

STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM AND COMMITMENT TO WORK AMONG TUNISIAN TEACHERS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND THEORETICAL TEACHING SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to specify the relationship between global self-esteem and commitment to work among teachers of physical education and theoretical subjects in the high school according to the age, seniority at work and gender. The sample constituted of 136 secondary school teachers from the region of Tunis (Tunisia), among those 58 teachers of physical education and 78 teachers of theoretical subjects participated in this study. The scale of self-esteem developed by Rosenberg (1965), and the commitment in the teaching translated and adapted by Alem, Bujold and Bertrand (2003) was used to collect the data. The obtained data were subjected to student's t test for comparison of independent averages and the Pearson correlation coefficient. The results showed that all teachers have a high level of self-esteem. The level of commitment to the work of almost all teachers is average (27 on 40) and this level does not differ by gender. The level of self-esteem by the teachers of physical education was higher than their counterparts in theoretical subjects; however, they are more engaged in their work. On the other hand, the Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that age and years of service are positively correlated with self-esteem. On the basis of results it is believed that with time and with seniority, the teachers have a level of more and more raised self-esteem. Finally, this study showed that the age and years of service are not connected with commitment in the work.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, commitment in the work, Tunisian teachers.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching and particularly the quality of teaching is starting to gain an ever more prominent place for the concerns of educational institutions. The hardness of

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teaching profession and the various health and psychological distress problems can lead the teachers to abandon their profession. But even if it may cause lot of difficulties, the teaching profession can provide to teachers sources of motivation and considerable satisfaction.

It seems that the determining factor between these two contradictions is the professional commitment defined as a form of psychological attachment or a strength with which the professional is involved in his work (Chapman, 1984, 1983a, 1983b). The identification and attachment to the profession can be considered as the key aspects of the profession that allow teachers to engage in it. According to Tardif and Lessard (2005) teachers could be “active actors committed in an individual and collective approach of analysis and development of their skills”.

The teaching difficulties can be harmful and counterproductive for the psychic plane of the individual. In this regard the burnout generated by the over commitment and the anxiety resulting from fear of appearing incompetent (Hargreaves, 1994). Dysfunction (medical committees, reform commissions, acute shortage of medical prevention ...) in the follow-up of the health problems of the staff continue and increase in a large number of departments (Alem, 2003). Although, if the favourable factors exposed previously contribute to raise the commitment of teachers to their work, we can believe that their weakness or absence produces an unfavourable effect on this form of commitment. In sum, the commitment in work is connected with psychological and social factors meeting the needs of the person to become identified with his profession.

The professional commitment is also a matter of a complex process and articulates differently according to the personality of the individual and the characteristics like age, sex and number of years of service and the possible relationship with self-esteem. The self-esteem is a psychological component referring to the positive or negative perception that everybody has on his own value (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1979) and it can also be assimilated in the assertiveness in different domains of teaching including the teaching of physical education and sports. Some authors have given importance to the professional world and have directed their research towards external factors to teacher like the direction of institutions and its influence on the professional commitment.

Self-esteem as a fundamental dimension of personality that influences the construction of the individual has gained ground in the scientific world. Various studies proposed to demonstrate the influence of self-esteem on academic or athletic performance as well as on the conditions of strong self-esteem construction, among others the decisive role of the family and the environment. This study aimed to check if there is any influence of age, gender, seniority and type of subject matter (physical education vs. theoretical subject) on self-esteem and commitment in teaching of the Tunisian teachers. Given the importance of

commitment in the teaching profession and its impact on work performance in general and the deep imprint marked by self-esteem in the life of the individuals especially teachers, this study conducted to achieve the objectives such as:- to check if the variables age, gender and years of service have an influence on self-esteem and commitment to the work of teachers, as well as to find out if self-esteem and commitment vary according to the subject taught.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Sample

The sample includes a total of 136 secondary school teachers distributed as 58 teachers of physical education (women 26 and men 32) and 78 teachers of theoretical subjects (women 40 and men 38). The average age of selected teachers of physical education was 41 years and teachers of theoretical subjects were 39 years. These teachers were randomly selected in different high schools of the greater Tunis.

2.2 The Variables of the Study

2.2.1 Commitment in the Work: The commitment in the work as a dependant variable is considered by Meyer and Herscovitech (2001) as “a source of strength that binds an individual to significant behaviour with regard to one or several targets.” It is about an obvious psychological configuration that influences or determines the course of someone. The concept of commitment allows explaining the motivation to act of a person independently of his attitudes and extrinsic advantages and explains behaviours that seem opposed to the interests of an individual. Commitment also constitutes an additional way to explain the behaviour of the persons which justifies its relevance (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004).

2.2.2 Self-esteem: Self-esteem is the second dependent variable of this study, it is a psychological component that refers to the positive or negative perception that everyone has on his own value (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1979). It can be considered a kind of feeling of the individual about what he/she is or what he/she thinks to be. The self-esteem is the global judgment of self value. This judgment is possible since the individual developed a “self-image”, that is knowledge of his personal characteristics (Paradise, & Vitaro 1992). It is a self assessment of the abilities, qualities and results in the different skills domains. This assessment can be positive or negative and it produces the image which guides attitudes and behaviours.

The commitment in work and self-esteem among teachers are studied according to their age, gender, years of service and the nature of the subject taught (physical education versus theoretical subjects).

2.3 Tools and Instruments

2.3.1 Scale of Self-Esteem: Finalized by Rosenberg in 1965, this scale remains the most widely used test in psychological research to assess the global self-esteem. In test includes 9 items after removing of the deviant item. The items were evaluated with a Likert scale at 4 levels (1= completely disagree, to 4 = completely agree).

2.3.2 Commitment to Work Questionnaire: This is the questionnaire that assesses commitment to work. This questionnaire was translated and adapted by Alem, Bujold and Bertrand (2003).

2.4 Procedure of Data Collection

After obtaining the authorization from the regional delegations of education of the region of Tunis, investigator administered the tests in respected schools. Investigator personally met to the chosen teachers and explained them the purpose and significance of this study as well as the meaning of items of the questionnaire were also explained to them. After that the responses of the subjects on the respective questionnaires have been recorded.

2.5 Technique of Data Processing

The analysis of the two questionnaires allowed the researcher to obtain scores of self-esteem and the degree of commitment in the work. The obtained quantitative data were statistically processed by the Student t test for independent averages and the test of correlation of Pearson.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Mean comparison of the commitment in the work according to the gender

Gender	N	Mean	<i>t</i> value	Sig.
Women	69	26.93	-0.49	0.961
Men	67	26.97		

The statistical processing showed in the above Table 1 revealed that all the teachers have a high average level of commitment in the work (27 of 40). The average commitment in the work for women teachers is found 26.93 and for men it is found 26.97. This level of commitment does not differ according to gender ($t = -0.49, p = 0.96$). The results of this study demonstrate that the commitment among the teachers does not differ according to the gender.

Table 2: Comparison of the commitment in the work according to subject taught

Subject Taught	N	Mean	<i>t</i> value	Sig.
Physical Education	58	25.91	-2.09	0.039
Theoretical Subjects	78	27.72		

The results presented in the above Table 2 showed that the average of the scores of the test of commitment in the work for the teachers of physical education is 25.91 and for theoretical subjects are higher 27.72. The teachers of the theoretical subjects are more high in their work than the teachers of physical education ($t = -2.09, p=0.039$).

Table 3: Comparison of the self esteem according to the gender

Gender	N	Mean	<i>t</i> value	Sig.
Women	69	30.80	1.39	0.167
Men	67	29.91		

The statistical processing showed in the above Table 3 revealed that all the teachers have a high level of self-esteem (30 of 36). The self-esteem is the same for women and men ($t = 1.39, p = 0.17$).

Table 4: Comparison of self-esteem as the subject taught

Subject Taught	N	Mean	<i>t</i> value	Sig.
Physical Education	58	31.16	2.293	0.023
Theoretical Subjects	78	29.77		

The results presented in the above Table 4 showed that the average of the score of the test of self-esteem among the teachers of physical education is rather high (31.16 on 36). The average score of the test of self esteem among teacher of theoretical subjects is lower (29.77 on 36). The teachers of physical education

have a level of self-esteem higher than those who teach theoretical subjects ($t = 2.29, p = 0.02$)

4. DISCUSSION

Our study showed that the commitment among teachers does not vary with age, gender and seniority. These results are rather disconcerting as they're not consistent with the results reported by Huberman (1989) who had demonstrated that the professional commitment of the teachers in Europe and North America decreased over time.

Meyer and Allen (1991) had reported that these personal characteristics, although related to commitment, remained variable regarding their importance or the degree of their effect. However, Rosenholtz (1991) showed that the weakly committed teachers stagnated in their profession that is they feel neither in progress nor in development, they seem less motivated to accomplish their tasks nor they have few ambitions, independently of their age and years of experience.

Our results support those reported by Rosenholtz (1991). However, they are not substantial with those reported by Huberman (1989) had demonstrated that the professional commitment of the teachers decreased over time. Huberman (1989) as a specialist in life cycle study of teachers had identified a difficult starts then a phase of stabilization and finally a phase of experiment within the class or the school. His report raised questions such as "Are we more or less satisfied of our career at precise times of teaching?" Or "Are there any phases or stages in the teaching process?" The search results Huberman (1989) were applicable to several countries in Europe as Switzerland, Spain and Belgium and may allow us to deduce a possible specificity of the Tunisian context needed in a further study.

The study of Sylvester (2010) supports our results as far as he considered that factors such as gender, localization of the institute, academic qualifications and years of teaching experience have no impact on the teacher's attitude towards the teaching profession as well as his level of satisfaction by performing this job. According to our study and as it's supported by the works of Bawa (2002), the gender of teachers does not influence the degree of self-esteem, what is agreement. The age and the years of service are positively correlated with self-esteem enabling us to conclude, that self-esteem's level of the teachers raises more and more with age and seniority.

We note that the studies conducted on self-esteem of teachers are rare if not nonexistent. Most studies concern the sportsmen as well as the influence of their self-esteem on the motor performance. Other studies have focused on the child, the student, the conditions of development of a higher self-esteem, as well as its relationship to the academic failure or success. The study also highlighted the fact that the teachers of physical education have a higher self-esteem level in

comparison with their counterparts of the theoretical subjects. A study realised by Patricia Gambert and Jacques Bonneau in 2010 on a population of 900 teachers of physical education in France has documented that most of these teachers are waiting for the recognition of a risky job status. Many of them suffer relatively early in their careers from health problems related to the practice of their discipline, and many of them underline the slightest recognition of their discipline from the students, parents and even from other teachers which could create a risk of retreating and introversion. The statistical process of our results does not reveal a possible relationship between self-esteem and commitment in the work of teachers. For Reyes (1990), the teachers who strongly committed in their work showed a higher positive self-esteem by working hardy, remaining committed to the organization, colleagues, student and the subjects for which they are responsible. Following the example of Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990), other researchers have observed a correlation between organizational commitment of teachers and the performance of the students. It seems that the commitment of the teachers not only contributes to the success of students but it's largely influenced by it (Firstone, & Pennell, 1993).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Our research aimed to highlight the effect of the variables gender, and the nature of the subject matter (physical education versus theoretical subjects) on the commitment in the work and self-esteem of teachers.

By examining the fluctuation of the commitment in the work according to the nature of the subject taught, it seems that the level of commitment is higher among the teachers of the theoretical subjects.

In general, the level of self-esteem among teachers (of physical education and theoretical subjects) is high, and according to our results it is highest among the teachers of physical education. The results of our study also showed that the teachers of physical education are less engaged in their work than the teachers of theoretical subjects.

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