

A STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AT THE BASIC EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOLS IN SAGAING TOWNSHIP, SAGAING REGION

Thi Thi Khine^{*}

Abstract

This study investigated students' perception on the characteristics of effective teachers at the Basic Education High Schools in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region. A total of 392 Grade-10 students (male=194, female=198) were selected as participants from three Basic Education High Schools in Sagaing Township, using simple random sampling method. Descriptive research design was used. In questionnaire, it has two main parts: demographic data and 25 items for studying students' perception on the characteristics of effective teachers. The five domains of the Effective Teacher Surveys are Lesson Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, Professional Responsibility and Personal Characteristics. The students' perception on the characteristics of effective teachers was examined by using the Effective Teacher Surveys (25 items) developed by Hadley (2011) based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Descriptive Statistics, one way ANOVA and Independent Sample *t*-test were used to analyze the data. Regarding the findings of data, students from school B had the highest mean value ($\bar{X}=3.05$) among three selected Basic Education High Schools. There were significant differences in students' perception on the characteristics of effective teachers grouped by school ($df = 2$, $F = 6.688$, $p < .001$), gender ($t = -2.467$, $p < .05$) and subject combination ($t = 5.451$, $p < .001$). The results showed that the perception of students from school B was highest among selected three schools; the perception of female students was better than that of male students; and the perception of pure science students was better than that of eco-science students.

Keyword: Effective Teacher

^{*} Associate Professor, Department of Educational Theory, University for the Development of National Races of the Union

Introduction

Education plays an important role in building a nation. Its quality depends on the quality of teachers and teachers' effectiveness. Effective teachers tend to be aware of educational goals. Effective teachers must possess the knowledge and skills needed and must be able to use them appropriately in order to achieve such goals.

Teachers can be categorized as effective or ineffective. Different people have different perspective of an effective teacher. Some people define an effective teacher as a person who has a superior command over a particular subject; who has an ability to transfer his or her subject effectively to the students. Others are of the view that can activate students' energy and could make them work in a better way (Mailk, 2013).

The idea of effective teacher for each individual is variable. Students' perceptions, opinions, and experiences about an effective teacher are different. An effective teacher has been considered, sometimes, as a perfectionist, encouraging, approachable and caring, other times as intelligent, enthusiastic, funny, clever, affective and understanding, open, and with a relaxed style while teaching. Strong et al. (2004, cited in Moreno, 2009) stated that teaching is vocational and most effective teachers are passionate about their chosen profession. An effective teacher is always in a constant learning process due to changes in terms of the students' characteristics, the curriculum, the community, and finance among many others.

To be an effective teacher does not only involve a deep content knowledge, but also organizational, management and communication having skills, being able to organize instruction, and providing relevant assessment and fair evaluation. In addition, an effective teacher is responsible to create a warm classroom climate, to promote enthusiasm, motivation and an interactive teacher-student relationship. Also, it implies to be caring and understandable, and above all, to enhance learning.

According to James A. Belasco (1991, cited in Mailk, 2013), effective teachers possess a repertoire of teaching practices known to stimulate students' motivation. They have a variety of activities and teaching techniques to make leaning fun for the students. He/ she plans her lesson based on strategic thoughts that involve the conscious selection and use of tools of

thought from her repertoire. Her skills include making children self-motivated. Effective teachers are themselves at a life-long learning process. They are able to diagnose and use their professional knowledge appropriately to enhance students' learning and to improve their personality in order to make a better society.

This study investigated to the extent that students perceive the characteristics of effective teachers. This study hopes that if the teachers understand the students' preferred characteristics of effective teachers, the teachers will be able to maintain and modify themselves their effective characteristics.

Aims of the Research

The main aim of the research is to investigate the students' perception on the characteristics of effective teachers from selected schools. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To investigate the characteristics of effective teachers based on the students' perception at the BEHS, Sagaing Township.
- To examine the differences of students' perception on the characteristics of effective teachers according to students' personal variables such as gender, subject combination, and school.

Research Questions

- To what extent do students perceive the characteristics of effective teachers?
- Are there any significant differences in the characteristics of effective teachers according to students' personal variables such as gender, subject combination, and school?

Definition of Key Term

Effective Teacher

Anderson (2004) stated that an effective teacher is one who quite consistently achieve goals – be they self-selected or imposed- that are related either directly or indirectly to student learning

Operational Definition Effective Teacher

Effective teacher is a person who can improve student learning with his/ her professional and personal skills such as lesson planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibility and personal characteristics.

Theoretical Framework

The single largest factor in improving the educational outcome of a student is the effectiveness of that student's teacher in the classroom and that student's principal in the school. Thus, the priority in a school should be to train, create, and retain a culture of effective teachers and principals. "Effective" is defined as producing a result. Very simply, an effective teacher can produce student learning, growth, and achievement. Wong & Wong (2012) have identified the three characteristics of teachers and school leaders have used these characteristics to show how a teacher can improve student learning. These are:

- They are extremely good classroom managers.
- They know how to teach a lesson for student learning and mastery.
- They have positive expectation for student success.

Robert J .Walker (2008) has studied characteristics of effective teachers for fifteen years and defined "effective" as that these teachers made the most significant impact on their lives. He formulated twelve identifiable personal and professional characteristics of effective teachers that consistently affected students in positive ways.

Barbara C. Hunt (2009) stated that effective teachers consistently achieve goals that focus on desired outcomes for their students. Teacher effectiveness is encompassed in knowledge, attitudes, and performance.

Knowledge

- Teachers have excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Teachers have thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach and pedagogical methods for teaching those subjects to students.

- Teachers know a variety of pedagogical strategies, and when and with which students these are appropriate and likely to be effective.
- Teachers have a thorough understanding of the linguistic and cultural background of their students, and how best to maximize learning for students with diverse needs and characteristics.
- Teachers know how to organize and manage classroom, using time effectively.
- Teachers know how to assess student learning, both formally and informally, and how to vary instruction for students based on these assessments.
- Teachers know how to select and make resources that are appropriate for student learning activities.
- Teachers understand language development and children developmental stages at the level they teach.

Attitudes

- Teachers respect their students regardless of their background, language, or ethnicity.
- Teachers have high expectations for the learning of all students.
- Teachers view student errors as a window to their thinking that can be used to improve student learning.
- Teachers are reflective about their practice.
- Teachers believe in collaboration with others toward common goals for student learning
- Teachers are receptive to involvement of parents and community members in their classroom.
- Teachers are eager to continue to learn and to improve their practice.
- Teachers are committed to their profession

Performance

- Teachers' classrooms are well organized, providing an environment that fosters an interest in learning.

- Teachers developed classroom rules with students and maintain safe and orderly classroom in which all students are treated fairly and equitably.
- Teachers make effective use of time, both of overall classroom time and the time of individual students.
- Teachers use effective teaching techniques: planning lesson, presenting new material clearly, helping students connect new learning with previous learning, and providing guided and independent practice for new material taught.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to be actively involved in their own learning.
- Teachers respond to student errors in positive ways that help students understand and learn concept involved.

Methodology

Quantitative method was used in this study.

Population and Sample

The target population was Grade-10 students in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region. There are twelve (three urban schools and nine rural schools) Basic Education High Schools and total of over 1200 students (over three hundred urban school students and over nine hundred rural school students) in Sagaing Township. Among them one urban school and two rural schools were chosen in this study. In order to obtain representative sample, 392 Grade-10 students were selected as subject from three schools using random sampling method.

Instrumentation

The students' perception on characteristics of effective teachers was examined by using Effective Teacher Surveys (25 items) developed by Hadley (2011) based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. The scales of items in the questionnaire were four point Likert-scales ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree and 4-strongly agree.

Procedure

In October 2017, pilot testing was conducted with 32 Grade-10 students from Practicing Basic Education High School of UDNR. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.63. Then, questionnaires were distributed to the 392 students from selected schools to collect the data from 22nd November to 27th November 2017. After that, data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the mean scores for the students' perception on their effective teachers' characteristics. Next, independent sample t-test, one -way ANOVA, and Tukey HSD test were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences for the students' perception on their effective teachers' characteristics according to school, gender, and subject combination.

Findings

According to table 1, the total mean value of students' perception on characteristics of effective teachers for school A, B and C were 2.93, 3.05 and 3.01. The mean value of school B for students' perception on characteristics of effective teachers was greater than that of school A and school C.

Table 1: Total Mean Values and Standard Deviation of Students' Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers Grouped by School

School	No. of Students	Mean	SD	Remark
School A	96	2.93	.24	Agree
School B	96	3.05	.21	Agree
School C	200	3.01	.24	Agree

1.00-1.49=strongly disagree 1.50-2.49=disagree 2.50-3.49= agree 3.50-4.00= strongly agree

The mean values of students' perception on characteristics of effective teachers based on five domains; lesson planning and preparation(LPP), classroom environment(CE), instruction(I), professional responsibility(PS)

and personal characteristics(PC) for school A, B and C are showed in table 2. It revealed that personal characteristic was greater than other four domains in all schools.

Table 2: Mean Values and Standard Deviation of Students' Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers based on Five Domains Grouped by School

School	N	LPP		CE		I		PR		PC	
		Mean	SD								
School A	96	2.77	0.35	2.71	0.38	2.92	0.41	2.98	0.41	3.23	0.43
School B	96	2.73	0.37	3.03	0.31	3.07	0.37	3.13	0.36	3.30	0.38
School C	200	2.61	0.39	2.88	0.39	3.09	0.39	3.01	0.45	3.45	0.39

1.00-1.49=strongly disagree 1.50-2.49=disagree 2.50-3.49= agree 3.50-4.00= strongly agree

One-way ANOVA was used to explore differences between characteristics of effective teachers grouped by school. Significant differences were found at lesson planning and preparation (LPP) $p < 0.01$ level, classroom environment (CE) $p < 0.001$ level, instruction (I) $p < 0.01$ level, professional responsibility (PR) $p < 0.05$ level, and personal characteristics (PC) $p < 0.01$ level (See table 3).

Table 3: ANOVA Results of Students' Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers Grouped by School

Domains		<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	<i>P</i>
LPP	Between Groups	2	2.068	1.034	7.214	.001**
	Within Groups	389	55.767	.142		
	Total	391	57.835			
CE	Between Groups	2	4.820	2.410	17.085	.000***
	Within Groups	389	52.653	.135		
	Total	391	57.473			
I	Between Groups	2	1.899	.949	6.181	.002**
	Within Groups	389	59.747	.178		
	Total	391	61.645			
PR	Between Groups	2	1.242	.621	3.483	.032*
	Within Groups	389	69.380	.178		
	Total	391	70.622			

Domains		<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	P
PC	Between Groups	2	2.473	1.273	7.568	.001**
	Within Groups	389	63.555	.163		
	Total	391	60.028			
Total Mean	Between Groups	2	.718	.359	6.688	.001**
	Within Groups	389	20.877	.059		
	Total	391	21.595			

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

To obtain more information of which particular school had the difference, Post- Hoc test was conducted by Tukey HSD method and it revealed that the mean difference between school A and school B was - .120 and it was significantly difference at $p=0.001$. And, the mean difference between school A and school C was - .075 and it was significantly difference at $p=0.025$ (See table 4).

Table 4: Multiple Comparison of Students’ Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers Grouped by School

(I) School	(J) School	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
School A	School B	-.120*	.033	.001
	School C	-.075*	.029	.025
School B	School A	.120*	.033	.001
	School C	.045	.029	.258
School C	School A	.075*	.029	.025
	School B	-.045	.029	.258

*The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level.

The mean values of male and female students’ perception on characteristics of effective teachers based on five domains are showed in table 5. It revealed that male and female students agreed on their effective teachers characteristics in five domains.

Table 5: Mean Values and Standard Deviation of Students' Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers based on Five Domains Grouped by Gender

Domains	Gender	No. of Students	Mean	SD	Remark
LPP	Male	194	2.67	.392	Agree
	Female	198	2.68	.378	Agree
CE	Male	194	2.83	.413	Agree
	Female	198	2.91	.349	Agree
I	Male	194	2.99	.409	Agree
	Female	198	3.09	.379	Agree
PR	Male	194	2.98	.437	Agree
	Female	198	3.08	.384	Agree
PC	Male	194	3.38	.240	Agree
	Female	198	3.36	.227	Agree

1.00-1.49=strongly disagree 1.50-2.49=disagree 2.50-3.49= agree 3.50-4.00= strongly agree

According to table 6, there were significant differences in students' perception on their characteristics of effective teachers. It was found that female students' perception on classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibility were greater than that of male students.

Table 6: Independent Sample *t*-test for Students' Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers Grouped by Gender

Domains	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	MD
LPP	Male	194	2.67	.392	-0.407	390	.684	-.01582
	Female	198	2.68	.378				
CE	Male	194	2.83	.413	-1.995	376.687	.047*	-.07709
	Female	198	2.91	.349				
I	Male	194	2.99	.409	-2.8	390	.005**	-.11136
	Female	198	3.09	.379				
PR	Male	194	2.98	.437	-2.327	390	.020*	-.09934
	Female	198	3.08	.384				

PC	Male	194	3.38	.240	.305	390	.761	.01267
	Female	198	3.36	.227				
Overall	Male	194	2.97	.240	-2.467	390	.014*	-.05819
	Female	198	3.02	.227				

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The mean values of pure science and eco- science students’ perception on characteristics of effective teachers based on five domains; lesson planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibility and personal characteristics are showed in table 7. It indicated that pure science students and eco- science students agreed on their effective teachers characteristics in all domains.

Table 7: Mean Values and Standard Deviation of Students’ Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers based on Five Domains Grouped by Subject Combination

Domains	Subject Combination	No. of Students	Mean	SD	Remark
LPP	Pure Science	77	2.688	.395	Agree
	Eco- Science	315	2.671	.382	Agree
CE	Pure Science	77	3.070	.300	Agree
	Eco- Science	315	2.825	.386	Agree
I	Pure Science	77	3.210	.321	Agree
	Eco- Science	315	3.003	.404	Agree
PR	Pure Science	77	3.111	.355	Agree
	Eco- Science	315	3.013	.439	Agree
PC	Pure Science	77	3.470	.339	Agree
	Eco- Science	315	3.347	.423	Agree

1.00-1.49=strongly disagree 1.50-2.49=disagree 2.50-3.49= agree 3.50-4.00= strongly agree

To analyze and evaluate whether students’ perception on characteristics of effective teachers depends on subject combination, the independent sample *t-test* was conducted. It was found that there were significant differences in students’ perception on characteristics of effective teachers. The pure science students’ perceptions on classroom environment,

instruction and personal characteristics were greater than that of eco- science students (See table 8).

Table 8: Independent Sample *t*-test for Students' Perception on Characteristics of Effective Teachers Grouped by Subject Combination

Domains	Subject Combination	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	MD
LPP	Pure Science	77	2.688	.395	.338	390	.735	.0165 7
	Eco- Science	315	2.671	.382				
CE	Pure Science	77	3.070	.300	5.199	390	.000***	.2453 7
	Eco- Science	315	2.825	.386				
I	Pure Science	77	3.210	.321	4.811	140.9 9	.000***	.2072 2
	Eco- Science	315	3.003	.404				
PR	Pure Science	77	3.111	.355	1.826	390	.069	.0893 5
	Eco- Science	315	3.013	.439				
PC	Pure Science	77	3.470	.339	2.377	390	.018*	.1234 6
	Eco- Science	315	3.347	.423				
Overall	Pure Science	77	3.11	.189	5.451	140.8 8	.000***	.1381 9
	Eco- Science	315	2.97	.237				

* $p < .05$

*** $p < .001$

Discussion, Recommendation, and Further Research

Discussion and Recommendation

In this study, the perceptions of students on their effective teacher characteristics are satisfactory. The results showed that the perception of students from school B was greatest among students from selected three schools according to table 1. In all schools, the students' perception on their effective teacher characteristics, personal characteristics, was greater than other four domains according to table 2. So teachers in all schools need to exercise better practice in lesson planning and preparation, personal characteristic classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibility. The perception of female students on classroom environment,

instruction and professional responsibility was better than that of male students according to table 6; and the perception of pure science students on classroom environment, instruction and personal characteristic was better than that of eco-science students according to table 8. It can be said that characteristics of effective teachers varied according to school, gender, and subject- combination.

To be an effective teacher is not an easy task. Effective teachers must possess good professional and personal skills. Content knowledge, good planning, good classroom management and organizing, clear communication, and professional development are essential factors to be effective teacher.

The following recommendations are made for teacher effectiveness and for improving student learning.

- Teacher should have a sound understanding of the standards that define intended student learning.
- Teachers should use their understanding of standards to design appropriate and effective learning.
- Teachers should create attractive classroom that is warm, in which student learning can improve.
- Co-operative learning groups should be formed within the classroom as needed to achieve particular objectives.
- Teachers should reinforce positive behavior, especially with students who have a history of behavioral problems.
- Teachers should prepare students for learning by providing an initial structure to clarify intended outcomes and cue the desired learning strategies.
- Teachers should provide whatever assistance students need to enable them to engage in learning productively.
- Teachers should provide immediate feedback to students concerning the correctness or adequacy of their responses.
- Teachers should praise students to reinforce correct, adequate, and appropriate responses.

Needs for Further Research

This study tried to investigate the students' perceptions on characteristics of effective teachers of Basic Education High Schools at Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region. It is necessary to investigate students' perceptions on characteristics of effective teachers in other States and Regions. In the future, if the research subjects include those from other elementary schools and lower secondary schools, more detailed results will be obtained. Further research for in- depth analysis is needed. In conclusion, it is expected that the useful information and knowledge obtained from this research will contribute to the enthusiastic teachers to become effective teachers.

Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following people for their invaluable help, guidance, supporting, and encouragement of conducting this research paper:

U Mya Win, Rector, University for the Development of the National Races of the Union; Dr. Cho Cho Mar, Pro- Rector (Academic), University for the Development of the National Races of the Union; Daw Yin Yin Myint, Professor, University for the Development of the National Races of the Union; headmasters, teachers and students involved in this study.

References

- Anderson, L.W. (2004). *Increasing Teacher Effectiveness*, UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, 2nd Ed. Retrieved from <https://www.unesco.unesco.org/image/0013/00137/137629.e.pdf>
- Hadley, D.Howell. (2011). *Characteristics of Effective Teachers: A Comparison of the Perceptions of Upper Level Secondary School Students and Secondary School Administrators*. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/342>
- Hunt, B. C. (2009). *Teacher Effectiveness: A Review of the International Literature and its Relevance for Improving Education in Latin America*. Working Paper Series No.43.Retrieved from [http://archive.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/WP43%.20.%20English%20\(final\).pdf](http://archive.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/WP43%.20.%20English%20(final).pdf)
- Mailk, S.K. (2013). *Image of an Effective Teacher in 21st Century Classroom*. Retrieved from http://www.wjeis.org/File-Upload/ds_217232/File/os.ansari.pdf.
- Moreno, R.C. (2009). *Effective Teachers: Professional and Personal Skills*. Retrieved from <https://www.ucim.es/ab/education/ensayos>
- Walker, R.J. (2008). *Twelve Characteristics of an Effective Teacher*. A longitudinal, Qualitative, Quasi- Research Study of In- service and Pre- service Teachers' Opinions. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ815372.pdf>
- Wrong, H . K & Wrong, R .T. (2012). *Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers and Principals*. Retrieved from <http://www.newteacher.com/pdf/Development.pdf>.