

Regular Article

Professional development of high school geography teachers' with special reference to profession perception and profession commitment

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Abstract

The present investigation is intended to study the profession development of geography teachers high schools from perception of the class room teacher and how far the professional development is enabled to the students for better of their education. The scale of profession perception and profession commitment is constructed. Samples from 444 high schools geography teachers with normative survey and purposive sampling method. Statistical techniques were applied to draw the result. The Personal variables were studied with respect to locality of the institution, medium of teaching and type of the management of Geography teacher is compared. The significant difference is found in medium of teaching and type of the management and found no significant in locality of the institution. There is a positive, significant correlation between the profession perception and profession commitments of geography teachers.

Keywords: Profession perception, profession commitment, Geography teachers, High school

Introduction

The need for teacher development is vital in an environment where educational goals for schools, teachers and students are high. Teachers are expected to help students become critical, constructive thinkers who have developed thorough conceptual understandings (Borko & Putnam, 1998). Students are required to synthesize information, solve problems, invent new ideas, create models, and explain themselves with confidence and proficiency. Classrooms are viewed as places where rich discourse should take place as students engage in their work and explore problems with meaningful contexts.

The traditional approach to teaching is a long-established style and is especially prevalent in schools amongst older teachers who were taught, and have long been teaching in this manner (Goos, 1999; Sakonidis, Tzekaki & Kaldrimidou, 2001; Thompson, 1992). It consists of the mastery of concepts and procedures as the ultimate goal of instruction and places little emphasis on the processes of geography, or on the knowledge that comes out of geographical problem situations. There is therefore a strong contemporary need for teacher development.

Need and significance of the study:

As in every occupation, individuals who are working in the teaching profession are also expected to have certain knowledge, skills and attitudes. Knowledge and skills are the behaviors that teachers should perform while doing their jobs. In other words, knowledge and skills are the efficacies indicating the behavioral standards of teachers. Competency means the necessary features of a profession to be successfully carried out (Sisman, 1999, p.9). Efficacies of occupational teaching knowledge include all knowledge and skills regarding teacher's interaction with students, planning and organizing the lessons effectively, managing the classroom effectively, developing and using rich teaching strategies, and evaluation of learning outputs effectively (Rumajogee, Jeeroburkhan, Mohadeb, & Mooneesamy, 2003, p. 32).

Even though the attitudes are generally assumed within the scope of competency, they should be analyzed separately in terms of their effect on the learning of knowledge and skills because there is a correlation between the attitudes of individuals while attempting to do a job and completing that job successfully. As Sozer (1991, p. 4) states, in a learning environment where attitude formation is not taken into account, the possibility of having great difficulties in the

occurrence of learning experiences and realization of teaching activities should not be forgotten. Attitude can be defined as tendencies pushing the individual to perform particular behaviors against particular people, objects, and situations (Demirel & Un, 1987, p. 173). In this respect, the attitude of the teacher towards his or her profession can be considered as the determinant of his or her behaviors in the profession. On the other hand, the quality of the attitude of the teacher reflects his or her occupational understanding of teaching (Can, 1987, p. 160). Therefore, examining the student attitude is very important in terms of providing an effective teaching-learning environment and developing functional education programs (Yasar, 1985, p.5).

Most of the learning in distance education occurs independently from the existence of teacher depending on the teaching materials prepared in advance (Evans, 1994, p. 16). In other words, the majority of the efficacies that are the resultant of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students will gain can only be provided with teaching materials. However, in formal education, since students go through the learning process face-to-face, they gain the necessary efficacies within the interaction between both the teacher and other students. In this respect, determining the attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession and their perception levels of teaching efficacies are of great importance. The attitudes of teacher candidates regarding teaching profession and their perception levels of teaching give some clues in a way concerning the effectiveness of the program implemented. As Ozer (1993, p. 11) states, the most important issue in teacher training programs carried out through distance education is the effectiveness of the program; in other words, whether the content has been learned, or whether the behaviors aimed have been gained by the teachers or not.

Statement of the problem

A teacher with in depth knowledge in the subject matter, ability to teach the concepts according to the mental ability of the students, with interest to acquire new knowledge and to contribute the innovative ideas related with his profession will perform his duty effectively.

So the investigator has interested to undertake a research work on "PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PROFESSION PERCEPTION AND PROFESSION COMMITMENT."

Review of related literature

Professional development leads to develop the quality of education. The quality of education provides no of achievers in the particular class. Another important thing is that many high school students not shown adequate interest on their geography subject due to poor and inappropriate teaching methods. This lead many have not taken higher level geography as major course even if taken it would be poor performance. In research level geography candidates are limited in this contest.

Govinda R.L and Surya Prakasham. B (2003) studied about parents Perception of Quality of Special Education Services in NGO's. Narayanasamy (2003) Made a study about professional development of secondary school teachers with reference to teaching profession perception, teaching aptitude and personality factors of secondary grade teachers. Fisher, D. and Koul,R.B.(2004) studied about students' Perception of Science learning Environment in Jammu: Attitudes and Gender Differences. Reddy. G.L and Jeevanantham. M. (2004) Conducted a study on school effectiveness Factors (Physical, Curricular and Administrative Factors). And their contribution towards Enhanced Primary stage.

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Harold. H (1981) conducted Study on perceptions role a of pay-offs teachers expectations, attributes and institutional of working in teacher centers. This Study was designed to determine how perceived roles of others educators involved with teacher centers the associated teacher with centers and the purposes major benefits and of teachers' centers as institutions.

Evans, Susan (1981) investigated the perceptions of Classroom Teachers, Principals and Resource room Teachers of the Actual and Desired Roles of the Resource Teacher.

Rohland ,(1985) studied communication of teachers the roles in a Middle School.

This three-phase study spanned five areas of interest (1); the school as organisation and social system, (2) roles and role behaviour in organisations (3) communication structure in organisations (4) network analysis concepts and 5) Development of fundamental interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behaviour (FIRO-B).

Madon.S,Jussim.(1997) and Eccles.J. Investigated into the effect of teacher perceptions on prediction of students' achievement. Results yielded a strong pattern showing that teacher perceptions Predicted achievement more strongly for low achievers for than high Achievers. Results also yielded a much weaker pattern showing that teacher overestimates predicted achievement more strongly than Teacher under estimates. Implications for social perceptual accuracy, self-enhancement theory, and understanding when self-fulfilling prophecies were stronger were discussed.

Gehrke, Nathalie.J and others (1982) made an analysis of teacher's perception of their school environment. Study explored the relationship between physical environment of school and teachers work in them.

Omah (2002) said it is uncommon to discover that teachers are sabotaging the efforts of government via their perception and characters towards their profession, the result of which has adverse effect on the academic performance of the student. It is unanimously agreed that teachers' perception and attitude have remarkable effect on students' achievement Mandla (2000) saw teaching as a social service career and no career is of more value to society than teaching therefore teachers should see the career as the one that offers a worker greater opportunity to benefit others hence their right frame of mind and better perception about the profession are very essential ingredient for students' performance The primary obligation of teaching profession in Nigeria is to guide children, youth and adults in the pursuit of knowledge and skill to develop healthy attitudes that enable them live in harmony with all other Nigerians and rightful perception of teachers will help the students to be more happy, useful and responsible to the society since the ultimate strength of the Nation lies in the social responsibility, economic competency and moral strength of the individual (Olayiwola, 2002)

The teaching profession is a unique occupation and it is believed that the quality of the services of the teaching profession in Nigeria directly influences the future of the Nation and its citizens Harris (1997) observed that within any single subject areas, teachers' perception will influence a range of teaching skills, styles, models and approaches that comprise a teaching repertoire and this will provide a clear frame work for describing the teaching activities.

Occupational commitment is one of the chief values in our society. It is a mark of adulthood among us to settle down to a consistent line of activity, a career in a chosen field. With few exceptions, we have structured our organizations in such a way that they operate best with a low turnover of workers, and it is the mark of a good administrator to keep them at their jobs. Similarly, the occupation which people leave does not seem to us a good one; we value most those occupations which people choose early and work at into old

age. Particularly in occupations aspiring to be professions or in doubt of their status, there may be great concern about commitment because it is considered a mark of the real profession.

In a ground-breaking paper, Becker suggests that commitment to any consistent line of activity occurs when an individual, confronted with an opportunity to depart from it, discovers that in the course of past activity he has, wittingly or not, accumulated valuables of a kind that would be lost to him if he makes a change. We can apply this conception of commitment (as Becker does briefly in illustrating his thesis) to commitment to an occupation. In doing so, we shall be concerned not so much with commitment as an individual process, as with certain occupational and organizational structures which appear likely to facilitate the accumulation of valuables resulting in commitment. Ward S. Mason reveals there is evidence that the well-established professions produce high levels of commitment, we shall in most in-stances compare the kinds of valuables generated by certain aspects of the structure of medical practice, college teaching, and research, as well as some of the arts, to the valuables characteristic of school-teaching.

Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the professional development of geography teachers with reference to profession perception and profession commitment.
2. To asses the profession perception of geography teachers.
3. To asses the profession commitment of geography teachers.
5. To find out the association between profession perception and profession Commitment of Geography teachers.
6. To find out the correlation between profession perception and profession Commitment of Geography teachers.

Methodology

Method

Normative survey method was adopted in this study.

Sample

The present study includes the High schools in Dharmapuri District of Tamilnadu. There are many High Schools in the District but selected 150 schools were taken for the study. Since the study deals with the professional development of geography teachers, a sample of 444 geography teachers were taken through stratified random sampling method.

Tools

The following tools were used in the study.

1. Scale of profession perception constructed and validated by the investigator.
2. Scale of profession commitment constructed and validated by the investigator.

The personal data sheet was used to collect information about gender, locality, age, experience, medium of teaching, qualifications and management of the geography teachers.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample with reference to the variables taken for the study. In differential analysis, the significance of difference between groups was studied using't' test and 'F' test. Chi-square test was used to study the association between the variables. Product moment correlation was used to study the correlation between the variables.

Analysis and interpretation

Table: 1. Professional perception with reference to School location, medium of instruction and type of management

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t -Value | P |
|-----------------------|---------|------|----------------|----------|----|
| School location | Urban | 77 | 153.37 | 17.07 | NS |
| | Rural | 367 | 154.14 | 17.72 | |
| | Tamil | 347 | 155.02 | 17.20 | |
| Medium of Instruction | English | 97 | 150.42 | 18.55 | S* |
| | Govt | 315 | 155.42 | 16.84 | |
| Type of management | Private | 129 | 150.58 | 18.92 | |

*significant at 0.05 level

The scores of profession perception of geography teachers with reference to school location, medium of instruction and management type are analysed the data is shown in the table 1.

1)The table shows that there is no significant difference, hence the rural and urban teachers they do not differ in their profession perception.

2)There is a significant difference, hence the Tamil and English medium instruction teachers they differ in their profession perception.

3)There is significant difference, hence the Government and Private school teachers they differ in their profession perception.

Table 2. Professional commitment with reference to School location, medium of instruction and type of management

| Group | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t -Value | P |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|--------|----------------|----------|-------|
| School location | Urban | 77 | 159.88 | 21.68 | 0.195 | 0.846 |
| | Rural | 367 | 159.36 | 21.26 | NS | |
| Medium of Instruction | Tamil | 347 | 160.78 | 20.87 | 2.509** | 0.012 |
| | English | 97 | 154.68 | 22.28 | | |
| Management type | Govt | 315 | 161.64 | 20.60 | 3.421** | 0.001 |
| | Private | 129 | 154.10 | 22.13 | | |

** significant at 0.01 level

1)The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for urban and rural geography teachers. It is concluded that urban and rural geography teachers do not differ in their profession Commitment.

2)The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the geography teachers with Tamil and English as medium of teaching differ in their profession commitment. The teachers teach through Tamil medium are at higher level than the teachers through English medium in their profession commitment.

3)The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the geography teachers of Govt& aided and Private schools differ in their profession commitment. The teachers teach in Govt& aided are higher level than the teachers of private schools in their profession commitment.

Correlation between profession perception and profession commitment

Table 3 showing the Pearson correlation between the profession perception and profession commitment

| Variable | N | r | p |
|--|-----|--------|------|
| Profession perception Vs Profession commitment | 444 | 0.832* | 0.00 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The Pearson correlation is significant at 0.01 levels, for the profession perception and profession commitment. That is there is a positive, significant relationship between the profession perception and profession commitment of teachers.

Findings of the study

1)The rural and urban teachers they do not differ in their Profession perception.

2)The geography teachers with Tamil and English as medium of teaching differ in their profession perception. The teachers teach through Tamil medium are at higher level than the teachers teaches through English medium in their profession perception.

3)The geography teachers of Govt. & aided and private schools differ in their profession perception. The teachers teach in Govt. & aided are higher level than the teachers of private schools in their profession perception.

4)Urban and rural geography teachers do not differ in their profession Commitment.

5).The geography teachers with Tamil and English as medium of teaching differ in their profession commitment. The teachers teach through Tamil medium are at higher level than the teachers through English medium in their profession commitment.

6)The geography teachers of Govt. & aided and private schools differ in their profession commitment. The teachers teach in Govt. & aided are higher level than the teachers of private schools in their profession commitment.

7). There is a positive, significant correlation between the profession perception and profession commitment of geography teachers.

Discussion

1. The men and women teachers and the urban and rural teachers are at the same level in their profession perception. It agrees with Rajasekar.S.,and Sini,S.S(2005) who reported that there was no significant difference between a) The male and female research

scholars in science subjects b)Urban and rural research scholars in arts and science subjects. It is also agreement with Bani Day, Sandhya Gihar and Manoj Kumar Saxena(2005)who reported that (a)there is no significant difference between the male and female teacher trainees in their internet knowledge.(b)There is no significant difference between teacher trainees hailing from rural and urban areas.

2. The geography teachers with Tamil and English as medium of teaching differ in their profession perception profession commitment. The teachers teaches through Tamil medium are at higher level than the teachers teaches through English medium in their profession perception and profession commitment. It is agreement with Paul Douglas .S , Srinivasa Rao, Eswara rao .G .M and Madanu Rayappa(2008) who reported that the teachers are under the opinion that there is a tremendous influence of mother tongue on learning English in these students and the effect of non usage of English other than the classroom is one of the major factors influencing the English language development and There is significant difference among the teachers working in English and Telugu Medium students on the overall development of English language in the students.

Educational implications

1.The study reveals that there is significant relationship between the professional development with reference to professional perception, profession commitment and profession perspectives. Therefore it is an alarming result that the policy makers, teachers, Head masters and education department have to take suitable action to improve the professional development.

2. The study reveals that the teachers teach through Tamil medium are at higher level than the teachers teaches through English medium in their profession perception, profession commitment and profession perspectives. This shows that the medium of teaching plays a vital role in profession perception, profession commitment

and profession perspectives. So due weight age should be given to the education teaching through mother tongue. For the English medium schools due to Lack of English language knowledge and lack of practice the English medium teachers differs in their perception. This can be enhanced by adopting suitable screening test during the staff selection and language improvement programs to be arranged.

3. The geography teachers of Govt. & aided and private schools teachers differ in their profession commitment and profession perspectives. The teachers teach in Govt. & aided are higher level than the teachers of private schools in their profession commitment and profession perspectives. This is because of lack of interest of the private schools management to direct the teachers or to encourage the teachers to participate workshops, seminars and similar professional development programs organized by the education department.

4. In general arranging periodical professional development programs, refresher courses and pooling the staff with subject wise experts for the seminar and workshops will help them to acquire the new skills and new technique to adopt.

Recommendations

1. The education department should encourage the staff to acquire higher degrees. It will help to enhance the profession perception of the teachers.

2. Arranging periodical professional development programs, refresher courses and pooling the staff with subject wise experts for the seminar and workshops will help them to acquire the new skills and new technique to be adopted.

3. Establishing University resource center to cater the school teachers for psychological and professional counseling.

4. Subject experts should be selected and made available all-round the year which displayed in each District education offices and the schools to utilize the teachers.

5. Financial assistance may be given to the teachers to undertake action research and projects related to teaching-learning process.

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