



Cognitive Dissonance, Locus of Control, Self-efficacy and Academic Performance of Novice Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to find out whether teachers' locus of control is external / internal and their level of ability to bring out success on the part of the learners at Higher Secondary level into present context. The investigator will employ mixed methods of study. Few methods like in-depth open-ended interview method, normative survey method, case study method, exploratory research in which more open questioning technique will be used. Triangulation procedure will also be used to take meticulous data review gathered through diverse method to reach a more valid and accurate estimate for qualitative outcome to strengthen the present study. At the same time, whether the novice teachers prefer negative / positive cognitive element in their professional environment in the dissonance condition or tension state. If these aspects are Identified and Strengthened, the novice teachers will have cognitive consistency, which will be useful for them to survive in their profession and strengthen their activity in order to enhance the performance of novice teachers.

KEYWORDS

Cognitive Dissonance, locus of control, self-efficacy, novice teachers and performance

Introduction

School is an organized system in which pupils in various cultural backgrounds pursue their studies at different levels and receiving instructions from the teacher. In involving instructional activities, teachers have to plan their activities by making use of their abilities and capabilities to give effective teaching to the learners (Saravanakumar.AR, 2008). While giving effective teaching to enhance the performance of students, teacher behavior plays a vital role. Nowadays, teachers are being under stress in the present educational set up. That is there are in cognitive dissonance. The best way to avoid cognitive dissonance is to refrain from engaging in difficult discussions, to refrain from questioning things, and to refrain from considering opposing views. We should applaud those who are willing to engage in and overcome cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive Dissonance of Teachers

Teachers, who teach without adequate experience in school, encounter cognitive dissonance. Teachers who teach with lack of training and teachers who got enough skill training for a long time in teacher training institutions also face cognitive dissonance. Therefore, the cognitive dissonance is a psychological discomfort which is faced by novice teachers who enter in teaching profession. The experience that teachers face in professional environment is entirely different from what they have learnt in actual training programme. In this circumstance, the novice teachers find difficult to handle or tackle the situations which are problematic and they are forced to enter in emotional state and their cognitions are inconsistent.

Trends in Locus of Control

In recent decades, locus of control has become a more widely recognized and discussed concept in education. There are two main approaches that schools use when working with teachers who have an external locus of control. More structured, orderly and supportive classrooms and teaching environments are believed to benefit teachers with an external locus of control, while teachers with an internal locus of control often thrive in more unstructured learning environments. There are two locus of control teacher behavior, viz., external and internal. Internal locus of control insists that teacher himself is responsible for his own attitude or behavior whereas the external locus of control insist that the external factors control over his behavior. So, these external and internal factors are responsible for successful and

unsuccessful performance of the teacher to affect (or) develop students' performance.

Self-efficacy of Teachers

The effectiveness of socialization process in congenial social environment also reduces cognitive dissonance. When dissonance is reduced, the teachers' self-efficacy is promoted. The analysis can be done perfectly by effective and experienced teachers who can identify the real causes of these problems and tackle the situation by preferring positive cognitive elements such as sincerity, punctuality and ethical based activities etc., but novice teachers may find difficult to handle the professional environment and thereby they prefer cognitive elements and struggle a lot with frustration, mental stress, lack of harmony and difficult to work in a comfortable way and they enter into cognitive dissonance. When the occurrence of cognitive dissonance, that lesser, the teacher efficacy in promoting Learner performance.

Identification of Locus of Control, Self-efficacy of Teachers

The teachers' self perception in new professional environment must be in a positive direction. Otherwise, there will be cognitive dissonance. In order to avoid this situation, the investigator decided to identify the novice teachers' locus of control and self-efficacy to enhance students' outcomes. By knowing these psychological states, the investigator may suggest new innovative ideas in order to have cognitive consistency by changing the newly qualified teachers' cognition and their personal attitude in order to perform their professional activities in a successful way.

Need & Significance of the Study

Teachers' activities will always reflect on the society. If they perform well in a positive way, students get better results which in turn work out for the welfare of the future society. In teaching profession, newly qualified teachers face more conflicts. They suffer due to dissonance. In a profession like teaching, if teacher himself has cognitive dissonance, it would produce ineffective results in teaching – learning process (Saravanakumar.AR, 2008). This will harm the teacher, students and the whole society. Therefore, it must be given due concern. Mental hygiene of teachers must be maintained properly by providing corrective measures like changing dissonance into consonance. Therefore, the study is necessary in the present context. The study also focuses on locus of control and self-efficacy of newly qualified teacher. If novice teachers have internal locus of control, they

develop their ability and the level of ability will be used for bringing out the high level outcome also. In this way, the study may be a needed one in the present context.

Objectives of the Study

- The present study was taken up with the following objectives:
- To identify the level of cognitive dissonance among novice teachers.
 - To find out the locus of control of novice teachers, whether external or internal.
 - To find out the attitude of novice teachers – whether positive or negative.
 - To find out the self efficacy of novice teachers – whether high or low.
 - To find out the teacher performance in terms of academic achievement of students.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The process of drawing the elements from the population is called sampling. The composition of a sample is very important to draw conclusion of a research. A good sampling requires representativeness, adequacy, independence and homogeneity. In this research work, random sampling technique was used. Teachers handling higher secondary classes, within three years of experience were selected as sample for the study. Government, government, aided corporation and matriculation schools in and around from Coimbatore city were selected. Thus the sample size is comprised of 350 novice teachers who are presently serving in higher secondary schools, handling higher secondary classes, located in and around Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu State. Of the 350 novice teachers,148 male teachers and 202 female teachers handling Higher Secondary classes of Tamil Nadu State Board Syllabus.

Contributions of the Study

- The study directly deals with the attitude of teachers which is important in the field of education.
- It brings out the inner nature of the teachers towards their profession.
- It helps the newly qualified teachers to adapt themselves in their professional environment.
- It guides the teachers in converting the cognitive dissonance into cognitive consistency.
- The study will be conducted through the lived experiences of teachers that may help newly trained teachers to socialize in their professional environment.
- By suggesting, how to change their dissonance into consonance, the study may promote the mental health of teachers and in turn provides emotional intelligence which is a positive sign to their profession.
- The study may help removing drawbacks in the educational system. It helps the teachers to learn the teaching environment and makes them adapt the environment. Teachers are made to realize the practicality of environment.
- The study may guide the novice teachers to distinguish between mild and severe problems and teach how to handle the problems based on severity even though teachers have lack of experience.

Statistical techniques used

The researcher adopted both inferential and descriptive statistics.

For descriptive statistics mean, SD and Chi-square were used. For inferential statistics 't' test and ANOVA were used to verify the formulated hypotheses about the significant differences between the mean values of dimensions of cognitive dissonance and selected variables. Karl Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation was used to out the relationship among cognitive dissonance, locus of control, teacher attitude and self efficacy. Variables related to cognitive dissonance namely locus of control, teacher attitude and self-efficacy showed relationship among themselves. Hence the researcher proceeded with the analysis of data.

Table 1: 't' Test Results: Subject handled by novice teachers and Variables of Cognitive dissonance (Sample with high Cognitive Dissonance)

Variables	Subject				't' value	df	P value	Sig/Non sig
	Arts(111)		Science(153)					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Internal locus of control	43.14	2.19	44.13	2.80	3.116	262	0.002**	Sig
External locus of contro	47.26	5.95	49.33	5.44	2.937		0.004**	Sig
Attitude	66.26	4.45	65.66	4.28	1.098		0.273	Non sig
Self-efficacy	82.41	7.75	84.61	6.88	2.423		0.016*	Sig

Note: * P<05, ** P<01, *** p<001

The above table shows that't' values for the dimensions internal locus of control, , external locus of control and self efficacy of novice teachers 3.116,,2.937 and 2.423 respectively. These values are greater than the table value of 1.97at 5% significant level for df 262. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted for these variables. So there is significant difference between the mean values for the dimensions internal locus of control, external locus of control, ,and self efficacy of novice teachers and the selected variable namely subject handled by novice teacher who have perceived high level of cognitive dissonance. Comparatively (Science) novice teachers show slightly higher mean value for the dimensions external locus of control and self efficacy. The 't' value for the dimension teacher attitude is 1.098 for subject handled by novice teachers who have perceived high level of cognitive dissonance,. This value is less than the table value of 1.97 at 5% significant level for df 262. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted for this variable. So, there is no significant difference between the mean values for the dimension namely, teacher attitude with respect to subject handled by novice teacher who have perceived high level of cognitive dissonance.

Findings

Novice teachers were in cognitive dissonance often. But with the suggestions and guidance of seniors and friends, most of the novice teachers were found to change their dissonance into consonance. As per this study, attitude of novice teachers needs a better change though all other dimensions taken up in the study namely, internal locus of control and self efficacy are reported to be satisfactorily good. But none of these dimensions involved in the academic performance of teachers in terms of students' academic achievement. This indirectly indicates students seek some other means to score marks in examination.

Conclusion

In the light of present study, it is understood that existence of cognitive dissonance in human beings is universal and teachers are in no way an exception to this. Attitude of teacher have a direct correlation with teaching- learning process. Therefore to accomplish the goals of education, teacher attitude plays a dominant and crucial role in transforming students to a productive side. Ultimately, the teaching community is expected to prefer positive cognitive elements, think internally and enhance their self efficacy for the sake of students' uplift which would reflect in our nation's progress as a whole.

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