

# GAP BETWEEN EXISTING AND DESIRED LEVEL OF PERCEIVED ETHICAL COMPETENCES IN PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS: A CONTEXT OF PAKISTAN

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## Abstract

We assessed the existing and desired level of self-perceived ethical competence. Adopted version of Reflex Project instrument consisting of 39 items was used to collect data from the 313 prospective teachers enrolled in the departments of Education of the sampled Universities. The respondents rated themselves on a seven-point scale for existing and desired ethical competence level. The reliability of the scale for existing and desired competence was 0.914 and 0.900 respectively. The analysis of the data revealed that the existing level of ethical competence was much lower than the desired ethical competence level and high existing level was associated with high desired level. The qualitative data (interviews from 12 teacher educators) revealed that Ethics was ignored part of the curriculum and needs to be added. But all the respondents tend to agree that ethics cannot be taught until and unless teacher educators follow the ethics. The findings of the study will contribute to the development of ethical competence of prospective teachers and teacher educators by sensitization, inclusion of ethics into curriculum and assessment. The enhanced ethical competence in prospective teachers will contribute to develop ethical competence in their students.

**Key Words:** teacher education; perceived ethical competence; prospective teachers

## Introduction

Man is the only creature that needs to learn ethical competence (Abbasi, Kashifur Rehman, & Bibi, 2011; Abbasi, Rehman, & Abbasi, 2010; Maududi, 2003). Although ethics is one of the standards for teacher education in Pakistan, nevertheless it is being neglected in teacher education in Pakistan. None of the courses on ethics or value education is offered in teacher education program. Consequently, in teacher education assessment of ethics has no room to be included. Even the teacher educators rarely talk about ethical competence. This neglect of ethics in teacher education has contributed to ethical issues among teaching community of Pakistan. Some of the reasons of this neglect as quoted by (Zia, 2007) may be ignorance of the theoretical foundation on

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ethics in teacher education, fear of controversy, apathy, and a mixture of various factors.

There are expectations from governments worldwide to deliver higher standards of ethics in their social services (Dorasamy, 2010). Ethical competence reduces the acceptability of corruption (Zekos, 2004). The teachers need to be trained in ethical competence (Carr, 2006; Keefer & Ashley, 2001). This study will contribute to the development of ethical competence by providing the existing level of ethical competence in prospective teachers and gap between existing and desired level of ethical competence.

### **Pakistani Context**

Presently, Pakistan is fighting against terrorism and ethical standards are being perilously affected. Deterioration of law and order has weakened the national administrative structure. The virus of corruption has not spared even the education sector (Khalid & Khan, 2006). This problem is more jeopardized by political interference and lack of technical and especially ethical competence. The interference of bureaucracy widens the gap between ground realities and what is represented in papers. Politicians spoil the fabric of education system for their petty benefits; they have no stake in the system as their children study abroad. The scenario of the system of education in Pakistan can be improved by better management and focus on technical and ethical competence (Khalid & Khan, 2006).

### **Teacher Education in Pakistan**

Teacher education in Pakistan is striving to overcome various challenges including inconsistency in policy, low quality curriculum, lack of resources and low quality teachers (Haider, 2008). Teacher education in Pakistan had no fixed standards for the assessment of prospective teachers (Khalid & Khan, 2006) before the introduction of National Professional Standards for Teachers in 2006. Sometimes there is mismatch between examination grades and practical teaching skills.

Pakistani society being a victim of terrorism over three decades is facing ethical problems. Education may contribute to solve these problems (Rehman & Baig, 2012). Mahmood, Ahmed, and Iqbal (2013) observe that teacher's competence contributes a lot in the performance of students at all levels of education. A large body of research shows that the quality of teachers is low in Pakistan (Government-of-Pakistan,

2009). Presently, the pedagogical skills of teachers in Pakistan and sometimes teacher educators encourage passive preparation of tests instead of producing active seekers of knowledge and skills (Government-of-Pakistan, 2009). The prevailing meager salary of teachers not only hinders to attract academically talented candidates to take up the teaching profession but also complicates the problem (Government-of-Pakistan, 2009).

The government of Pakistan is committed to improve the quality of teacher education. One of the methods of improving quality of teacher education is standard-setting and accreditation of teacher education programs (Hameed-Ur-Rehman & Baig, 2012). The teacher education programs are now in the process of accreditation and adoption of National professional standards for teachers (Government-of-Pakistan, 2009).

Ten standards have been set by National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) for teacher education in Pakistan; the third standard is about knowledge of Islamic Ethical values and social life skills. It is further explained that the teachers need to understand the ethical values and practices, and the implications of these values for bringing national and global peace, unity and social adjustment.

### **Ethical Competence**

Ethical competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities which facilitates commission of ethical behaviors (Morales & Cabello, 2012). Competence can be defined as knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function in an acceptable standard (Baartman & Ruijs, 2011). It is a person's ability to perform a valid (relevant, qualified, at a concrete quality level) and reliable (precise and fast) part or function of occupation. Competence measure might be developed based on three parts: tasks, responses and scoring (Blömeke, Troitschanskaia, Kuhn, & Fege, 2013). Ethical competence is the ability to meet some standard of excellence to complete a task or job by following universal standards of equality, justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance and peace (Bartlett, 2013). Ethical competence covers three main elements: knowledge, skill and attitude (Baartman, Gulikers, & Dijkstra, 2013; Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez, 1999; Vleuten, Schuwirth, Scheele, Driessen, & Hodges, 2010). Competences can be generic, specific and ethical. Generic competences are generally recognized as being important for a person's integration

into a quickly altering place of work (Collis & Montgomery, 1995). Specific competences refer to the capability to do the job and are occasionally called hard skills (Ashworth & Saxton, 1990). Ethical competence can be defined as knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function in an ethical way.

### **Development of Ethical Competence**

There is discussion among the educationists whether ethics need to be taught formally or informally (Zia, 2007). Pakistani society is experiencing a rise in materialism and disrupting standards of ethics. Developing ethical competence in teachers leads to their involvement in providing high quality teaching and enables them to duly encounter ethical issues (Borhani, Alhani, Mohammadi, & Abbaszadeh, 2010). The purpose of teacher education is ethical as well as technical training in teaching (Borhani et al., 2010; Rabin & Smith, 2013). In other words, in teacher education, professional ethical competence and teaching capabilities need attention. Developing ethical competence leads to train teachers committed to and responsible for presenting high quality teaching. Improved ethical competence increases students' capabilities in various fields including their self-esteem and taking advantage of learning opportunities (Borhani et al., 2010).

The roots of ethical competence can be found in moral development of an individual (Cheetham & Chivers, 1996). Competence based training approach to professional ethics for teachers can provide a relevant framework for developing ethical competence (Weissman & DeBow, 2003). Ethical competence development focuses on strengthening the ability of teachers to apply basic ethical concepts to complex and difficult ethical problems (Clarkeburn, 2002).

The development of ethical competence follows the following three steps. Firstly, the teachers need to know and understand basic dimensions of ethics: equality, justice, balance, brotherhood, tolerance and peace. The comparative knowledge of benefits of aforesaid globally accepted values and negative impact of discrimination, prejudice, class, gender, language and race on the ethical competence of prospective teachers (Government-of-Pakistan, 2009). Secondly, the teachers demonstrate positive attitude towards cultural diversity, individual differences, tolerance and celebration of diversity, and conflict resolution through dialogue. Thirdly, the teachers need to perform and use their skills to

engage in creating a learning community in which opinions of individuals are respected. Ethical competence can be developed by practicing Islamic code of conduct and guiding through a convincing dialogue to value and practice ethics (Epstein & Hundert, 2002; Government-of-Pakistan, 2009).

Kidwell, Fisher, Braun, and Swanson (2012) suggested following steps for developing ethical competence: first step is anticipating specific threats to development of ethical competence; second step is to strengthen the ethical competence of teacher educators; third step is to develop administrative practices and processes which promote ethical competence in teacher education.

### **Self-Assessment of Perceived Competence**

Universities have a natural concern with the assessment of learning outcomes of their graduates (Hughes, 2013). The assessment of competence has been a topic of discussion for long (Allen & Velden, 2005). Different approaches have been used for competence assessment. In one of these approaches, assessment of professional competence is based on evidence provided by the individuals rate themselves (Gonczi, 1994; McNamara, 2013). On the other hand in other approaches, assessment of competence is based on the information gleaned from the (outside) observers (Epstein & Hundert, 2002). The second approach is expensive in terms of time and resources, as it requires more and complex data for the purpose (Groth-Marnat, 2009). The self-assessment method is easy but there are questions of its reliability (Norman, Watson, Murrells, Calman, & Redfern, 2002). These questions have been answered by Shah (2009) who studied generic competences in Pakistan and reported that self report method was the fittest for assessment of competences. He further argues that self assessment of competences is cost effective, easy to administer and a direct source of information, especially at higher education level (Shah, 2009).

### **Teacher Education and Ethical Competence**

A number of social disorders are observable in our society, which specifies deficiencies in the moral development of students in Pakistan. Teachers have significant role in the moral development of their students. Teachers are trained in teacher education institutions. This makes it essential to explore whether teacher education institutions are promoting ethics and moral values among the prospective teachers or

not. For this reason the researchers investigate the development of ethical competence among prospective teachers. Another important reason for the study of acquisition of ethical values among prospective teachers is that ethics is one of the national professional standards for teacher education in Pakistan. Ethical competence climate has been neglected in educational settings (May, Gandara, Edwards, Subhani, & Huyck, 2010).

Teaching demands specific competences. Teacher education is expected to develop a set of general, specific and ethical competences. Job market expects the teacher education to develop some specific and generic skills among the graduates (Pukelis & Pileickiene, 2009; Shah, 2009). The role of teacher education includes but is not limited to preparing young people for their entry into the job market (Nunan, 1999). Increasingly, teacher education institutions need to focus on competences which are in demand (Aracil & Velden, 2008). Teacher education must go ahead to devote greater attention to ethical competence (Aracil & Velden, 2008; Teichler, 1999). At policy level teacher education is focusing on the importance of ethical competence, but at curriculum and assessment level this focus is missing (Fallows & Steven, 2000), at least in Pakistan. Some authors say that ethical competence is hidden (Singh, Narasuman, & Thambusamy, 2012), but there is growing recognition that the competence should be made clear in the curriculum (Maher & Graves, 2007; Pandiyan, 2011; Yorke, Knight, Moon, Layer, & Moreland, 2004). There is a debate in the universities whether the ethical competence should be taught as a separate subject or students learn this competence as part of the curriculum (Goldie, 2000). In Pakistan there is no mechanism to teach ethical competence to students of teacher education (Haider, 2008). If development of ethical competence is the aim in teacher education, then we need to assess ethical competence. As teaching and learning in Pakistan is assessment driven (Ali, Tariq, & Topping, 2009; Van der Vleuten et al., 2010), it needs to be part of the assessment in teacher education for developing the same among the graduates.

Assessment of competences significantly enhances the level of these competences at the end of academic session (Dainty, Cheng, & Moore, 2004; Fortin & Legault, 2010; Male, Bush, & Chapman, 2011). Ethical competences existing in teacher education enable the graduates to perform better in their practical life (Schaeper, 2009; Williams, 2003).

The present study will contribute by creating evidence based awareness among prospective teacher educators, administrators and policy makers for the development and assessment of ethical competence. This study will contribute to the development of ethical competence by providing the existing level of ethical competence in prospective teachers and gap between existing and desired level of ethical competence.

### **Procedure of the Study**

This study is descriptive in nature as no experimentation is involved and the data were collected in natural settings. Descriptive research describes situations, events, and persons as they exist (Bordens, 2006; Robson, 2002). It usually explains and describes situation in which events are occurring for evaluating data and drawing conclusions for synthesizing ideas (Saunders, Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011). In this study survey design was used. Survey design studies intend to measure a construct which may be theoretical or practical (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Raja, Mahal, & Masih, 2004). The data gathered from survey is subjective in one sense and objective in another. The respondents are usually subjective in their opinions on one hand and researchers may be very objective in converting the responses into numbers, analysing data and reporting results (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2008; Parks, 1984).

The mixed method was used in this study. Mixed methods research combines traditional qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). The qualitative method leads towards in-depth and detailed study of the problem (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The quantitative method is used to collect empirical data in numeric codes (Johnson et al., 2007; Migiro & Magangi, 2011).

### **Sample**

The process of sampling helps draw valid inferences on the basis of small portion of population (Bröder, 2000). A sample is a miniature representation of population under study used to describe the population (Marshall, 1996). After specification of population the researcher needs to specify the number of participants to be selected (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Multiple sampling strategies are required for studies in which both qualitative and quantitative research approaches are used (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). While deciding about the sampling scheme, mixed methods researchers need to

keep in mind the objective of the study (Creswell, 2013). The objective of the study is to generalize the findings of the sample of prospective teachers from five universities to all the eleven universities of the Punjab. If the objective of the study is to generalize the quantitative and/or qualitative findings to the population from which the sample was drawn then the researcher should attempt to select a sample for that component that is random (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). There are five random sampling schemes appropriate for the mixed method research: simple random sampling; stratified random sampling; cluster random sampling; systematic random sampling; and multi-stage random sampling (Lee, Forthorner, & Lorinor, 1986; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Picquelle & Mier, 2011). Multi-Stage Purposeful Random sampling scheme was considered appropriate for the study. This scheme represents selecting settings, groups, and/or individuals representing a sample in two or more stages; the first stage is random selection and the following stages are purposive (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2006; Hameed-Ur-Rehman & Baig, 2012). Following Multi-Stage Purposeful Random sampling scheme, the researchers randomly selected five universities out of 11 general universities situated in the jurisdiction of Punjab province of Pakistan. At second stage department of education was selected from all the four above selected universities. At third stage all classes in final semester were selected. In this way three classes from University of Sargodha and two classes from Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, Government College University Faisalabad and University of Education, Sargodha Campus were selected. In this way eleven classes of prospective teachers were selected respectively. The scheme ended up selecting 349 prospective teachers from four universities; physical verification resulted in discarding 36 questionnaires which were not properly filled leaving behind 313 with the following detail: University of Sargodha 101; Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi 68; Government College University Faisalabad 71 and University of Education 73. Majority of respondents (89.7%) were female.

### **Instrument of the Study**

Major objective of the scale development is to compose a valid measure of an underlying construct (Clark & Watson, 1995). Scale development process can be divided into four steps (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Sharma,

2003). In the first step, the construct is defined. In the second step, items are generated. In the third step, the instrument is pilot tested and is revised if necessary. In the fourth step, the instrument's construct validity is further examined (Daigneault & Jacob, 2014; Remor et al., 2012; Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011; Sundström, 2009).

Firstly, the construct of perceived ethical competence was operationally defined on the basis of the literature review. Competence can be defined as the whole of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function in a certain professional domain (Baartman & Ruijs, 2011). Being competent can be defined as having sufficient ability to function at an acceptable standard (Bartlett, 2013). Ethical Competence covers three main elements: knowledge, skill and attitude (Baartman et al., 2013; Bebeau et al., 1999; Vleuten et al., 2010). In this study ethical competence is defined as the whole of knowledge, skill and attitude necessary to function in ethical way. These knowledge, skill and attitude constitute the 3<sup>rd</sup> National professional standards for teacher Education in Pakistan (Government-of-Pakistan, 2009). Secondly, a pool of 57 items was developed to reflect the aforesaid definition of ethical competence. A 7-point scale (ranging from very low to very high) was used for each item. Each item had two levels: one for existing and other for desired competence level. This item pool was reviewed by a panel of nine education faculty members having PhD for face validity. Thirdly, after incorporation of feedback by the panel, pilot instrument was developed consisting of 51 items and administered to a sample of 50 respondents. Fourthly, statistical analysis revealed that the scale is unidirectional. Exploratory factor analysis on existing competence revealed that the scale has only one component that is ethical competence. The factor loadings range from 0.54 to 0.83. The above procedure produced 39-items scale. The reliability for both existing and desired competence scale was 0.914 and 0.90 respectively. After finalisation of instrument, the researchers personally visited the sample universities and collected data.

#### **Analysis and Interpretation of Quantitative Data**

The collected data were checked for aberrant values and missing values. Paired sample t- test was applied to compare the mean differences between desired and existing ethical competence scores. It can be used to determine if two sets of data are significantly different from each other.

Table: 1 Comparison of existing and desired level of ethical competence score

Variable	Level	Mean	Sd	Difference	T	Sig.(2-tailed)
1 Ethical Competence Score	Desired	6.15	.53	1.33	49.225	
	Existing	4.82	.73			.000
2 Ethical Competence Knowledge Score	Desired	6.02	.63	1.44	37.185	.000
	Existing	4.58	.84			
3 Attitude towards Ethical Competence Score	Desired	6.18	.67	1.20	35.802	.000
	Existing	4.99	.92			
4 Ethical Competence Skills Score	Desired	6.24	.57	1.35	34.506	.000
	Existing	4.89	.97			

df= 312

The table shows that prospective teachers' perceived desired competence level is significantly higher than perceived existing level of Islamic ethical competence. This difference in existing and desired competence is evident in knowledge, attitude and skills of ethical competence.

### Correlation

A correlation for the data revealed that desired ethical competence and existing ethical competence were significantly related ( $r = .753$ ,  $N = 313$ ,  $p = .000$ , two tails). Higher existing competence was associated with higher desired competence. It implies more you desire, more you acquire is true for ethical competence. This is true for knowledge ( $r = .593$ ,  $N = 313$ ,  $p = .000$ , two tails), attitude ( $r = .769$ ,  $N = 313$ ,  $p = .000$ , two tails) and skills ( $r = .711$ ,  $N = 313$ ,  $p = .000$ , two tails) skills in ethical competence.

### Analysis and Synthesis of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data came from interviews of faculty members from four universities of Pakistan. Fifteen participants (seven women and five men) were taken from departments of Education of the selected universities. The designation of teacher educators was as follows: two

were professors, four associate professors, seven assistant professors and two lecturers. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each of them. The interview schedule had four main questions: what are the concept, representation in curriculum, prevalence, and future teaching strategies to teach ethical values? These four questions were asked about adopting equality, justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance, peace, avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, social class system, gender biasness, religious bias, and language bias.

### **Analysis of Interview Data Regarding Teaching of Equality, Justice, Brotherhood, Balance, Tolerance, Peace**

Teacher Educators' perception of equality, justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance, peace as a value

The concept of equality: Responding question regarding the concept of 'equality' participants replied: it is equal behaviour with all friends/concerned people, equal treatment/behaviour with all students, equality in assessment, equal opportunities for all (male and female), equal access of all available resources and same rules and regulations for all.

The concept of justice: respondents perceived that justice is to put the things on their suitable place, equal rights and opportunities, same standards for reward and punishment, equal access to facilities, fair treatment and fair evaluation. Many factors determine justice; it is reflected from the common behaviours of the people.

The concept of brotherhood: While asking about brotherhood, the participants replied that it is behaving like brothers, sharing happiness and sorrows. Brothers have good feelings and sacrifice for their brothers and sisters. Brothers live like a family, feel the pain of others, and console others in difficult times. It is a kind of everlasting friendship.

The concept of balance: The participants' reflections about balance as value were as: it is reflected through equal work load of all colleagues, balance between facilities and expected output and flexibility. Balance in behaviour especially in reward and punishment.

The concept of Tolerance: While describing tolerance they said: tolerance is the ability to listen others' point of view, respect for diversity in ideas, beliefs and culture. It is dealing with behavioural issues and

unfavourable attitude, and unfavourable people and policy. It is also coping with existing biases without creating any disturbance.

The concept of Peace: The respondents perceived that peace is demonstrated by satisfied employees; smooth functioning of an organization and rule of law.

Representation of Equality, justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance and peace in curriculum: The respondents were of the view that there was no formal representation of all these values in curriculum of teacher education in instruction and assessment of teacher education. The teacher educators especially referred the standard regarding ethics, which is not being implemented.

**Prevalence of equality justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance and peace teacher education institutions:** The respondents viewed that all these values exist at individual level in some teacher educators and prospective teachers. But at institutional level there is no system to promote these values.

**Strategies of promoting equality justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance and peace:** The respondents perceived that the values can be taught by teaching and assessing these values. The teaching may be done through instruction and role models in the form of teacher educators. The values can be taught by including them in the institutional culture. This can be facilitated by improving governance in the departments; currently either departments lack rules or rules are not well shared. These values need to a part of teacher educators' performance evaluation and accountability system.

**Avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias**

The concept of avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias

Prejudice: Teacher educators perceived that the causes were prejudice jealousy, discrimination, and irrational superiority complex. It is demonstrated by non-cooperation, disrespect, grouping, disturbed functioning of an institution, anti-social behaviour, lack of harmony, isolation, negative thinking, narrow mindedness, no consistency and unhappy people.

Discrimination: Most of the teacher educators perceived that discrimination is mild form of prejudice. It is demonstrated by

dissatisfied employees, inequality, lack of confidence, distorted thinking, lack of ethics, no value/respect to rules and regulations, and bickering among employees against management. It may lead to big conflicts.

**Gender Bias:** A gender bias is discrimination among male and female, giving preference to any sex, soft behaviour towards female etc. It is demonstrated by ignorance of males and boys suffer because of gender biasness

**Religious and Language Bias:** Respondents perceived that differential treatment based on religious beliefs and language is called religious bias and language bias respectively

**Representation of avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias in curriculum:** There is no representation of avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias in curriculum of teacher education in Pakistan.

**Prevalence of avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias as a value:** Prejudice: While some of the respondents denied the existence of prejudice, some others say that it exists. One respondent said; 'naturally it exists everywhere in any shape'. Reasons may be religious beliefs and ingrained caste system.

**Discrimination:** Teacher educators perceived that discrimination exists here very much in our system and society as well. It is demonstrated as favouritism and bad behaviour of authority.

**Gender Bias:** Majority of respondents said that gender bias exist mostly favouring girls. One of the male respondents said: 'it exists as we usually say "ladies first" in banks females are privileged over males even on public places'.

**Religious and Language Bias:** In central part of Punjab, Pakistan, where study was conducted no language, religious and social class based discrimination was reported. The outcome was surprising. The reason may be teaching profession is joined by only lower middle class having moderate religious disposition. In central Punjab, language and, heterogeneity is almost nonexistent.

**Strategies for teaching avoidance of discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias as a value:** Avoidance of prejudice can be taught through models in faculty, favourable atmosphere of teacher training institutions and inclusion in curriculum.

**Discussion**

The self-perceived ethical competence scale cannot be used for high stakes assessment. It is better to interpret it for program evaluation purposes instead of decision making at individual level.

The desired ethical competence level is higher than desired competence level. This shows the need to teach and learn ethical competence, especially in teacher education programs. This need is felt by the teacher educators and prospective teachers. The teacher education institutions do not implement ethical standards in admission process. Similar situation exists in recruitment of teachers in Pakistan. As a result a sizable portion of teacher educators is not convinced to include ethics into curriculum mainly because they do not follow it (Zia, 2007). This portion unfortunately has more influence on decisions, due to their ethical and unethical practices. Consequently, even the teacher educators rarely talk about ethical competence. This neglect of ethics in teacher education has contributed to ethical issues among teacher community of Pakistan.

The existing and desired competence levels are positively related. It means that teacher educators who are aware of learning ethical competence learn more than their counterparts who are not. Similarly findings have been reported by Morales and Cabello (2012). Prospective teachers take teacher educators as role models and often express their views regarding it (Bain, 2011). If developing ethical competence is the goal, then ethical competence of teacher educators needs to be enhanced along with inclusion of ethics in the curriculum.

The qualitative data revealed that ethical values equality, justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance, peace, and avoidance of prejudice, discrimination, gender bias, religious bias and language bias are not being taught. The values are absent from curriculum. There is no mechanism to promote these values, mainly because these are not in the priorities of high ups. These values are part of religion but politicisation of religion in the wake of American led war against Russia in Afghanistan, where Pakistan was a frontline state, has shifted the focus of religion from promotion of ethical values to the fight with opponents on petty issues.

Ethics is the ignored part of the curriculum, instruction and assessment. The situation speaks of complete neglect of ethical

competence in teacher education in Pakistan. Ethical competence can be developed if government and universities join their hands to revise teacher Education curriculum for inclusion of ethical competence and assessment of it. The recruitment of teacher educators and especially the heads of teacher education institutions should be made keeping in view the higher level of ethical competence. Competence based teacher education might be solution to this problem. In competence based teacher education curriculum is based on competence, learning outcome is competence, and assessment is competence based (Kouwenhoven, 2003). This may improve the performance and job satisfaction of future teachers (Ko, 2012).

The results of this study may be interpreted with caution. The study is based on self-assessment of existing and desired ethical competence; there might be some difference in self-assessment and actual level of competence. The self-perceived ethical competence scale cannot be used for high stakes assessment. It is better to interpret it for program evaluation purposes instead of decision making at individual level. The sample of the study was selected from only one province Punjab. Situation in other provinces might be different.

### Conclusions

There is a gap between existing and desired ethical competence of prospective teachers. The teacher educators who perceived that they need more ethical competence, their existing level of ethical competence was also high. The reason of low level of ethical competence was absence of ethical competence in syllabus, teaching and assessment of prospective teachers.

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