

## TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM: EXPLORING THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL TEACHERS PROFESSIONALISM

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### ABSTRACT

*Teacher professionalism means expertise and consulting determined standards in education. Novel considerations of teacher professionalism that offer professional environments for teachers to take responsibility for their performance. In the educational context, teacher professionalism emphasis on teachers' professional education such as being good at their job, fulfilling the standards, and attaining success. This survey research explores the levels of Dera Ghazi khan teachers 'professionalism. Self-developed questionnaire of professionalism scale with line of national professional standards for teachers in Pakistan (2009) comprising factors of subject matter knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of Islamic ethical values, instructional planning and strategies, assessment, learning environment, and effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies was used. The sample of the study comprised 360 primary school teachers from the Dera Ghazi khan, districts of Punjab province. The analysis showed an average level of professionalism among public primary school teachers of the Dera Ghazi khan, districts. A significant difference concerning the gender and job experience of the teachers was found. It is concluded that a sense of professionalism is normal among some primary school teachers of Dera Ghazi khan districts. Recommendations have been drawn to replicate the study with a more diverse sample and introduction of teacher professional training programs for teachers to develop a sense of professionalism.*

**Keywords:** Teacher professionalism, teacher education, professional development, teaching performance, national professional standards, national education policy-2009.

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism means expertise, and consulting determined standards in education (Demirkasimoğlu, 2010). Similarly, Mayer and Mills (2021) stress the importance of how changes in accountability, standards, performance assessments and teacher testing as well as the availability of non-traditional routes into the teaching profession that priorities subject-matter expertise and on-the-job training have impacted the evolution of teacher professionalism over time.

Modern ideas about teacher professionalism that create settings where educators can work independently and with confidence are essential. Teacher professionalism in the classroom places an emphasis on instructors' competence in the classroom, adherence to professional norms, and achievement of student learning goals (Demirkasmolu, 2018). According to Sellars (2014), the idea of a professional is underpinned by a wide range of criteria. According to her, teaching is a form of social work that requires extensive training and education. She also notes that the profession is organized thanks to its guidelines and evaluation of its actions.

Teachers need to be provided with opportunities to develop their competencies to maintain professionalism and, consequently, reform supervisors will need to appreciate every step of development. A few development steps are initiation, involvement, engagement, and cooperative and collaborative culture development in school. In Pakistan, numerous reforms are being started to progress public schools. These reforms need the development of teachers' professional expertise and improve their professionalism

(Rizvi & Elliott, 2007). OECD's (2005) report and review on teachers observed that effective professional development, going on, includes teachers' training, practices, and comments or feedback, and offers suitable time and development support. Successful development programs comprise learning activities for teachers that are exactly what teachers will use in their classroom and appreciate the teachers' development learning opportunities. There is increasing interest in progressive schools as learning institutions, for teachers to enhance their expertise and experience more systematically.

Orgoványi-Gajdos (2016) identifies three crucial phases in which instructors' ability to solve problems and tackle difficult tasks evolve. To become an effective educator, one must first complete their "Pre-service" training, which occurs at the beginning of their careers as instructors. In the second phase, known as "new teacher," educators take their first independent steps as classroom instructors and experience their first years of friction with the realities of the profession. The third and final stage is CPD or "the Experienced Teacher Stage" (European Commission, 2010, p. 6).

Many policies in the field of teacher education fail to recognize the significance of developing teachers who are familiar with and comfortable with conducting research. They also miss out on the possibilities afforded by research in the field of teacher education for the purpose of revising requirements for accountability. In this way, measures in Australia and England aimed at improving the quality of education for teachers are reducing the respect and status of those who work in the field. Each nation's teacher education policy and related directions might prioritize teachers' professional development (Mayer & Mills, 2021).

Peña-López (2009) (2009) Educators are increasingly called upon to shoulder greater responsibilities in many nations' classrooms. Educators today are being asked to do more than ever before, including: teaching in culturally diverse classrooms; prioritizing the inclusion of students with special learning needs; increasing the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the classroom; preparing for and planning within evaluation and accountability frameworks; and organizing more opportunities for parent involvement in the classroom and at the school. There is no thought given to the quality of teachers' induction or pre-service training, and it is not anticipated to fully prepare teachers for the difficulties they will face in the classroom. In order to keep up the standard of education and to keep a highly professional teacher in the classroom, educational institutions actively seek to provide teachers with opportunities for teacher education or in-service professional development.

According to the research of Khizar et al. (2019), when Pakistan's Ministry of Education developed its National Professional Standards for Teachers and National Education Policy (2009), it failed to give adequate consideration to teachers' professionalism. They stated that the programme did not cover the development of teachers' professionalism and that there was no shared harmonization between NEP and NPSTs specialists.

In Pakistan, the Ministry of Education 2009 suggested ten standards for training new teachers. These standards are Knowledge, Human growth and development, Knowledge regarding Islamic and ethical values/ skills for social life, Teaching planning and methodologies, Evaluation, Learning milieu, Communication skills and usage of ICT, Cooperation and partnerships, Continuous professional development and code of conduct, The teaching of English as a secondary/foreign language. There are three components to each standard: (a) what does the instructor know about knowledge and comprehension (content), (b) disposition (behaviors, attitude, values), and (3) what could be completed by a teacher in terms of performance (skills)?

Mushtaq and Mustafa (2015) assert that National Professional Standards for all the teachers in Pakistan will happen as an important step in the development of education. These principles are essential for all teachers for teacher professionalism. Therefore, the need arises to know the level of professionalism in public school teachers through National professional standards for Teachers in Pakistan.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the professionalism of public sector school teachers.
2. Explore the teacher professionalism concerning gender in public sector school teachers.
3. Find out the possible change in teachers' professionalism with respect to length of time spends in job.

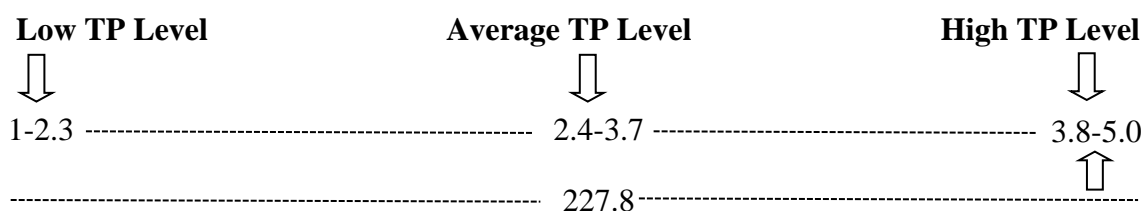
**METHODOLOGY**

This cross-sectional survey research design explores the levels of teachers ‘professionalism of public primary school teachers in Dera Ghazi Khan. Self-developed questionnaire of professionalism scale with the line of national professional standards for teachers in Pakistan (2009) comprising factors of subject matter knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of Islamic ethical values, instructional planning and strategies, assessment, learning environment, and effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies was used. The sample of the study comprised 360 primary school teachers of the Dera Ghazi Khan, districts of Punjab province.

**RESULTS**

**Objective 1: Levels of professionalism of public sector school teachers**

**Research Q 1: Is there any difference between levels of teachers' professionalism of public sector school teachers**



**Figure 1. Teacher professionalism (TP) Levels**

The above figure 1 shows the levels of professionalism. There are three levels (low, average, and high) of teachers’ professionalism. Interval 1.3 was used in a 5-point Likert scale value. So low level of teachers’ professionalism ranges from 1-2.3. The average level of teachers’ professionalism level is ranging from 2.4-3.7 and the high level of teacher professionalism is ranging from 3.8-5. The mean score value of 227.8 indicates the average level of professionalism in some public schools’ teachers of Dera Ghazi Khan.

**Table 1 Overall Mean Score of teacher professionalism**

	N	Mean	St. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Overall Mean Score	360	227.8	17.34	122	272

The above table 1 shows overall mean score of 227.8 that represent most of the primary school teachers of district Dera Ghazi Khan have an average level of professionalism. Teacher professionalism concerning to: (a) local, (b) qualification and (c) monthly income.

**(1). Is there any difference between the levels of professionalism of public sector school teachers of Dera Ghazi Khan concerning local**

**H0: There is no significant difference between the teacher professionalism of rural and urban school teachers.**

**Table: 2 Comparison of professionalism Mean score Between Urban and rural teachers**

Residence	N	Mean	St. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Urban	136	226.4	19.71	1.26	358	.207
Rural	224	228.7	15.70			

Above Table 2 shows the comparison of professionalism. Mean scores between the urban and rural teachers. It is depicted that urban school teachers (N=136) have a professionalism mean score = 4.047 and rural school teachers N= (224) have a professionalism mean score of 4.161. The value of the t-test for independent samples (t=1.26, df = 358 & p=.207) shows that there is no significant difference between the professionalism of urban and rural school teachers.

**(2). Is there any difference between the levels of professionalism of public sector school teachers of Dera Ghazi Khan concerning qualification**

**Table 3: Comparison of professionalism mean score concerning qualification**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Income	Between Groups	219.2	3			
	Within Groups	107734.7	356	73.0	.241	.867
	Total	107953.9	359	302.6		

The above table shows a comparison of the professionalism of the teachers of four different Qualification groups (B.A/BSc, M.A/MSc, MPhil/MS, and Ph.D.) and shows no significant difference ( $F=.241, p=.867$ ) in the professionalism of the teachers involved in four different qualification groups of study.

**(3) A comparison of teachers' professionalism scores of four income groups:**

**Table 4: Comparison of teachers' professionalism scores of four income groups**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Income	Between Groups	582.3	3			
	Within Groups	107371.6	356	194.1	.644	.587
	Total	107953.9	359	301.6		

The above 4 table shows a comparison of the professionalism of the teachers of four different income groups and shows no significant difference ( $F=1.537, p=.205$ ) in the professionalism of the teachers involved in four different income groups of study.

**Objective 2: Explore the teacher professionalism concerning gender in public sector school teachers.**

**Research Question 2: Is there any difference between professionalism of public sector school teachers of Dera Ghazi Khan concerning gender**

**Table 5: Comparison of teachers' Mean professionalism scores between male and female teachers**

Gender	N	Mean	St. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Male	180	225.4	17.43			
Female	180	230.3	16.94	2.704	358	.007

The above table 5 shows the comparison of mean teachers' professionalism scores between male and female teachers. It is indicated that male teachers (N=180) have professionalism mean scores = 225.4 and female teachers N= (180) have professionalism mean scores of 230.3. The value of the t-test for the independent sample ( $t=2.704, df = 358$  &  $p=.007$ ) shows that there is a significant difference between male and female primary public school teachers' professionalism. So, it is concluded that female teachers have more professionalism than male teachers.

**Objective 3: Find out the possible change in teachers' professionalism concerning the length of time spends on the job.**

**Is there any difference between the levels of professionalism of public sector school teachers of Dera Ghazi Khan concerning the length of time spends in job or job experience**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Income	Between Groups	3270.6	3			
	Within Groups	104683.3	356	1090.2	3.70	.01
	Total	107953.9	359	294.0		

The above table indicates a comparison of the professionalism of the teachers of four different job experience groups, (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16 and above) and represents significant difference ( $F=3.70, p=.01$ ) in the professionalism of the teachers involved in four different job experience groups of study.

**CONCLUSION**

Conclusions drawn from the findings and analysis of data are as follows: (1) public school primary level Teacher of Dera Ghazi Khan shows an average level of professionalism. It is concluded that a normal sense

of professionalism is in primary school teachers of Dera Ghazi Khan, (2) the professionalism of both rural and urban teachers is the same. No difference between the professionalism of urban and rural teachers was found, (3) the professionalism of the teachers involved in four different monthly income groups (30,000-45000, 46000-60000, and 61000-75000 76000-above) is the same. It is concluded that monthly income does not affect teacher professionalism, (4) professionalism is not equal for male and female teachers. Female teachers have more professionalism in their teaching profession as compared to male teachers and (b) the professionalism of the teachers of four different job experience groups, (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16 and above) was found not the same. It is concluded that with the passage of time and experience it is increased.

## DISCUSSION

It is a common expectation that teacher education, research, and training enhance their professionalism in their teaching profession. The present study shows the average level of professionalism in some school's teachers at Dera Ghazi Khan, where traditional teaching styles may be adopted to some extent. Similarly, Demirkasımođlu (2018) and Nairz-Wirth and Feldmann (2019)'s study exposed that in the educational context, teacher professionalism emphasizes teachers' professional education such as being good at their job, fulfilling the standards, and attaining success and reforms must be desired for education field policy and other factors in society to promote professionalism. Similarly, Rizvi and Elliott (2007)'s study also emphasizes that teachers need to be provided with opportunities to develop their competencies to maintain professionalism and, consequently, reform supervisors will need to appreciate every step of development.

The present study shows that with the passage of time and experience teachers show more professionalism. Similarly, Fox et al. (2015) study also revealed similarities between common expectations and present study findings. Similarly, Orgoványi-Gajdos (2016) also emphasizes the development of teachers' problem-solving and challenging skills given three important stages. In the first phase, known as "Pre-service," a teacher receives the foundational education and training they'll need to become an effective educator. In the second phase, known as "new teacher," educators take their first independent steps as classroom instructors and experience their first years of friction with the realities of the profession. As a teacher with some experience under their belts, you've reached the third level, CPD. The present study shows no significant differences in professionalism in the district of Dera Ghazi Khan school teachers found concerning locality and income.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the major suggestions regarding the present study: (1) the study should be replicated with a more diverse sample, (2) an overview of professional training programs for teachers should be observed to develop a sense of professionalism, (3) further reforms and initiatives from the field of education policy need to enhance professionalism, (4) school factors that cause de-professionalism should be removed to stabilize professional teaching, (5) research conferences and seminars should be conducted to improve teachers' professionalism and (6) old traditional teacher center teaching should be replaced with student-centered to enhance professionalism.

### Recommendations for the Future Study

The following are the major suggestions for future study: (1) professionalism is a necessary part of the construct of the study "Teacher wellness" Its role may be explored in more detail in a future study and (2) the Present study was a cross-sectional survey research design. An experimental study is recommended to explore how teacher professionalism may be improved at the primary education level.

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