

# TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS DUE TO TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Abstract** *This study examines a path analysis of the effect of teachers' attitudes towards teaching on their performance. It also aims at examining the differences of the estimated affect according to novice and expert teachers. Data of this study were collected from 236 Omani teachers using two instruments. The path analysis for the novices and experts teachers' samples revealed that the teachers' attitudes towards teaching have significant direct effect on their professional performance with the more experienced teachers. Results of this study create the need for further study to identify the effect of teachers' attitudes with advanced experience years on performance which could very well lay out the necessary attitudes to impulse teachers' productivity.*

**Keywords:** *Attitudes Towards Teaching, Performance, Teaching Experience.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' attitudes toward teaching and teacher professional performance are two important issues tackled theoretically. Much of the literature provides that the first one to use the term attitude was the English philosopher Spencer, in his book, the First Principles. Then the concept has become very common that theorists from different fields began to develop theories about it in accordance to what they have in their own fields of research. Theoretically, Fishbein and Ajzen [1] presented a model that explains the complex relation between attitude and behavior or performance called "the Reasoned Action Model". This model supposes that the persons' beliefs about a certain object affect their own attitude towards that object. Moreover, the attitudes affect behavioral intention, which affects the person's actual behavior towards the object. In the teaching matter the relationship between attitudes and teaching practice were summarized by Smith [2]. As Smith [2], it can be obviously understood that teachers' attitudes towards the profession have an effect on their teaching practice.

In the theory of performance, Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager [3] presented two broad approaches to professional performance. First, dimensions of the performance domain which define categories of professional performance that apply to all jobs. Second, the causal patterns of relations between the various dimensions and antecedents of professional performance explain the variability and the causal sequences of professional performance. Performance theory compares the difference between the desired behaviors with the actual behavior a

person exhibits on the profession that is determined by a person's contribution to achieving organizational goals [4].

The relationship between teachers' attitudes towards teaching and their performance in teaching as a profession has already been studied by different scholars [5,6,7,8,9,10,11,3,12]. For instance, Duatepe and Oylum [7] prove that teachers' attitudes towards their profession have an effect on their performance, which means that positive and negative attitudes towards the profession can affect performance in any profession. Nadeem et al. [11] and Akkus [5] found that the relationship between teachers attitudes and their performance in teaching is significant. Harrison, Newman, and Roth [13] argued that employee attitudes are related to their behavioral engagement in work roles. So employees with higher levels of satisfaction are more likely to be engaged in their work, which cause higher levels of performance. Teaching experience is also studied as a moderator of teachers' professional performance by Dokko, Wilk, and Rothbart [6], who found that prior occupational experience has a positive effect on performance via knowledge and skill but a negative direct effect that diminishes the overall relationship, and they provide preliminary evidence that the negative effect was driven by behavioral and cognitive rigidities. This is in alignment with other studies like [14,15,16].

The change of attitude is represented by either a change in its intensity (increasing or decreasing) or a change in its nature (positively or negatively). Khalifah and Mahmoud [17] summarize the aspects of attitudes mentioned in different literature in three basic approaches: a) conversation attraction approach, b) opposing behavior approach, and c) reconciliation approach. Fishbein and Ajzen [1] presented the reconciliation approach in their model. It is considered as the most comprehensive trend of all theories of attitude change because it is provides explanations for the human behavior by studying different situations and contexts that relate to the concerned behavior. It also focuses on the predicted intention issue that determines the behavior.

Forwarded years of teaching could be change the attitudes of teachers towards the profession. Nearly, this fact was argued by Henderson and Henderson in Lumsden [18], who found that teachers' attitudes towards teaching as a career become weak with expert teachers rather than

novices. They presented that 40% of teachers had weak attitudes towards teaching and 57% of them were ready to leave the profession and 3% of them were undecided about it. The previous review hypothesized that teachers' attitudes towards teaching could be changed year by year towards their profession. Consequently, changes in attitudes affect teachers' professional performance. This study contribution is to undergo a path analysis of the affect teachers' attitudes towards teaching might have on their performance. It also aims at examining the differences of the estimated affect according to novices and experts teachers.

#### RESEARCH AND STATISTICAL HYPOTHESES

H0(1): There is no significant direct effect of teachers' attitudes towards teaching on their teaching performance.

[H0(1):  $\beta = 0$  ],  $p < .05$ .

H0(2): There is no difference between the estimated direct effect of novices and experts teachers. [H0(2):  $\beta(\text{novices}) = \beta(\text{experts})$ ],  $p < .05$ .

Note: All research and statistical hypotheses are considered at level of significance  $p < .05$ .

### II. METHODOLOGY

#### Participants

The participants were selected based on the stratified random sampling technique. According to the Ministry of Education [19] in the Sultanate of Oman, the number of teachers in the academic year 2011/2012 is 51811 [89.21% Omani] teachers distributed over 11 educational governorates. The population of this study represents only: (a) cycle two teachers in the basic education excluding individual growth subject teachers (sport, art, music) and life skills teachers, (b) all Omani teachers who have a bachelor degree or above and are teaching in the cycle two of basic education schools. To administrate the study's instruments, 236 Omani teachers as a participants were randomly selected from four educational governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. The pool of teachers in this study has different experience in teaching distributing from 1 year to more than 10 years.

#### Instruments

Data collection was based on two instruments concerning the study variables: (a) teachers' attitudes towards teaching scale and, (b) teachers' professional performance evaluation instrument. Teachers' attitudes towards teaching scale seeks the demographics variables about the teachers which are gender and work experience. Teachers have to select their perceived degree of contentment with 36 items describing their attitudes towards teaching as a career. These items are presented in two ways, 23 of them as positive items and 13 items developed as negative items. The scale was a 5-point

Likert-scale; strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The content validity ratio's formula (CVR) was developed by Lawshe in 1975:  $[CVR = (n - N/2) / (N/2)]$  where  $n$  is number of arbitrators indicating the item is essential, and  $N$  is the total number of arbitrators [20]. In addition, Lawshe provided a table of critical values for the content validity ratio. According to Lawshe's table, the critical value in case of 9 arbitrators starts from .78. Therefore, the 36 items of this scale were registered .78 or more of content validity ratio. For the whole 36-items attitude scale, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is .87. The second instrument was teachers' professional performance form. This form aims to evaluate the level of teachers' performance when they do their teaching duties [21]. It contains 20 elements; 8 of them used to assess professionalism and personal behavior and the other 12 elements to assess competency in performance. Each element takes a scale from 1 for low performance to 5 for the exceptional performance (5-point Likert scale). It was designed by several local and foreign experts in the Omani Ministry of Civil Service. This instrument is validated for use by several Ministries in the Sultanate of Oman. Using the internal consistency estimate of reliability approach, the calculated Cronbach alpha for this instrument was .92.

#### Data Analysis

Using AMOS 18.0 software, the data was analyzed to test the statistical hypotheses. Therefore, the statistical outputs which are means, standard deviations, and the path analysis have been calculated. The path analytical model of this study proposes that the teachers' attitude towards teaching (exogenous variable) has a direct effect on their professional performance (endogenous variable). The path analysis was tested by estimate the values of path coefficients from the independent (exogenous) variable to the dependent (endogenous) variable for the overall sample and according to the two levels of teachers' experience which were categorized in novices and experts teachers. To study the moderator effects of work experience, multiple group analysis on the model was performed to test the differences among the novices and experts groups. The multiple groups comparisons test involved the Critical Ratios for differences, which use a two-tailed test for compare Z- values of counterparts paths with absolute value 1.96. All research and statistical hypotheses were tested at level of significance  $p < .05$ .

### III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### Preliminary Analysis

The demographic of participants were distributed according to work experience. Teachers those taught 3 years

or less were considered as a novices group. They were 128 (54.24%) out of 236 teachers. The other 108 (45.76%) of participants were considered as an experts group who taught more than 3 years. Table 1 describes the study variables according to means, standard deviations, and univariate and multivariate normality. For the validation of univariate normality of observations, both skewness and kurtosis values were calculated. Skewness refers to the symmetry of a

distribution while kurtosis refers to the peakedness of a distribution. According to Tabachnick and Fidell [22], the observations have an accepted normality with zero skewness and kurtosis. The skewness outside the range  $\pm 3.0$  is considered extreme skewness [23]. According to [24,25], the absolute kurtosis value greater than 10.0 may suggest a problem while absolute kurtosis index value greater than 20.0 may designate a more serious one.

**Table 1**  
**Means, standard deviations (SD), and univariate and multivariate normality of variables**

| Variables                         | Mean          | SD           | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Teachers Attitude Toward Teaching | 106.45 (2.96) | 14.7 (0.408) | -.14     | -.42     |
| Teacher Professional Performance  | 88.04         | 5.10         | -1.01    | 1.36     |
| Multivariate                      |               |              |          | 3.47     |

Table 1 shows skewness and kurtosis indexes for the two variables. There is no extreme value to reject the assumption of univariate normality in observations distributions. The lowest skewness registered with teacher professional performance (- 1.01), while the highest is - 0.14 with the attitudes variable. In addition, Table 1 also shows that the multivariate normality is 3.37 with kurtosis value, which is accepted according to [24,25].

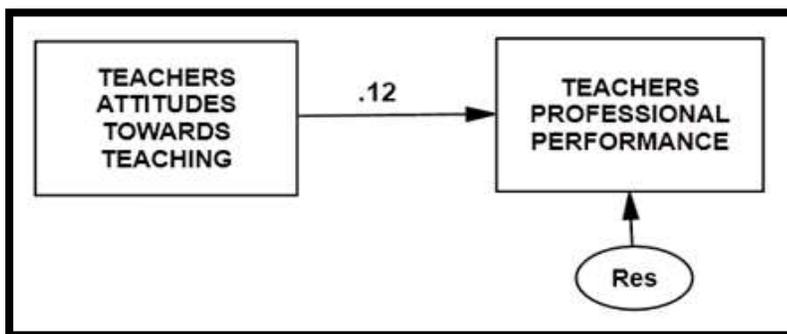
Teachers' attitude towards teaching which is measured by the 36-items scale were ordered responses in five-point Likert scale; (0) strongly disagree, (1) disagree, (2) not sure, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree. According to Table 1, the resulting total scores mean is 106.45 and the standard deviation of the total scores is 14.7. According to scaling points which are ranged from 0 to 4, the mean is 2.96 and the standard deviation is 0.408. Therefore, teachers mostly have positive attitudes towards teaching. On the other hand, teachers' professional performance represents the teacher score in performance evaluation form. The mean of teachers' scores in this instrument is 88.04 and the standard deviation

is 5.10. According to the instrument rating, scores between 80 and 89 represent a very good performance [26]. Thus, most of teachers in this research had very good performance in teaching.

Path Analysis

Overall Sample

The path analysis model for the overall sample includes all of teachers sample selected randomly in this study. According to Figure 1, path analysis shows that the estimated standardized path coefficient was .12. This value represents the direct effect of teachers' attitudes towards teaching on teachers' professional performance. Statistically it is non-significant at the level .05. Therefore, the first null hypothesis [H0 (1): There is no significant direct effect of teachers' attitudes towards teaching on their teaching performance; H0 (1):  $\beta = 0$ ] is retained at  $p < .05$ . Thus, the exogenous variable, which is the attitudes towards teaching, was a non-significant predictor of the endogenous (dependent) for the direct path.



**Figure 1. Standardized coefficient (beta) of overall sample's path model**

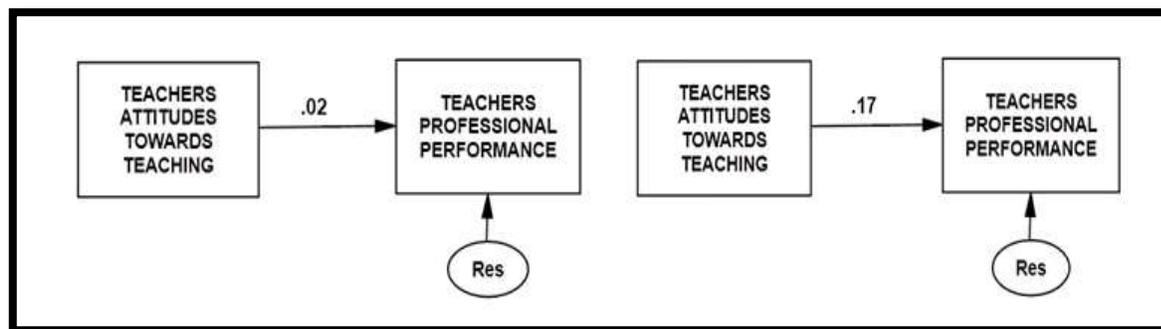
Novices and Experts Teachers Sample

The path analysis model for the novices teachers sample includes all teachers who have work experience from 1 to 3 years, while the path analysis model for the experts teachers sample includes all teachers who have work experience more

than 3 years. According to Figure 2, path analysis shows that the estimated standardized paths coefficients are .02 for novices sample and .17 for experts' sample. Statistically, the value .02 is non-significant at the level .05. This results displays that the novices teachers' attitudes towards teaching

is not a predictor of their professional performance. Beta value for the direct effect of experts' teachers group was .17. This value is weak but statistically enough to confirm that

the experts teachers' attitudes towards teaching affecting their professional performance.



Model-1 (Novices)

(b) Model-2 (Experts)

Figure 2. Standardized coefficients (beta) for novices and experts teachers sample's path

Using the Critical Ratios for differences in AMOS output of analysis properties, the comparison between the paths of two models is based on z-test values. Z-test value for the difference between the path coefficients of model-1 (novices) and model-2 (experts) should be exceed [1.96] (absolute value of 1.96) to indicate the significant difference between the counterpart paths at  $p < .05$ . Referring to result of the test, the z-value is 1.98 which is slightly greater than the absolute value 1.96. This value indicated that there is significant difference across the two group teachers according their experience. Therefore, teaching experience is considered as a moderator for the direct effect of the Omani teachers' attitudes towards teaching on their professional performance. Consequently, the second null hypothesis of this study [H0(2): There is no difference between the estimated direct effect of novices and experts teachers; H0 (2):  $\beta(\text{novices}) = \beta(\text{experts})$ ] is rejected at  $p < .05$ . Thus, teachers' experience could play a role in the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards teaching and their professional performance.

To justify why the novices teachers' attitudes are not affecting their performance, the theory of individual differences sees that the type of knowledge, skills, and work habits associated with task performance are different from those associated with contextual performance.

Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmit [27] classified the teaching in a school as a task performance. They also presented that the individual differences in ability, personality, and interests are presumed to combine and interact with training, education, and experience to shape declarative knowledge and practical knowledge and skill. Moreover, Hunter in Motowidlo et al. [27] sees that the job knowledge and skill are represented as mediators to achieve an effect between the ability and job performance. On the

other hand, Brinol and Petty [28] examined how the individual differences affect attitudes and how attitudes change through the aspect of knowledge and another three motives. Based on the previous brief and according to the view of individual differences' theory, teachers' attitudes towards teaching are not enough to affect their performance in teaching without the knowledge and skill. Therefore, that can explain the non-significant direct effect found between novices teachers' attitudes towards teaching and their professional performance. Another reason to explain this finding is that the performance of the novices teachers is only based on their knowledge which was recently achieved from the college rather than their attitudes.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The preliminary analysis was found that the teachers mostly have positive attitudes towards teaching and most of them had very good performance in teaching. According to the path analysis for overall sample, teachers' attitudes towards teaching was not the factor responsible for their low or high performance in teaching. The value .12 of the path coefficient was very low and non-significant at  $p < .05$ . While the path analysis for the sub-groups samples found that the teachers' attitudes towards teaching have a direct effect on their professional performance with the more experienced teachers. Therefore, knowing the teachers' attitudes towards their profession is an important matter that needs to be dealt with in the educational sector.

This study suggests developing attitudes scales to measure the experts teachers' attitudes towards their profession. This will enable the stakeholders to stand on the teachers' attitudes based on empirical insight that they currently lack. As a sequence, teachers' negative attitudes towards teaching can be altered to increase their productivity in the schools. Results of this study create the need for

further study to identify the effect of teachers' attitudes with advanced experience years on performance which could very well lay out the necessary attitudes to impulse teachers' productivity. Needless to say, one limitation of the current study result is that the value of the direct effect of teachers' attitudes on their performance was significant but weak (.17). This can be attributed to the small size of the experts' teachers sample which was 108 teachers. Therefore, further study should attempt the same methodology with larger sample size of experts' teachers (more than 5 years) to confirm this study results.

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