National Professional Standards for Teachers: Awareness, Perspective & Implementation in Pakistan

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of prospective teachers about the awareness of the implementation of national professional standards for teachers. The present study was descriptive followed by a survey method. The study was quantitative and the survey was used as the research design. The questionnaire was used as a research tool. Male and female prospective teachers of the pre-service teacher education program, B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary of four public sector universities of Azad Kashmir session 2015-19 was the population of the study. The sample size was determined by using a stratified proportionate sampling technique. And the sample size was calculated by the Raosoft sample size determining formula. Thus the sample size was 196. In this study, the questionnaire was used as a research tool. All the statements of the questionnaire were according to the topic and objective of the study. The questionnaire was validated by the experts of the relevant field. According to the opinions and suggestions of the experts, statements were changed. The reliability of the questionnaire was measuring internal consistency by using Chronbach Alpha. Its value was found to 0.85. For data collection, a questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the sampled prospective teachers of the pre-service teacher education program B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary of public sector universities of Azad Kashmir.

Keywords: Implementation, National Professional Standards, Prospective Teachers, Perceptions

Introduction

The development of a nation depends upon its quality education system. The quality of education is directly determined by the leadership feature in the classroom. The work of the teacher is seen as the most important factor in making all the educational changes at the initial stage. The teaching process is influenced by academic opportunities, subject information, teaching skills and abilities, and teacher responsibility. Besides, given the increasing quality of education in various dimensions, efforts need to be stepped up to ensure that teacher training programs are implemented and that there is sufficient demand to improve the skills of the people (National Education Policy, 1998-2010). To produce world-class teachers, they must be developed on standard-based approaches of professional development teacher education programs. The standards state the knowledge, skills, and competencies of teachers that enhance students' learning. Without professional development standards for teachers, neither quality can be assured nor measured (Özyürek, 2007). Teacher professional development is just as important as sustenance. As the soulless body ages, the untrained teacher also becomes outdated (Peterson, 2007). Hewson (2007) states that the 35th President of the United States, Kennedy, has declared his teacher the main pillar of society. He called the teacher the backbone of the community and the nation. He emphasized that the letter was not a signal of a formal antitrust inquiry into the allegations.

Education, as it is the foundation of all that remains, occupies a high position in society; therefore there is a burning need to properly equip teachers with the latest teaching strategies to meet the growing demands of this profession. To meet the growing demand in the world of teaching, we have set up a teacher education program for professional development for teachers (Tuinamuana, 2006). In this regard, the Government of Pakistan has also set a professional standard for teachers. The Ministry of Education, with USAID financial assistance, has developed a national standard for

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ten teachers for teachers in Pakistan. These standards were allowed to take effect on February 23, 2009. These standards are, in fact, the mainstay of quality education but the question remains as to whether they have the same attitudes and interests as expected. Therefore, efforts are being made to review the content of the pre-service teacher education program related to the National Standards for Teachers in Pakistan and to conduct a survey of teacher prospectus awareness on the standards to be followed. Teacher work for pre-service teachers. Curriculum for teachers at public universities in Azad Kashmir.

Teaching is a lively and worthwhile occupation. Excellent teachers deliver to their students ironic, stimulating, and all-around learning experiences. Realizing the significant role of professional standards for teachers in teacher education programs, the study will focus on the implementation of national professional standards for teachers about pre-service teacher education programs in Azad Kashmir. Pre-service education programs at Azad Kashmir are executed at primary, elementary, and secondary levels. Academic achievement of students at the primary and elementary level is satisfactory, while at the secondary level academic achievement needs improvement (Education Department of AJK, 2016). Therefore the present study will focus on teacher education program B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary of public sector universities of Azad Kashmir.

Literature Review

Professional standards for teachers can be traced back to the founding of the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards in the United States in 1946. Their main goal was to raise the status of teaching to the profession (Cochran, 2009). Standards for teachers have been developed in many countries to ensure quality teacher training programs. In Pakistan, USAID provided financial support to the Ministry of Education in developing national professional standards for teachers. On February 23, 2009, the standards were allowed to apply.

Professional development is a vital component in improving the quality of teaching and learning. It keeps the teachers equipped with updated knowledge and helps them to tackle the teaching and learning issues more effectively. Continuous learning of the teachers brings positive change in students learning. Teachers with teacher education programs are expected to deliver better results than fewer or none. The teacher education program is considered as a process that develops the information span, abilities, capabilities, competencies, and behaviors of the participants so that they can get a better learning experience for students. The teacher education program is an important part of teacher development programs. It enhances the skills required for accepting the challenges of the teaching, some teaching skills can only be developed by reflective strategies. Prospective teachers will bring variety in the teaching strategies for the teachers and numerous results are affected by teacher education programs (ASU, 2004).

The importance of pre-service teacher education programs has been accepted globally for the last three decades. Developed nations have realized that in raising quality, training programs for teachers are very necessary. They can be in-service and pre-service programs. They will be a rich source for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge by developing an in-depth understanding of instructional strategies. Effective teacher training programs are the sole contributors to the holistic development of students. Application-level, that the use of knowledge in own context and situation makes a training program effective and efficient towards successful execution (Hayes, 1997).

Every one of the nations of the world is constantly attempting to enhance the nature of teacher education. The nations at beginning times of advancement are attempting to guarantee the transmission of basic skills just and concentrating on getting more teachers in the classroom. Developed nations are concentrating on growing high order cognitive skills in students, for tending their complex needs; these nations are fortifying the quality of the teaching workforce by teacher education programs (OECD, 2013).

The basic aim of the training program is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the teachers. The involvement of parents in the school's program is a key factor in the upbringing of children. Trained teachers can engage parents in the school's activities. Knowledge including curriculum, content knowledge and pedagogy, craft skills including planning, classroom management, and use of ICT, dispositions including values and beliefs of the teacher. The teacher education programs should also prepare teachers to undertake other school and community responsibilities. Both scholastic and co-scholastic areas needed to be addressed in training programs (Williamson, 2008).

Memorized based teaching has been shifted to student-centered instructional activities. It is also based on analytic and critical thinking. Simple methods of teacher-centered were dominating but now activity-based having skill learning is in practice. The shifting will be more fruitful if the teachers having better knowledge, skill, and understanding of implementing new classroom practices (Barrow *et al*, 2007).

Effective teacher training programs should contain factors such as an innovative approach, adequate duration with a continuous reflection on teaching methodology, support from the school leaders, teachers working in groups for sharing questions, experiences, reflections, and their beliefs about teaching. Benchmarks are set, what to achieve from any specific training programs. The setting of the benchmark is derived from standards which are prevailed not only in the country but also related to the other countries. These create links towards the whole world. Teachers should be given opportunities to build up ownership of the professional development program and the innovations brought about in the program (Adey, 2004).

Teacher training has shown raise concerning its significance and status. It has developed as an international movement for three decades. It is now accepted by several countries as the major factor in an approach to raising the quality in the provision of education. Teacher education programs facilitate teachers to become vastly proficient by growing and progressing their understanding through better use of active teaching and learning techniques (Hayes, 1997).

It has been stated by Hillard (2001) that while considering teaching as a developed profession, training related to teacher becomes its important part. The education system requires teachers to have essential knowledge and skills to fulfill the demands of the profession. Memorization based information is not sufficient in this era of technology. It should be extended with understanding and complete compression. Knowledge alone can be of no importance if it has not been practiced and transferred to the students. These qualities in the teacher can be developed only by the programs which can train and develop them.

Furlong and Maynard (1995) also highlighted teaching as a complex process, which requires a variety of skills including decision making and revising decisions in light of new observations, reflections, feedback, and linking theory to the practical work. Without appropriate training programs for teachers, they can't be equipped with modern methods and technologies.

The selection of the pre-service training program's content that will be covered during the program is an integral part of the design. Program content will be delivered to the prospective teachers. Objectives guide the professional to select which content is needed to achieve the objectives. The content plays important role in effective learning and applying the learning in work situations, especially the content directly related to their tasks. Another important aspect that helps the prospective teachers to apply what they have learned is the practical approach to the content (Lim *et al*, 2007).

After the selection of content, the instructional methodology needs to be determined. The faculty member should use a variety of methods to maximize the learning by catering to the needs of diverse learners. Noe (2008) compared the training methods concerning their effect in transferring the training. According to his comparison table group, building methods and simulations have the highest rate of transferring the training.

Case studies, role plays, and business games have a medium rate of transferring the training while the presentation and lecture method has the lowest rate of transfer. Each component of the training method has its strength and limitation, some components can be expensive and others can be too lengthy, the faculty members should carefully select the most appropriate method in the given situation (Hargreaves, 2000).

The final component of pre-service teacher education design is feedback and evaluation. It is meant for collecting data about how well the trainees met the training objectives. Timely and focused feedback should be practiced. Feedback and evaluation data can provide us with information about the satisfaction of the prospective teachers with the pre-service teacher education program and the faculty members. Another important aspect is that the satisfaction level of the prospective teachers also determines how they will implement the learning from the program in their workplace. A higher satisfaction level will increase the effective implementation of teach (Phillips, 2002).

Objective of the Study
The main objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of prospective teachers about the awareness of the implementation of national professional standards for teachers.

Delimitations of the Study
The study was delimited to:
1.   Only four public sector universities of Azad Kashmir
2.   Only pre-service teacher education program; B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary
3.   Only prospective teachers of session 2015-2019

Research Methodology
Research Design
The present study was descriptive followed by a survey method.

Research Population
The population of the study was comprised of 411 Male and female prospective teachers of the pre-service teacher education program, B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary of four public sector universities of Azad Kashmir. All these male and female prospective teachers of the pre-service teacher education program, B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary of four public sector universities of Azad Kashmir was enrolled in the session 2015-19.

Sampling Procedure
The sample size was determined by using a stratified proportionate sampling technique. And the sample size was calculated by the Raosoft sample size determining formula. Thus the sample size was 196.

Instruments of the Study
An adapted questionnaire based on UNESCO's feedback questionnaire for national professional standards for teachers in Pakistan was used to investigate perceptions of prospective teachers.

Validity and Reliability
The questionnaire was reviewed twice, once by a panel of experts in education and statistics, the second sample was administered to the same type of respondents with a small number of samples. Ambiguous items and statements were omitted. The questionnaire and checklist are also validated by measuring internal consistency using Chronbach Alpha. Its value was found at 0.85.

Data Collection
For data collection, a questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the sampled prospective teachers of the pre-service teacher education program B.Ed. (Hons.) Secondary of public sector universities of Azad Kashmir.

Data Analysis
Quantitative data analysis was performed by using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-21). Analysis Miner (QDAM) and results were presented in the form of descriptive and inferential statements.

Results
Table 1 *Subject Matter Knowledge*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	32	17.6		
A	112	61.5		
UN	14	7.7	3.13	1.61
DA	12	6.6		
SDA	12	6.6		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 1 depicts that 17.6% strongly agreed with the statement, 61.5% agreed. 7.7% given no response, 6.6% agreed while 6.6% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of participants agreed with the statement that Subject Matter Knowledge.

Table 2 *Human Growth and Development*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	48	26.4		
A	62	34.1		
UN	26	14.3	381	2.11
DA	29	15.9		
SDA	17	9.3		

	Frequency	Percent		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 2 shows that 26.4% strongly agreed with the statement, 34.1% agreed. 14.3% given no response, 15.9% agreed while 9.3% strongly disagreed. Therefore, it's decided that a large number of participants agreed with the statement that Human Growth and Development.

Table 3 *Knowledge of Islamic Ethical Values/Social Life Skills*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	28	15.4		
A	76	41.8		
UN	42	23.1	4.21	2.41
DA	22	12.1		
SDA	14	7.7		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 3 indicates that 15.4% strongly agreed with the statement, 41.8% agreed. 23.1% given no response, 12.1% agreed while 7.7% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of participants agreed with the statement that Knowledge of Islamic Ethical Values/Social Life Skills.

Table 4 *Instructional Planning and Strategies*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	30	16.5		
A	90	49.5		
UN	33	18.1	3.29	2.91
DA	12	6.6		
SDA	17	9.3		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 4 directs that 16.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 49.5% agreed. 18.1% given no response, 6.6% agreed while 9.3% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of participants agreed with the statement that instructional planning and strategies.

Table 5 *Assessment*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	105	57.7		
A	12	6.6		
UN	45	24.7	4.21	2.71
DA	9	4.9		
SDA	11	6.0		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 5 reveals that 57.7% strongly agreed with the statement, 6.6% agreed. 24.7% given no response, 4.9% agreed while 6.0% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of the participants agreed with the statement that assessment.

Table 6 *Learning Environment*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	102	56.0		
A	38	20.9		
UN	30	16.5	3.92	2.33
DA	6	3.3		
SDA	6	3.3		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 6 shows that 56.0% strongly agreed with the statement, 20.9% agreed. 16.5% given no response, 3.3% agreed while 3.3% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of the participants agreed with the statement that learning environment.

Table 7 *Effective Communication and Proficient Use of Information Communication Technologies*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	115	63.2		
A	48	26.4		
UN	12	6.6	3.36	1.93
DA	3	1.6		
SDA	4	2.2		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 7 depicts that 63.2% strongly agreed with the statement, 26.4% agreed. 6.6% given no response, 1.6% agreed while 2.2% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of participants agreed with the statement that effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies.

Table 8 *Collaboration and Partnerships*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	92	50.5		
A	37	20.3		
UN	17	9.3	4.13	2.71
DA	24	13.2		
SDA	12	6.6		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 8 describes that 50.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 20.3% agreed. 9.3% given no response, 13.2% agreed while 6.6% strongly disagreed Hence, it's decided that a large number of the participants agreed with the statement that collaboration and partnerships.

Table 9 *Continuous Professional Development and Code of Conduct*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	50	27.5		
A	56	30.8		
UN	42	23.1	3.79	2.51
DA	5	2.7		
SDA	29	15.9		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 9 illustrates that 27.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 30.8% agreed. 23.1% given no response, 2.7% agreed while 15.9% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of participants agreed with the statement that continuous professional development and code of conduct.

Table 10 *Teaching of English as Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL)*

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
SA	123	67.6		
A	17	9.3		
UN	33	18.1		
DA	3	1.6		
SDA	6	3.3		
Total	182	100.0		

Table 10 illustrates that 67.6% strongly agreed with the statement, 9.3% agreed. 18.1% given no response, 1.6% agreed while 3.3% strongly disagreed. Hence, it's decided that a large number of the participants agreed with the statement that Teaching of English as Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL).

Discussion and Collusions

The majority of respondents said they know the topic, human growth and development, Islamic moral values/social life skills, educational planning and strategy, assessment, learning environment, effective communication, and skillful use of information communication. Technology, collaboration and partnership, continuous professional development and etiquette, and learning English as a Second/Foreign Language. Khan and Islam (2015) however evaluated National Professional Standards Teachers and found that the majority of teachers performed unsatisfactorily against National Professional Standards Teachers. They are designed to ensure that teachers have a partial understanding of the knowledge about the topics, knowledge of human growth and Islamic moral values, skills in education planning and strategy, outdated traditional assessment methods, and effective learning. They were partially informed that they would not use Information Communication Technology. Teachers have shown poor interactions with parents and the community, indicating a lack of professional development approaches between teachers. Besides, the National Education Policy (2009) and National Professional Standards Teachers are not suitable for any contribution to teacher training because of the lack and lack of policy assessment agencies. Besides, the formulation of policy rules and the development of a top-down approach and professional standards are the main reasons for the lack of focus on professionalism. Both National Education Policy (2009) and National Professional Standards Teachers should reflect teachers' professionalism, but expert opinions suggest

that professional design is not on the agenda, so there is no difference between National Education Policy (2009) and National Professional Standards Teachers in teacher professionalism. The agreement was found not to exist. The results of a study by Ahmad and Rauf (2012) supported this conclusion. They identified gaps between the process of policy development and the situation analysis process, the communication difference was that not all stakeholders were involved in the process of policy formulation and there were no policy assessment agencies in Pakistan.

Recommendations

The professionalism of teachers plays a healthy role in the quality of teaching and all-round development of students. Professional standards for teachers In terms of professionalism, the same group of experts can be assigned the task of creating educational policy in the case of revision of professional standards.

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