

Study of the Attitudes of Elementary School Teacher's towards Professional Development



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Abstract

Systemic reform addresses changes in instructional methodologies affecting professional development. These methodologies encourage teacher to provide classroom instruction that is active, student centered, problem-based and inclusive. The professional growth of teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically. Professional development includes formal experiences such as attending workshop, and professional meeting, mentoring etc. and informal experiences such as reading, professional publication, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline etc. The main objective of the present investigation was to study the attitudes of elementary school teacher's towards professional development. In the present study descriptive survey method was used for the collection of data and a formal list of questionnaire was prepared. The "Professional Development Survey Instrument" scale developed and standardized by the researcher was used for the present result to collect data from the sample. The Statistical Technique Mean, S.D. and 't- test' were used to analyze the data. The main Purpose of the present study was to find out the attitude of elementary school teachers towards professional development. The scale of teacher's attitude towards professional development here has classified in to three factors i.e. Gender (Male and Female), Experience (1-5 years & +5 years), Degree level (Graduate and post graduate). On the basis of the results emerged from the analysis and interpretations of the data, it was found that there exists no significant difference between male and female teachers attitude towards professional development. The results of the study also indicate no significant difference between 1-5 yrs. and +5 yrs. experienced school teachers' attitudes towards professional development. The findings of the present study have also showed no significant difference between graduate and post graduate teacher's attitude towards professional development. The study also indicates that empowering teacher's to select the types of professional development in which they participate and providing teachers with time during the school day or remuneration for involvement outside of the work day would improve the attitudes and participation of teacher's regarding professional development.

Keywords: Attitude, Elementary School, Professional Development.

Introduction

A person's working pattern as well as his living style i.e. appearance, writing, acting and working determines whether she/he is a professional or an amateur. The only successful people in any field, including living itself, are those who have a professional viewpoint and are professionals. Professional development in a broad sense refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. Human behaviors are regulated by their real self and social self. Conflict between these selves has an adverse effect upon a person's working pattern as well as living style. Work done is the self-portrait of the person who did it. A person's appearance, talking, writing, acting and working determine whether s/he is a professional or an amateur. Unfortunately the society does not consider the importance of professionalism. Differentiation is not viewed as seriously as it should be viewed. So people tend to consider amateur work as normal. People accept less than good results i.e. products and services. The field of education also is not an exception.

Professional teachers are considered the mainstay of a school and their experience and expertise bring value to the school community. The current demands that relate to the paradigm shift in instructional methodologies present new pressures for the veteran teacher. The teacher's response to the current reform movement may not be obvious, but rather subtle changes in attitude, viewpoint, and involvement in the total school community. The periods of transition within the teaching career may result in withdrawal or burnout. These are changing times in education systems around the world. With the start of the new millennium, many societies are engaging in serious and promising educational reforms. One of the key elements in most of these reforms is the professional development of teachers; societies are finally acknowledging that teachers are not only one of the variables that need to be changed in order to improve their education systems, but they are also the most significant change agents in these reforms. This double role of teachers in educational reforms-being both subjects and objects of change-makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging area, and one that has received major attention during the past few years.

The current reform movement emphasizes a shift in instructional methodologies that result in an increased amount of professional development activities. According to L. Ron Hubbard, "The only successful beings in any field, including living itself are who have a professional viewpoint and make themselves professionals." So far as higher education is concerned, universities and colleges are accredited by NAAC on the basis of their excellence. The objective of accreditation is gaining and maintaining quality in higher education. The basic question is how far the teachers working in four or five star universities have professional attitude? To find the answer to this question, the present study was undertaken. The present study tries to throw some light on these issues.

Review of Literature

The review of literature promotes a greater understanding of the problem and its crucial aspects and ensures the avoidance of un-necessary duplication. It also provides comparative data on the basis of which one can evaluate and interpret the significance of one's findings. Review of literature in the concerned field helps one to locate the research problem as well as to guide and support the research work in hand. Huberman (1980) found that most of teacher's have perceptions of success in terms of their pupil's behaviors and activities, rather in terms of themselves or other criteria. "Teaching is a complex dynamic process which through varied activities addresses the learning styles of the students (James Caulfield, 1989)". Fullan (1991, 1993), "characterized that the professional development programs as among the most promising and most readily available routes to growth on the job not only as a way to combat boredom and alienation, but also as a pathway to increased competence and greater professional satisfaction. What attracts teachers to

professional development, therefore, is their belief that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their effectiveness with students, but teacher also tend to be pragmatic. Guskey (1995) investigated that learning matter not because it leads to better jobs or produces national wealth, but because it enriches the spirit and advance social health". Sparks (1994), (1995) investigated that in addition to teacher effectiveness, the new vision of professional development emphasized that was 'result - driven', 'systems - related' and constructivist approach. Richardson, (1998) evaluated that professional decision makers need to decide between competing models of professional development & traditional and "reform" based on new philosophies about the purpose of professional development helping teachers acquire a "change orientation" rather than just adopt new techniques. Traditional activities, such as workshops are very common in Professional development education field because they are usually shorter in duration. Hirsh and Sparks (2000) determined that professional development must be at the core of the work day for teachers. It determines many aspects of professional development must be changed. These changes must include making professional development results-oriented, centring professional development around content standards, aligning staff learning with the overall school plan, and having a significant amount of time and money devoted to teachers professional learning. Professional development sustains the talents of the teacher and maintains the teacher's skills. It is professional development that allows for teachers to maintain their teaching careers. Effective professional development makes the connection between subject matter and pedagogy while addressing the varied learning styles of the child (Sparks, 2002). Through our review of literature we learned that professional development could be successful only if it took place over time (not one session only) and integrated with the school context, and focused on helping teachers not just acquire new behaviors but change their assumption and ways of thinking (effectiveness) as well.

Statement of the Problem

"Study of The Attitudes of Elementary School Teacher's Towards Professional Development".

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the attitudes of elementary school teacher's towards professional development.
2. To study the difference between male and female elementary school teachers attitudes towards professional development.
3. To study the difference between less experienced (1-5 years) and more experienced (5+ years) teacher's attitude towards professional development.
4. To study the difference in the attitudes of teacher's having graduation degree and post graduation degree towards professional development.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists no significant difference between male and female elementary school teacher's attitude towards professional development.
2. There exists no significant difference between less experienced (1-5 years) and more experienced (5+ years) teacher's attitude towards professional development
3. There exist no significant difference between the attitudes of teacher's having graduation degree and post graduation degree towards professional development.

Delimitations of the Study

1. The study was delimited to Kurukshetra district of Haryana only.
2. The study was delimited to elementary school teacher's only.
3. The study was confined to sample of 50 teachers' only.
4. Only 3 independent variables viz. (Gender, Experience, degree level) and one dependent variable i.e. professional development were used for the study.

Research Design

The purpose of the present study was to examine the attitude of elementary school teachers towards professional development. The study focused on whether the demographic variables of gender, years of teaching experience, level of education and type of school in which they are teaching have an effect on teacher's attitude towards professional development.

Sampling Process

Random sampling technique was used in the present study. It is a sampling technique or method in which all members of a group (population or universe) have an equal and independent chance of being selected. The study was based on a sample of 50 school teachers.

Methodology

Descriptive Survey method was used in the present study for the collection of data. The Survey method is a technique of gathering data by asking question to people who are thought to have desired information. A formal list of questionnaire is prepared. The Survey method was used because perception of teacher is studied

Tools Used

The Scale "Professional Development Survey Instrument" was developed and standardized by the researcher and was used for the present result to collect data from the sample.

Statistical Techniques Used

The Statistical Technique Mean, S.D. and 't-test' were used to analyze the data.

Result and Discussion

The main Purpose of the present study was to find out the attitude of elementary school teachers towards professional development. The scale of teacher's attitude towards professional development here has classified in to three factors i.e. Gender (Male and Female), Experience (1-5 years & +5 years), Degree level (Graduate and post graduate).

To find out the significant difference between the types of gender, experience and Degree level the statistical technique t-test was used. The result of the same has been discussed in the following tables:-

Results with Respect to Male and Female Elementary School Teachers Attitudes towards Professional Development.

Table 1: Significant Difference between the Attitude of Male & Female Teachers Toward Professional Development

Groups	N	M	S.D	S. Ed.	t-Ratio
Male	14	15.07	1.94	0.49	0.66(NS)
Female	36	14.75	1.38		

NS – indicates not significant

The t-ratio calculated in Table 1 was found to be 0.66 and the needed values to be significant at .01 levels is 2.704 and at .05 levels is 2.021. The calculated t-ratio value is smaller than the table value at .05 level of significance. Therefore, it is not significant at .05 levels of significance. Hence, hypotheses no. 1 is accepted i.e. there is no significant difference between male and female elementary school teacher's attitudes and male and female elementary school teacher's attitude towards professional development. Again, the mean scores of the male (15.07), which is slightly greater than the mean score of female teachers (14.75) so, it can be interpreted that both the male and female teachers have similar attitude towards professional development. It might be due to the reason that both male and female teacher's are now a day's more aware about the importance of professional development and its practices.

Results with Respect to Less Experienced (1-5 Yrs.) and More Experienced (+5yrs.) School Teacher's Attitudes towards Professional Development

TABLE 2: Significance of difference between the attitude of (1-5 yrs.) and (+ 5 yrs.) experienced teacher's towards professional development.

Experience	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t-Ratio
1-5 yrs.	33	14.85	1.618	.4720	0.058(NS)
+ 5yrs.	17	14.83	1.507		

NS – Not Significant

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-ratio value was 0.058, which is smaller than the table value at .01 levels i.e., 2.707 and .05 levels i.e. 2.021. Therefore it is not significant at 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the hypotheses no. 2 is accepted i.e. there is no significant difference between 1-5 yrs. and +5 yrs. Experienced school teacher's attitude towards professional development. It indicates that there is no significant difference between less experienced (1-5 yrs) and more experienced (+5 yrs.) school teacher's attitude towards professional development.

Results With respect To Degree-Level of Elementary School Teacher's Attitude towards Professional Development

Table 3: Significance of difference between the attitudes of graduates and post graduate school teachers towards professional development.

Degree Level	N	M	S.D	S.Ed.	t-Ratio
Graduate Trs	19	15	1.46	0.439	0.228(NS)
Post Graduate Trs	31	14.9	1.5317		

(NS – Not Significant)

Table 3 indicates that the calculated t- value was 0.228, which is less than the table value 2.021 at .05 level and 2.704 at .01 levels of significance. Therefore it is insignificant at .05 levels of significance. Hence the hypotheses no. 3 is accepted i.e. there is no significant difference between graduate and Post graduate teacher's attitude toward professional development.

Main Findings

On the basis of the results emerged from the analysis and interpretations of the data, it can be calculated that

1. There exists no significant difference between male and female teachers attitude towards professional development. It means they have similar attitude towards professional development.
2. The results of the study also indicate no significant difference between 1-5 yrs. and +5 yrs. experienced school teachers' attitudes towards professional development.
3. The findings of the present study have also showed no significant difference between graduate and post graduate teacher's attitude towards professional development.
4. The results of the study indicates that empowering teacher's to select the types of professional development in which they participate and providing teachers with time during the school day or remuneration for involvement outside of the work day would improve the attitudes and participation of teacher's regarding professional development .

Conclusion

The most outstanding characteristics of any research are that it must contribute something new to the development of the area concerned. So, the investigator has drawn some educational implications of her study. Since the present study is conducted on the attitudes of the elementary teacher's towards

professional development the study has some implications for teachers:

- (1) Ensure that teachers receive regular feedback on student learning progress. It the use of new practices is to be sustained and changes are to endure, the individuals involved need to receive regular feedback on the effects of their efforts.
- (2) It is necessary to organize some awareness programmes to inculcate positive attitude and bring about more awareness among the teachers towards professional development activities.
- (3) If a new program or innovative methods is to be implemented well it must become a natural part of teacher's repertoire of teaching skill. It is only the professional development courses or activities which enhance the teacher's confidence & will power to do something innovative.
- (4) Especially for the programme continuation and expansion, teachers must come to use the new practices almost out of habit. So, it is clear that, to be successful professional development must be seen as a process, not an event.

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