

Adapting a Teacher Role Survey Instrument to a Malaysian Context

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Satu kajian tentang kebolegunaan alatan Tinjauan Peranan Guru, yang dikembangkan Maes dan Anderson di Amerika Syarikat, dalam konteks Malaysia dibuat ke atas guru-guru pelatih Universiti Sains Malaysia. Perbandingan dapatan tentang respons terhadap butiran-butiran yang dikatakan berkait langsung dengan Lokas Kawalan Luaran dan Dalaman menunjuk bahawa guru-guru pelatih itu lebih "dalaman" dalam pengharapan terhadap peranan mereka sebagai seorang guru. Analisis lanjutan memberi bukti-butir bahawa alatan Tinjauan Peranan Guru itu harus diubahsuai lagi untuk keadaan Malaysia.

Introduction

The expanding educational services and curriculum revisions of the last few years, together with increasing classroom enrolments in urban schools have brought about serious rethinking of the role of classroom teacher. Would there be a shift of the ideas of a teacher as an educator and mentor to one more consonant with the pressing demands for teachers to deliver a body of knowledge and to rationale teaching as just another job? Current image of the school teacher has been rather uncomfoting, probably because of the expanding pool of teachers with the inevitable misfits in the system. Staff-room talks that use to focus on pupil achievements and job satisfaction have veered to that of frustration to reach the child and the lack of authority of the teacher over discipline matters. Letters to editors have only further demoralize the teaching corp and one can actually sense a feeling of despair amongst teachers for teaching as a profession. Many teachers would already have reached the state of uncertainty of bringing about more professionalism in the job, what with the soon to be implemented new curricula? Hence it would be an opprotune time to view how teachers see their role, and to what extent does a teacher believe he/she would be able to control events affecting his/her life?

The Rotter I-E Scale (Rotter, 1966) was a social learning measurement developed to determine whether an individual has self-control over life's events (internal locus of control) or one life's events were controlled by external factors (external locus of control). The Rotter I-E Scale and its derivations are found to be of significant predictive value of pupil's achievement in primary schools, for example, in a study of Malaysian primary school children Maznah (1984) confirmed that pupils who score high in internal locus of control measures (using the Crondall Intellectul Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire) also scored high in academic achievement. Thus a measure of Locus of Control may have utility in predicting general performances. However if we assume the teaching profession to be one of substantive value to a teacher, it is also of importance to develop measures of Teacher's Locus of Control. Does how a teacher feel about his/her responsibility on a child's academic attainment contribute to better/not-so-good school achievement? Do teachers care about their ability in affecting improvements in schools? Does the school or school system improve or act as a barrier on teachers to perform to their best ability? Do parents' concept of teachers have a bearing on teacher's perception of their roles?

Guskey (1981), Rose and Medway (1981) have respectively developed the Teacher Locus of Control and the Responsibility for student Achievement Questionnaire to determine and

assess the questions raised earlier. These instruments purports to determine teachers' beliefs in their responsibility for academic achievement and for monitoring student behaviours. Maes and Anderson (1985) proposed that work-related events or issues may have positive or negative bearings on how teachers perceive their roles. Seven aspects of work related issues (so called "teacher work reinforcers") were identified for their study to develop a Teacher Role Survey (TRS) instrument. These reinforcers were said to be related to work with students, relations with teachers, sense of achievement, curriculum and programme freedom, responsibility, recognition, and attitudes of society and parents. Forced choice items were written for each of these reinforcers together with items for seven other categories, namely, administration, personnel policies, salary, working conditions, workload, security, and social services. An initial instrument consisting of 75 items was prepared for trail testing. Through a series of serial order block testing and comparing the results with the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, 32 items were selected for inclusion into a form for Teacher Role Survey. Factor analyses of the 32 items revealed 4 factors; three of these factors being in congruence with four of the earlier seven reinforcers. Maes and Anderson subsequently reduced the items into a 25 - item final form (revised, Anderson and Maes, 1986). Some of these reinforcer categories have more items than the other in the TRS. Each of the item was developed as a contrast between two statements; one representing an internal, the other an external, belief about school or teaching. The following item illustrates a contrast, designed to measure control expectancies related to recognition as a reinforcer in teaching:

- (a) Teachers are given recognition in proportion to the quality of their performance.
- (b) Given society's attitude toward teaching, there is really very little a teacher can do to gain the recognition deserved.

On analysis statement 'b' represents a more external control expectancy than 'a'. The order of statements, i.e. external or internal is a supposedly random in the item form. The respondents, teachers in USA, were given sufficient time to select the statements that of best fit their expectations.

Propose of Study

This study attempts to utilize the TRS form of Mass and Anderson on Malaysian teacher trainees with a view to compare the perception of teacher roles with certified teachers in the USA sample. The USA sample comes from teachers in a large school district in New Mexico. At the same time certain modifications and addition of items to the TRS would be assessed as to its utility in the Malaysian context.

Methodology and Instrumentation

In this study the Maes and Anderson TRS (1985) was used as the basis of study. A variant of the TRS was derived by adding 13 items to the original 32 item. These items cover areas of pedagogy, relationship with pupils, public examination and achievement, classroom environment, and teacher's work responsibility. The last category consist of 8 items and by itself could be an indicator of "Job Responsibility". All these additional items were structures along an external - internal expectation basis.

It was thus essential to keep track of the items in the instrument format so that the various variants of TRS could be traced and compared with the TPTP.

The following are the tags of the TRS instrument in the study:

TRS-1 : modified final instrument, 25 items (Maes and Anderson (1986).

- TRS-2 : original instrument, 32 items (Maes and Anderson, 1985).
 Jobs : 8 items that reflect teacher's work responsibility.
 TRS-3 : TRS-2 plus Jobs.
 TRS-4 : TRS-3 plus 5 additional items.

TRS-4 is the final form in which teacher trainees responded to anonymously sometime during their 9-week teaching practice and returned to the author at the end of the practice session.

The items on the TRS-4 were scored '1' or '0', a value of '1' being given to an external perception selected: As the responses were made anonymously no attempt was made to link the total scores in any one of the variants of TRS with achievement scores or performance in teaching practice.

Result and Discussions

Means and Standard Deviation

The TRS of Maes and Anderson (1985) consisting of 32 items yielded a mean of 9.90 with a standard deviation of 4.32 external responses for a sample of 194 teacher trainees. The same form yielded a mean of 14.22 with a standard deviation of 7.11 external responses for the USA sample of 166 teachers.

On computation, t-test for the two populations yielded $t = 6.15$, $df = \alpha$ and $p < 0.05$. Thus the two samples differ in their average external responses with the Malaysian sample having a lower external expectancy and consequently a higher internal expectancy. Does that mean that Malaysian teacher trainees perceive a higher locus of control over their role as a teacher?

There were distinct differences in total external responses scored for the TRS-1, TRS-2, Jobs, TRS-3, and TRS-4 forms between male and female respondents. Their means and standard deviation were illustrated in table 1.

Instrument	M	Std. Dev.	M	Std. Dev.	M	Std. Dev.
TRS 1 (25 item)	8.73	5.31	9.43	5.33	8.32	5.23
TRS 2 (32 item)	9.90	6.05	10.86	6.25	9.34	5.90
Jobs* (8 item)	1.37	1.50	1.94	1.66	1.04	1.30
TRS 3* (40 item)	11.27	7.01	12.81	7.43	10.39	6.66
TRS 4* (45 item)	12.95	7.78	14.67	8.20	11.94	7.52

TABLE 1: Means and Standard Deviation

N = 194

Male N = 67

Female N = 127

*t-tests revealed significant differences between groups means for male and female subjects with $p < 0.05$.

A series of t-tests were conducted to determine differences of means and standard deviation between male and female subjects. It was shown that female trainees have significantly lower external scores for Jobs, TRS-3, and TRS-4. That is to say female teacher trainees cope better for their role as teachers with a higher internal expectancy over events as teachers or job responsibility. Is it an indication that female trainees are more effective teachers and all trainees in general have a higher internal control over teaching events than established teachers (compare TRS-2 mean between Malaysian and USA sample)?

Analyses of Differences between Malaysian and USA samples with regards to selected Reinforcers

A number of items in TRS-w were composed to determine the differences in means for the US and Malaysian samples. These differences may explain the total mean differences 9 items representing reinforcers in the TRS were selected and their means and standard deviations listed in table 2.

Reinforcer	Item No.	Malaysian Sample		USA Sample		t-value
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Responsibility	9	.70	.45	.43	.50	5.347*
	10	.26	.44	.44	.50	-3.597*
Recognition	2	.53	.50	.55	.50	-0.378
	11	.62	.49	.44	.50	3.346*
Relationship with Teachers	3	.83	.39	.52	.50	6.475*
Administration	4	.35	.49	.60	.49	-3.966*
	32	.39	.49	.43	.50	-0.629
Sense of Achievement	13	.52	.50	.40	.49	2.294*
	27	.63	.48	.42	.49	4.092*

TABLE 2: Differences in Means and Std. Dev. between Malaysian and USA teachers on selected reinforcers

*t-value exceed 1.960 for df. and significant at $p < 0.05$.

Item @ 9 and @ 10 refers to the responsibility reinforcer and read as follows:

	Score
9a. In this day and age, teachers are deprived of a strong sense of personal responsibility.	1
b. Teaching is a profession that enables one to develop a strong sense of personal responsibility.	0
10a. The more one teaches effectively, the more one is delegated responsibility for classroom management.	0
b. With all the "snoopervisors" in schools, teachers are watched over regardless of their competence level. (x people who reports on others)	1

The difference between means for item 9 was significant with $t = 5.347$, $p < 0.05$. Malaysian teacher trainees seem to succumb to the 'fate' that they were deprived of a strong sense of responsibility. This could be due to the perception of large classes and the relatively demanding workload which subsequently generated a feeling of inability to control external circumstances. At the same time Malaysian teachers feel that they are given responsibility for classroom management if they teach effectively. Thus this group have a higher internal expectancy than the USA sample. The means were significantly different at $t = -3.597$ and $p < 0.05$. Also there was a sense of security among Malaysian teachers that their performances were not spied upon by others or criticized about.

Item @ 2 and @ 11 refer to the recognition reinforcer and read as follows:

	Score
2a. Teachers are given recognition in proportion to the quality of their performance.	0
b. Given society's attitude toward teaching, there is really very little a teacher can do to gain the recognition deserved.	1
11a. To get recognized, a teacher need only to exert the effort to perform well.	0
b. One of the problem with teaching is that there is little recognition even when it is earned.	1

There were no difference in means of response to item '2' for the two groups of teachers. However for item '11', the difference in responses was significant at $t = 3.346$, $p < 0.05$. The Malaysian group had a higher external expectancy that tend to be negative in nature. Malaysian teachers generally feel not given their due recognition, especially with the image of the teaching profession being questioned by all and sundry.

Item @ 3 refers to the relationship with teachers reinforcer and read as follows:

	Score
3a. Teachers today are mostly out to take care of themselves.	1
b. I find that most teachers are friendly if I am friendly to them.	0

The difference in means for this item was significantly different at $t = 6.475$, $p < 0.05$. Apparently the trainees perceive that all teachers are busy and mind their own business or could it be an indication that our trainees felt that fulltime teachers do not have much time to be friendly with trainees. On the other hand the high response to the external expectancy might be due to the "newness" of the school setting to the trainees.

Items @ 4 and @ 32 refers to the administration reinforcer and reads as follows:

	Score
4a. If I work hard and perform effectively, administrators are very supportive of my work.	0
b. I find that principals and administrators base their support of a teacher more on which and hearsay than on quality of work.	1

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| 32a. | School administrators are highly responsive to directives “from above” but not very responsive to influence from teachers. | 1 |
| b. | Teachers are heard and responded to by administrators to the degree that they effectively plead their case. | 0 |

In both items the Malaysian sample scored low means, and the difference was significant for item “4” with $t = 3.966$, $p < 0.05$. This mean that the Malaysian teachers do have greater self confidence that they do get some form of support of their work if they work hard and perform effectively. Apparently the Malaysian teachers were not so cynical of the claimed lack of justice of the administration. However what form of non-monetary support would be appreciated?

Item @ 13 and @ 27 refer to the sense or achievement reinforcer and reads as follows:-

		Score
13a.	It is clear that a teacher can take delight in creative development of learning experiences.	0
b.	More and more learning experience are “canned” and mandated for the teacher. (e.g. the new syllabus, strict guidelines and texts etc.)	1
27a.	Teaching is a profession in which a sense of achievement is often missing because it is difficult to know the effect of one’s work.	1
b.	One of the advantages of teaching is that one is the “manager of the classroom” and thus can arrange things so as to get a clear sense of what has been accomplished.	0

For both items ‘13’ and ‘27’ the means for the Malaysian sample are larger than that of the USA sample and are significant at $t = 2.294$ and $t = 4.092$ respectively, with $p < 0.05$. Perhaps the structural design of the syllabus and its concomittant fixated contents and procedures as well as “official” guide books had really changed the perception of independence of teacher to perform and consequently a lack of a sense of achievement of the teacher concerned.

Of the above selected 9 items for comparison 7 showed significant difference in perception of ability of the teacher to control such reinforcers affecting their roles as teachers. It is quite clear here that the TRs when applied to the Malaysian situation derived variability in responses.

Conclusion

One of the significant findings of the study is that female trainees appeared more internal in expectancies of their role in teaching when compared to male trainees, and that they volunteer to seek hlep or sought the advice of school teachers in their normal discharge of duties. Probably this could be an indicator that females are much more effective teachers than their male counterpart. Observations during teaching practice supervision generally tend to indicate female trainees are more conscientious of their teaching preparations.

As a group the Malaysian trainees are more internal in expectancies than the trained teacher in USA. However the differences in means in certain items thereby leading to significant total means between the two groups do nindicate that the TRS in general may not be highly suited

to the Malaysian concept of the Role of a Teacher. Probably the TRS could be readjusted in the terms of reinforces using some of the additional items in TRS-3 and TRS-4.

In order to refine the instrument in terms of its absolute usefulness with trainees, certain items on administration could be revamped or reduced and more valid items on perception of work, effectiveness of delivery and delivery and interactions with pupils could be considered. Also some dependent variables e.g. performance of trainee from various sources or observations, pupils evaluation of the trainee, etc. may be used to validate the usefulness of a Malaysian TRS to help determine effectiveness of a trainee.

As a hindsight, if one were to view teaching as a process, apart from its apparent role as a professions, could it be said a teacher's performance is a reflection of the internal processes or procedures internalized within the individual?

Hence, based upon the contention of internalization Malaysian teachers, here specifically the trainees may have internalized more positive perceptions of the teaching profession. As no attempt was made to measure locus of control with current practicing teachers, there may be a possibility that we would see a drop in the mean for locus of control for practicing teachers. If that were the case, the subsequent question to raise would be what professional support system would best be exploited to enhance or maintain the present high level of internalization of the trainees when they reach the schools?

Among the clues to this question would be schools principals' support for their staff, working conditions, on-going professional development strategies and also a supportive public.

On the part of the teacher-trainers, the pre-service educational courses could build in more components linking concepts and theories as well as practice to the affective domain with a view to further internalize positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. The 'idealism' exemplified and held by the present trainees must be maintained after leaving the ivory tower and entering the school corridors. In this aspect perhaps the training institutes and the schools can work out better mechanism for continued enhancement of the teaching profession.

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