

A Study on the “Professional Competence of Teachers in Relation to Students Achievement” At Secondary Level

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Need and Importance of the Study:

The importance of the teacher in national life cannot be overemphasized. It is he who influences the immature minds of the youth. He treats and tries to mould the living stuff into various forms. The future of the nation is fashioned by him through the process of education. A nation trying to march ahead on the roads to progress can leave the education of her child in the hands of incompetent teachers only at its own risk. “The world of tomorrow will be born from the schools of today” says M.L Jacks. In this way, teacher, indeed, is the true builder of the nation. A competent teacher is an advantage of any organization and occupies the most significant place in an educational institution because they have ability to change the future of the nation. Need of the nation is not only to magnetize but also to protect the competent teachers.

Effectiveness of any school system is largely dependent on its head and the contributions of teachers. The functioning and academic role of the teachers becomes, thus, the most crucial factor in the school system. Teacher’s academic behaviour reflects the efficiency of the institution. The academic role of the teachers and role performance sets the tone of institution. If the students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost point to the academic contributions of the teachers as the key to success.

The high school stage consists of classes VI to X, since, the secondary education stage is an important stage, large majority of children who are likely to enter into the life of work aspects, the emphasis is on bringing their education to a standard, which would enable them to lifelong learning with self confidence alongwith useful knowledge and skills, proper work habits, attitudes and character which would contribute to their productivity and well being.

Requirement of strong and empowered secondary education system is well defined for a developing nation. To prove the strength of our educational system we need teachers who are competent, and who are aware of their duties thus they will do their best. That’s why competency is the ornament of teacher. It creates the position of teacher in the system. Therefore, it is affected by various factors such as intelligence, academic achievements, socio-economic states, attitude towards teaching profession, personality factors, adjustment, teaching aptitude as well as demographic variables like qualification, gender, locality etc. In this study, the researcher has undertaken a study to know the perceptions of teachers towards Professional Competence and also to know the relationship between Professional Competency of Teachers and Students’ Achievement at Secondary Level.

The perusal of studies reveals that secondary school teachers professional competence received very little attention in India, only limited studies have been attempted to study the professional competence of teachers. So far very little attention has been made to study the professional competence of teachers viz., support to learners for learning, maintenance of effective learning environment of the class room level, organization of subject in other innovative way to make the learner benefit, proper planning, conduct of proper assessment techniques by the teachers, and maintenance of intra-inter relationship at secondary level in Andhra Pradesh. Professional Competence of Teachers creates significant effect on the ability of student achievement. The present study has been undertaken teacherwise with a view to know the perceptions of teachers towards professional competence at secondary level. Extensive research on various aspects of education has been conducted, thus secondary stage acquires the highest importance in the educational ladder of the student. Such an important stage, must have competent teachers to promote the student academic progress. Hence the problem on hand for research acquires special importance in the field of education.

Statement of the Problem:

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the Professional Competency of teachers working in Secondary Schools.
2. To study the Correlations in between the dimensions in the Professional Competency Scale.
3. To study the correlations between the Professional Competency and Students’ Achievement.
4. To study the significant differences in between the variables basing on their Socio-Economic background towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be high Professional Competency among Secondary School Teachers.
2. There is no significant relation in between the Areas of Professional Competency Scale.
3. There is no significant correlation between Professional Competency and Students' Achievement.
4. There are no significant differences in between the perceptions of Male and Female respondents towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.
5. There are no significant differences among the perceptions of respondents based on their Age group towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.
6. There are no significant differences among the perceptions of respondents based on their Locality towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.
7. There are no significant differences among the perceptions of respondents based on their Type of Management towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.
8. There are no significant differences among the perceptions of respondents based on their General Qualifications towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.
9. There are no significant differences among the perceptions of respondents based on their Professional Qualifications towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.
10. There are no significant differences among the perceptions of respondents based on their Professional Experience towards the Professional Competency of Teachers working in Secondary Schools.

Sampling and Sample Design:

The questionnaire was administered among the teachers of secondary schools working in Eluru District with a view to getting the whole sample base and better results. Subjects were selected from sixty schools covering seven mandals in Eluru District. The investigator personally approached and distributed the questionnaires to respondents. The purpose and procedures for filling out the questionnaires were personally explained to the school teachers who acted as respondents. The selection procedures are described as follows:

The investigator selected High Schools covering Government, Zilla Parishad, Municipal/Corporation and Private schools in selecting the respondents. The investigator selected seven mandals viz., Bhimadole, Denduluru, Eluru, Kaikaluru, Mandavalli, Mudinepalli and Nidamaruru for this study purpose.

List of Selected Mandals:

The investigator selected seven mandals viz., Bhimadole, Denduluru, Eluru, Kaikaluru, Mandavalli, Mudinepalli and Nidamaruru localities by adopting stratified random sampling technique. The actual selection of mandals was made by first arranging the mandals alphabetically of Eluru District locality wise and then the mandals were selected by adopting stratified random sampling technique. First the investigator collected the list of schools and then arranged in an alphabetical order, later the schools were selected by adopting stratified random sampling technique.

The investigator personally visited all the sampled schools for the collection of data purpose. The investigator selected the teachers teaching school subjects as the sampled respondents for this study purpose. The printed questionnaires were distributed to all the respondents in each school. A total of 420 (60 Headmasters+360 Teachers) respondents were handed over the questionnaires to fill in the questionnaires. The returns position of the questionnaires distributed was encouraging. Out of the 420 distributed all the 420 questionnaires were returned to the investigator by the selected respondents.

Construction of Tool:

The scale was operationalised as a complex scale of several dimensions. It was conceptualized as divisible into 07 different areas such as – 1) Supporting for Learning, 2) Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment, 3) Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning, 4) Planning for Teaching, 5) Assessment, 6) Professionalism and 7) Parent / Community Co-ordination. It is an instrument designed for self rating of the teachers opinion of the degree to which they feel on their Professional Competency aspects on the specific job related tasks in their schools. The instrument consists of 101 statements relating to Professional Competency deemed appropriate for assessment by teachers. These statements are grouped by seven areas.

Pre-Test Administration, Item Analysis and Final Test Items:

The pre-test of this preliminary questionnaire was conducted on 60 respondents selected from different schools. Pre-test questionnaire consists of 101 items. The items were designed, and scored to indicate Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree effectiveness rating of the Professional Competency of the Teachers.

Likert's summated rating technique method was used. Accordingly each scale item consists of 5 response categories –

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree which were scored from 5 to 1. By using SPSS package, the Chi-Square technique was the statistical method deployed for item analysis. Out of 101 items pre-tested, a total of 85 items were selected for the final scale. The split-half reliability co-efficient for the Professional Competency of Teachers Scale was 0.98 and for the validity of the scale, it is based on the content and construct validity.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The discussion of the major findings follows the main research objectives of the study. These objectives were met by reviewing related literature in the field of Professional Competencies of Teachers and Students' Achievement at Secondary Level. In school the data collected and its subsequent analysis yielded the following major findings.

The teachers Professional Competency score is 354.02, which falls in the category of "High Effective". The mean scores towards Supporting for Learning, Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment, Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning, Planning for Teaching, Assessment, Professionalism and Parent / Community Co-ordination falls in the category of "High Effective".

The average achievement value for all the schools was 70.93. This study revealed that 30(50%) schools had fallen in the "Above Average" category, whereas 30(50%) schools had fallen in the "Below Average" level.

There establishes a significant correlation between Professional Competence of Teachers and Students' Achievement at Secondary Level.

The co-efficient of correlation between overall index of Professional Competence and Student Achievement is 0.20 and the p-value is 0.00, which is statistically significant at 0.01 level. This shows that there establishes a significant relationship between Professional Competence of Teachers and Student's Achievement at Secondary Level.

The areas in Professional Competence scale as perceived by Teachers establish significant relationship with Students' Achievement. It seems that all the areas in the Professional Competence scale Viz., Supporting for Learning, Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment, Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning, Planning for Teaching, Assessment, Professionalism and Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects were established relationship for the students progress.

Twenty one schools (35.00%) had fallen in the category of "Moderate" level, whereas the remaining thirty nine schools (65%) had fallen in the category of "High Effective" level. It shows that 65% schools are effective in the **Supporting for Learning** Aspects of the Professional Competence of Teachers.

It was noticed that Age, Qualification and Teaching Experience of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Supporting for Learning Aspects but on the Designation, Gender, Locality, and School Management category respondents differed significantly. The Teachers perceived high comparatively than Headmasters towards the Supporting for Learning. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards the Supporting for Learning. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Supporting for Learning than Rural and Urban area teachers. Private school teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Supporting for Learning than Government and Local body school teachers.

Twenty four schools (40.00%) had fallen in the category of "Moderate" level, whereas the remaining 36 schools (60.00%) had fallen in the category of "High Effective" level. It shows that more than 55% schools are effective in the **Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment** Aspects of the Professional Competence of Teachers.

It was noticed that Age, Qualification and Teaching Experience of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment Aspect but on the Designation, Gender, Locality, and School Management category respondents differed significantly. The Teachers perceived high comparatively than Headmaster towards Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards the Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment aspect than Rural and Urban area teachers. Private school teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment Aspects than Government and Local body school teachers.

Only one school (2%) has fallen in the category of "Average" level. It shows that in the locality, the students understand the concepts and also in organizing subject matter for student learning was average, in Rural locality requires attention and also fourteen schools (23%) had fallen in the category of "Moderate" level, whereas the remaining forty five schools (75%) had fallen in the category of "High Effective" level. It shows that more than 95% schools are effective in the **Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning** Aspects of the Professional Competence of Teachers.

It was noticed that Designation, Age, School Management, and Qualification of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning Aspects but on the Gender, Locality and Teaching Experience category respondents differed significantly. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning Aspects. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning Aspects than Rural and Urban area teachers. 10 to 20 years Teaching Experienced teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning Aspects than Below 10 and Above 20 years Teaching Experienced teachers.

Nineteen schools (32%) had fallen in the category of “Moderate” level, whereas the remaining 41 schools (68%) had fallen in the category of “High Effective” level. It shows that more than 68% schools are effective in the **Planning for Teaching** Aspects of the Professional Competence of Teachers.

It was noticed that Designation, Age, School Management, and Qualification of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Planning for Teaching Aspects but on the Gender, Locality and Teaching Experience category respondents differed significantly. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards Planning for Teaching Aspects. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Planning for Teaching Aspects than Rural and Urban area teachers. 10 to 20 years teaching experienced teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Planning for Teaching Aspects than Below 10 and Above 20 years Teaching Experienced teachers.

Only one (2%) school has fallen in the category of “Average” level. It shows that the average school receives proper application of assessment tools for the improvement of quality and also 23 schools (38%) had fallen in the category of “Moderate” level, whereas the remaining thirty six schools (60%) had fallen in the category of “High Effective” level. It shows that more than 60% schools are effective in the **Assessment** Aspects of the Professional Competence of Teachers.

It was noticed that Age, Qualification and Teaching Experience of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Assessment Aspects but on the Designation, Gender, Locality, and School Management category respondents differed significantly. The Teachers perceived high comparatively than Headmasters towards the Assessment aspect. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards Assessment aspect. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Assessment Aspect than Rural and Urban area teachers. Private school teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Assessment Aspects than Government and Local body school teachers.

Five (8%) schools had fallen in the category of “Average” level. It shows that plans are to be initiated for the improvement of **Professionalism** and also thirty four schools (57%) had fallen in the category of “Moderate” level, whereas the remaining 21 (35%) schools had fallen in the category of “High Effective” level.

It was noticed that Designation, Age, School Management, Qualification and Teaching Experience of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Professionalism Aspects but on the Gender, Locality and Teaching Experience category respondents differed significantly. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards Professionalism Aspects. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Professionalism Aspects than Rural and Urban area teachers.

Only one school (2%) has fallen in the category of “Average” level, seven schools (12%) had fallen in the category of “Moderate” level, whereas the remaining fifty two schools (86%) had fallen in the category of “High Effective” level. It shows that more than 86% schools are effective in the **Parent / Community Co-ordination** Aspects of the Professional Competence of Teachers. It shows that the maintenance of community co-ordination by the staff of the secondary schools was high and encouraging irrespective of all locality and type of management.

It was noticed that Designation, Age and Professional Qualification of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects but on the Gender, Locality, School Management, General Qualification and Teaching Experience category respondents differed significantly. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to the Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects than Rural and Urban area teachers.

Local body school teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects than Government and Private school teachers. Science Group qualified teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects than Arts group qualified teachers. 10 to 20 years Teaching Experienced teachers expressed high perceptions with respect to Parent / Community Co-ordination Aspects than Below 10 and Above 20 years Teaching Experienced teachers.

Thirteen schools (21%) had fallen in the category of “Moderate” level, whereas the remaining forty seven schools (79%) had fallen in the category of “High Effective” level. It shows that more than 79% schools are effective in the **Professional Competence** of Teachers at Secondary Level. It shows that majority of the teachers working in secondary schools possessing **Professional Competence**, irrespective of Type of Management, Locality and Experience. All the institutional teachers possessing High Effective rating towards professional competencies.

It was noticed that Designation, Age and Qualification of the respondents did not differ significantly towards Professional Competency of Teachers at Secondary Level but on the Gender, Locality, School Management and Teaching Experience category respondents differed significantly. Female teachers expressed high perceptions than Male teachers towards Professional Competency of Teachers. Tribal area teachers expressed high perceptions towards Professional Competency of Teachers than Rural and Urban area teachers. 10 to 20 years teaching experienced teachers expressed high perceptions towards Professional Competency of Teachers than Below 10 and Above 20 years teaching experienced teachers.

We can observe that more than 90% of the respondents perceived high towards the learner support for learning. They perceived high towards giving guidance to the learners academic progress, suggesting more for the improvement of academic abilities of the learners, and supporting to the needs by students by providing remedial actions etc., it was also noticed that more than 80% of the respondents perceived high towards conduct of co-curricular activities. Valuing the interest of the learners, usage of out of class time it is suggested that teachers must pay more attention towards the needs and interest of the students and also suggested to conduct more number of curricular activities at secondary level.

We can notice that more than 90% of the respondents perceived high towards the maintenance of effective learning environment. They perceived high, towards usage of low-cost and no-cost materials, conduct of experiment for the benefit of the learners, usage of ICT, allocation of time properly for the benefit of learning environment. It was also noticed that more than 80% of the respondents perceived high towards usage of variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students diverse needs, facilitating learning experiences for the promotion of autonomy to the learners. Hence, it is suggested that learner autonomy should be given in almost all the schools, though the teachers become perfect in all aspects, provision of learner autonomy and fulfilling the needs of student is essential and necessary at secondary level.

We can infer that more than 90% of the respondents perceived that they are understanding the subject matter and also organizing the subject matter suitable to the learners. It seems that, the teachers are possessing the subject knowledge competency and also possessing the competency in the pedagogical aspects. They are helping the students for the development of learning abilities. They observed the time frame also when dealing with the content.

We can notice that more than 90% of the respondents perceived that almost all the components in the planning for teaching aspects was high. It was noticed that almost all the teachers are competent in planning. It was noticed that the teachers are competent in planning day to day activities, and also the maintenance of records was high.

We can notice that the assessment practices at secondary level as perceived by teachers were encouraging. More than 90% of the respondents' perceived high perceptions towards observation of evaluation procedures, effective implementation of CCE, assessing the people performance by developing CCE methods, assessing the project activities and conducting action research works individually.

The perceptions of teachers towards professional aspect was encouraging. This study revealed that teachers are reflecting the academic issues and also pursuing opportunities for professional growth. They also serve as role models for the students of school level.

Encouragement from the parents for the maintenance of school and also for the maximum enrollment and reflection of students at school level is not encouraging. It needs attention, whereas maintenance of relationship with parents and staff participatory level of parents in the meetings, utilization of grants etc., are encouraging.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings derived from the study, it may be concluded that, teachers should in fact be knowledgeable basis. The teachers must possess, competencies, such as methodological, motivational, material usage, instructional evolution and maintenance of inter and intra relationships are the prerequisites for excellent Job Performance. Teacher competencies have become a focal point for motivation and commitment among teachers. Professionally competent teachers in the teaching and learning process may be a very good force of action in creation of instructional activities for the benefit of students, they are the valuable factors that will enhance the intellectual growth of both the teachers and the students. From the study it was noticed that, competent teachers providing all the instructional activities shows the sound knowledge of the content what they teach.

