

Examining the Association between Optimism and Professional Dedication of Teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract



*This study investigated the link between scholastic optimism and commitment to teaching. The study also examined the effect of scholastic optimism on the level of commitment of teachers. The study used a correlational design. The target populations of the study were 2,312 school teachers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Simple random sampling was used to collect the KP sample for the study within the period of the academic year 2021-2022. The study used two types of questionnaires to collect the data. The first questionnaire was adapted, and it consisted of 11 items regarding scholastic optimism. The second questionnaire was also adapted, and it consisted of 18 items on teachers' commitment. Pearson *r*, independent samples *t*-tests and simple linear regression were the variable inferential statistics that were used to analyze the data. The data showed that there was a very strong positive correlation between scholastic optimism and teachers' commitment. The study also illustrated how literacy optimism intensely impacts teachers' commitment. Supporting this is that the subscales showed there are some statistically significant gender differences. In order to develop a commitment to the teaching profession, teachers are encouraged to foster a scholastically optimistic disposition.*

Keywords: Scholastic Optimism, Teachers' Dedication, School Teachers

Introduction

Scholastic optimism, as conceptualized by Safari and Soleimani (2019), refers to the belief in a school's inherent strengths and positive attributes, including its personnel (teachers, staff, and students), facilities, and relationships with the school community. Optimistic teachers take their students' sessions wherein they find possibilities. Teaching becomes a creative and proactive endeavor that aims to educate the students and empower them as well. Research reveals that optimism contributes to scholastic performance and enhances teachers' and students' self-efficacy, confidence, and classroom relationships and resilience (Hoy et al., 2008; Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Lu, 2021; Smith & Hoy, 2007; Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015).

Faculty optimism (Asgari & Rahimi, 2014) can be seen as a combination of three concepts: collective efficacy, pedagogical confidence, and scholastic focus. Faculty optimism appears in one's hope for the future. In the face of a changing world challenged by distressing and even dismal events, it provides a means to explain the belief that one's situation will get better (Carver & Scheier, 2002). More precisely, it provides hope that one's positive outlook will keep them from falling into a negative situation. Teacher's Confidence can be understood as the perception that learning can be recognized and even reviewed. Teachers have Student/Parent Involvement Belief that parents and students want to improve, as teachers can recognize the obstacles students face (Hoy et al., 2008). This resonates with the theory that optimistic teachers look for the good in everything. Optimistic and determined teachers set a positive outcome to their goals (Pathak & Lata, 2018). So, optimistic teachers devote all their efforts to implementing instructions and ignoring the mistakes.

Three factors are argued to underpin teachers' optimism: scholastic emphasis, faculty trust, and group efficacy. Scholastic emphasis involves teachers demonstrating behaviors grounded in the belief that fostering an encouraging classroom environment will help learners achieve scholastic success. Faculty trust involves faculty members' belief that students and parents can become active participants in the learning process. Parents and students are thought to be actively engaged in the building and sustaining of high standards for learning. Group efficacy refers to teachers' belief that

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they can effectively teach and increase students' achievement (Hoy et al., 2006; Hoy & Miskel, 2013). These are all dimensions that interact and influence one another.

Teacher dedication occurs when one mentally associates one's beliefs with one's practice of devoting oneself to one's occupation (Lu, 2021). It is a prerequisite for efficient teaching, creating conditions under which students' performance and achievement increase drastically (Altun, 2017). According to Sarikaya and Erdogan (2016), a teacher exhibits dedication when he or she is willing to engage in additional extracurricular activities and responsibilities related to his or her calling, thereby establishing positive outcomes. Therefore, a teacher's dedication to the teaching profession can be understood as enthusiastic engagement with the school's objectives, psychological assimilation of specific roles and actions to enhance teaching quality, and emotional connection with students. It entails a teacher's concern for the student, the school, and the profession, underpinned by a solid knowledge base and a teaching career (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004; Han, 2021). Teacher dedication is the referent and focal point of teaching excellence and quality, enhancing students' performance and engagement, improving teacher performance, and the quality of the school.

There are several traits associated with devoted teachers. Most notably, they demonstrate dedication to maintaining high standards, commendable communication skills, and concern for pupils' progress, learning, and overall achievement (Altun, 2017). Devoted teachers are more likely to take students' needs and preferences into account to stimulate students and foster active participation during school activities and work towards achieving the school's short-term and long-term objectives (Lu, 2021). Finally, they demonstrate dedication to the teaching and learning process through their participation in teacher training and skills development programs and by fostering a mentally conducive and supportive learning environment (Sarikaya & Erdogan, 2016).

Moreover, dedication shows a person's mental allegiance to a school. This indicates pledged faithfulness to the principles and objectives of the institution. Teacher dedication refers to a teacher's demonstration and assurance in the line of duty. It is widely regarded as the primary aspect of effective teaching. Highly committed teachers can impact their students' learning and achievements (Altun, 2017). Because teacher dedication is associated with building a nurturing environment that enables students to achieve greater success, it is a key driver of teachers' goal realization and enhanced performance (Altun, 2017).

Literature Review

Bandura's social intellectual theory, Coleman's community principal theory, Seligman's scholastic optimism, and Hoy and his colleagues' research on school climate and value systems serve as the theoretical scaffolding for educational optimism focusing on a distinct teaching approach and a means for the teaching staff resource (Hoy, 2008; Beard, 2010; Hoy, 2002; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; McGuigan & Hoy, 2006). The only variation is that, instead of the department or a specific educator, the hypothetical reinforcements and their parts are now addressed. Scholastic optimism is paradoxically built on an optimism that underpins notions of the educator as knowledgeable, the learner as engaged, the parent as understanding, and the task as accomplished (Hoy et al., 2006).

Hoy et al. (2006) have provided the most recent version of the theory of scholastic optimism and have sustained the theory of scholastic optimism (her and the first) concept. Scholastic optimism involves the confidence that the educator has in teaching students and parents, the self-efficacy to use appropriate strategies, and, in that context, lending support to the student, rather than to the department or a specific educator. The hypothetical reinforcements and their parts are now addressed in achievement (Hoy et al., 2006), constitute (Hoy & Tarter, 2011).

An educator's dedication to teaching is related to how happy they feel about teaching and the Unique Attributes they bring to their teaching (element of influence) (Park, 2005). For students to grow and develop their skills in an environment of learning with excellence, teachers are expected to be dedicated (Tsui & Cheng, 1999). Many believe that teacher dedication, especially as it relates to students' learning, teachers' work performance, and teaching behaviors (including absenteeism, turnover, and disposition towards teaching), is a central part of quality faculty teaching (Elliott & Crosswell, 2002). There are two main reasons for the importance of teacher dedication. The first pertains to internal reasons: as teachers move higher within the education system, they develop an internal urge for higher and more complex roles, with greater challenges and more varied demands. The second is an external driving force, stemming from empowered and organized changes seeking new duties and responsibilities grounded in teachers' voluntary dedication.

Teacher optimism is linked to an educator's sense of scholastic dedication, which, in turn, is an invaluable component of meaningful instruction (Lu, 2021). It is indicative of how much effort a teacher is putting towards career development and job satisfaction (Altun, 2017). This includes teachers' dedication to schooling and career development, driven by performance and a commitment to achieving professional goals (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004). This notion encompasses both personal and contextual elements, both of which affect teachers' productivity and teaching effectiveness (Huang et al., 2016). Dedicated educators zealously champion the vision of the school and/or university in which they are employed, and they are always willing to take on additional responsibilities (Sarikaya & Erdogan, 2016).

Instructor productivity is more likely to achieve positive outcomes when optimism is present, whereas pessimism increases the potential for negative outcomes due to instruction (Scheier et al., 2001; Scheier & Carver, 1992). For instance, optimism is a positive predictor of the attainment of professional and educational goals, an enduring state of positive affect, and effective coping (Peterson, 2000). Additionally, optimism has been linked to positive changes in physical health (Rasmussen et al., 2009; Segerstrom, 2005), increased levels of happiness and well-being (Mahon & Yarcheski, 2002; Weaver & Habibov, 2010), and improvements in personality and the disposition to plan (Buehler & Griffin, 2003; Weaver & Habibov, 2010).

Teacher dedication is fundamental to great instruction (Day, 2004) because it stimulates and motivates teachers to carry it out (Vallerand, 2008) and students to achieve it. The absence of enthusiasm renders any teaching method futile (Hargreaves, 1997) and motivates students. Two things become inevitable in such cases. First, a teacher's motivation instills students' motivation to a great extent. Driving this further, Hansen (2001) held that, because of a committed sense of enthusiasm, a teacher is in a position to make students eager to achieve more and be more productive. This holds true in cases when students develop a positive mindset toward learning (Fink, 2003).

Perhaps because of such enthusiastic teachers and their dedication, students attain appreciable standards of achievement. Committed teachers develop enthusiasm in their students and create a strong stimulus (Brady, 1995) by motivating them and instilling a more fervent spirit, so that students achieve positive outcomes from their efforts (Ross, Adra). It is a teacher's dedication to her students, her school, her profession, her own training and improvement that constitutes Excellent Instruction (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004). The best teachers are characterized by a dedication that energizes them to make students active participants in class activities (Gregory & Boucher, 1995). Irresistibly committed teachers are motivated to instruct others in their true sense of the profession (Linston & Garrison, 2003).

Teaching dedication is critical for reducing teacher turnover, implementing curriculum and subject-area changes, and monitoring and maintaining successful outcomes and advances in student learning (Hausman & Goldring, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2010; Robinson & Edwards, 2012). Research shows that one of several factors influencing dedication to teaching is the lack of studies that explore the relationship between various competencies and teaching dedication (McKim & Velez, 2016; Mee & Haverback, 2014; Sorensen & McKim, 2014).

For instance, Akhtar et al. (2012) conducted studies using samples of employees from various private-sector companies and found a link between optimism and employee dedication. Moreover, according to Vohra and Goel's (2009) study, dispositional optimism among mid-level managers is a strong predictor of organizational dedication and job satisfaction. Kurz (2006) found that in his study of elementary school teachers, scholastic optimism is a predictor of the teachers' professional dedication. Gallagher et al. (2013) studied the relationship between demographic characteristics and optimism. The results showed that optimism is affected by gender, age, and education. Age, in particular, is a strong predictor, with younger individuals being more optimistic than older individuals.

A study by Ghasemzadeh et al. (2020) from Iran finds that Affective Dedication mediates the linkage of Enabling Structure and Scholastic Optimism. In addition, Affective Dedication was found to obscure the linkage of Scholastic Optimism and Collective Responsibility. The study finds that the strongest relationship of Collective Responsibility was with Scholastic Optimism. Moreover, the study by Vetrivelmany and Ismail (2021) from Malaysian secondary schools suggests that teachers' Scholastic Optimism was a strong predictor of their Organizational Dedication. This further suggests that teachers are Organizational Dedication when the teachers believe they have the ability to

influence Learning and Teaching and are interested in enhancing their teaching. The results are consistent with Coban and Dermatas (2011), which exhibited a linkage between teachers’ organizational dedication and scholastic optimism.

Methodology

We implemented a non-experimental, quantitative, correlational approach under the positivist paradigm, focusing on a cross-sectional survey design. Ali et al. (2021), Faiz et al. (2021), Jabeen et al. (2022), Kanwal et al. (2022), Lakhan et al. (2020), Mah Jabeen et al. (2021) focused on the determined population, which can be described as the totality of elements among which samples are generated. The population in this study consisted of 2,312 secondary school teachers in the province of KP, as provided by the School Education Department, 2016. Munir et al. (2021), Saeed et al. (2021), Sajjad et al. (2022), Siddique (2020), Siddique et al. (2022), and Siddique et al. (2022) focused on the identified sample, which can be understood as a segment sourced from the sampled population. The approach used in this study was a simple random sampling. The first stage consisted of stratifying the KP province into 3 major zones and then, from each of these zones, randomly picking 2 districts. To capture the data from the secondary school teachers, two self-administered questionnaires with closed-ended questions were used. Beard et al. (2010) focused on the scope of the Individual Teacher Scholastic Optimism Scale. Beard et al. (2010), developed their model for scholastic optimism by employing 3 conceptualizations. These were scholastic emphasis, faculty, trust, and group belief, efficacy. The reliability coefficient was reported as 0.82. With regard to teachers’ dedication, a version of Meyer et al. (1993) scale on a 5-point scale was used to measure the respondents (school teachers, in this case). The scale had 3 aspects related to teachers’ dedication, namely, affective dedication, normative dedication, and continuance dedication. This segment included a total of 18 items, 6 for each component. The respondents rated each item on a 5-point scale with a reliability coefficient of 0.86 on this measure. Analyzing the data collected will involve the use of inferential statistics, including Pearson’s r, independent sample t-test, and linear regression.

Table 1: Correlation between Scholastic Optimism and Teachers’ Dedication

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i> -value	<i>Sig.</i>
Scholastic Optimism and Teachers’ Dedication	426	.713	.000

**P<0.01

The positive correlation found between scholastic optimism and teacher dedication is presented in Table 1. Result in this study shows a positive relationship between scholastic optimism and teacher dedication at secondary school level with Pearson r at (.832, P<0.01).

Table 2: Relationship of Sub-scales of Teachers’ Dedication with Scholastic Optimism

Sub-scales of Teachers’ Dedication with Scholastic Optimism	1	2	3	4
Affective Dedication	1	.624**	.624**	.658**
Normative Dedication		1	.724**	.630**
Continuance Dedication			1	.624**
Scholastic Optimism				1

** *p* < .001 (2-tailed), *n* = 426

Table 2 shows the correlation between scholastic optimism and teachers' dedication. These results show that Affective Dedication (*r* = .768**), Normative Dedication (*r* = .630**), and Continuance Dedication (*r* = .641**) are all positively correlated with scholastic optimism. That is, there is a positive correlation with scholastic optimism and all the sub-variables of teachers' dedication.

Table 3: Gender Comparison between Scholastic Optimism and Teachers’ Dedication

Variables	Gender	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Scholastic Optimism	Male	325	47.12	5.60	3.45	314.01	.000
	Female	191	44.95	7.53			
Teachers’ Dedication	Male	325	75.70	9.33	2.96	328.76	.000
	Female	191	72.73	11.82			

*P<0.05

As shown in Table 3, scholastic optimism and dedication showed notable difference by gender. A huge gap in male and female teacher dedication and scholastic optimism was found. Male teachers are rated higher than female teachers in scholastic optimism and dedication. Male teachers showed more career commitment and higher scholastic optimism as compared to female teachers.

Table 4: Gender Comparison of Factors of Scholastic Optimism and Teachers' Dedication

Sub-scales of Scholastic Optimism and Teachers' Dedication	Gender	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Self-efficacy	Male	325	17.21	2.30	2.76	321.57	.000
	Female	191	16.52	2.99			
Trust	Male	325	17.19	2.29	3.28	309.37	.000
	Female	191	16.33	3.14			
Scholastic Emphasis	Male	325	12.72	1.94	3.01	332.74	.001
	Female	191	12.09	2.42			
Affective Dedication	Male	325	25.18	3.71	2.40	326.23	.000
	Female	191	24.21	4.75			
Normative Dedication	Male	325	25.12	3.22	2.02	352.58	.012
	Female	191	24.46	3.74			
Continuance Dedication	Male	325	25.39	3.45	3.57	322.34	.000
	Female	191	24.04	4.48			

Table 4 shows varying degrees of Teacher Dedication and Teacher Dedication by Gender. For all of the sub-scales of scholastic optimism and Teachers Dedication in the study, differences between Male Teachers and Female Teachers were significant. Within the scholastic optimism and dedication sub-scales, Male Teachers had higher average scores in comparison to Female Teachers. Male Teachers were more dedicated to the teaching profession and were more scholastically optimistic compared to Female Teachers.

Table 5: Effect of Scholastic Optimism on Teachers' Dedication

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Model <i>R</i> Square
Scholastic Optimism and Teachers' Dedication	.832	33.94	.001	.692

The linear regression model in Table 5 explains the dependent variable as an R2 score of .692 of the variance captured by the independent variable. Here is the independent variable, outside the scope of the educator's efforts, that explains 69.2% of the variance of teacher dedication. Additionally, the beta value (.832) was significant with $p = .001$. Scholastic optimism has a positive beta value of .832 with p at .001, therefore having a large positive impact on teachers' dedication, thus disproving the null hypothesis. Scholastic optimism positively impacted the dedication of secondary school teachers.

Discussion

Scholastic optimism may promote the commitment of teachers. The teaching of scholastic optimism may enhance self-efficacy, classroom relationships and resilience of students and teachers, confidence, and classroom relationships, and may enhance teachers' (as well as students') well-being, and engagement and level of success. Committed teachers elevate student learning and achievement by improving their communication and concern for students (Hoy et al., 2008; Hoy and Tarter, 2011; Lu, 2021; Smith and Hoy, 2007; Sezgin and Erdogan, 2015; Wang & Guan, 2020).

This section presents the results of descriptive correlational studies. This quantitative analysis aims to identify the relationship between students' scholastic optimism and teachers' commitment. The analysis further evaluates how student optimism impacts teacher dedication using regression analysis. The relationship between teacher dedication and students' scholastic optimism is one of the focus areas of the study. The correlation of scholastic optimism and teacher dedication is measured using the Pearson r statistic. Empirical studies posit that there is a strong positive correlation of teacher dedication to the students' scholastic optimism. In studies of teachers' scholastic optimism, the correlation of scholastic optimism to the factor of scholastic optimism is also tested. A strong positive correlation of teachers' dedication is found in the studies. The positive correlation between scholastic optimism and teacher commitment is evident. Studies of teacher commitment and scholastic optimism (Akhtar et al., 2012; Coban & Dermitas, 2011; Ghasemzadeh et al.) show a positive correlation between the factors of teacher commitment and scholastic optimism.

The studies examined found a strong relationship between optimism and commitment among teachers. It was also found that all subcategories of teacher commitment had a significant relationship with academic optimism.

The second key objective examined dedication to teachers of both genders and academic optimism. To explain the data regarding gender differences, an independent-samples t-test was used. Statistically significant difference of teacher scholastic dedication and optimism was detected between male and female teachers. This was also true for sub-scales of dedication and their components (affective, normative, and continuance) in addition to the sub-variables of scholastic optimism (emphasis, trust, and group efficacy). These results support Gallagher et al. (2013).

The second key objective examined the gender differences of scholastic optimism and teacher commitment. Gender-related information was collected through the independent sample t-test. There was a significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of all three variables (scholastic optimism, teacher commitment) and all sub-variables of the three components. The results also support Gallagher et al. (2013).

The study examined the effect of scholastic optimism on teachers' commitment, using linear regression for the analysis. The study found that teachers' commitment to scholastic optimism was a significant predictor. The results were consistent with Ghasemzadeh et al. (2020) and Vetriveilmany & Ismail (2021). It was found that scholastic optimism positively influenced teachers' commitment and was an important predictor of teachers' commitment.

Conclusion

Scholastic optimism was viewed as a positive factor in teachers' career dedication. This study aimed to evaluate the relationship between teachers' dedication and students' scholastic optimism. The analysis revealed a positive, strong, and significant relationship between scholastic optimism and teacher dedication. The study also identified variations in scholastic optimism and teacher dedication within the sample by gender. The findings showed that male teachers were more optimistic and committed to their scholastic careers than their female counterparts.

The idea of scholastic optimism has been seen as a means of forecasting a teacher's dedication to the teaching profession. This research aimed to study the correlation between scholastic optimism and teacher dedication. Based on the results, a statistically and practically significant positive correlation was observed. Furthermore, a difference in the demographic factor of gender was seen and reported in the means of scholastic optimism and teacher dedication. The results indicated that male teachers showed a greater level of scholastic optimism and dedication than female teachers. This indicated that statistically significant differences were observed in the means of the particular dimensions of scholastic optimism and of the three sub-dimensions of teacher dedication: affective, normative, and continuance dedication. A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the effect of scholastic optimism on teacher dedication. It was indicated that scholastic optimism significantly affects teacher dedication.

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