The Influence of Teachers' Interpersonal Skills to Their Cognitive Competencie as Principal's Guide for Teacher Selection

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were: 1) To determine the level of teacher cognitive competencies in terms of Classroom management, and Commitment and responsibility; 2) To determine the level of interpersonal skills in terms of: Communication Care, Respect, and Assertiveness; 3) To investigate the significant influence of teacher interpersonal skills toward teacher cognitive competencies. The study utilized the descriptive method. The research instrument was Oppinionaire with one section based on the two dimensions of Teacher Cognitive Competencies (Abd et al, 2012). The first sub dimension, Classroom Management, consisted of ten Likert-style questions. The second sub dimension of Teacher Cognitive Competencies, Commitment and Responsibility, also consisted of ten Likert-style questions. The second section, Interpersonal Skills, was divided into four dimensions (Brown, 2004) with each dimension consisting of five Likert-style questions. The researcher developed the opinionnaire by using several different definitions of terms that covered all of the dimensions in this study. The statistics used for the treatment of the data were mean, standard deviation(s.d.), standard error mean (s.e.mean), coefficient of variation(C.V.),rank and Multiple regression Analysis: Method enter and method stepwise. The results showed that the highest level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies is in the Commitment and Responsibility dimension and the lowest is Classroom Management. Respect was the highest level of Teacher Interpersonal Skills among the Teachers. Among the dimensions of Teacher Interpersonal Skills, Respect had the highest influence on Teacher Cognitive Competencies. Since the dimensions of Teacher Interpersonal Skills significantly influence Teacher Cognitive Competencies, Principals and other administrators should establish and maintain approaches on how to increase the level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies within the school through teacher selection and developing teacher tools.

Keyword(s): Teacher Cognitive Competencies, Interpersonal Skills, Classroom Management, Teacher Selection, Principal's Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Today, schools are faced with the ongoing challenge of providing quality education. At the crux of this is the idea that to do so schools must have effective teachers. In education reform, there is possibly no other issue as fundamentally important as improving teacher quality (Pappano, 2011). Other factors in a school such as budgeting, the number of students in a class and what's being taught are small in comparison to the significant influence a teacher can have on a student, which puts the issue of improving teacher quality in classrooms in the US at the forefront of those involved in Education (The Economist, 2011). In October, 2015, the Malaysian Education Minister, P Kamalanathan, confirmed plans to bring in teachers from India to improve standards of effective teaching in non-urban areas (The Economic Times, 2015).

When developing teacher quality in schools, fitting leadership and management is required; however, according to an article, The Gates Foundation's Effective Teacher initiative has found issues that a large number of administrators who are in schools do not have the systems or administrative tools in place to facilitate teacher recruitment or development (Long,2015). Schools should be environments for growth in terms of both students and faculty members. All too often the focus of management is on the high achiever, those who already have it, rather than developing staff who require some form of training or development to move up to the high achiever level (Lucas, 2015).

One noticeable area for possible development and reform is that of teacher selection, hiring and the process and strategies involved as a means for improving the overall effectiveness of faculty staff (Goldhaber, 2013) There is an emerging risk that a large number of school recruitment processes are affected by the personal bias or a notion of what an effective teacher is. School systems would benefit hugely from decision-making processes based on due-diligence and research-led enquiry. These decisions tend to have more traction promoting the overall running of the school in terms of grades, school wide discipline and communication (Strong & Hindman, 2006).

Research Objectives

1. To determine the level of teacher cognitive competencies in terms of: Classroom management, and Commitment and responsibility

2. To determine the level of interpersonal skills in terms of Care, Respect, Communication and Assertiveness

3. To investigate the significant influence of teacher interpersonal skills toward teacher cognitive competencies.
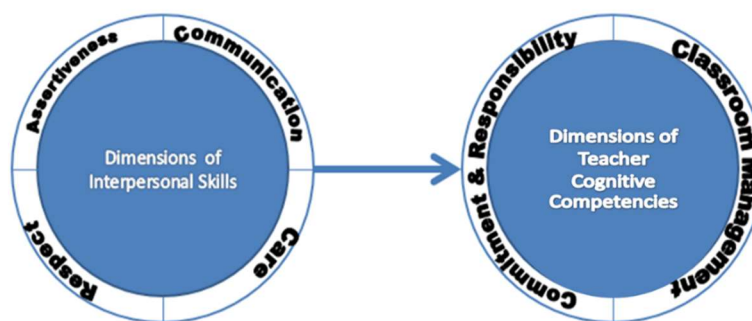
Conceptual Framework of the study

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Student

Shown in Figure 1 is the conceptual framework of the study. This study focuses on the relationship of two dimensions of teacher cognitive competencies namely: 1. classroom management, and 2. Commitment and responsibility based on a previous study done in Malaysia (Abd et al, 2012). It also focuses on the relationship of the four dimensions of Interpersonal skills namely: Communication, Care, Respect and Assertiveness as defined in a previous study (Brown, 2004),

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was descriptive research. The respondents were identified through the use of convenience sampling. The reason for convenience sampling was due to the location of the schools. All of the schools that were used in this study are located close to each other. The research instrument was an opinionnaire. The opinionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The data gathered was statistically tested and analysed with appropriate statistical tools. Conclusions and recommendations were made on the findings of the study.

The survey opinionnaire was floated in five international schools for the academic year 2016-2017 and 120 teachers from K-12 teachers participated in this study.

Data obtained from the opinionnaire was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v16.0). The data from the opinionnaire was analysed separately. The SPSS v16.0 was used to generate tables for frequencies, mean, s.d, se, c.**V**. Three tables were generated, one, the table showing the level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies in terms of a. Classroom management, b. Commitment and responsibility. The second table shows the level of Interpersonal Skills in terms of: Care, Respect, Communication, and Assertiveness. The third table show the significant influence of Interpersonal Skills on Teacher Cognitive Competencies.

Table 1. Basic Statistics on the level of Job Satisfaction of teachers.

Teacher Cognitive Competencies	Basic Statistics					Descriptive Equivalent
	Rank	Mean	s.d.	s.e. mean	C.V.	
(2) Commitment and Responsibility (k=10)	1	87.552	9.7463	.8717	0.1113	Very High
(1) Classroom management (k=10)	2	81.072	9.9823	.8928	0.1231	High
Overall		168.62	18.2074	1.6285	0.1079	Very High

k= total number of items

As shown in the above Table 1, the level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies was in Very high level with the mean of 168.62 and standard deviation 18.2074. The value of mean of all the aspects of Teacher Cognitive Competencies varies from "High" to "Very High".

By the values of C.V (varies from 0.1113 to 0.1231), it shows that the variation of all the aspects of Teacher Cognitive Competencies were consistent or stable and could be classified into 1 type (pattern of variations), consisting of "Commitment and Responsibility" (C.V.= 0.1113) and "Classroom Management" (C.V.= 0.12312).

By the rank of Teacher Cognitive Competencies, it was found that the highest level was in Commitment and Responsibility, and the lowest level was in Classroom Management".

Table 2: The level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies in terms of Commitment and Responsibility and its basic Statistics.

Interpersonal Skills	Basic Statistics					Descriptive Equivalent
	Rank	Mean	s.d.	s.e. mean	C.V.	
Respect (3)	1	43.6160	4.7037	.4207	0.1078	Very High
Assertiveness (4) (k=5)	2	41.8000	4.8159	.4307	0.1152	High
Communication (1) (k=5)	3	42.1120	4.8878	.4371	0.1160	Very High
Care (2) (k=5)	4	43.8640	5.1514	.4607	0.1174	Very High
Overall		**171.39**	**17.1802**	**1.5366**	**0.1002**	**Very High**

k= total number of items

As Shown in the above Table 4, the level of Interpersonal Skills was in Very High level with the mean of 1.7139E2 and standard deviation 17.18021. The value of mean of all the aspects of Interpersonal Skills varies from "High" to "Very high".

By the values of C.V. (varies from 0.10784 to 0.11744), it shows that the variation of all the aspects of Interpersonal Skills were consistent or stable and could be classified into 1 type (pattern of variations), consisting of Respect, Communication, Care and Assertiveness (C.V.= 0.10784 , C.V.= 0.11606 ,C.V.= 0.11744, and C.V=0.11521).

By the rank of Interpersonal Skills, it was found that the highest level were in Respect, Communication, and Care, and the lowest level was in Assertiveness.

Table 3: The results of investigating the Influencing factors of Interpersonal Skills and some characteristics of respondents on Teacher Cognitive Competencies by multiple regression analysis of method enter and method stepwise.

Method Enter					Variables in the Equation	Method Stepwise				
p-value	t	beta	s.eb	b		b	s.eb	beta	t	p-value
.014	2.488*		10.922	27.177	(constant)	24.640	9.909		2.487*	.014
.032	2.175	.211	.361	.786	Communication	1.006	.325	.270	3.090*	.002
.003	2.988*	.264	.312	.932	Care	.944	.313	.267	3.013*	.003
.002	3.186*	.290	.352	1.122	Respect	1.381	.307	.357	4.495*	.000
Method Enter					Variables in the Equation	Method Stepwise				
p-value	t	beta	s.eb	b		b	s.eb	beta	t	p-value
.177	1.360	.125	.347	.472	Assertiveness					
.440	-.775	-.076	.161	-.125	Age					
.096	1.678	.164	.183	.307	Working					
.658					R^2	.640				
37.845*					F	71.614*				
.000					P-value	.000				

*P<.05

By using method enter of multiple regression analysis; it was found that the linear combinations of the predictor variables (four dimensions of Interpersonal Skills plus Age and Years Working) were

statistically significant at the α=.05 to predict Teacher Cognitive Competencies with F value of 37.845, and p-value of 0.000. Where among the four dimensions of Interpersonal Skills, only two of them namely "Care" and "Respect" were significant at the α=.05 to predict Teacher Cognitive Competencies with t value of 2.988* and 3.186*.

It was also found that the coefficient of determination, R-squared, was 0.658. It means that 65.80 % of the variation in the criterion variables was accounted for by the linear combinations of the four dimensions of Interpersonal Skills.

By using method stepwise of multiple regression analysis, it was found that three predictor variables namely, "Communication", "Care", and "Respect" were the necessity and sufficient dimensions to influence "Teacher Cognitive Competencies" with t values of 3.090*, 3.013*, and 4.495*. It was found also that 64.0 % of the variation on the criterion variable was accounted for by the linear combinations of the three predictor variables.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

To accomplish this task the researcher used descriptive method. Convenience sampling was used to select the teachers from selected International Schools in Bangkok. The research instrument was Opinionnaires with one section based on the two dimensions of Teacher Cognitive Competencies (Abd et al, 2012). The first sub dimension, Classroom Management, consisted of ten Likert-style questions. The second sub dimension of Teacher Cognitive Competencies, Commitment and Responsibility, also consisted of ten Likert-style questions. The second section, Interpersonal Skills, was divided into four dimensions (Brown, 2004). Each dimension, Commitment, Care, Respect and Assertiveness, consists of five Likert-style questions. The researcher developed the opinionnaires by using several different definitions of terms that covered all of the dimensions in this study. The data was analyzed using SPSS version.160.0

Summary of Findings and Discussion

1. The level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies was determined in areas of classroom management and commitment & responsibility. Commitment & Responsibility of the teachers was found to reach the expected level of competency with mean of 87.55 or "Very High" among the competencies. Classroom management was also found to reach the expected level although at a slightly lower level of competency with mean of 81.07 or "High". This means that the importance of education, the investment of time and focus on the academic and social needs is very effective, while the ability to control, manage and organize a classroom is mildly weaker. According to a study done in Thailand (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015), what makes an exceptional teacher is high levels of commitment and responsibility. From the data, the kindergarten, primary, secondary and subject teachers in the selected International schools located in Bangkok, Thailand have a very high level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies in terms

of commitment and responsibility and classroom management. This is important as teachers unaware of how to manage classrooms and fulfill responsibilities may in fact produce results to the opposite effect of those desired. (Allen K.P., 2010) There is consistency according to the coefficient of variation, so there is stability in the respondents. There is 1 pattern that can be seen which have the coefficient of variation that are Very High respectively.

2. The level of Interpersonal Skills of the respondents mainly depends upon/ is strongly linked to Respect with mean of 43.61 or "Very High". This means that Interpersonal Skills totally depends on confidentiality in situations that could cause embarrassment, and the respect for dignity of students with an understanding and sensitivity of where the students are coming from. The strong levels of Interpersonal Skills could also come about as a result of positive experiences and modelling of behaviours from teachers during the primary and secondary education experience (Garvis, 2012). There is a significant relationship between the factors such as Respect, Assertiveness, Communication, and Care of Interpersonal Skills and Teacher Cognitive Competencies. We can see the patterns of coefficient variations are Very High, High, Very High, and High Respectively. This means that their patterns are consistent. Respect is the most important factor in Interpersonal Skills. It shows that as a valued and practiced Interpersonal Skill among teachers, Respect produced the highest level of Interpersonal Skill among respondents in selected International schools in Bangkok. It is crucial to be successful and promote learning that there be an established upon and acceptable level of respect at both teacher-student and student-student level (Robitaille & Maldonado, 2015)

3. The most influencing factor in Teacher Cognitive Competencies is Respect then Care followed by Communication. The least influencing factor on Teacher Cognitive Competencies is Assertiveness.

    Classroom management is influenced by Communication factors like "listen attentively when communicating with others", and understand and observe verbal communications:" It is also influenced by the characteristics of respondents, "years working". When teachers are able to fully support the flow of information, discussion and learning, they can communicate it, making the task of controlling the classroom much easier and therefore much more beneficial and conducive to learning. It is clear that experienced teachers can develop this skill over time which influences their ability to effectively manage their classrooms. Teachers must have a well-honed communication skill set to allow them to interconnect effectively with students, colleagues and administrators (Ihmeideh et al, 2010)

    Commitment & Responsibility is influenced by the factor of Care like "offer students support for both their academic and emotional needs", and by the factor of Respect like "have and understanding and sensitivity of where my students come from and who they are". An accomplished Teacher is able to handpick essential notions of a more complex thought and put it across orally, visually or textually, in order to foster shared understanding with respect

and sensitivity (National Research Council U.S, 2011). Among the dimensions of Interpersonal Skills namely Respect, Care and Communication significantly influence Teacher Cognitive Competencies in the selected international schools located in Bangkok, Thailand. In conclusion, it can be said that the Dimensions of Teacher Interpersonal Skills significantly influence Teacher Cognitive Competencies in the selected international schools in Bangkok, Thailand.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies as perceived by the kindergarten, primary, secondary and subject teachers in the selected International schools is above the expected level or is in a high to very high level. However, the first dimension of Teacher Cognitive Competencies, Classroom Management, was ranked last slightly lower than Commitment and Responsibility with high level. It means that Classroom management is possibly an area for concern and development. Therefore, Principals should give more attention and awareness to the significant predictive factors of classroom management, namely Communication and years working, to help guide them in the teacher selection process.

2. Principals should also look to provide programs and activities that give the school chances to develop policies, programs and strategies for improving the classroom management within their schools.

3. Since the dimensions of Interpersonal Skills significantly influence Teacher Cognitive Competencies, Principals and other administrators should maintain and establish approaches on how to increase the level of Teacher Cognitive Competencies within the school through teacher selection, developing tools based on the data given in this and related studies i.e. interview surveys, questionnaires etc,

4. Principals should be more aware of their both their incoming and incumbent staff's levels of interpersonal skills as factors that significantly influence Teacher Cognitive Competencies and ultimately performance. Identifying deficits at a group and individual level could guide teacher selection from outside and from within the school, while also giving direction to Professional Development.

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