

Investigation of Professional Commitment Among Practicing Teachers in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the phenomenon of professional commitment in the institutions of the Higher Education Department in the province of Punjab. The phenomenon is related to the teachers' commitment to teaching, teamwork, and students' welfare. The study framework follows the positivistic paradigm and quantitative approach through the survey method for hypothesizing phenomena and gathering and analyzing data. The study population consists of public-sector college teachers from Punjab, Pakistan. Through the multistage sampling technique, 803 public college teachers were selected as a sample of the study. The data was collected through a self-developed questionnaire, i.e., 'measure for teachers' professional commitment.' For the validation purposes of the data tool, qualitative and quantitative analysis was carried out by seeking expert opinion and pilot testing for factor analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the study instrument. Descriptive statistical analysis was applied to answer the study's research questions. The results reflect that professional commitment among teachers is at a low level, and commitment to teaching and teamwork is at a low level. Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that a low level of teachers' professional commitment is critically important to be addressed through a selection of teachers who have taught as their first choice for the job to ensure intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, incentives, appreciation, and social recognition might be supportive for enhancing their commitment to teaching.

Keywords: Investigation, Professional Commitment, Teachers in Higher Education.

Introduction

The educational system of Pakistan consists of three tiers, i.e., elementary, secondary, and graduate studies. Where the in-between level is higher secondary or intermediate and Bachelor qualifications in the national education qualification framework (Amir et al., 2022). The given level of education is served somewhat in Pakistan in higher secondary schools, but most students are provided education in intermediate, degree, or graduate colleges.

Keeping in this perspective, there is a continuous decline in public sector schools. In parallel, the public sector colleges are not competitors of the private colleges in attracting admission to students (Mughal et al., 2019) after they complete the secondary level. The reported recession in colleges is frequently discussed in the education circles in Pakistan, where teachers lack professional commitment. Along with management, college teachers are criticized for losing their professional

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commitment. Hence, the quality and effective teaching-learning environment is not very conducive in public sector colleges.

In light of the stated background, very rare research studies cover the different dimensions to address Pakistan's ever-increasing decline in school and college sector education. Among the causal factors, the researcher is interested in studying the teachers' status and level of professional commitment in three dimensions: commitment to teaching, commitment to teamwork, and commitment to students' welfare. Thus, the present study focuses on the teachers' commitment to their professional responsibilities.

In educational settings, teaching staff facilitates the growing teaching experience. In this way, the organization's climate should be sufficient so educators can perform attractively. Many variables impact an instructor's resolve, inspiration, and execution, including the trust of the essential chief for the educators (Fard & Karimi, 2015). For this reason, associations seek to investigate answers for upgrading the cooperation of people to contribute to the foundation's points and targets and to advance proficient responsibility among instructors.

In an instructive setting, educator assumes a vital part where the climate should be sufficient so educators can perform with their fullest potential and their expert responsibility might increment. The expected climate relies upon different factors, such as the trust of central educators, which can prompt participation between people, gatherings, and associations (Fard & Karimi, 2015). The developing and effective associations seek new answers for further developing cooperation between people and gatherings and to have wanted results and accomplish objectives. In any case, for hierarchical connections, the associations' chiefs and representatives should consider the significance of trust, advancement, and their part in trust for the framework (Fitzroy, 2007).

Among the resultant personal factors include professional commitment, which is a varying phenomenon as compared to subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills because it depends on more organizational climate, incentives, trust, etc. Trust is one of the essential points in human relations, behaviors, and organizational life which may influence teachers' performance and can enhance their commitment to the task. The given relationship works in educational institutions as organizational values, like focusing on the commitment and level of commitment of employees commonly dependent on the trust of the leadership and their colleagues, through organizational support, etc., to fulfill the institutional objectives. In this way, it is still important to determine the level of trust the leaders pose to their staff, which might influence the teachers' commitment to their professional responsibilities.

Statement of the Problem

The background of the study established that organizational climate needs various factors to have a conducive working climate. Among those, the critical factors are assumed to be interrelated, i.e., principals' trust in their teachers and their commitment to their instructional responsibilities. However, teachers are generally vocal that the institutional principals least possess trust in them. Hence, a lack of trust probably influences their professional commitment, which plays a significant role in the institution's success. Such assumed settings in educational institutions have far-reaching repercussions on the system. Therefore, the present study was planned to investigate teachers' professional commitment level, probably the consequence of organizational trust, by assessing the relationship between the given variables.

Objectives of the Study

The following objective of the study was to:

1. Determine professional commitment among practicing teachers in higher education institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the investigation of the research objective:

1. What are college teachers' perceived professional commitment to teaching, teamwork, and student welfare?
2. Do female and male college teachers differ in their level of professional commitment to teaching, teamwork, and students' welfare?
3. Do the college teachers, who have varying professional experience, differ in their level of professional commitment to teaching, teamwork, and students' welfare?

Review of Literature

The literature provides various definitions of commitment. According to Grego-Planer (2019), commitment is an emotional connection that an individual has with an organization in terms of its objectives and values without expecting a reward. Celeb (2000) gave a similar definition, defining commitment as an individual's attitudes toward the values and goals of an organization beyond the formal and standard expectations.

The concept of commitment is discussed in various fields of knowledge (Altun, 2017). He considers an educator's commitment to be a passion that is central to effective teaching and learning. Mart (2013) suggests that passionate teachers are recognized by their commitment to their students' success. In Mart's view, an educator's commitment is to devote oneself, physically and spiritually, to teaching and learning tasks. In other words, a committed educator is a passionate, dedicated teacher full of enthusiasm.

The organizational obligation is the intellect of credentials, faithfulness, and participation revealed by a worker to an institute (Gibson et al., 2009). Referring to the above authorities' quotes, the organizational obligation is the faithfulness of a follower to preserve their existence as a member of the organization to attain the objectives of the organization. Organization's objectives and targets. Commitment is validated by devising:

1. A demonstrative connection to the institute
2. Self-identification with the institute
3. A Reasonable association with the organization
4. Dependence on the needs of the organization
5. Ethical relationship with the organization
6. Loyalty to the organization

In a study "investigating the relationship between trust, contrast and organizational \belonging considering the moderate effect of organizational commitment," Khorshid and Yazdani (2012) observed that the expectation of personnel to the institute and contrasting indicators within the organization have a constructive and substantial impact on worker trust. Moreover, among the different aspects of organizational commitment, employees' emotional commitment to the organization, the employee's trusting relationship with the organization and their association with the organization, and standards of organizational duality positively and significantly regulate employee-organizational relationships.

There is a substantial and constructive connection between interactive trust and organizational assurance in the study on the impacts of organizational commitment and interpersonal trust (Bakiev, 2013). Tit concluded that relational confidence among workers creates an environment of confidence, which leads to great levels of obligation and enhanced enactment.

Faculty's commitment to the institution is based on the adoption of the institution's goals and values. Variables determining teachers' commitment to the institution are interaction with other teachers, relationships with students, the quality of the work, and a harmonious working climate with administration (Celep, 2000). Harfitt (2018) states that committed teachers adhere to institutional goals, collaborate and cooperate with other teachers, and seek out techniques to promote the school and the teaching profession.

There are five major dimensions of professional commitment that included (NCTE, 1998): Commitment to the student youngsters needs educators who figure out them and their necessities with awareness. They should be cared for by instructors who figure out their senses, advancing necessities and propensities alongside their abilities and capacities. By taking up the calling of education, the educator is sworn to advance and improve students.

The school and local area have an emblematic connection. Educators need to situate the local area in the significance of schooling as a deep-rooted process and rouse them to view it from that perspective.

Self-efficacy is a system utilized by the person to self-control their ways of behaving, as indicated by Bandura's (1991) social mental hypothesis of self-guideline. Hence, when the singular's self-viability increases, their fearlessness also rises, bringing about a response of smugness and further showing better proficient responsibility. Then again, high self-adequacy implies the individual is achievement-situated, will generally defeat all hardships, seeks after challenging work, etc., all adding to the height of expert responsibility.

In light of the trust hypothesis of Snyder et al. (2002), it is exceptionally trusted that the person collects profound examples from their effective encounters of accomplishing the objective, improving organization feeling that makes inspiration objective work out as expected. Plot pathways are remembering to execute the systems of objective. Also, the individual might try to achieve the objective with the direction of self-discipline and way power and creates pride, under which they are urged to continue to direct sure work ways of behaving with positive work perspectives, prompting high expert responsibility. Then, at that point, with regard to hopefulness (Pérez et al., 2021) dispositional idealism is embraced. That is, as the singular's assumption is positive, they would hold positive work perspectives and show great expert responsibility in the criticism circle of self-guideline.

At long last, for strength, as Luthans et al. (2007) contend, people with a serious degree of strength know better how to move defensive variables to oppose pressure and unfavorable circumstances. In such a manner, such individuals will go above and beyond to outperform hindrances and present proficient responsibility through great work mentalities for the display of expert responsibility. Certainly, those with high flexibility can likewise confront inconsistent and disrupted climates with techniques to adjust to such climates with an uplifting outlook, raising the plausibility of fortifying proficient responsibility.

Teachers' Commitment to Teaching

The teacher is considered the fundamental component of the learning structure in the institute. The character of teachers is critical in altering educational contribution to guarantee that there is only alteration or growth in excellence in schools with modification and enhancement in the worth of

teachers. A commitment is a psychosomatic association between a person and his task constructed on a demonstrative reply to the exertion. Individuals with a developed work obligation recognize their work and have a constructive outlook (Riyadh et al., 2020).

A teacher's obligation to the occupation is well-defined as the psychological association between a person and the occupation, grounded on the person's dynamic reply to the occupation. Similar to commitment regarding the organization, the commitment of teachers toward the occupation also moved from a one-way point of view to a multidimensional approach, mainly through generalizing the profession from measures aimed at studying commitment.

Student respect and achievement for teachers increases engagement in teaching: the better you become as a teacher, your task will be more rewarding. It has also been noticed that students pay more respect to such committed teachers regarding their duties and profession. It explained that students respect the commitment of teachers as compared to their attitude and results. Even facing difficult days in class. Only in this way can the teacher show self-confidence and display an optimistic and passionate approach in class. Empowering the students is another quality of teachers (Riyadh et al., 2020).

With teaching commitment comes the responsibility of constantly exploring novel teaching methods and improving the students' learning experience. A committed teacher has the potential to equip students with innovative instructional approaches that lead to success. Furthermore, such teachers encourage students to participate in creative activities to become zealous learners. High-quality teaching requires teachers to commit to students, school, the teaching profession, and career continuance (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004).

Committed teachers care about students' development by working with them. They strive overwhelmingly to become efficient in teaching and learning by using various approaches. Effective teaching is impossible without loving the profession (Garrison & Liston, 2004). Committed teachers have respect for their students and build strong relationships with them. They always struggle for continuous professional development. They also work collaboratively with fellow teachers to foster the students' learning. Discussing the learning material and devising innovative teaching methods with fellow teachers motivate teachers to help students' intellectual growth. These elements enhance the effectiveness of both teaching and learning (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

The commitment of teachers is vital for quality education. It impacts teachers' performance, professional teaching, student success, and school (Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018). Teachers who are committed to their profession always seek new instructional strategies and change their teaching practices to assist students in the classroom. Improvement in job performance is a key criterion for instituting an efficient learning environment where students are involved in learning. Committed teachers also cultivate loyalty to the employer institution and exert great effort to ensure its flourish.

Commitment provides teachers with love, desire and energy, which is essential for their performance. Committed teachers are more contented with teaching and thus strive to undertake better instructions (Somech & Bogler, 2002). Their loyalty to the institute is undisputable, and their willingness to achieve the school's goals is obvious (Carbonneau et al., 2008). They always struggle for excellence to make an impact on the students' development (Dennett, 2002). Understanding the requirements of students is fundamental, and a committed teacher pays attention to students' needs.

Teaching is a demanding and complex job requiring strong commitment (Carbonneau et al., 2008). Crosswell (2006) defines commitment as a high level of connection to the organization. A

committed teacher possesses strong emotional bonds to the knowledge of the subject area, students, and school and makes a difference in the student's learning.

The commitment to teaching is based on three factors (Balay 2000):

- Faith in creating a difference in learning.
- Students' anticipations in learning and.
- Inclination to establish an efficient learning climate.

Education researchers listed the following traits of educator's commitment to their institutions (Kyaw, 2022): Teachers should a) Constantly discuss and develop teaching methods, b) Observe other's performance continuously and assess their performances by comparing with them, c) Supply the education resources together, d) Assist others in developing the new teaching methodologies.

It is also pertinent to note that some elements negatively affect the organizational teacher's commitment. These factors as nonalignment of organizational and personal values and objectives, absence of trust and communication, interpersonal conflicts, and how principals enforce or withdraw conflict resolution. Good working settings increase teachers' commitment and allow them to do their job more appropriately. In the same way, disproportionate non-teaching tasks, classes with large numbers of students, absence of job autonomy and choice, sense of seclusion from fellow teachers and administrators, inadequate organizational support, and incapacity regarding essential decision-making processes affect commitment adversely.

Teachers' Commitment to Teamwork

Many studies also describe employees' lack of experience tackling specific significant issues and their lack of power to solve them, which makes them not considered good team members. This develops a negative attitude and behavior regarding their participation as useful and valuable members of the organization (Zareematin et al., 2012).

Managers believe that workers inspire each other to express themselves; nevertheless, they accept recognized approaches for dealing with employee objections. Indeed, the components of organizational silence, management's attitude towards silence, supervisor's attitude towards stillness, announcement chances, and workers' silent manners clarify the position of this organizational sensation amongst workers (Vakola et al., 2011).

Teachers' Commitment to Welfare of Students

Student is central to all the activities in an educational institution (Mart, 2013). To enhance professional competence of students and to make them well-educated community members through quality learning atmosphere is primary focus of a committed teacher. It is noteworthy that student success strongly depends on commitment of teacher. Hatos and Pop (2019) assert that low level of commitment results in decline of success rate of students.

Overall, teacher commitment to students includes concerns for subject knowledge, students learning and student's growth (Sun, 2015). Teacher commitment is believed to be central to school effectiveness (Nir, 2002) based on the argument that students' achievements are closely linked with commitment of the teachers to their work, their schools, and students. It was further argued that commitment is a give-and-take and accrual process which depends on the employee's perception of the share of incentives to contributions and the accumulations of side bets in the employment system.

Therefore, it may be of various types, hypothesized and operationalized in a variety of ways by different researchers. Hence, teacher commitment may be seen as reflecting a high level of

psychological attachment on behalf of the teacher to their profession (Nir, 2002). The key significant indicator of teacher commitment is teacher efficacy (Chan et al., 2008), a belief that a teacher can do what he/she believes is possible to be accomplished.

Teacher commitment varies depending on what the teacher is seeking (Chan et al., 2008). For example, there are three dimensions of teacher commitment that are frequently discussed: commitment to students, commitment to teaching, and commitment to specific place (Hariri & Sumintono, 2020). Teachers that are committed can make a difference in school settings. Hence, the teacher may behave differently depending on the commitment settings of interest to them. It was argued that lesser teacher commitment results in reduced student achievement because burnedout teachers are less sympathetic towards students. In addition, burned-out teachers have a lower level of tolerance for frustration in the class and feel more apprehensive and fatigued. Further, lack of teacher commitment reduces job satisfaction which often leads to indolence, absenteeism, and poor teaching quality (Seebaluck & Seegum, 2013). The opposite is true when teachers are committed to their students.

Teacher commitment depends directly to their work performance which, in turn, impacts the students significantly. In any educational institution student is the most important element (Mart, 2013). A committed teacher always tries to improve students' professional competence through quality learning environment. He/she endeavors the students by making effective contribution to their achievement.

Research Methodology

The research was quantitative in nature and survey method was used for hypothesizing phenomenon, gathering and analyzing data. All teachers of Govt. colleges of province Punjab were the target population of this study while all teachers working in Govt. colleges of three divisions were the accessible population. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. At first stage three divisions (Lahore, Rawalpindi and Gujranwala) were selected conveniently. Then in second stage, sample of 50% of the total 352 accessible colleges i.e., 176 colleges were taken from three divisions i.e., Lahore, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. At the next stage, 5 teachers from 176 colleges were selected for data collection. So, total sample of study was 803 teachers. The study consists of one variable, i.e., 'professional commitment of teachers' hence one scale was developed on five points Likert scale to collect data regarding professional commitment of teachers in three dimensions i.e., commitment to teaching, commitment to teamwork, commitment to students' welfare.. Validity of the scale was ensured through expert opinion, pilot testing and factor analysis.

Data Analysis

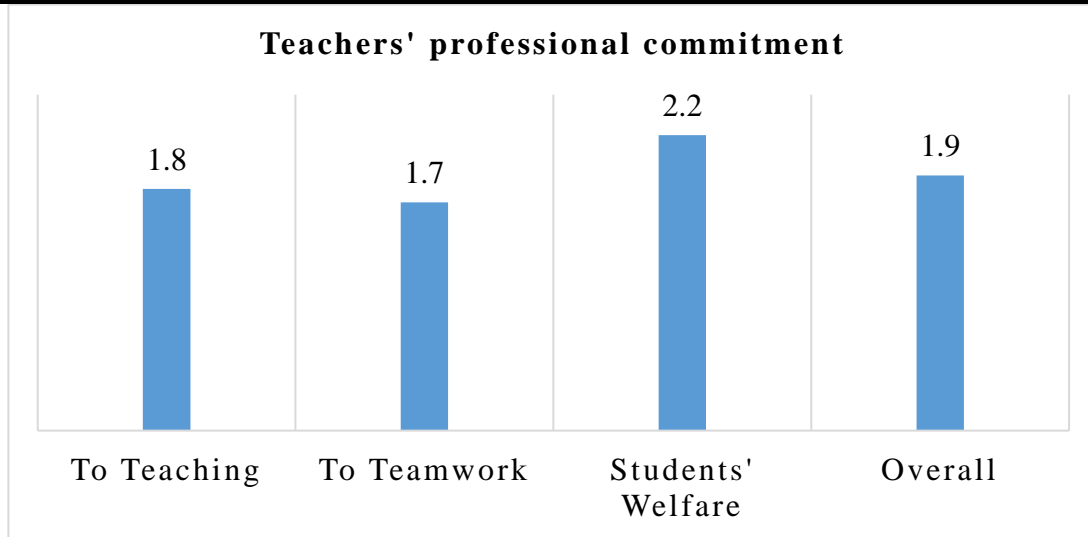
Collected data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics i.e., mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of professional commitment of teachers addressing research questions.

Table 1: Descriptive of Data Results on Teachers' Professional commitment

| Sub Scales | N | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|-----|
| Commitment to teaching | 803 | 1.83 | .72 |
| Commitment to teamwork | | 1.70 | .57 |
| Commitment to Students' welfare | | 2.17 | .75 |
| Overall Professional Commitment | | 1.86 | .59 |

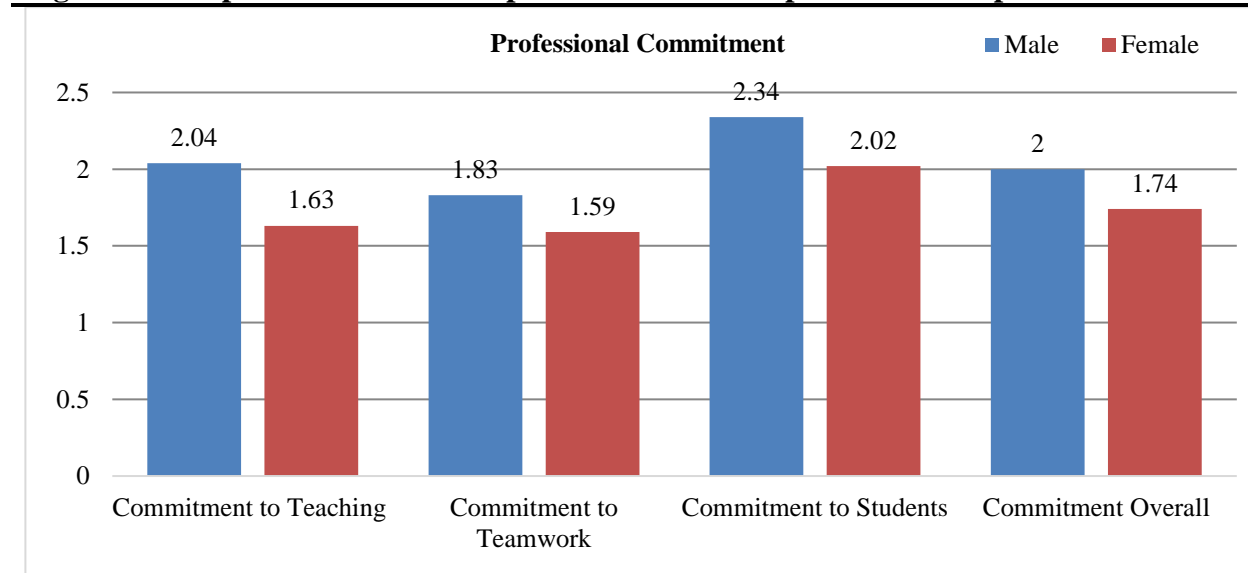
The data given in the table 1 about the descriptive values on the Professional commitment scale, where scores on commitment to teaching is ($M=1.83$, $S.D=.72$), commitment to teamwork ($M=1.70$, $S.D=.57$), commitment to students' welfare ($M=2.17$, $S.D=.75$), and overall professional commitment ($M=1.86$, $S.D=.59$), respectively. Further for easier and better understanding the following data results are presented in the graphical form.

Figure 1: Graphic Representation of Teachers Professional Commitment



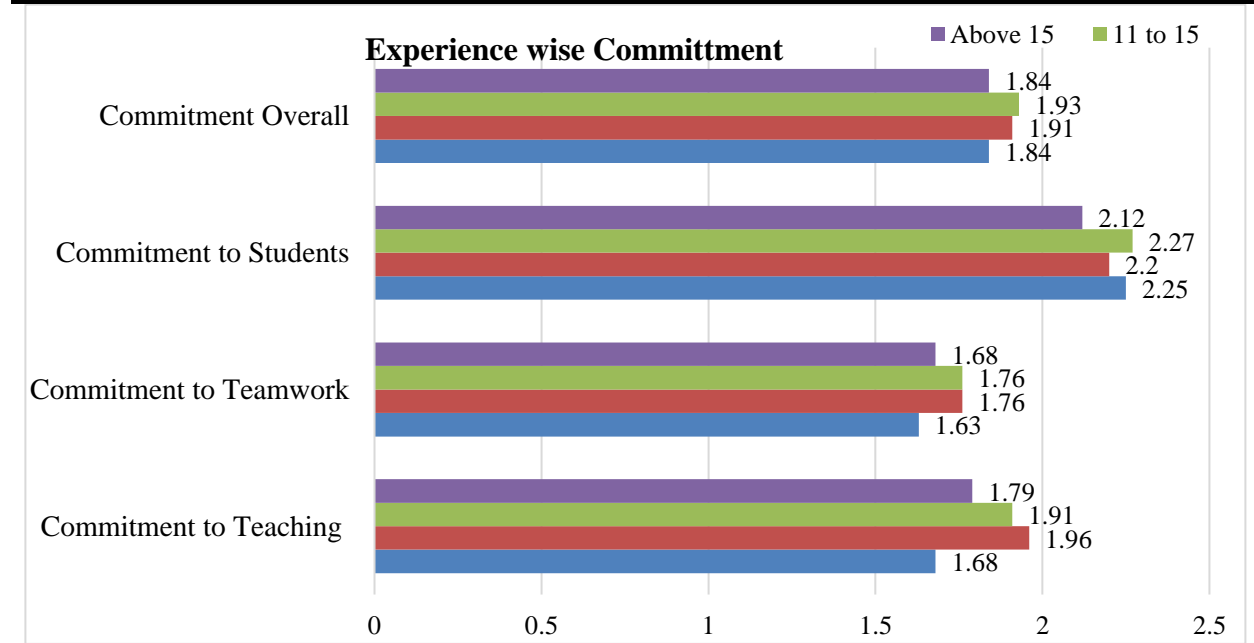
Keeping in view the research question about the levels on different factors of the professional commitment, figure 1, shows that teachers' professional commitment on different factors i.e., commitment to teaching ($M=1.8$) and to teamwork ($M=1.7$) is very low while their commitment to students' welfare ($M=2.2$) and overall professional commitment ($M=1.9$) is also low.

Figure 2: Graphic Gender-wise Representation of Comparative Descriptive



The given figure shows that there is no noticeable difference in the commitment to teaching among male ($M= 2.04$) and female ($M= 1.63$) teachers. There is no remarkable difference in the commitment to teamwork and to students' welfare of male ($M= 1.83$ and female $M= 1.59$) teachers. Furthermore, the over difference on commitment mean scale as ($M= 2.0$ and female $M= 1.74$).

Figure 3: Graphic Representation of Experience based Comparative Descriptive



The given figure 3, shows that there is slight decline in teachers' commitment to students' welfare with passing time, i. e, $M= 2.25$ decreased to 2.12 while it improved in teaching commitment $M=1.68$ to 1.79. Although on commitment to teaming work and overall commitment is stable but low level of their commitment during the period of their professional stay with the same principals during their teaching.

Discussion

As far as the teachers' professional commitment is concerned the level of professional commitment over all is low while on all the three factors like commitment to teaching, to team work and to students' welfare is very low particularly in commitment to teaching and to team work. The results of study are supported by Khorsheed and Yazdani, (2012) that organizational particularly the employees' emotional commitment and trusting relationship positively strengthens association between the workers and work association.

Conclusion

- a) They themselves reported teachers' low-level professional commitment, is alarming. Furthermore, such poor professional commitment is the reason of absence of 'will of work', 'lack of initiatives', and consequently rare professional growth and development among the personnel of educational institutions.

- b) Having different contexts, female and male teachers' level of commitment as reported by themselves on commitment to teaching, to team work, and to students' welfare, is not at desired level and both genders almost similar level of professional commitment.
- c) The overall level of teachers' professional commitment remains consistently low with the range of teaching experience. Such professional phenomenon implies least attraction in the teaching and absence of professionalism among the college teachers.

Recommendations

Low level of teachers' professional commitment is critically important to be addressed through selection of teachers having teaching as their first choice for job to ensure intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, incentives, appreciations, and social recognition might be supportive for enhancing their commitment to teaching.

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