



SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' DEDICATION TO THEIR PROFESSION

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Abstract

Teacher commitment plays a crucial role in shaping the educational experience, reflecting a personal dedication to the profession. It is a key factor in driving efforts to enhance school outcomes, particularly in terms of student academic achievement (Kushman, 1992). Defined by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, 1998) as a complete devotion to the teaching profession, commitment embodies an inner recognition of the noble nature of teaching. Secondary education serves as the cornerstone of the educational system, with secondary school teachers bearing the vital responsibility of molding the current generation for the future. Recognizing the significance of their role, this study aims to explore the level of professional commitment among secondary school teachers. Using the Normative Survey Method, the study selected a sample of 108 secondary school teachers in the Paschim Medinipur district through Simple Random Sampling Technique. Data analysis involved t-tests and ANOVA to uncover insights into teacher commitment. The study's major findings revealed a significant difference in professional commitment among teachers based on their experience levels. However, there was no significant difference observed in commitment levels concerning gender and qualification. These findings highlight the importance of fostering a strong sense of commitment among secondary school teachers, as it directly influences the quality of education imparted to students and ultimately shapes the future of the educational system.

Keywords: *Teacher commitment, Educational outcomes, Student academic achievement, secondary education, Professional dedication*

1. Introduction

Professional commitment refers to the strong dedication individuals feel towards their profession, particularly in the teaching field. This commitment encompasses two key elements: a sense of pride in being part of the teaching profession and a strong drive for

professional growth (Shashi, 2014). Simpson and Hood (2000) elaborate on commitment within the teaching context, noting that committed teachers exhibit specific behaviors. These include prioritizing professional development, demonstrating enthusiasm for teaching and learning, engaging with students, maintaining a positive attitude towards them, and understanding their motivations, strengths, needs, and circumstances. The level of professional commitment reflects the motivation towards one's chosen career path and the connection with the profession. Teachers who possess commitment, passion, and enthusiasm serve as role models for both students and colleagues. Fox (1964) emphasizes that a profession's strength lies in the commitment of its practitioners, highlighting the crucial role of passion in teaching, which positively impacts student achievement. Teacher commitment is integral to ensuring quality education, influencing the promotion of the teaching profession, work performance, school environment, and student outcomes (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). Hargreaves (1997) suggests that teaching is a pedagogical phenomenon, emphasizing the importance of committed educators in guiding learners towards success. Committed teachers adapt their teaching methods to create effective learning environments and develop loyalty to their school and profession. According to the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, 1998), teacher commitment entails complete dedication and devotion to the teaching profession, recognizing it as the noblest of all professions. It involves deep concern for students, awareness of one's role and responsibilities, and a high level of professionalism.

1.1 Rationale for the Study

Professional commitment stands out as the most influential factor in reshaping the educational landscape, as it instills in teachers the drive to engage in critical practices aimed at enhancing the quality of education. Educators with a high level of commitment not only inspire students to participate in school activities but also demonstrate genuine concern for their progress, continually seeking innovative methods to enrich their learning experiences. The evolution of technology prompts teachers to devise innovative strategies for effective teaching, while professionally committed educators establish meaningful connections between their profession and other stakeholders within the education system. They consistently update, strengthen, and refine their professional skills across various teaching domains to attain the highest level of proficiency. Given that secondary education serves as the cornerstone of the educational system, well-trained, competent, and committed teachers play a pivotal role in fortifying secondary education and empowering the entire nation.

Entrusted by the community, secondary school teachers shoulder the vital responsibility of nurturing the current generation for the future through the process of teaching and learning. Hence, the researcher has selected the topic of "Professional Commitment among Secondary School Teachers" to delve into this significant aspect of education.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine whether there is a significant difference in the level of professional commitment among secondary school teachers based on gender.
- ii. To investigate whether there is a significant variance in the professional commitment of secondary school teachers concerning their qualifications.
- iii. To assess whether there is a noteworthy distinction in the professional commitment levels of secondary school teachers based on their years of experience in the teaching profession.

1.3 Hypotheses

H01. There is no statistically significant disparity in the level of professional commitment between male and female secondary school teachers.

H02. There is no statistically significant distinction in the professional commitment of secondary school teachers based on their qualifications.

H03. There is no statistically significant variance in the professional commitment of secondary school teachers concerning their experience levels.

2. Literature Review

Mary and Annaraja (2015) observed that there was no notable contrast in professional dedication between male and female teachers across arts and science disciplines. In a similar vein, Arjunan and Balamurugan (2013) also concluded that there was no discernible gender-based disparity in professional commitment among teachers.

Contrary to these findings, Khan (2015) identified a noteworthy discrepancy in organizational commitment between private and public school teachers, with those in private institutions demonstrating greater levels of commitment.

The commitment of school teachers extends towards fostering student welfare, societal betterment, human values, and academic excellence. This dedication was emphasized in the study by Sharma (2008), who found no correlation between locality and the effectiveness of secondary school teachers, but did establish a significant association between teaching effectiveness and professional commitment.

Furthermore, Guven (2012) highlighted a notable distinction in organizational commitment between private and government school educators, with the former exhibiting higher levels of commitment.

In Ranju B's (2017) study on "Professional Commitment of School Teachers in the State of Punjab," a sample of 200 school teachers from Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur districts in Punjab was randomly selected. Data collection utilized the Professional Commitment Scale for Teachers (Kaur, Ranu, & Brar, 2013), revealing significant differences in professional commitment between male and female teachers. The findings indicate that a majority of school teachers exhibit an average level (56%) of professional commitment.

Shukla (2014) examined school teachers' satisfaction with work, commitment to the profession, and teaching competence. The study employed product-moment correlation and t-tests for analysis. Results revealed a strong positive correlation between primary school teachers' commitment to the profession and job satisfaction. However, the correlation between teaching competency and job satisfaction was significantly lower, and the correlation between professional commitment and teaching competency was also at a low level. Furthermore, the study found no significant differences in various stages of teaching competencies among teachers with different levels of job satisfaction, suggesting that educators' commitment did not vary significantly across different levels of job satisfaction.

3. Research Design and Methodology

The Normative Survey Method employed in the present study involves gathering data from a sample of secondary school teachers in Paschim Medinipur district. This method aims to collect information that represents the norms, attitudes, or behaviors of a particular group, in this case, secondary school teachers. The choice of this method suggests an intention to understand and describe the prevailing attitudes and behaviors related to professional commitment among secondary school teachers in the Paschim Medinipur district.

To obtain a representative sample, a Simple Random Sampling Technique was utilized. This sampling method involves selecting participants entirely by chance, ensuring that each secondary school teacher in the district has an equal opportunity to be included in the study. By using random sampling, the researchers can minimize bias and enhance the generalizability of their findings to the broader population of secondary school teachers in Paschim Medinipur.

In total, a sample of 108 secondary school teachers was selected for the study. This sample size was likely determined based on considerations such as the desired level of precision, the

available resources, and the estimated variability within the population. By collecting data from this sample, the researchers aim to draw conclusions about the professional commitment levels of secondary school teachers in Paschim Medinipur district, providing valuable insights into the factors influencing teacher dedication and devotion to their profession in this specific geographical area.

In the described process, the investigator took several steps to develop and validate a tool for measuring professional commitment among the participants. Initially, the tool was constructed based on guidelines and input from subject matter experts in the field. These experts likely provided valuable insights into the key dimensions and indicators of professional commitment, ensuring that the tool effectively captures the relevant aspects of this construct.

The finalized tool consisted of 40 items, each designed to assess different aspects of professional commitment. Participants were asked to respond to these items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." This scale allows participants to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement, providing a nuanced understanding of their level of commitment.

To ensure the reliability of the tool, the investigator calculated the reliability coefficient, which was found to be 0.95. This high coefficient suggests that the tool consistently measures professional commitment, indicating a high level of internal consistency among its items. This reliability coefficient provides confidence in the tool's ability to accurately assess professional commitment among the participants.

Once the tool was validated, the researcher proceeded to analyze the data collected from the participants. Various descriptive statistics, such as the mean and standard deviation, were calculated to summarize the central tendency and variability of the data. These descriptive statistics provide insights into the average level of professional commitment among the participants and the extent to which their responses vary.

In addition to descriptive statistics, inferential statistics were used to examine relationships and differences within the data. Specifically, the researcher employed t-tests and F-tests (ANOVA) as statistical techniques to analyze the data. These inferential statistics allow the researcher to draw conclusions about the significance of differences in professional commitment based on factors such as gender, qualification, or experience level.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

H01. There is no statistically significant disparity in the level of professional commitment between male and female secondary school teachers.

Table 1 illustrates the significant disparity in Professional Commitment between Male and Female Secondary School Teachers.

Category	N	Mean	SD	t- value	p- value
Male	27	177.41	8.362	1.22	0.22
Female	81	173.96	16.969	1.22	0.22

The interpretation of the table suggests that the calculated t-value (1.22) is lower than the critical or table t-value (1.96) at the 0.05 significance level. Consequently, the null hypothesis 1, which states that there is no significant difference between the Professional Commitment of Male and Female teachers, is accepted. Additionally, the mean score indicates that Male teachers exhibit higher levels of Professional Commitment compared to Female teachers.

H02. There is no statistically significant distinction in the professional commitment of secondary school teachers based on their qualifications.

Table 2 illustrates the Significant Difference in Professional Commitment between Undergraduate and Postgraduate Secondary School Teachers.

Category	N	Mean	SD	t- value	p- value
UG	37	173.49	14.01	0.630	0.531
PG	71	175.37	15.98	0.630	0.531

The data presented in the table indicates that the calculated t-value (0.630) is lower than the critical t-value (1.96) at a significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis 2 is accepted, suggesting that there is no significant difference in Professional Commitment between Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) teachers. The mean scores suggest that Postgraduate teachers exhibit higher levels of Professional Commitment compared to Undergraduate teachers.

H03. There is no statistically significant variance in the professional commitment of secondary school teachers concerning their experience levels.

Table 3 illustrates the significant difference in Professional Commitment among secondary School Teachers categorized by their experience levels.

Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f- value
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Between Groups	1685.502	2	842.751	3.789
Within Groups	23354.164	105	222.421	3.789
Total	25039.669	107		

The interpretation of the table indicates that the calculated F-value (3.78) exceeds the critical table value (3.09) at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis 3 is rejected. This suggests that there is indeed a significant difference among the Professional Commitment levels of teachers concerning their experience.

5. Findings

- i. There is no significant disparity in Professional Commitment between male and female teachers. However, the mean score suggests that male teachers exhibit a higher level of Professional Commitment compared to their female counterparts.
- ii. Similarly, there is no notable distinction in Professional Commitment between undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) teachers. Nonetheless, the mean score indicates that PG-level teachers demonstrate a higher degree of Professional Commitment compared to UG-level teachers.
- iii. In terms of experience, there is a significant discrepancy in Professional Commitment among teachers. The mean difference between teachers with less than 5 years of experience and those with more than 10 years of experience is 8.617 in Professional Commitment, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

6. Conclusion

The study's findings indicate a noteworthy disparity in Professional Commitment among teachers concerning experience, with those having more than 10 years of experience exhibiting higher levels of commitment compared to their counterparts. Additionally, male teachers demonstrate a higher level of Professional Commitment than female teachers, as evidenced by the mean scores. Furthermore, teachers at the postgraduate level display superior Professional Commitment compared to their undergraduate counterparts.

In the current educational landscape, teachers are faced with the challenge of adapting to evolving educational requirements. It is imperative for them to acquire higher-order thinking skills to effectively prepare learners for success in the era of information and communication technology. Recognizing and fostering the professional qualities and commitment of teachers can positively impact student achievement. When teachers possess professional competencies and commitment and are empowered to fulfill their roles in the classroom, school, and

community, it sets off a chain reaction leading to enhanced learning outcomes across various domains of human development.

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