Professional characteristics of an educator: A survey of literature

J. Anitha
Associate Professor, GRG School of Management Studies
R. Krishnaveni
Professor, PSG Institute of Management

Literature has shown that various studies have dealt with different professional features of teaching and they have focused on one or few professional characteristics of educators. In spite of the immense amount of literature on educator characteristics, a comprehensive study that would encompass the vital professional characteristics of an educator in total is lacking. This has instigated the researcher to take up the study to identify the professional characteristics of an educator. An attempt was made in identifying the educators' characteristics using student outcome as a boundary criterion to select the characteristics from among several that are available in the literature. Therefore, a new model of professional characteristics of educators was proposed. This paper discusses in detail, the characteristics of a profession in general and the wide range of educator's characteristics as studied in previous researches. The paper presents a wide scope for the models developed to be studied in depth to appreciate and investigate more about the professional characteristics identified through this review of literature. The models may also be tested empirically for further accumulation of knowledge in the field.

Key words: Professional characteristics, teaching, learning, relationship

Introduction

A profession has certain recognizable attributes; like they have an acknowledged knowledge base, the nature of which is area of performance, repertoire and matching. Professions have a rigorous training and certification of members; a workplace culture of high consulting and collaboration; systematic enculturation of new members; required and continuous learning regularly built into the work cycle; high public accountability; internal maintenance of high standards of practice; have members who are responsible for client results; have members who make autonomous decisions guided by a canon of ethics (Saphier, 1995). Modern studies identify further sensitive attributes and subtle qualities. A study on professionalism by Furusten (2013) identifies four systematic processes namely; building and maintaining relationships with clients, being available, representing relevant competence, and differentiation.

Teaching is considered a special and a noble profession that impacts students to emerge successfully in any other profession. Therefore, professional educators should develop as lifelong learners, reflective thinkers, and ethical leaders exemplifying the ideals of literacy, scholarship, and social justice in a diverse and ever-changing world. Studies show that a number of characteristics have been ascribed to a profession. This paper discusses in detail the characteristics of a profession in general and the wide range of educator's characteristics as studied in previous researches. The studies contributing to identifying these factors are represented in ten different models.

Characteristics of a profession

Pratte and Rury (1991) succinctly list four criteria that shape the traditional view of a profession: remuneration, social status, autonomous or authoritative power, and service. Perpetually, a list of characteristics is typical of occupations that have been traditionally regarded as professions, especially law and medicine. These characteristics include: professional autonomy; a clearly defined, highly developed, specialized, and theoretical knowledge base; control of training, certification, and licensing of new entrants; self-governing and self-policing authority, especially with regard to professional ethics; and a commitment to public service (Burbules & Densmore, 1991; Case et al., 1986; Haberman, 1986; Pratte & Rury,1991). Case et al. (1986) include the presence of a collegium among the essential characteristics of a modern profession.

Eight characteristics common to most professions are having an esoteric service; pre service study; registration and regulation by the profession itself; peer appraisal and review; professional code of conduct; earned status; the ideal of public service and client concern (NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Quality of Teaching, 1997, p.22-23) (Standards for Professional Practice in Australian Classrooms). Hart and Marshall (1992) have categorized the fundamental aspects of a profession as specific body of knowledge, ideal of service, ethical codes, autonomy and distinctive culture. According to Cook and Hudson (2003), the selected seven characteristics of a profession are: essential service to society, motivated by call to serve, special knowledge and skills, specialized advanced university training, public trust and status, code of ethics and performance standards, and professional organization.

Ingersoll (1997) quotes that sociologists have developed a professional model which is a series of organizational and occupational characteristics associated with professions and professionals to distinguish them from other kind of work and workers (Hall, 1968; Hughes, 1965; Volmer & Mills 1966; Wallace, 1994). These characteristics include rigorous training requirements, positive working conditions, high prestige, substantial authority, relatively high compensation and an active professional organization or association. Occupations can be assessed according to the degree to which they do or do not exhibit the characteristics of the professional model. The established professions – law and medicine in particular are usually regarded as the strongest example of the professional model. The process whereby occupations seek to upgrade their professional status by adopting the attributes of the professional model is known as professionalization.

'Professionalization refers to the degree to which occupations exhibit the *structural* attributes, characteristics and criteria identified with the professional model. Professionalism refers to the *attitudinal* attributes and ideology of those who are considered to be, or aspire to be considered as professionals. These include a belief in the value of expertise, rigorous standards and a public service orientation. Although professionalism is considered part of the professionalization process, it is not considered a reliable indicator of the professional model' (Hall 1968; Hughes 1965; Volmer and Mills 1966).

The president of the American Bar Association outlines six criteria as basic elements of professionalism for lawyers to follow in the pursuit of excellence. They are: ethics and integrity, competence combined with independence, meaningful continuing learning, civility, obligations to the justice system, and pro bono service (Shestack, 1998).

Lyons (2004) speaks about nine ways of projecting professionalism for health care personnel. They are responding to an appointment; getting places on time; and living up to contractual agreements; knowing the importance of appearance; supporting the leadership of the organization; using professional methods of communication; confidentiality; speaking well of others; understanding the inherent possibilities in interacting with other professionals. This increase in profile has been promoted by the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) which is a body with members from the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and Kenya representing a wide range of professions and has a mission to "increase the profile of issues relating to professionals, professionalism and professional bodies through research and networking with the aim of determining and promoting professional good practice" (PARN, 2011).

Educator characteristics

Professional educators should develop as lifelong learners, reflective thinkers, and ethical leaders exemplifying the ideals of literacy, scholarship, and social justice in a diverse and ever-changing world (Albee & Piveral, 2003). National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2001) has defined dispositions of a teacher as the values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behavior towards students, families, colleagues, and communities, and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. The dispositions or the characteristics of the educator thus have a direct impact on all with whom he connects.

A number of studies have been done in demarcating the characteristics of an educator. Historically, research studies have yielded copious lists of attributes and attitudes exhibited by effective teachers. The Purdue studies from the 1920s to the 1960s (McCombs & Whisler, 1997), the Michigan studies of the 1950s (Pintrich et al., 1994), studies by McKeachie (1990, 1992, 1995) and Murray and Renaud (1995) all identified specific characteristics that were associated with effective teachers. These characteristics were gathered from a variety of perspectives including student opinions, observation and teacher self-reporting. These studies spanned over seven decades, yet they consistently identified common and specific dispositions, such as: interest and enthusiasm in their subject and students, respect for all students, concern about student learning, fairness and sympathy toward students, and others that are associated with learner-centered teachers (Albee and Piveral, 2003).

Teacher professionalism starts from the assumption that teachers have authority and responsibility to make decisions in the best interests of their students (Sykes, 1991). A massive stretch of literature addresses the professional characteristics of educators, however, a comprehensive study that would encompass those vital characteristics was not found. An attempt was made in identifying the educator characteristics using student outcome as a boundary criterion.

Research indicates that students achieve better when teachers have a wide array of skills and adapt these skills to different contexts (Brophy, 1986). As per Evertson (1979), high achievement-high attitude classes were characterized by good organization, a high proportion of time in instructional activity, and task-orientation. Low achievement-low attitude classes were chaotic, unstructured classrooms with less task-orientation. It was also found that there is a distinct relationship between good classroom management (planning and organization of

activities) and student learning and behavior that shows the relationship between the affective behavior of the educator and the students' academic achievement and attitudes in the same study. An experiment with college teachers of English and freshman students shows that students who are dependent and need structure get significantly better grades if they have a teacher who is authoritarian and needs to structure the learning situation (Moore, 1973). Studies also have proven that reading achievement was significantly related to teachers' beliefs regarding the student (Love, 2003), and teaching experience has statistically significant positive effects on reading test scores of students (Rockoff, 2003).

The following literature illustrates the various studies and models developed by different authors for identifying the components of the Teaching Profession. As per Munoz et al. (2000), the characteristics of the ideal teacher are organized around some clearly differentiated dimension, given in four factors.

The first factor 'Teaching Competency' is composed of adjectives that evaluate to what extent students perceive the teacher expresses as clear, fluent in speech, expert, competent, intelligent, efficient, active, sharp, well documented, informed, fair and understanding. It also evaluates teacher's ability to synthesize, motivate the students, stimulate students' interest in the subject, and know how to listen. 'Teaching Qualities' factor includes adjectives that such as: practical, quiet, self-controlled, calm, objective, organized, balanced and promoting participation, which are involved in teaching activity. They could be considered as features related to a teacher's personality that define 'psychologically balanced' teacher (quiet, calm, self-controlled and balanced).

Moreover, 'Teacher's Appearance' factor is composed of three adjectives related to the physical appearance of the teacher; specifically with his/her elegance, attractiveness and kindness. It is composed of other clearly evaluative adjectives referring to the teacher's empathy (ability to identify other people's feelings), sensitivity and trust in his/her students.

Finally, 'directive-ness' (potency) factor is composed of four adjectives, clearly related to the control and directive ness that the teacher shows with his/her students. They are: authoritarian, directive, overbearing and demanding. In addition, other characteristics such as prestigious and high self-esteem are also included.

Another way of looking at teacher characteristics is as how Analoui (1995) has developed a model of teaching styles from the Managerial Grid of Blake and Mouton (1985). The dimensions which were chosen to describe their model were based on two separate concepts: 'concern for production' and 'concern for people'. This resulted in the identification of five styles of management, namely: task; team; middle of the road; country club; and impoverished. They are also applicable to the model of "teacher as a manager" having the dimensions as the 'concern on students' that focus on the students' difficulties and students' growth and the 'concern on task' that refers to the successful completion of the academic work that is intended. Thus, Analoui identified five teaching styles having the concern on students in the x-axis and concern on task in the y-axis: hard teacher (1, 9) where the concern on students is least and the concern on the task is high; soft teacher (9,1) where the teacher is highly concerned with the student and not on the task or the student's academic output; rundown teacher (1,1) is one who have least interest in both the student and the tasks of the student; effective teacher (9,9) is one who is most sought after as she/he is concerned on both the student's development and completion of tasks in terms of students' academic output; and so-so teacher (5,5) is one who have moderate interest in both the student aspect and the task aspect.

The output demanded from teachers, in most cases are highly intangible, qualitative and difficult to measure except in terms of its positive transfer to the learners or the task to which the learners are likely to apply it. Effective learning is not likely to occur unless attention is paid to both the subject-matter (task) and the individual learner (people).

As per Phelps (2006), when teachers use excellence as a critical criterion for judging their actions and attitudes, their professionalism is enhanced. This author contends that three primary indicators constitute the meaning of professionalism: responsibility, respect, and risk taking; and that when teachers are committed to these three values, their behaviors will reveal greater professionalism. To increase professionalism among teachers, practitioners must embrace 'responsibility', demonstrate 'respect', and practice 'risk taking'. Higher education is an important means or instrument in bringing about this sustainable change. According to Anne Sibbel (2009), the focus of education for global sustainability has been on encouraging consumers to modify patterns of resource consumption and waste management. This indicates the responsibility that educators are liable of for the future generation.

The Ontario College of Teachers (1999) has developed standards of practice for the teaching profession organized around the following five themes: commitment to students and student learning; professional knowledge; teaching practice; leadership and community; and ongoing professional learning (Auger et al., 2000). The teaching profession is also exemplified based on its different functions by another author. According to Squires (2004), professional work is not an end in itself, like scientific enquiry or artistic creation. It exists in order to have some effects or helps in bringing about some change beyond itself, which in the case of teaching is learning. The functions of teaching can be grouped under three broad headings: cognitive, affective and executive. The first refers to the process of learning and the second to the preference for learning. The third refers to the learner's general conception of, approach to and strategies for learning, which are bound up with his or her self-concept and personal agenda.

In the word of Packard (1993), the key learning characteristics essential for high quality professionalism to make students' learning and development most effective are that the teachers should act as master communicators, astute researchers and as a scholar. Master communicators are understandable and use positive communication for inter-personal relationships. All students learn to a greater degree when positive communication is used rather than through application of negative or authoritarian procedures. Researchers know how to assess readiness levels for everyone of their students, and through the use of multiple observation procedures. Each student learns to a greater degree when teacher observes the level of knowledge or skills the students have obtained, and find what they are ready to learn. The professional teacher as a scholar knows how to converge a variety of educational and social areas, including the general social milieu knowledge and skills in curriculum content and methodology along with the principles of human development and learning.

Ingersoll (1997) speaks on the following characteristics as traditional professional characteristics of professions and professionals with respect to the teaching field: a) credentials – use of professional criteria for hiring teaching job candidates; b) induction – provision of mentoring programs for beginning teachers and their effectiveness of assistance provided to new teachers; c) professional development – extent of participation in activities sponsored by professional teaching organizations and financial support; d) authority – faculty influence over

school policy making and the degree of teachers' individual autonomy within their classrooms, and e) compensation – the highest salary levels offered by schools.

Literature has shown that various studies have been conducted to deal with the different professional features of teaching and they have focused on single or multiple professional characteristics of educators. In spite of the immense amount of literature on educator characteristics, a comprehensive study that would encompass the vital professional characteristics of an educator in total is lacking. This has instigated the researcher to take up the study to identify the professional characteristics of an educator. An attempt has been made in identifying the educator's characteristics using students' outcome as a boundary criterion to select the characteristics from among several options that are available in the literature. As a result, a new model of professional characteristics of educators is proposed.

Professional characteristics of an educator

The research was commenced based on the assertion that the educators' characteristics play significant roles in framing students' achievement. Various individual characteristics of teachers were found to have influenced student outcome either directly or indirectly. The effect of subject knowledge of the educator has an impact on enhancing student participation (Mc Namara, 1991); engage in additional training on subject content that exhibits and transmits confidence to learners (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1997; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2003) and specialized form of teacher expertise that reflects in areas of designing a rich curriculum (Molander, 1992). All these aspects finally converge in improvement of student basic core skill and student achievement (Molander, 1992). Experiences of teaching shapes pedagogic content knowledge and subject knowledge (Mc Namara, 1991). This knowledge when combined with classroom management skills results in the credibility of the teacher (Kouzes & Posner, 1993) and in more effective teaching (Stanford et al., 1983). Updating of knowledge results in improving the quality of teaching and learning within the classroom, so that all students can achieve required learning expectations (Delong & Wideman, 1996). When increase in teacher-reports of student-teacher relationship quality was occurred, it brought increases in positive social, behavioural and engagement outcomes for students too. Similarly, increase in student-reports of student-teacher relationship quality generated positive behavioural, engagement and academic outcomes. Additional analyses of dyadic relationship patterns showed that as the relationship pattern improved, moving from negative concordance to discordance to positive concordance, there were increases in positive social, behavioral, and engagement outcomes for students (Decker et al., 2007). Talbot (1997) recommended that as the teacher is a powerful source of either satisfaction or frustration in students, the teacher's enthusiasm, competence and interpersonal and communication skills should be a role model that both cognitive and affective motives can co-habit side by side. Studies also disclose that educator remuneration has striking effects on improved students' outcomes (Lavy, 2002) and educator empowerment has effectively resulted in teacher efficacy (Bredeson, 1989), student learning (Glickman, 1990) and student motivation (White, 1992).

Specific characteristics of teaching profession are extracted from the research and are represented as illustrations in the forthcoming section. Subject Knowledge (Ingersoll, 1997; Lusch (and)& O'Brien 1997; Mc Namara, 1991; Stephens 1967; Tirri &Puolimetka, 2000), Teaching Prowess (Koutsoulis, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; McNamara, 1991; Munoz et al.,

2000; Snell & Swanson, 2000), Updating knowledge (Delong & Wideman, 1996; Rose, 2002; Stenhouse ,1981), Collegiality (Ingram, 1997; Snell & Swanson, 2000), Empowerment (Phelps, 2006), Teacher - student relationship (Analoui, 1995; Koutsoulis, 2003; Super, 1953), Remuneration (Hodson & Sullivan, 1995; Lavy, 2002; Loeb & Page, 2000), Commitment (Anderman, 1991; Ashburn, 1989; Naik, 1988;), Self development (Cheung & Cheng, 1997), Ethical code of conduct (Kerr & Smith, 1995; Kleyn & Kapelianis, 1999; Raelin, 1991; Shestack, 1998) are the consolidated characteristics identified.

Professional characteristics

Various literature studies that have extracted the professional characteristics are presented as illustrations in this section.

Subject knowledge: Subject knowledge was identified as the foremost characteristic of an educator through the literature survey. As referred by Wall (1998), professions are characterized by the need for and possession of particular kinds of knowledge, which are abstract and practical, massive in extent, difficult to master and lengthy to acquire. Also study by Winch (2004) states that subject knowledge is a characteristic of any occupation that is a profession. Figure 1 represents the source for subject knowledge; the effects created by the characteristic and the consequence of this quality that includes student achievement. Thus the effects of acquiring this quality finally converge in improvement of student basic core skill and student achievement (Molander, 1992). The other studies shown in the figure discusses on the effect of subject knowledge on method of teaching, enhancing student participation and evaluation of learning material (Mc Namara, 1991); diagnosing cause of students' underperformance and applying appropriate interventions (Snell & Swanson, 2000); engage in additional training on subject content that exhibits and transmits confidence to learners (Fang et al., 2011; Goldhaber & Anthony 2003; Goldhaber & Brewer 1997); specialized form of teacher expertise that reflects in areas of designing a rich curriculum (Molander, 1992); Teacher Leadership (Snell & Swanson, 2000) and Teacher Quality (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2003). Management education needs to be supplemented with knowledge of both theory and practice. Hence it has to take into account both academic and practitioner perspectives, by balancing in-class training, rooted in academic knowledge, with the experiential knowledge of business leaders and greater attention and investment needs to be made to better understand this dynamic (Kelliher et al., 2010). Hence subject knowledge is obviously one of the most significant characteristics of an educator.

Teaching prowess: Teaching Prowess was the next characteristic which is basically, the transferring the subject knowledge effectively to the learners. Teaching Prowess or the ability to teach includes pedagogy, communication skills and expertise and the emphasis being on pedagogy. Studies show that enhancing pedagogical skill results in other effective outcomes. Experience in teaching shapes pedagogic content knowledge and subject knowledge (Mc Namara, 1991). This when combined with classroom management skills results in the credibility of the teacher (Kouzes & Posner, 1993) and in more effective teaching (Stanford et al., 1983) which reflects teaching prowess. Pedagogical knowledge and subject knowledge when combined with understanding students' cognitive and developmental capacities will

result in expertise that is marked by commitment and change for student achievement through teaching prowess (Snell & Swanson 2000).

The emergence of practice-based learning creates potential for a reframing of conventional approaches to training and human resource development in schools (Harrington & Kearney, 2011). Such knowledge transferring network, improves the competitive advantage in diffusing knowledge and it surely presents new challenges that institutions need to confront. The developments in terms of online teaching and virtual methods have further increased these challenges and it is highly essential for an educator to equip and adapt to the changing environment. It is noteworthy that studies of Virtanen, Myllarniemi, and Wallander (2013) have proved that different types of learners (auditory, visual and kinesthetic) benefit from being exposed to different methods and pedagogical tools. This implies the significance of pedagogy adopted and hence the methods of knowledge transfer. The strengths and weaknesses of these alternative teaching methods and tools were assessed and were found to improve the teaching learning experience by both the students and faculty.
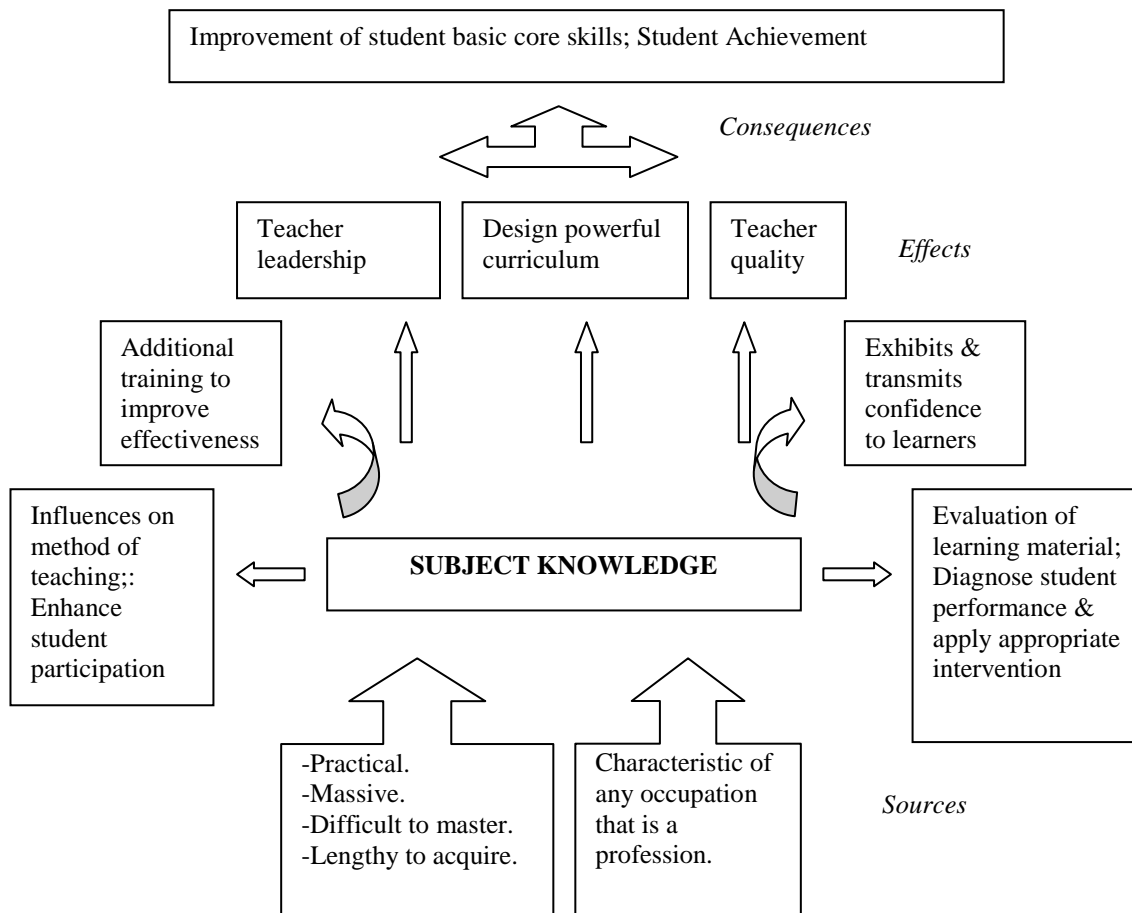
Figure 1: Studies representing Subject Knowledge as an educator characteristic

Updating knowledge: This is the third characteristic identified that emphasizes on life-long learning. It is very essential for the teaching profession. The aptitude and the dexterity of the educator is positive and rich as his knowledge is updated, keeping abreast of current professional training through new books, in-service work, conferences, professional reading and by being member of professional organization, resulting in a justified articulation of his proficiency (Black & Armstrong, 1995, Camarero, et al., 2012, Ellis & Castle, 2010). Management Research is a major source for updating knowledge which is identified as a participatory form of knowledge production (Harrington & Kearney, 2011). Enhancing teaching efficacy and process of learning presents an intense need to update educator knowledge. In this regard, educational research can be the only appropriate tool to cater the necessity of updating knowledge.

The action research strategy helps the teacher to find where is and what necessary update is required as Rose (2002) has referred the necessity to investigate the ways in which schools work, the efficacy of teaching and the processes of learning are getting greater than at any time in the past. Bassey (1995) and the National Education Research Forum (2000) express the importance of research in education and the need for educational research to be the center of social research. These studies depict the need for "Updating Knowledge" for an educator in both subject content and action research. This may be achieved through classroom environment (Stenhouse, 1981) and through conferences, workshops, professional training, professional organization and research (Black & Armstrong, 1995). This results in overall development of a more inclusive society (Rose, 2002) and in improving the quality of teaching and learning within the classroom, so that all students can achieve required learning expectations (Delong & Wideman, 1996). Apart from the traditional means of updating knowledge and developing professionalism, studies (Bailey, 2011) also show that informal learning mechanisms are important in professional development. Marsick and Watkins (1997) define informal learning as "a process of learning that takes place in everyday experience, often at subconscious levels". This calls for more innovative methods of learning and teaching in the educational arena.

Collegiality: Collegiality, that frames a significant relationship of an educator in his profession was the next characteristic identified owing to its importance in resulting in effective outcomes. Collegial and professional skills play an important role in the success of the beginning teacher (Hertzog, Pensavelle & Lemlech, 2000). Ingram (1997) explains higher order needs, such as achievement and collaborative decision making, which reflects collegiality, leads teachers to take on greater responsibility to achieve shared goals and visions. Teachers' efforts to attain shared goals become self rewarding. Internal rewards spur teachers on to higher levels of achievement. Collegiality calls for sharing responsibilities, ideas, suggestion and resources with other teachers (Ingram 1997). One becomes supportive and positive of colleagues and his institution and maintains an effective working relationship with all the institution personnel. Apart from the internal collegial networks, studies also identified the importance of developing external collegial networks. Stoten (2012) have found that in addition to the development of internal quality management systems, a number of colleges have agreed to create inter-collegial links that seek to validate their self-assessment process, disseminate good practice and provide professional development for staff. As per Snell and Swanson (2000), collaboration is characterized by a high degree of collegiality and co-operation, collaborative teachers' value consensus and compromise rather than competition.

A critical review of the literature on collegiality and collaboration depicts that healthy collegial relationship is developed through various initiatives in the institution environment, including internal rewards, teacher leadership, success of a beginning teacher, achievement through collaborative decision making, effective working relationship with all school personnel, enhance critical thought about teaching, sharing of ideas, reflection and respect for other's view points. Collaboration, consensus, compromise, collective expertise, communication skills and access to students/ peers results in higher levels of achievement of both colleagues and students.

Educators with enhanced collegiality recognize that collective expertise offers the possibility of generating optimal solutions to the complex problems of teaching and learning. They demonstrate strong communication skills and position themselves to be purposefully accessible to their students and peers which results in high levels of achievement among colleagues and with student community. Greater teacher collaboration in a culture of trust and accountability is required to face the challenges in professionalism in terms of educational reform, societal and economic development (Tan and Ng, 2012).

Commitment: This is another important factor where an educator is committed to his work not only in terms of his profession but also with the individuals with whom he interacts. If a system needs to be effective, result oriented and sustainable in educational institutions, it requires tremendous commitment from the educator (Ramalho & Wilcox, 2012). Commitment is a preference for remaining in the job and a sense of identification with the organization (Hackman & Oldham 1980; Louis, 1998). Commitment includes acceptance of and loyalty to the school as an organization (Reyes, 1990). It measures sense of pride and ownership in the school, teacher engagement or persistence on the job (Ashburn, 1989). Teachers tend to feel committed to their jobs when they are working in an environment that encourages support among co-workers, recognition for a job well done, and a stress on performance and accomplishment (Anderman 1991).

As per Naik (1988), Teacher's accountability involves moral, professional and contractual aspects that deal with their responsibility towards the persons they connect, the profession and the employing institution respectively. It could be observed that commitment to a profession comprises various dimensions. One has to be committed not only towards occupation, but has to be accountable for his moral and contractual aspects too. Though moral, professional and contractual aspects are not directly congruent with affective, continuance and normative commitment, it could be observed that these types do overlap with a few qualities described above.

As we know, affective commitment describes individual's emotional attachment, identification with and involvement in a particular organization; continuance commitment reflects employee awareness of the costs of leaving an organization; and finally, normative commitment reflects individual sense of obligation to remain in an organization. Commitment is a critical factor for the operation of an effective school (Anderman, 1991), better student-family-teacher relationships (Ford & Trotman 2001) and in enhancing the functions of direction (Louis, 1998).

Teacher student relationship: Four major studies have contributed in consolidating the factor 'Teacher Student Relationship' as a characteristic of an educator. As the Figure 2 shows, student

expectations, which mainly constitute humanistic approach, effective communication skills, class control and better understanding towards them dictates major criteria for better teacher student relationship (Koutsoulis 2003).

Knight (1994) describes the components of teacher credibility namely, competence, trustworthiness and dynamism of the teacher as the factors that influence the relationship with the students. Mentor- Protégé approach involving emphasis on one to one care and commitment obviously enriches student relationship as discussed by Super (1953). As the teacher is a powerful source of either satisfaction or frustration in students, the teacher's enthusiasm, competence and interpersonal and communication skills should be a role model that both cognitive and affective motives can co-habit side by side, thereby enhancing relationship with students (Talbot, 1997).
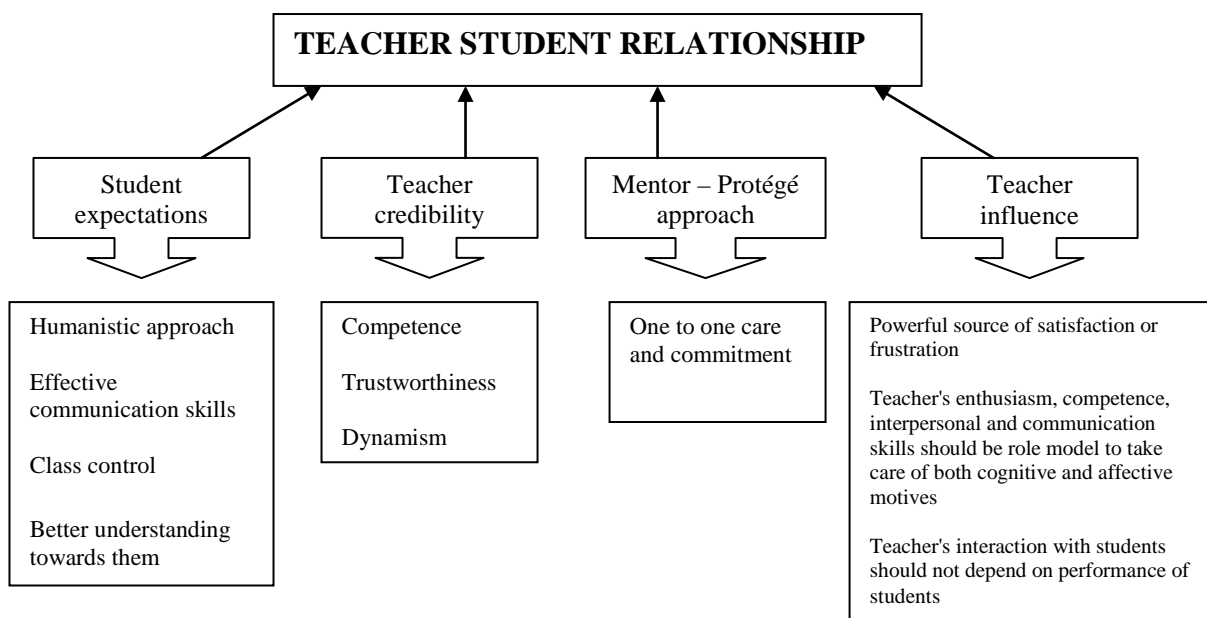
Figure 2: Studies representing Teacher student relationship as an educator characteristic

However, with the rush of choices through online and virtual learning mechanisms, the teacher student relationship is even more sensitive than described by the above studies. The personal lifelong learning journey that educational and academic staff undertakes in order to become skilled knowledge facilitators online is perceived and represented as a full learning cycle of multiple dimensions. Also, by identifying specific roles of knowledge facilitators according to context, the existing institutional social systems and city networks of learning were made evident in the practitioners' learning scope within their own institutions and beyond (Garcia, 2009). This calls for an intense interest in the growth of the students that will improve their liaison with their staff. In spite of virtual experiences, it could be realised that the relationship the learner has with the educator plays a major role in the teaching learning experience. Such online experiences do clearly reveal the increased intensity of the teacher's

interest in the student learning. Studies (Bullock, 2011) report on the relative success the educators experienced, using blogging tools to further develop relationships with undergraduate and graduate students and engage them in meaningful discussions outside of class time.

Empowerment: This is a process where teachers develop their competence to take charge of their own work and resolve their own problems. Numerous studies have portrayed empowerment as an important characteristic of a teacher or of any professional. Maeroff (1988) discusses on three main constituents of teacher empowerment. They are: improved status; increased knowledge and access to decision making. Studies have successfully derived a number of positive outcomes that result from teacher empowerment, including, improved teacher efficacy, job enrichment and professional autonomy (Bredeson 1989; Klecker & Loadman, 1996); student learning (Glickman, 1990); effective schools (Dondero, 1997); personal worth (Lashley 1999); professional judgment of content of curriculum and means of instruction (Zeichner, 1991); characterized as optimistic, determined, self actualized and skilled to empower others (Snell & Swanson 2000); raise in teacher attendance (Wunder, 1997); increase motivation and hence enhance teacher student relationship (Pickle, 1991); job satisfaction (Fritsch ,1995; Klecker & Loadman, 1996; Lanney, 1998); teacher morale (Wunder, 1997 & White, 1992), student motivation and improved communication with peers (White, 1992).

Empowerment not only enjoys discretion, autonomy, power and control but also information sharing (Lashley 1999). As rightly observed by Maeroff (1988), it is evident that status, knowledge and decision making capacities of the educators, when improved, can have a direct impact on both teacher behaviour and student behaviour as depicted by the above studies. Therefore, teacher empowerment not only results in student achievement but also in improved teacher behaviour and improved teacher student relationship.

Self development: This characteristic is a self attributing characteristic that develops in one's professional life. Apart from all the effects produced by the educator in his work life, he should also develop improvements and growth in his own self. This includes self assessment and evaluation that will lead to his career development, professional growth and acquire leadership qualities.

According to Cheung and Cheng (1996), the type of self-management that can encourage continuous self-learning and development to ensure quality of work in a changing environment should be a cyclical process consisting of five sequential stages: environmental analysis, planning and affiliating, developing and directing, implementing, evaluating and monitoring. Adhering to these phases, his work results in an enhanced quality output that fosters his associates and customers. As students are the basic acquaintance of a teacher, they enjoy the quality output of the educator which in turn is reflected in students' better performance. A self managed teacher will be able to enhance his career by assuming leadership skills that enriches his personal mindset and professional life (Crowther, 1997). Berry and Ginsberg (1990) identified three components of the role of a new cadre of professional educators, whom they called 'lead teachers': coaching other teachers; development and review of school practice; and decision making. Lieberman et al. (1988) identified the following skills that were manifested by teacher leaders: building trust and rapport; organizational diagnosis;

dealing with the process; using resources; managing the work; building skill and confidence in others.

Interest in one's self development was found to be an important characteristic of an educator because unless one is interested in one's development individually, it is very difficult for him/ her to focus on his/ her professional development. As observed by the studies, self managed teachers develop into lead teachers who serve as an example for both students and the other teachers.

Remuneration: This attribute is an undisputable characteristic that an educator has to give significance because the studies have shown a number of desirable effects of this factor. Remuneration is not exactly a characteristic possessed by the educator, but it is the perception or the importance that the educator gives to the attribute. Professionals are typically well compensated and are provided with relatively high salary and benefit levels throughout the career span (Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). The assumption is that, given the complexity of the knowledge and skills required, relatively high levels of compensation are necessary to recruit and retain capable and motivated individuals (Etzioni, 1969; Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). Studies disclose that remuneration has striking effects on retaining capable individuals (Ingersoll, 1997); increasing teacher quality (Rivkin, 1999); reducing teacher drop outs (Loeb & Page 2000) and improved students' outcomes (Lavy, 2002).

Typically remuneration is the acknowledgment of the complexity of skills & knowledge possessed by the educator. Once the educator understands his worth is appreciated well, his contribution towards the various desirable factors improves and that includes enhanced student outcomes, increase teacher quality and reduced teacher dropouts.

Ethical conduct: Ethical conduct is the most fundamental tenet of professionalism and is also the most challenging aspect. 'Ethical standards should not be treated as articles of containment but embraced as welcome moral principles guiding a growing, vibrant profession' (Shestack, 1998). It is a fundamental principle for any profession and represents an authoritative symbol of social responsibility (Raelin, 1991). When lapses in ethical behaviors occur, the credibility of the entire profession is endangered (Kerr & Smith 1995).

Like any other profession, consideration of a more highly developed professional ethics for teachers can only assist in the overall growth and enhancement of the profession (Lovat, 1998). Given their complex knowledge and highly technical skills, professionals play a vital role in society, and their morality is imperative. Also a research by Cuellar and Giles (2012) in their research on studying the feelings, beliefs and thoughts of ethical schools leaders resulted in six main themes that reflect the experience of being ethical as a school leader. They were holding personal and professional ethics as inseparable; "consistently" inspiring practice; valuing others; sustaining a humane view of education; being sensitive to the complex local context; and leading as serving. Ethical conduct is also the most challenging aspect of any profession as it cannot be just followed as rules but have to be applied appropriately for a situation. This has to be taught to the students to enrich their ethical decision making skill (Wyatt, 2004).

A code of conduct is designed to provide a mechanism for public accountability and internal disciplinary action, which enhances public accountability. While the process of conceiving such a code would be undoubtedly an immense challenge, it could result in a

concrete resource for teachers who currently cope with conflicting responsibilities, tensions among their various relationships and overall ethical uncertainty with little professional direction (Campbell, 2000). Unlike medicine, architecture, or accounting, the teaching profession has not codified the knowledge, skills and dispositions that account for accomplished practice. Consequently, both misconceptions and lack of consensus about what constitutes good teaching continue to exist (Snowden, 1993). Moreover codes of ethics are living documents that change over time, and revisions will be needed as our knowledge base grows and as our consensus emerges around controversial ethical issues (Herlihy & Theodore, 1995). Teacher behavior which is the outcome of an educator's ethical conduct does have correlation with student achievement scores (Harris, 1998).

The studies contributing to the extraction of the ten professional characteristics from the literature review with the base criterion focusing on positive student outcome in any form, is presented as above with discussion. These characteristics have been defined in summation of the literature reviewed and through relevant appreciation of the concepts for the teaching profession as follows and the figurative model is depicted in Figure 3.

Defining the professional characteristics

Subject Knowledge (SK): It is the educator's expertise in respective discipline that is acquired earnestly, thorough in content, extensive enough to assess and that is exhibited with confidence to supplement students in their core skills of the subjects.

Teaching Prowess (TP): It is defined as the ability of the educator to employ appropriate pedagogy, effective communication skills, and demonstrate classroom management skills competent enough to sustain his/ her credibility.

Updating Knowledge (UK): It describes the educator's aspiration for updating one's knowledge and improving the process of teaching through professional training, research and action research.

Collegiality (COL): It is the sense of oneness with peers that enhance consensus rather than competition that results in developing and gaining professional skills and institution effectiveness through shared ideas, goals and practice.

Commitment (COM): It is the educator's personal and professional investment of time and space with dedication to his profession that entails his/ her work, institution, colleagues, students and the community.

Teacher Student Relationship (TSR): Here the educator enrich his/ her bond with the students through his/ her interpersonal skills and developing a sense of responsibility, confidence and self discipline that enables them to interact freely and effectively in groups and also feel a sense of fair treatment and being attended with care and respect.

Empowerment (EMP): This is the capacity of the educator to engross information and execute autonomy with discretion and control in the process of decision making.

Self- Development (SD): This characteristic indicates the responsibility that the educator possesses toward him/ herself in achieving job satisfaction, managing time structure, meeting his career aspirations and enriching his leadership qualities for professional growth.

Remuneration (REM): This is an indisputable characteristic which rewards the complexity of the knowledge, skills and capabilities expressed by the educator to motivate and retain the talented individuals.

Ethical code of Conduct (EC): Ethical code of conduct is defined as standards of action, flexible enough to practice appropriately for a situation, in guiding a vibrant profession.
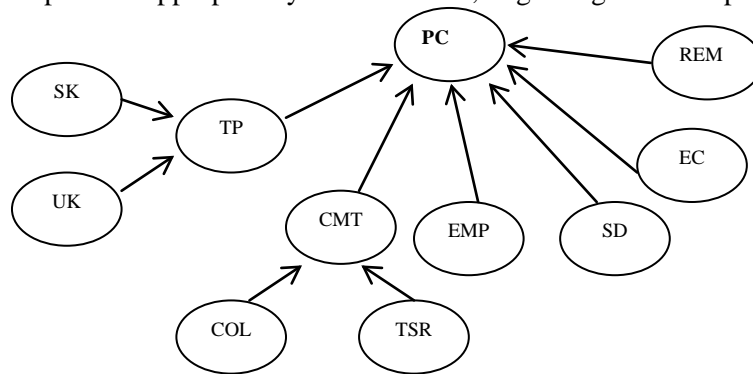

Figure 3: Professional Characteristics model

  The model in Figure 3 was derived to represent the professional characteristics of an educator inter-relating them based on literature (Cervero, 2001; Hart & Marshall, 1992, Hausman & Goldring, 2001; Ingersoll, 1997).

Concluding remarks

Based on literature review, the important and repeated professional characteristics of educators were identified as subject knowledge, teaching prowess, updating knowledge, collegiality, commitment, teacher student relationship, empowerment, self development and remuneration. In depth analysis of each of the individual characteristic was made and presented.

  As per Blewitt (2010), the higher education sector has to respond to the new economic and environmental imperatives in the business scenario. It is certainly encouraging a need for flexibility and adaptability, new multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research approaches and new pedagogies that address the new learning ecologies. Apart from such improvements in the approaches and curricula of the management education sector, it is highly desirable for efficient and efficacious teachers with desired professional characteristics to sustain any fruitful realisation. A graduate attribute is needed that suggests in a changing world individuals, and groups should learn not only to accommodate changes but enjoy them, go with them and in so doing shape them according to values and principles. And educators play a major role in achieving the same. Of the many ways, enhancing the professional characteristics of the educators will provide effective solutions for desirable student development.

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