



TEACHER CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AS A PERFORMANCE INDICATOR FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT – A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

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Academicians, educational planners, policy makers, teacher educators, and parents uniformly agree that the success of an educational program is largely determined by how teachers perform their job. The future rests heavily upon the quantity and quality of education received by the young that only the best should teach. This paper describes the personality traits of teachers adjudged to be effective in relation to their performances in the classroom. This is based on the doctoral research experience of the author who developed two observation schedules - one to assess the personality attributes of teachers in 8 dimensions and another to teaching effectiveness with 35 items. The tools were developed by pooling of 6,361 descriptive statements obtained from stakeholders and descriptions of research earlier research findings and condensing the items which took two years. To establish the association between teacher characteristics and classroom teaching competencies, a total number of 912 observations of 703+209 classroom teaching by upper primary teachers was done. The personality characteristics of effective teachers identified are the bipolar dimensions such as : Dull vs Intelligent; Unimaginative vs Resourceful; Unsympathetic vs Considerate; Immature vs Integrated; Unrefined vs Refined; Listless vs Enthusiastic; Unattractive vs Magnetic and Autocratic vs Democratic. Though this study was carried out in the late eighties, the author with her experience of over four decades as teacher educator finds these to be true even in the present day.

The largest single item in our budget is the salary for the teachers. The impact that a teacher makes on the learners is relatively permanent. Academicians, educational administrators, planners, policy makers, teacher educators and parents agree that the success of an educational program is determined to a largely, by how teachers perform their job. Expressed opinions and established facts reveal that our future rests so heavily upon the quality and quantity of education by the young that only the best should teach. Good teachers are a vital necessity to the progress as well as the safety of our nation. "Challenges of education: A Policy Perspective" (1985) affirmed the importance of teacher performance thus: "Teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. Whatever policies may be laid down, in the ultimate analysis these have to be interpreted and implemented by teachers, as much through their personal example as through teaching-learning process." Empirical evidence and research studies affirm that the relationship between teacher's personality and the quality of teaching is substantial.

Teacher Behavior: Assumptions

Teacher behavior is a function of situational factors and characteristics of the individual teacher. Teacher behavior is characterized by tendencies and predispositions to respond consistently over time and across situations thus making prediction possible. The behavioral tendencies are observable and hence measurable. Measurement of teacher behavior is approximate rather than absolute. It is a fact that measurements in social sciences cannot be exact but approximate only. As we all know human behavior is contextual and not textual, given the same context, one can say that teacher 'A' is better than teacher 'B' or teacher 'C'.

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In some research studies teachers were judged using expressions such

as 'effective' and 'ineffective', which is not justified. Grading teacher performance is a function of measurement procedures employed as designations 'more effective' or 'less effective', which are relative terms. In the present paper, the term 'behavior' refers to the personality traits or personality dimensions or characteristics as revealed in classroom teaching. Certain characteristics, which are value loaded like 'sincerity', 'honesty'

were not intended to be observed as these are high-inference behaviors. Personality traits are habitual responses to specific stimuli organized into characteristics; traits are organized into a constellation, configuration or clusters of relatively homogenous behavior.

As the investigation focused only on the classroom behavior or performance or of teachers, there is a need to explain the context for using the expression 'performance'. Teacher competence, which is descriptive of the quality or standard of a teacher, is a repertoire of teacher's knowledge, skills and beliefs, which are competencies; competence is a matter of degree whereas competencies are skills or performances which a teacher may or may not have. Borich (1977) in his book titled "The Appraisal of Teaching" describes three different kinds of competencies, which are: a) knowledge competencies (cognitive understandings demonstrated), b) performance competencies (teaching process demonstrated) and c) consequence competencies (pupil behavior as evidence of teaching effectiveness). In other words, they are presage, process and product variables.

The study considered only the performance competencies or process variables as revealed in the classroom. As performance is ideally assessed through observation, two observation schedules were designed, gaining inspiration from the classic research of David G. Ryans on characteristics of teachers (1969).

Construction of Observation Schedules (to assess teaching effectiveness and personality attributes):

As the findings of review of related research studies showed that most of the investigations were done on pre-service teachers using rating scales, it was decided to select teachers in service as the target group and to use only observation schedules for assessment, which are more reliable than other instruments.

The following tools already available were consulted while designing the observation schedules:

1. Baroda Teaching Effectiveness Assessment Scale
2. Teaching Assessment Battery developed by Jangira and Singh (1982)
3. Master List of Categories and Performance Elements (364 competencies developed by the Centre for Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1978)
4. The California Statement of Teaching Competence
5. Stanford Teaching Competence Appraisal Guide

There is a temptation to mention here that the entire study was done at a time where only provision for photocopying (pages from the libraries) with many restrictions was available; no internets, no mobile apps, no e-mail facilities, no advanced information-communication technology. Thanks to the University Grants Commission for its liberal grant to the researcher to purchase books, to meet travel, stationery and postal expenses, related to the study. Physically travelling several thousand kilometers to visit several places in order to collect literature and meet experts at the national level was a challenging task, which, of course, was very rewarding.

It was necessary to collect a set of statements describing the classroom behavior or performance of effective teachers from all the stakeholders. Questionnaires were administered by post and in person whenever possible to:

1. teacher educators in university departments and colleges of education in Tamil Nadu,
2. inspecting officials including Chief Education Officers, District Education Officers, Inspectors of Schools in Tamil Nadu,
3. teachers and Heads of High and Higher Secondary schools in Sivagangai District,
4. higher secondary and secondary school pupils of Karaikudi town,
5. teacher trainees of Dr. Alagappa College of Education and
6. parents of school children who were interviewed when met on the school campuses.

The questionnaire was an open-ended one seeking responses to a simple question "Whom do you consider as the most effective teacher in your experience and state reasons for judging that teacher to be so". Postal reminders were sent to those respondents who were in other parts of Tamil Nadu to return the filled in questionnaires and the response was 45%, which was an appreciable rate.

The population comprised all the 390 upper primary teachers working in 32 high and 13 higher secondary schools of the 4 zones of Devakottai Educational District, Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. No sampling was done. These teachers were from 25 mixed schools, 10 girls' schools, and 10 boys' schools; out of the 10 boys' schools, five were mixed at higher secondary level.

Initially to familiarize herself with the concepts of teaching effectiveness and teacher behavior, the author did a case study of five teachers adjudged to be the best by peers, students and heads in the respective five schools in Karaikudi. The case study consisted of observing twice the teaching of two different subjects at various points of time, both without any prior intimation, followed by an in depth individual interview with each of the five teachers after the second observation was over. It was surprising to learn that four out of the five never chose to become teachers! Only one wanted to pursue teaching profession; she was the alumna of Dr. Alagappa College of Education. She broke her right hand in the volleyball ground during her undergraduate program and joined B.Ed. program with this permanent handicap. The other four made attempts to become a doctor, get a job in bank or LIC, but were not successful and hence they had to join the profession of teaching. The beauty and charm of the profession transformed them into effective teachers!

Pooling of responses for construction of Observation Schedules:

The obtained descriptive statements numbering 6,361 were broadly classified into those describing the personality dimensions of teachers and those describing classroom-teaching performances of teachers. While 4,000 statements were related to the personality traits, 2,361 were related to the ongoing teaching process in the classroom.

Descriptions about teacher traits repeated several times were ranked based on their frequency and categorized based on clustering similar ones. Likewise, descriptions about the ongoing teaching behavior were pooled, categorized and ranked for their order of frequency.

In the mean time, review of related research studies was done visiting libraries of NCERT, UGC, British Council, ICSSR, University of Mysore, American Consulate Library, University of Madras for conceptualization of the topic. A total number of 147 studies were come across, from which descriptive statements of personality and teaching of effective teachers were gathered for pooling. The statements as responses to questionnaires and those collected from the literature were clubbed for further pooling and ranking based on frequency.

Condensing several thousand statements to design two observation schedules took two academic years, as the scholar was a part time candidate serving as a teacher educator in the then Dr. Alagappa Chettiar Training College, which later on was renamed as Dr. Alagappa College of Education; after Alagappa University was established in 1985, it became a constituent college of the university. Designing of instruments to observe teachers was meticulously done for ensuring objectivity and reliability. As based on these tools only a teacher's effectiveness would be assessed and considering the ethical aspect of judging human beings, utmost care was given for validation of the observation schedules.

Validation of the Observation Schedules:

A preliminary try out of both the tools was carried out with five teachers in the model higher secondary schools. After minor revisions, a pilot study was done on 30 teachers working in schools of Karaikudi. Each of the 30 teachers was observed twice, with a gap of two months between the first and the second observations. Subjects other than the ones the teachers taught during the first visit were observed during the second time. The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.66.

To increase the objectivity of the assessment an old student of the researcher was trained for seven days with theoretical and practical inputs about the research. Seven teachers were observed twice; though in the beginning there was variation in the assessment scores, at the end of the training period the assessment by the co-observer was very close to that of the researcher. The inter rater reliability was 0.94.

Reliability of the tools was established independent of the population by observing 15 B.Ed. trainees twice; inter- observer reliability was found to be 0.80.

Expert, face, content and criterion validities were established for the observation schedule to assess teaching effectiveness.

The test-retest reliability of the observation schedule to assess personality attributes was 0.87. The reliability for observation done independent of the population was 0.75. Face, expert, criterion and content validities were found, making the observation schedules suitable for field use. The observation schedules were revised and refined twice, based on expert opinion, field tryouts and pilot study.

The pre-pilot study observation schedule for assessing teaching effectiveness had 43 items, which were reduced to 35 for the final observation, as eight teaching behaviors were non-functional during the time of observation. Similarly, the observation schedule to assess personality dimensions had 12 dimensions initially, which were reduced into eight based on pilot study experiences.

Data Collection:

All the available secondary grade teachers in the schools of Devakottai Educational District were observed travelling a distance of 3,640 kilometers visiting all the 45 schools twice; schools with more teacher strength were visited thrice since each observation lasted for forty minutes. Though the sanctioned teacher strength was 500 for Devakottai Educational District, only 390 posts were filled up. During first observation, only 247 teachers were present, while others were on medical leave or on other duty or on personal leave. During second observation, out of the 247 teachers observed earlier, only 209 were present. As the same teachers had to be observed for the second time also, teachers who were present during the subsequent visit could not be included. A third time observation was also planned; but if the strength of teachers present would be less than 200, then correlation analysis would be difficult. A total number of 912 observations were done. Whenever the purpose of the investigation was asked by some heads and teachers during data collection, use of the term 'teaching effectiveness' which was part of the study, was purposely avoided. This was to control the tendency to present a better impression on the part of the teachers before the observer, which might distort the findings of the study (the Hawthorn effect). The researcher answered the question simply stating that she wanted to see if there was any relation between teacher personality and classroom teaching. Borg and Gall (1983) observed that such deceptions are justified if the investigation promised to add to scientific knowledge. Thus, the ethical aspect of research was taken care of. There was no voluntary participation; all the teachers had to give the lessons for observation. The cooperation *par excellence* rendered by both the heads and the teachers made the study a scientific and objective one. In some cases, persuasion of heads of schools was needed, but this was done with ease as the researcher had already established contacts with these practice schools for the trainees of the college where the researcher had been serving. Confidentiality was maintained strictly, though one headmistress was curiously asking for the teachers' scores on teaching. She was hesitant to permit the researcher for the second time observation stating that teachers did not want to give lessons. However, the headmistress' room was in the last portion of the school, which was a modified house, and while crossing the classrooms the teachers enthusiastically invited the researcher to observe their classes. Learning this, the head gave permission to the researcher strictly asking for disclosing of the scores on teaching effectiveness of the teachers. The investigator agreed to show the scores without displaying the names of the teachers! This

persuasion took about 45 minutes. Sitting at the back of the classroom, each teacher was observed for the entire period. A few teachers attempted to give revision lessons to create a better impression, which could be easily sensed, but such teachers were requested to take fresh lessons for which they had already come with preparation. During the first observation, the researcher and the trained co-observer assessed the teaching effectiveness. During the second observation, the researcher assessed the personality dimensions of the teachers while the co-observer assessed the teaching. Thus, there were three observations to assess teaching by each teacher, teaching two different subjects and one to assess the personality of the teachers as revealed in the classrooms. All these observations were done without any prior intimation to the school. 76 VI std. classes, 89 VII std. classes and 44 VIII std. classes were observed. Observations of 30 English lessons, 22 Tamil lessons, 73 Mathematics lessons, 53 Science lessons, and 31 History and Geography lessons were done. Out of 209 classes observed, 5 classes had a pupil strength below 30, 95 classes had a strength ranging from 30 to 50, 53 classes had a pupil strength of 70 to 90 and in 4 classes, the strength was between 90 to 110!

Analysis of Data:

Correlation analysis was done between the percentage scores on teaching effectiveness and personality traits. All correlations were computed applying Pearson's Product-Moment correlation. Using Orion PC/AT and PC machines of Aurelec Data Processing System data were analyzed. Development of software for enabling analysis specific to the need of the study alone took four months! Manual verification was done to check the correctness of correlation values. Tetra choric correlation was calculated; multiple correlation technique was employed to find out those combinations of personality dimensions that maximized teaching effectiveness. Regression equations were computed to enable prediction of teaching effectiveness scores from scores on measures of personality.

Major Findings:

1. There existed a positive, substantial and significant relationship between personality dimensions and teaching effectiveness (rt value = 0.70 and product-moment r value = 0.59, both significant at 0.01 level).
 2. There existed a positive, low to moderate, significant relationship between each of the eight dimensions and teaching effectiveness. The maximum 'r' was found between intelligence and teaching effectiveness (r = 0.58). Magnetic behavior was also found to be positively related with teaching effectiveness (r=0.58). Refined behavior, integrated behavior and considerate behavior were also positively related with teaching effectiveness but at a moderate level (r=0.30, 0.33, 0.37 respectively).
 3. Certain combinations of personality dimensions revealed a greater positive relationship to teaching effectiveness. The tetra choric combination of dimensions such as enthusiastic, magnetic and democratic behaviors were significantly related with teaching effectiveness (R= 0.63). The combination of magnetic and democratic behaviors also showed substantial correlation (r= 0.63).
- A combination of all the eight dimensions also showed significant relationship with teaching effectiveness (R= 0.63). All the correlations were significant at 0.01 level.
4. Using regression equations it was possible to predict teaching effectiveness from the scores on personality dimensions.

Recommendations:

1. Though it is difficult to change the personality of the student teachers within a short duration of one or two years, attempts to develop traits that are frequently researched to be associated with successful teaching deserve a fair trial.
2. Modules for pre-service and in-service training levels may be developed, validated and implemented. Such trainings for enhancing personality attributes and teaching effectiveness should be a part of pre-service – in service continuum.
3. Applying suggestions of great educationists like N.L.Gage, microteaching, mini courses and other techniques of behavior change may be tried out. Nowadays many personality training techniques have been developed and being implemented.

Presently student teachers are trained to develop transferable life skills; this may be helpful. At the time when the study was done, expressions such as life skills were not heard of.

It would be apt to conclude with N.L. Gage's observation in his award

winning publication, which was gifted to the researcher, titled "Hard Gains in the Soft Sciences" : "Research on teaching promises no millennium; it merely holds out a reasonable prospect of improving on the way teaching is".

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