

Balancing Professionalism and Experience in Education

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Abstract

In an educational setting, the combination of professionalism and experience plays a vital role in creating an effective teaching and learning environment. While professionalism enhances ethical conduct, effective communication, commitment to student success, collaboration and teamwork, punctuality, adaptability, leadership, as well as accountability and self-reflection, practical experience empowers teachers with problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and skill development. Establishing a balance between professionalism and experience fosters trust, growth, and academic excellence. This can be effective to both teachers and educational stakeholders. This study investigated the relationship between teachers' experience and their level of professionalism. The research involved 61 Iranian school teachers with varying years of experience and levels of professionalism. To analyze the experience of the teachers, the researchers used a reflective journal. Besides, to investigate the level of professionalism, the researchers created a questionnaire to examine how professional the teachers might be. The questionnaire was completed by the teachers' colleagues, the students, and their parents. Data analysis, including Pearson Correlation and ANOVA, revealed that experience alone does not guarantee professionalism. The correlation between experience and professionalism was weak and non-significant ($r=0.25$, $p=0.08$). ANOVA results showed varying professionalism levels across different experience groups ($F(3,61)=5.42$, $p<0.01$). This suggests that more teaching years do not automatically lead to greater professionalism. Teachers who demonstrated professionalism were seen as more competent, approachable, and effective in their roles. The study emphasizes the importance of balancing professionalism and practical experience in teacher development and employment.

Keywords: Educator Development, Professional Growth, Professionalism, Teacher Effectiveness, Teaching Experience