Professional Values among Teachers: Gaps and Status

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the sole purpose to identify the levels of professional values among teachers at secondary stage. The study is based on the sample of 150 teachers of 15 secondary schools in Jammu district (J & K State). Professional Value Scale (PVS) for teachers, developed and standardized by Dr.D.R.Kapoor(2009), was used for the present study. The scores of respondents on six sub-tests of professional values namely, sincerity, attachment, propensity to accept a new challenge, propensity to do action research for improving teaching and learning, attitude of caring, and professional drives were derived. The profile yielded by the scores of teachers on professional values were analyzed with regards to marked variables namely age, sex, qualification, training, experience, subject taught and results respectively. Data was analyzed using SPSS as per the given design specifying variables and their relations. Results derived have shown low levels of professional values among teachers at the secondary stage. Qualification, training, experience, and learning outcomes were found significantly related to professional values. In the prevailing scenario, the present study has wider implications for planners, academician, and stakeholders in designing professional codes for developing integrity, duty, service, respect, tolerance, equity, excellence, national pride, and accountability among the teachers.
KEYWORDS: Values, Propensity, Action Research, Caring, Professional drives.

INTRODUCTION

Professional values are reflected in teacher's logical, psychological, and moral acts. These may be love, ecstasy, mutual communication, respect, fun, growth, support, challenge, creativity, freedom, honesty and spiritual unity. Perseverance, integrity, maturity, commitment, involvement, and accountability are the essential ingredients to professional growth in achieving the ends with appropriate means. It is a mature way of thinking and doing job purposefully and integrating professional acts and practices in achieving excellence (Gupta & Kapoor,1984). These values earmark principles/guidelines/criteria to know the facts, to act consciously, to achieve excellence and happiness in a set of relations in an organization; empower and provide insight for decision making and to find out practical solutions to intricate problems with number of options (Murray, 2003). Sachs (2000) identified five core principles of teachers' professionalism: namely, learning, participation, collaboration, cooperation and activism. Professional values are just behaviour specific, nitty-gritty and so descriptive and have little to the imagination. People must be able to use them as marching orders because they are the how of mission, the means to the end–winning (Welch & Welch, 2005). Professional Values of an individual reflect self-image or self-identification.   A professional vision of the occupation will motivate teachers effectively by giving them a realistic and justifiable pride in them and in their work (Duke, 1987).

Teaching, in fact, is different in nature from other white collared professional occupations. Teachers have, for example, some professional freedom of action and do not have to follow rules like pure bureaucrats do. A teacher himself has to basically construct the norms to which he is to conform. While valid for him, they may not be the norms of his colleagues in the next classroom. The teaching profession is unique and distinct because teachers have to address to the diverse student population i.e., having different socio-economic and cultural background. Second, it deals with delicate human being with unique intellectual, social and emotional dimensions and is not a raw material to be converted mechanically into products. Profession is not to stuff materials into the brain container but to bring about positive behavioural change which requires mastery over logical and pedagogical content knowledge. Bonnet (1996) says teaching is about the engagement of the personhood of the teacher with personhood of the pupil- a genuine mutual responsiveness initiated by the teacher's desire to enable authentic learning.

In the present scenario, the role of the teacher has expanded from transmitter of knowledge to reflective practitioner, action researcher, classroom manager, curriculum developer, life long learner, and community partner. In the technology rich environment when huge quantum of knowledge is generated in all parts of the world with super speed and can be accessed with the blink of an eye, the teachers have to make them 'technological fit'. Teachers have to come out of the conventional mode of chalk and talk, talk the talk, or short cut methods to achieve the goals. They have to be 'holistic' and 'inclusive' in their approach. They need to change their mind-set and be proactive to update, upgrade, and sharpen their professional competencies to get insights in the different processes of the profession.

The teacher today is on cutting edge where quality, accountability, leadership and discipline converge. It impels him to introspect about his standing, convictions, role and performance. He has to do his SWOT analysis to find out where he stands in context of 1) practice in teaching and communication skills, 3) knowledge base, 4) sensitivity to student urges, needs, aspirations and concerns, 5) learning outcomes, and 6) the code of moral conduct (Kapoor,2009). Commitment, integrity, confidentiality, caring, competence, responsibility, compassion, spirit of enquiry and advocacy are usually considered as core values of a profession (Swann and Pratt, 2003). Truth of the teaching profession is revealed in Rig Veda as mentioned below:

> *"Kushalaat na pramaditavyam,*
> *Swaathyaayaat na pramaditavyam,*
> *Pravachanaat na pramaditavyam." (Rig Veda)*

(To be a successful professional, the teacher should perennially practice his teaching skill, pursue his studies ceaselessly and continually update his communication skills. Any deviation from it would constitute a deliberate sin leading to perdition)

REVIEW OF RESEARCHES
Strain (1995) observes "Professionalism is intractably bound up with widely shared values, understandings and attitudes regarding the social order and the rules by which others, in certain relationships, may instigate a claim on us –to claim the standing of a profession which has come to mean adherence to an ethic, a moral principle, which

derives from a freely undertaken commitment to serve others as individual human beings, worthy of respect, care and attention."

These norms lead to what may be termed as the 'professional value structure' in teachers (Wilson and Berne, 1999). Professionals consistently increase their knowledge, skills, and practices. They enjoy reading new literature and attending seminars, conferences, workshops, summer institutes and other professional activities. They have a full faith in their work and profession. They may sacrifice many things for their professional growth. Researchers have established that the professional values among teachers contribute significantly towards teaching effectiveness (Gupta,1984). There is paradigm shift in pedagogy from mere instruction to the inclusion of cultural specific processes and creation of healthy and congenial organizational climate in order to make learning more open and effective. Huberman's (1989) study of teachers' professional life demonstrates a range of development trajectories. It is an unfolding of "professional way–of-being" (Dall'Alba, 2006). In other words, professionals not only learn knowledge and skills, but these are renewed over time while becoming integrated into ways of being the professional in question. The professional development involves not simply accumulating knowledge and skills but learning to deal with the situations encountered in qualitatively different and more complex ways (Borko , 2004).The influential model (Dreyfus, 2002) has been used in empirical studies in a range of professional contexts, such as nursing (Tanner and Chelsa, 1996), teaching (Berlinger, 1994), management (Ryan, 1975; Fook and Hawkins, 1995), and computer programming (Chmiel and Loui, 2004).

Halstead and Tylor (2000) recognize that two assumptions lie behind the standards and professional values for teachers. First, teachers see it as their role to influence the development of their pupils' values. Second, the teachers in their relationships, attitudes and teaching styles influence pupils' values. Professional values drive teachers to (1) foster collegiality and collaboration,(2) draw content from the available knowledge base, (3) involve participants in decision making, (4) reflect on and practice what is learned, (5) develop leadership qualities, (6) inculcate sincerity and accountability (7) conduct periodical self evaluation and (8) develop positive mind-set to achieve excellence in the execution of job. Ethical, social, emotional, academic, clientele, management, job involvement and spiritual values are the basis of professional advancement (Kapoor, 2009).

METHODOLOGY
The study is based on the sample of 150 teachers of 15 secondary schools in Jammu district (J & K State). Professional Value Scale (PVS) for Teachers developed and standardized by Dr.D.R.Kapoor was used for the present study. The scores of respondents on six sub-tests of professional values were derived. The scores of respondents on professional values were derived by simple summation. The profile yielded by the scores of teachers on professional values were analyzed with regards to marked variables namely age, sex, qualification, training, experience, subject taught and results respectively. Data was analyzed using SPSS as per the given design specifying variables and their relations. On the basis of data analysis, results were derived.

Table-1 Standard Scores of Teachers on the Different Dimensions of Professional Values

Dimension	Standard Scores
1. Sincerity	47
2. Attachment	25
3. Propensity to accept new challenges	25
4. Propensity to action research	22
5. Professional Drives	35
6. Caring	20

Table- 2 Significance of Differences between Teachers on Professional Values Across Age & Gender

Variable	M1	M2	O1	O2	C.R.
Sex					
Male Vs Female	47.63	46.67	4.46	5.52	1.38
Age					
Young Vs Middle Aged	48.00	46.48	5.96	4.16	1.87*
Middle Vs Elder Aged	46.48	48.79	4.16	4.42	3.12**
Young Vs Elder Aged	48.00	48.79	5.96	4.42	0.78

**P/.01   *Symptomatic

Table- 3 Significance of Differences between Teachers on Professional Values Across Qualifications, Professional Training & Experience

Variable	M1	M2	O1	O2	C.R.
Professional Training					
Trained Vs Untrained	48.23	47.11	4.97	4.16	1.59*
Qualification					
Graduate Vs Post Graduate	46.35	47.47	7.08	4.32	1.03
Experience					
More than 5 Years Vs Less than 3 Years	48.78	47.72	4.41	4.25	1.59*

**P/.01   *Symptomatic

Table- 4 Significance of Differences between Teachers on Professional Values Vis-à-vis Discipline & Terminal Results

Variable	M1	M2	O1	O2	C.R.
Discipline					
Art Vs Science	45.45	47.23	6.48	4.99	1.85*
Terminal Results					
More than 75% Vs					
Less than 50 %	48.54	45.75	50 3.56	4.75	3.12**

**P/.01   *Symptomatic

RESULTS

Table-1 shows that the teachers at secondary level were found deplorably low on four dimensions of Professional Value Scale namely attachment, propensity to accept new challenge, propensity to research, and caring. Lack of professional attachment implied accidental entry to profession, low level of involvement, enjoyment and satisfaction in teaching. Propensity to accept new challenge had been found at low ebb as reflected by lack of innovativeness, and indifference to action research. Teachers were found lacking on the variable of caring i.e. how to address the diverse population of students to meet their perceived needs. However, teachers were found high on sincerity i.e. their objectivity, and impartiality. Teachers had also been found good on the variable of professional drives i.e. urge professional orientation, participation in professional programmes for amelioration of their profession standard.

Table -2 reveals that no significant difference had been found between male and female teachers of professional values. However, the mean score of male teachers on professional values was found higher as compared to female teachers. Statistically significant difference had been found between the middle aged and elder aged group with regard to professional values (P/.01). Elder aged group had been found higher on professional values than the middle aged group. Moreover, significant difference had been found between young and middle at 0.05 level.

Table-3 shows that statistically significant difference had been found between trained and untrained teachers at the secondary level on professional values (0.05). Trained teachers were found higher on professional values as compared to untrained teachers. No significant difference was found between graduate and post graduate teachers on professional values. However, mean score of postgraduate teachers was found higher as compared to graduate teachers. Statistical significant difference had been found between

experienced and less experienced teachers on professional values at 0.05 level. Teachers with more than 5 years service experience were found higher on professional values as compared to teachers with less than three year experience of teaching.

Table-4 reflects that there had been statistically significant difference between the art and the science teachers on professional value at 0.05 level. Science teachers had been found higher on professional values as compared to art teachers. Statistically significant difference had been found between the teachers on professional values in relation to their terminal results. The teachers showing more than 75% results were found higher on professional values as compared to teachers with less than 50% results. Two cut off point were considered for the present study i.e. less than Q_2 and more than Q_3.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the present study support the results from the earlier research studies (Gupta and Kapoor, 2009; Hammond and Sykes, 1999; Corcoran, 1995; Sachs and Day, 2005) which reported that the teachers had been at the low level of professional values. The present investigation had further reflected that the teachers at secondary level lacked attachment, propensity to research and innovation. They had been found least caring in relation to students needs. Research studies provide ample evidence that the experienced and elder teachers have higher professional values as compared to less experienced and young teachers (Kapoor, 2009; Togneri, 2003; Swanson, 1995; Sparks and Hirsh, 1999; Grossman, 2000; Fullen, 2001). In the survey of 24 countries in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2013), it was also found that new teachers spend less time on teaching and learning and more time on classroom management and report lower levels of self-efficacy than experienced teachers. The present study reveals that trained teachers were higher on professional values as compared to untrained which corroborated with evidences of earlier research studies(Gupta and Kapoor2009; Kapoor,2013;Archibald and Odden,2001; Langer, 2000, Adey, 2004, Borko, 2004). The present study shows that the teachers with higher level of professional values had shown good academic results.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Educational planners should devise and develop codes of conduct for teachers. Research studies support that codes of conduct provided guidelines through ethical rules, held teachers responsible and accountable for their actions, protected clients (children), enhanced the professional status of the teaching profession, and created and maintained professional identity (Van Nuland, 2009). Codes of conduct for teacher should be enacted to ensure integrity, duty, service, respect, tolerance, equity, excellence, national pride, and accountability among the teachers.

2. Educational Institutions should develop indicators for assessing the professional values among teachers, Assessment should be multidimensional i.e. evaluation by self, by clients, by colleagues and by community or stakeholders. One of the basic and fundamental elements of an organization is 'ethics' a set of 'moral prisms' through which employees should be observed and enable them to determine the right

things for themselves. A set of 'prisms' should include: - virtue ethic, result ethic, universal ethic, public exposure ethic, and caring ethic (David, A. Sharpiro, 1999).

3. Communication skill is basic to professional values and growth. Educational institutions should provide ample opportunities to teachers to develop their basic skills of communicating consistently in a professional manner at all times and in all settings and with sensitivity, by considering differences in culture, race/ethnicity, religion, and gender.

4. Educational institutions have a significant role in developing professional values among teachers. Congenial learning environment should be developed wherein teacher may resolve ethical dilemmas through a systematic, reflective decision-making process based on ethical principles and theory. He is enabled to evaluate the ethical accountability of his or her actions, intentions and outcomes.

5. Professional values demands for sound and effective relationships with colleagues and the management. Sharing of ideas, suggestions and resources, and good practices with other teachers pave way for professional growth. Good relationship with management calls for aligning his or her professional activities with institutional mission and goals.

6. We are living in a flat world where lot of knowledge, new processes, techniques, innovative practices are being developed and transmitted. These changes demand for high degree of professional ethical standards to ensure equality and equity, justice so that benefits of new technologies should be made comprehensive and inclusive.

7. Profession values are the sets of attributes possessed by a teacher and are reflected in his or her logical, psychological, and moral acts applied in classroom setting with the purpose to bring about positive behavioual change among individual with diverse cognitive abilities, and diverse socio-cultural background. In order to achieve excellence, institution should redesign its strategies and curricular activities to develop professional values among teachers.

8. Researches have established that teacher preparation enhances the quality of teaching and students outcomes (Kapoor,2013). But teacher education institutions are not responsive to the changing needs of the time and are not producing the desirable results in developing professional values among teachers. Therefore, the pre-service and the in-service teachers training need drastic change to make it adequate and qualitative. Effective training programmes can ensure developing professional values among teachers for their professional growth and excellence in learning.

9. The lack of professional values among teachers generally affects the morale of the teachers and students outcomes. There is an urgent need to constitute a political body, which can foster desirable professional values among teachers considered essential for the professional growth.

10. The policy planners should focus on the right organizational forms, resource base, and incentive for educators to engage in the development of professional values among new teachers as a basic part of their work.

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