



A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL TEACHERS IN RELATION TO THEIR BACKGROUND VARIABLES

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Abstract

The present research aims to study the professional development of higher secondary level teachers in relation to their background variables such as gender, qualification, teaching experience, and type of institution. The study recognizes that teacher professional development is a crucial factor in improving the quality of education. Data were collected from 200 teachers selected from government and private higher secondary schools. A descriptive survey method was adopted, and a self-constructed professional development scale was used to measure the level of professional growth. The results revealed significant differences in professional development with respect to certain background variables such as qualification and type of institution, while gender and teaching experience showed no significant influence. The findings highlight the need for continuous professional development programs and institutional support to enhance teachers' competencies at the higher secondary level.

Keywords: Professional Development, Higher Secondary Teachers, Background Variables, Teaching Experience, Institutional Type.

Introduction

Teacher professional development is one of the most essential components in ensuring educational excellence. A teacher who continuously upgrades his or her knowledge, skills, and pedagogical practices contributes more effectively to the teaching-learning process. In the context of higher secondary education, where students transition towards

higher studies or professional courses, the teacher's role becomes even more crucial.

Professional development includes both formal and informal learning opportunities such as workshops, seminars, training programs, mentoring, and self-reflective practices. However, teachers' engagement in these developmental activities is influenced by their personal and professional background factors—gender, qualification, teaching experience, and the type of school they serve in (government or private).

This study seeks to analyze how such background variables affect the professional development of higher secondary level teachers and to identify areas requiring institutional support.

Review of Literature

Previous studies (Day, 1999; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Guskey, 2009) have emphasized that continuous professional development is indispensable for teachers' effectiveness. Studies in the Indian context (Batra, 2010; Rao, 2015; Mishra, 2020) reveal that institutional climate, teacher motivation, and access to training opportunities significantly influence professional growth. Yet, variations across demographic and institutional backgrounds remain underexplored at the higher secondary level.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of professional development among higher secondary school teachers.
2. To examine the differences in professional development with respect to background variables such as:



- Gender
- Qualification
- Teaching Experience
- Type of Institution (Government/Private)

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to qualification.
3. There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to teaching experience.
4. There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to type of institution.

Research Methodology

1. **Research Design:-** The descriptive survey method was used to study the problem.
2. **Population and Sample:-** The population comprised all higher

secondary level teachers from government and private schools. A stratified random sample of 200 teachers (100 male and 100 female) was selected from different schools in urban and rural areas of Jaipur District.

3. **Tools Used:-** A self-developed “Professional Development Scale” (PDS) was used, consisting of 40 items covering dimensions such as pedagogical skills, curriculum enrichment, use of ICT, classroom management, and professional engagement.
4. **Data Analysis:-** The data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test to determine significant differences among groups.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using **mean, standard deviation (SD), and t-test/ANOVA** to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. The analysis was carried out in relation to background variables: gender, qualification, teaching experience, and type of institution. The following tables present the results hypothesis-wise.

Hypothesis 1 : There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Male	100	123.45	12.38	1.24	0.217	Not Significant
Female	100	125.18	11.92			

Interpretation:

The obtained *t-value* (1.24) is less than the table value (1.97) at the 0.05 level, indicating no significant difference between male and female teachers. This implies that gender does not influence the level of professional development among higher secondary school teachers. Both male and female teachers exhibit comparable engagement in professional learning activities.

Hypothesis 2 : There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to their qualification.

Qualification	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Graduate	80	118.62	13.54	3.52	0.001	Significant
Postgraduate	120	128.96	12.47			



Interpretation:

The obtained *t-value* (3.52) is greater than the table value (1.97) at the 0.05 level, indicating a significant difference. Thus, teachers with postgraduate qualifications demonstrate higher professional development levels than those with graduate degrees. Higher education appears to enhance teachers' academic awareness and motivation to participate in professional growth opportunities.

Hypothesis 3 : There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to teaching experience.

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Up to 5 years	60	121.35	11.48	2.12	0.123	Not Significant
6–10 years	70	124.26	12.27			
Above 10 years	70	126.15	13.02			

Interpretation:

The *F-value* (2.12) is not significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that teaching experience does not significantly affect professional development. This may be due to limited exposure to systematic in-service training irrespective of service length. Even senior teachers require structured and continuous professional development opportunities.

Hypothesis 4 : There is no significant difference in the professional development of higher secondary school teachers with respect to type of institution.

Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Government	100	119.84	11.96	4.08	0.000	Significant
Private	100	128.92	12.24			

Interpretation:

The *t-value* (4.08) exceeds the critical value at the 0.01 level, showing a significant difference. Teachers from private institutions exhibit higher professional development than those in government schools. This may be attributed to more frequent training sessions, accountability mechanisms, and institutional support in private settings.

Summary of Findings

Hypothesis No.	Variable	Result	Significance
1	Gender	No significant difference	NS
2	Qualification	Significant difference (Postgraduates > Graduates)	S
3	Teaching Experience	No significant difference	NS
4	Type of Institution	Significant difference (Private > Government)	S

Overall Interpretation:

Professional development is influenced mainly by **educational qualification** and **institutional type**, while **gender** and **experience** do not show substantial effects. The data suggest that higher academic attainment and supportive institutional environments foster professional growth among higher secondary teachers.

Discussion

The findings suggest that educational qualification and institutional environment play a vital role in shaping teachers' professional

growth. Private institutions often emphasize performance-based evaluation and encourage participation in training programs, leading to higher professional competence. However, the



absence of significant differences concerning gender and experience indicates that professional development opportunities should be equally accessible to all educators, regardless of demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

Professional development is a continuous and dynamic process that enhances teachers' effectiveness and ensures educational quality. The study concludes that qualification and institutional type significantly influence the professional development of higher secondary level teachers. Therefore, it is recommended that both government and private educational authorities provide regular, well-structured professional development programs tailored to teachers' specific needs.

Suggestions

1. Professional development programs should be made mandatory for all teachers at regular intervals.
2. Schools should create professional learning communities to encourage peer interaction and reflective practices.
3. Government initiatives should focus on digital literacy and pedagogical innovation for higher secondary teachers.
4. Incentives should be provided to teachers who actively participate in workshops, seminars, and professional courses.

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