



## **TEACHERS' COMMITMENT: AN OVERVIEW**

**Shweta Tripathi**

*Research Scholar, School of Education, D.A.V.V, Indore*

### **Abstract**

*'Commitment' is a powerful word. Teachers' Commitment is the key factor that influences the teaching- learning process. It is the psychological identification of the individual teacher with the learner, the subject matter and the objectives of teaching. Some teachers see their commitment as part of their professional identity, it defines them and their work and they 'get a lot of enjoyment from this' (Elliott and Crosswell, 2001). Other teachers' feel the demands of teaching to be significant, requiring great personal investment and view it as a job that can 'take over your life' (cited in Nias, 1981). These teachers often limit their commitment and their engagement with the school, as a means of survival. In some cases, these teachers choose to leave the profession altogether. No matter what the age is, the role of a teacher cannot be underestimated. Hence, things that affect the performance of a teacher, and in turn, the quality of education. At present it is felt that there is a decline in the quality of teaching. It is high time for empirically testing and analyzing the interface between commitment among teachers and their performance. It is indeed, the need of the hour. The present study explored the pervasive, yet often elusive, construct of commitment in educational environment setting.*



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### **Introduction**

It evokes many images such as a prison, a factory, and a church. What do they have in common? Etzioni (1961, 1964) called them distinct, alternate forms of commitment. Whether by physical coercion, material remuneration, or symbolic norms, commitment is drawn from all people as they move into the mainstream of social life. One major sector of society that incorporates "the ranks of the committed" is the workplace.

'Commitment' is a term that teachers frequently use in describing themselves and each other (Nias, 1981). It is a word used to distinguish those who are 'caring', 'dedicated' and who 'take the job seriously' from those who 'put their own interests first'. Some teachers see their commitment as part of their professional identity, it defines them and their work and they 'get a lot of enjoyment from this' (Elliott and Crosswell, 2001). Other teachers' feel the demands of teaching to be significant, requiring great personal investment and view it as a job that can 'take over your life' (cited in Nias, 1981). These teachers often limit their commitment and

their engagement with the school, as a means of survival. In some cases, these teachers choose to leave the profession altogether. For these reasons, Teachers' Commitment has been found to be a critical predictor of teachers' work performance, absenteeism, burnout and turnover, as well as having an important influence on students' achievement in, and attitudes toward school (Firestone, 1996; Graham, 1996; Louis, 1998; Tsui and Cheng, 1999). Commitment is part of a teacher's affective or emotional reaction to their experience in a school setting (Ebmeier and Nicklaus, 1999). It can be seen to be part of a learned behaviour or attitude associated with the professional behaviour of teachers. From these affective reactions to the school setting, teachers make decisions (both consciously and subconsciously) about their level of willingness to personally invest to that particular setting, or particular group of students. The present study explored the pervasive, yet often elusive, construct of commitment in educational environment setting.

### **Types of Commitment**

Teaching is classified as profession. Teaching is no simply an occupation aimed at making money for livelihood but it is a social service for national development. A teacher should be permanently committed to his work. Those who have chosen teaching as profession, acquire necessary knowledge and skills with no personal likes and dislikes. Professional commitment means, —the feeling of devotion among the people of a gathering towards their calling.

In order to complete this study of commitment, it was necessary to develop a structural framework to address three main areas of investigation. These areas included conceptual, instrumental, and relational issues that would provide both direction and outcomes for the study. Conceptual Issues- The concept of commitment in the workplace has been a phenomenon of ongoing interest to researchers (Stevens, Beyer, & Trice, 1978; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Mowday & Sherman 1981). There has been, however, "a general lack of agreement concerning how best to conceptualize and measure" commitment (Mowday et al., 1979). Stevens et al. (1978) referred to the presence of "both overlap and ambiguity with regard to competing concepts of commitment". Morris and Sherman (1981) concurred that a common theoretical framework was lacking. In their view, "a central issue becomes that of the difference in concepts (and thus measures) of organizational commitment that exist among researchers". Morrow (1983) identified commitment as a multi-dimensional concept. A number of researchers have attempted to distinguish between the meanings that teachers have ascribed to the word commitment (Becker, 1960; Lortie, 1975; Lacey, 1977; Woods,

1979; Nias, 1981; Tyree, 1996). Becker (1960) and Lacey (1997) define commitment as the investment in a particular career, in this case teaching. Whereas, Lortie (1975) regards commitment as the willingness an individual enacts in investing personal resources to the teaching task. Teacher commitment, like organisational commitment, is conceptualised as being multi-dimensional (Nias, 1981).

One distinction made in the workplace has been organizational commitment and professional commitment (Morrow & Goetz, 1988; Bartol, 1979; Norris & Niebuhr, 1983; Aranya & Ferris, 1984; Blau, 1989). Organizational commitment is defined by Porter, Steer, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) as “The individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization.” This identification and involvement can be characterized by a) “a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values” b) “a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization” c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership”. Mowday, Steer, and Porter (1979) claim that a commitment by an employee happens over a substantial amount of time. During this time, the employee comes to identify themselves with the organization and organizational goals. Obviously, the impact of organizational commitment in a school setting easily correlates. A desirable teacher is one who identifies with the school, adopts school goals as their own, and is willing to put forth extra effort (Hoy and Tarter, 1989). Mowday, et al., (1979) made the connection between organizational commitment and overall effectiveness. The Organizational Commitment began to receive greater attention from the early 60 of last century (Klein, Molloy, & Cooper, 2009). Since then it has been defined and measured in various ways, having many authors opted to formulate their own conceptualization of the construct and proposed specific measuring instruments (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Morrow, 1983; Reichers, 1985). At present there is no agreed definition of Organizational Commitment (Klein, Molloy, & Cooper, 2009) although multidimensional approaches, which argue that this construct is comprised of several components, have wider acceptance. It is in these that the model of three components of the Commitment of Meyer and Allen fits (1991, 1997), it is developed with the goal of integrating the one-dimensional dominant conceptualizations. According to Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) Organizational Commitment is a state of mind that characterizes the relationship of specific nature between the contributor and the Organization, and has implications on its decision to continue or not in the Organization.

The nature of this relationship can be affective, normative and calculative, constituting these three types of relationship, represented by the three components of Organizational Commitment: affective, normative and calculative. In this context, employees with a strong affective Commitment remain in the organization because they want to; normative remain in the organization because of the sense of duty or of moral obligation; calculative remain in the organization because they need to (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). This is how the Organizational Commitment is considered a bond resulting from the intensity of the three components that integrate: affective, normative and calculative (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Klein, Molloy, & Cooper, 2009). Despite the weaknesses that are identified, in particular, the high relationship between the affective and normative components and possible two-dimensional nature of calculative component (Klein et al., 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Rego & Souto, 2004), the model of Three-component of Organizational Commitment has been one of the models that have featured more stable and consistent results in a plethora of empirical studies.

Another term is professional commitment. Although professional Commitment has been the subject of a smaller number of studies compared to Organizational Commitment, it was referenced during the 50s of last. Until the early 90s of last century Professional Commitment was approached essentially from a one-dimensional perspective, having been conceived as a bond of affectionate nature towards the profession. Professional Commitment is defined by Lee, Carswell and Allen (2000) as “the psychological connection between an individual and his profession, based on affective reaction of the individual towards this profession”. As Organizational Commitment, Professional Commitment also evolved from a one-dimensional perspective for a multidimensional approach, mainly through the generalization of the profession of measures designed to study the organizational commitment. It was in this context that Meyer and colleagues (1993) expanded the model of Three-components of the Organizational Commitment of Meyer and Allen (1991) to a professional context. The results obtained from a sample of nursing students and nurses have revealed that the measurements of the three components included in the Professional Commitment - affective, calculative and normative - differed among themselves, as well as the three components - affective, calculative and normative - included in the Organizational

Commitment. These revelations could support the thesis that we were in the presence of two independent constructs (distinguished), although related to each other. Professional Commitment began to receive greater attention, particularly as a result of the rapid transformations of the economy and the world of work and its reflexes in the workers' professional pathways. According to Meyer (2009), in a context of high instability a growing importance of other forms of commitment in the workplace is expected, in addition to the Organizational Commitment. Dealing with uncertainty and with the difficulty of working life leads workers to redefine their commitment targets, causing them to look beyond the Organization and to carefully consider the nature and limits of their connection to the Organization and, in some cases, redirect their emotional energy to the profession.

Another distinction has been between professional commitment and union commitment (Shankar, 1985; Benveniste, 1987; Jarausch, 1990). A third distinction has been made between organizational commitment and union commitment (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, & Spiller, 1980; Reichers, 1985). Michael E. Gordon and colleagues (1980) defined union commitment as a member's identification with and involvement in a particular union, and operationalized the definition in terms of three related components:

1. A strong desire to remain a member of the union
2. A willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the union
3. A definite belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the union

### **Factors Effecting Teachers' Commitment**

Teacher commitment may be enhanced or diminished by factors such as student behaviour, school and administrative support, parental demands, and national education policies. Evidence presented at the UNESCO International Conference on Education in 1996 suggests that reform policies in many countries in recent years have led to deterioration in the working conditions of teachers, in turn producing demoralization, abandonment of the profession, absenteeism, and a negative impact on the quality of education offered to students (Tedesco, 1997). Among the different segments, the fulfilment an instructor derives from his work and the establishment he achieves is the essential one. Work satisfaction characteristics (1) Satisfaction with promotional opportunities (2) Satisfaction with work itself (3) Satisfaction with co-workers (4) Satisfaction with supervisor (5) Satisfaction with pay, are important determinants of

teacher's commitment. Satisfaction with promotional opportunities was the best predictor of commitment (Rabi S. Bhagat and Marilyn B. Chassie, Jan., 1981). Promotion can make a huge increment in the pay an employee and in addition in the traverse of authority and control. The employees feel that they are being perceived by their own association as a powerful supporter and in this manner, will be happier with their employment. The relationship of satisfaction with pay to professional commitment is quite straightforward. Pay has long been considered one of the most important organizational rewards because it allows employees to obtain other rewards. The study done by Christian Vandenberghe (2008) shows that the effect of pay satisfaction on intended turnover is fully mediated by affective commitment and perceived sacrifice commitment. Pay satisfaction is also significantly related to normative commitment but the latter has no significant influence on the outcome. Satisfaction is the essential indicator of how profoundly the representative esteems participation in the organisation. Since supervisors make a significant part of the workplace of their subordinates, involves an essential position in the association with whom the educators must connect on everyday schedule, they may be portrayed as speaking to the association, to educators and as interceding the trust and constancy which representatives ascribe to the association.

It is well said that intrinsic motivation is enduring in nature. One who discovers delight in doing his work and is infatuated with his work won't require whatever other motivation to remain focused on his work. Same applies to the arena of teaching. If a teacher finds sheer intrinsic enjoyment in the subject matter and has the feeling of viability in having accomplished something admirably, he will stay focused on his work. The ideal motivation in teaching is intrinsic-to discover delight, fulfilment, and even satisfaction in the classroom. It is ordinary that when an educator gets poor student rating, the negative impact on his mentality might be great to the point that he/she may attempt to shed his calling or to protect against the danger by precluding the legitimacy and questioning the students rating, or may decide on minimum contribution in his calling and keep up his separation.

Extraneous inspiration however not as viable as natural inspiration, lays awesome effect on the execution of people. Commitment to a role-identity such as teaching can also be based on the anticipation of extrinsic rewards-e.g., money, recognition, awards, favours, and other benefits associated with teaching. In like manner, educator viability is probably going to be upgraded by the renown that is picked up from being referred to as a "decent instructor" by

students and associates. It is apparent that these extrinsic satisfactions reflect a response from others. With a lack of recognition for effective teaching, faculty members are likely to withdraw self-investment from teaching and find satisfaction in other activities apart from his profession such as social service, political activities etc.

Steers (1977) found significant interrelationships between measures of perceived job characteristics and employees' commitment. That is, commitment was influenced by the nature and quality of employees work experiences with an organization.

One approach is a consideration of professional commitment in terms of exchange or reward-cost notions. Here, the emphasis is on the bargaining or exchange relationships between the individual and the organization the more positive the exchange from the member's view indicate, the more prominent his dedication the framework. On the off chance that a teacher will feel that the reward he is getting from his calling completely legitimizes the penances that he is making to meet the obligations that accompanies his calling, at that point it is common that he will feel fulfilled and henceforth dedicated towards his work.

Authors have additionally contended that an absence of strain and uncertainty in the execution of responsibility could be appropriately viewed as an authoritative resource (an organizational asset. It can similarly be argued that the existence of role tension and uncertainty results in the increased attractiveness of extra organizational alternatives (Alutto, 1969) and, consequently, decreased commitment towards their work. The importance of role-related variables such as the significance of part related factors, for example, years in the association, work/part over-burden, and experienced part struggle as vital indicators of worker responsibility regarding the association.

Some researchers have emphasized individual differences in the determination of commitment. Background variables as gender, level of education, or team size were found to be related to three forms of commitment. Steers (1977) noted that age has been found to be positively associated and education negatively associated with commitment. The significance of occupation qualities, for example, criticism, assignment, personality, and the idea of social collaboration in the forecast of authoritative duty can't be disregarded. At the point when an instructor clarifies a topic in his classroom he searches for a positive input from his understudies, in his liberality in extracurricular exercises too he expects criticism from his understudies and associates, and keeping in mind that an educator releases his authoritative obligations productively he expects a thankfulness from his seniors. Without

criticism, an instructor feels demotivated and his energy level reductions fundamentally affecting his work and subsequently affecting his dedication level as well.

While discussing commitment of teachers we cannot ignore organizational Sex role-related characteristics on commitment like (1) Role stress (2) Number of working hours (3) Number of children actively caring for (4) Number of social and work related roles. Sex and conjugal status have an impact in decision of calling. Hitched ladies go for the kind of transporter which give them adequate time to contribute at home. Females decide on serene and secure natured occupations. Women see higher costs joined to leaving an association than single, unattached people. Ladies representatives look for appearance of connection related needs with regards to their utilizing work associations; their requirement for alliance would be decidedly identified with hierarchical duty. Conjugal status was prescient of hierarchical responsibility in ladies.

Personal characteristics (1) Need for achievement (2) Need for affiliation (3) Age (4) Education. Sharma (2008) made a comparative analysis of the commitment among teachers regarding some of their personal and academic variables such as age, gender, faculty, qualifications. It was found that teachers temperamentally characterized as conscientious, rule-bound, venturesome, socially bold, trusting, adaptable, practical, regulated by external realities, controlled, high in self-concept control; and having home, health, emotional and occupational adjustment were more likely to be more committed to their profession. It has been for the most part noticed that youngsters like changing starting with one occupation then onto the next for their professional success though old ones like to stay focused on their association. Youngsters continue upgrading their instructive capability for special open doors though the old ones have restricted extension for the same. Levels of relational trust uncover the degree to which people see their social condition as favourable, helpful, or inviting. The less an organization is seen in these terms, the less is likely to be the commitment among their employees towards their profession. Sheldon (1971) found that opportunities for social interaction correlated positively with feelings of commitment. Responsibility conduct is propelled generally by the degree to which different vital needs are showed amid a connection procedure with the association. Individual attributes set would be decidedly identified with hierarchical duty despite the typical discoveries of the negative connection amongst training and worker responsibility regarding the association.

One's commitment to teaching can be reinforced by collegial relations, mutual esteem, and the quest for community that constitute the ideal of academic life. Social support is also frequently problematic for the teacher vis a vis students. The affective domain is essential for a mutually satisfying relationship between teacher and students.

Background factors such as father's occupation have been shown to affect professional commitment. Colombotos' finding (1962) of a direct relationship between a family's socioeconomic status and commitment to professional norms, for example, suggests that commitment towards an employing organization also can vary as a function of blue versus white collar origins.

Educating is delegated calling. Educating is not just an occupation meant for profiting from job. It is a social administration for national improvement. An educator ought to be all time focused on his work. With the heightening demands and new difficulties characteristic in the current instructive atmosphere, being a dedicated educator is additionally evolving. It has turned out to be basic to increase advance understanding into educator duty because of its nearby relationship with ideas, for example, nature of instructing, instructor flexibility, instructor participation, educator burnout, instructor's maintenance, hierarchical "wellbeing" of the school, understudy demeanour and learning results. We can see educator responsibility as a speculation of "additional" time and instructor duty as engagement with the school group. Because of asset, time and space imperatives, every one of the issues can't be incorporated here henceforth there stays significantly more untouched extensions to be examined in such perspective. The real fundamental rule here is to build the striking nature of instructing as an expert attempt and to put on the impact that some individual considerations. The major basic principle here is to increase the salience of teaching as a professional endeavour and to put on the effect that somebody cares.

### **Results of Teacher Commitment**

Regarding results or outcomes, commitment has been significantly and negatively associated with turnover and, to a lesser extent, with other withdrawal behaviours, such as decreased performance and increased absenteeism and tardiness.

1. A committed teacher is likely to be less tardy, work harder, and be less inclined to leave the workplace than a non committed teacher.
2. A committed teacher is more likely to devote more time in extracurricular activities to accomplish the goals of the organization than is a non committed teacher.

3. It is also likely that committed teacher will perform his job better than non committed ones.
4. Students who work with a committed teacher will outperform students who work with an uncommitted teacher.
5. Moreover, students' achievement and their affective characteristics will be more positive than those of students working with an uncommitted teacher.

Thus, teacher commitment is likely to influence the level of performance of both students and teachers themselves. All in all, committed teachers will believe and act upon the goals of the school exert effort that go beyond personal interest, and intend to remain members of the school system.

### **Importance of Commitment**

Practitioners and researchers stress the importance of a loyal committed work force. Individuals who are committed represent a more stable, consistent body of employees, who will exert effort when work conditions are not ideal. With a recent trend towards a decline in loyalty across many levels and types of employees, commitment has become an increasingly important issue for all types of organizations. Mowday, et.al. (1982) indicate that the linkage between the individual employee and the organization leads to (a) a strong belief and acceptance of the organizations goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a strong desire to maintain organizational membership.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers are important pillars of the educational system of any nation. They are considered to be the Nation Builders. To perform such a heavy task they have to be physically, mentally, economically and socially balanced. Only then can they provide an effective teaching and learning process. Teaching requires effective as well as qualitative improvement for the betterment of learners. At present it is felt that there is a decline in the quality of teaching. Recent research in the field of education reflects that though the quality, competency, dedication and commitment in teachers are showing upward trends, they are not being able to discharge their duties in a right manner or effectively.

We have a long history and tradition of value-based, self-sufficient and commitment oriented system of education in our country. According to the Rigveda: "Education is something which makes man self-reliant and selfless". The Upanishad insists on "Education for mental

liberation”. Bhagavad Gita: “Nothing is more purifying on earth than knowledge/ wisdom”. We have moved on from industrial age to knowledge age and then to information age. No matter what the age is, the role of a teacher cannot be underestimated. Kothari Commission (1964) and UNESCO have equivocally stressed the importance of the role of teachers in nation building. Teachers are expected to positively influence children’s behaviour in various ways (Cohen, 2012, Higgins D' Alessandro 2002). Hence, things that affect the performance of a teacher, and in turn, the quality of education need to be addressed. “Good teaching is to do with good teachers’ values, identities, moral purposes, attitudes to learning, their caring and commitment..... and their passion” ( Day, 2004). Teachers’ Commitment is the key factor that influences the teaching- learning process. It is the psychological identification of the individual teacher with the learner, the subject matter and the objectives of teaching. Besides, his/her intention to maintain organizational membership and become involved in the job well beyond personal interest is also desirable. Teachers’ Commitment has been found to decrease progressively over the course of their teaching career (Fraser, Draper & Taylor,1998). At the beginning of a teachers' career, there is an early stage of commitment to teaching associated with the choice of professional identity, followed by a stage of experimentation and search for new challenges, teachers often experience a stage of conservatism and which can lead to eventual disengagement (Huberman, 1993). This transition from an enthusiastic engagement with the profession to a more distanced and limited involvement, reduces a teacher's willingness to reform classroom practice, engagement in whole school initiatives and levels of participation in extra-curricular activities. A decrease in commitment levels during the course of the teaching career is also problematic in relation to the retention of experienced teachers in the classroom. It is high time for empirically testing and analyzing the interface between commitment among teachers and their performance. It is indeed, the need of the hour.

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