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A STUDY OF COMMITMENT OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RELATION TO SOME BACKGROUND VARIABLES

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ABSTRACT

The need for the improvement and enhancement of teacher commitment of teachers at various teaching level is universally emphasized. Hence in the present study an attempt was made to express the effect of teaching level (elementary and secondary level), locale (urban and rural) and gender on commitment of 300 school teachers selected from three districts of Punjab. The data were collected by Teacher Commitment Inventory (NTCI) by Dr. Noorjehan N. Ganihar (2010). The ex-post facto research design was used to study main and interaction effects of independent variable namely, teaching level, locale and gender on teacher commitment among school teachers. From the findings of the study it was concluded that elementary school teachers have significantly higher level of teacher commitment as compared to secondary school teachers. Rural school teachers are significantly more committed as compared to urban teachers. From triple order interaction (Gender x Locale x Teaching Level) effects, it was found that differences in commitment of elementary and secondary school teachers are conjoint dependent upon both independent variables of gender and location. Elementary school teachers have significantly higher level of commitment than secondary school teachers only in case of male teachers of rural areas.

KEYWORDS

teacher's commitment, rural teachers, elementary teachers, secondary teacher.

TEACHER COMMITMENT: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCT

Commitment of the teacher is defined as the degree of positive and affective bond between the teacher and the school/college. It does not refer to passive type of loyalty where teachers stay with their jobs, or involved in the schools/colleges or their work. Rather it reflects the degree of internal motivation/enthusiasm and job satisfaction teachers derive from teaching and the degree of efficacy and effectiveness they achieve in their jobs (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Commitment is part of a teachers' affective or emotional reaction to their experience in a school setting (Ebmeier and Nicklows, 1999). Teacher commitment to school commitment is a complex attitude that is potentially influenced by the nature of the groups and is contingent on the context in which an individual function. Thus, different socio-cultural environments will prescribe different imperatives for individuals or groups attitudes toward their work, particularly teachers' commitment in educational setting means considerable loyalty to the specific school and a strong desire to put constant effort into work to develop the school (Park, 2005; 463). It is closely connected to teachers work performance and their ability to innovate and to integrate new ideas into their own practices and having an important influence on student's achievement in and attitudes towards school (Firestone, 1996; Graham, 1996; Lovis, 1998; Nias, 1981; Tsui and Change, 1999). Personal factors such as educational setting, teaching level (Punia, 2000), age, employment of spouse, academic level, administrator attitude and practices and support of administratory are highly correlated with teachers' professional commitment (Kang, 1982), further educational experience and salary (Bloom, 1988), caste categories have some influence in determining levels of commitment (Shishupal, 2001). The literature reveals a growing interest in exploring teacher commitment due to its strong psychological ties to schools, students and subject areas (Firestone and Pennell, 1993). At the school level, teacher commitment is empirically supported as an influential factor for school effectiveness, teacher satisfaction and teacher retention (Fresko et al., 1997; Nir, 2002; Singh and Billingsley, 1998) as well as performance (Tsui and Chen, 1999), absenteeism and staff turnover, the ability to innovate and integrate new ideas into practice (Firestone and Pennell, 1993; Park, 2005; Riehl and Sipple, 1996) and the student level, teacher commitment is found to have an impact on student achievement and attitudes toward school (Firestone, 1996; Louis, 1998; Nias, 1981; Tsui and Chen, 1999) as well as students' commitment (Bryk and Driscoll, 1988). Some social and psychological variables are also related with teacher commitment like perceived status, intrinsic motivation, interest in the profession, desire to improve skills, social support choice satisfaction and perceived challenges (Mohan, 1992), teachers' emotional experiences and their psychological state to teaching (Choi and Tang, 2011), healthy school environment enhances commitment among teachers (Maheshwari, 2003), quality of supervision and pay satisfaction had significant positive influence on organizational commitment (Malik, 2010). Teacher commitment is a complex attitude that is influenced by the nature of the groups and is contextually contingent (Cohen, 2007; Razak et al., 2010), as different socio-cultural environments will have different imperatives for individuals to fulfill socially prescribed roles and fit into social contexts (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). In addition, the socio-cultural values and work orientation of a specific group can influence their attitudes, resulting in different commitment levels among teachers (Cohen, 2007; Razak et al., 2010). Teachers might have several forms of commitment that relate to the strength of psychological attachment or identification with the focus of commitment. This focus can refer to the school as an organization, students, teaching as a profession or classroom teaching. Teachers' behaviour might vary depending on the type of commitment they emphasize (Cohen, 2000; Firestone and Pennell, 1993; Firestone and Rosenblum, 1988; Somech and Bogler, 2002). Singh and Billingsley (1998) suggests that there are multiple forms of teacher commitment: commitment to teaching, school and students (Firestone and Rosenblum, 1988) and commitment to the teaching field (Billingsley, 1993). More concisely, such researchers as Billingsley and Cross (1992), Firestone and Pennell (1993) as well as Somech and Bogler (2002) operationalize teacher commitment into commitment to one's organization and commitment to profession. Specifically, Louis (1998) explained four types of teacher commitment based on the research performed by Louis and Smith (1988, 1990), Reyes (1990) and Rosenholtz (1989) as well as Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990). Louis (1998) highlights the dimensions of commitment to school from a socio-logical perspective by creating a sense of community and personal care among school individuals. These dimensions include commitment to academic goals by exerting more effort to nurture high expectations for student achievement; commitment to students by understanding and being aware of adolescents' development as unique, whole individuals; and commitment to the body of knowledge to achieve effective teaching. On the other hand, Nir (2002) emphasizes three types of teacher commitment i.e. commitment to teaching, commitment to students, commitment to one's organization. In reflectin, the literature depiction of teacher commitment as a multidimensional construct is supported by Tyree (1996). Tyree (1996) claims that the different dimensions of teacher commitment are correlated to some degree. As a result, teacher commitment warrants a multidimensional solution because two or more commitment dimensions might better distinguish between commitments to subjects and students. Consistently, Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) argued in favour of the importance of distinguishing among the different dimensions of commitment, as teachers' behaviour patterns might vary depending on which commitment focuses are in operation. Moreover, Firestone and Pennell (1993) acknowledge the need for different forms of teacher commitment. These authors state that the multidimensional perspective of teacher commitment is vital because teachers are motivated to professionalize and pursue changes in teaching practice. In summary, the idea of multidimensional teacher commitment is worth exploring because a multiple-commitment approach is more precise and meaningful (Reichers, 1985). Considering the literature discussed, the conceptualization of teacher commitment can be synthesized as a multidimensional construct reflective of four dimensions: commitment to school, commitment to students, commitment to teaching and commitment to profession.

COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL

Teacher commitment to school has been more rigorously defined, measured and researched (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Reichers, 1985; Yousef, 2000) than other dimensions of teacher commitment. Teacher commitment to school has been studied to examine its nature and effects by a number of researchers (John and Taylor, 1999; Kushman, 1992; Somech and Bogler, 2002). These authors find that elementary school teachers have significantly higher levels of organizational commitment than high school teachers. Teachers who are highly committed to their school are engaged in achieving school goals, exert considerable effort beyond minimal expectations and remain working within the organization. In this study, teacher commitment to school is conceptualized as teachers’ belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the school as well as teachers’ efforts to actualize these goals and values and sustain their strong desire for membership in the school.

COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS

Kushman (1992), claims that commitment to students is expressed in terms of teaching and schools’ student achievement. According to Louis (1998), commitment to students motivates teachers to address students undergoing personal crises and to be more sensitive and aware of students’ development and achievement. Rosenholtz (1989) asserts that teachers who are committed to their students are likely to engage positively with their students, work harder to make classroom activities more meaningful and introduce new ways of learning. As such, teacher commitment to students is conceptualized as teachers’ responsibilities in student learning involvement.

COMMITMENT TO TEACHING

Commitment to work refers to the degree to which a person wants to be engaged in his or her work (Warr et al., 1979). Meanwhile, Lodahl and Kejner (1965) define commitment to work as the extent to which a person identifies with his or her work psychologically. It can be inferred that a person with strong work commitment would have more positive feelings towards his or her occupation than a person with weak work commitment. In an education context, teacher commitment to teaching is conceptualized as a psychological link between teachers and their teaching, which can be reflected through teachers’ willingness to exert effort to teach effectively, greater enthusiasm for teaching the subject matter and willingness to devote extra time to students (Tyree, 1996). In fact, teacher commitment to teaching plays an important role in determining how long the teacher remains in the teaching profession (Chapman, 1983; Chapman and Lowther, 1982; McCracken and Etuk, 1986). Based on this background, teachers’ commitment to teaching is conceptualized as teachers’ willingness to be engaged in teaching work.

Committed employees are found to be often demonstrated better work performance and a lower degree of withdrawal (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Omar and Aziz, 2002), and commitment has been shown to predict important outcomes, such as turnover intentions, performance, job satisfaction, prosocial organizational behaviour, absenteeism and tardiness (Balu, 1985; Wiener and Vardi, 1980). In an educational setting, committed teachers are likely to be characterized as those who are more hard-working, devote more time to school activities, have better work performance and exert more effort beyond personal needs (Reyes, 1990). Committed teachers also have stronger psychological association to their school, students, teaching and profession (Firestone and Pennell, 1993; Louis, 1998). Teachers engaged in higher education were found to be more committed in comparison to the teachers in secondary schools (Sharma, 2001), departmental commitment comes much closer to job commitment (Parthiban, 2008). Teachers who were committed towards organization are more satisfied with their job (Kumar and Patnaik, 2004; Jennifer, 2006; Shukla, 2014). Empirical studies conducted by Gupta and Gehlawat, 2013; Park, 2005 shown higher commitment of private school teachers than public school teachers. Shukla (2014) concluded that professional commitment and teaching competency have very low positive correlation but they are interdependent of each other. Yousof while studying school climate and teachers’ commitment concluded that professional teacher behaviour made a significant contribution to teachers’ commitment. Teachers’ perceived remuneration, opportunity for further training, responsibility, social status, a sense of belongingness and job security as impacting on the level of morale and commitment to their duties (Kariuki, 2014)

COMMITMENT TO PROFESSION

Blau (1985) defines professional commitment as “one’s attitude towards one’s profession or vocation”. Colarelli and Bishop (1990) define commitment to profession as the advancement of individual vocational goals and the drive and commitment associated with completing these goals. Additionally, Somech and Bogler (2002) state that teacher commitment to profession involves an affective attachment to the profession or occupation, which is associated with personal identification with and satisfaction obtained from being a teacher. Teacher commitment to profession is important because it enables an individual to develop the skills and relationships needed to have a successful career regardless of the organization within which he or she is employed (Colarelli and Bishop, 1990). According to Meyer et al. (1998), individuals might choose to redirect their emotional energies towards the profession to which they belong, which has at least two implications. First, such individuals might be likely to participate more at work and/or with their professional associations. Second, a focus on the profession might increase the likelihood that employees improve their professional skills, knowledge and abilities. Therefore, teacher commitment to profession is conceptualized as the strength of teacher motivation and involvement at work to improve professional skills, knowledge and teaching abilities.

Overall, these four dimensions are important in educational settings and are necessary to accomplish school objectives, improve teachers’ professionalism and pursue changes in teachers’ practice. The conceptualization of each dimension is summarized in table 1.

TABLE 1: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERTIONALIZATION OF TEACHER COMMITMENT

Dimension	Conceptualization
Commitment to students	Teachers’ involvement in or responsibility for student learning
Commitment to teaching	Teachers’ willingness to engage in teaching work
Commitment to school	Teachers’ belief and acceptance of their school’s goals and values, efforts toward the actualization of those goals and values and desires to keep up school membership
Commitment to profession	Teacher attitude, loyalty and involvement in enhancing and developing their chosen profession

In the present era of globalization, privatization and liberalization teachers are required to meet the growing and challenging changes uncertainties and expectations of the society. So teacher is expected to be committed to his profession, learner, and society. If quality education is to goal, it cannot be achieved without sincere efforts of dedicated and committed teachers. In such a complex environment effective career long teacher development programmes that build teacher capacities and commitment are of crucial importance to quality education.

The need for the improvement and enhancement of teacher commitment of teachers at various teaching level is now universally emphasized. The study also examines the relationships between gender, teaching level, locale, work experience and teachers’ commitment to schools became there demographic variables have been identified as important predictors of teacher commitment (Park, 2005; Hulpia et al., 2009a; Hulpia et al., 2009b). Building on the research objectives, the following research question was put forward. What is the effect of gender, teaching level and locale on commitment of school teachers? Hence in the present study on attempt was made to express the effect of teaching level (Elementary and Secondary level), locale (Urban and Rural), gender on commitment of school teachers. Thus study will be helpful in finding out the empirical reality regarding teacher commitment and explore the ways and means of increasing the commitment which ultimately contribute to enhance the quality of education.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study and compare commitment among school teachers in terms of teaching level, locale and gender.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There will be significant difference in teacher commitment between elementary and secondary level school teachers.
2. There will be significant difference in teacher commitment between urban and rural school teachers.
3. There will be significant difference in teacher commitment between male and female school teachers.
4. There will be significant interaction effect of teaching level, locale and gender on teacher commitment of school teachers.

METHODOLOGY**SAMPLING**

In the present study stratified random sample was used. Out of 22 districts of Punjab three districts were randomly selected from three regions Majha, Malwa and Doaba i.e. Gurdaspur, Jalandhar and Ludhiana. From each district 12 schools from rural and 13 from urban were selected on random basis, both from elementary (if only elementary) or secondary (having either secondary or both elementary and secondary sections). From these 75 selected 300 school teachers (150 elementary and 150 secondary school teachers) were selected by giving equal weightage to gender and locale.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The data were collected by Teacher Commitment Inventory (NTCI) by Dr. Noorjehan N. Ganihar (2010), consisting of 21 items to be distributed among five dimensions. The range of score on scale is 21 to 105, minimum showing low and maximum showing high level of teacher commitment.

FORMATION OF FACTORIAL DESIGN

The ex-post facto research design was used to study main and interaction effects of independent variable namely, teaching level, locale and gender on teacher commitment among school teachers. The teaching level x locale x gender (2x2x2) design i.e. 'elementary and secondary', 'male and female', and 'urban and rural' was formed. The distribution of sample in terms of 2x2x2 factorial design is shown in table 1.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE IN TERMS OF TEACHING LEVEL x LOCALE x GENDER FACTORIAL DESIGN

	Elementary Level		Secondary Level	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Urban	38	38	38	38
Rural	37	37	37	37
Total	75	75	75	75

Keeping in view the requirements of analysis of variance to have equal number of cases, 30 subjects were randomly assigned to each cell in 2x2x2 factorial design for computational purposes. So out of 300 only 240 subjects were included in teaching level x locale x gender factorial design which is 80% of the sample, under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean teacher commitment scores of school teachers along with standard deviation in teacher level x locale x gender factorial design are given in table 2.

TABLE 2: MEANS AND SDs OF TEACHER COMMITMENT SCORES OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TERMS OF TEACHING LEVEL X LOCALE X GENDER FACTORIAL DESIGN

		Elementary (A ₁)		Secondary (A ₂)		Total
		Male (B ₁)	Female (B ₂)	Male (B ₁)	Female (B ₂)	
Urban (C ₁)	Mean	84.33	87.9	86.06	85.43	85.93
	SD	7.92	6.32	9.60	7.70	7.80
Rural (C ₂)	Mean	93.03	87.73	85.86	87.30	88.48
	SD	8.12	7.85	8.01	6.60	7.64
Total	Mean	88.68	87.82	85.96	86.36	87.20
	SD	8.02	7.07	8.80	7.15	7.72

It may be noted from table 2 that male urban elementary schools teachers have lowest mean teacher commitment score of 84.33 as compared to highest mean teacher commitment score of 93.03 in case of male rural elementary schools teachers. The mean teacher commitment score of other groups of school teachers in terms of teaching level, locale and gender factorial design lie in between these two mean scores.

In order to find out the significance of main and interaction effects of teaching level, locale, gender on teacher commitment three way analysis of variance was worked out. The summary of ANOVA is given in table 3.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (TEACHING LEVEL x GENDER x LOCALE) ON TEACHER COMMITMENT

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Teaching Level	260.83	1	260.83	4.12*
Gender	3.17	1	3.17	0.05
Locale	390.15	1	390.15	6.61*
Teaching Level x Gender	24.2	1	24.2	0.38
Teaching Level x Locale	176.47	1	176.47	2.78
Locale x Gender	173.4	1	173.4	2.74
Teaching Level x Gender x Locale	448.81	1	448.81	7.09**
Within	14682.01	232	63.28	
Total	16159.05	239		

* Significant at 0.05 level.

** Significant at 0.01 level.

It can be observed from table 3 that F-ratio for the main effect of teaching level on teacher commitment turned out to be 4.12 which is significant at 0.05 level. It may be concluded that elementary school teachers have significantly higher level of teacher commitment as compared to secondary school teachers (88.25 vs 86.16).

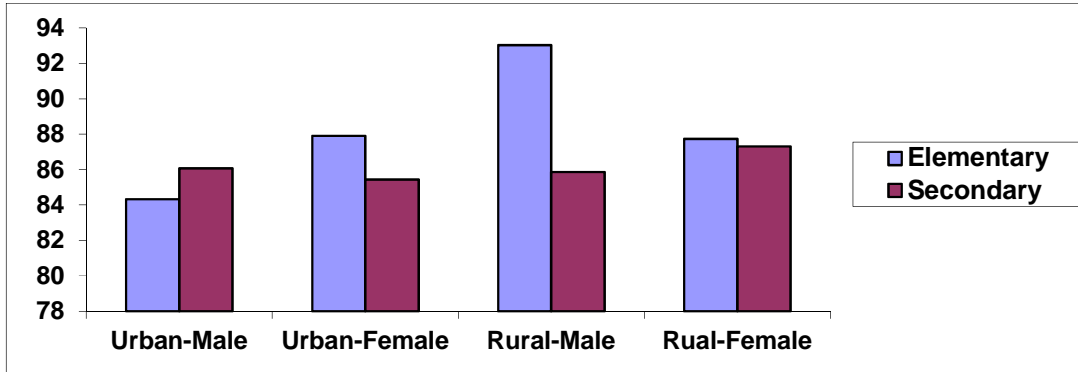
The F-ratio for the main effect of gender on teacher commitment came out to be 0.05 which is not significant at 0.05 level. This shows that male and female school teachers do not differ significantly in their teacher commitment (87.32 vs 87.09).

It can be observed that from table that F-ratio for the main effect of locale on teacher commitment turned out to be 6.61 which is significant at 0.05 level. It shows that rural school teachers are significantly more committed as compared to urban teachers (85.92 vs 88.48).

The F-values for the double order interaction effects of gender x teaching level, gender x location and teaching level x location turned out to be 0.38, 2.28 and 2.74 respectively. None of these F-values is significant at 0.05 level. It may be seen from table 3 that the F-value for the triple order interaction of teaching level x locale x gender was found to be significant as F-ratio, 7.09 is significant at 0.01 level. This is suggestive of the fact that the differences in commitment of elementary and secondary school teachers are conjoint dependent upon both independent variables of gender and location. As may be seen from table that elementary school

teachers have significantly higher level of commitment than secondary school teachers only in case of male teachers coming in rural schools ($t=3.49$; $p<0.01$) (Figure 1 and Table 4).

FIGURE 1: MEAN COMMITMENT SCORES OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ACROSS GENDER AND LOCALITY



This means that significant difference in commitment of elementary and secondary school teachers is restricted to rural male teachers.

TABLE 4: SIGNIFICANCE OF MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ACROSS GENDER AND LOCATION LEVELS

Group	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	M _D	t	M _D	t
Urban	1.73	0.84	2.47	1.20
Rural	7.17	3.49**	0.43	0.229

** $p<0.01$

Though male secondary school teachers have higher level of commitment than male elementary school teachers coming from urban schools, but this difference is not significant ($t=0.84$; $p>0.05$), also female elementary school teachers have higher level of commitment than female secondary school teachers coming from urban and rural areas, but these differences are not significant ($t=1.20$ and 0.229 ; $p>0.05$).

The reason regarding differences in teacher commitment of elementary and secondary school teachers in terms of gender and locale may be due to some job compulsions, public pressure, administrative checks, social recognition, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of staff. From results it was also clear that female elementary school teachers have more commitment level than male secondary school teachers, the reason may be teaching is always considered a feminine job in India, as they are more comfortable and satisfied with their profession. In Punjab, there is always more enrollment of girls in education colleges as compared to boys. Further elementary teachers have to be mother teacher and humble for being able to deal with younger children as compared to secondary school teachers. It was also found that school elementary teachers have higher level of teacher commitment than secondary school teachers coming from rural teachers. It means location has specific effect on teacher commitment of elementary and secondary teachers. The reason may be that in rural areas, there is lack of vocational choices, as compared to urban areas. In the era of urbanization and technology there are diversification of jobs. This may be hamper their teacher commitment.

The results of present investigation can be seen in the light of findings of Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972), Punia (2000) and Sharma (2001). While these findings are contrary to the findings of Maheshwari (2003) that there is no significant effect of locale on teacher commitment. In consistent with those found in previous studies (e.g. Brunetti, 2001; Park, 2005; Leithwood and Bratty, 2008; Hulpia and Devos, 2009a; Hulpia et al., 2009b and Du, 2013), data analysis reveals that male teachers were more committed to their schools than female teachers. Kariuki et al. (2014) found no statistically significant relationship between teachers' gender, age and experience and commitment to work. According to Butcha (2012) age, gender and school type have significant but small effects on the perceptions of beginning secondary school teachers' professional commitment. While Alhadban (2009) and Kouts (2012) claiming that female teachers are more committed towards profession and basic values than male teachers. Male teachers are more committed to attaining excellence for professional actions than female teachers. Some studies have indicated that females level of commitment is higher than male's levels of commitment (Coladarci, as cited in Chan et al., 2008; Park, 2005). But, the findings of Borman and Dowling (2008) indicated lower commitment of females. Teacher commitment was found to be independent of gender and stream among secondary school teachers (Sharma, 2015).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Steps should be taken for enhancing commitment of secondary school teachers. Refresher courses and seminars may be arranged for developing affective and emotional characteristics. They should attend to all the students in their classes and be sensitive to how they respond to each situation. New appointment should be regularised soon because uncertainty or contractual system in jobs may also hampering their commitment. In this line government should take appropriate steps in securing, nurturing and retaining committed teachers. There should be synchronization between the activities of the teacher education institutions and those of schools, resulting in adequate practical experiences at the training stage. The teacher education system needs to give practical shape to the critical role of teacher education in the content of providing a good quality school education for all. Teachers should be involved in formulation of policies that affect them, that participatory decision making give them sense of belongingness which contributes to commitment at work. Urban teachers should be convinced as to desirability of accepting jobs in rural, remote areas. Surplus teachers in urban school should be appointed in rural areas. In this line rationalization of teachers is fruitful. Government should provide infrastructural facilities, adequate institutional material and more incentives to teachers who are working in rural areas.

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