

Self-Evaluation of English Teachers against National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT:

Teachers' education renders an important contribution to improve the quality of education besides teachers' professional development. In order to compete in the global knowledge economy, there is a dire need to polish and refine the raw talent into a productive asset so as to create and develop an all encompassing education system for elementary level, focusing on each segment of the level keeping in view the needs of time and social demands, where teachers must be an important part in the planning process along with the stakeholders, because in the entire process, teachers play a significant role in imparting quality education, in addition to meeting grooming requirements through multifarious classroom activities. Moreover, an important contribution of teacher education is identification and development of teachers' abilities to manifest pedagogical skills as 'Reflective Teachers' while conducting various educational and coeducational activities involving multiple dimensions. For achieving the aforesaid purpose, Professional Standards for Teachers have been developed in Pakistan, in consultation with stakeholders of all provinces. The focus has remained to improve the quality of education in general and teacher education in particular. In light of this standpoint, the current study aims at highlighting the demographic profile of English Language Teachers (ELTs) and exploring at what education level, National Professional Standards for teachers were being practiced the most. The research is based on quantitative approach, where convenience sampling was employed for the selection of participants. The sample size was calculated by using software Open Epi. Self-evaluation Rubrics was used as a tool for collecting data. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. The major finding revealed that the practicality of National Professional Standards in teaching pedagogies across education level was found more as compared to primary level than at secondary and tertiary levels. It is suggested that to promote the quality and equity in education, government reforms and policies should equally be implemented at all education levels.

Keywords: *Teacher education, Standard-based teaching, National Professional Standards*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is the ultimate goal of teaching, but how do teachers learn to teach? Teacher education embraces training and development. Both terms refer to the need for improvement in teaching. However, the difference is, training is given by somebody else to prepare teachers while, development is one's own personal effort to strive for the better (Freeman, 1989). According to Freeman (1989) "Training is a strategy for teacher education that helps teacher achieve mastery in certain aspects of teaching". At the same time, it has some limitations as well. Freeman states that it takes the fragmented view of teaching. He proposes a holistic approach to teacher education that includes two aspects: firstly, the subject knowledge and mastery of skills; secondly, he emphasized a need for teachers to become conscious of their attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching. Over the years, different models for teacher education have been proposed. Freeman proposes a model for teacher education that includes four constituents. First is the knowledge-based that teacher possess (what), and skills in how to transmit that knowledge into learners (how). The remaining two constituents are attitude and awareness. Attitude is the individual's choice of action. Freeman (1989) defines attitude as "the stance one adopts towards oneself". Attitude plays an important role in teacher education as it accounts for teachers' successes, strengths, and failures. Lastly, the fourth constituent is awareness, which is the most important of all. Since through

awareness teachers can effectively use other constituents. For instance, when a teacher is aware of any problem then he/she can use the knowledge and decide on what to do with the knowledge and skill he/she possess by the change of attitude.

Katz & Snow (2003) addressed standards in second language teacher education as a strategy for improving language teacher education. According to them, standards can be described as “tools that can be used to improve outcomes”. These outcomes depend on the goal of improvement for teachers, teacher trainer, educators, students, program and so on. Standards set out a clear expectation for all those who are involved. For teachers and administrators, it provides guidelines for curriculum, assessment and evaluation. For the teacher educator, it designs competencies needed by teachers for their teaching career and for students it sets out performance criteria about what they should know for meeting standards. Another term associated with standards is performance indicators. In the United States, the TESOL/NCATE for teacher education program was designed to prepare teachers of ESL educators. Katz & Snow (2003) states “the TESOL/NCATE standards provide performance indicator and accompanying rubrics describing teachers’ performance at three levels, Approaches Standard, Meets Standard, and Exceed Standards”. The use of such standards illustrates how teachers progress on a development continuum towards a fixed reference point standard.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To promote quality education, standard-based reforms have already been initiated in different countries locally and globally. It shows that teacher educators are shifting their attention from the conventional reforms to the contemporary ones. Over the last two decades, in Australia, the introduction of standards for the teaching profession reflects a global trend. Adoniou & Gallagher (2016) conducted a study to reveal teachers’ attitudes to newly mandated teaching standards in Australia. The study revealed positive attitudes toward teaching standards from both teachers and principals. Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and productive lives. Therefore, to cater to the diverse learning needs of the student, teachers are expected to be knowledgeable in their content areas and skillful in a wide range of teaching approaches. In the same way, Ingvarson (1998) highlighted the importance of teaching standards by establishing a direct relationship between standards-based teaching and professional development of teachers. According to him, the standard-based system aims to make teachers more responsible in their teaching repertoire. The reason behind encouraging teachers to build their standards-based system is to create a strong sense of ownership with the potential to influence all teachers. For creating this ownership, it is equally important to finding out what techniques and strategies are being used by teachers for their professional development. It will further ensure that teachers continually review their practices in the light of contemporary research and professional standards. A similar study found in Australia by Mayer et al. (2006) aims to ensure and extend the quality of the teaching profession concerning professional standards for teaching.

The standards can regulate the teaching profession and enhance its status by providing an explicit policy mechanism of quality teaching. Bathmaker (2006) conducted research that discusses the consequences of the Standards for Further Education teacher training and considers what sort of ‘teaching and learning professional’ is implied by the Standards. In 1999, the standards for further education teachers were launched in England and Wales by the Further Education National Training Organization. These standards were intended to inform those who were involved in teaching and learning in further education for pre-service training and continuous professional development. Similarly, Johnson in his study (2001) examines the advantages of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and its effect on teacher education programs. The study revealed the positive effect of standards on teacher education, for instance, modification in standards as per need, and in a few cases, education programs had been rearranged. It is implied that standards-based teaching has not only initiated but teacher educators have already begun to revise and review them for further advancement as well. Standards have been used for different purposes and in a variety of settings. There are standards for teachers in general; in addition, Katz and Snow (2003) included standards for English language teacher that competent teachers need to know and utilize in designing lessons. In Egypt, four sets of standards were developed for English language teachers, in-service trainers, in-service program, and educational leaders. A second initiative, standards for teachers of English at pre-service (STEPS) is identified that addresses the social, linguistic, and pedagogical competencies required by prospective teachers who intend to teach in primary, preparatory and secondary schools.

Katz & Snow (2003) also mentioned that in China, teacher performance standards were designed with the local application in mind. It encourages teachers to look at their particular need and inspire their development in their particular need. They were built around eight domains that reflect the best practices while respecting the Chinese educational system. Similarly, in Pakistan, many problems are being faced by teachers

while teaching. The standards-based movement has already been initiated in national education policy 2009 for all the subjects and developing standards for English language teachers would be beneficial for English Language Teachers. Around the world, teacher education and teacher professional development have been given ample attention and importance. Dayoub & Bashiruddin (2012) in his article cited ongoing efforts that have been made by different countries to improve the quality of education. In the USA, many reforms have been initiated that allow the extensive study of specific disciplines. In Germany, pre-service training has been introduced including coursework, internship and examination. France had improved teacher education for primary and secondary teachers. Besides, Japan and Taiwan graduate-level programs for teachers have been emphasized.

To ensure quality teaching, educational authorities around the world are developing standards for teachers and evaluating teachers against those fixed criteria. The idea of standard-based teaching and evaluation for the teaching profession has been circulating in education policy discourses and debates for much of the latter part of the 1990s. The government and officials in Australia, the UK, the US, and other countries have initiated the standard-based development to improve the standard of educational systems and to improve the practices of teachers in classrooms (Sachs, 2003). Similarly, in Pakistan efforts are being made by the government of Pakistan to improve the quality of education. A key deficit in Pakistan's education system is the absence of standards for most educational interventions. Even where these standards are established, there are no proper means of accountability. Resultantly, the true picture of the intervention never comes to reality. Minimum National Education Standards document reads that: "In order to gauge the performance of the system that enables effective learning, a set of criteria or standards become important to set the benchmark value for the curriculum, the textbooks, teachers' development, assessment and the particular environment in which learning takes place" (p. 1).

Dayoub & Bashiruddin (2012) in his article claimed that there was no evidence of implementation of national professional standards or preparing teachers as per these standards. They added that "so far they remain on paper only". In addition, Khan & Islam (2015) conducted a research based on the National Professional Standards to evaluate the instructional performance of public sector teachers in light of National Professional standards at boys' primary school level in district Peshawar. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the teachers showed unsatisfactory performance as per the criteria of national professional standards for teachers in Pakistan. On the other hand, only a limited number of teachers showed partial practicality of national professional standards. Hence, all the prevalent problems being stated, the researcher proposed this study to highlight the demographic profiles of ELTs and evaluate the practice of National Professional Standards in the teaching pedagogies at primary, secondary and tertiary level. This research will help teachers to reflect and update their teaching pedagogies that will improve the quality of teaching and education in Pakistan. Zaki (2006) has also strengthened the idea that to have a good education, teachers must develop a holistic and pluralistic view of teaching by combining preparation stage, evaluation stage and application stage in the light of curriculum. All three stages are already mentioned in national professional standards for teachers in Pakistan. This study will try to show that by incorporating these standards in teaching practices, quality of teachers and educators will be improved.

III. METHODOLOGY

The current study has employed a quantitative approach. The strength of quantitative research is manifolds. It is "systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts" (Dornyei, 2007). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) states "The quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted." (p. 100). Therefore, sampling techniques used in this study was convenience sampling "where an important criterion of sample collection is the convenience of the researcher" (Dornyei, 2007). The sample size was calculated using the software OpenEpi version 3.01. The confidence level of 95% was taken. Frequency of Effective communication using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was 1.4% as documented by a study conducted on Public Sector School Teachers at Primary Level in District Peshawar by Khan & Islam (2015). The largest sample size calculated was 22 teachers from private sectors from all primary, secondary and tertiary level institutes. The data was collected by English teachers, who had been teaching at the primary, secondary, and tertiary level. The teachers were contacted through telephone and rubrics were given them in a face to face meeting. The teachers were asked to evaluate themselves according to their teaching pedagogies against the standards.

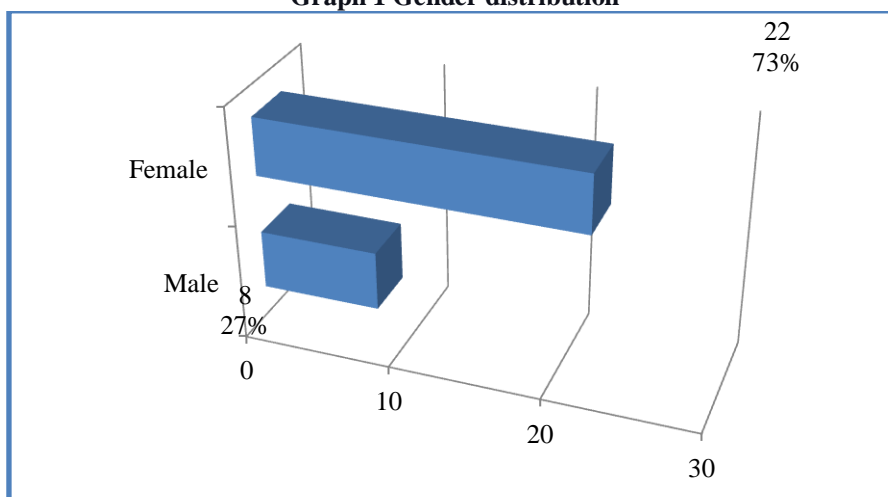
The National Professional Standards for teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP) rubrics used in the study were adapted from the Ministry of Education. The Purpose of the Self- Evaluation rubric was to evaluate the practices

of standards in their choice of teaching practices. The Self- Evaluation rubric was only slightly modified to fit in the English Language Teaching context. The Self-Evaluation rubrics were given to teachers with a three level-coded rating scale. In the scale there were three levels; level one was the beginner level that had score one, level two was an intermediate level that had score two and level three was an advanced level that had score three. In the rubrics, ten standards were given and each standard was comprised of three sections: “knowledge and understanding (what teachers know), dispositions (behaviours, attitudes, and values) and performances (what teachers can do and should be able to do)” (NPSTP, 2009). In the rubrics, out of these ten standards, twenty-six sub-standards were made. The Self-Evaluation rubrics for teachers were attached in the appendices. Assessing the validity and reliability of an instrument is integral to measure the instrument’s usefulness. In this research, Reliability was assessed through chochran alpha. It was found that chochran alpha=0.791 which showed internal consistency was acceptable.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

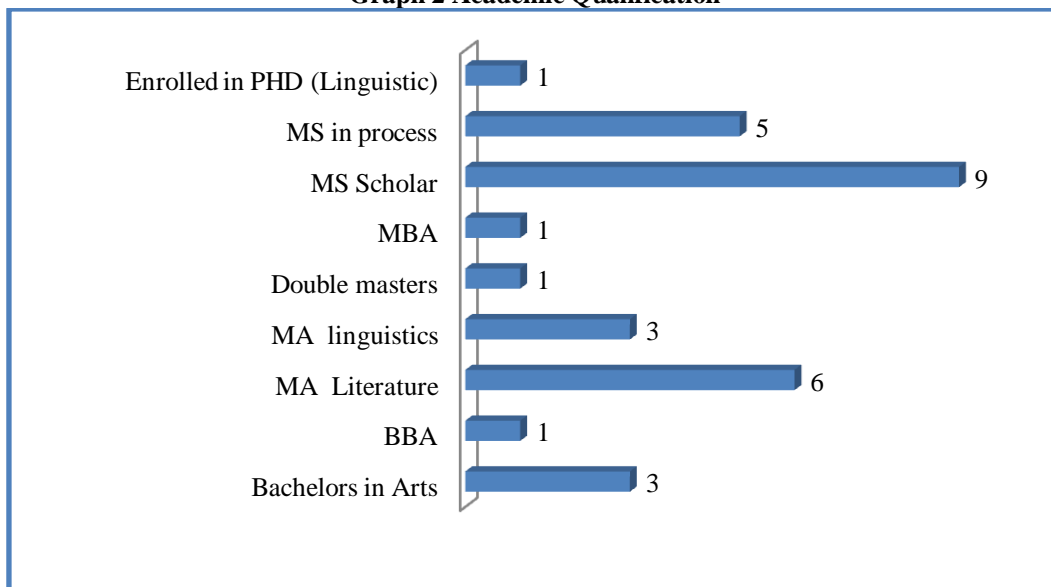
Dornyie (2007) states “Descriptive statistics are used to summarize set of numerical data to converse time and space”. In addition, it is the more professional way of presenting score by providing the mean of respondents answer rather than just listing all the scores obtained.

**4.1 Analysis #1 Demographic Analysis of Teachers
Graph 1 Gender distribution**



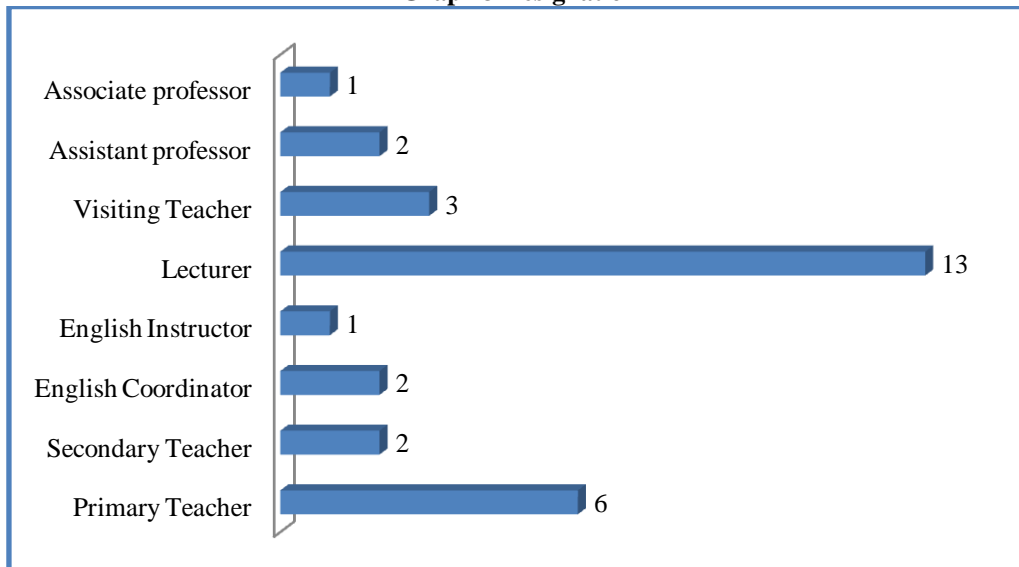
Graph 1 showed that the intact group had unequal gender distribution. 8 participants were male and 22 participants were female.

Graph 2 Academic Qualification



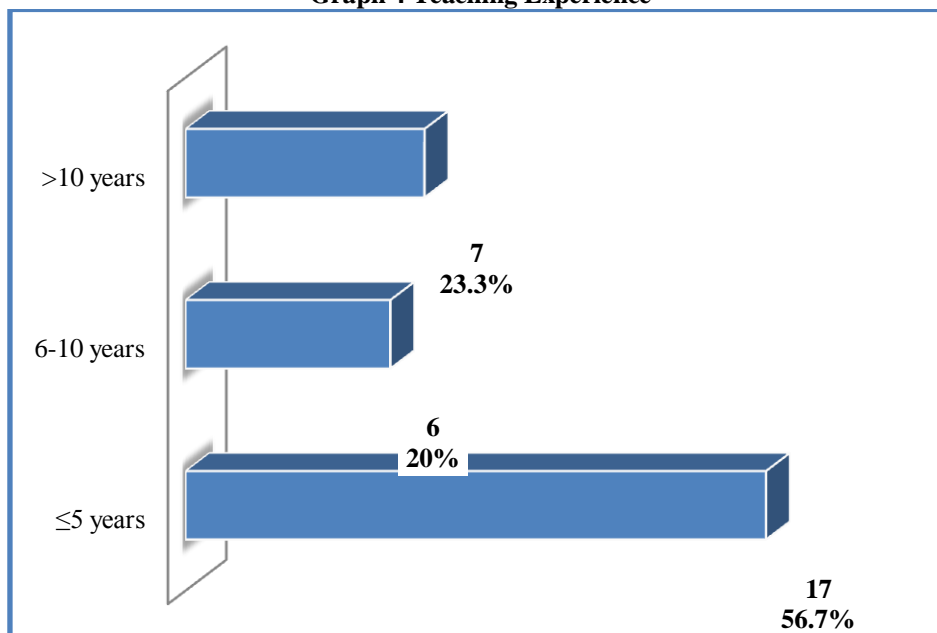
The above graph revealed that out of thirty, nine teachers held MS degree and five were enrolled in MS, six teachers had MA literature, three MA linguistics and BA respectively. In addition, one teacher had double masters, BBA, MBA and PhD respectively.

Graph 3 Designation



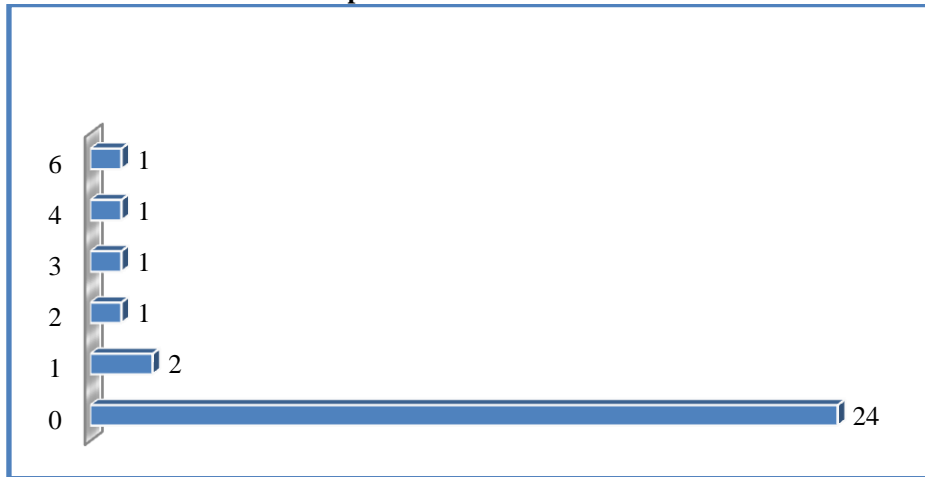
The analysis showed that 13 teachers were lecturer, 6 primary teachers, 3 visiting, and 2 secondary teachers, English coordinator, assistant professor respectively. Besides, one was an associate professor and English instructor respectively.

Graph 4 Teaching Experience



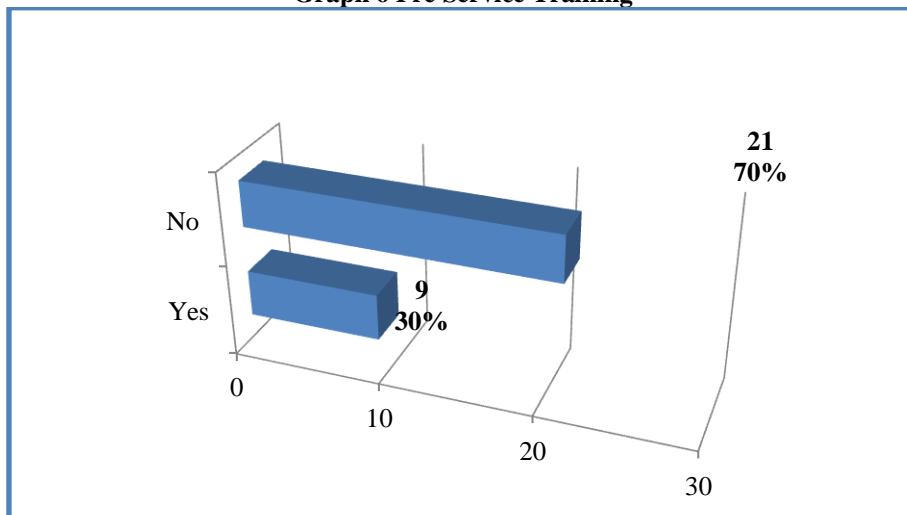
The analysis showed that 17 teachers had experienced between 1 to 5 years, 6 teachers had experienced between 6 to 10 years, 7 teachers had more than 10 years of experience.

Graph 5 Research Publication



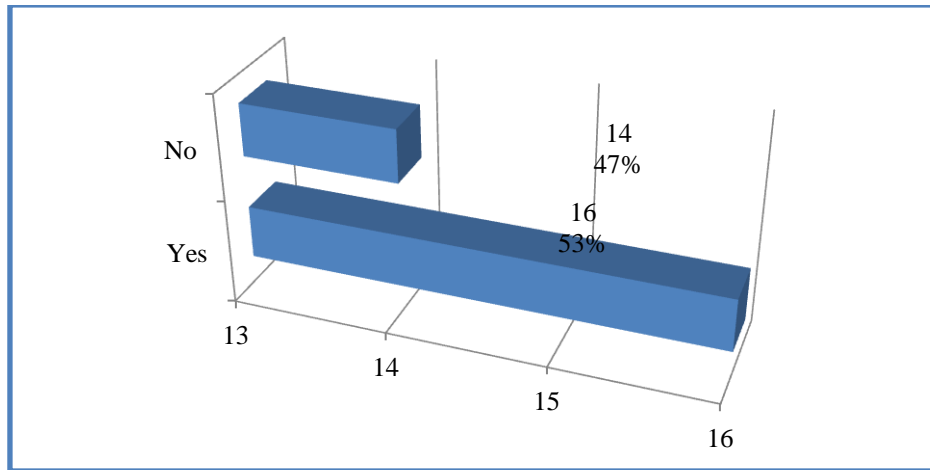
The analysis showed that 24 teachers did not have any research experience while remaining teachers had conducted a few numbers of researches.

Graph 6 Pre Service Training



The above analysis showed that out of 30, 9 teachers had pre-service training and the remaining 21 did not have any pre-training.

Graph 7 Continuous Professional Development



The above analysis revealed that 16 teachers were enrolled in Continuous Professional Development while the remaining 47 were not enrolled in any programme.

4.2 Analysis #2 Frequency Distribution of National Professional Standards across Education Level
Table 1 Cumulative Mean at Education levels

S#	Standards	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Standard 1: Subject Matter Knowledge				
1.1	Source of the lesson content	2.2	2.8	2.6
1.2	Understanding of the subject matter knowledge/curriculum	2.3	2.7	2.1
1.3	Teaching Strategies/Pedagogy employed	2	2.7	2
1.4	Activating child’s knowledge	2.5	2.2	21.9
Standard 2: Human Growth and Development				
2.1	Accommodating learning styles and abilities	2.5	2.6	1.6
2.2	Engaging a range of children	2.6	2.6	2.1
2.3	Higher order and critical thinking skills	2.8	2.7	2.5
Standard 3: Knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills				
3.1	Knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills	1.6	1.2	1.8
Standard 4: Instructional Planning and Strategies				
4.1	Long term planning	2.3	1.9	1.7
4.2	Lesson planning	2.4	2	2
4.3	Using instructional resources	2.6	2.3	2.1
4.4	Learner centeredness	2.2	1.8	1.6
Standard 5: Assessment				
5.1	Linked to learning outcomes	2.3	1.9	1.99
5.2	Formative Assessment	2.2	1.7	1.8
5.3	Summative Assessment	2.5	1.7	1.8
5.4	Providing feedback	2.7	1.8	2.1
Standard 6: Learning Environment				
6.1	Relationships and participation	2.6	2.1	2.3
6.2	Classroom management	2.8	1.8	2.1
6.3	Collaborative learning	2.6	2.1	2
Standard 7: Effective communication and proficient use of information communication				

technologies				
7.1	Communication skills	2.9	2.3	2.6
7.2	Language proficiency	2.9	2.6	2.6
7.3	ICT	2.6	2	1.9
Standard 8: Collaboration and partnerships				
8.1	Parent involvement	2.3	1.9	1.4
Standard 9: Continuous professional development and code of conduct				
9.1	Self-reflection	2.2	2.5	2
9.2	Professional development	2.4	1.8	1.9
Standard 10: Teaching of English as second/Foreign language (ESL/EFL)				
10.1	Teaching of English as second/Foreign language	2.2	2.6	2.7
Mean		2.43	2.17	2.04

Table 1 indicated that the average mean value of primary, secondary and tertiary teachers was 2.24, 2.19 and 2.06 respectively. Overall, the mean value implied that practicality of standards in teaching pedagogies was found most at the primary level. As compared to the primary level, the mean value of secondary teachers was 2.19, which showed that standards were being practiced but not as well as they should have been followed. Lastly, at the tertiary level, standards were being followed, but as compared to primary and secondary levels, less attention was paid by teachers in practicing all teaching standards.

One interesting finding is, at a primary level out of ten standards, the most practiced standard was Effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies i.e. standard 7 and the least practiced was standard 3 i.e. Knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills. Similarly, at the secondary level, the most followed standard was Subject Matter Knowledge i.e. standard 2 and the least followed was standard 3. Lastly, at the tertiary level, the most and least followed standards were standard 10 i.e. teaching of English as Second/Foreign language (ESL/EFL) and standard 8 i.e. Parent involvement respectively. These results show that English language teachers are using the standard-based approach in their teaching pedagogies but teaching pedagogies vary at all three levels. Beside, inconsistencies can be noted in the usage of standard-based approach at all level.

Standards-based teaching serves as a point of reference and a way of ensuring consistency when needed, both in academic and professional lives. Darling-Hammond (1997) suggests that unless we move toward keeping goals that are more consistent rather than always making exceptions to the goals, our educational reforms “will surely evaporate in a very short time, long before good schooling spreads to the communities where it is currently most notable by its absence.” It is implied that consistency can bring improvement and advancement in the education system. It can be achieved by executing education policies at all levels of education. For that standard based teaching is important in teacher education program in general and for second language teacher education program in particular; since “standards serve as a common frame of reference... they can offer a coherent vision and direction for instruction and criteria for evaluation” (Katz & Snow, 2003).

According to the National Education Census “data and several studies indicate that professional preparation of teachers in Pakistan is neither standardized nor based on acceptable professional standards” (NPSTP, 2009). The content teachers teach is important, some attention must be drawn towards how teachers’ performance can be measured by standards, this “will eventually provide the evidence that the standards are being met or that some remedial action is required” (NPSTP, 2009). Therefore, the insights gained from the current study may be of assistance for stakeholders across the country to help improve the quality of education.

V. CONCLUSION

Khan (2012) claims “a majority of the 1.2 teachers are either under-qualified, unqualified or poorly qualified; and do not possess adequate pedagogical understanding, subject matter knowledge and lack effective teaching skills”. The low quality of teaching is a hindrance in the way of quality education and therefore prevents students from contributing to the national economic development. Keeping in mind the gaps in the education system this research was conducted to determine the practicality of national professional standards and their implementation across all education levels. The major findings of the research revealed that the practicality of national professional standards in teaching pedagogies was found more at primary level. At the secondary level, standards were being practiced by teachers but the mean value was less than the primary level. Lastly, it was found that less attention was paid towards the national professional standards at the tertiary level.

The results revealed that National Professional Standards for teachers in Pakistan are being followed more at primary level, therefore, a campaign in the form of workshops and seminars should be run to promote government's reforms and policies for education at all levels. In addition to this, it is suggested that standards for English language teachers should be developed and the government should establish a teacher-training institute for teaching English as a language. Finally, standard-based evaluation of teachers should be initiated at all levels. It gives an accurate assessment of where teachers stand against the Teacher Standards. It also enables set goals and plans their professional development pathway.

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