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AN INTEGRATED ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS, EXTERNAL PROBLEMS AND DILEMMA MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT
Teaching is a noble profession that involves continuous interaction with students, colleagues, parents, school administration, well-wishers and society. As part of their professional responsibilities, school teachers must encounter various internal and external problems that may influence their professional effectiveness, decision-making and interpersonal relationships. Internal problems include personal conflicts, emotional challenges, and lack of self-confidence, professional dissatisfaction and difficulties in balancing personal and professional responsibilities. External problems include institutional pressure, administrative responsibilities, over workload, parental expectations, student-related challenges, technological changes and inadequate professional support. Dilemma management competency refers to the ability of teachers to identify, analyse, evaluate and manage conflicting situations arising in their professional lives. The present article examines the interconnected nature of internal problems, external problems and dilemma management competency among school teachers in Kerala. It adopts a conceptual and analytical approach based on existing literature and educational perspectives. The article emphasis the necessity of professional commitment, emotional stability, judicious decision-making, strait forwardness of teachers", good communication skill, problem-solving capacity and support from the institution helps teachers in managing professional dilemmas. It also made an integrated analysis of the relationship between teachers' internal and external problems and their competency to manage professional dilemmas. The article suggested urgent need for progressive professional development programmes and supportive school atmosphere, all these strengthen teachers' dilemma management competency.

KEYWORDS: *Internal Problems, External Problems, Dilemma Management Competency, , School Teachers in Kerala*

INTRODUCTION
Education is one of the most powerful tools for personal development of an individual and social change. Teachers are the torch bearers of the entire educational process by facilitating learning, developing values, promoting critical thinking and preparing students to become responsible citizens. It is our dear teachers who mould our character, our personality and finally help us to reach our final destination. The professional responsibilities of teachers extend beyond classroom instruction and include academic planning, assessment, student guidance, communication with parents, administrative duties and participation in institutional activities. The teaching profession has become increasingly complex due to changes in educational policies, technological development, social interventions and the diverse needs of learners. Teachers are always to maintain academic standards while addressing individual differences, emotional needs, behavioural challenges and institutional responsibilities. The expectations of society may create various problems and professional dilemmas. Internal problems arise from personal, professional and psychological factors within teachers, whereas external problems originate from the professional and social environment in which they work. Both categories of problems may mutually interact and influence teachers' professional judgement and decision-making.

Professional dilemmas are entirely different from occupational problems because teachers' professional dilemmas involve conflicts between what a teacher lives should be done and what the circumstances require the teacher to do. Professional dilemma occurs when a teacher faces two or more competing responsibilities, values, expectations or possible courses of action. For example, a teacher may experience a conflict between maintaining classroom discipline and responding empathetically to a student's personal difficulties. Similarly, teachers may experience tension between completing the prescribed curriculum and providing individual attention to learners. Yadav and Aneja's study, Everyday Dilemmas and Challenges of a School Teacher, highlights that teaching involves continuous decision-making and dilemmas related to classroom control, curriculum transaction and societal expectations. This demonstrates the importance of examining teachers' professional challenges as interconnected experiences. In Kerala, school teachers work in diverse educational environments, including government, aided and unaided institutions. Differences in institutional resources, administrative practices, geographical conditions, student backgrounds and parental expectations may influence the nature of professional challenges experienced by teachers. Therefore, an integrated examination of internal problems, external problems and dilemma management competency is important for understanding teachers' professional experiences and identifying strategies for improving their professional effectiveness.

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REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Yadav and Aneja (2018), examined the everyday dilemmas experienced by school teachers. Their study highlighted challenges associated with classroom control, curriculum transaction and societal expectations. The study demonstrates that teaching involves continuous professional decision-making and the management of competing responsibilities. **Caspari-Gnann and Sevian (2022)** examined professional dilemmas as possible sources of teacher development. Their study explored conceptual, pedagogical, cultural and political contradictions in teachers' professional activities. The authors highlighted that professional dilemmas can provide opportunities for reflection and improvement in teaching practices. **Joseph and Gopal (2023)** investigated challenges experienced by higher secondary teachers in Kerala during online education. Their study identified technological changes, inadequate IT support and unequal internet access as important challenges. The research provides a regional perspective on external problems affecting teachers. **Ulvik, Smith and Helleve (2017)** examined ethical aspects of professional dilemmas experienced by beginning teachers. It highlighted the importance of preparing teachers to manage ethical and professional challenges through teacher education and professional development. **Ding and Wang (2018)** examined the professional dilemmas encountered by teacher candidates during their teaching practice. It highlighted the influence of personal beliefs, professional identity and institutional expectations on decision-making.

RESEARCH GAP

All most all the studies have examined various aspects of teachers' professional problems, occupational stress, ethical perspectives and dilemmas in decision making. All these problems are analysed. There is a need for an integrated analysis of internal problems, external problems and dilemma management competency among school teachers in Kerala. The present integrated analysis considers that internal and external problems may not operate independently. Instead, they may interact and influence teachers' professional decisions and responses to challenging situations. The present article therefore emphasises the importance of understanding these three dimensions within a common conceptual framework.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the major internal problems experienced by school teachers in Kerala.
- To identify the major external problems affecting school teachers in Kerala.
- To analyse the concept and dimensions of dilemma management competency among school teachers in Kerala.
- To identify strategies for strengthening dilemma management competency among school teachers in Kerala.

INTERNAL PROBLEMS

Internal problems refer to personal, emotional, psychological and professional difficulties experienced by teachers that may affect their attitudes, temperament, relationships and professional functioning. These problems may originate from individual expectations, personal experiences, emotional responses, professional responsibilities and perceived limitations

MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS

Emotional Problems

- Emotional challenges faced by school teachers in classroom situations.
- Emotional stress arising from continuous professional responsibilities.
- Difficulty to maintain emotional balance.
- Emotional immaturity due to professional expectations.
- Failure to cope with personal emotions from professional responsibilities.
- Emotionally weakened towards criticism.

Psychological problems

- Anxiety related to professional performance.
- Lack of confidence in classroom interactions.
- Inability to take decision concerning profession.
- Negative self-evaluation.
- Lack of defence mechanism concerning uncertainty

Self-confidence and self-esteem problems

- Lack confidence concerns academic strength.
- Lack of confidence in classroom management.
- Indifferent attitude in expressing professional opinions.
- Unwillingness to admit personal limitations.

Professional identity conflicts

- Conflict between personal values and professional responsibilities.
- Uncertainty about professional roles.
- Failure in maintaining a teaching philosophy of their own.
- Conflict between ideal teaching practices and actual classroom experiences.

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- Expectations concerning professional identity.
- Unwillingness to accept professional responsibilities.

Decision-making difficulties

- Lack of confidence in dealing challenging classroom situations.
- Fear of the consequences of professional decisions.
- Lack of clarity while handling ethical conflicts.
- Inefficiency to take alternative solutions.
- Immaturity concerning independent decisions.

Motivation-related problems

- Lack of enthusiastic approach towards teaching.
- Lack of personal interest in professional development.
- Failure in maintaining professional commitment.
- Reduced sense of achievement.
- Indifferent attitude towards innovative teaching practices.
- Unwillingness to maintain long-term professional goals.

Work-life balance difficulties

- Failure in managing professional and personal responsibilities.
- Carrying work-related issues into personal time.
- Problems related to find out time for personal interests.
- Feeling guilty about not meeting personal or professional expectations.
- Difficulty to find out adequate time for personal relaxation.

Interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts

- Adjustment problems with colleagues.
- Emotional reactions towards negative feedback.
- Disagreement with differences of opinions concerning profession.
- Soft temperament while responding to students' behavioural issues.
- Negative attitude in maintaining professional relationships.
- Aversion in discussing personal matters with colleagues.

Professional dissatisfaction

- Sense of guilty concerning personal abilities are not fully utilised.
- Dissatisfaction towards professional achimenes.
- Apathy towards professional accomplishment.
- Disappointment when professional expectations are not achieved.

Reflective and adaptability problems

- Reluctance to changing established teaching methods.
- Unwillingness in correcting professional drawbacks.
- Lack of confidence in adopting innovative approaches.
- Professional adjustment problems concerning curriculum transaction.
- Kerala Specific Research Evidence.
- Some published studies provide evidence for examining these internal dimensions amongteachers in Kerala.

DISCUSSION

Arunima C. and Binny Joseph (2023) Examined burnout, general well-being and resilience among 180 school teachers from Kannur, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kollam. Study of occupational stress in Thalassery (2022) Examined occupational stress among 484 higher secondary teachers. Manoj Krishnan and Aravind (2020) Examined occupational stress among 52 faculty members in private B-schools in Kollam district. Occupational stress study in Ernakulam (2026) Examined stress among 111 teachers in selected private schools. These studies are relevant to emotional exhaustion, professional dissatisfaction, confidence, coping and work-related stress. However, they do not establish that every dimension listed above is prevalent among all teachers in Kerala.

MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF EXTERNAL PROBLEMS

Administrative problems

- Excessive administrative stress.
- Continues submission of reports and records.
- Lack of clarity in assigning duties.
- Delays in administrative decisions.
- Mismatching instructions from higher authorities.
- Inadequate administrative support.

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- Excessive monitoring and supervision

Workload-related problems

- Over teaching workload.
- Large class sizes.
- Excessive periodical examinations and evaluation duties.
- Additional discipline duties.
- Lack of adequate time for predations.
- Participation in multiple school activities.
- Difficulty in completing the prescribed curricular activities at available time.
- Insufficient time for individual student attention.

Student-related problems

- Classroom misbehaviour.
- Lack of student motivation.
- Irregularities among students.
- Differences in learning abilities among students'
- Learning difficulties among students.
- Excessive use online medias and mobile phone by students.
- Behavioural problems.
- Parental reluctance in addressing students' difficulties.
- Difficulty in managing students with diverse educational needs.

Parent-related Problems.

- Unrealistic parental perspectives.
- Constant parental pressure concerning students' academic achievement.
- Unnecessary interfere on teachers' professional decisions.
- Disagreements concerning student evaluation.
- Lack of parental cooperation.
- Complaints regarding classroom management.
- Poor communication between parents and teachers.
- Differences of opinion regarding discipline.

Institutional problems

- Inadequate infrastructure.
- Lack of teaching-learning materials.
- Insufficient laboratory facilities.
- Inadequate library resources.
- Poor maintenance of school infrastructure.
- Poor technological facilities.
- Inadequate facilities for inclusive education.

Colleague-related Problem

- Communication gap between colleagues.
- Differences of opinion concerning instructional methods.
- Professional misunderstandings.
- Unhealthy competition among teaches
- Lack of teamwork.
- Unequal distribution of responsibilities.
- Difficulty to work with teachers having different professional ethics.

Professional development-related problems

- Limited opportunities for professional development.
- Insufficiently training in new teaching methods.
- Difficulty attending professional development programmes.
- Insufficient training in digital technologies.
- Lack of subject-specific training.
- Limited opportunities for research and innovation.
- Inadequate professional guidance and mentoring.
- Difficulty adapting to curriculum changes.

Technological problems

- Inadequate digital infrastructure.

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- Poor internet connectivity.
- Lack of access to updated technological resources.
- Difficulty using digital teaching platforms
- Insufficient technical support.
- Frequent changes in educational software.
- Lack of adequate digital training.
- Technical difficulties during online teaching and assessment.

Social and community-related problems.

- Unnecessary social pressure regarding teachers' behaviour.
- Differences in community expectations.
- Unwanted social criticism of teachers' decisions.
- Challenges arising from diverse family backgrounds.
- Frequent community interference in academic activities.
- Lack of community participation in educational activities.
- Social expectations regarding students' academic achievement.
- 10.Policy and curriculum-related problems.
- Curriculum revisions.
- Changes in examination systems.
- Practical difficulties in implementing new educational policies.
- Increased documentation requirements.
- Confusion regarding curriculum frame work and competency-based learning.
- Delay in orientation program regarding policy changes.

Student assessment and evaluation problems

- Problems related to assessment activities within limited time.
- Pressure concerning large numbers of answer scripts to evaluate.
- Problems related to continuous and comprehensive assessment.
- Differences between examination performance and actual learning.
- Pressure from parents regarding marks and grades.
- Difficulties in maintaining fair and objective evaluation.

Geographical and environmental problems.

- Long-distance commuting to school.
- Shortage of transport facilities
- Inadequate infrastructure in geographically remote areas.
- Seasonal disruptions due to heavy rainfall and flooding.
- Limited access to professional development opportunities in remote locations.
- Differences in educational resources between rural and urban schools.

DILEMMAMANAGEMENT COMPETENCY

Dilemma management competency refers to the professional ability of teachers to recognise, understand, analyse and respond appropriately to situations involving conflicting responsibilities, values, expectations or decisions. Teachers constantly came to across the situations in which a single decision may not satisfy all the people or professional responsibilities involved. In such situations, they must think about alternatives and choose suitable l course of action. Dilemma management competency does not mean the ability to solve problems. It also involves professional evaluation, ethical judgment, emotional stability and the ability to cope with divergent interests.

DIMENSIONS OF DILEMMAMANAGEMENT COMPETENCY

Dilemma Management Competency refers to the ability of school teachers to identify, understand, analyse, evaluate and effectively manage difficult situations involving conflicting values, responsibilities, expectations, interests or professional decisions in their teaching profession. It is a reality that teachers are constantly encounter situations in which two or more choices appear equally important, but selecting one may create difficulties or dissatisfaction for others. The ability to handle such situations through critical thinking, professional evaluation, ethical judgment, communication and decision-making is known as Dilemma Management Competency. In the teaching profession, teachers need this competency to maintain professional ethics, establish positive relationships, promote student development and fulfil their institutional responsibilities.

NATURE OF DILEMMAS FACED BY SCHOOL TEACHERS

A professional dilemma occurs when a teacher faces two or more competing responsibilities, values or expectations and finds it difficult to decide on the most appropriate course of action. Examples include:

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- Maintaining discipline with due respect student's individual freedom.
- Providing equal opportunities while addressing the different learning needs of students.
- Maintaining confidentiality while reporting a student's serious problem.
- Balancing academic achievement with students' well-being.
- Following instructions from while protecting professional values.
- Managing conflicts between parents' expectations and educational principles.
- Balancing personal responsibilities with professional commitments

MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF DILEMMA MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY

Identification of Dilemmas: It refers to the ability of teachers to recognise and understand situations that involve conflicting responsibilities, values, expectations or professional obligations.

Critical Thinking and Analysis

It refers to the ability to examine a problematic situation from different perspectives before making a decision.

Examples:

- Identify the causes of classroom conflicts.
- Considering the consequences of divergent decisions.
- Evaluating the needs and aspirations of students, parents and colleagues

Ethical and Professional Judgement

It refers to the ability to make decisions according to professional ethics, moral outlook and educational values.

Examples:

- Equal treatment of all students.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Avoiding discrimination and favouritism.
- Protecting students' rights and dignity

Decision-Making Ability

It refers to the capacity to select the most appropriate solution after considering alternative courses of action. Examples:

- Making appropriate decisions concerning disciplinary matters.
- Conflict resolution between personal and professional responsibilities.
- Selecting favourable circumstances and strategies to address students' academic problems.

Problem-Solving Ability

It refers to the ability to develop practical solutions to complexsituations arising in the teaching profession. Examples:

- Resolving classroom management problems.
- Finding solutions concerning disagreements among students.
- Addressing conflicts with colleagues and school authorities

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

It refers to the ability to communicate effectively with students, parents, colleagues and school administrators while managing difficult problems.

Examples:

- Listening amicably to different viewpoints.
- Communicating ideas very clearly.
- Negotiating and resolving misunderstandings.
- Maintaining positive professional relationships.

Emotional Regulation and Self-Control

It refers to the ability to manage one's emotions, stress and reactions while dealing with challenging professional situations.

Examples;

- Remaining cool under pressure.
- Controlling frustration caused by work pressure.
- Responding patiently to negative response
- Avoiding emotionally driven decisions.

Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

It refers to the ability to resolve disagreements and conflicting interests through discussion, cooperation and mutual understanding.

Examples:

- Resolving conflicts between parents and teachers.

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- Amicably handling disagreements among colleagues.
- Timely intervention of students' conflicts.
- Making mutually acceptable solutions.

Reflective Practice

It refers to the ability to evaluate one's own decisions and actions and learn from previous professional experiences.

Examples:

- Reviewing the after effect of decisions.
- Analysing the drawbacks of handling difficult situations.
- Planning future decision-making strategies.
- Learning from professional experiences

Adaptability and Professional Flexibility

It refers to the ability to modify one's approach according to changing situations, institutional requirements and students' needs without compromising professional ethics.

Examples:

- Adapting comprehensive teaching methods to different learners.
- Responding sensibly to unexpected situations.
- Changing strategies when an initial solution does not work
- Factors Influencing Dilemma Management Competency
- Teaching experiences helps to handle complex situations.
- Professional knowledge, professional ethics, commitment and responsibilities supports better decisions.
- High level emotional intelligence among teachers helps to control emotions and understand others.
- Communication skill is an important factor to conflict resolution.
- Institutional support and support from colleagues help teachers to address professional problems to a some extend.
- Training and workshops improve teachers decision-making skills.
- Critical thinking skill helps teachers to evaluate different alternatives.
- Social and cultural environment, values and expectations influence teachers' professional decisions.
- Working condition, school atmosphere and relationships affect teachers' responses to dilemmas.

IMPORTANCE OF DILEMMA MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS

- It helps professional ethics and accountability.
- It develops classroom management skills.
- It promotes healthy teacher–student relationships.
- It helps maintain positive relationships with parents.
- It helps fairness and equality in educational practices.
- It reduces workplace conflicts.
- It improves the quality of professional decisions.
- It enhances teachers' confidence in handling difficult situations.
- It Supports students' academic and personal development.
- It contributes to a positive school environment.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Dilemma Management Competency is an important factor that contributing the development professional effectiveness, ethical behaviour and overall performance of school teachers. Teachers frequently encounter internal and external problems in relation to their profession that require appropriate judgement, critical thinking and decision-making. Developing this competency has several educational implications for teachers, students, school administrators and the educational system.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

- Development of professional ethics: It helps teachers to follow professional values, moral principles and ethical standards while handling challenging situations.
- Improvement in decision-making: It enables teachers to take appropriate decisions concerning conflicting responsibilities and expectations.
- Enhancement of emotional intelligence: It helps teachers to control emotions, manage stress and maintain emotional stability in difficult situations.
- Development of problem-solving skills: It helps teachers to develops the ability to identifyproblems, analyse situations and find suitable solutions.

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- Professional growth: It motivates teachers to develop professional knowledge, confidence and competence.
- Development of reflective thinking: It helps teachers to evaluate their professional decisions and learn from their professional experiences.
- Better work–life balance: It helps teachers to reduce conflicts between personal responsibilities and professional commitments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Positive teacher–student relationships: Teachers having good dilemma management competency can establish supportive and respectful relationships with students.
Equal opportunities for education: Promotes non-discriminatory treatment of all students.
Improved classroom management: Helps teachers to handle student behavioural problems effectively.

- Preservation of student rights: Teachers should encourage to respect students' dignity, privacy and individual differences.
- Improvement in learning environment: In every school there should have a peaceful, supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere.
- Development of moral values: Students learn ethical values, social responsibility, empathy and conflict-resolution skills through activities of teachers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

- School should organise professional development programmes on dilemma management competency.
- Educational institutions should encountered friendly working environments for teachers.
- Opportunities should be provided teachers to discuss their professional difficulties and ethics issues.
- Administrators should be followed participatory decision-making approach.
- Grievance and redressal cell should be established to address teachers' internal and external problems.
- School administrators should follow transparency, cooperation and mutual respect.
- Mentoring, guidance and counselling programs should be organized for teachers to reduce professional difficulties

CONCLUSION

Dilemma Management Competency is an important factor that contributes professional competency among school teachers. Teachers faces so many internal and external problems in relation to their profession that adversely affect their professional accomplishment. Such situation's create value crises, irresponsible temperament and negative attitude among teachers in Kerala. In order overcome and manage professional dilemmas teachers must requires critical thinking ability, professional judgment skill, strong decision-making skill, problem solving ability, emotional stability, good communication and the ability to the timely intervention of conflict and misunderstanding. In the present educational environment in Kerala teachers must maintain professional integrity. Dilemma management competency helps teachers to overcome the problems that related profession. In addition to that dilemma management competency also promotes positive teacher–student relationships, good school atmosphere and productive educational practices. For the development of dilemma management competency teachers requires continuous professional growth, strong support from the part of institution, high ethical standard and morality. Teacher training institutions and school administrative missionary have crucial role to provide suitable training facilities and supportive working condition to strengthen this competency. In short identifying the relationship between internal problems, external problems and dilemma management competency is necessary for improving teachers' professional commitment. Developing professional dilemma management competency among school teachers in Kerala can make their professional well-being, professional commitment and comprehensive educational development. Hence, dilemma management competency should be recognised as an important factor for the development teachers' professionalism and commitment.

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