



CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AS PERCEIVED BY THEIR STUDENT – TEACHERS

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Abstract:

The purposes of the research were to explore some of the general characteristics which student – teachers ascribe to their teachers, to develop scales for measuring those of the characteristics which might be useful, in quantifying judgment of teaching effectiveness by students, and to see what differences, if any, existed between the evaluation of male and female students with regard to teaching effectiveness. Four hundred fifty students described the characteristics of a good teacher they knew using 36 scales. A principal component analysis of the description of a good/effective teacher produced 5 Factors: Performance, Pedagogy, Partnership, Evaluation and Encouragement. It was found that only “under Factor II: Pedagogy was rated significantly by female students to be a characteristic of a good teacher more than did males. No significant differences were noted in other scales of the five factors between males and females.

Introduction:

It would no longer be an easy task to give a precise definition of the phrase “teaching effectiveness” – the results of a process, as effective teaching demands a good deal of qualities on the part of a teacher. Teaching is considered to be an art as well as a science. If it is so, the art of teaching would know no bound. However, there is no universal agreement between researchers as to what constitutes effective teaching, but it is generally assumed to be related to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning (Doyle & Whitely, 1974; Centra, 1977; Hurt et al., 1978; Silvernail, 1979; Basset & Smythe, 1979; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981). Learning implies relative permanent change in the three domains of behaviours; accordingly, a teacher being a catalyst for change of children needs to be mentally, emotionally, and physically sound.

In the current study, teaching effectiveness was measured by student evaluation. It was measured by student evaluation. It was found from several studies that there is considerable evidence that student evaluation can provide reliable and valid measurement of teaching effectiveness. In a comprehensive review of literature on student evaluation, Costin, Greenough, and Menges (1971) concluded that student ratings of instruction were valid and reliable in assessing various criteria of instructional effectiveness. Blackburn and Lawrence (1986) reported 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. Murray (1984) found retest and ratings of same instructors by colleagues, alumni, and paid classroom observers. Cohen (1981) found an average correlation of 0.43 between student ratings of instructors and student performance on common final examinations, suggesting that higher rated teachers tend to foster higher levels of student learning than less highly related teachers.

In studies involving student ratings of teachers, factor analytic techniques have been used to uncover the underlying judgmental dimensions involved in evaluating teaching characteristics. Meredith (1969) concluded 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, instructional method, student interest and attention, course content, instructor characteristics, and specific procedures. Finkbeiner Lathrop, and Schuerger (1973) in their research study found 5-factor – general course attitude, attitude toward examinations, attitude toward method, instructor- student rapport, and attitude toward workload. Cashin (1973) in 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, stimulation and interest and grading and evaluation methods.

The purposes of the present research were to find out some of the general characteristics which students ascribe to their teachers as good, to develop scale for measuring those of the characteristics which might be useful in qualifying judgments of teaching effectiveness by students, and to test sex differences, if any, in the factor structures rated by students. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant differences between male and female students in their perceptions of the characteristics of good teachers.

Method:

Subjects:

The subjects were 450 students undergoing 2-year Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education course in 9 centres of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) operated by the Government of Manipur (India). There were 231 males and 219 females in the age group ranging from 24 to 58 years (M=43.78;

SD=7.119). All the 450 subjects were from the final year of the course with 50 students from each 9 DIET centres.

Instrument:

After lengthy considerations and reviews of available studies of teacher evaluations, some general characteristics of effective teaching were tentatively identified. Subsequently, 60 hypothetical attributes of teacher effectiveness were conceptualized. A pilot study was conducted among 80 students (40 males and 40 females) to evaluate each potential scale item to be rated on 5-point Likert-type scale. The students were asked to delete any statements reflecting the qualities they believed important for effective teaching and to add the statements if not found in the test instrument. On the basis of the deletions and additions suggested by students in the pilot study and after deleting the redundant or unreliable scale items from the test instrument, 36 scales were selected for inclusion in the final form of the test instrument*.

Procedure:

The instrument was administered to the students in their classes. They were told the nature and purpose of the study. They were also told to rate good teaching in general and not the teacher of any class they were taking or had taken in the past. Directors for using the scales were printed on the top of the instrument scales and were read to the students. They were encouraged to answer every scale.

Data Analysis:

The data were analyzed using a principal components analysis and varimax rotations. Multivariate analysis of variance were also done to work out significant differences in student scores across the scale items as a function of student scores across the scale items as a function of student sex.

Results:

After doing a number of Varimax rotations, a five factor solution was found to be the most meaningful interpretation of the data. Factor I: Performance, accounted for 35 per cent of the variance, was characterized by the qualities of 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 factor variance and was measured by such qualities as organization of learning experiences, effective teaching methods, intelligible teaching, motivation, interesting teaching and open-mindedness. Factor III: Partnership, accounted for 19 per cent of the factor variance reflected teacher-student rapport, availability, and humor. Factor IV: Evaluation, accounted for 13 percent of the factor variance was measured by the qualities of continuous assessment, fair grading, and giving assignments and feedback. The last Factor V: Encouragement, accounted for 9 per cent of the variance was characterized by such qualities as support, sociability, and cheerfulness. The factor structure of effective teaching ratings among students is presented in Table 1.

Sex Differences in Evaluation of Good Teaching:

The data were analyzed to test what differences, if any, existed between the evaluations of male and female students with regard to the scales of the five factors. Factor scores for each subject were generated and a multivariate analysis of variance done to assess differences in judgments between males and females. The results indicated that among the students, only Factor II, pedagogy, showed significant differences in judgments between males and females, wherein only “interesting teaching” was rated by females to be the characteristic of a good teacher more than did males, $F(7.171) = 1.14, p \leq 0.05$. No significant differences were noted in other scales of the five factors between males and females.

Table 1: Students’ Factor Structure for the Concept of a Good Teacher *

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

* Factor structure and variable loadings using Varimax rotation.

Discussion:

The results indicated that from among the scales of the five factors, the subjects appeared to focus the characteristics of a good teacher, inter alia, on such attributes as the organization of learning experiences, followed by teacher-student rapport, knowledge of the subject matter, effective teaching methods, enthusiasm for teaching, intelligible teaching, physical fitness, support, continuous assessment and dedication. Previous research on the qualities of good teacher found at least four attributes; knowledge of what is being taught, enthusiasm for teaching, rapport between teacher and student, and organization of the learning situation (Hildebrand & Wilson, 1970; Hildebrand Wilson, & Dienst, 1971; Eble, 1972; Feldman, 1976; Seldin, 1980; Marsh, 1983; Murray, 1985). Relations with students, broad knowledge both within and beyond a teacher’s

field, among others, as characteristics of effective teachers were reported by Wilson, Dienst, and Watson (1973). Other studies also found such qualities as knowledge of the subject matter, clarity, open-mindedness, knowledge of methods, effective teaching methods, and logical organization of course to be the characteristics associated with effective teaching (Clinton, 1930; Bousfield, 1940; French; 1957; Gadzella, 1968; Perry, 1971). Table 2 gives a comparison of the rank order of the ten most valued characteristics of good teachers in the present study, selected by rank-ordering the scales from highest to lowest mean with the higher the mean, the more valued the scale, with the ten most valued characteristics found in the studies of Clinton (1930), Bousfield (1940), and Perry (1971).

Meredith (1969) reported 2-factor model instructor empathy and instructional competency or a 6-factor model. Finkbeiner, Lathrop, and Schuerger (1973) found 5- factor – instructor- student rapport among other and Cashin (1973) reported 7-factor – course organization, student-teacher rapport, general teaching skills, inter alia.

As the current study involved a small sample, the results can only be suggestive of a new dimension of teaching effectiveness. Accordingly, further research to explore other dimensions will be necessary. However, the basic similarity of the judgments of students found in the present study and in previous studies suggests that the 5 factors and the corresponding scales relating to the characteristics of an effective teacher may be reflected in any particular teaching strategy.

Clinton (1930)	Bousfield (1940)	Perry (1971)	Present Study
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 of subject matter
Fairness	Well organized	Effective teaching methods	Effective teaching methods
Kind, sympathetic	Clarity of presentation	Tests for understanding	Enthusiasm
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	Motivate students	Dedication

* In rank order of their importance in each study.

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