

ABSTRACT

Personality characteristics contributing to effective teaching has been a subject of considerable research during the last few decades. These studies have taken several forms. Certain studies have sought to determine characteristics perceived to be desirable for effective teaching by teachers themselves and others closely related to teachers. Some studies have attempted to determine characteristics related to effective teaching by seeking to correlate various measures of teaching efficiency with assessments of various personality characteristics. There have also been attempts by certain investigators to identify characteristics of effective teachers under experimental conditions.

The present investigation was a teacher characteristic perception study. It was concerned with the personality characteristics perceived by principals, teachers and students to be desirable for secondary school teachers. Its specific objectives were to identify characteristics perceived to be desirable for secondary school teachers, to determine their relative and absolute importance as perceived by above groups of subjects and to discover consensus within and across different groups of subjects regarding their perceptions.

The principals, teachers and grades 10 and 11 pupils in the secondary schools of Kandy Education Region formed the basic population that came under the purview of this investigation. Three samples of 72 principals, 300 teachers and 320 students were drawn from a stratified random sample of 40 urban and 40 rural schools.

An instrument embodying 25 teacher personality characteristics or traits was developed to measure the perceptions of the selected subjects. This instrument consisted of three parts. First part was designed to elicit personal information about the respondents. Second part was designed to measure the subjects' perception of the absolute importance of each of the selected traits using a five point Likert rating scale. Third part of the instrument was designed to measure the subjects' perceptions of the relative importance of selected traits, using the method of paired comparisons. Perceptual data thus derived was subjected to statistical analysis using certain statistical techniques. These techniques included the computation of Spearman's rank correlation coefficients between the trait rankings of different groups of subjects, computation of Kendall's coefficient of concordance among the traits rankings of several groups of subjects, computation of the arithmetic means and the standard deviations of the weighted rating scale scores in

respect of each trait for each group of subjects. Tests of significance employed consisted of the tests of the significance of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, Chi square tests, Mann Whitney tests and t tests.

This study revealed that all traits which came under the purview of this inquiry had been perceived to be of significance for secondary school teachers, by all principals, teachers and students sampled in this inquiry. Certain marked similarities as well as discrepancies in the perceptions within and across different groups of subjects were also found to occur. These peculiarities in the perceptions of subjects appeared to be related to differences in their needs, role specifications, perceptions of the objectives of education and personal backgrounds.

This investigation spot-lighted the dearth of teacher characteristics research in Sri Lanka. It also revealed some probable lines of inquiry for future research in this area.