

SUMMARY

Professional commitment of teachers was recognised as a significant factor in improving an educational system, and a low level of commitment on the part of university teachers was widely held responsible for many maladies of higher education. To test this assumption, an analytical survey of the 'Kind' and 'Level' of professional commitment of Home Science college teachers of India was undertaken.

A related objective was to determine the relationship of professional commitment to the selected personal and professional characteristics and the organizational climate of the institutions offering Home Science.

Review of Literature

The use of the concept of commitment was frequently discussed in psychological and sociological literature. The professional commitment of teachers was studied in relation to personal and professional characteristics of teachers. Only one study explored the effect of organizational climate on commitment.

Commitment to the teaching profession was seen to be related significantly to positive attitudes towards research, supervision of student-teachers, role perception, self-concept and job-satisfaction, the last being negatively correlated.

There was an association between commitment and participation in professional organizations, offices held and journals read regularly.

There were contradictory findings as to commitment to the teaching profession being independent of variables like age, sex, marital status, length of experience and educational qualifications. Commitment was found to be independent of the organizational climate of the institution.

Later studies were found to have examined the usefulness of Becker's theory of side-bet commitment, where an individual while striving for consistency, acted in such a way as to involve his other interests (side-bets), originally extraneous to the action he was engaged in, directly in that action.

Population of the Study

All employed women teachers teaching Home Science subjects in degree granting institutions with a staff of three or more teachers, and available at the time of the study were included in the population. The population thus defined in the study comprised of a total of 612 home science teachers scattered in 66 institutions across the country.

Procedure

The theoretical framework adopted for the study was based chiefly on Becker's theory of side-bet commitment and on the assumption that commitment to the teaching profession comprised of two components, as postulated by Stebbins : Value and Continuance commitment to teaching.

It was also assumed that since commitment was manifested in behaviour and observable personal qualities, only behavioural evidence of committed persons would be an indicator of commitment and that it was possible to measure commitment through behaviours.

For the present study a measure of professional commitment (MOPC Form E) developed by Loftis (1962) and revised by Youngner (1977) was used for measuring the professional value commitment of the population to teaching.

The MOPC developed by Loftis was based on descriptions of persons "dedicated" or "devoted" to the profession, implied value for teaching per se. Hence commitment operationalised in terms of dedication and devotion was seen to be value commitment.

This measure was validated with respect to the cultural context of India. For such validation concurrent validity was sought with ratings of a purposive sample of the most committed and least committed teachers, by seven principals of Indian colleges.

Instruments Used in the Study

Two measures, one adopted to measure Value Commitment the other developed for continuance commitment, were used in the study.

Development of the MOPC Form A

In view of the fact that some of the items of Loftis' MOPC Form E were not discriminating significantly, an additional set of items for the Value Commitment to teaching scale, was developed. Descriptions of committed teacher behaviours were collected from educators and scholars combined with descriptions collected from literature, classified and integrated to form 160 items.

These items validated with reference to the content and construct measured were combined with the items retained on the MOPC Form E to form a modified measure (MOPC Form A) of professional Value Commitment to teaching (59 items).

To collect data on Value Commitment of the respondents a self-rating on the items of the MOPC Form A was asked. The categories depicting the self rating were : "Always true of me", "Usually true of me", "Sometimes true of me" "Rarely true of me" and "Never true of me", and were assigned the scores of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

Scale items of Loftis' MOPC Form E were stated to have a reliability of .92, while .91 was the reliability coefficient for the additional items developed for the MOPC Form A.

Continuance Commitment Scale

For Continuance Commitment a measure was specifically developed for identifying side-bets by compiling a comprehensive list of items describing conditions that made teachers stay on in the teaching profession. The list was compiled with items collected from the field of experience as well as from relevant theoretical and research literature. It was assumed that these conditions were "possible side-bets" for teachers and could prevent them from leaving the teaching profession. Content and construct validities of the measure were established.

The rating of the conditions were to be made on a three point scale of "certainty". The three degrees of certainty were : "Definitely will prevent", "Most likely prevent", "Some what likely to prevent", and "Will definitely not prevent" the rater as a teacher from leaving teaching. These categories were assigned a score of 3,2,1 and 0 respectively. The responses in the category "will definitely prevent" were identified as side-bets of the teachers. Responses in the other categories were identified as possible or potential side-bets.

Correlation coefficients of nine pairs of alternate items in the scale were computed and those with an r of .5 and above were retained as reliability checks in the scale. The reliability for the alternate pairs of items was calculated for the pretest data and was estimated to be .87.

Influence of Contaminating Variable

The possibility of contaminating influence of social desirability, in the responses to the two measures of commitment were examined by including a Social Desirability Scale (SD). The correlational analysis between the SD set scores and each of the items on the two commitment scales, was sought to determine whether the items on both the measures were contaminate by the social desirability factor.

On the three statements that were found to be susceptible to the SD effect on the MOPC Form A, corrections for SD set was made for individuals who were in the top quartile of the SD scale and were identified as needing correction. This was accomplished by shifting the score of each selected individual one point away from the more desirable end of the response on the scale.

Organizational Climate

Halpin's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) was used to identify the climate of the institutions offering Home Science. It was scrutinised by ten administrators in colleges in India with more than 10 years of experience in the field for judging the applicability of the items contained in the questionnaire, in the Indian context. No modifications were necessary.

Personal Data Form

A personal data form was designed to elicit information regarding personal and professional characteristics of the respondents viz. age, marital status, husband's occupation, educational qualifications, professional status, nature of present appointment, length of experience in the teaching profession, order of choice of teaching as a career, previous posts held, membership in professional organizations and publications.

The instruments were compiled into a Rating Scale Questionnaire, which comprised of the Value Commitment scale, Continuance Commitment scale, the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire and the personal data form. It was then pretested on a random sample of 30 Home Science College teachers. Data was collected by mail. Two reminders were sent after an interval of fifteen days to the non-respondents.

Analysis and Findings

The findings were based on data collected from a large representative sample of the defined population of home science teachers.

Description of Respondents

Nearly fifty percent of the Home Science teachers in higher education were in the age range of 26-35 years. A majority (62.90) were married, and their husbands were in non-teaching occupations. Over 75 percent had a Master's degree

which for a majority, was earned in Home Science. Seventy percent were lecturers, and a majority (75 percent) were permanent employees. Only 20 percent held administrative posts. Almost an equal percentage were found to have a length of experience of 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10, and 11 to 20 years, in the teaching profession.

Forty-one percent were uncertain of their staying on the job, whereas 34 percent expected to stay for more than 15 years.

With a majority (68.80 percent), teaching as a career was the first choice. Fifty percent had held previous posts, most of which were teaching jobs or jobs related to teaching. A majority of the Home Science teachers were members of only one professional organization and had no publications to their credit.

Organizational Climate

A majority of the Home Science colleges and university departments had an 'Open' organizational climate, followed by 16.67 percent who had an 'Autonomous' climate. Only one institution could be identified as having 'Familiar' 'Paternal' and 'Closed' climates. Value Commitment and Continuance Commitment was not significantly associated with the organizational climate.

Status of Professional Commitment

A majority of the home science college teachers had a moderate level of Value Commitment and Continuance Commitment to teaching. Value commitment which implied interest in teaching for its own sake, was predominant in the professional commitment of a majority of the home science teachers. Thus the hypotheses that the Value Commitment to teaching of the home science teachers is low, and that Continuance Commitment to teaching would predominate in their professional commitment, was not supported by the findings of the study.

The descriptions rated as "always true of me", on the Value Commitment measure, by a majority of the teachers with a high level of Value Commitment, belonged to the areas of commitment identified as 'Ambition' and 'Self understanding'.

Side-Bets of the Respondents

The total number of side-bets per teacher ranged from one to thirty. A majority of the respondents were bound by sixteen side-bets. The five top ranking side-bets of over fifty percent of the teachers were opportunity to : remain in touch with subject of interest, to impart knowledge, for intellectual development, to keep my knowledge of the field updated and safe job for women.

The pattern of side-bets of teachers with a high level of Continuance Commitment differed significantly from that of

teachers with a high level of Value Commitment. Those high on Continuance Commitment reflected more of practical considerations whereas those high on Value Commitment reflected more of academic interest.

Nature of Commitment

Both the kinds of commitment were structurally a single factor attribute and not factorially complex. There was a correlation of .21 between Value Commitment and Continuance Commitment, as components of professional commitment, which signified that those high on Value Commitment were likely to be high on Continuance Commitment. However those low on Value Commitment were not necessarily low on Continuance Commitment.

Association of Professional Commitment and the Selected Variables

The selected personal and professional characteristics were highly inter-correlated. None of the characteristics was singly associated with Value and Continuance Commitment to teaching, but were associated due to the combined effect of a cluster of correlated characteristics.

However, professional status and anticipated length of stay were found to be contributing the most to Value Commitment and Continuance Commitment to teaching, respectively.