Perceived Problems of Computer Teachers

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Effectively equipping 21st-century individuals with skills to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is of utmost importance, as they have become commonplace in most areas of life. Such skills are established in the K-12 curriculum. In this regard, computer teachers in K-12 schools play the leading role both in the computer-literacy education of their students, and in assisting other teaching and administrative staff. However, a considerable amount of computer teachers have either received minimal or no formal education regarding their subject area, or they are not called for assistance in accordance with the education they have received. Thus, they are confronted with several instructional, administrative, technical, and personal problems while fulfilling their roles.

Purpose of the Study: This study investigates the problems that K-12 computer teachers experience, and examines whether their problems vary with regard to certain variables, particularly gender, educational background, and experience.

Methods: Seventy-two computer teachers working in the city of Eskisehir, Turkey were administered a 47-item Likert questionnaire which had high internal reliability coefficients along with an ideal response rate of 92 percent. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics followed by relevant parametric tests, including t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Results: Administrative problems were the most serious problems, while personal issues were not considered important by the participants. Teachers differed in terms of the amount of perceived technical problems with regard to gender, educational background, and experience. Female teachers reported to have more technical problems than male teachers. Education faculty graduates had significantly more technical problems, whereas technical education faculty graduates had significantly more instructional problems. Finally, teachers with two to four years of
experience reported more technical problems than teachers with five and more years of experience.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Computer teachers are the front line individuals in equipping pupils with relevant ICT skills for the 21st century. However, it seems they are neither well-prepared for the work, nor well-supported in carrying out their duties. Thus, an important implication for policy-makers is to clarify the job definitions of computer teachers, particularly as they complain mostly about administrative problems. Lack of sufficient ICT education for other teachers increases the responsibilities of computer teachers and results in role conflicts and work overload. Thus, overcoming colleagues’ inadequate understanding concerning the roles of computer teachers carries importance, as well as sustaining a balance between the curricula of education faculties and technical education faculties.

Keywords: Computer education, teacher education, teacher background, teacher experience, gender