



DIMENSIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AS RATED BY STUDENT – TEACHERS

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Abstract:

The current paper aimed at exploration of characteristics of effective teachers and also working out the significant differences in the characteristics as rated by younger and older student-teachers. The sample consisted of 450 student-teachers undergoing the final year of the 2-year Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education course in 9 Centres of the District Institute of Teacher Education (DIET) operating in Manipur (India) under the Government of Manipur. There were 231 males and 219 females in the age group ranging from 24 to 58 years ($M= 43.78$; $SD =7.119$). The sample students described the characteristics of a good/ effective teacher they knew using 36 scales. A principal-components analysis of the descriptions produced 5 Factors with 21 scales: Performance (6), Pedagogy (6) Partnership (3) Evaluation (3) and Encouragement (3). The results indicated that no significant difference in the characteristics relating to Evaluation rated by younger and older students was noted, but the difference was recorded in one or more characteristics in all the four factors between them.

Introduction:

Of all the teaching inputs, teaching is the most key input in the entire educational process. It is on whose competency that the success or failure of the system depends. Therefore, the development of effective and competent teachers at all levels of education is highly called for. Because an effective teacher is expected to possess many qualities, inter alia, ability to teach theory and practice in an integrated manner ; ability to select and organize subject matter for instructional purposes ; ability to use a variety of methods ; ability to function effectively in the guidance program of the school ; ability to use a variety of effective teaching-learning procedures ; ability to develop and use instructional materials ; ability to organize and supervise co-scholastic activities. As spelt out by the Secondary Education Commission 1952-53 (1965. P. 84), “ even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remain dead unless quickened into life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teacher. Sometimes even an unsatisfactory and unimaginative syllabus can be made interesting and significant by the gifted teacher who does not focus his mind on the subject-matter to be taught or the information to be imparted but on his students their interests and aptitudes, their reactions and response”. Similar idea was expressed by Ryans (1960, p.1) as: “If competent teachers can be obtained, the likelihood of attaining desirable educational outcomes is substantial. On the other hand, although schools may have excellent material resources in the form of equipments, buildings and text books and although curricula may be appropriately adopted to community requirements, if the teachers are misfits or are indifferent to their responsibilities, the whole programme is likely to be ineffective and largely wasted”.

Realizing the importance of good teachers, thousands of research studies had been conducted and volumes had been written on the subject, but still not satisfied. In the words of Biddle and Ellena (1964, P.5), “Probably no aspect of education has been discussed with greater frequency, with as much deep concern, or by more educators and citizens, than that of teacher effectiveness How to define it, how to identify it, how to measure it, how to evaluate it, and how to detect and remove obstacles to its achievement. Findings about the competence of teachers are inconclusive and piecemeal, and little is presently known for certain about teacher excellence”.

The present study attempted to identify the general characteristics of a good teacher through student evaluation, following the findings of several studies. Costin, Greenough, and Ménges (1971) reported that student ratings of instruction were valid and reliable in assessing various criteria of instructional effectiveness. Cohen (1981) found an average correlation of 0.43 between student ratings of instructors and student performance in common final examination, suggesting that higher rated teachers tend to foster higher levels of student learning than less highly rated teachers. Blackburn and Lawrence (1986) concluded that well-constructed student rating instruments show alternate-forms reliability of .90 or higher, yield similar factor structures when factor analyzed, and are taken seriously by students as opposed to being filled in a random manner. Thus, the characteristics of a good teacher as rated by students were reported to be valid and reliable. However, factor analytic techniques have been used in studies involving student ratings of teachers. It was concluded by Meredith (1969) that research on the dimensionality of student ratings supported either a 2-factor model focusing on instructor empathy and instructional competency or a 6-factor model –factors of general course attitude, instructor characteristics, and specific procedures. Finkbeiner, Lathrop, and Schuerger (1973)

found 5-factor-general course attitude, attitude toward examinations, attitude toward method, instructor-student rapport, and attitude toward workload. Cashin (1973) in a review of 7 factor analytic studies among college students found several common factors to all studies, such as course organization, workload or difficulty level of courses, student-teacher rapport and interaction, general teaching skills, instructor impact, simulation and interest, and grading and evaluation methods. Clinton (1930), Bousfield (1940), and Perry (1971) also reported some important characteristics of good teachers (See Table-2).

The current study aimed at exploration of characteristics of effective teachers by developing scales for measuring those characteristics and also working out the significant differences, if any in the factor structures rated by younger and older student-teachers.

Method:

Subjects:

Altogether 450 student-teachers undergoing final year of 2-year Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education (D.El. ED) course in 9 centres of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) operating under the Government of Manipur (India) were involved in the study, in which 231 of them were males and 219 females in the age group 24-58 years (Mean=43.78 ; standard Deviation=7.119) with 50 students from each nine centres.

Instrument:

A total of 60 hypothetical attributes of teaching effectiveness were conceptualized after reviews of available studies of teacher evaluations by students. A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 80 students (40 males and 40 females) reading in the final year of the 2-year D.El.Ed. To evaluate each potential scale item to be rated on 5-point Likert -type as strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagrees, and undecided. After deleting the redundant or unreliable scale items, 36 scales were selected for inclusion in the final form of the instrument. The data were collected through the 36 scales.

Procedure:

The test instrument was administered to the student-teachers in the classroom itself. They were told the purpose of the study and also told to rate good teaching in general and not the teacher of any class. Directions for using the scales were given. They were encouraged to rate all the scales.

Data Analysis:

Factor analysis technique was done using a principal-components analysis and varimax differences, if any, in the characteristics of a good teacher rated by younger and older student-teachers. Here, younger students were represented by those whose age was below mean.

Results:

The present study found five-factor solution with 21 of the 36 scales of the test instrument to be the most meaningful interpretation of the data after a number of varimax rotations. Factor I: performance, which accounted for 35 per cent of the factor variance, was characterized by such 6 scales as knowledge of the subject matter, enthusiasm for teaching, physical fitness, dedication, elocutionary skills, and longer teaching experience. Factor II, pedagogy, accounted for 24 per cent of the variance, was measured by such 6 structures as organization of learning experiences, effective teaching methods, intelligible teaching, ability to motivate, interesting teaching, and open-mindedness. Factor III, Partnership, accounted for 19 per cent of the factor variance, reflected by 3 scales such as teacher-student rapport, availability, and humor. Factor IV: Evaluation, accounted for 13 percent of the factor variance, was measured by 3 qualities of continuous assessment, fair grading, and giving assignments and feedback. The last Factor V : Encouragement, accounted for 9 per cent of the factor variance, was characterized by 3 scales of support, sociability, and cheerfulness. Table 1 presents the factor structures of student ratings.

The results on the hypotheses indicated no significant difference between younger and older students in their ratings in the characteristics under Factor IV: Evaluation ($F(3,446) = 0.561, p=0.05$). A significant difference in one or more scale in the remaining four factors was noted. In Factor I : Performance, more older students rated physical fitness and longer teaching experience as the qualities of good teacher than did younger students $F(6,443) = 2.470, p=0.05$; similarly, more older students rated organization of learning experiences, effective teaching methods, intelligible teaching, ability to motivate, and interesting teaching than did younger students $F(6,443) = 3.774, p=0.05$ (Factor II: Pedagogy); under Factor III: Partnership, older students rated teacher-student rapport, availability, and humor as the attributes of effective teacher more than did younger students $F(3,446) = 4.517, p=0.05$; and support was rated by younger students as a quality of good teacher more than did older students $F(3,446) = 3.483, p=0.05$ (Factor V: Encouragement).

Discussion:

The findings of the study suggested that of the 21 scales in 5-factor structure, organization of learning experiences was the most valued characteristic, followed by teacher-student rapport, knowledge of the subject matter, effective teaching methods, enthusiasm for teachings, intelligible teaching, physical fitness, support, continuous assessment, dedication, among others. Similar findings were reported by Clinton (1930), such as knowledge of subject, pleasing personality, neatness in work and appearance, fairness, kind, humor, etc.

Bousfield (1940) also reported fairness, mastery of subjects, interesting style of presentation, well organized, clarity of presentation, etc. Perry (1971) reported - well prepared for class, sincere interest in subject, knowledge of subject, effective teaching methods, etc. A comparison of the rank order of the ten most valued characteristics of effective teachers in the present study with the ten most valued characteristics reported by Clinton (1930), Bousfield (1940), and Perry (1971) is presented in Table 2. From these studies, it was observed that the characteristics such as organization of learning experiences, teacher-student relation, knowledge of subject, effective teaching methods, fairness, encouragement, inter alia, were found to be the most common characteristics of a good teacher in all the studies under review. Several studies also found at least four attributes of the qualities of good teacher, such as knowledge of subject, enthusiasm for teaching, rapport between teacher and student, and organization of the learning situation (Hilderbrand & Wilson, 1970; Hilderband, Wilson, & Dienst, 1971; Eble, 1972; Seldin, 1980; Marsh, 1983; Murray, 1985).

About age differences in ratings the characteristics of good teachers, older students appeared to be more concerned with such attributes as physical fitness, teaching experiences, organization of learning experiences, teaching methods, intelligible teaching, ability to motivate, interesting teaching, teacher-student rapport, availability, and humor than did younger students, while younger students were more concerned with support or encouragement than did older students. It suggested that older students seemed to be more choosy about the characteristics of teachers than did younger students.

In fine, the generalizability of the findings of the study would merit further investigation. However, educational authorities may take account the 5-factor model and the corresponding attributes emerging from the current study at the time of recruitment of teachers.

Table 1: Factor Structure of an Effective Teacher*

Factor-I Performance (6 scales)	Factor-II Pedagogy (6 Scales)	Factor-III Partnership (3 scales)	Factor-IV Evaluation (3 scales)	Factor-V Encouragement (3 scales)
Knowledge of subject .728 Enthusiasm .715 Physical fitness .699 Dedication .672 Elocutionary skills .609 Longer teaching experience .604	Organization of learning experiences .756 Effective teaching methods .717 intelligible Teaching.708 Ability to motivate .643 Interesting teaching .594 Open –mindedness .576	Teacher-Student rapport .735 Availability .669 Humor .556	Continuous assessment .695 Fair grading .584 Giving assignments and feedback .571	Support .698 Sociability .648 Cheerfulness .593

* Factor structure and variable loadings using varimax rotations.

Table 2: Most value Characteristics of Good Teachers *

Clinton (1930)	Bousfield (1940)	Perry (1971)	Present Study (2017)
Knowledge of subject	Fairness	Well prepared for Class	Organization of learning experiences.
Pleasing personality	Mastery of subjects	Sincere interest in subject	Teacher-student rapport
Neatness in work and appearance	Interesting style of presentation	Knowledge of subject	Knowledge or subject matter
Fairness	Well organized	Effective teaching methods	Effective teaching methods
Kind, sympathetic	Clarity of presentation	Tests for understanding	Enthusiasm for teaching
Sense of humor	Interesting in students	Fairness	Intelligible Teaching
Interest in profession	Helpfulness	Effective communication	Physical fitness
Interesting style of presentation	Ability to direct discussion	Encouragement independent thought	Support
Alertness and broadmindedness	Sincerity	Logical organization of course.	Continuous assessment
Knowledge of methods	Keen intellect	Motivates students	Dedication

* In rank order of their importance in each study. Rank-ordering the scales from highest to lowest mean with higher the mean, the more valued the scale.

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