the concepts of their students which is a positive sign in this regard. Here, what we need is to impart full-time training to the teachers from both the districts of Punjab so that the learning outcomes of the curriculum could be adequately achieved. There is also a dire need to impart training to the teachers about the life-skills and classroom management so that the teachers could ensure quality in their teaching process and also maintain a long-lasting discipline in the classroom so that the learning potential of the students could be enhanced on an emergency basis.

Standard-4 *instructional planning and strategies*, play an instrumental role that concentrates on showing you how to make good decisions about what to plan and how to teach effectively. During classroom observations, use of different methods and techniques remains an issue that indicates a significant impact on teaching and learning process. The analysis of the study indicated that majority of the teachers (25 out of 32 teachers) had no awareness about the learning objectives of our national curriculum that is why they were found irresponsible and inapt in attaining curriculum objectives while Safia (2005), an emerging scholar in the modern educational research field of Pakistan, refutes this viewpoint in her study as she holds that “fairly a large number of teachers are well-acquainted with the main aims and objectives of the content to be taught in the classes” whereas Siddiqui, another young scholar (2010), in his study, had different viewpoint as he says that most of the teachers had no adequate knowledge about the chief motives of our national curriculum. In the meanwhile, (Anderson, 1991), opines that competent and efficient teachers not only attain those goals formulated by themselves but they also pursue those goals set by others for them (Anderson, 1991). Further data revealed that most of the teachers showed poor performance while applying a variety of instructional approaches (scarce knowledge about instructional approaches), out of school activities, various classroom management techniques, value the pedagogy of collaboration, developing problem-solving skills among students, team-work and cooperative learning. Siddiqui (2010) and Safia (2005) seemed to agree with the results that the majority of the teachers failed to employ effective teaching methods. They are professionally trained but are not using proper methodologies. Most of the secondary school teachers demonstrated poor performance in using different methods and strategies for effective learning and were categorized as emerging teachers.

NPST 5 Assessment

“Good awareness – Ineffective practice” Almost more than half of the secondary school teachers know various methods of assessment and how to improve students’ learning through assessment but did not know how to practice it in the classroom. As one of the participants has reflected the same point in his words:

“In my view, formative assessment is best for the academic development of the students because it gives us an immediate response to how much extent, some student has mastered some skills.”

Another teacher preferred a different assessment technique, “I think, through the annual examination system, students are subject to memorize concepts for a longer period of time and their knowledge remains intact in the long run.”

On the contrary, one of the participants was more creative in the area of students’ evaluation as he added that “I design quiz competitions for the students on weekly basis, use students report cards, develop students portfolio, test items, to assess the students’ assessments and assessment through computers built in my opinion, annual assessment system is not thoroughly

reliable and valid as it only measures the students' capacity to learn or memorise rather than to evaluate the students' true potential."

The study concluded that almost half of the teachers evaluated teaching through continuous internal assessment while the majority of teachers never tried to feedback through continuous internal assessment. Most of the teachers believed in summative assessment.

It was also found that the majority of the teachers never report the students' progress to their parents in remote areas. On the other hand, in urban areas, teachers were found to share students' learning achievements with their parents.

Assessment is the sum and substance of all the learning and teaching practice. This standard helps both the students and teachers to learn about what they have learnt and what they need to learn. It focuses on the students' academic needs and the teachers' professional skills to acquire the learning outcomes of their teaching process. It mainly revolves around certain methods of assessment such as formative, summative, oral, written, quizzes, self-assessment etc. A careful analysis of the cross-case studies revealed that most of the teachers were aware of the different assessment methods and were practicing them as such. Great a many participants were well-cognizant with the traditional assessment methods applied in our country and they lamented over it once again. Though some of them were using the bi-weekly or bi-monthly (fortnightly) method of written assessment yet the others were more convinced to make use of oral assessment, especially in the Islamiyat and computer subject.

Furthermore, the researcher found that many of the teachers were unconsciously applying various methods of assessment and successfully evaluating the learners' abilities so that the academic and psychological growth of the students and their learning outcomes could be fairly achieved.

In this study, it is found that a little more than half of the secondary school teachers knew various methods of assessment and how to improve student's learning through assessment but did not know how to practice it effectively in the classroom. Reliability and validity of the test were considered a major concern during classroom observation, they were found very weak in test constructions. The reason is quite apparent that they were not properly trained in the area of assessment and evaluation; therefore, their competency in test development was reported to be very weak. The course on measurement and evaluation be enriched and made compulsory in all teacher-training programmes. All the teachers have the task of keeping records and making reports of students' absences and late-comings. This situation was further supported by Stonge (2006) that a great number of school teachers consider maintaining and preparing students' academic records a burdensome and tiresome activity.

Conclusion

As a whole, the study concluded that most of the secondary school teachers found in this study showed a bit acquaintance with the National Professional Standards for Teachers but their potential and talents were not latent as the attitude of most of the participants was casual rather than truly professional due to lack of opportunities regarding professional development.

The comparative results of the study showed that newly hired secondary school teachers (inducted after 2012) were found to be more active, enthusiastic, well-informed and competent than those of other teachers.

Summing up all the above-mentioned four cases, it can be stated that there is a dire need to promote awareness about (NPSTs) among the teachers where the government should keep a vigilant eye on the quality of education through regular inspections by education experts and subject specialists which is quite an uphill task but if done tactically then it can tackle all the barriers in the way of teachers' awareness about these standards in order to bring out the desired outcomes.

Recommendations

After findings have been made and conclusions have been drawn, it becomes indispensable to put forward a handful of worthwhile recommendations so that the main premise of quality teaching might be projected and the professional development of teachers could be enhanced.

1. Overall, there is a dire need to conduct extensive training sessions, in-service workshops to make the teachers well-cognizant with all the ten standards prescribed in the NPSTs.
2. It is recommended that if the government offers training workshops regarding Subject-matter knowledge, the teachers might be more curious and enthusiastic to update their subject-matter knowledge in line with the latest trends in various disciplines of studies so that they could effectively inculcate certain ideas and clarify various concepts to their students by alluding to the everyday examples and situations.
3. Classroom management skills are essential for successful teaching. So, if the education managers may take solid steps for the better awareness of instructional planning and strategies then teaching quality and students' learning outcomes might better be ensured and achieved.
4. Innovative assessment techniques such as "Item Bank Development" based on Bloom-Taxonomy" regarding paper setting and checking might equip the teachers to enhance their evaluative skills and assessment methods.

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