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IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS ON THE COMPETENCIES OF THE TEACHERS: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA.

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Abstract:

When we look to improve the overall growth and performance of the primary school going children in a systems approach, it is evident that the most important determinants comprise several entities like parents, teachers, peers, school environment and the child itself. Improvement in the quality of primary education, to a large extent, is linked to the quality of teaching and this in turn depends on the competencies possessed by the teachers. This research endeavor is an attempt to explore the relationship between the socioeconomic/demographic factors and the competencies possessed by the teacher. For the purposes of the present study, the necessary data was collected from 76 primary school teachers drawn from different schools in Davanagere district of Karnataka state. A pretested structured questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher during the period September 2013 to November 2013.

The results show that teachers assign very high ratings to the need for 'acting as role models for their students' and gender does not play a significant role in determining this perception. Further, it was found that the variables like experience, gender, religion and the place of residence have no impact on the teachers' perceptions about their own roles and the competencies they possess. The study also reveals that place of residence of a teacher has no impact on the way they perceive the importance of demonstrating the experiments in the class. Further, the study reveals that religion has no bearing on teachers' perception about 'understanding the learning speed of a student and modifying teaching methodology accordingly'.

KEY WORDS:

Teacher, Competency, Role.

INTRODUCTION

The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. Education Commission, 1964-66.

This was how the Education Commission described the role of education in socio-economic transformation of India. It is not surprising at all that this observation still holds, even in the present, vastly transformed educational ecosystem which is extant in India. In an ideal sense, the teacher is an example of knowledge, loyalty, perseverance and integrity. She is a model for behavior, attitudes and values from the

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standpoint of the students. Students learn as substantively from the invisible curriculum, – the lives of the teacher, more pertinently in the classrooms and the school environment, - as from the visible curriculum which prescribes and regulates the teaching-and-learning within classrooms.

The competencies possessed by the teachers enable the creation of a professional and effective environment which ensures best teaching practices. Competent teachers can contribute towards building systems, designing policies and procedures to ensure and maintain high quality learning atmosphere that leads to better performance. The need for attaining and building on the competencies has increased for all teachers in today's challenging teaching environment. There is a sense of acute urgency on the part of the policymakers to both expand and deepen the deliverable competencies among the primary school teachers. In this regard the present research is an effort to study whether socioeconomic and demographic variables like gender, age, experience, religion and the place of residence, inter-alia impact the competencies that a teacher possesses.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study aims at investigating the level of teaching competencies possessed by the teachers and their perceived importance among primary school teachers. The objectives of the study are to investigate the relationship between socio economic and demographic variables like age, gender, place of residence, length of service, religion on the one hand and teaching competencies like understanding the local culture, demonstrating the experiments and ability to modify teaching methodology based on the learning speed of the children on the other among the primary school teachers of Davanagere district of Karnataka state.

METHODOLGY:

The research design is descriptive in nature and an attempt has been made using the same to explain the competencies of the teacher. The population of the research was, all the teachers who teach primary classes and reside in Davanagere district during the period of study. Primary data was collected through personally administered structured questionnaire. The variables investigated are; Gender; Age; Religion; Place of residence and Length of Teaching Experience. Response for competency was collected on five point Likert Scale ranging from least important to most important. A sample was selected by using stratified sampling technique for selection of schools and the selection of individual teacher was made by simple random sampling technique. 100 questionnaires were distributed to the teachers, out of which 24 were invalidated due to incomplete response after preliminary screening. 76 questionnaires were used for data analysis. Data was analyzed by using SPSS and excel spread sheet for the testing of hypotheses.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The acquisition, up- gradation and sustenance of the required competencies by a teacher directly depend upon his/her perception regarding the need for a teacher to act as a role model for his/her students. Being at an abstract 'state of mind' level metric, one would expect that the strength of perception regarding this aspect is likely to be high. The study attempted to investigate whether there was a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers regarding this perceived role of a teacher.

Hypothesis 01:

Ho: There is no significant difference between the male and female teachers in terms of their perceived importance regarding *teachers' necessity to act as role models for the students*.

Table no: 1 Group statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Male	41	4.927	.264	.042
Female	35	4.829	.384	.067

Source: Primary data

Table no: 2 Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Role model Equal Variances not assumed	7.378	.008	1.319	74	.191	.098	.075	-.050	.247
Equal Variances not assumed			1.282	58.94	.205	.098	.077	-.055	.252

Source: Primary data

To test for the difference between the male and female teachers, an independent samples t - test was conducted using the SPSS platform. The results are reported in tables -1 and 2. At 95% significance level, the 'p' value stood at 0.191, with equal variances assumed; it was slightly higher at 0.205, when equal variances' state was not assumed.

This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the male and female teachers with regards to the perceptions about the need to act as role models for their students. Another noteworthy result is that the degree of importance attached to this metric by the teachers under study was very high, with the mean scores reaching almost the upper limit of 5 (mean values of 4.927 for male teachers and 4.829 for female teachers).

Hypothesis 02:

Another important aspect that was investigated into was the relationship between the *length of experience* of the teachers and the strength of their *perceived importance of the knowledge about local culture* as an essential teacher competency. For this purpose, the teachers were categorized into 3 groups, namely: a) “Beginners” having an experience of less than 10 years; b) “Moderately experienced”, having an experience of between 11 and 20 years; and, c) “Highly Experienced”, having an experience of more than 20 years.

Ho: The length of experience and the perceived importance of local culture as an element of competency are independent. One-way Anova test was employed for the purpose of testing this hypothesis using the MS-Excel spreadsheet application. The results are reported in tables 3 and 4.

Table no :3 Summary

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Beginners	20	88	4.4	0.568
Moderately experienced	44	176	4	0.558
Highly experienced	12	48	4	0

Source: Primary data

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Table no :4 ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	2.358	3	1.179	2.473	0.091	3.122
Within Groups	34.800	73	0.477			
Total	37.158	76				

Source: Primary data

The results of the Anova test, as reported in the relevant tables, indicate that there is no significant difference between the three groups on this aspect. The 'p' value of .091 is greater than the significance value of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis that "The length of experience and the perceived importance of local culture as an element of competency are independent." is accepted.

Hypothesis 03:

Demonstrating the experiments is one of the essential competencies that a teacher must possess, since the teaching becomes more effective and the learning process becomes faster than in the traditional teaching. In order to explore the perception of the teacher towards this competency and its relationship with the place of residence, the teachers were categorized into three groups depending on where they reside: a) "Village"; b) "Town"; and, c) "City".

Ho: There is no significant difference between place of teachers' residence and their perception about importance of demonstrating the experiments.

Table no :5 ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value
Between Groups	0.205	2	0.102	0.326	0.723
Within Groups	22.901	73	0.314		
Total	23.105	75			

Source: Primary data

Table no: 6 Conducting Experiments Descriptives

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower	Upper
Village	32	4.281	.457	.081	4.117	4.446
Town	13	4.385	.650	.180	3.992	4.778
City	31	4.387	.615	.111	4.161	4.613
Total	76	4.341	.555	.064	4.215	4.469

Source: Primary data

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The results of one way anova are presented in table 5 and 6. The results show that there is no significant difference between these three groups. The 'p' value for 95% confidence level 0.723 is greater than the significance value of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted, implying that there is no significant difference between the teacher's place of residence and their perception about importance of demonstrating the experiments to the students.

Hypothesis 04:

Another competency that the researcher attempted to investigate about was whether the religion of a teacher has an impact on the ability to modify his/her teaching methodologies based on the perceived learning speed of the student. Out of 76 respondents, 52 teachers belonged to "Hindu" religion and the rest of 24 belonged to "Muslim" religion. These two religions accounted for the entire strength of the respondents. The null hypothesis is formulated as below:

Ho: The religion of teachers and their ability to modify teaching methodology based on their perceptions regarding the learning speed of students are independent.

To test this particular hypothesis an independent samples t- test was conducted using the SPSS. The results are reported in tables - 7 and 8. At 95% confidence level, the 'p' value stood at 0.090, with equal variances assumed; it was slightly higher at 0.092, when equal variances' state was not assumed.

This implies that there is no statistically significant difference between the teachers belonging to either of the religions, with regards to the perceptions about understanding the learning speed of a student and modifying the teaching methodologies accordingly. Also the degree of importance attached to this metric by the teachers of both the religions under study was reasonably high, with the mean scores of 4.3077 for teacher belonging to Hindu religion and 4.0000 for Muslim religion teachers.

Table no: 7 Group statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Hindu	52	4.308	.729	.101
Muslim	24	4.000	.722	.147

Source: Primary data

Table no: 8 Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Learning speed	1.984	.163	1.716	74	.090	.308	.179	-.049	.665
Equal Variances not assumed			1.721	45.183	.092	.308	.179	-.0523	.668

Source: Primary data

CONCLUSION:

The study made an effort to understand whether the variables like length of experience, gender,

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place of residence and religion have an impact on the way teachers perceive their roles and competencies. All the teachers under the present study have high scores in competency. The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the importance given to the need for acting as role models for their students between the male and female teachers. Also they give same degree of perceived importance for demonstrating the experiments to the students. Further the study revealed that length of the service does not have any impact on their perception about understanding the local culture as one of the essential competencies and similarly religion of a teacher has no impact on understanding the learning speed of a student and modifying their teaching methodologies accordingly.

It is evident from the findings of the present research work that the teachers are competent and there is no significant impact of socioeconomic variables on the competencies and perceived roles. The present findings are a positive reflection on the state of affairs in the formative stages of teachers' training institutions and also on the prevailing environment of the schools both of which appear to be quite secular. This has resulted in teachers belonging to various socio economic and demographic categories to manifest higher levels of perceived competencies across all categorizations considered in the present study.

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