

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

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PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT OF TEACHERS WORKING IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

Special Education programs are designed for those students who are mentally, physically, socially and/or emotionally delayed. Special Education programs and services adapt content, teaching methodology and delivery instruction to meet the appropriate needs of each child.

KEY WORDS: Special Education programs and services adapt content, individualized education planning (IET).

INTRODUCTION

Special schools are using strategies such as assistive



technology, accommodations, modification and paraprofessionals to help students receiving special education services succeed in general education settings.

The individualized education planning (IET) is often described as the cornerstone of special education. The IEP should be comprehensive and include current performance measures based on multiple tests and assessment methods, educational goals and objectives that define how problems will be addressed in the short and long term, definition of how the child's progress will be measured on an ongoing basis, disciplinary methods, and individualized healthcare plan.

Special education teachers work with children and youth who have a variety of disabilities. The majority of special education teachers work with children with mild to moderate disabilities, using or modifying the general education curriculum to meet the child's individual needs and providing required remedial instruction. Most special education teachers instruct students at the preschool, elementary, middle, and secondary school level, although some work with infants and toddlers.

The special education teacher in today's schools plays a very critical role in the proper education of exceptional students. They possess typical characteristics such as capacity for self-direction, patience and perseverance, experiment minded, physical fitness and personal adjustment

The strength of any profession depends upon the degree of commitment of its members. Commitment towards the profession enables the special school teachers, regardless of their level of training, to collaborate and participate in the special education contexts together with the cognitive knowledge and theoretical basis of the profession, the technical and practical skills that are required to carry out the essential tasks of the role, the

ethical and moral dimensions, the attitudes and beliefs that are crucial to the particular profession and its ways of working.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Teaching profession is different from other professions. The teacher plays a key role in the educational system for its success or failure. Few teachers realize this fact. The importance of the teacher in any educational system lies in the attitude possessed by them towards their profession. In this context, the commitment of teachers on their profession needs specific attention. The present investigation is an attempt to study the professional commitment of teachers towards teaching profession.

The job of special school teachers is much more demanding. The need for flexibility, autonomy and novelty makes their job definitions inherently ambiguous giving room for more role conflicts.

Professional commitment towards the teaching field makes the special education teachers play diverse and challenging roles while planning and organizing the educational program for the students with disabilities, teaching and transacting the framed curriculum, training the students in all curricular activities, guiding and counseling the students/parents and colleagues and, intra and interpersonal interactions.

Many studies are conducted on primary and secondary school teachers, college teachers and agricultural teachers related to the variable professional commitment. It is worthwhile to indicate here that no such study has been done on the topic under investigation. Looking at the gap, it is decided to conduct a study on the title "Professional Commitment of Teachers Working in Special Schools in the Southern Districts of Tamilnadu."

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the level of professional commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to marital status
2. To find out the level of professional commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to nature of school
3. To find out the level of professional commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to years of experience

NULL HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to marital status
2. There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to nature of school
3. There is no significant association in the professional commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to years of experience

METHODOLOGY

The present study has employed normative survey method to study the Professional Commitment of Teachers Working in Special Schools in the Southern Districts of Tamilnadu.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 290 teachers working in the special schools of the six southern districts of tamilnadu namely Thoothukudi, Tirunelvel, Kanyakumari, Madurai, Sivagangai and Ramnad.

TOOL

Professional Commitment Scale prepared and validated by the investigator was used for measuring professional commitment of teachers working in special schools.

Table.1
Difference in the Professional Commitment of teachers working in special schools
with respect to marital status

Professional Commitment and its Dimensions	Marital Status	Count	Mean	S.D.	Calculated 't' Value	Table value at 5% level	Remarks
Commitment to the learner	Married	219	29.79	3.196	0.904	1.96	NS
	Unmarried	78	29.41	3.152			
Commitment to the Profession	Married	219	40.01	5.881	2.308	1.96	S
	Unmarried	78	38.36	3.834			
Commitment to the School	Married	219	35.37	3.515	0.428	1.96	NS
	Unmarried	78	35.17	3.521			
Commitment to the Society	Married	219	25.46	2.827	1.294	1.96	NS
	Unmarried	78	24.97	2.824			
PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT	Married	219	130.62	12.413	1.729	1.96	NS
	Unmarried	78	127.91	10.253			

Table.2
Difference in the Professional Commitment of teachers working in special schools with respect to nature of school

Professional Commitment and its Dimensions	Nature of School	Count	Mean	S.D.	Calculated 't' Value	Table value at 5% level	Remarks
Commitment to the learner	Aided	224	29.51	3.336	2.085	1.96	S
	Private	76	30.29	2.622			
Commitment to the Profession	Aided	224	39.48	5.961	0.648	1.96	NS
	Private	76	39.95	3.566			
Commitment to the School	Aided	224	34.96	3.616	3.733	1.96	S
	Private	76	36.50	2.929			
Commitment to the Society	Aided	224	25.28	2.912	0.596	1.96	NS
	Private	76	25.5.	2.543			
PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT	Aided	224	129.22	12.522	2.181	1.96	S
	Private	76	132.24	9.608			

Table.3
Association between years of experience of teachers working in special schools in Professional Commitment and its dimensions

Professional Commitment and its Dimensions	Years of Experience	Low		Average		High		Calculated χ^2 value	Table value at 5% level	Remarks
		Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected			
Commitment to the learner	0 to 10	28	29.3	124	126.5	35	31.2	2.490	9.49	NS
	10 to 20	13	11.6	53	50.1	8	12.3			
	20 to 30	6	6.1	26	26.4	7	6.5			
Commitment to the Profession	0 to 10	23	24.9	163	161.4	1	.6	1.048	9.49	NS
	10 to 20	11	9.9	63	63.9	0	.2			
	20 to 30	6	5.2	33	33.7	0	.1			
Commitment to the School	0 to 10	28	31.1	114	114.1	45	41.8	2.841	9.49	NS
	10 to 20	13	12.3	48	45.1	13	16.5			
	20 to 30	9	6.5	21	23.8	9	8.7			
Commitment to the Society	0 to 10	26	32.4	136	129.0	25	25.6	12.101	9.49	S
	10 to 20	22	12.8	44	51.1	8	10.1			
	20 to 30	4	6.8	27	26.9	8	5.3			
Professional Commitment	0 to 10	28	33.0	125	122.2	34	31.8	5.057	9.49	NS
	10 to 20	19	13.1	43	48.3	12	12.6			
	20 to 30	6	6.9	28	25.5	5	6.6			

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present study has yielded the following interpretation for discussion.

This research reveals that there is no significant difference in professional commitment and its dimensions such as Commitment to the learner, Commitment to the School, and Commitment to the Society of teachers working in special schools with respect to marital status. Married teachers are highly committed towards the profession than unmarried ones. This finding is supported Ayeop (2003) who posited that married teachers have higher satisfaction in their job.

Furthermore, the study revealed that there is a significant difference between professional commitment of aided and private special school teachers. This is not surprising because this is in line with the study of Kamla and Anal (2006) who observe that there is a significant difference in teachers' commitment in private and public primary school in Malaysia.

There is no significant association in professional commitment and its dimensions such as Commitment to the learner, Commitment to the profession and Commitment to the Society of teachers working in special schools with respect to years of experience. But there is significant association in professional commitment and its dimension Commitment to the society of teachers working in special schools with respect to years of experience. No wonders that teachers with many years of experiences in special education work harder,

demonstrate stronger affiliation to their society, and show more desire to carry out the goals of teaching than beginners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study, relevant literature studied and observations made by the investigator during the study, a few recommendations, which may help in developing professional commitment among teachers in special schools, are offered.

Professional commitment requires personal commitment and a willingness to take on the tasks assigned and to acquire knowledge, positive attitude necessary for teaching. Following are some recommendations to increase the level of professional commitment among teachers.

1. Providing favorable teaching atmosphere in the school.
2. Providing professional freedom i.e. freedom to choose the appropriate method of teaching, thinking, planning etc.,
3. Allowing teachers to conduct experiment and innovations in teaching and learning practices.
4. Providing chances for career advancement to the teachers.
5. Providing good remuneration.
6. Providing opportunities for professional growth through seminars, workshops, in-service teaching programmes etc.,
7. Providing proper working conditions in the school.
8. Providing opportunities to improve their qualification.

CONCLUSION

Special education teachers take on a variety of “teacher roles”, which may vary over the course of an individual teacher’s career. They work with students who have a wide range of special needs and disabilities. These children also require a variety of different services, modifications and accommodations in their educational experiences. Knowledge of each type of disability and the specific needs of the children with that disability are crucial for a teacher involved in the field of special education. Proponents of teacher professionalization have argued that improvements in the commitment of teachers are one of the outcomes most likely to be positively affected by the new teacher reform efforts.

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