

Globalization: Challenges to Teacher Professionalism and the Changing Role of Pakistani Teachers

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Abstract

Globalization has influenced teaching profession significantly, converting today's teacher as the part of a very vast global teaching community. The purpose of this study was to review the related literature on teacher professionalism in both international context and local cultural perspective of Pakistan. This paper critically examines the criteria on which the teacher professionalism can be evaluated: subject knowledge, social function and ethical role, work autonomy, professional development, and the use of latest technology. Here, the paper finds that the idea of teacher professionalism has not yet reached any consensus and many diversified interpretations can be traced throughout the related literature ranging from the recognition of teachers as semi-professionals to full-professionals. The paper also indicates the professional diversity among Pakistani teaching community who do not find a favourable professional environment, by and large. Nonetheless, much is needed to enhance their professionalism; they need continuous professional development, working autonomy and financial betterment.

1. Introduction

1.1. Globalization and Teacher Professionalism

Globalization appears as a postmodern phenomenon with its ideological and hegemonic potential. It is identified with varying connotations, as, for instance, the Americanization, the Colonization of the lifeworld, the enslaving of the third world by advanced capitalist societies (Malisa, Koetting & Radermacher, 2007). Sometimes, it is supported by arguments which are based upon humanity relying on shared perspectives while living in global world to contribute to the common benefits. Market globalization, international politics, worldwide communication, advanced technology and cultural pluralism are some of the major subjects of globalization. Education is not unique to debate under the umbrella term of globalization. Globalization is a phenomenon of *big change*, a shift from being indigenous to being global. However, the slogan is raised, ‘Think globally—act locally’ which is not so forceful that it can resist the hegemony of globalization (Tabb, 2001). The paradigm of educational beliefs is getting mixed with changed perspectives. Education is now a commodity, one of so many saleable products in this global village. This *neoliberalism* claims that today’s problems are best addressed by the market, and the local government regulation and public sector should be as minimized as possible. This neoliberal model of education involves three aspects of education (Tabb, 2001):

- i. Making the provision of education more cost-efficient by commodifying the product;
- ii. Testing performance by standardizing the experience;
- iii. Focusing on market skills.

The world of education is much echoed by new metaphors of educational Taylorism, professional competition, market skills, global needs, distance learning and standardized testing. That is why, education is also a product to be sold like other industrial commodities.

1.2. Teacher as a Member of the Global Teaching Community

Today’s teachers have changed their spatial orientation; from being local to being global. Being part of the sales representative group of global product of education, the teacher has to encounter with the international business needs of multinational organizations. The spectrum of education now spreads over training the learners in accordance with the indigenous and global needs of big global business organizations. Being the part of the global community, the teachers are also working in multicultural settings (Thill & Bovee, 2005). Likewise, the modern teachers have to be well-

equipped with the modern global technology for their survival; otherwise they might be left behind in the race of professionalism (McLaren & Rarahmandpur, 2005).

1.3. Purpose and Method of Study

In this context, the purpose of this study was to review the related literature on teacher's professionalism. The reviewers have attempted to cover the issue in both the international context and local cultural perspective of Pakistan. This paper will help in explaining the professional status of Pakistani teachers, which require further empirical or theoretical studies and thus, future studies could be focused on indigenous questions and local cultural issues pertaining to teacher's professionalism. The literature for this study was reviewed from global to local perspective, encompassing the international trends and prevailing conditions in the local cultural context of Pakistan. This review will create an awareness of the need to pay more attention to teacher professional standards.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

William James (1842-1910), first introduced the metaphor of *artist* for the teachers; though the idea was neither supported by any evidences nor distinguished from many connotations attached with the metaphor. However, the implication of the idea influenced the policy makers in a way that they took teaching as an art, i.e. an inborn faculty. So, teachers were regarded to be born with an innate ability of teaching which were less affected by professional training. The idea of saintly attributes was also fixed with the teachers and teaching was regarded as a highly noble profession. They were thought as the persons who would guide the humanity and did not have any need of professional development; they were already perfect. The debate on the role of teachers entered into a new phase focusing on the controversy whether teachers are merely workers, or they are professionals.

The idea of teachers as professionals has been replaced by the idea where teachers are mere workers who like other workers, need training to enhance their teaching skills. For instance, most teaching unions define teachers as 'workers', 'employees' or 'proletariats' whose main issue is their pay raise and salary boost. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1990) presents three main reasons due to which teachers are identified as workers:

- i. there are too many teachers for high status to be automatically accorded in the public mind;

- ii. educational qualification level of teachers is not considered equal to that of other professionals and;
- iii. feminization of teaching profession as the rewards and status of teachers decline, it is commonly asserted, in direct proportion to growing number and pre-dominant place of women among their ranks.

Many other reasons are also associated with the idea of regarding teachers as workers. For instance, teachers start with the pay lower than that of other professionals. After passing more years in teaching, they see the gap is getting wider in the financial inequality. The time that the teachers spend in schools is only six to seven hours which is less than half of the time the professionals do. Different from the other professionals, teachers' salaries are not usually associated with their performance. As per general perception, teaching is an easy job, and anyone can do it. It does not require much professional training for being a 'good teacher'.

2.2. Teachers as Professionals

A very hot debate exists on the question whether teachers should be labeled as professionals or they should be regarded merely as workers or proletariats. The term professionalism is in itself, a vague connotation that is identified in different ways in different contexts. The idea of teacher professionalism is multidimensional in nature and thus may be elucidated differently with different focused areas of learning and pedagogy (Coleman & Shah-Coltrane, 2011). Despite the lack of any consensus on definition, most attribute teachers' professionalism to highly specialized knowledge, precise occupational judgement, skill improvement and the accomplishment of standards they are accountable for (Creasy, 2015). It is therefore that the teachers' professionalism has been interpreted differently: sometimes regarded as semi-professionals (Collay, 2006), sometimes as full-professionals (Fenstermacher, 1990; Van Veen 2008), and sometimes merely as workers (OECD, 1990).

2.3. Review of the Criteria for being Professional

Looking at the criteria that the professionals must come up with, we see that the foremost criteria for being a professional resides in the subject knowledge (Hoyle, 1995). Knowledge base of a teacher has been a debate as some focus on the content and others on pedagogy (Jackson, 1987 as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003). If teaching is just like a skill which can be attained by practice, experience and being a part of teaching community, then it is no more different from other skills such as to be an electrician, a plumber or a carpenter. However, the role of a teacher is different. The

job of a teacher is not only to transmit the information from one container to the other but rather they have to 'translate' the knowledge according to the cognitive, psychological and emotional level of his student. There is a strong relationship of professional ethics and emotional intelligence of learners (Baracsi, 2016; Dorudi & Ahari, 2015). It requires pedagogical content knowledge, which can only be promoted through professional development, a lifelong process including the organized formal programs or workshops and a continuous learning at work. Teaching is a pedagogical content skill that not only comes by practicing, it also involves a continuous effort and training where a teacher's professional career is polished. Teachers are expected not only to deliver the knowledge to the learners' brains but also to develop them socially, ideologically and politically. Shedd and Bacharach (1991) rightly conclude, "When we focus on what professionals do, there is every reason to believe that teaching is among the most difficult, demanding and (potentially) highly skilled professions" (p.11).

Another important criterion for treating anyone as a professional is the social function and ethical role (Hoyle, 1995; Salehnia & Ashraf, 2015). Teaching is a service for the well-being of the society. Teachers are regarded as the constructor of a nation. They are expected to guard community beliefs, ideologies, cultures and traditions. They are considered responsible for the holistic development of learner's personality. This feature, without any debate, makes teachers distinguished from other professionals. Even, some see the fundamental objective of teaching profession as to establish a moral consciousness in the society. Fenstermacher (1990) puts it in the way that "like medicine, teaching is a form of skilled practice, and also like medicine, teaching becomes nearly incomprehensible when disconnected from its fundamental moral purposes" (p. 132).

Autonomy is another issue of debate for the teaching profession. Hoyle (1995) has observed that concerning the practitioner autonomy, teachers have less freedom in their jobs as compared to other professions like medicine, law or business. Though the communities where teachers have more autonomy, they can better be perceived as professions (such as in France, UK & USA). Whereas the countries (such as Pakistan, Venezuela, Paraguay & Bangladesh) where the teachers have less or no autonomy, the case is different (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In most of the communities, teachers' autonomy is restricted and limited by the governmental policies, administrative constraints and societal expectations. Van Veen (2008) believes that more relevant, is just how teachers perceive their autonomy in terms of governmental, administrative or other forms of interferences. A common objection to teachers' autonomy is that they have to do what 'others' decide about them to do. Autonomy and responsibility are interdependent variables. However, teachers' autonomy seems a paradox when they are made responsible for holistic development of their pupils but are kept dispossessed of full autonomy. Nevertheless, teachers are, more or less, autonomous in their pedagogic decisions. No educational policy determines how to translate curriculum according to

intellectual and emotional state of the students, keeping in view their individual differences along with so many other factors. Teachers' autonomy is not restrained while they are deciding the classroom strategies to meet the requirements of a classroom that is composed of culturally, socially and academically diverse students. Sometimes, teachers' autonomy may affect the local school policies. Looking at the other professional roles of teachers, besides pedagogical, we can see that teachers are generally autonomous as clinicians, researchers and educators.

Like other professionals, teachers are also in need of their professional development. Teachers have an interest in their professional development and learning, in order to, enhance their daily practice (Van Veen, 2008). Professional development is not merely limited to refresher courses or training workshops conducted occasionally. Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995). Teachers' professional development is essential, as it is associated with teachers' beliefs, students' learning and educational reforms. A class taught by a professionally developed or trained teacher will have high achievement grades. No educational reform is successful without focusing at teachers' professional development (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Richardson and Placier (2001) point out the fact that formal in-service off the job training currently available is considered largely ineffective, and a growing emphasis is thereof being placed on workplace learning today.

Working with the latest technology to run the everyday business is an important feature of any professional's job. Teachers are benefiting from the latest technology, though it does not distinguish their profession. The use of audio-visual aids helps the teachers in their classroom; however, the class does not require any sophisticated equipment as needed by other professionals.

Technology has influenced the teaching skill much less than it has affected the other professions, for instance medicine, engineering and agriculture. Technology is changing today's classroom and has enabled multi-modal teaching, bringing innovation to dynamic curricula and promoting online research and collaboration (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2008). Even so, in some subjects, teachers are fully exploiting the latest technologies, particularly information technology, for instance in language teaching, vocational teaching and teaching the other professionals.

2.4. Present State of Education System in Pakistan

Figure 1 shows that in Pakistan, educational institutions are of diverse nature. Different kinds of educational systems are running which are at so many points diverse, and even poles apart, from each other.

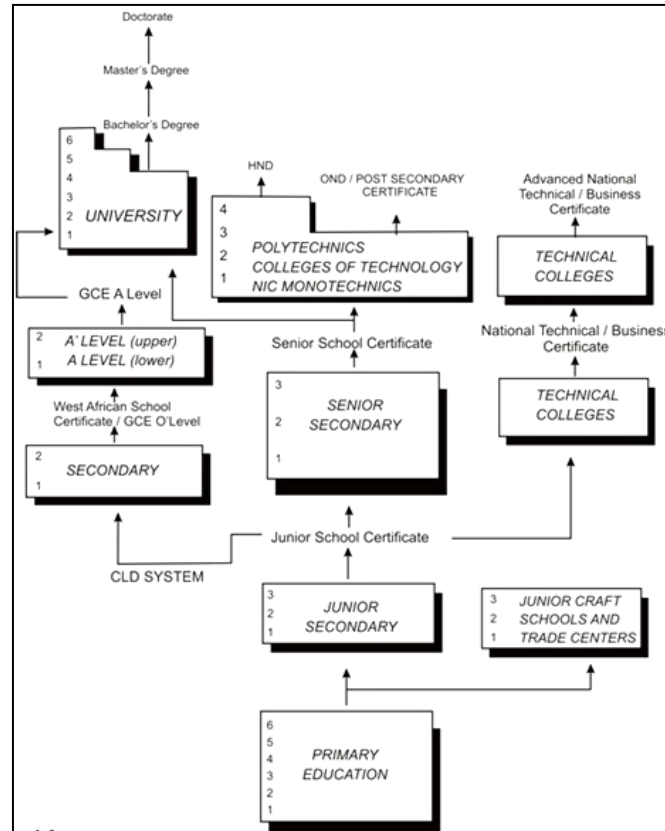


Figure 1: Education system in Pakistan (Adapted from Khan, 2014)

2.4.1. Government-run education system

The public-sector institutions comprise the largest education providing system in Pakistan. The number of government institutions has increased up to 191, 065 public institutions at various levels, serving 27.69 million students to complete their education (NEMIS, 2017). However, the government is investing a huge budget on them and continuously providing technical assistance, the performance of these schools is going down (Soomro, 2014). The present situation calls for drastic changes and revolutionary measures to be taken for the revival of government schools.

2.4.2. Private education sector

Private sector's engagement in education sector is, in fact, encouraging for education system overall. The number of private institutions has increased up to 112,381 at various levels, serving 19.80 million students to complete their education (NEMIS,

2017). Most of the *English medium* schools are independent in their decision regarding syllabus designing, teaching methods, and examination system. However, the government has taken some steps, so far on the policy levels (National Education Policy 1998-2010), to establish regulatory bodies to control these schools which have dominated the public-sector schools in all respects.

2.4.3. Madrassah education

Along with the government recognized education system, a parallel system of *Madrassah* education system exists, independently. The government holds no control on their policies, finances, education and social roles. The private religious managerial structure seeks no support from federal or provincial government but from like-minded public. Their degrees are somewhat recognized and mostly not recognized by the government. According to Pakistan Educational Statistics (2015-16), total of 32,272 Deeni Madaris are working in Pakistan. Out of which, 946 (3%) are in public sector, whereas 31,326 (97%) are in private sector. However, every government structure plans to initiate some modern reforms which all prove to be vague in the end.

2.4.4. Non-formal education

In Pakistan, millions of children are deprived of their basic right of education and they are forced to remain out of school due to financial factors. The government has introduced non-formal basic education scheme to address such children and bring them to schools. Under this cost-effective system, the primary education course is taught in only forty months. Government provides teachers with salaries and teaching materials whereas community provides school building/room. There are 31,685 NFBE schools, serving 1,280,600 students in the country (NEMIS, 2017).

2.4.5. Teachers' training institutes

In Pakistan, there are 209 Teachers Training Institutions which offer teachers' training programs for Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) and Certificate in Teaching (CT) to primary school teachers (NEMIS, 2017). The enrollment reached up to 723,352 in the year 2015-16. In addition to these, the Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, offers comprehensive programs based on distance learning; its total enrolment reached about 1.7 million in year 2017.

2.5. Present State of Teachers in Pakistan

Currently, according to Pakistan Education Statistics, 2015-16 (NEMIS, 2017), in Pakistan total number of institutions is 303,446, serving 47,491,260 enrolled students with 1,723,790 teachers. The system comprises 191,065 institutions from public sector and 112,381 from private sector. Similarly, out of total 145,829 primary schools, 125,573 (86%) are from public sector and 20,256 (14%) from private sector. At the primary level, total enrolment is about 18.751 million learners/students. The teachers

serving at the primary level schools are 422,797 with the composition of 324,561 (77%) from public sector and 98,236 (23%) from private sector. There are total 163 universities providing their services in both public and private sectors of education. The total teachers in the universities are 83,375, out of which 66,532 (80%) are in public and 16,843 (20%) are in private sector.

3. Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Analysis of Teacher Professionalism

After studying the literature on teachers' professionalism and the changing global scenario, it can be found that the viewpoint of considering teachers as professionals may not be generalized in one trend only. It would be an oversimplification to conclude that all teachers are quite as professionals, as professionals should be, matching the above-discussed criteria completely. Correspondingly, it will also be an over-generalization to label all the teachers, merely as non-professional or workers, not meeting the requirements needed for being professionals. Teaching may be regarded as a full-fledged profession. In countries where the professional environment exists, the teachers behave as full-professionals do, for instance in France, the UK and the USA and many other advanced nations.

The countries where the conditions are comparatively less favorable, the teachers also lack professional approach, for instance Pakistan, Venezuela, Paraguay, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and many other less or under developed nations. However, some researchers (e.g., Brock et al., 1999; MacDonald, 1995; Ingersoll & Perda, 2008) have tried to find out a midpoint, which is to regard school teaching as a semi-profession because they believe that teachers can never meet the criteria associated with the profession of medicine and law.

3.2. Teaching as a Professional Conduct

It is found that the question of considering teachers merely as workers and non-professionals arises because of misunderstanding the teaching profession in two ways:

- i) First, teachers' role is limited only to transfer some information from a more knowledgeable brain to a less knowledgeable brain.
- ii) Secondly, the teachers are studied as detached from their environment.

However, critically looking at the teaching profession, we see that even this role is in itself very much professional as to study child's brain and make it fertile to sow the seeds of new knowledge and skill, it is not the task of an ordinary worker. It requires

specialized skill to perform this role. Many studies (e.g., Harden & Crosby, 2000; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007) have identified various professional roles of teachers which represent the teacher more than merely a lecturer. In addition to this, a teacher has to perform so many different roles, some of which are mentioned below:

- A. A teacher is a clinician who deals with the psychological, emotional and personality issues of students. He takes up case studies, prescribes and treats the learners.
- B. A teacher is a researcher who constantly remains busy in his classroom research to amend his teaching, invent new ways and improve his pedagogical knowledge. Even he generates knowledge.
- C. A teacher is an educationist who suggests and designs curricular and pedagogical policies, essentially at classroom and local school level, and also on the national level. Teachers study themselves and their own process of socialization and then decide new changes in the teaching policies.
- D. A teacher is a good administrator who possesses managerial skills for administering classroom and learning environment.
- E. A teacher is a protector of social values and guards the ideological and societal interests of the community.

Evaluating the role of institutional environment, we find that the organizational structure, available resources, financial incentives and the role of power and autonomy are among those so many factors that determine teachers' professional behaviour (Mumtaz, 2000; Tahir & Qadir, 2012). The present age of specialization and vast knowledge has created diversity in the levels of professionalism even within the same profession. A common tailor is a worker but a dress-designer is a professional; a common barber may be a worker but a hairdresser is a professional; an ordinary merchant is a worker but a businessperson dealing with the statistics in a stock market is a full-fledged professional. Similarly, an ordinary teacher working in the rural areas of Baluchistan (Pakistan) may be merely a worker but a Montessori teacher in an elite school of Islamabad (Pakistan) is very much a professional.

It may be, therefore, understandable that teaching occupation has a maximum potential to be a full-profession if it finds the environment conducive to its growth (Strauss, 2017). The concerns of teachers, like other professionals, are different from those of factory workers. The main issues of workers' community are increase in pay roles, enhancement in remunerations, better working hours, income bonuses, more fringe benefits, welfare of families, facilities of medical treatments and so many others of the same kind. On the other hand, professional teachers are raising their voices for

enhanced research facilities, professional development programs, relaxed teaching hours, prestigious status, academic funding, scholarship programs, and democratic administration (Troman, 2001). Hence, we can see that the state of being professional varies from country to country, culture to culture and precisely speaking from group to group and even from institution to institution (Hextall, Gewirtz, Cribb & Mahony, 2007).

3.3. Are Pakistani Teachers Professionals?

The statistics show that in Pakistan, a very big teaching community exists, of about 1,723,790 teachers (NEMIS, 2017). It requires profound study to analyze the professionalism of each kind of teaching community. The situation of government-run primary school teachers is widely different from that of university teachers (Vazir & Retallick, 2007). A huge difference of salaries, academic climate and professional status is unabridged. According to UNESCO and ITA (Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi) report (2013), the conditions for fresh primary teachers are not so favourable. Their problems start when they receive a very low salary, usually ranging between 10,000 to 25,000 Rs. (or 100 to 250 US \$), at least in the initial years of their career (Bari, 2016). The report, therefore, recommends that the salary structure for various categories of public sector teachers should be commensurate with that of other professions. The teachers, due to their unique role and responsibilities in shaping Pakistan's future, deserve to be given a special consideration with regard to remuneration (*ibid*). There is no need to add something more to their once-acquired knowledge, as they have to repeat the same experience over the years. Achieving the certification in PTC, CT, B.Ed., and M. Ed programs, they find it enough for their professional development. In the market, these courses have no special privilege as they have never been effective in preparing the teachers for the real classroom environment (Tahir & Qadir, 2014). For 1,723,790 teachers of Pakistan, only 209 teachers' training institutes are present, to say one institution for 8248 teachers.

However, conditions are comparatively better in universities and improving day by day. In 163 universities (both public and private sector in 2016), total 83,375 teachers are working and the student-teacher ratio is 18 which is not unreasonable (NEMIS, 2017). By the reason of current policies (for last 5-7 years) of Higher Education Commission Pakistan, university teachers are heading towards their role of being professionals. University teachers are enjoying better salaries, research funds and development grants (HEC, 2017). However, these financial investments are much less than that of any other developed countries (for instance the UK, US, France,) and even less-developed countries (for instance India, Indonesia, Malaysia). Pakistan is one of those countries which are investing too less on their education i.e. Rs. 902.7 billion, only 2.5 % of national budget (Finance Division, Govt. of Pakistan, 2017-18). Nevertheless, a change is there. The studies in Pakistani context have highlighted that the major problem in analyzing the professionalism of Pakistani teachers is the

disparity within the national education systems (e.g., Ghouri, 2017; Lynd, 2007; UNESCO & ITA, 2013). It seems very difficult to rank an institution type as the one that is providing professional environment to the teachers. The divergence in different school systems is not only on the technical reasons but there are different educational approaches dominating in these institutions. It is very difficult to claim all privately run school system as one type. Even the institutions within the same type are different from each other. In some universities, teachers are just the employees mired into their financial concerns and are less interested in research pursuits and professional development. Similarly, a female teacher of Montessori section in elite class private schools is expected to be more professional than the teachers of those private schools opened for commercial purposes only. Professionalism of rural area government school teachers cannot be compared with that of urban area school teachers. The autonomy, knowledge, societal contribution, technological skills and professional development of the *Deeni Madaris* teachers is a very much relative perception and debatable issue.

4. Conclusion

The idea of teacher's professionalism has not yet reached any consensus and many diversified interpretations may be traced throughout the related literature ranging from the recognition of teachers as semi-professionals to full-professionals. This professionalism may be promoted and protected by various means, for instance, by paying more attention to teachers' professional development, uplifting their financial and social status and awarding more practitioner autonomy. It is now believed that the process of professional development and empowering teachers with practitioner autonomy have a significant impact on teachers' beliefs and practices, on students' learning and on implementation of educational reforms (e.g., Coleman, & Shah-Coltrane, 2011; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The disparity in educational institutions in Pakistan supports the idea of varying degrees of teacher professionalism with the country. Somewhere, they appear as professionals working autonomously with their passion of enhancing knowledge and contributing to society with specialized skills. On the other hand, in unfavorable academic climate, their professional conduct will be changed, and they will become just workers, serving the interests of local business organizations who find less opportunities to grow professionally. For now, the only certainty is that teachers will remain in the policy spotlight as the governments around the world, optimistically in Pakistan too, seek to improve the performance of their education system as well as the knowledge and skills of their teachers. The Pakistani teachers' professionalism may be enhanced by improving the management and supervision structure, increasing professional development opportunities, enhancing the motivation level and professional self-image of teachers.

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