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Gender Differences In Professional Commitment Among Senior Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Professional commitment refers to a teacher's dedication, responsibility, and loyalty toward their profession, reflecting the degree to which they are motivated to achieve professional goals and uphold educational standards. It is considered a key factor influencing teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and overall school performance. This study examined the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers with reference to gender. A sample of 127 teachers from two districts of Himachal Pradesh was assessed using the Professional Commitment Scale developed by Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Dr. Sarbjit Kaur Ranu, and Mrs. Sarvjeet Kaur Brar. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied for analysis. Results indicated that the majority of teachers (74.80%) exhibited an average level of professional commitment, while 15.75% were at a high level and 9.45% at a low level, highlighting uneven distribution across categories. Gender-wise comparison showed that male teachers ($M = 161.02$, $SD = 29.43$) scored slightly higher than female teachers ($M = 152.51$, $SD = 26.24$); however, this difference was not statistically significant ($t = 1.71$, $p = 0.089$). The findings suggest that professional commitment levels significantly differ across categories but are not influenced by gender. The study underscores the importance of fostering professional commitment among teachers to improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: Professional Commitment, Senior Secondary School Teachers, Gender, Teacher Effectiveness, and Teaching Profession.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a dynamic process in which teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the academic, social, and moral development of students. Among the various factors that determine teachers' effectiveness, professional commitment occupies a central position. Professional commitment refers to the psychological attachment and sense of dedication that individuals have toward their profession. Professional commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular profession. Similarly, commitment encompasses affective, continuance, and normative dimensions, reflecting teachers' emotional attachment, perceived costs of leaving, and sense of obligation toward their profession. In the

educational context, professional commitment ensures that teachers remain motivated, loyal, and willing to exert efforts beyond routine responsibilities, which ultimately enhances the quality of teaching and learning. Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone for individual development and societal progress. Teachers, as the facilitators of knowledge and values, play a vital role in shaping the future of students and, consequently, the nation. The quality of education in schools is largely dependent upon the professional commitment of teachers, which reflects their dedication, loyalty, and sense of responsibility toward their profession. Professional commitment not only influences teaching effectiveness but also determines the overall academic environment of schools. Professional commitment refers to the degree of attachment, identification, and involvement a teacher has with the teaching profession. A committed teacher exhibits enthusiasm, perseverance, and a sense of accountability, which directly impacts student achievement and institutional growth. In the context of secondary education, where students undergo critical developmental changes, the professional commitment of teachers becomes even more significant. Gender differences in professional commitment have been a subject of scholarly interest, as social roles, cultural expectations, and work-life balance often influence the way male and female teachers perceive and perform their professional duties. While some studies suggest that female teachers show higher levels of dedication due to their nurturing roles, others indicate that male teachers exhibit stronger commitment owing to career-oriented motivations. These variations necessitate an empirical investigation to understand the dynamics of gender differences in professional commitment. In Himachal Pradesh, senior secondary school teachers hold a pivotal position in guiding adolescents during a crucial stage of their academic journey. Exploring their level of professional commitment with respect to gender provides valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, and educational planners to enhance teacher effectiveness and ensure equitable educational outcomes. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine gender differences in professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers of Himachal Pradesh.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Professional commitment of teachers has been recognized as one of the most crucial determinants of teaching effectiveness, student learning outcomes, and institutional success. A committed teacher not only fulfils professional duties with sincerity but also demonstrates loyalty, dedication, and a sense of responsibility toward the teaching profession. In the context of senior secondary schools, where students are at a critical stage of academic and career development, teachers' professional commitment plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' motivation, discipline, and achievement. Gender, as a socio-cultural construct, has been widely studied in relation to workplace behaviour and attitudes, including commitment. Existing literature highlights that male and female teachers may differ in their level of professional commitment due to variations in role expectations, social responsibilities, work-life balance, and cultural norms. While some studies suggest that female teachers often show higher affective commitment because of their nurturing orientation, others indicate that male teachers display stronger continuance or normative commitment due to career progression and financial stability. However, research findings on gender differences in professional commitment among teachers remain inconclusive and context-specific. In the Indian educational scenario, particularly at the senior secondary level, gender disparities in terms of workload distribution, professional growth opportunities, and social expectations are evident. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine whether such differences influence teachers' professional commitment. This study is significant because it will contribute to a deeper understanding of how gender impacts teachers' professional commitment in senior secondary schools. Such insights can guide policymakers, educational administrators, and teacher educators in framing strategies to enhance professional commitment across both genders. It may also help institutions design gender-sensitive professional development programs, ensure equitable opportunities, and strengthen the overall teaching-learning process. Thus, the present study is an attempt to systematically analyze gender differences in professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers, thereby addressing an important gap in educational research and providing evidence-based recommendations for improving teacher effectiveness.

REVIEWS OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Several researchers have examined the professional commitment of teachers in relation to gender and other demographic variables, though the findings remain varied and sometimes contradictory. Alam (2018) conducted a survey of 111 secondary school teachers in Aligarh (U.P.) and found significant gender differences in professional commitment, with male and female teachers differing notably in their levels of commitment. However, no significant differences were observed between rural and urban teachers, while government and private school teachers differed significantly in their professional commitment. The study

emphasized that institutional heads play a vital role in fostering commitment by providing resources, maintaining effective communication, and encouraging professional development through workshops and seminars. In a similar line, Rekha and Savita (2019), in a study of 100 secondary school teachers from Jhajjar District of Haryana, also reported significant differences in professional commitment with respect to gender, marital status, residential background, and length of teaching experience. However, no significant difference was observed with respect to the type of school, indicating that school ownership may not influence teachers' commitment levels. Contrasting with these results, Chaman (2020) studied 100 male and female government senior secondary school teachers and found no significant gender differences in overall professional commitment. Male and female teachers did not differ in their commitment to the learner, society, profession, or basic values. The only difference reported was in the area of commitment to achieving excellence, where male and female teachers showed variation. More recently, Ravindra et al. (2022), in a large-scale study of 700 secondary school teachers from Andhra Pradesh, reported that gender, type of school, locality, and level of teaching experience did not significantly influence professional commitment. This suggests that demographic variables may not universally account for differences in commitment, and other contextual or institutional factors may play a stronger role. Taken together, these studies highlight a lack of consensus on the role of gender and demographic variables in determining teachers' professional commitment. While some studies (Alam, 2018; Rekha & Savita, 2019) reported significant gender-based differences, others (Chaman, 2020; Ravindra et al., 2022) found no such variations. These mixed findings indicate the need for further investigation, particularly in diverse educational contexts, to better understand whether and how gender differences shape the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers.

OBJECTIVE

1. To study the level of professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers.
2. To compare the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers with respect to their gender.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Method was employed.

TOOL USED

1. PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT SCALE

Professional Commitment Scale was developed by Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Dr. Sarbjit Kaur Ranu, and Mrs. Sarvjeet Kaur Brar was used. This scale consists 45 items divided into five areas of commitment namely;

1. Commitment to learner
2. Commitment to society
3. Commitment to profession
4. Commitment to attain excellence
5. Commitment to basic human values

SAMPLE

The sample for the present study consisted of 127 senior secondary school teachers drawn from two districts of Himachal Pradesh. The sample included both male and female teachers, selected with the purpose of examining gender-wise differences in professional commitment.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED

In the present study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Descriptive statistics, including mean, percentage, and standard deviation, were used to analyze the overall level of professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers. To examine gender-wise differences, the independent sample *t*-test was applied, with the level of significance fixed at 0.05.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to 127 senior secondary school teachers from two districts of Himachal Pradesh. The scope of the study was confined to one independent variable, namely gender, and one dependent variable, professional commitment. Other factors such as teaching experience, subject specialization, and type of institution were not considered.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 Level of Professional commitment of Senior secondary school teachers

The responses collected from senior secondary school teachers on the Professional Commitment Scale were subjected to statistical analysis. To assess the general level of professional commitment among the respondents, the mean, standard deviation, and other descriptive statistics of the total scores were computed. The results are presented in Table-1.

Table-1

Frequency distribution and Descriptive Statistics related to Professional commitment of Senior secondary school teachers

Class Interval	Frequency (f)	Frequency Percentage (f)	Cumulative Frequency (CF)	Cumulative Frequency (CF) percentage
221-236	2	1.57	2	1.57
205-220	7	5.51	9	7.08
189-204	32	25.2	41	32.28
173-188	39	30.72	80	62.99
157-172	20	15.75	100	78.74
141-156	10	7.87	110	86.61
125-140	3	2.36	113	88.97
109-124	12	9.45	125	98.42
93-108	2	1.57	127	100
Total	127	100		
Descriptive Statistica	Value	Descriptive Statistica	Value	
Mean	155.9921	Median	150	
Mode	144.81	SD	27.80045	
skewness	0.803587	Kurtosis	0.126372	
Range	131	Q1= 134.5	Q3= 169	

Table 1, presents the frequency distribution and descriptive statistics of professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers. The observed scores range from 93 to 224, giving a range of 131, which indicates a wide spread of scores across the sample. The mean score ($M = 155.99$) is close to the mid-point of the distribution, suggesting that the overall level of professional commitment is moderate. The median ($Md = 150$) and mode ($Mo = 144.81$) are also near the mean, further reinforcing that the majority of teachers demonstrate an average level of professional commitment. In terms of frequency distribution, the highest proportion of teachers (30.72%) fall within the score range of 173–188, followed by 25.2% in the 189–204 range. Together, these two groups constitute more than half of the sample, clearly indicating that average commitment levels are dominant among senior secondary school teachers. On the other hand, very few teachers are located at the extremes, with only 1.57% each at the lowest (93–108) and highest (221–236) score ranges. The standard deviation ($SD = 27.80$) shows a moderate variability in scores, meaning that while the central tendency indicates average commitment, individual differences still exist among teachers. The distribution is positively skewed (Skewness = 0.80), indicating that a relatively larger proportion of teachers score below the mean, and only a few exhibit very high professional commitment. The kurtosis

value (0.12) is close to zero, suggesting a distribution that is nearly normal, with neither excessively peaked nor excessively flat tendencies. The quartile values ($Q1 = 134.5$, $Q3 = 169$) further clarify the spread: 25% of teachers score below 134.5 (low commitment), 50% fall between 134.5 and 169 (average commitment), and only 25% score above 169 (high commitment). This shows that the majority (around three-fourths) of teachers lie within the average range, while very few demonstrate extremely high or extremely low levels of commitment.

Figure-1

Pie- Chart Showing Percentage Distribution of senior secondary school teachers according to their level of ‘ Professional Commitment



The pie chart (Figure-1) depicts the percentage distribution of senior secondary school teachers according to their level of professional commitment. The chart shows that 74.80% of teachers fall within the average level of professional commitment, while 15.75% demonstrate a high level, and only 9.45% belong to the low-level category. This distribution clearly reflects that the majority of teachers maintain an average degree of professional commitment, with relatively fewer at the extremes. The figure complements the descriptive statistics (Table-1), which also revealed that most teachers cluster around the central range of scores, with only a small proportion displaying either very high or very low commitment. Together, these results highlight that professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers is predominantly moderate, indicating stability but also suggesting scope for initiatives that could enhance the proportion of teachers reaching higher commitment levels.

Figure-2

Frequency polygon of professional commitment scores of senior secondary school teachers

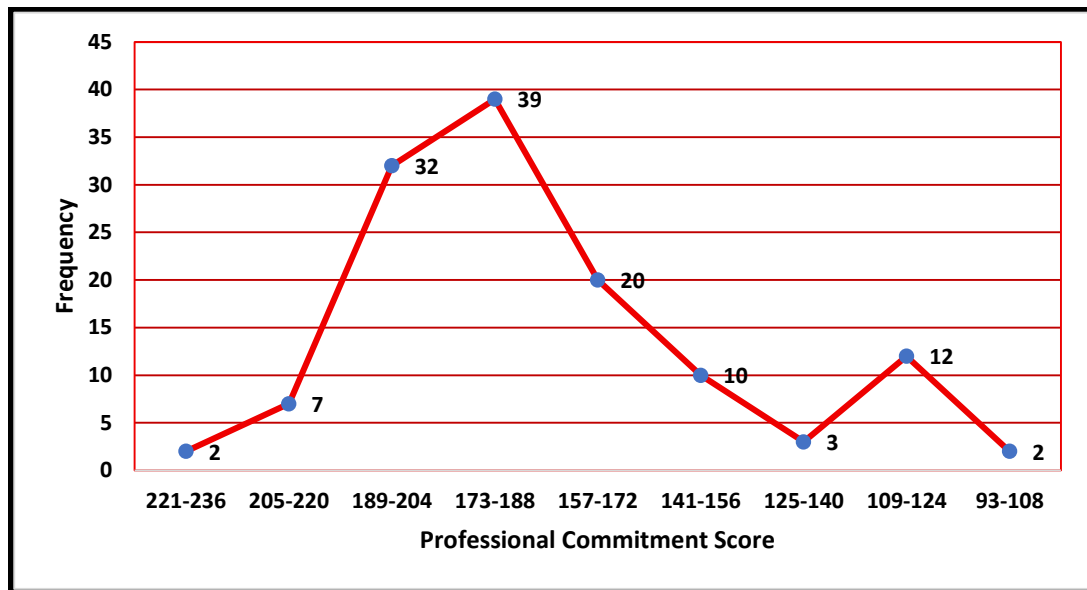


Figure-2 presents the frequency polygon of professional commitment scores of senior secondary school teachers. The distribution is unimodal with moderate positive skewness (Skewness = 0.8036, $z = 3.70$, $p < .001$), indicating a slight pull toward higher scores. The kurtosis value (0.1264, $z = 0.29$, ns) is nonsignificant, reflecting a mesokurtic pattern. Thus, the data deviate from normality primarily due to skewness, while the overall peakedness remains comparable to a normal distribution.

1.2 Gender-Wise Comparison of Professional commitment Among Senior Secondary School Teachers

To examine whether gender influences the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers, the mean and standard deviation scores of male and female teachers were compared. An independent samples t -test was applied to test the statistical significance of the difference in mean scores. The results are displayed in Table-2.

Table-2

Comparison of Professional commitment Scores by Gender

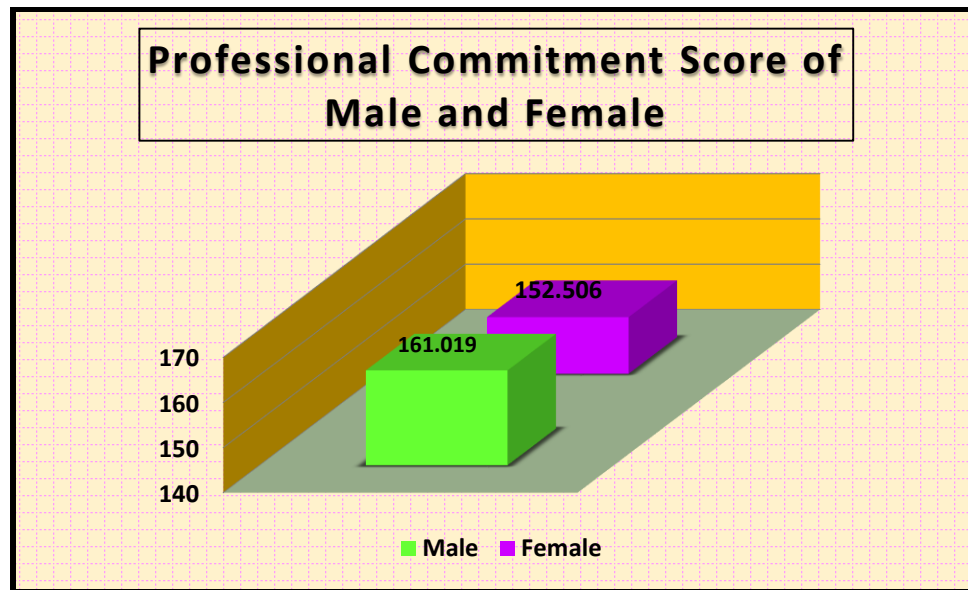
Gender	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Male	52	161.019	29.4349	1.71	not significant $p = 0.089$ (NS)
Female	75	152.506	26.2444		

(NS = Not Significant)

The analysis presented in Table-2 indicates that the mean professional commitment score of male teachers ($M = 161.02$, $SD = 29.43$) was marginally higher than that of female teachers ($M = 152.51$, $SD = 26.24$). However, the obtained t -value (1.71) did not reach statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.089 > 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that “there is no significant difference in the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers with respect to gender” is accepted. This suggests that the apparent difference in mean scores between male and female teachers is not substantial enough to be considered a true effect and may be attributed to random variation. It may therefore be inferred that gender does not exert a significant influence on the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers in the context of the present study.

Figure-3

Difference in Professional Commitment of male and female Senior secondary school teachers



FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The analysis of professional commitment among senior secondary school teachers revealed that the majority of teachers (74.80%) fall under the average level of professional commitment, while 9.45% of teachers were found at the low level and 15.75% at the high level. This uneven distribution clearly indicates that professional commitment is not uniform among teachers, with the largest proportion concentrated at the average level. In testing the null hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in professional commitment levels among teachers," the results led to its rejection. The findings suggest that the levels of professional commitment significantly differ, with the average level being dominant compared to low and high levels. Further, a gender-wise comparison of professional commitment showed that the mean professional commitment score of male teachers ($M = 161.02$, $SD = 29.43$) was slightly higher than that of female teachers ($M = 152.51$, $SD = 26.24$). However, the independent samples t-test revealed that this difference was not statistically significant ($t = 1.71$, $p = 0.089 > 0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that while professional commitment levels significantly differ across low, average, and high categories, gender does not emerge as a significant factor influencing the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions can be proposed to enhance the professional commitment of senior secondary school teachers:

1. **Strengthening Professional Development Programs** – Since a majority of teachers were found to have only average levels of professional commitment, regular workshops, seminars, and in-service training programs should be organized to update teachers with new pedagogical skills, classroom management strategies, and subject knowledge.
2. **Mentorship and Peer Support** – Schools should establish mentorship systems where experienced teachers guide and support younger or less experienced teachers. This can help in building a strong sense of professional identity and belonging.
3. **Recognition and Rewards** – Recognition of teachers' efforts through awards, incentives, and appreciation can enhance motivation and encourage higher levels of professional commitment.
4. **Supportive School Environment** – Creating a positive socio-emotional climate in schools by encouraging collaboration, mutual respect, and open communication among teachers, administrators, and students can foster commitment.

5. **Balanced Workload and Stress Management** – Since workload and stress often affect teacher commitment, administrators should ensure fair distribution of tasks and provide counselling or stress management workshops to maintain teachers' psychological well-being.
6. **Professional Autonomy** – Teachers should be given opportunities to participate in decision-making processes related to curriculum design, teaching methods, and school policies, as this autonomy boosts their sense of responsibility and commitment.
7. **Encouraging Research and Innovation** – Teachers should be motivated to engage in action research, innovative teaching practices, and reflective teaching, which not only enhance their professional growth but also strengthen their commitment to the profession.

In conclusion, the suggested measures aim to create a supportive, motivating, and professionally enriching environment for teachers. By focusing on continuous development, recognition, and autonomy, schools can enhance teachers' sense of belonging and responsibility. Ultimately, these steps will not only strengthen teachers' professional commitment but also improve the overall quality of education at the senior secondary level.

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