

A comparative study of public and working folks grammar schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan in light of the national professional standards for teachers at secondary level

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Abstract:

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The main objective of this study is to review and compare the awareness and teaching practices of Public and Working Folks Grammar School (later WFGS) teachers in the light of National Professional Standards (later NPST). The study population consisted of all female Secondary School Teachers (later SST) of Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, and Mardan districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This is a quantitative research study. A sample size was limited to 200 SST by using the random sampling technique. The study is delimited to three standards, i.e., subject matter knowledge, planning, instructional strategies, and assessment. The percentages, frequencies, and sample t-tests are used for data analysis. The findings reveal that more than 50% of the SSTs in both types of schools are aware of NPST, but the number is higher in WFGS compared to public schools. The teachers perceived that these standards have a significant role in developing professionalism. Based on the evaluation of data and the existing teaching practices, raising awareness among the teachers about the importance and practical implementation of NPST is obligatory. It is highly recommended that proper training programs and workshops should be conducted to train the teachers according to NPST.

Keywords: Teaching practices, Subject matter knowledge, Instructional strategy, Planning, Assessment, Female teachers, Public schools, Professionalism, Practical education.

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1. Introduction

Educational experts admitted that the education system of any country can't be improved without effective teachers' training programs and professional standards. The teachers perform their role in changing the education system and implementation of educational reforms. Over the past few decades, there has been a lot of focus to check whether the quality of teaching practices is according to the perceptions of NPST. A teacher is always considered a role model for the students. The students perceive a teacher as an intellectual when he or she is committed to making them learn and has a spirit of adventure. The qualities of commitment and creative work of a teacher give him or her special respect in society and among other colleagues and students (Lierse, 2016).

All around the world, there has been a radical change in thinking and now more importance is given to knowledge-based society and economy instead of material views. To deal with the various issues and challenges, the proper policies and standards are required in every profession. In teaching, professionalism among the teachers is important for their exceptional performance (Khizar et al., 2019). The teaching profession requires professional knowledge, skills, and disposition. A standard teaching methodology depends on the professional qualification and excellence in that profession. A professional teacher can solve different problems related to student care, assessment, and all other interconnected issues in the teaching and learning process (Darling-Hammond, 2015).

A large number of people in Pakistan are associated with the teaching profession who are working in many public and private sector education institutions (Tahira et al., 2020). Initially, all the education policies made in Pakistan focused on the social, moral, and professional development of teachers. To deal with global challenges, various certification programs and trainings have been started and incentives were linked to teacher education (Sarwar et al., 2010). To compete with the rest of the world and strengthen teacher education, it is important to create standards and guidelines. Both the National Education Policies (NEP) and NPST should be designed in a way to support professionalism among the teachers which is important for effective teaching and learning process (Shami, 2005).

The teaching practices investigated by Ullah et al. (2022) in the secondary schools of Lahore and focused on the four standards of NPST. The sample of the study included both students and teachers. The results of the study have shown that teachers were aware of NPST, but they were not implementing these standards effectively in their classrooms. Therefore, it was recommended to find out the reasons that why the teachers are not teaching according to these standards in the schools.

Many studies have been done on the education policies and standards in Pakistan. Previous studies considered different aspects of NPST. But so far, no study has been conducted comparing the teaching practices of Public and WFGS in the light of NPST. The present study addresses the gap in the existing literature and compares the teaching practices of teachers working in funded projects like WFGS with other public schools and their perceived their needs based on NPST.

The objective of study is (1) to compare the teachers' subject matter knowledge of Public and WFGS schools. (2) to compare the teachers' planning and instructional strategies of Public and

WFGS schools. (3) to compare the teachers' competencies regarding assessment of Public and WFGS schools. Moreover, the hypothesis of study is (1) There is no difference between the teachers' subject matter knowledge of Public and WFGS schools. (2) there is no difference between teachers' planning and instructional strategies of Public and WFGS schools and (3) there is no difference between teachers' competencies regarding assessment of Public and WFGS schools.

2. Literature review

Professional development (later PD) of teachers has always been considered a long-lasting procedure. It is important that regular opportunities must be provided for the PD of teachers. The formal source of PD comprises of workshops, mentoring and professional meetings. The informal sources of experiences include reading of professional communications and videos related to an academic discipline (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The international focus on teacher quality education is very high, so there is need to implement NPST. The educators who mentor teachers must need to understand what they know and need to learn as professional (Korthagen, 2010). In 2009, the NPST was introduced in Pakistan by the Ministry of Education with the support of UNESCO and USAID. These standards include subject matter knowledge, the human growth and development, knowledge of Islamic values, instructional planning and strategies, assessment, learning environment, effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies, collaboration and partnerships, professional development and code of conduct and the teaching of English as a second/foreign language (Government of Pakistan, 2009).

The main purpose of introducing these standards was to link the curriculum of teacher education programs to the NPST. Sahito and Väisänen (2018), pointed out in their study that although thousands of pre-service teachers complete their graduation every year, their professional knowledge, understanding of content and delivery are not up to the mark. The NPST was developed to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers. These standards provide a framework to formulate professional competencies for teacher education. They also provide a policy mandate for implementing categorical structures of quality teaching. Theoretically, these standards can be used to simultaneously standardize the profession and enhance its status (Leonard, 2012).

According to the National Educational Policy 2017, teacher education should be based on content knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The NPST should be based on these pillars to address the learning needs of the students (Government of Pakistan, 2017). The standards have not been widely incorporated into teacher education programs. Therefore, their successful practical implementation in the classroom has not yet achieved (Akram & Zepeda, 2015). Ghimire (2020), has conducted a study on PD of teachers. The objective of the study was to find out the impact of collaborative action research in enhancing the professional competence of pre and post service teachers. The results of the study have shown that such type of activities performed a positive role in the PD of teachers.

Through a case study, Nawab (2017) reported that the teachers who attended the in-service courses programs in the rural areas of Pakistan had a positive change in their attitude and practices. But gradually the enthusiasm of the teachers ended for many reasons. Among them the main reasons were the workload, lack of resources and time constraint. There was no

support and encouragement from other teachers. As a result, these teachers resumed the old practices of teaching.

3. Theoretical framework

The need to improve the quality of teaching has remained a datable topic around the world since the last nineties. The main objective was to improve the performance of teaching institutes and the level of teachers' competence so that they might be able to perform their duties effectively. The development of NPST is not an easy task and numerous phases are involved in this activity. These standards make the teachers bound to perform within a specific education scenario (Sachs, 2005). The Australian taskforce explained that the NPST would not work without the active participation of teachers and training partners. For the successful execution of these standards at schools, the recommendations were given by the taskforce (Sim, 2006).

Although many teachers have completed pre-service training, but still, they lack professional knowledge and conception of content. Therefore, their method of teaching is not up to the standard, though NPST set the yardsticks to follow the academic procedures smoothly (Sahito & Väisänen, 2018). Globally, many studies have been conducted and concluded that beside finding the dissertations of these standards, their implantation remained a priority (Bourke et al., 2012 ; Chróinín et al., 2012; Khizar et al., 2019). To evaluate the implantation of the NPST, Khan and Ahmad, 2018 conducted a research study on classroom teachers. On the basis of the results, it was argued that adherence to the NPST resulted in the temporary professionalism among the teachers and recommended to focus on such a professional quality to develop public trust. A study by Mushtaq and Mustafa (2015) focused on NPST in the teaching of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The study recommended that to improve the quality of education we should follow the principles of our beloved prophet. The regular training should be arranged to keep the teachers up to date with the changes and improvement made in standards.

4. Methodology

This was a quantitative research study. The descriptive statistical techniques were applied. In Pakistan there are ten professional standards for teachers and the researcher selected three of them including subject matter knowledge, planning and instructional strategies and assessment. A self-developed questionnaire used as an instrument of data collection. It was finalized in the light of experts' opinion. The feedback of the respondents recorded through five-point scales strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

4.1. Population

All the SST of the selected schools was the respondent teachers. The selection was made from government high schools Peshawar, Nowhera, Charsadda and Mardan districts. *These districts have been selected because they have both Public and WFGS systems* The population for this study was 760 female SST in Public and WFGS schools.

4.2. Sample and sampling technique

The sample of the study was 200 teachers who were selected from four districts by using the

random sampling technique. The level of confidence was 90%. The validity of the instrument was confirmed by experts and Reliability was calculated by using Cronbach’s Alpha which was 0.873.

4.3. Coding of the factors

The coding scheme used in this study. Codes used instead of writing the whole question. The purpose is to simplify the task.

5. Data analysis and results

Percentage and independent Sample *t-test* were used for drawing the results in this study. The teachers’ perceptions about the SMK are recorded in table 1. The results show that 62% of teachers in public schools were agreed/ strongly agreed about the question that “*teachers demonstrate the in-depth knowledge of the subject*”. In WFGS about 86.8% of the SST agreed with this question. The majority of SST (75.9% in public and 82.9% in WFGS) agreed with the question asked that “*teachers clearly explain the learning outcomes*”. About (35.7% in Public and 60.8 in WFGS) agreed with the question inquired “*teachers explain all the concepts effectively*”. Around 72.1% in public and 55% in WFGS schools agreed with the question inquired “*teachers simplify the topic into main points so that to become easy for understand by the learners*”. A large number of SST (51.9% in Public and 58.1% in WFGS schools) agreed with the question probed “*teachers share concept-based examples from everyday life*”. The majority of SST (62% in Public and 62.8% in WFGS) admitted that “*teachers used the appropriate tools of inquiry according to nature of the subject*”. Around 48.9% in Public and 89.2% in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*teachers abreast with latest trends of the subject.*” Close to 44.2 % in public and 58.9% in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*teachers consider students’ prior knowledge of the subject*”. For 48.9% in public and 60.4% in WFGS schools admitted the statement “*teachers develop students’ interest in the subject area.*” Most respondents of 39.6% in public and 64.4% in WFGS schools agreed with the statement that “*teachers understand the relationship of the subject to other disciplines*”.

Table 1: Standard-1, Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK)

Sub Factors	Public Schools						Working Folks Grammar Schools					
	N	SA	A	N	DA	SD	SA	A	N	DA	SD	
SMK1 <i>demonstrate</i>	100	11.4	50.6	24	10.9	3.1	76.7	10.1	7.7	4.7	0.8	
SMK2 <i>outcomes</i>	100	36.4	39.5	14	9.3	0.8	70.5	12.4	10.8	4.7	1.6	
SMK3 <i>concepts</i>	100	7.0	28.7	34.1	20.9	9.3	13.0	47.8	25.6	11.6	2.0	
SMK4 <i>topic</i>	100	25.6	46.5	17.0	10.1	0.8	18.6	36.4	28.7	11.6	4.7	
SMK5 <i>life</i>	100	5.4	46.5	38.8	7.0	2.3	12.4	45.7	27.2	12.4	2.3	
SMK6 <i>tools</i>	100	12.4	49.6	24.0	10.9	3.1	12.4	50.4	24.0	11.6	1.6	
SMK7 <i>trends</i>	100	10.9	38.0	18.6	20.9	11.6	4.7	84.5	5.3	4.7	0.8	
SMK8 <i>prior</i>	100	4.7	39.5	22.4	25.6	7.8	16.3	42.6	27.9	10.9	2.3	
SMK9 <i>interest</i>	100	14.0	34.9	32.5	15.5	3.1	17.8	42.6	27.9	10.1	1.6	
SMK10 <i>relationship</i>	100	10.1	29.5	30.9	22.5	7.0	16.3	48.1	25.5	7.0	3.1	

The results given in table 2 show the perceptions of the teachers about the standard of PIS. It is shown that 82.4 % in Public and 72.1% in WFGS schools agreed that with the statement “*teachers’ explanation is clear and precise*”. It is exposed that 41.9% in Public and 38 % in WFGS schools acknowledged the question asked that “*teachers engage their students in multiple learning activities.*” About 53.5% in Public and 72.7% in WFGS schools agreed with the question inquired “*teachers use variety of outcome-based activities.*” Several 59 % in Public and 35.6 % in WFGS schools agreed with the question inquired “*Teachers use creative teaching aids on the right time.*” Similarly, 47.3 % in Public and 79.4% in WFGS schools agreed with the question probed “*teachers teach with multiple learning styles.*” Here, 58.2 % in Public and 83 % in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*Teachers always promote healthy competition among students.*” The data shows that 47.8 % in Public and 73.2 % in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*teachers give examples of application of content from practical life*”. It is given that 48.1% in Public and 94.1 % in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*teachers arouse students’ curiosity to find more and do more.*” Moreover, about 55.1 % in the public and 47.3 % in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*Teachers’ teaching is mostly students centred.*” 46.6% in Public and 58.2 % in WFGS schools agreed with the statement “*teachers promote active learning through effective use of available resources*”.

Table 2: Standard-2, Planning and instructional strategies (PIS)

Sub Factors	n	Public Schools					Working Folks Grammar Schools				
		SA	A	N	DA	SD	SA	A	N	DA	SD
PIS11 _{explanation}	100	13.4	69.0	10.0	6.0	1.6	25.6	46.5	17	10.1	0.8
PIS12 _{learning}	100	13.2	28.7	33.2	20.2	4.7	9.3	28.7	30.2	21.7	10.1
PIS13 _{variety}	100	14.7	38.8	29.4	15.5	1.6	15.3	57.4	20.2	3.9	3.2
PIS14 _{creative}	100	20.2	38.8	21.6	14.7	4.7	2.3	33.3	22.5	32.6	9.3
PIS15 _{styles}	100	10.1	37.2	24.8	20.9	7.0	33.1	46.3	7.6	10.1	2.9
PIS16 _{competition}	100	14.0	44.2	24.8	14.7	2.3	69.1	13.9	4.7	2.3	10.0
PIS17 _{content}	100	16.0	31.8	31	16.3	4.9	53.1	20.1	3.1	8.6	15.1
PIS18 _{curiosity}	100	14.0	34.1	27.9	18.6	5.4	90.3	3.8	1.3	3.8	0.8
PIS19 _{centred}	100	13.2	41.9	27	13.2	4.7	10.1	37.2	24.8	20.9	7.0
PIS20 _{resources}	100	14.0	32.6	31.7	17.8	3.9	14.0	44.2	24.8	14.7	2.3

Table 3 shows teachers’ perceptions about assessment techniques used by the SST. It can be shown from the results that 69.3 % in Public and 51.9% in WFGS schools agreed that with the statement “*teachers used different assessment strategies to assess students’ competency.*” Number indicates that 41% in Public and 55.1% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers understand various assessment related issues.*” 44.9% in Public and 59.7% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers always encourage students to assess their own learning.*” Likewise, 59.8 % in Public and 61.2 % in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers asked the students such questions that make them think*”.

critically”. Also 58.8 % in Public and 58.1% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “teachers assess students’ progress through reflection on instruction”. About 58.9 % in Public and 58.10 % in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers’ asses the students by asking constructive feedback on their learning.*” The data displays that 51.1 % in Public and 71.3% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers provide opportunities to students to engage in self-assessment activities.*” The number given in table reveals that 43.4% in Public and 57.4% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers developed and used objective assessment tools to measure the students’ progress.*” About 65 % in Public and 58.9% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers accurately report assessment data.*” The number in table shows that 55.53% in Public and 53.5% in WFGS schools agreed with the question asked that “*teachers use the assessment results to improve learning of students*”.

Table 3: Standard-3, Assessment (ASS)

Sub Factors	n	Public Schools					Working Folks Grammar Schools				
		SA	A	N	DA	SD	SA	A	N	DA	SD
ASS21 competency	100	18.9	50.4	19.4	9	2.3	17.8	34.1	32.5	14	1.6
ASS22 issues	100	15.4	25.6	39.5	16.4	3.1	20.2	34.9	30.2	11.6	3.1
ASS23 encourage	100	16.2	28.7	40.3	13.2	1.6	16.3	43.4	24.8	13.2	2.3
ASS24 critically	100	19.4	40.4	25.6	4.6	10	18.6	42.6	29.4	7.8	1.6
ASS25 progress	100	26.2	32.6	23.4	16.3	1.5	21.7	36.4	31	9.3	1.6
ASS26 feedback	100	10.1	48.8	22.6	8.5	10	23.3	34.8	31	7.8	3.1
ASS27 opportunities	100	15.4	35.7	27.2	17.8	3.9	49.6	21.7	19.4	8.5	0.8
ASS28 progress	100	12.1	31.3	37.2	17.8	1.6	16.3	41.1	28.7	11.6	2.3
ASS29 accurately	100	19.3	45.7	21	10.84	3.16	17.5	41.4	20.1	12.4	8.6
ASS30 results	100	15.5	40.03	20.9	20.2	3.37	20.2	33.3	34.1	10.6	1.8

The average values of all sub factors of each standard are given in table 4. SMK.COM* is the average values of the frequencies of questions presented in table 1 asked about the SMK. Similarly, PIS.COM* and ASS.COM* show the average values of frequency of the questions about the PIS and ASS given in table 2 and 3.

Table 4: Frequency distributor of average values of sub factors of NPST

Factors	N	Public Schools					Working Folks Grammar Schools				
		SA	A	N	DA	SD	SA	A	N	DA	SD
SMK.COM*	200	13.79	40.33	25.63	15.36	4.89	25.87	42.06	21.06	8.93	2.08
PIS.COM*	200	14.28	39.71	26.14	15.79	4.08	32.22	33.14	15.62	12.87	6.15
ASS.COM*	200	16.85	37.92	27.71	13.46	4.06	22.15	36.37	28.12	10.68	2.68

Based on the results of table 5, it is concluded that there is statistically significant difference between the opinions of SST in both type of schools. The calculated value of $t(198) = 2.612$ and tabulated figure is 1.98 at $\alpha=0.05$. The null hypothesis is rejected. It means that the SST in WFGS has better knowledge and implementation of the SMK in comparison with the teachers at public schools.

Table 5: Comparison of SMK of Public and WFGS Schools

Subject Matter Knowledge	n	Mean	SD	t-test		
				df	t	Sig
Public Schools	100	7.241	0.071	198	2.612	0.05
WFGS Schools	100	6.312	0.192			

Table 6 shows the calculated value of $t(198) = 4.312$ which is higher than 1.98. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The test results have shown that the SST in WFGS has better knowledge of planning and instructional strategies as compared to public schools.

Table 6: Comparison of PIS of Public and WFGS Schools

Subject Matter Knowledge	n	Mean	SD	t-test		
				df	t	Sig
Public Schools	100	3.261	0.823	198	4.312	0.05
WFGS Schools	100	2.312	1.192			

Table 7 shows the calculated value of $t(198) = 3.891$ is greater than table value. The null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that SST in WFGS schools have more knowledge about the various assessment techniques as compared to public schools.

Table 7: Comparison of ASS of Public and WFGS Schools

Subject Matter Knowledge	n	Mean	SD	t-test		
				df	t	Sig
Public Schools	100	4.165	1.031	198	3.891	0.05
WFGS Schools	100	3.612	0.981			

6. Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to compare the teaching practices of Public and WFGS schools in the context of NPST. The comparison was made between WFGS and Public-school SST teachers. Both types of education systems provide training to teachers, so the perspective of their teachers is different towards the implementation of NPST. The quality of teaching in the classroom depends upon the quality of education. The role teacher in implementing all education reforms is very important. This is the proven fact that the teachers' academic qualifications, subject matter knowledge, planning, instructional strategies and various assessment techniques play a crucial in the whole process of teaching-learning. In study the results exposed that on average 54.12% of SST in Public and 67.93 % in WFGS schools agreed with questions asked about the knowledge and practices of the various sub factors of SMK.

Teachers would be conscious of knowledge, techniques, and skills exercised in classrooms. They are also desired to possess the ability to apply a variety of activities and strategies for inciting critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students. The results of the study are supported by Khan (2014) and Ali et al. (2022). The findings of their study revealed that teachers have the knowledge about the subject. But as most of the books are written in English and because of the weak control on this language they can't properly teach these books. Since the results, it can be derived that 53.99% of SST in public schools knew about the PIS as compared with 65.36% in WFGS teachers. The PIS refer to all methods and techniques that help the students to better learn and understand their course books. The aim is to make the teaching style artful and practical. This enables the students to participate actively in their education (Ahmad & Ali, 2023).

The results about the assessment revealed that on average 54.77% and 58.8% SST in Public and WFGS schools respectively were acknowledged the questions that were asked about this standard. The assessment of the students in the classroom is an ongoing process. It enhances the quality of teaching and enables the students to be communicated (Parveen & Mughal, 2022). A study conducted by Khan and Islam (2015) on the importance of NPST. The findings of the study have shown that teachers in various schools are not truly executing the NPST. It was further observed that teachers don't properly link their training knowledge with instructional strategies in the classroom.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion it is concluded that SST in both type of schools is not truly practicing NPST. Most teachers who work in WFGS have better knowledge and awareness of NPST when compared with SST in public schools. This is a very significant study in the sense that for the first time these two different school systems were compared in the perspective of NPST. The primary data generated by this study can be beneficial for the concerned authorities. The areas identified should be focused on to improve teaching quality. It is also determined that in secondary schools, teachers should follow the prescribed area of instructions which is recommended in the 2006 curriculum.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this research study, the following recommendations suggest future research.

- Regular trainings and workshops should be conducted to give awareness about NPST.
- Different types of refresher courses should be arranged considering the experience of the teachers.
- Teachers should motivate towards quality instructions by adopting NPST.
- The establishment of the performance management wing is indispensable.
- Teachers 'promotion must be linked to their professional excellence.
- Compulsory training programs should be introduced, and teacher performance should be evaluated on the basis of these programs.
- It is recommended that there should be a comparative study between different provinces to develop a better competition for the improvement of the entire education system of the country.

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