

RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHERS' AUTONOMY AND TEACHERS' WORK ACCOUNTABILITY WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Since independence, various commissions and committees have been focusing on teachers and the teaching-learning process in educational institutions. Several factors contribute to making teachers professionally competent, among them both teachers' autonomy and teachers' accountability. The important factors which directly affect the professional competence of teachers are that autonomy creates self-confidence and encourages teachers to be involved in the teaching-learning process to the maximum extent. An autonomous teacher is capable of creating autonomy (Friedman, 1999). It is a means of encouraging and strengthening the autonomy of teachers. NCF 2005 specifically mentioned that teachers' autonomy is essential to ensure a learning environment of freedom, flexibility and respect, the teacher should also it is required. Among the various internal factors affecting the professional competence of teachers, teacher accountability is another important factor which more or less affects the professional competence of every teacher. It is widely believed that teachers have to perform their duties effectively. Needs to be handled with full accountability. Every teacher should be accountable towards his teaching profession because the teacher is more responsible for the future of the student and the execution of all the academic work. And of course, quality education requires a professionally competent teacher and depends on the teacher's ethics and accountability to his profession. Research has shown that the more autonomy a teacher has, the greater his professional development will be, because gaining autonomy gives him the full potential to be more responsible towards his work and make the work productive. Thus when responsibility is realized the responsibility increases. Therefore, in this regard, teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability are very important factors for teachers' professional competence. The present study aims to study the relationship between teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability on the professional competence of secondary school teachers, in which 500 secondary school teachers of Bilaspur district have been selected as a sample. As a result of the study it was found that the relationship between professional competence of teachers and autonomy of secondary school teachers was found to be significant and there was very low relationship between the two, also a significant difference was found in the autonomy of teachers' assessment under teachers' autonomy and were correlated with each other whereas the remaining dimensions of teachers' autonomy were not found significant and were not correlated with each other. Secondly, with regard to teachers' professional competence and secondary school teachers' work accountability, accountability towards the principal and accountability towards colleagues were found to have no significant relationship with teachers' professional competence, whereas in the remaining dimensions of teachers' work accountability, significant differences were found and they were correlated with each other. Third and lastly, the combined significant contribution of teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability was found to be low in predicting the professional competence of secondary school teachers.

KEYWORDS: *Teachers' Professional Competence, Teachers' Autonomy, Teachers' Work Accountability, Autonomous Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

The professional competence of the teacher, which includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of teaching and learning, curricular knowledge, teaching experience, and professional competencies of teachers are a set of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that the teachers, by acquiring them, can help the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual fostering of learners in the course of education, and these competencies are classified in three cognitive, emotional and skill areas (Shulman, 1986; Grossman, 1995; Westera, 2001; Darling Hammond, 1999). Professional competencies of teachers are a set of knowledge, attitudes and skills that the teachers, by acquiring them. Teacher knowledge, motivational competencies, and beliefs are not in themselves enough to lead to teacher competence i.e. the ability to meet complex demands in a given context by mobilizing various psychosocial resources (cognitive, functional, personal and ethical). Professional competence of teachers can be defined as the teachers' capability to master their subjects in-depth and the way to appropriately deliver them to the students (BSNP, 2009; Hung, et al., 2007; Rusman, 2010). An autonomous teacher will reflect on his/her role and make changes to help learners become independent and autonomous. It is as an individual making choices without undue interference from external parties (Thavenius, 1999; McGrath, 2000; Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Huang & Benson, 2007; Nelsen, 2010; MacDonald, 2002; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000; Stoljar, 2013; Juntunen, 2015; Smith, 2000). Teachers' autonomy can be defined as teachers' planning, implementing their professional activities within certain restrictions, making preferences in terms of the organization of the working environment and participating in administrative processes, and empowering the teachers in relation to his/her authority and responsibilities. Autonomous teachers feel more confident in themselves in virtual learning environments. NCF-2005 states teachers' autonomy is essential for ensuring a learning environment that addresses children's diverse needs. As much as the learner requires space, freedom, flexibility, the teachers also requires the same. Currently, the system of administrative hierarchies and control, examinations, and centralized planning for curriculum reform stand as constraints in the path of autonomy of the school heads and teachers. Teachers' autonomy is not a static entity that some have while others do not. This is a dynamic situation that varies according to teachers' different areas of decision making and situational, personal, and external constraints. Even when they have curricular freedom, teachers do not believe that they have the authority to do things differently. Accountability dictates how teachers' professional practice is structured. Holding teachers accountable for their education is generally considered a part of professional professionalism. It is required in order to consider an occupation as professional and its implementation are put into practice in different ways to make up a distinctive characteristic of professionalism. Teachers' work accountability is an inseparable part of teachers' professionalism. It also includes a commitment to place the needs of the students at the centre (Poulson, 1998; Maphosa et al., 2012; Moller, 2009). Accountability is a delegation of responsibility for organizing activities in a certain manner or producing specific results. Hence, teachers' accountability can be defined as the responsibility of a teacher toward his or her students' performance. Accountability is "to render an account of, to explain and answer for" (Thurlow, 2009; Noriati et al., 2010; Wagner, 1989). Many factors contribute to making teachers professionally competent, from them the autonomy of teachers and the accountability of teachers are both important factors, which directly affect the professional competence of teachers, and teachers' autonomy means the right to freedom from control in the teaching profession and to develop their own teaching position freely without any obstacle. Research shown that the more autonomy a teacher has, the

greater his or her professional growth. By getting autonomy to the teacher, he will also be more responsible towards his work, because autonomy is given to him only to complete that work so that the teacher can use his/her full potential to make the work productive. In this way, when there is a sense of responsibility, there is an increase in the responsibility towards his/her work. Therefore, in this regard, teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability are very important factors for teachers' professional competence.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLES USED

- **Teachers' Professional Competence:** Professional competence of teachers refers to Teachers' Competence on the Subject Matter, Teachers' Teaching Innovation Competence, Teachers' Ethical Competence, Teachers' Future Building Competence, Teachers' Managerial Competence, and Teachers' Digital Competence, which were self-reported by secondary school teachers of Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state.
- **Teachers' Autonomy:** Teachers' Autonomy refers to Teachers' Teaching Autonomy, Teachers' Assessment Autonomy, Teachers' Professional Development Autonomy, Teachers' School Functioning Autonomy and the Teachers' Sense of Autonomy, which were self-reported by secondary school teachers of the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state.
- **Teachers' Work Accountability:** Teachers' Work Accountability refers to Accountability towards the organization, Accountability towards Principal, Accountability towards Pupils, Accountability towards Classroom Teaching, Accountability towards the Profession, Accountability towards Colleagues, and Accountability towards Society, which measured by a standardized scale as self-reported by secondary school teachers of the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state.
- **Secondary School Teachers:** Secondary school teachers refer to teachers appointed in government and private secondary schools recognized by CGBSE, Raipur, and CBSE, New Delhi in the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state, who were engaged in teaching and learning during the academic session 2021-22 to class 9th to class 10th students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following objectives are formulated:

- To study the correlation between teachers' professional competence and teachers' autonomy of secondary school teachers.
- To study the correlation between teachers' professional competence and teachers' work accountability of secondary school teachers.
- To study the combined relationship of teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability on the professional competence of secondary school teachers.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of objectives, following the hypotheses are formulated:

- **H01:** There is no significant correlation between Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Autonomy of secondary school teachers.
- **H02:** There is no significant correlation between Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Work Accountability of secondary school teachers.
- **H03:** There is no combined significant contribution of Teachers' Autonomy and Teachers' Work Accountability in predicting teachers' professional competence of secondary school teachers.

Method of the Study

Descriptive Survey Method Used.

Variables of the Study

The present study consists of three major variables 1. Teachers' Professional Competence (TPC) 2. Teachers' Autonomy (TA) 3. Teachers' Work Accountability (TWA)

The Population of the Study

The number of total secondary schools in Bilaspur district including 4 blocks (Bilha, Masturi, Takhatpur and Kota) and 78 clusters was 351, in which the total number of government and private secondary schools were 168 and 183 respectively. All secondary school teachers of 4 blocks and 78 clusters were considered as the population of the study.

Selected Sample

After getting a list of all the school teachers of Bilaspur District in Chhattisgarh state, the researcher selected a total sample of 500 teachers which comprised 250 private secondary school teachers and 250 government secondary school teachers from the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state.

Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling technique applied.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

For the fulfillment of the objectives of study, three tools were used.

- Teachers' Professional Competence Scale (TPCS)
- Teachers' Autonomy Scale (TAS)
- Teachers' Work Accountability Scale (TWAS)

The research tools used for data collection were Teachers' Professional Competence, Teachers' Autonomy and Teachers' Work Accountability, which were used step-wise in the study. In this study, two research tools namely Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Autonomy were constructed and one standardized tool i.e. Teachers' Work Accountability was used.

Statistical Techniques Used

- In order to compare the means, t-test and ANOVA were used.
- Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of correlation was applied to find out the correlation.
- Liner and multiple regression were used to find out the individual and combined influence of teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability on the professional competence of secondary school teacher.

HYPOTHESES WISE MAJOR FINDINGS

H01: There is no significant correlation between Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Autonomy of secondary school teachers.

Results Table: 1

Variables	n	df	r	Results	Findings
1. Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Autonomy	500	498	0.092*	Significant	Very Low Correlation
2. Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Assessment Autonomy (TAA)	500	498	0.133	Significant	Correlated
3. Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Teaching Autonomy (TTA)	500	498	0.043	Not Significant	Not Correlated
4. Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Professional Development Autonomy (TPDA)	500	498	0.067	Not Significant	Not Correlated
5. Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' School Functioning Autonomy (TSFA)	500	498	0.056	Not Significant	Not Correlated
6. Teachers' Professional Competence And Teachers' Sense of Autonomy (TSA)	500	498	0.015	Not Significant	Not Correlated

H02: There is no significant correlation between teachers' professional competence and teachers' work accountability of secondary school teachers.

Results Table: 2

Variables	n	df	r	Results	Findings
1. Teachers' Professional Competence and Teachers' Work Accountability	500	498	0.175**	Significant	Correlated
2. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards the Organization	500	498	0.167	Significant	Correlated
3. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards Society	500	498	0.093	Significant	Correlated
4. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards Pupils	500	498	0.157	Significant	Correlated
5. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards Classroom Teaching	500	498	0.115	Significant	Correlated
6. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards the Profession	500	498	0.167	Significant	Correlated
7. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards Colleagues	500	498	0.065	Not Significant	Not Correlated
8. Teachers' Professional Competence and Accountability towards the Principal	500	498	0.077	Not Significant	Not Correlated

H03: There is no combined significant contribution of teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability in predicting teachers' professional competence of secondary school teachers.

Results Table 3

Model Summary^b

Table 3(a)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.187 ^a	.035	.031	9.42896

a Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL-TWA, TOTAL-TA

b Dependent Variable : TOTAL-TPC

ANOVA^b

Table 3(b)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1602.670	2	88.905	9.013	.000 ^a
Residual	441852.912	497	801.335		
Total	45788.582	499			

a. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL-TWA, TOTAL-TA

b. Dependent Variable : TOTAL-TPC

Table 3(c)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	285.738	10.318		27.694	.000
TOTAL –TA	.074	.050	.067	1.491	.137
TOTAL – TWA	.235	.064	.165	3.694	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TOTAL-TPC

H03-Findings: There is a low significant contribution of teachers' autonomy and teachers' work accountability in predicting teachers' professional competence in secondary school teachers.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Implications of the study are as follows:

- Future researchers can use this standardized instruments of teachers' professional competence scale and teachers' autonomy scale in their research work.
- An induction programme may be conducted to sensitize teachers about the importance of the professional competence of teachers.
- Teachers need to be encouraged to discuss their teaching professional problems with all faculty members and peers, this will help teachers to become aware of their autonomy in their profession.

- Teachers should be given continuous professional development training, this will help in improving professional and multidimensional competence among school teachers which will strengthen the quality of intellectual human resources.
- Seminars, conferences, research orientations, tool presentations, and synopsis presentations should be organized at regular intervals of time, these will help the teachers to share their field experiences, and problems faced in their teaching profession.
- This study will provide some useful information regarding teachers' professional competence, teachers' autonomy, and teachers' work accountability among teachers. Etc.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Important suggestions for future research are given below:

- A similar study may be conducted on B.Ed, M.Ed, teacher educators, and faculty members of Diploma, Graduate, and Master Levels.
- A similar study may be conducted through longitudinal design.
- A study may be conducted on the availability of support services and their impact on the promotion of research culture in higher education institutions.
- A study may be conducted on the identification and alteration of teachers' professional competence concerning some demographic variables for developing prospective teachers into effective teachers.
- A study may be conducted by taking other correlates of teachers' professional competence, teachers' autonomy, and teachers' work accountability separately. Etc.

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