



Contents list available <http://www.kinnaird.edu.pk/>

Journal of Research & Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan

Journal homepage: <http://journal.kinnaird.edu.pk>



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, BELIEFS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

This study was intended to investigate the experiences of elementary school teachers in their professional career. The study explored the concepts, beliefs, expectations, commitment, orientations theories regarding teachers' professional experiences in their career. Qualitative research method was used for this study. Data was collected by eight elementary school teachers of District Lahore. A semi structured interview was conducted by elementary school teachers. Data was analyzed by using coding and thematic analysis. The study concluded that the elementary school teachers opt this profession because it is noble and respectable profession. It also concluded that teaching practice during pre-service training is important element of training program that helped teachers' during their professional career.

Keywords

Experiences, Elementary school teachers, professional career



1. Introduction

Research is an effective way to identify the reasons why people choose teaching as a profession (Sharma, 2014). It is considered that awareness of Education in a culture is the base of achievement in recent era; it plays a powerful role in country rather than other assets, which is considered the main source of national economic

Education, GOI (2012) education has vital role in the betterment of society. Teacher is an agent and focal person of Education system which make the life meaningful for students by making the curriculum interesting and achievable this passion makes them a good teacher; therefore, the quality and standard of education is closely related to each other. A small scaled study explained "enjoying

teaching” and “enjoying working with children” better than other things and internal motivation decides placing. In another study the teachers are seen as multi-motivated. Some studies reported that the pre-service teachers of primary level having the essential qualities and characteristics of a good teacher and their basic reason to join the teaching, to work with children instead all others (Uztosun, 2012). It is very difficult to know why pupils choose teaching as a career. The cause of variation in responses is cultural, social and economic differences which they have and the subjects which are being taught by them. In another study the reasons of choosing teaching as a career by a prospective teacher are found as, wish to participate in social development and intrinsic norms of teaching. Lortie’s (1992) contend most of the teachers’ beliefs derive by personal experiences while as students. Mostly existing researches were focused on student’s performance only a few tried to enumerate the teachers’ professional beliefs (Hoy & Woolfolk, 2008; Brouwer, 2005). The researches about other professions indicated the importance of professional socialization, ahead of content description for the training of law, medical and armed forces. Instead of high number of teachers’ abrasion there are many few researches on teachers’ socialization. To ensure the long retention of teachers, professional Socialization was mentioned into three parts: (1) Socialization of teachers, (2) socialization in other professions (3) and resiliency (Pitkala, 2003). Existing prose mostly concluded that the teachers’ socialization mostly focused on effects of school culture on

teachers’ performance. Mostly the performance of newly appointed teachers are discouraged because they seek socialization main while their teaching Gross, (2009). Gross sited in Quinn, (2011) reported a longitudinal research on professional socialization to measure the competency of teachers starting to observe them from pre-service training till their three years’ service as a regular teacher on 128 cooperative teachers, 357 students, 24 graduate teachers from education department and 31 university supervisors. She concluded that professional socialization has significant impact on the development of teacher’s competence. Ingersoll and smith, (2004) reported that the in-service teacher who have acknowledged various orientations programs even less than half would never like to leave their profession before completing at least five years’ service as compare to those who didn’t receive any such type of training or orientation programs. Furthermore, he stated that mentor of related area or discipline helps to retain teachers in cooperation, proper planning, collaboration with colleagues and social interaction with teachers inside and outside the class and reduce the attrition rate. A study concluded that the teachers have different context, background and experiences, in this way they have different factors for professional motivation. Furthermore, it was reported that the elementary and secondary school teachers have significant different motive to stay in their profession (Achinstein *et.al* 2004). Scheib’s, (2006) stated the multiple constructs which become a cause of dissatisfaction of teachers.

The common factor proved that, teachers leave the profession when they are unable to find their rights. Milton, (2009) stated that teachers like to work in such type of schools which offers the productive opportunities, has attractive culture, democratic environment, good collaboration and affective policies. It was concluded by the interviews of those teachers who left the profession due to have the following issues as meager managerial support, enveloped administration, less involvement of staff in decision making, and deprived culture.

1.1. Challenges and Problems

The existing policies about elementary school teacher's promotion have no encouragement to track their career, in point of fact it encouraged to progress in high section to good teachers (Retallick J, 2007). Annual confidential report (ACR) system considered only a formality and not so good to report the quality of teachers. Seniority is considered a fair mean for promotion but it's a slow procedure and ignores the capabilities, competencies and merit. This thing decreases the level of teacher's motivation. So, flexibility it is required needed to motivate and retain the teachers in schools. Unintended and unplanned promotions and transfers effects on the quality of teaching and de-motivate the teachers. Universally there is ban on teachers transfer but have been transferred on the base of solid reason within sub-district or UCs. The ban on transfer cases mostly create problems for females especially for married women who can't shift with their husbands at their location. Retallick J, (2007) furthermore concluded that the

promotion, transfer and salary is directly influenced on teacher's performance and to improve the quality of teaching it is necessary to improve the managerial rules and organizational policies. Crocco and Costigan, (2007) stated the reason of disappointment and why teachers leave this profession is mostly seen as the use of traditional methodologies and consistent lesson plans. It is needed to encourage the teachers for professional commitment to enhance the professional reliability and endurance for their career.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was to...

- 1) Investigate the concepts, beliefs, expectations, commitment, and perceptions of elementary school teachers'.
- 2) Explore the professional experiences of elementary school teachers.

1.3. Research Questions

- 1) What are the concepts, beliefs, expectations, commitment, and perceptions of elementary school teachers'?
- 2) What are the professional experiences of elementary school teachers?

2. Research Methodology

The study was qualitative in nature. All the public and private sector Elementary school teachers of Lahore district were the population of the study. Eight elementary school teachers were taken as sample by using purposive sampling technique. A semi structured interview was conducted to collect

the data and data was analyzed by using thematic codes.

3. Findings and Discussions

This study was explored the professional beliefs of elementary school teachers' and concluded that most of the people joined teaching profession because it is respectable and noble profession. A very few teachers opt this profession by impressing their teacher family members. Some teachers 'opt the teaching profession because they have not any other option and not allowed by the family to go for some other profession. A very few teachers' personally like to do this job as taking it their passion and want to develop the personality of individual through this profession. Uztoşun, (2012) stated that It is very difficult to know why pupils choose teaching as a career. The cause of variation in responses is cultural, social and economic differences which they have and the subjects which are being taught by them. In another study the reasons of choosing teaching as a career by a prospective teacher are found as, wish to participate in social development and intrinsic norms of teaching. The study also concluded that the expectation of teachers at the time of joining about their profession were, as they wanted to get respect from society by doing their best effort for the betterment of society. They desired to see their students groom personally, morally and socially due to their instructions, guidance and supervision. Only few teachers were having no expectation while joined this profession. The expectations of elementary school teachers were analyzed regarding their professional progress they wanted

to move themselves at better place in next five years. Few teachers haven't any views about their professional growth and development, where they will be. The study also explored the personal and professional qualities of a good teacher and reported as they must be regular, punctual, committed and competent and must have full command on their subject. A good teacher must be hardworking honest and sincere with his profession. A research was conducted by Jaffer *et al*, (2001) to recognize the thoughts of ideal teacher according to themselves, students and parent's perception about it. The study concluded that good teacher must be polite, punctual, regular, professional and morally developed. The study also explored the strategies that helped to maximize the learning in classroom. The most commonly used strategies were reported as group activities, written assignments, reading, and discussions and sometime logical seating arrangements. Most of the teachers expressed that good relationship with colleagues and administrators give direction, motivation and guidance to teachers which has positive impact on effective teaching learning and teachers' performance. Good relationship with students and provision of friendly environment enhance the pace of learning, students' feel confident and easily share their problems with teachers. This study also concluded that the instructional material and tool of assessment should be according to the level of students. Teachers' are bound to follow the Punjab Text Book Board's syllabus and instructional material. They have authority to

choose activities and methodologies by themselves.

A previous study reported that in-service teachers' considered the teaching profession as teacher centered (Quinn, 2011). The study also reported the teaching experience at the beginning of the profession. Most of the teachers' discussed that they are always supported and motivated at every stage of difficulty by their seniors. The study also explored the importance of teaching experience and concluded that it is most important for professional grooming and development of teachers. Rewards, motivation, teachers' trainings and workshops are considered most important elements of professional development. Uztosun, (2012) stated that a good teacher seeks a lot by their schooling days, their entire previous experiences are considered as anticipatory socialization which helps to shape a good teacher. Retallick J., (2007) reported that the present training has positive effects on teachers' development about student centered approach, awareness of no cost and low cost instructional material, multigrade teaching, lesson planning. Instead of all these practical implementations of such things are difficult due to lack of follow up in classroom practices. Retallick J., (2007) furthermore concluded that the promotion, transfer and salary is directly influenced on teacher's performance and to improve the quality of teaching it is necessary to improve the managerial rules and organizational policies. The study also concluded that the role of teachers' union must be important and needs to free from any political link. The current study reported that pre-service

training of teachers prepared them for in-service teaching. The respondents said that they learnt a lot by their teaching practice. It was more effective which prepared them for practical service and profession. Webb, (2005) stated the difference of pre-service training courses and facts of practical experiences. The study presented the results of a pre-service training research and concluded that the pre-service training not prepared the teachers for in-service training. Warwick and Reimers, (1995) stated that the pre-service training of teachers is not much beneficial for their professional growth and development and excellence of teaching and learning affected by it.

4. Conclusion

The study was concluded that the elementary school teachers opt this profession because it is noble and respectable profession. Only few teachers opt this profession due to their personal interest and by impressing their teacher family members. At the time of joining teachers expected this profession as it is the best platform of improving the society and people. Teachers' have positive expectations regarding their promotion in next five years. The personal and professional qualities of good teachers were concluded as they must be regular, punctual, committed and competent and must have full command on their subject. The elementary school teachers' considered group activities, written assignments, reading and discussion are the best teaching strategies for effective learning. The study also concluded that good relationship with students and administration enhance the pace of leaning.

Teachers use the Punjab text Book Board syllabus and choose activities according to the level of students. The study also concluded that the elementary school teachers were supported and directed in every difficult situation by their seniors and higher authorities at the beginning of their career. The study also concluded that rewards, motivation, teacher's trainings and workshops are considered the important elements of professional development. Teacher union was also concluded as important consideration for elementary school teachers. The study concluded that teaching practice during pre-service training is important element of training program that helped teachers' during their professional career.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that awareness sessions and seminars on career choice should be conducted so, people should know the importance of any profession when choosing it. So that they can do justice to their work. The study also suggested that quantitative perspective of the teachers on the topic should also be collected to see a wider view.

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