
Construction of an Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession: A Study among Secondary School Teachers in Mizoram

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ABSTRACT:

The attitude scale towards teaching profession has been constructed not only with the objective of finding the attitude of teachers towards teaching profession, but it is also hoped that the findings of this scale would enable the investigators to make suggestions towards improving the teachers' perception towards their profession. The scale consists of 22 items with ten positive and 12 negative items. Reliability of the scale (.69) was established using split half method. Content validity and criterion related validity was also established. Concurrent validity was found to be (.84). For scoring, the pattern suggested by Likert was followed. Norms and interpretation of the scale was also established. Findings show that majority (62.03%) of secondary school teachers have neutral attitude towards teaching profession. The possible reasons for the findings and suggestions for improvements were made.

People often ask teachers whether they enjoy their professions. When they do this, they are actually asking them whether they have positive or negative attitudes towards teaching profession. Attitude is commonly defined as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistent favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” The object may be a person, institution, process or event. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) Attitude reflects a tendency to classify objects and events and to react to them with some consistency. Attitude is not directly observable but rather is inferred from the objective, evaluative responses a person makes.

ATTITUDE SCALE:

An individual who has associated positive affect or feeling with some psychological object is said to like that object or to have a favourable attitude towards the object. An individual who has associated negative affect with the same psychological object would be said to dislike that object or to have an unfavourable attitude towards that object.

Attitude of an individual can be assessed through two methods such as seeking opinions and observing behaviour. Seeking opinions is a common and widely used approach of judging the attitude. It can be through asking direct questions or through different attitude scales.

Attitude scale is a special type of questionnaire designed to produce scores indicating the intensity and direction (for or against) of a person's feelings about an object or event. There are several types of scales that can be constructed. Two widely used methods of scaling are method of equal appearing intervals originally developed by Thurstone and Chave and summated rating

scale known as Likert type scale developed by Likert, R. From the scores of an attitude scale it is found out whether the attitude towards certain phenomenon is positive or negative.

TEACHING PROFESSION:

Teaching profession can be defined as an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service and to advise others for a definite fee or salary. The topic whether teaching is a profession or not has long been debated upon. The question is not on whether a teacher is a professional or not, the basic question being raised is whether the teachers are performing their duties as professionals or not.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

A teacher can never be an effective teacher if he/she does not have a positive attitude towards teaching. In the state of Mizoram, there has not been a single Attitude scale constructed for the purpose of finding out the attitude of school teachers towards teaching profession. It is with the hope that some improvements may be made in the teaching profession of school teachers in Mizoram that the investigator has constructed the attitude scale to study the attitude of school teachers towards teaching profession.

A study of the attitude of teachers towards teaching profession is not without logic, given that most of our school teachers at present do not seem to think of school teaching as their career. A good number of them enter it by chance, and a great percent of teachers are influenced by family circumstances, monetary gain in the form of tuition, a number of holidays and vacations etc.

Attitudes are key to improving the quality of education. Teachers' attitudes towards their profession have a great influence on students' learning. It also determines their satisfaction on their job. This is important as teachers are the nation builders and the development of a nation to a large extent actually depends on the teachers. Thus it is important to find out whether teachers have positive or negative attitudes towards teaching profession and so the main variable of the present research focuses on constructing and finding out teachers' attitude towards teaching profession, so as to make suggestions to improve teachers' perception toward their profession.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To construct and standardize a Likert type attitude scale towards teaching profession
2. To find out the attitude of Secondary school teachers towards teaching profession in Mizoram

Objective no 1: Construction and standardization of a Likert type attitude scale towards teaching profession

To begin with, relevant statements to measure the attitude towards teaching profession was formulated keeping in view certain category of topics as these were considered relevant to be included in the attitude scale. These are:

*classroom teaching

- *financial aspects
- *social aspects
- *academic responsibility
- *personality of the teachers
- *value system of the teachers
- *professional growth

SELECTION OF STATEMENTS:

Keeping in view the above categories, the researcher collected and framed 126 statements, both positive and negative, for the first draft of the attitude scale by consulting books, journals, internet, teachers, educationists etc. which were then given to six experts in the field for analyzing the content as well as for editing the statements. Thereafter, a number of statements which were considered irrelevant were dropped and a few statements were modified as were suggested by the experts. Finally, 36 statements were selected for the final draft.

Try out:

The final draft of the attitude scale consisting of 36 statements was administered to 100 secondary school teachers in Aizawl city with the intention of finding the discriminative value of each item. Scoring was done and the entire score was arranged in ascending order. After this, the top 27% as well as the bottom 27% of the score was taken aside for the purpose of item analysis and item discrimination. Then, the mean and standard deviation value of attitude score for each statement were then computed separately for the above mentioned top and bottom groups. The 't'-values for significance of differences between the mean attitude scores of the top and bottom 27% group of respondents, that were indicative of their discrimination values, were calculated for all the 36 statements. After that, those items having 't' value above 2.58 i.e. statements which are significant at 0.01 level of confidence were retained for the final scale and statements having 't' value less than 2.58 were then rejected. Subsequent to item discrimination, 14 statements were yet again discarded and the final scale finally comprised of 22 statements.

Establishment of Reliability

'Split-Half Method' was applied for the establishment of reliability of the scale. The whole scale was divided into two halves by taking all odd numbered items as one group and all even numbered items as another group. The co-efficient of reliability was computed between the two halves of the scores by using the "Product Moment Correlation". The co-efficient of reliability of the whole scale came out to be .69, which can be considered adequate for an attitude scale.

Establishment of Validity:

The content validity of the attitude scale was established by seeking the opinions of experts in the field of education with the nature of content covered by the statements on teaching profession. The experts approved on the validity of the content of items.

Criterion related validity was also established. This was done by computing the correlation co-efficient between the newly constructed scale and one already standardized Attitude Scale Towards Teaching Profession (ASTTP)" developed by Dr. (Mrs.) Umme Kulsum, Bangalore

University, (2008). This way, the scale was validated by means of concurrent validity by employing the product moment correlation. A co-efficient of correlation between these two scales was found to be .84 which is regarded as acceptable concurrent evidence.

Scoring procedure:

For scoring the attitude scale, the pattern suggested by Likert was followed. Each statement in the attitude scale is followed by responses viz. strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Scoring for each item of the Attitude Scale was done by giving a score of 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0 for positive statements, and 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 for negative statements. The highest possible score for the attitude scale is $(22 \times 4) = 88$, and the lowest possible score is $(22 \times 0) = 0$, since the total number of statements in the scale is 22. The item numbers for positive and negative statements are given in the following Table -1

Table – 1
Item Numbers for Positive and Negative Statements

Sl. no.	Types of statements	Item Numbers	Total
1	Positive	2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21,	10
2	Negative	1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 22	12

Norms and Interpretation of the Attitude Scale:

In order to establish the norms, the attitude scale was given to 453 High School teachers in the different districts of Mizoram. The raw scores obtained by all 453 teachers are transformed into the Stanine scale by organizing them in frequency distribution and then giving the percentage of each stanine score points according to the normal distribution curve. The first stanine includes 4 percent, second stanine includes next 7 percent, third stanine includes 12 percent and fourth stanine includes next 17 percent, the middle or fifth stanine includes middle 20 percent, sixth stanine covers 17 percent, seventh stanine covers 12 percent, eighth stanine includes 7 percent and the top or ninth stanine includes 4 percent of the total cases. This way, norms for interpreting the raw scores are prepared with the help of stanine grade. Accordingly, stanine 1 indicates very low attitude towards teaching profession, stanine 2 & 3 indicates low attitude towards teaching profession, stanine 4, 5 & 6 indicates moderate attitude towards teaching profession, stanine 7 & 8 indicates high attitude towards teaching profession and stanine 9 indicates very high attitude towards teaching profession.

The score range, stanine grade and interpretation of the score are given in the following Table -2

Table – 2

Score Range, Stanine Grade and Interpretation of Attitude Scale towards teaching profession

Sl. No	Score Range	Stanine Grade	Interpretation
1	Above 80	9	Very high attitude
2	77-80	8	High attitude
	74-76	7	
3	70-73	6	
	66-69	5	Moderate attitude
	62-65	4	

4	59-61	3	Low attitude
	55-58	2	
5	Below 55	1	Very low attitude

The following is the recently created attitude scale towards teaching profession constructed by the investigator:

ATTITUDE SCALE TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION

Instructions: Below is a list of statements aimed to study the attitude of teachers towards teaching profession. Please put a tick mark (✓) on any one of the five boxes given on the right side of each statement. If you **strongly agree**, put a tick mark below **SA**, if you **agree**, put a tick mark below **A**, if you are **undecided or uncertain**, put a tick mark under **U**, if you **disagree**, put a tick mark under **D** and if you **strongly disagree**, put a tick mark under **SD**. *Please respond to every item.* There is no time limit but you have to respond as quickly as possible. Your frank and sincere answers will be very much appreciated.

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Teachers' platform is one of teaching and explaining the subject matters only.					
2. Teachers' duty is to equip themselves with the latest technology of teaching.					
3. Teachers cannot control the class without inflicting corporal punishment to disobedient students.					
4. Teachers have to adapt to changes in the society.					
5. Teachers' responsibility towards the students ends in the school.					
6. Teachers cannot make both ends meet without private tuition.					
7. Teachers should be proud of their profession irrespective of other people's feelings towards it.					
8. Teachers worry more about their domestic works than the teaching profession in our society.					
9. Teachers consider teaching a noble profession.					
10. Teachers enter into teaching profession because it is easily available.					
11. Teachers are more interested in their salary than in their pupils.					
12. To develop the motivation to learn in students is an important role of the teacher.					
13. Teachers feel shy to give their identity in social gatherings. .					
14. Teaching is a challenging profession.					

15. Teachers do not bother about the achievement levels of the students.					
16. Nowadays, students do not look at their teachers as role models.					
17. Training is essential for effective teaching.					
18. Teaching profession offers free time for teachers.					
19. Teaching is a respectable profession.					
20. Teaching profession develops personality of a teacher.					
21. Teaching profession expects teachers to act ideally.					
22. Teachers find teaching profession interesting only in the beginning.					

Objective no 2: Attitude of Secondary school teachers towards teaching profession in Mizoram.

The attitude scale toward teaching profession which was administered to 453 high school teachers in Mizoram were scored and tabulated. On the basis of the responses obtained from them, teachers were categorized into five groups in accordance with the norms of the scale. For easy interpretation, they are combined and arranged into three groups.

The following table No. 3 shows the number, percentages and interpretation of all teacher respondents' attitude towards teaching profession.

Table 3
Attitude of secondary school teachers in Mizoram towards teaching profession

Groups	No. of teachers	Percentage	Interpretation
Very high attitude	14	3.09%	20.53% (favourable)
High attitude	79	17.44%	
Moderate attitude	281	62.03%	62.03% (Neutral)
Low attitude	61	13.47%	17.44% (unfavourable)
Very low attitude	18	3.97%	

As indicated in the table, out of the total number of sample, i.e. 453 teachers, 38.09% have very high attitude towards teaching profession. 17.44% have high attitude towards teaching profession, 62.03% have Moderate attitude, 13.47% have low attitude towards teaching profession and 3.97% have very low attitude towards teaching profession.

For interpretation, the percentages of the two high groups are added together and the percentages of the two low groups are added together. Therefore, we can interpret that majority of secondary school teachers in Mizoram have neutral attitude (62.03%) towards teaching profession. There are slightly more teachers who have favourable attitude (20.53%) towards

teaching profession than those teachers who have unfavourable attitude (17.44) towards teaching profession.

DISCUSSION:

Although by and large, majority of people have a tendency to have a fairly neutral attitude toward most things, it is rather surprising that majority of teachers in the present study have neutral attitude towards their teaching profession. One actually expects teachers to have positive attitude towards their own teaching profession. Of course, the present finding reveals that apart from the neutral attitude, there are more percentages of teachers having favourable attitude towards teaching profession than teachers with unfavourable attitude, but this difference is not large. One possible reason could be because many teachers do not think of school teaching as a profession since they enter the teaching job by chance. Many educated and talented youth hunting for a career mostly place teaching job as their last resort for a career. Most enter this profession only when they could not find any other job. Besides many private schools recruit teachers with poor academic record who are not trained and who did not have any aptitude for teaching, just because they can hire them with lesser wages. Therefore, these could be the plausible reason why so many secondary school teachers in Mizoram have neutral attitude towards their chosen profession.

SUGGESTION:

Following suggestions have been recommended for improving the attitude of secondary school teachers towards teaching profession:

1. Organising training for teachers working in schools periodically. For example, inviting experts to speak on topics relating to teaching skills and ethics.
2. Building healthy competition among teachers by organising award functions.
3. Providing better environment at workplace. For example, a reasonably comfortable seating arrangements and sufficient teaching facilities.

CONCLUSION:

It is very much relevant that an extensive study of the attitude of secondary school teachers towards their profession is conducted. Teachers at this level of education are concerned with adolescents and adolescence is considered to be the most awkward period in an individual's life needing more care and understanding than any other stages in life. Moreover, there has not been an attitude scale towards teaching profession constructed in Mizoram. It is greatly hoped that the present study would be utilised to understand the teachers' attitude and that measures would be taken to make improvements wherever necessary.

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