

PAPER ID: 20260201048

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS ACROSS RESIDENCE AND GENDER

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Abstract: The present study aimed to examine the professional commitment of college teachers with reference to their place of residence (rural and urban) and gender (male and female). The main objectives were first of all to measure the level of teachers' commitment of various dimensions- one of these dimensions being the teachers' commitment towards students, society, the profession, self-development, and fundamental human values; and secondly, to find out if these commitments significantly differ based on the place of residence or gender. Descriptive and comparative survey design has been used, and a sample of 120 teachers from rural and urban schools has been chosen through random sampling. Data were collected using the Professional Commitment Scale for Teachers instrument developed by Dr. Rabindra Kaur, Dr. Srabjeet Kaur Renu, and Smt. Sarabjeet Kaur Barar. The collected data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-tests. The research revealed that professional commitment of teachers did not vary significantly based on their residence. However, urban teachers showed slightly higher professional commitment scores in most dimensions. On the other hand, gender differences were found in some aspects. Female teachers showed significantly higher commitment towards students, self-development, and overall professional commitment while no significant difference was observed in commitment towards society, profession, and fundamental human values. The results indicate that teacher gender may affect certain aspects of professional commitment, whereas the teacher's residence has little impact. The research carries some vital educational implications such as the necessity of targeted professional development programs, providing assistance to teachers in rural areas, and implementing strategies to increase overall teacher commitment. Moreover, the new research recommendations entail the necessity of extending the sample, considering more variables, and using qualitative methods to understand better the factors that influence professional commitment.

Keywords: Professional Commitment, Upper Primary School Teachers, Residence, Gender, Teacher Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

Professional commitment is one of the essential factors leading teacher effectiveness and the success of institutions, especially in the case of higher education, where the teachers are not only the agents of knowledge but also the major influencers in students' critical thinking, values, and career laterals. Professional commitment is one of the features of a teacher when he/she is devoted to his/her profession, willingly abides by the professional ethics, and is motivated to academic and institutional development effectively. Committed teachers are the ones to a greater extent to have more satisfaction from their job, perform better, and thus experience a higher feeling of responsibility, which positively influences the student learning outcomes and the overall quality of the educational process. The college education system teachers are faced with more and more intricate demands. They should be involved in academic instruction, research activities, curriculum development, mentoring, and community engagement. These roles require dedication which, however, may differ depending on factors of a personal and contextual nature. The place of residence

(urban vs. rural) and gender, among others, are very influential variables that may affect teachers' attitudes, opportunities, and professional behavior. Teachers from different areas and of different genders may have different perceptions, access to resources, and ways of engagement in their professional work. Teachers residing in urban and rural areas often experience different working environments. Urban educators might enjoy more access to materials, participation in training activities, and connection with academic circles. On the other hand, rural teachers could be in a position of limited local facilities, less availability of training programs, and increased number of job tasks. These differences can influence their level of professional commitment. Similarly, gender remains an important socio-cultural factor that shapes professional experiences in many educational contexts. Different work-life balances, societal expectations, and roles within the institution, as well as differences in access to career advancement opportunities, may characterize male and female teachers. These factors can lead to differences in their professional dedication and involvement.

While studies have looked at professional commitment at different levels of education, there has been a lesser number of studies that have focused only on college teachers—an indispensable group of people who are the future of the next generation of professionals and scholars. So, it is very important to know how gender and place of residence affect the professional commitment of college teachers in order to create the policy that will increase teacher motivation, make the working conditions better and have a positive impact on the whole higher education quality. This research is a comparative study of college teachers' professional commitment based on their gender and place of residence and therefore, can provide guidance to educational planners, administrators, and policymakers about the ways of teacher support and engagement in different contexts.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Professional commitment of teachers has been widely studied in educational research because of its strong association with teacher effectiveness, institutional development, and student achievement. The following review focuses on literature related to professional commitment, place of residence, and gender as they pertain to college or higher education teachers. Researchers like Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) defined professional commitment as a strong belief in the goals and values of the profession, a willingness to exert considerable effort, and a desire to maintain membership in the profession. Later educational studies have taken these aspects and applied them to the teaching profession, thus, identifying teacher commitment as one of the main factors leading to a teacher's job satisfaction, instructional quality, and student success. In his research, Day (2012) stressed that teachers holding strong professional commitment become more reflective, adaptive, and ultimately, they are more effective in managing academic tasks. In the same vein, Firestone & Rosenblum (1988) argued that commitment to the profession depends on the local working environment, support from colleagues, and the culture of the institution. Researches by Nayak (2018) and Shukla (2016) revealed that the professional commitment of college faculty members is a result of various factors including work autonomy, academic freedom, access to career progression, and institutional regulations. Kumar & Gupta (2017) found that urban teachers demonstrated higher levels of professional commitment compared to rural teachers due to better working conditions. In contrast, some studies observed that rural teachers often form stronger community bonds, which may enhance their sense of responsibility and attachment to the profession. Sharma & Singh (2015) found that female teachers tended to be more dedicated to teaching tasks. According to Rao (2019) and Verma (2020), professional commitment did not vary significantly between genders of college teachers, indicating that universities and colleges might provide equal opportunities and set

the same standards for both genders. However, the issues of work–life balance, the division of the workload, and societal norms might affect male and female teachers in different ways.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

A Comparative Study of Professional Commitment Among College Teachers Across Residence and Gender

4. OBJECTIVE

1. To compare the professional commitment of college teachers based on place of residence (urban vs. rural).
2. To compare the professional commitment of male and female college teachers.

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₁: There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of college teachers based on place of residence.

H₂: There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of college teachers based on gender.

6. DELIMITATION: This study is restricted to college level teacher in Moradabad Region only.

7. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employed a descriptive and comparative survey design to examine the professional commitment of college teachers, which served as the dependent variable. A total of 120 teachers from various urban and rural colleges were selected using a random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of both male and female teachers from different residential backgrounds. The study focused on two independent variables: place of residence (rural or urban) and gender (male or female), which were examined to determine their influence on teachers' professional commitment. In order to measure professional commitment, the Professional Commitment Scale for Teachers, a tool created by Dr. Rabindra Kaur, Dr. Srabjeet Kaur Renu, and Smt. Sarabjeet Kaur Barar, was used. This standard instrument is very reliable and valid and is recognized by the majority of the research community. It also measures different aspects of professional commitment like dedication, responsibility, and commitment to professional values. The data were gathered both in-person and online after informed consent was obtained from the participants. They were informed about the study's objectives, assured of confidentiality, and given clear instructions for completing the scale. The use of both physical and digital questionnaires facilitated participation from a wider range of people.

The data that were obtained were subjected to statistical methods for analysis. The mean and standard deviation were used to describe the central tendency and variability of professional commitment scores, and t-tests were used to compare groups based on residence and gender.

8. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES: The hypotheses of the study were tested by mean, SD and t-test

9. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

H₁: There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of college teachers based on place of residence.

Dimension	Rural Area (N = 55)		Urban Area (N = 65)		t-value	Significance level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Commitment towards Students	31.13	7.33	33.09	6.97	1.49	-
Commitment towards Society	33.24	5.07	33.34	5.21	0.11	-
Commitment towards Profession	28.96	5.73	30.42	5.15	1.46	-
Commitment towards Self-Development	29.98	5.87	31.46	6.31	1.33	-
Commitment towards Fundamental Human Values	34.27	3.21	34.34	5.18	0.09	-
Total Score	157.28	22.20	162.65	23.76	1.21	-

Interpretation: From the observation of Table, it is evident that at the college level, the mean scores of professional commitment across all dimensions—namely, (1) commitment towards students, (2) commitment towards society, (3) commitment towards profession, (4) commitment towards self-development, and (5) commitment towards fundamental human values, as well as the overall professional commitment—of teachers working in rural areas are lower than those of teachers working in urban areas. Specifically, for Hindi medium teachers, the rural teachers’ mean scores were: first dimension (31.13), second dimension (33.24), third dimension (28.96), fourth dimension (29.98), fifth dimension (34.27), and total score (157.28), all of which are comparatively lower than the scores of urban teachers. Although the professional commitment of teachers in urban areas appears higher across most dimensions, statistical testing revealed that there is no significant difference between the rural and urban teachers in terms of their mean scores and overall professional commitment, except for the dimension related to fundamental human values. This indicates that, while urban teachers show slightly higher commitment, the difference is not statistically meaningful in most areas. Based on these findings, the hypothesis “There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of college teachers based on place of residence.” can be accepted.

H₂: There is no significant difference in the professional commitment of college teachers based on gender.

Dimension	Male Teacher (N = 54)		Female Teacher (N = 66)		t-value	Significance level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Commitment towards Students	29.56	6.87	34.35	6.72	3.84	0.01
Commitment towards Society	32.54	5.02	33.91	5.17	1.47	-
Commitment towards Profession	28.78	5.77	30.55	5.07	1.76	-
Commitment towards Self-Development	29.19	6.27	31.94	5.92	2.45	0.01
Commitment towards Fundamental Human Values	34.02	4.03	34.55	4.64	0.67	-
Total Score	154.07	22.99	165.29	22.33	2.69	0.01

Interpretation: From the observation of Table, it is evident that at the college level teachers, the mean scores of professional commitment across all dimensions—namely, (1) commitment towards students, (2) commitment towards society, (3) commitment towards profession, (4) commitment towards self-development, and (5) commitment towards fundamental human values, as well as overall professional commitment of male teachers are lower than those of female teachers. Specifically, male teachers scored 29.56 for commitment towards students, 32.54 for commitment towards society, 28.78 for commitment towards profession, 29.19 for commitment towards self-development, 34.02 for commitment towards fundamental human values, and 154.07 for overall professional commitment. Female teachers, on the other hand, obtained higher mean scores across all dimensions. Statistical analysis, however, indicates that the difference between male and female teachers is significant for certain dimensions. Significant differences were found in the first dimension commitment towards students ($t = 3.84, p < .01$), the fourth dimension commitment towards self-development ($t = 2.45, p < .01$), and the overall professional commitment ($t = 2.69, p < .01$). In contrast, no significant difference was observed for the second dimension—commitment towards society ($t = 1.47$), the third dimension—commitment towards profession ($t = 1.76$), and the fifth dimension—commitment towards fundamental human values ($t = 0.17$). These findings suggest that female teachers demonstrate higher professional commitment than male teachers in certain key areas, particularly towards students, self-development, and overall commitment, while no significant difference exists in other dimensions.

Based on this analysis, the hypothesis “There is no significant difference in professional commitment between male and female teachers working in college level”—can be partially accepted.

10. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that place of residence does not significantly influence professional commitment among college teachers, although urban teachers tend to have slightly higher scores. This might be attributable to more sound facilities, easy access to professional development programs, and supportive academic environments in the urban area. On the other hand, gender seems to have a selective effect on professional commitment. In particular, female teachers made a higher score in dimensions related to students, self-development, and general commitment, which might signify that they are more intrinsically motivated, more engaged in teaching practices, and more faithful to professional obligations. These results are in line with the earlier research which shows that female teachers frequently exhibit a higher degree of professional dedication, especially in direct teaching and developmental activities. Essentially, the research points out that while the place of residence has a negligible impact and gender affects some areas of professional commitment, thus suggesting that teacher support programs and policies should perhaps consider gender-specific factors to facilitate commitment and professional effectiveness.

11. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the professional commitment of upper primary school teachers with reference to their place of residence (rural and urban) and gender (male and female). Based on the analysis of data collected from 120 teachers, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The study revealed that teachers working in urban areas scored slightly higher in all dimensions of professional commitment compared to their rural counterparts. However, these differences were not statistically significant, indicating that residence does not have a meaningful impact on teachers' professional commitment. Rural and urban teachers have almost the same amount of commitment, conscientiousness, and respect of professional values.

2. Female teachers had higher average scores in more than one dimension of professional commitment, especially in commitment towards students, self-development, and overall professional engagement. Statistical analysis found significant differences between these areas while other dimensions—commitment towards society, profession, and fundamental human values—did not indicate significant gender differences. It means that gender affects professional commitment selectively, thus female teachers being more involved in student-centered activities and professional development.

3. The overall professional commitment of teachers is between moderate and high level, which is a reflection of their dedication to the teaching profession, students, society, and ethical values. The findings indicate that professional commitment is influenced more by individual factors, such as gender, rather than environmental factors like place of residence.

12. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the research on the professional commitment of upper primary school teachers have the potential to influence educational practices, policies, and teacher development in several ways:

1. Teacher Training and Professional Development: As research results indicate, female teachers demonstrated higher commitment in certain aspects like student engagement and self-development. Therefore, a teacher training program can work to increase professional commitment in male teachers, especially in these areas. Professional development institutes and workshops can create opportunities to close these differences and foster professional dedication from different perspectives.

2. Support for Rural Teachers: The research findings showed no significant differences by residence. Still, it can be said that the score of rural teachers was slightly lower, which pointed out the need for them to receive adequate support and the necessary resources in the rural schools. These can include easy access to professional development, teaching aids, and mentoring programs to improve the level of professional commitment.

3. Policy Formulation: Educational policymakers can come up with measures that will lead to the sustaining and even increasing of teachers' professional commitment regardless of their genders and places of residence. The recognition and rewards of dedication, the encouragement of continuous professional growth and creation of opportunities for skill enhancement are some of the policies that can engage teachers more in their profession.

4. Promoting Student-Centered Practices: The higher commitment of female teachers towards students indicates the importance of student-focused teaching approaches. Such institutions may facilitate and equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement strategies that result in increased students' involvement, inspiration, and overall growth.

5. Next Research and Tracking: The research points to the importance of incessant tracking of the professional attitude. Principals may keep tabs on teachers' willingness to work through engagement surveys and thus intervene with measures to keep morale and professional loyalty at a high level, which is a precondition for the provision of high-quality education both in the countryside and towns.

13. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are made for future research:

- Future studies can include a larger and more diverse sample of teachers from different states, regions, or types of schools (government, private, and aided) to enhance the generalizability of the findings.
- Researchers may examine the influence of different factors on professional commitment such as age, teaching experience, educational qualifications, subject specialization, and socio-economic background to understand the issue more deeply.
- Longitudinal studies will be able to tell how professional dedication originates and varies in time, especially concerning career progression, policy changes, and teacher training interventions.
- Future research may use qualitative methods like interviews, focus groups, or case studies to understand teachers' personal experiences, motivations, and challenges concerning professional commitment, which quantitative measures cannot reveal.
- Researchers might explore the link between teachers' professional commitment and student achievement, engagement, or socio-emotional development to be able to measure the impact of teacher dedication on student learning.
- There might be similar research done at the levels of secondary, higher secondary, and college to find out if professional commitment patterns vary at different stages of education.
- Future research can examine the role of targeted professional development programs or motivational interventions in fostering teachers' professional commitment in rural and urban areas.

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