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RECONCEPTUALISING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF NEP 2020: AN INTEGRATED MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

DR. ARPITA SINGH

ASSOCIATE. PROFESSOR, DEPT. OF TEACHER EDUCATION SHRI JAI NARAIN MISRA P.G. COLLEGE, LUCKNOW,
EMAIL: arpita.s.ind@gmail.com

Abstract
Teacher professional competence is one of the major issues in present reform efforts in education in relation to the National Education Policy 2020. Existing models of teacher competency have thereby failed to recognize the complex, contextual, and changing nature of teaching in diverse and under-resourced and technologicalized settings, even though they attempt to uphold the importance of pedagogical and content knowledge. Building competencies becomes further challenging because of structural differences. In this paper, the described limitation is addressed through the proposal of the Integrated Multidimensional Teacher Professional Competence Framework (IMTPCF). The paper, with theoretical underpinnings of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Competency paradigm, policy design and empirical threads from India, reconceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic interplay of six domains: pedagogical content, contextual and inclusive, assessment and reflective, professional ethics & values, transformative & leadership, and psychological competence. Interestingly, psychological competence, including self-efficacy, resilience and goal directedness, emerges as the primitive domain, switching on and integrating the other five domains to engage in the processes of teacher competence (Bandura, 1997; Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024). The model offers conceptual and practical meaning to teacher education and training in the NEP2020 era, aligning with the new National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Keywords: Teacher Professional Competence; NEP 2020; Psychological Competence; Teacher Education; Self-efficacy; Inclusive Education; IMTPCF

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of teacher professionalism is recognised as one of the key factors affecting quality of education and learning globally. The international evidence shows that teacher quality is one of the most important school factors impacting student learning and classroom practices (OECD, 2019). Recognising this in the Indian context, the newly launched National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 states, 'teachers are the central agents of change, curators of curriculum and facilitators of active student engagement' (Ministry of Education, 2020).

The NEP 2020 states a shift from an input-based delivery of pre-service teacher education to a competency-based one that demands high emphasis on reflective practice, inclusivity and professional autonomy. 21st-century teachers are not only required to teach the prescribed curriculum, but also to foster creativity and higher-order thinking, address varying learner needs, innovate with digital technologies, and contribute towards institutional growth and stability.

Such a transition necessitates a wider conceptualisation of competence to be multidimensional and fluid. However, despite the move away from behaviourist paradigms, conventional ways of conceptualising teacher competence still prevail. Frameworks such as the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) still focus on the central importance of knowledge of instruction (Shulman, 1986; Ball et al., 2008). These types of models are useful starting points, but do not address issues of contextual variation, nor how teachers adapt to these changes meaningfully using digital technologies or inclusive pedagogies.

This is supported by empirical research in India. Across different settings and levels, research finds a theory-practice disconnect, where teachers have a grasp of the concepts, yet cannot translate these into lessons on the ground, with differentiation, managing learners and on-the-fly adaptations (Suar et al. 2025). competence thus needs to be re-conceptualised not as knowledge, but as a capacity to use knowledge.

Institutional differences with regard to quality assurance, access to professional learning and resources mean competence varies from region to region (IJED, 2025). The growth in online learning presents new challenges and yet

teachers' capacity to pedagogically adopt technologies is uneven (Bhattacharya et al. 2025; Gangmei & Thomas, 2025).

Similarly, inclusive education calls for competence to be sensitive to socio-cultural and linguistic diversity, but teachers lack sufficient training for inclusive pedagogies (Tripathi, 2025). One of the components that falls into this is psychological competence. Psychological factors, including self-efficacy, contribute to pedagogical decision making, retention and teacher entry into the profession (Bandura, 1997; Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024). These psychological variables have been ignored in the field's conceptualization of teacher competence, but they are beginning to gain recognition. These gaps in theory, the body of empirical evidence and recent policy reform all point toward a need for a conceptualization of an integrated construct. This paper suggestively frames a concept of the Integrated Multidimensional Teacher Professional Competence framework (IMTPCF), which envisions a competency as a hierarchically arranged and dynamically connected system with a psychological competency at its core.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Concepts of teacher professional competence, developed along many different traditions, seem quite separate from each other in their conceptualisations. A synthesis of four predominant trends, namely PCK, competence models, policy accounts, and psychological approaches, exposes their strengths and limitations, highlighting the necessity of a cross-tradition conception.

2.1 Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

The concept of PCK, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1986), was a defining moment in the history of perceptions of teacher competence. It did away with the idea of separating subject and pedagogical knowledge and found it more useful to see these two elements as being intrinsically related, and to examine how teachers repackage disciplinary knowledge for reception by students. More recently, the range of PCK has been broadened to encompass the quality of instruction and student achievement (Ball et al. 2008).

In this school of thought, competence is viewed as specialised professional knowledge that is honed through practice. However, one of the weaknesses of PCK is that it is narrowly focused on instructional aspects of teaching; it has very little to say about how teachers adapt to contextual variation, reflectively reason or account for emotional and motivational issues.

Further developments, such as Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), position technology within a third domain. This solution obfuscates the TN system of knowledge, but leaves it as essentially a knowledge-based model, with competence as an extended list of categories of knowledge, rather than a holistic and dynamic model of competence.

2.2 Competency-Based Perspectives

Competency-based models, such as those promoted by the OECD, define teacher competence as a combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes and professional dispositions (OECD, 2019). The competence-based models have caused a change in focus from knowledge to competence-in-action. Teachers need to be able to meet the ever-changing situation in the classroom, reacting appropriately as needed. A significant advantage of this position is its focus on reflexivity and adaptability. The teacher must analyse their own practice and consider evidence-based results whilst mediating a good working relationship with his/her students.

This therefore directs toward a student-centred, flexible and interactive teaching approach. One drawback of competency frameworks is their perceived lack of coherence. They address several different fields, but there is little explanation as to what relationship they have to each other. Competence is thus seen as a disparate trait.

2.3 Policy Frameworks: NEP 2020 and NPST

In the Indian context, NEP 2020 proposes a paradigm shift towards integrated and competency-based teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020). The policy calls for synthesising knowledge, practice beliefs and professional engagement, with teachers seen as reflective practitioners and initiators of learning.

Devising the soon-to-be-released National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), though aspiring to the global norms, identifies the competencies, dividing them into the realms of professional knowledge, practice and values. While extensive, policy contexts across education are normative and aspirational, and offer little insight into the organisation and 'operationalisation' of the competencies. Evidence indicates that theory remains central in teacher education programmes, with a deficiency in practice and reflection (Suar et al. 2025).

2.4 Psychological Foundations of Teacher Competence

A growing proportion of research has focused on the psychological aspects of teaching, though these continue to be a relatively less prominent aspect of more formal competence models. Self-efficacy is one of the variables that is

established as being an important factor. Self-Efficacy is defined by Bandura (1997) as: 'An individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments.' There are many influences on teachers' self-efficacy. It influences the selection of teaching methods and ultimately affects a teacher's persistence and discipline under difficult circumstances. High self-efficacy teachers tend to select more innovative methods, and are also more able to attract and keep students (Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024).
Findings from India on teachers (at the school level) also show the importance of psychological factors in the (teachers') competence building (Shukla, 2024). Besides self-efficacy, there are other key constructs such as resilience and motivation, which are also important in a resource-poor environment. Therefore, these are also intriguing attributes, which should be taken into account. While there's an ongoing scientific foundation, psychological competence has been largely conceptualised as an external factor, and not a professional skill. This leaves current models unable to explain variation in teacher ability.

2.5 Synthesis and Conceptual Gap
PCK → *Strong instructional knowledge*
Competency frameworks → *Multidimensional but fragmented*
Policy frameworks → *Holistic but abstract*
Psychological research → *Empirically strong but isolated*
↓
No integrated, explanatory model of competence

These perspectives, taken collectively, show a significant gap. Models either feature excessively conceptual maps, use domain mentalism in enlarged, complex forms, or prioritize knowledge. Interactivity, context sensitivity, and psychological mediation of the skill have not yet been included in adequate models of teacher competency. This served as the foundation for creating the IMTPCF to close that gap.

3. Empirical Evidence from the Indian Context
Empirical evidence from India would suggest whether other conceptualisations still work in a case to be considered rather advanced. Empirical India shows us that the job maps shown by national policy documents such as the NEP 2020 were not entirely wrong in imagining the teacher job as multidimensional, but there are still missed out developing competences, uneven disbursement, and weak linkage across the job. Interpreting these as discrete gaps rather than a systemic failing, a synthesis reveals that teachers' jobs may be conceptualised as a multidimensional one, but in completely fragmented ways. This section looks at empirical evidence under four dimensions: pedagogical, digital contextual and inclusive competences and professional work.

3.1 Pedagogical Competence and the Theory–Practice Gap
A common theme also emerging from the research is the disconnect between theory and practice in the classroom. It was clear that pre-service teachers could spell pedagogical concepts out, but not actually do them on the ground (Suar et al. 2025). This disconnect was evident in expectations around lesson planning, classroom management, differentiation, and assessment practices. The continuing existence of the gap point is also due to the fact that teacher education programmes tend to focus more on the acquisition of knowledge than actual practice-based integration, and so the competence still remains very much in the cognitive realm rather than the operational.
This points to the fact that competence has to be understood as mobilising knowledge in context, which entails the integration of knowledge with skills and situational judgement. Institutional differences also may exacerbate this problem. Variation across instructor types in terms of quality, faculty support and institutional resources (IJED, 2025) can result in inequitable development of pedagogical competence. Such differences underscore that competence is not equally developed, for it depends on contextual factors and structural supports.

3.2 Digital Competence and Pedagogical Integration
The qualitative development of digital learning offers another context of teacher competence. But evidence from research shows that teachers' digital competence is inconsistent and shallow, only at the ceiling level of practical skills (Bhattacharya et al. 2025; Gangmei & Thomas, 2025). One of the major findings of our research is the difference between having a technique and using a technique pedagogically. Many teachers are capable of using a technique, but relatively few know how to use it in the context of teaching. Teachers tend to rely on techniques to deliver content; they do not use them to help students learn interactively.
The impact of professional development programmes targeted at enhancing digital competence is mixed. However, studies indicate that collaborative, long-term, practice-focused programmes have greater success than those which are short-term and removed from school experience (Charania et al. 2023). These results seem to indicate that digital competence cannot be considered as a separate domain per se. It is really related to pedagogical, contextual and

Reflective competences, which simply emphasise the importance of a comprehensive conceptual framework to consider the different competences.

3.3 Contextual and Inclusive Competence

There is tremendous diversity of learners in India in terms of language, socio-economic factors and culture. Hence, teacher competence areas should include the ability to adapt pedagogies to suit the needs of diverse learners, but little evidence exists to show that most teachers are trained for inclusive education (Tripathi, 2025). Difficulties faced by the teachers are infrequent use of differentiated instructions, inadequate knowledge of inclusive pedagogies and lack of institutional support. Such problems show a flaw in the teachers' educational programmes, as contextual competence is not a systematically established program. One of the crucial ones arising from this literature is that of teacher agency, the capacity to act purposefully and effectively in the professional domain.

Teachers who possess higher levels of agency tend to be more innovative in their practice and offer more effective provision for different types of students (Tripathi, 2025). However, agency is shaped by both structural conditions and psychological presuppositions, including a sense of efficacy. This illustrates the interconnectedness of contextual and psychological competence. Adapting to different contexts as a sole competence depends not only on knowledge, but also on teachers' believing in their capacity, motivation and confidence.

3.4 Professional Development and Competence Enhancement

Professional development (PD) is seen as one of the most important strategies for improving teachers. India has a range of PD programmes, including in-service programmes and technology-enabled programmes. The impact of these programmes has been inconsistent. Research has shown that there are similarities among effective PD programmes: they are long-term, contextually relevant, interactive and vocational (Mishra et al. 2025; Charania et al. 2023). In these programmes, it is possible for teachers to adapt practices, reflect on their practice and use the results of the experimentation to improve. In opposition to this, many other types of PD schemes have been short-lived and ungeneralized, mostly paying attention to delivering content, rather than competence.

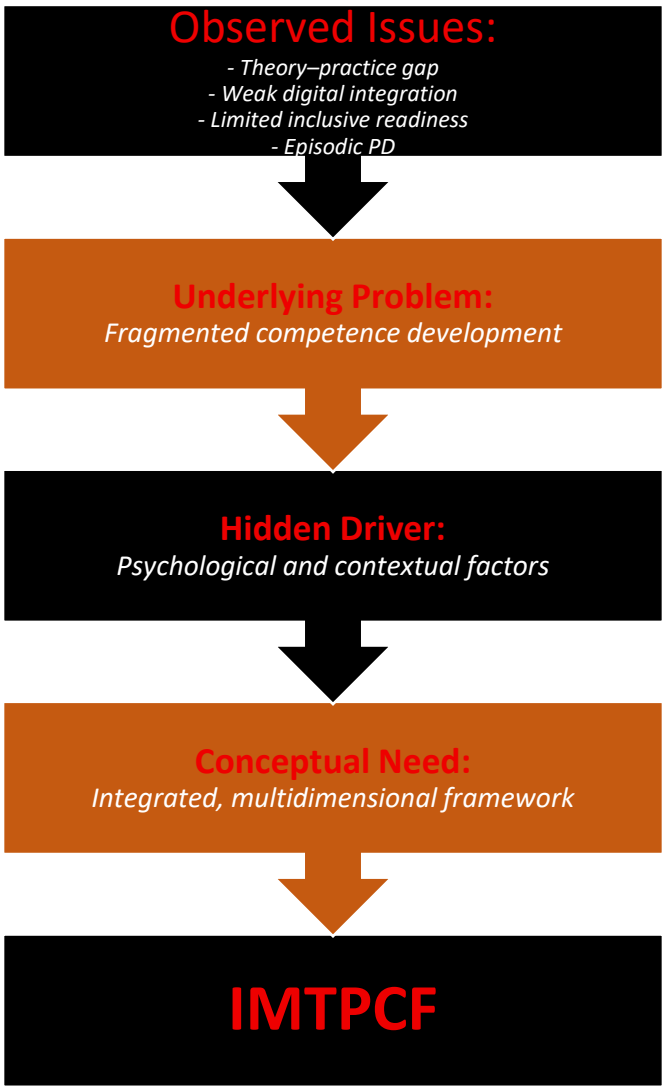
Such courses tend not to have a long-term impact on teachers' classroom experiences and practices, as they do not consider the interactive and contextualised dimension of competence. Crucially, the success of PD very much depends on the psychological profile of teachers. Based on the empirical findings, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy tend to participate actively in professional development and implement learned concepts in their practices (Shukla, 2024). We can see the importance of psychological competence as one of the driving forces for competence development.

3.5 Synthesis of Empirical Evidence

The empirical evidence reveals several consistent patterns:

- Teacher competence is **multidimensional**, involving pedagogical, technological, contextual, and psychological dimensions
- Competence domains are **interdependent**, rather than independent
- Psychological factors significantly influence **competence enactment**
- Structural and contextual disparities lead to **uneven competence development**
- Existing systems fail to integrate these dimensions effectively

Empirical-to-Conceptual Mapping



The apparent lack of any cross-relationships between the domains, and the lack of attention to psychological processes in the existing models, thus provides an empirically based rationale for the reconceptualisation of teacher competence using an integrated framework.

4. Need for Reconceptualisation

The examination of theoretical perspectives and empirical knowledge identifies core problems in traditional conceptions of teacher professional competence. These depth-structural difficulties suggest the need for a re-conceptualisation of competence in line with the contemporary contexts of teaching. A critical flaw is the concentration on knowledge-based dimensions. PCK and related models focus on knowledge of teaching but fail to address the full range of difficulties of teaching in heterogeneous and technologically-rich settings (Shulman, 1986; Ball et al., 2008). The first limitation is that teachers might not be able to work in one dimension at a time and simultaneously address contextual uncertainties and individual differences among students.

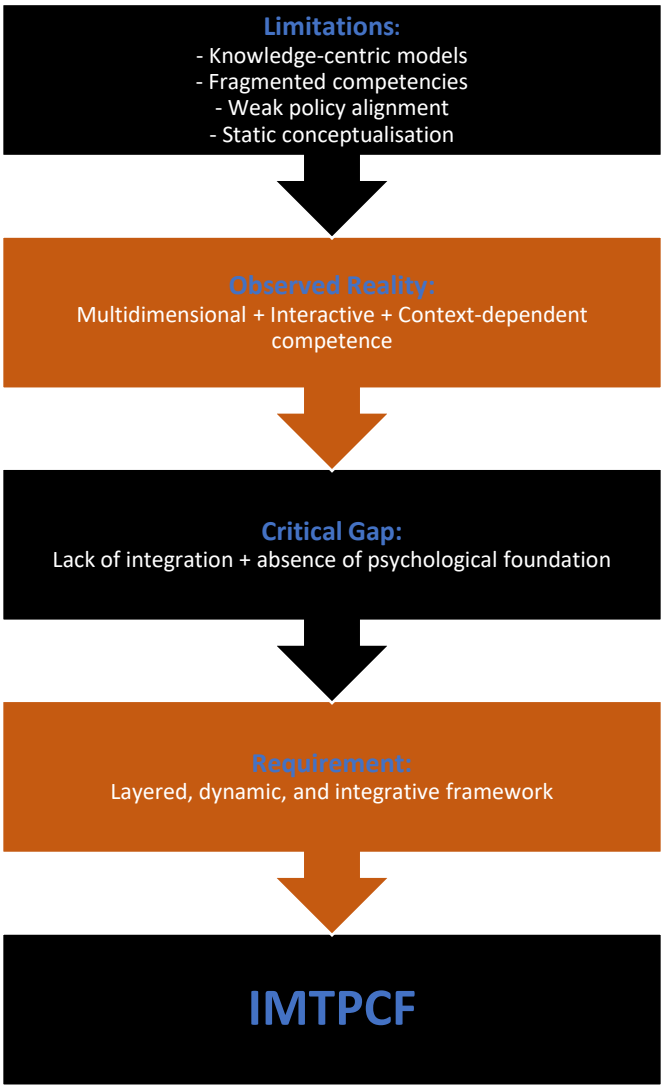
Knowledge-based approaches are unable to incorporate and deal with these complexities. A second limitation addresses the fragmentation of the competence domains. Competency-based approach expands the concept of competence, but views the competence domains as independent but not necessarily integrated modules of the holistic competence (OECD, 2019). It is an anomalous concept to consider how the competence domains will complement each other in practice, like pedagogical skill with contextual definition or reflection with normative decisions, to enhance the teacher's performance.

The gap between what's taught and how policies are delivered remains wide. NEP 2020 calls for integrated, competence-driven learning that ties together knowledge, skills, and values, yet current models fail to translate those goals into classroom action. Teacher training often leans on theory over hands-on practice, which leaves the policy shift unfulfilled. Competence isn't seen as a fixed outcome anymore, and it's now understood as something one builds

through ongoing experience. In practice, teaching takes constant adjustment - something most curricular designs don't acknowledge.

Education systems still treat lessons like static plans instead of living conversations shaped by feedback and change. Research shows that 'competence is a process that is affected and shaped by the interaction of multiple domains and by contextual and psychological variables'. The failure to account for the lack of psychological ability also diminishes many existing frameworks. Evidence has shown how greatly self-efficacy impacts teachers' behaviour (Bandura, 1997; Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024), but little effort has been made to study the psychological elements.

Conceptual Transition



These drawbacks emphasize the necessity of a framework that is multifaceted, integrative, and dynamic, with psychological competence serving as its cornerstone.

5. The Integrated Multidimensional Teacher Professional Competence Framework (IMTPCF)

5.1 Conceptual Overview

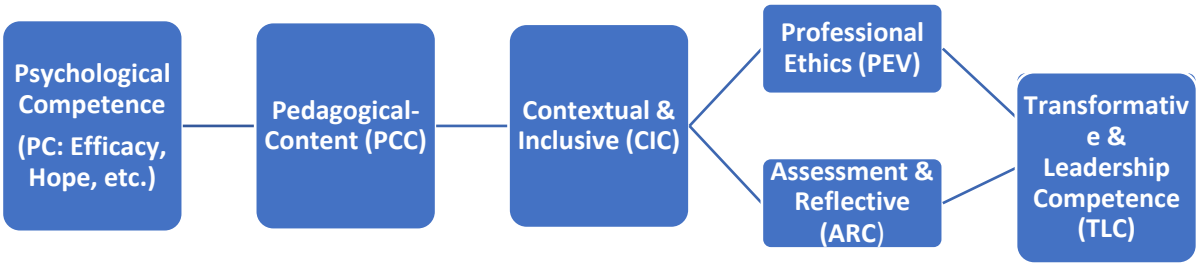
The IMTPCF was suggested as a means of addressing the structural constraints present in models of teacher competence, which tend to visualise competence as a set of isolated areas. Instead, the IMTPCF proposes an 'armoured-up' layered approach, where different dimensions interact to provide cohesive competence. The six domains of this framework are pedagogical-content competence (PCC), contextual/inclusive competence (CIC), assessment and reflectiveness competence (ARC), professional values/ethics (PEV), transformative/leadership competence (TLC), and psychological competence (PC).

What is distinctive in this framework is the placement of the psychological competence domain as an underlying component for the activation, integration, and maintenance of each of the other domains. This structural orientation captures this underlying assumption that competence is not simply held but, not only enacted in the setting, but also

that the enactment of competence requires motivating, construal, and psychofunctional mechanisms. In this way, by reframing the issue around competence-in-action rather than the acquisition of knowledge, the IMTPCF tackles one of the central defects of prior TM frameworks and resonates with current views on teaching as a situated activity (OECD, 2019).

5.2 Structural Representation

The IMTPCF is organized as a layered system where each domain builds upon and interacts with all other domains. Though based on a firm hierarchy the system is not linear; there are also feedback loops between domains.



The framework maintains that psychological competence is the foundation of pedagogical action; pedagogical competence is influenced by the context while the processes of reflection and ethics regulate practice. Leadership competence appears as a result of integrated functioning of domains.

5.3 Domain Specifications

5.3.1 Pedagogical-Content Competence (PCC)

Pedagogical-Content Competence is the core of instruction. It comprises content knowledge, instructional strategies and transforming content for effective learning (Shulman, 1986; Ball et al., 2008). Lesson planning, understanding preconceptions, application of scaffolding and learners' motivation fall under this domain. In the IMTPCF, PCC is conceptualised as activated/not static knowledge, to be shown through teachers acquired with a favourable psychological state to modify their knowledge accordingly. Teachers can be well-informed in pedagogical knowledge, but will not necessarily be successful if PCC is low, in addition to a lack of confidence, motivation and contextual understanding, and as such, PCC will work in conjunction with other domains.

5.3.2 Contextual and Inclusive Competence (CIC)

Contextual and Inclusive Competence involves flexibility in accommodating learners' backgrounds, identities, and needs through adaptable pedagogical practices. This encompasses understanding plurality (linguistic, socio-economic, and individual differences) and adopting inclusive pedagogies (TP 2020). CIC is crucially important for the Indian context because of the diversity of classrooms. CIC can be seen as the mediating space in which pedagogical knowledge is translated into relevant practice.

Teaching is not only about knowing what knowledge and pedagogy is but also about relating it to learners and the classroom context. CIC is also related to psychological and ethical aspects. Teachers' attitudes towards learners, their motivation for working with diversity and their commitment to inclusion shape the way this competence is put into effect; without such dispositions, contextual adjustment will be rather restricted.

5.3.3 Assessment and Reflective Competence (ARC)

Assessment and Reflective Competence: the ability to assess student learning and systematically reflect on practice, including the use of formative and summative assessment, feedback, and decision making from evidence. Reflections are an ongoing, cyclical process linking experience and improvement (OECD, 2019).

When situated in the IMTPCF, ARC is a process which reinforces for teachers to develop their practice following prior evidence and experience. By reflecting on their teaching, teachers recognise and notice failures in their teaching, modify how they teach, and deal with the 'forces and factors of the context' (Farrell, 2008). Reflective competence is a continuous process that enables teachers to improve, grow, and change their teaching over time. A lack of reflective competence will not lead to improvement in what and how teachers teach.

5.3.4 Professional Ethics and Values (PEV)

Professional Ethics and Values constitute the normative aspect of teacher competence relating to commitment to equity, valuing students, ethics, and professionalism. This is consistent with the value-oriented perspective of the NEP 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). Regarding the IMTCF, the PEV functions as a control filter; it is an omnipresent influence in all fields and domains. Therefore, the teachers who design instruction, examine/prove it, and engage with students work their way toward what's right.

For example, inclusive teaching is led by ethics and pedagogy. PEV is a practice reflection and the basis of ethical practice for teachers. The two of PEV and reflective competence are interwined as ethical awareness is often achieved by reflection-in-action.

5.3.5 Transformative and Leadership Competence (TLC)

Transformative and Leadership Competence: The ability of teachers to act as change agents, catalyse reform in the educational setting, and mentor and collaborate with colleagues to bring innovations into the educational institution. It also encompasses the ability to work towards institutional development.

TLC is not an input domain in the IMTPCF, but a phenomenon that arises as the end product of pedagogical, contextual, reflective, ethical and psychological domains. Teachers are asked to display leadership when they are skilled in orchestrating various domains to solve problems and enhance practice. This seems consistent with an emphasis on teacher agency and development in NEP 2020 and also with a view of leadership not as a distinct skill, but something that is embedded within everyday classroom practice.

5.3.6 Psychological Competence (PC)

The first layer of the IMTPCCF is the Psychological Competence. This layer is the most important contribution that the IMTPCF has made to theory. The layer has some significant factors such as self-efficacy, resilience, motivation and goal-setting. Given that self-efficacy affects teacher behaviour, self-efficacious teachers are more likely to undertake change, persist under trying circumstances and engage in reflective practice (Bandura, 1997; Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024). Resilience assists teachers to overcome constraints and motivation motivates professional engagement.

Unlike other models, the IMTPCF considers psychological competence a structural predictor. It influences:

- the activation of pedagogical knowledge
- its ability to adapt to context
- engagement in reflective practice
- engagement in ethical practice
- emergence of leadership behaviours

Psychological competence may be a prerequisite for the other domains to be fully engaged and used.

5.4 Inter-Domain Dynamics

One strength of the IMTPCF is clearly the delineation of the relationships between the domains. It looks at competency as a property that emerges from interaction, not as just an aggregation of a set of factors.

The framework operates through four core principles:

- **Activation Principle:** Psychological competence enables the enactment of pedagogical knowledge
- **Adaptation Principle:** Contextual competence shapes how pedagogy is applied
- **Regulation Principle:** Reflective and ethical processes refine and guide practice
- **Emergence Principle:** Leadership arises from the integration of all domains

These interactions are both dynamic and reciprocal. Feedback can be looping and persistent and can bring about further progress, for example, in reflective practice, whether it be increased pedagogical competence and confidence or increased psychological confidence or in leadership, which can serve to strengthen perceptions of self-efficacy.

<u>Interaction Flow</u>

- **Psychological Competence (PC)**
  ↓ *activates*
- **Pedagogical Competence (PCC)**
  ↓ *adapted through*
- **Contextual Competence (CIC)**
  ↓ *refined via*
- **Assessment & Reflection (ARC)**
  ↓ *regulated by*
- **Ethics & Values (PEV)**
  ↓ *leads to*

- **Transformative Leadership (TLC)**

Feedback Loop:

- **ARC** → strengthens PCC & PC
- **CIC** → reshapes PCC
- **TLC** → reinforces PC

5.5 Theoretical Contribution

The IMTPCF moves from additive to integrative modelling of teacher competence by explicitly defining relationships between domains. It grounds psychological competence as 'core', which is an absent feature of almost all other paradigms.

It also consolidates institutional and policy dimensions with conceptualisation by bringing NEP 2020 visions to life. Thus, by constructing a model of a multi-layered, interactive system for competence, the IMTPCF gives comprehensive and explanatory accounts of teacher professionalism in complex educational contexts.

6. DISCUSSION

The IMTPCF moves beyond an attribute-based view of teacher competence by offering a system-oriented view of professional practice as an inter-relation of six activity-based domains. Attribute-style models of competence emphasise specialised bodies of knowledge (Shulman, 1986; Ball et al., 2008). However, while the attribute classification scheme is useful for categorising the knowledge base of teacher education programs and teachers' repertoires of practices, it provides less explanation about how this competence is enacted in practice across different contexts.

Competence is conceptually modelled as a system by the IMTPCF. This framework's ability to account for differences amongst teachers with similar credentials but differing efficacy is a crucial component (Suar et al. 2025). Knowledge-based models are insufficient to explain this discrepancy. Using psychological competence as the basis for good professional task performance makes the IMTCPF more amenable to this. The IMTPF is predicated on self-efficacy; this influences how we learn and apply knowledge and how we perform in practice (Bandura, 1997; Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024). The model is also more able to offer "a bridging of theory and practice". The NEP 2020 calls for holistic competence, but current implementations are disjointed (Ministry of Education, 2020). The IMTPCF puts this into practice by partitioning competence into several pluralistic domains, another way of providing a framework for holistic teacher education and professional development. Interaction is less obvious but needs to be taken into account. Teaching must be innovated all the time, and competence expands between the feedback areas of domains. It is the development of reflective competence which is the key to opening this up and allowing the practice to be transformative and developmental (OECD, 2019). This model is theoretical and remains to be validated. The associations between the domains and a place for psychological competence as the uniting factor need to be validated for generalisability. Furthermore, the individualised model of competence is current with no acknowledgement of institutional elements. The IMTCPFC could offer a wider and more systematic model of teacher competence than the TKC did by identifying five domains and highlighting the importance of psychological processes.

7. Policy and Practice Implications

The IMTPCF offers a curriculum framework very suitable for the implementation of a competencies-based vision of NEP 2020 in the formulation of reforms in the teacher education, professional development and assessment systems. Its significance is not limited to the incremental innovations but the reorientations from a categorised approach to integrated competence development. A key implication relates to curriculum reform in teacher education. Current curricula tend to regard the domains of pedagogy, psychology assessment and technology as discrete learning areas, and thereby reinforce the disjointedness of teacher learning.

An IMTPCF-mediated curriculum design would focus on routes through integrated competence clusters, conceived as bridges between the sphere of program and student achievement, linking instructional design to contextual factors, assessment and reflection upon practice. For instance, lesson planning should reflect learner diversity, formative assessment, and value issues rather than technical procedures. Extending the practicum through extended immersion in real school settings, mentoring, and provision of feedback is paramount to close the theory-practice divide pointed out in existing research (Suar et al. 2025).

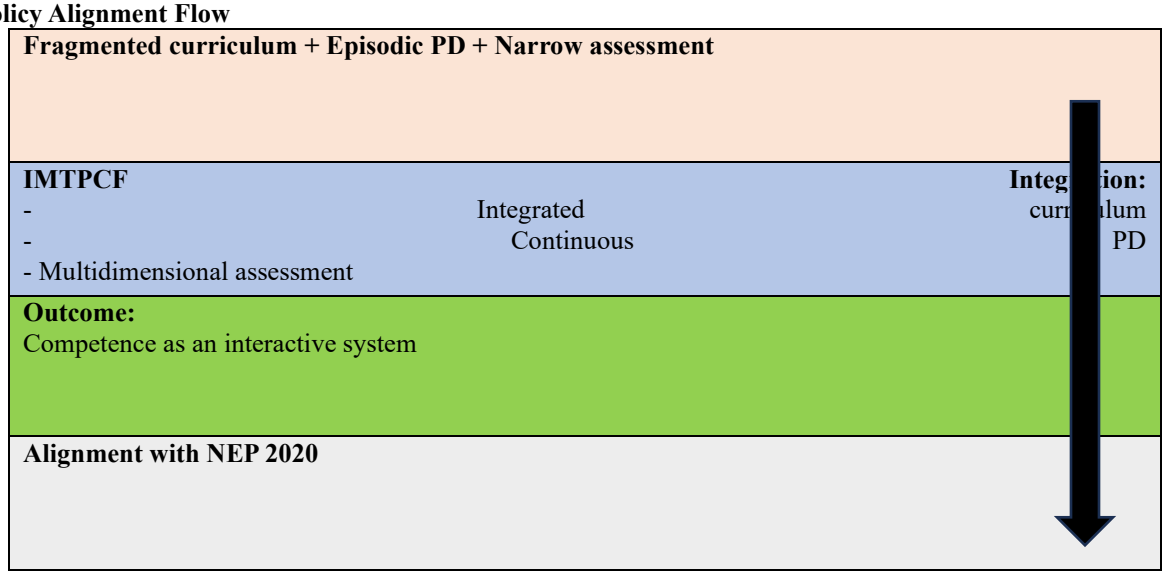
It also identifies an important area for further development: the need to ensure psychological competence is an integral part of teacher education. Psychology is frequently taught as a 'one-off' theoretical subject with little link made to professional practice. The IMTCPF stresses applied techniques which go on to develop self-esteem, resilience and reflective self-regulation by means of a series of 'guided' teaching experiences, collaboration with other students, and

reflection. Psychological competence must be a part of this integration. PD systems need to be reinvented to focus on one-off, short-term workshop-based PD, which constrains the development of sustained competencies.

The IMTPCF is committed to advocating for a focus on ongoing school-based forms of professional learning communities, such as peer observations, mentoring, action research, professional learning communities, etc. Research suggests that ongoing and contextualised PD has a positive influence on teachers' classroom practices (Mishra et al. 2025; Charania et al. 2023). Also, PD programmes should not be on isolated skills but on multiple domains at the same time. The second implication relates to an integrated measurement of teacher competence. Existing systems tend to measure individual components of competence, for example, teacher knowledge (as a multiple-choice test) or classroom interactions. They do not acknowledge the interactions between components of competence. The IMTPCF sustain the development of comprehensive portfolios for evaluation by combining its direct and indirect indicators, like observation protocol logs, self-reflections and student outcomes.

Psychological indicators can be a way to improve the system of measurement. The final suggestion highlights the improvement of contextualised and inclusive competence. Strategies of model application into different contexts of teacher education can be achieved through bringing more cases, many teaching and learning contexts and embracing flexible approaches offered by teacher educators. To sustain the competence, required mentoring and additional resources.

Policy Alignment Flow



Overall, the IMTPCF suggests a transition from perceiving teacher competency as a set of abilities to seeing it as a cohesive and growing system that necessitates integrated reforms across policy, institutions, and practice.

8. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to explore an alternative for teacher professional competence and have proposed that we revisit the existing conceptual understanding, as well as invoke a new framework that incorporates the considerations of the applicability of traditional theories for Indian education, the empirical obstacles faced by traditional frameworks and the future demands as envisaged by the NEP 2020. The IMTPCF of teacher competence counters the weakness of deficiency and diversity by claiming a system of interacting teacher competence. This model builds on and advances knowledge of additive models by providing a comprehensive explanation of the ways in which competence is enacted by integrating pedagogical, contextual, reflective, ethical, psychological, and leadership domains. Not least, the psychological element of professional competence is particularly highlighted, a feature that may help to account for disparities in teacher quality and effectiveness.

The IMTPCF appears to align itself well with the competency- based future of NEP 2020 and the emerging National Professional Standards for teachers. It translates the strategic goals and vision of the policy in conceptual form and would therefore provide a framework for operationalising the different teacher education and professional development and testing systems. The model is based on holistic approaches that encourage the confluence of competence and skills.

However, it is only a theoriescape and requires validation. Further research could investigate the inter-relationships of the domains of competence, especially that of psychological competence, by means of more sophisticated methods.

More multidimensional instruments are needed that take into account the interactive nature. To conclude, the IMTPF has added to the debates on teacher professionalism by means of an evidence-based, rigorous framework which is grounded in teachers' lived experience and is focused on reconciling theory, policy and practice. It provides a sound basis for school-based research and systemic reform in teacher education.

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