Performance Appraisal: An Evaluation of Teachers’ Competencies Based on National Professional Standards in Pakistan

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Abstract

The main focus of the study was to develop the teacher evaluation mechanism for school teachers in Pakistan. The key objectives of the study were (a) to assess the secondary school teachers’ competencies based on national professional standards in Pakistan and (b) to categorize the secondary school teachers’ competency based on the five levels defined in the rubrics. The population of the study consisted of the secondary school teachers of government sector. To conduct the observational survey, a sample of 453 participants (teachers) from three clusters was selected to observe the performance of the teachers in the field. An observation sheet was developed to measure the teachers’ competencies at secondary level. Overall results by using formulas of percentage, chi-square and simple mean identified that most of the teachers 33.2% were found at developing teacher level, 29.2% teachers were at proficient teachers, 26.0% teachers were at emerging teachers. However, 13.3% teachers were found as accomplished teachers while 6.4% secondary school teachers were found at not demonstrated teacher level. Based on findings of the study a number of recommendations have been presented to enhance the knowledge, understanding and skills of teachers.

Key Word: Performance Appraisal, Teacher Competencies, National Professional Standards, Assessment.

Introduction

In almost all aspects of life significant structural changes are taking place that have direct effect of socio-cultural fabric of society. In almost all aspects of life significant structural changes are taking place that have direct effect of socio-cultural fabric of society. At the same time education is considered only a tool for understanding such changes. It is the responsibility of the educators that they should develop such curriculum that may help students to connect with the world and understand the changes and issues that our world is currently facing. Being the foundation of human cognitive development, schools in 21st century have become nerve centers, a place for teachers and students to connect with those around them and their community. Teachers in this new environment perform less as instructors and more as orchestrators of information, giving children the ability to turn knowledge into wisdom. In order to educate in the 21st century, teachers are desired to cultivate and maintain the student’s interest in the material by showing how to apply this knowledge in the real world. Their role appears to try to increase their students’ curiosity,
which helps them to become lifelong learners. There are many skills that children need in order to be successful in the 21st century, the most important skills are: promoting effective leadership, quality of teaching, ability to collaborate, critical thinking skills, oral presentation skills, written communication skills, ability to use technology, willingness to examine civic and global issue and chance to learn about new career opportunities (Peterson, 2007).

The quality of education depends to great extent on the quality of teacher and quality of teacher without having teaching skills seems impossible. In fact, teacher is considered the top most academic and professional person in the educational pyramid (Singh, 2007). Without good teachers even the best system of education is found to fail while with good teachers the defects of the system can largely be overcome. Bhargava (2005), Agra (2005) and Sharma (2003) were of the view that the performance of students and quality of education depended upon the quality of teachers. To improve the quality of teachers, teachers must be given a professional status. Being professional, teachers are expected to use the best practices and strategies to meet challenging demand of their career, which involve imparting knowledge and developing essential skills and attitude in the students. The accomplishment of these goals in teaching is determining. They have to use the best of their abilities to achieve the outcomes and use those practices and strategies that have been found more efficient and effective. A good teacher is expected to be committed to his work and would have the ability to take initiatives (Cruickshank, 2009).

Teaching profession is a building block for all other professions. The quality of teaching shapes the future of students and prepares them to be a responsible citizen. Teachers play a central role in ensuring quality and effectiveness in learning and establishing foundation of a learned and educated society. It is said that the wealth of nation depends upon how effectively its young’s minds are trained to take the various responsibilities in the society. There is a need for a greater emphasis on continuing education for teachers to meet the growing demand of teaching profession. To meet the growing demand of the teaching profession world had intended to plan for professional growth for teachers. The concept of empowering teachers has been changed throughout the world and introduced teacher evaluation and accreditation system to assess the personal and professional competencies of teachers. For this purpose professional standards have been set to ensure maximum quality in teaching and learning.

The basic purpose of standards is to constitute the ‘critical knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to perform a specific role effectively. They explain the primary components of performance rather providing a comprehensive list of responsibilities. Furthermore, they serve to specify what performance or behaviors an institution is particularly looking for. They describe what teachers need to know and do to provide relevant and valuable learning experiences for learners and groups of individuals (Cruickshank, 2009). The extent to which professional standards have met can be assessed via performance indicators set by the authorities. Government of Pakistan has taken an initiative to improve the quality of education through improving the quality of teacher education. It is made an important pillar of the National Educational Policy, 2010. Quality assurance requires professional standards of teacher education and an effective mechanism of accreditation of teacher education institutions and programs. The policy and planning Wing of Ministry of Education (MoE) in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is implementing Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP) with the financial support of the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) under STEP. Professional standards for teachers have been developed in consultation with stakeholder in all provinces. Although, the professional standards are aimed for primary level beginning teachers, these standards can be adapted and used for secondary level teachers and teacher educators.

The standards of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions are designed to: define competencies, skills and attributes deemed to be essential for teachers, guide the detailed development of pre and in-service programs of teacher education; establish policies, procedures and systems for accrediting teacher education programs and institution offering them, assure public about the quality of their educators and educational outputs and outcomes (UNESCO, 2008). The recommended standards for evaluation of teachers’ competencies are as follows:
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
10. Teaching of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL)

Standard based development of teachers and other educators is part of a larger international movement of quality assurance in many fields of human endeavor. With a critical perspective quality assurance in education analyzes the factors that contribute to educational quality, monitors their presence in the system, and evaluates the impact they have on students learning (Government of Pakistan, 2009). A number of studies in the last three decades have pointed out the key issues and problems of teacher education in Pakistan. A variety of factors have been cited in the literature. Primary school teacher certification programs are relics of the 19th century normal school model. They neither provide broad general education.

**Objectives of Research Study**

Objectives of the study were (a) to assess the secondary school teachers’ competencies based on national professional standards in Punjab and (b) to categorize the secondary school teachers’ competency based on the five levels defined in the rubrics and (c) to propose recommendations for further improvement of the existing standards of teachers’ performance.

**Research Methodology**

The nature of the study was descriptive and following procedure was adopted to complete this piece research work. The population of the study consisted of the secondary school teachers of Government sector including boys and girls situated at urban and rural areas of the province of Punjab. The study was survey type on the basis of probability sampling methods (multistage cluster sampling) which according to Connolly (2007) serves as the foundation of all statistical tests. Sample was taken from the province of Punjab which was divided into three clusters (Northern cluster, central cluster and southern cluster). From each cluster two districts were selected as a sample of the study and each was included in the study as the district (strata) spread geographically and thus, sample was spread, large and ideally representative of the population because according to Best and Kahn (2003) in survey research the sample would be larger than experimental researches to represent the population. The districts (strata’s) were further divided into urban and rural division and so, the study compared the six districts of Punjab Province. After determining the target population size in selected six districts, sample was calculated with the help of statistical formula at confidence level 95% (margin error 5%). The population of secondary school teachers in the whole Province (Punjab) according to School education department, Government of Punjab, is 43200 (http://www.schools.punjab.gov.pk/). To conduct the observational survey of this research, a sample of 453 participants (teachers) was selected to observe them in the field directly. The size of sample was rationalized as Cohen, L., Manion, & Morrison, (2008) and Jyothi, (2007) suggest to select form the size of population i.e. if the population of a research study is 100,000 and above, the size of sample should be 384 as appropriate. However the researcher has taken 453 participants as focused sample for this research, which is slightly above to the actual suggested by Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, (2008) and Jyothi, (2007) just to maintain if any error of counting representation accuracy. The data selected from six districts of Punjab province was determined. Sample was taken from six selected districts Sargodha, Chakwal, Faisal Abad, Hafiz Abad, Lodhran and Muzaffargarh by considering the urban and rural areas of the selected samples.
Research Instrument

The problem was explored in quantitative term because the teachers’ professional competencies at secondary level could be analyzed better through the observational checklist. The researcher observed the competencies based on national professional standards for teachers in natural setting which they were currently demonstrating, practicing and applying during their classroom teaching. An observational checklist was developed on bases of prescribe levels of teacher accreditation by Policy and Planning wing of Ministry of Education, Pakistan collaboration with UNESCO, is implementing Strengthening Teacher Education Program (STEP) under the financial support of USAIDs. This observation helped the researcher to collect the empirical evidences of their practices in the classroom teaching. The data from these observations was used to cross verify the evidences with the quantitative data from the questionnaire field by the research sample. The evidences of observations were reflected their sources of verifications e.g. teachers dairies, portfolios, lesson plans, individual conferences, peer reviews, classroom observations, work sheets, journal entries, students’ work samples, test scores, research evidences, colleague and parents comments etc.

Results of the study

Standards Based Analysis of Secondary School Teachers’ Competencies


Table 1 An evaluation of secondary school teachers competencies based on national professional standards in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Level-0</th>
<th>Level-1</th>
<th>Level-2</th>
<th>Level-3</th>
<th>Level-4</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-1</td>
<td>36 7.9</td>
<td>99 21.8</td>
<td>160 35.3</td>
<td>139 30.6</td>
<td>20 4.4</td>
<td>303.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-2</td>
<td>12 2.6</td>
<td>135 29.8</td>
<td>160 35.4</td>
<td>121 26.7</td>
<td>25 5.5</td>
<td>227.72</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-3</td>
<td>8 1.8</td>
<td>123 27.2</td>
<td>169 37.3</td>
<td>104 23.0</td>
<td>49 10.8</td>
<td>254.34</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-4</td>
<td>34 7.5</td>
<td>106 23.4</td>
<td>137 30.3</td>
<td>160 35.3</td>
<td>16 3.5</td>
<td>280.60</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td>14 3.2</td>
<td>100 22.1</td>
<td>154 33.9</td>
<td>165 36.4</td>
<td>20 4.4</td>
<td>282.74</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-6</td>
<td>14 3.2</td>
<td>128 28.3</td>
<td>156 34.4</td>
<td>131 28.9</td>
<td>23 5.2</td>
<td>219.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-7</td>
<td>53 11.6</td>
<td>115 25.4</td>
<td>142 31.3</td>
<td>119 26.2</td>
<td>23 5.1</td>
<td>182.18</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-8</td>
<td>31 6.9</td>
<td>120 26.6</td>
<td>129 28.6</td>
<td>151 33.4</td>
<td>21 4.6</td>
<td>183.91</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-9</td>
<td>29 6.4</td>
<td>107 23.6</td>
<td>134 29.6</td>
<td>150 33.1</td>
<td>33 7.2</td>
<td>216.64</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-10</td>
<td>57 12.6</td>
<td>147 32.3</td>
<td>161 35.5</td>
<td>83 18.3</td>
<td>5 1.1</td>
<td>278.36</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29 6.4</td>
<td>118 26.1</td>
<td>150 33.2</td>
<td>132 29.2</td>
<td>24 5.2</td>
<td>242.86</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first national standard of teachers’ competency is related to subject knowledge. The related teachers were observed to assess their subject competency level ranging from level-0 to level-4. Each level was categorized in terms of assigned parameters mentioned above. Subject matter knowledge is very important aspect of teaching which helps to transfer clear concepts and bring more understanding to the learner. When gauged through observation of teaching in classroom, a variation in understanding level was found as presented in table 1. The analysis of various levels indicated that maximum number of teachers were at level-2 (Developing teacher) that was (35.3%) of the total teachers observed. Its (P) value is significant and is less than 0.05. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers have generally demonstrated adequate growth towards achieving this standard (subject matter knowledge). The second very important aspect of
national professional standard in Pakistan is human growth and development. Human growth and development was assumed necessary for teachers as it helps to understand how children and adolescents develop and learn in variety of school, family and community context. When consolidated and merged into one standard, a variation in this understanding level was found. It is cleared that maximum number of teachers were at level-2 (Developing teacher) that were (35.4%) of the total teachers observed. Its (P) value is significant and is less than 0.05. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers sometimes provide opportunities that support their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development. Third most significant element of national profession standard in Pakistan is knowledge of Islamic ethical/social life skills. Knowledge of ethical skills helps to understand the civics manners and code of conduct. This understanding when merge, a variation in understanding level was found and presented in table 4.127. The analysis of various levels indicated that maximum number of teachers was at level-2 (Developing teacher) that was (37.3%) of the total teachers observed. This analysis indicates most of the teachers were having basic understanding about basic knowledge of Islamic ethical/social life skills. Fourth standard “instructional planning and strategies” was assumed very necessary for teacher as it helps to design long term and short term plans upon knowledge of subject matter, curriculum goals, and employ a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies. The analysis of various levels indicated that maximum number of teachers were at level-3 (Proficient teacher) that was (35.3%) of the total teachers observed. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers know how to promote students’ learning through available resource. Fifth element of national professional standard is “assessment”. Knowledge of assessment helps to evaluate students’ learning using multiple assessment strategies and interpret results and promote students’ achievement. Further analysis indicated that maximum number of teachers were at level-3 (Proficient teacher) that was (36.4%) of the total teachers observed. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers generally know various methods of assessment but they did not meet the desired level of competence. Sixth aspect of national professional standard in Pakistan is learning environment which is very important for teacher as learning environment helps to create a supportive, safe and respectful learning climate that encourages positive social interaction. The analysis of various levels indicated that maximum number of teachers was at level-2 (Developing teacher) that was (34.4%) of the total teachers observed. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers know how to promote students’ learning through available resource. Seventh standard “effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies” was assumed necessary for teacher as the knowledge of ICTs for teachers helps to know how to operate technologies in the classroom. It is indicated that maximum number of teachers was at level-2 (Developing teacher) that was (31.5%) of the total teachers observed. This is quite clear that most of the teachers generally understand the importance of communication skills in teaching. Eighth standard “collaboration and partnership” was assumed necessary for teacher as with the help of collaboration teachers build relationships with parents, guardian and professional organization in the community to support students’ learning. The analysis of various levels indicated that maximum of teachers were at level-3 (Proficient teacher) that was (33.4%) of the total teachers observed. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers generally know the different approaches to collaborate effectively with community. Ninth aspect of national professional standard in Pakistan is continuous professional development and code of conduct was considered very important for teacher as it helps to participate as responsible members of the professional community and establish collegial relationships to enhance the teaching and learning process. Empirically it is clear that most of the teachers were at level-3 (Proficient teacher) that was (33.1%). This analysis indicates that most of the teachers generally know the professional code of conduct but did not meet the desired level of competency. Tenth standard was teaching English as second/foreign language (ESL/EFL). The knowledge of English as a second language was assumed necessary for teacher as teaching of English helps to understand pedagogy of English as second language and effectively communicate in English language. The analysis of various levels indicated that most of teachers were at level-2 (Developing teacher) that was (35.5%) of the total teachers observed. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers occasionally give importance to English as a second/foreign language. Teachers’ evaluation is one of the paramount factors in the mechanisms of quality improvement and assurance endeavors in the process of educational development. The above mentioned standards are the indicators of teachers’ professional competencies based on their existing practices of professional responsibilities, measured by the researcher during this research evaluation process in the sample secondary schools of Punjab province. To measure the
teachers’ competencies and professional skills, an observational checklist was used and the results are displayed in above table. When merged into one table, a variation in different competency level was found. The analysis of various levels indicated that maximum number of teachers were at level-2 (Developing teacher) that was (33.2%) of the total teachers observed. Its (P) value is significant and is less than 0.05. This analysis indicates that most of the teachers had adequate growth towards professional standards but did not meet the desired level of competency.

Mean Score of Each Standard

The standards wise analysis was completed according to already prescribed criteria by National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education in Pakistan. According to accreditation council criteria no standard is rated lower than 2.00, the mean score for candidate status or level 0 is 2.50<3.00, level I grand mean is 3.00<3.50, level II grand mean is 3.50<4.00, level III grand mean is 4.00<4.50 and level IV grand mean is 450< (http://www.pacte.pk).

Table 2 Mean Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Teaching Competency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Subject Matter Knowledge, Standard</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Human Growth and Development</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge of Islamic Values and Life Skills</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Instructional Planning and Strategies</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Collaboration and partnerships</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Continuous professional development and code of condut</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teaching of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL).</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall standard mean 3.01

Table 2 shows the percentage and means score of all (ten) standards of teaching profession. The overall mean score of teachers in all standards was found 3.01 that ranged between 3.00<3.50 and this range is related to level-1 (Emerging teacher). Data reveals that majority of the teachers teaching at secondary schools were having basic teaching competency. It is quite clear from the above discussion that the teachers in different standards found less competent regarding professional standards.

Discussion

Quality teachers are the single most determinant of students’ achievement. Teacher education, ability and experience account for more variation in student achievement than all other factors. Studies have found that 40 to 90 percent of the difference in student test scores can be attributed to teacher quality. Knowing the subject matter, understanding how students learn, and practicing effective teaching methods translate into greater student achievement (Puriefoy, 2009). Quality of teachers without having subject knowledge, using proper teaching methods, assessment techniques, community linkage, knowledge of Islamic values/life skills, communicative competency and knowledge of learning environment is impossible. This observational study based on national professional standards for teachers in Pakistan evaluated the different professional competencies of secondary school teachers in Punjab province. Most of the secondary teachers during evaluation were found weak in all almost all standards however teachers were found very much weak in (a) effective communication and efficient use of information and communication and (b) teaching of English as a second/foreign language. As this research study was based on national professional standards, most of the competencies described in standards were not according to the country context and these standards were adopted from New Jersey National Professional Standards with minor modification.
This research study recommends revision of standards for teacher which is according to what is desirable as well as feasible. The comparative results of the study revealed that male secondary school teachers found more competent than female teachers. This study further seems to indicate that the male teachers were found more dominant and authoritarian than the female teachers. The classrooms of male teachers were found more disciplined, organized and controlled than the female. As regards the urban and rural setting, performance of teachers in urban areas was significantly better than performance of teachers belonging to rural area. Discipline wise analysis described the variation of SST Science and SST Arts. Comparative results of the study concluded that SST Science showed better performance as compared to SST Arts during classroom practices. The means score of academically high qualification was found better than teachers having low qualification while experience wise analysis showed surprising results.

**Recommendations**

Based on the present research study, there are recommendations, which may not only improve the present competencies of the teachers but may also enhance the whole school development particularly in public sector school, civil society organizations directly or indirectly and most importantly the policy makers.

- Recruitment procedure for teacher should be on merit and selections of teachers should be based on competency instead of marks or degrees. Unfortunately, our educational system is totally marks oriented system which lacks competency, creativity and critical thinking. Most of the private teacher education institutions are just using education as means of collecting money so they are looking the quality of education in another way. BUT unfortunately in Pakistan there have not been serious attempts at government level to prepare teachers to improve the quality education in the country. This study would strongly recommend that all private professional education institutions should be closed as they are promoting ‘briefcase teaching culture’. Thus this culture has instantly become popular and constant rise. There are some educational institutions which are largely dependent on visiting faculty having same faces, same briefcase, same transparencies but different students. The quality of education must not be compromised at any cost. There should be some criteria and conditions for the selection of teacher so that this ‘touch and go’ system should be eradicated.

- Selection of appropriate methods during teaching was reported as another weak competency of secondary school teachers. They should be trained in such a way that they can understand every teaching method, its proper use in a particular situation. Although teachers were of the view that they possessed good lesson planning skills but principals’ comments, students’ views and classroom observation negated this claim. It is therefore recommended that more emphasis should be put on developing good lesson planning skills during training by providing more opportunities for lesson planning and by showing them model lesson plans developed by the expert teacher trainers.

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