

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AS PERCEIVED BY PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

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Introduction

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 investigators have attempted to determine characteristics related to effective teaching, by seeking to correlate various measures of teaching efficiency with assessments of various teacher personality characteristics (Singer 1978, Coulter 1978, Witkin 1977, Saracho and Spodeck 1981, Richter and Tjosvold 1980, Aspy 1972, Sheppard 1978, Barr 1948, Ryans 1952, 1959, 1961). There have also been attempts by some investigators to identify characteristics of effective teachers under experimental and observational situations Delamont (1978).

Besides these correlational and experimental studies, there have been several investigations of the teacher's self-perceptions and perceptions of others with reference to personal pre-requisites of effective teaching (Symonds 1955, Taylor 1962, Brown 1966, Delamont 1978, Barr 1961, Gallup 1976, Chaikin 1978, McKeachie 1980). Referring to the significance of teacher characteristic perception studies, Barr (1961) claimed that, "it is not enough to know merely what is, but it is equally important that we know what people think is".

The present investigation was a teacher characteristic perception study, the first of its kind to be undertaken in Sri Lanka. It was concerned with characteristics or traits perceived by principals, teachers and students to be desirable for secondary school teachers. Its specific objectives were to determine the relative and absolute importance of each of 25 selected teacher traits as perceived by Secondary School Principals, Teachers and Students and to discover consensus within and across the groups of subjects regarding their perceptions.

Methods of Study

(a) Population and Sample :

The principals, teachers and pupils of grades 10 and 11 in the secondary schools of one Educational Region, Kandy in Sri Lanka formed the population that came under the purview of this study. Kandy Education District is moderately populated and consist of both urban and rural populations. Secondary schools in the district are not much different from those of other school districts of Sri Lanka. Three representative systematic samples consisting of 72 principals, 300 teachers and 320 pupils were drawn. Stratified random sampling procedure produced a sample of 40 urban and 40 rural schools

(b) Identification of Teacher Traits :

A questionnaire was administered to a sample of principals, teachers and students which required them to describe or list characteristics they consider to be desirable for secondary school teachers. Based on an analysis of the responses to the above questionnaire and a review of literature on traits which have been investigated earlier, the following list of 25 teacher traits was developed. For the most part, names and definitions offered for these traits follow earlier teacher characteristic perception studies.

Trait	Definition
<i>Cognitive Traits</i>	
Scholarliness	Thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject required to be taught.
Understanding of children	An understanding and awareness of pupils' needs; abilities; weaknesses; difficulties; peculiarities and patterns of behaviour.
Professional knowledge	A knowledge of the aims; principles techniques and processes of education, alertness to changing trends and developments.
Objectivity	Making use of adequate evidence and critical reasoning in making decisions and conclusions, being free from prejudices.
<i>Pedagogical Traits</i>	
Ability to discipline	Ability to control pupil behaviour appropriately in order to establish a classroom environment conducive to learning and teaching.
Stimulatingness	Ability to stimulate pupils' interest in learning.
Preparedness	Organization and planning of all instructional activities and ensuring availability of required materials beforehand.
Expressiveness	Possession of predominantly verbal, and other skills of communication necessary for clear exposition of learning materials to students.
Use of recognition and praise	Offering recognition and praise to pupils for their efforts and success in learning.
<i>Temperamental and Dispositional Traits</i>	
Efficiency	Ability to accomplish tasks punctually and expeditiously.
Orderliness	Ability to accomplish tasks systematically, adherence to definite routines and schedules of work.
Interest in guidance	Interest in providing children proper guidance in their learning through example, precept, warning and punishment.

Interest in subject	Interest in continuous learning in order to keep imformed of current developments in subject matter knowledge.
Ethicalness	Morally virtuous, and well disciplined conduct
Fairness	Equal concern for all students, having no favourites.
Co-operativeness	Able to work co-operatively with the principal; teachers. students; parents and others.
Kindliness	Kind and sympathetic to students.
Democratic nature	Not enforcing excessively rigid and restrictive rules concerning pupils' classroom behaviour, offering opportunities to pupils to express their views; to make certain collective decisions and to undertake responsibilities.
Friendliness	Enjoying students' companionship, maintaining personal contacts with them, interested in their problems and needs;
Emotional stability	Emotionally stable, calm and consistent in behaviour.
Sociability	Seeking cordial relationships with individuals and various social groups, participating in social groups and community affairs.
Leadership	Readiness to take initiative in a number of school and out of school activities.
Interest in extra curricular activities	Taking an interest and actively participating in extra curricular activities of the school.
Cheerfulness	Cheerful in classroom and school.
Pleasantness	Pleasant personal appearance and pleasing manners.

(c) Instruments :

An assessment instrument was developed to measure the perception of the relative and absolute importance of each of the 25 traits thus derived, as well as to elicit certain personal information about the subjects. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to gather required personal information about the subjects. Second part of the questionnarire presented the subjects with a rating task using a five point Likert type rating scale, in order to measure the perceived absolute importance of each of those teacher traits. Each item consisted of the trait name and a brief definition of the trait. Respondents were required to express, their perception of the importance of each trait by indicating the frequency with which teachers should display each trait. Frequencies with which teachers may display each trait were presented as five alternative, namely that the teachers may, 'vary often,' 'often,' 'occasionally,' 'rarely' or 'very rarely' display the particular trait. Third part of the questionnaire presented the subjects with a paired comparison task in order to determine the relative importance of each of the 25 selected traits.

(d) Statistical Treatment :

To analyse the perception of the absolute importance of each of the 25 traits, the 5 alternative responses of the Likert scale were assigned arbitrary scores ranging from 1 to 5 and the arithmetic means and standard deviations were computed for each trait in respect of each group of subjects. Group differences on perceived absolute importance of traits were further tested using a Z-test statistic (Ferguson, 1968).

Perception of the relative importance of traits examined under paired comparisons was analysed using the procedures specified in Torgerson (1958), Edwards (1969), and Sedere (1983). Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient, Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance and Mann-Whitney Test were suitably employed to examine congruence of perceptions.

(e) Results and Discussion

Perception of the Relative Importance of Teacher Traits :

Table 1 shows the rank order position awarded to each trait by each group of subjects. These trait ranks reveal their perception of the relative importance of each of the 25 traits investigated. Groups of principals in general were found to have perceived the traits, understanding of children, ability to discipline and scholarliness as being of prime importance to teachers. Besides, the traits efficiency, preparedness, ethicalness and stimulatingness have been ranked high. Traits ranked low, included leadership, friendliness, emotional stability, cheerfulness, sociability interest in extra curricular activities and pleasantness. Remaining traits had been assigned middle order rank positions.

Certain striking peculiarities in the perceptions of certain groups of principals could also be noted. Thus female principals had attributed much more importance to recognition and praise, democratic attitude and kindness than the others, whereas trained graduate principals had attributed much more importance to emotional stability than the rest.

The composite principal sample place greatest value on traits contributing to teacher's skill as an able manager of children followed by traits contributing to cognitive and instructional competence and good social relations. Pleasantness was perceived to be of least relative importance.

Table 2 presents correlations between the trait rankings of different groups of principals, calculated using rank data presented in Table 1. It reveals impressively high correlations between the trait rankings of urban and rural principals, male and female principals and trained graduate and trained non graduate principals. The common variance, between these groups was found to vary from 77% to 88% indicating a very high level of agreement

The similarity of trait rankings of all the groups of principals, suggested a high degree of consensus among them. A high coefficients of concordance (0.9406) discovered among the trait rankings of the 6 independent groups of principals substantiated the above conclusion as seen in Table 3 which presents coefficients of concordance among the trait rankings of independent sub groups constituting principal, teacher and student samples.

Teachers perceived the traits scholarliness, understanding of children, ability to discipline, preparedness, interest in subject, stimulatingness as being of highest significance. Traits ranked low consisted of pleasantness, cheerfulness, sociability, friendliness, emotional stability and interest in extra curricular activities.

The composite teacher sample placed greatest value on scholarliness, followed by traits related to teachers skill in management and control of children, instructional competence and good social relations. Like principals, teachers too had perceived pleasantness to be of least relative importance.

Table 2.

*CORRELATIONS AND COMMON VARIANCE (r²) BETWEEN TRAIT RANKINGS
BY PRINCIPAL, TEACHER, STUDENT GROUPS, AND THEIR
STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE*

GROUPS	Coefficient of Correlation	Common Variance
Principals :		
Urban/Rural	.9377 **	88%
Male/Female	.8900 **	79%
Trained Graduates : Trained Non-Graduates	.8785 **	77%
Teachers :		
Urban : Rural	.9900 **	98%
Male : Female	.9731 **	95%
Over 40 years : Under 40 years	.9500 **	90%
Trained Graduates : Graduates	.9054 **	82%
Trained Graduates : Trained Non-Graduates	.9200 **	85%
Trained Graduates : (GCE OL/AL)	.8262 **	68%
Trained Non-Graduates (GCE OL/AL)	.9438 **	89%
Graduates : Trained Non-Graduates	.9700 **	94%
Graduates : GCE (OL/AL)	.9292 **	86%
Students :		
Urban : Rural	.9477 **	90%
Male : Female	.9092 **	83%
Working Class : Middle Class	.7460 **	56%
All Principals : All Teachers	.9146 **	84%
All Principals : All Students	.6335 **	40%
All Teachers : All Students	.6954 **	43%

* P < .05

** P < .01

Table 1 RANKING OF (DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF) TEACHER TRAITS BY PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Traits	PRINCIPALS							TEACHERS							STUDENTS										
	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Tr. Graduates	Tr. Non Grads.	C. Pr. Sample	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Over 40 yrs.	Under 40 yrs.	Tr. Graduates	Graduates	Tr. Non Grads.	G.C.IE (OL/AL)	C. Tr. Sample	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Middle Class	Working Class	C. St. Sample
COGNITIVE TRAITS																									
Scholarliness	3	4	4	2	4	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	1	1	3	1	5	1
Understanding of Children	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	11	7	7	15	7	14	9
Professional Knowledge	8	9	8	17	7	10	8	13	13	13	12	13	10	7	13	13	14	13	17	17	14	17	13	17	16
Objectivity	11	15	13	12	12	14	13	11	11	9	13	11	12	13	9	10	12	11	12	13	13	8	12	7	12
PEDAGOGICAL TRAITS																									
Ability to Discipline	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	5	3	8	12	8	13	11	10	11
Stimulatingness	7	2	2	4	3	6	3	6	5	6	4	5	6	5	7	5	7	5	1	6	2	7	4	3	5
Preparedness	5	5	6	5	8	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	8	2	4	3	4	9	8	10	9	10	9	8
Expressiveness	13	16	14	15	19	12	14	8	9	10	9	6	13	11	5	8	8	8	10	10	9	10	8	13	10
Recognition and Praise	14	11	12	7	10	13	12	10	10	11	7	10	7	6	10	11	15	10	20	19	21	18	20	18	19
TEMPERAMENTAL AND DISPOSITIONAL TRAITS																									
Efficiency	4	8	5	11	6	5	6	9	6	8	11	7	8	10	11	7	4	9	2	3	4	2	5	2	2
Orderliness	10	12	11	13	15	9	11	7	8	7	8	7	9	12	6	9	6	7	6	4	6	5	3	8	6
Interest in Guidance	9	7	9	10	11	7	9	12	12	12	10	12	11	9	12	12	13	12	15	18	17	19	16	20	18
Interest in Subject	12	10	10	8	9	11	10	5	7	5	6	8	4	3	8	6	9	6	13	11	12	11	17	11	13
Ethicalness	6	6	7	6	5	8	7	15	14	14	16	18	14	15	14	16	10	15	14	14	15	12	14	12	14
Fairness	15	17	16	18	18	16	16	14	15	15	14	14	15	14	15	14	18	14	3	5	3	4	2	6	4
Co-operativeness	16	13	15	16	16	15	15	16	16	17	15	15	17	20	18	15	11	16	7	9	11	6	15	4	7
Kindliness	18	14	17	9	14	17	17	17	17	16	17	16	16	17	16	17	16	17	5	2	5	1	9	1	3
Democratic Attitude	17	19	18	14	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	17	20	19	17	18	17	18	16	15	16	14	6	10	15
Friendliness	20	21	20	20	23	19	20	20	21	21	20	20	21	21	21	21	20	21	19	16	18	16	18	16	17
Emotional Stability	22	18	22	19	13	23	21	19	20	20	19	19	18	18	20	19	19	19	22	20	20	21	19	21	21
Sociability	24	22	23	24	21	24	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	24	24	22	23	18	21	19	20	22	15	20
Leadership	19	23	19	23	20	21	19	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	20	23	22	23	24	24	24	24	24	24
Int. in Extra Curr. Activities	21	20	21	21	22	20	22	21	19	19	21	21	19	16	19	22	21	20	21	23	23	22	23	22	23
Cheerfulness	23	24	24	22	24	22	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	25	23	23	24	24	24	22	22	23	21	23	22
Pleasantness	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	24	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25

Tr. - Trained; C. - Composite; Pr. - Principal; Tr. - Teacher; St - Student; Grads. - Graduates

Correlations between the trait rankings of different teacher groups too point to a high degree of agreement between them - (Table 2). Common variance between the various correlated groups was found to vary from 82% to 98%, with the only exception of that between G. C. E. teachers - (least qualified teachers who are at the bottom of the teacher recruitment scheme) - and trained graduate teachers which amounted to only 68%. The impressively high coefficient of concordance (0.9624) among the trait ranking of the 10 teacher groups, which was also the highest for any set of groups, suggested a vary high degree of consensus among teacher groups - (See Table 3).

Table 3.

CONCORDANCE AND COMMON VARIANCE (r^2) AMONG TRAIT RANKINGS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS OF SUBJECTS AND STATISTICAL SIGNIFIACNCE

GROUPS	Coefficient of Concordance	Common Variance
Principal Groups (m = 6)	.9406 **	88%
Teacher Groups (m = 10)	.9624 **	92%
Student Groups (m = 6)	.9278 **	86%
Principal and Teacher Groups (m = 16)	.9214 **	95%
Principal and Student Groups (m = 12)	.7175 **	51%
Teacher and Student Groups (m = 16)	.8109 **	66%
Composite Principal, Teacher and Student Groups (m = 3)	.5901 *	33%

m : Number of sets of ranks

. p < .05

** p < .01

The traits perceived by student groups to be of prime importance to teachers, included stimulatingness, efficiency, fairness, scholarliness, kindness, orderliness and co-operativeness. The traits ranked low included sociability, recognition and praise, interest in extra curricular activities, emotional stability, leadership, cheerfulness and pleasantness.

The composite student sample attached highest value to scholarliness, followed by efficiency, kindness and fairness. Next in order of importance were traits closely related to teaching competence. Like principals and teachers, pleasantness was considered to be of least relative importance.

Fairly high correlations between the trait rankings of different student groups suggested general agreement between them – (See Table 2). Correlation between the trait rankings of middle class working class students was however found to be lower, and was also the lowest for any pair of groups within the three major samples. Common variance in this instance amounted to only 56% suggesting considerable disparity between the perceptions of these two groups.

Ranks assigned to teacher traits by different student groups appeared to be less consistent than those of principal and teacher groups. As the coefficient of concordance (0.9278) indicates, consensus among the 6 student groups appeared to be slightly less compared to consensus among principal and teacher groups – (Table 3).

A comparison of the trait preferences of the composite principal and teacher samples revealed that principals attributed much more importance to efficiency, ethicalness, professional knowledge and interest in guidance than the teachers. Greatest disparity occurred in respect of ethicalness ranked 7th by the principals and 15th by the teachers.

Between the composite principal and student samples too many marked discrepancies could be observed. Principals laid greater emphasis on understanding of children, ability to discipline, ethicalness and professional knowledge than the students. Students placed greater emphasis on fairness, kindness, co-operativeness, democratic attitude and efficiency than the principals. Greatest disparity occurred in respect of ability to discipline ranked 2nd by principals and 11th by students.

Between the composite teacher and student samples too discrepancies very much similar to those discovered between principals and students could be noted.

Considering the relative importance attributed to 3 major trait categories, it was found that principal, teacher and student groups had in general placed highest value on cognitive traits followed by pedagogical traits. Least relative importance had been attributed to temperamental and dispositional traits. Statistics presented in Table 4, which are based on rank data reported in Table 1, substantiate the above conclusion. This Table which reports the results of Mann-Whitney Test, reveals that the hypothesis of no difference between principals, teachers and students in the relative importance attached to each of the major trait categories has been proved in every case.

Table 4

*CONGRUENCE BETWEEN PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN
THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF MAJOR
CATEGORIES OF TEACHER TRAITS*

Trait Category	Larger Sum of Ranks	Smaller Sum of Ranks	T Value	0.05 Level CR	Null Hypothesis
<i>Principals and Teachers</i>					
Cognitive	18.5	17.5	7.5	2	Accepted
Pedagogical	37.5	28.5	13.0	5	Accepted
Temperamental	266.0	262.0	126.0	84	Accepted
<i>Principals and Students</i>					
Cognitive	20.5	15.5	5.5	2	Accepted
Pedagogical	31.5	23.5	8.5	5	Accepted
Temperamental	280.5	247.5	111.5	84	Accepted
<i>Teachers and Students</i>					
Cognitive	19.5	16.5	6.5	2	Accepted
Pedagogical	35.0	20.0	5.0	5	Accepted
Temperamental	282.0	246.0	110.0	84	Accepted

0.05 Level CR Value taken from,
Conover, W. J. -*Practical Nonparametric Statistics* (1971).

Table 8

Perception of the Absolute Importance of Teacher Traits

Table 5 shows the traits which received high (above 4.5) and low (below 4.0) mean values on five point Likert scale, that is those traits which were expected to occur more frequently and less frequently in teachers. The three groups were very much similar in their perceptions of the most and the least important sets of traits. Students however had attributed higher values to a fewer and lower values to a larger number of traits, than principals and teachers. The two columns under Highest/Lowest indicate the highest and the lowest mean rating awarded by any of the sub-samples such as urban/rural, male/female and trained/non-trained.

These trait preferences suggest that principals, teachers and students expected teachers to possess most of the time, those traits contributing to cognitive and instructional competence, efficient pupil management, good interpersonal relations and conduct, just and reasonable treatment of students, pleasing manners and appearance.

Teachers, in their evaluations of the absolute importance of traits had attributed highest values to almost all traits. These apparently exaggerated values may have arisen out of their desire to present a self image of a most ideal teacher stereotype. Students on the other hand had given lower values to most traits than the other two groups. Realities encountered by students in their relationships with teachers may have probably induced them to be more modest in their demands on teachers.

Table 5.

TRAITS WHICH RECEIVED HIGH (ABOVE 4.5) AND LOW (BELOW 4.0) MEAN VALUES FROM HALF OR MORE THAN HALF OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF GROUPS WITHIN EACH OF PRINCIPAL, TEACHER, STUDENT SAMPLES WITH THE HIGHEST AND THE LOWEST RATING VALUE RECEIVED BY ANY OF THE SUB-SAMPLES

Traits	Principals		Teachers		Students	
	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest
<i>High - (Above 4.5)</i>						
Preparedness	4.88	4.55	4.81	4.64	4.65	4.55
Scholarliness	4.75	4.08	4.85	4.68	4.81	4.63
Expressiveness	4.67	4.08	4.48	4.49	4.63	4.48
Efficiency	4.65	4.16	4.63	4.50	4.73	4.38
Stimulatingness	4.61	4.08	4.77	4.60	4.65	4.52
Pleasantness	4.75	4.41	4.76	4.62	..	..
Ethicalness	4.75	4.25	4.77	4.50	..	..
Orderliness	4.65	4.00	4.80	4.47	..	..
Interest on subject	4.65	4.25	4.72	4.51	..	..
Interest in guidance	4.67	3.75	..	..	..	..
Ability to discipline	4.65	3.91	4.74	4.56	..	..
Co-operativeness	4.58	4.06	4.70	4.36	..	..
Fairness	4.58	4.00	4.71	4.54	..	..
Understanding of children	..	..	4.62	4.45	..	..
<i>Low - (Below 4.0)</i>						
Emotional stability	3.96	3.50	4.14	3.85	3.90	3.00
Sociability	3.96	3.16	3.95	3.58	3.38	3.07
Leadership	4.15	3.66	4.22	3.77	3.93	3.42
Friendliness	4.33	3.52	4.32	3.72	3.70	3.40
Interest in extra curricular activities	..	..	4.08	3.79	3.77	3.41
Professional knowledge	..	..	..	..	3.98	3.39
Recognition and praise	..	..	..	..	4.06	3.79
Cheerfulness	..	..	..	..	3.90	3.63

Table 6 shows the trait standard deviations in respect of the three groups of subjects. It reveals that the trait standard deviations of the teacher groups were comparatively lower than those of the other two groups, indicating greater consensus within teacher groups. Trait standard deviations of student groups revealed greater deviations among them in their values compared to those of principals and teachers.

Table 6

TRAITS WITH LOW (BELOW ONE) AND HIGH (ONE AND ABOVE ONE) STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN RESPECT OF HALF OR MORE THAN HALF OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF GROUPS WITHIN EACH OF PRINCIPAL TEACHER, STUDENT SAMPLES

Traits	Principals		Teachers		Students	
	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest
<i>Low</i>						
Preparedness	0.43	1.37	0.39	0.67	0.60	0.72
Scholarliness	0.49	1.50	0.42	0.63	0.46	0.69
Expressiveness	0.54	1.24	0.50	0.81	0.71	0.86
Efficiency	0.60	1.33	0.58	0.98	0.48	1.03
Stimulatingness	0.58	1.50	0.47	0.65	0.56	0.72
Pleasantness	0.42	1.24	0.54	0.61	0.80	1.04
Ethicalness	0.51	1.54	0.55	0.76	0.65	0.85
Interest in subject	0.54	1.35	0.44	0.79	0.65	1.00
Ability to discipline	0.51	1.31	0.46	0.75	0.85	0.95
Co-operativeness	0.76	1.16	0.45	0.77	0.62	0.96
Kindliness	0.84	0.96	0.60	0.92	0.75	1.03
Orderliness	0.54	1.04	0.46	0.79	..	..
Fairness	0.76	1.41	0.55	0.82	..	..
Interest in guidance	0.55	1.28	0.67	0.91	..	..
Int in extra curr. Activity	0.60	1.09	0.82	0.95	..	..
Democratic attitude	0.69	1.26	0.72	0.97	..	..
Cheerfulness	0.69	1.41	0.69	0.97	..	..
Objectivity	0.76	1.15	0.44	0.89	..	..
Recognition and praise	0.90	0.98	0.59	0.89	..	..
Professional knowledge	..	..	0.70	0.97	..	..
Understanding of children	..	..	0.56	0.78	0.70	1.13
<i>High</i>						
Leadership	0.93	1.18	0.75	1.06	1.02	1.20
Emotional stability	0.90	1.35	0.85	1.13	1.03	1.30
Professional knowledge	0.99	1.35	..	..	0.89	1.23
Sociability	..	..	0.82	1.11	1.08	1.29
Friendliness	..	..	0.72	1.17	0.91	1.34
Fairness	..	..	..	..	0.97	1.31
Interest in guidance	..	..	..	..	0.62	1.11
Recognition and praise	..	..	..	..	0.79	1.13
Interest in subject	..	..	..	..	0.96	1.00
Cheerfulness	..	..	..	..	0.87	1.23

Table 7

*MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF TRAIT RATINGS GIVEN BY
PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS*

	Principals N = 72		Teachers N = 300		Students N = 320	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Understanding of children	4.3750	0.9910	4.5333	0.6956	4.0938	0.9652
Ability to discipline	4.5278	0.7500	4.6500	0.6394	4.1219	0.9373
Stimulatingness	4.5278	0.8218	4.6800	0.5820	4.5906	0.6514
Scholarliness	4.6111	0.7792	4.7368	0.5492	4.6781	0.6429
Preparedness	4.7361	0.6919	4.7133	0.6102	4.5812	0.6855
Efficiency	4.5694	0.7841	4.5767	0.7343	4.5063	0.8491
Ethicalness	4.6667	0.8222	4.6000	0.6940	4.2780	0.8271
Professional knowledge	4.1250	1.0869	4.2400	0.8708	3.5469	1.2025
Interest in guidance	4.4861	0.7871	4.4564	0.8354	4.1031	1.0257
Interest in subject	4.5833	0.7459	4.5933	0.6803	4.1156	0.9280
Orderliness	4.5417	0.6907	4.6033	0.6689	4.2563	1.0093
Recognition and praise	4.2222	0.9378	4.4533	0.7323	3.8438	1.0802
Objectivity	4.4583	0.8212	4.4567	0.7506	3.9594	1.0023
Expressiveness	4.5414	0.7861	4.5767	0.7112	4.5094	0.7957
Co-operativeness	4.5000	0.8558	4.5067	0.7659	4.3780	0.8587
Fairness	4.5139	0.9192	4.6233	0.7140	4.4218	1.0535
Kindliness	4.2639	0.8557	4.3167	0.7949	3.9938	0.9921
Democratic attitude	4.1111	0.8485	4.0733	0.8929	3.9187	1.0826
Leadership	3.9583	1.0934	3.8602	0.9884	3.8156	1.1498
Friendliness	3.8333	0.9929	3.8733	1.0556	3.6156	1.2051
Emotional stability	3.7361	1.1748	3.9867	1.0115	3.3375	1.2539
Interest in extra-curricular activities	4.1667	0.9193	3.9333	0.9265	3.5094	1.9714
Sociability	3.8333	1.0209	3.7373	1.0548	3.2219	1.2510
Cheerfulness	4.3472	0.8584	4.3467	0.8178	3.7219	1.1513
Pleasantness	4.7083	0.6377	4.6900	0.5846	4.3375	0.9089

Table 6 further reveals that traits perceived to be most important had lower standard deviation indicating greater consensus within groups in respect of these. Traits perceived to be less important had higher standard deviation, suggesting less consensus within groups regarding the degree of importance attributed to these traits.

Table 7 presents mean values and standard deviations of trait ratings given by the composite samples of principals, teachers and students. Table 8 reveals congruency between different groups of subjects in their perception of the absolute importance of each of the teacher traits. No significant differences in trait perception were found between principals and teachers. Between principals and students, significant differences were found in respect of most traits, principals responding higher in every instance. Between teachers and students significant differences were found in respect of 20 out of the 25 traits. Thus greatest congruency existed between principals and teachers and least congruency between teachers and students.

Table 8 Z-TEST STATISTICS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN TRAIT RATINGS BETWEEN PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Traits	Principals vs. Teachers	Principals vs. Students	Teachers vs. Students
Understanding of children	-1.26	2.16 *	6.52 **
Ability to discipline	-1.27	3.93 **	8.23 **
Scholarliness	-1.28	-0.68	1.22
Efficiency	-0.07	0.60	1.26
Preparedness	0.26	1.70	2.57 *
Ethicalness	0.63	3.60 **	5.25 **
Stimulatingness	-1.47	-0.60	1.80
Professional knowledge	-0.83	3.97 **	8.24 **
Interest in guidance	0.18	3.49 **	4.85 **
Orderliness	-0.68	2.87 **	5.07 **
Objectivity	0.01	4.43 **	7.01 **
Interest in Subject	-0.10	4.56 **	7.33 **
Expressiveness	-0.34	0.31	1.11
Recognition and Praise	-1.94	2.99 **	8.26 **
Fairness	-0.94	0.74	2.80 **
Co-operativeness	-0.06	1.09	2.04 *
Democratic attitude	0.33	1.64	1.94
Kindliness	-0.47	2.33 *	4.48 **
Leadership	0.69	2.37 *	2.84 **
Friendliness	-0.30	1.60	2.83 **
Int. in extra curr. activities	1.92	5.26 **	5.21 **
Emotional stability	-1.66	2.55 *	7.10 **
Cheerfulness	0.01	5.21 **	7.91 **
Sociability	0.74	4.37 **	5.50 **
Pleasantness	0.22	4.07 **	5.28 **

* P < .05 = 1.96

** P < .01 = 2.58

Conclusions

The present investigation has revealed the absolute and relative importance of 25 personality characteristics for secondary school teachers as perceived by principals, teachers and students. In their evaluation of the absolute importance of each of the 25 traits, the subjects of this inquiry have indicated their desire to see teachers displaying most of these traits often or very often in their behaviour. Highest values have been attributed to those traits contributing to teachers' cognitive and instructional competence and efficient pupil management. This seem to suggest on the one hand the need to give due credit to academic achievement in the recruitment of secondary school teachers and on the other hand the need to include in teacher education programmes catering to those with only a secondary education, and academic component designed to upgrade their knowledge of the subject matter. It is also implied that the professional component of a curriculum for teacher education should aim at developing traits such as understanding of children, knowledge of aims, functions, processes and methods of education, ability to motivate learning, skills of communication, ability to plan instructional activities and skills of effective classroom management and control.

The other characteristics which the subjects of this study desired secondary school teachers to display most frequently consisted of those related to good inter personal relations (kindliness, co-operatvieness, friendliness, fairness and democratic attitude), ethical conduct, pleasing manners and appearance. It would be highly desirable if these qualities could be given cosideration in selecting prospective teachers despite the difficulties involved in determining the presence of such qualities in an individual. Attitudes favourable to these personality traits need to be inculcated and the traits fostered in teachers during their period of professional preparation. These qualities enable a teacher to build up a teacher-pupil relationship characterised by mutual respect and acceptance without which a fruitful teaching-learning encounter appears inconceivable.

In their evaluation of the relative importance of each of the 25 traits, principals, teachers and students have all attributed highest ranks mostly ranging from 1 to 10 for eight traits. These consisted of scholarliness, knowledge of children, ability to discipline, stimulatingness, preparedness, expressiveness, efficiency and orderliness. Traits to which highest relative importance had been awarded were once again found to be those contributing to teachers' cognitive and instructional competence and effective classroom management and control. Unlike principals and teachers, students were found to have assigned high relative values to three other traits, namely kindliness, co-operativeness, and fairness. Students expect to have some of their emotional and expressive needs fulfilled during their interaction with their teachers. The above trait preferences of students may therefore be interpreted as an expression of certain student needs which require to be fulfilled if a satisfactory teacher pupil relationship is to be ensured. Teachers need to be aware of traits other than knowledge and teaching skills that contribute to their succes in classrooms.

Although there was general agreement among subjects in their evaluations of traits described above, there were also certain striking differences among them, particularly in their perception of the relative importance of certain traits. As these traits underlie certain role behaviours, differences in trait perception may be interpreted as disagreements in role expectations. Such disagreements between complementary role incumbents like principals and teachers or teachers and students lead to poor interaction which may ultimately result in frustration, poor learning and teaching and low morale.

Two traits concerning which there occurred considerable disagreement between teachers and principals were ethicalness and interest in guidance. Principals' demands on these qualities were higher than what the teachers appeared willing to concede. These differences may therefore be treated as representing one possible source of principal-teacher conflict in our secondary schools.

Similarly considerable disagreement occurred between teachers and students concerning the traits, kindness; co-operativeness and fairness. Students were found to have awarded much higher values to these traits than their teachers. These differences suggest the possibility of poor teacher-pupil interaction taking place in source of our secondary school classrooms.

Teachers as well as principals need to be aware of the possible sources of conflict, and be willing to evolve a working consensus in the interests of good inter-personal relations, upon which ultimately rests the success of a classroom and a school.

Despite broad consensus among subjects in their evaluation of certain traits, they were also found to have attributed varying degrees of importance to certain other traits. These peculiarities in the perceptions of subjects appeared to be primarily related to their distinct role specifications, personal backgrounds and their perception of the objectives of secondary education.

Thus principals as administrators of schools valued most highly traits which contribute to effective pupil management and control and the maintenance of order and discipline in the schools. Teachers whose major role is considered to be that of dispensing knowledge valued most highly teachers' knowledge and the qualities that underlie successful imparting of this knowledge to pupils.

Pupils whose major need is to be taught and whose major role is that of receiving knowledge, valued most highly teachers' knowledge and the qualities that enable teachers to impart this knowledge most effectively. Being the occupants of the lowest position in the school authority hierarchy they have given expression to their need for just and sympathetic treatment from those who wield power over them, by placing much more value on fairness and kindness than the teachers and principals.

Trait perceptions also appeared to be related to certain personal variables of the subjects. Thus female students as well as female principals placed greater value on kindness. Trained graduate teachers and principals attributed much more importance to professional knowledge than the others.

Middle class students attached greater absolute importance than all the other students groups to almost all teacher traits in general.

Finally the evaluation of teacher traits also seemed to be related to the perceptions of the objectives of secondary education. Primary objective of secondary education is probably perceived to be that of providing academic learning. This appears to be one plausible explanation for the highest value placed by all subjects on cognitive traits followed by pedagogical traits.

Present findings also appear to provide further evidence of students' capacity to make reasonable and valid evaluations of teacher traits. By attributing greater importance to simulatingness they revealed their preference for teachers' ability to evoke interest in learning within them. In contrast they placed very much less value on recognition and praise indicating their less concern for sources of extrinsic motivation. They valued ethicalness much more than qualities such as friendliness, democratic attitude, sociability and pleasantness and like principals and teachers placed highest importance on cognitive and pedagogical traits, and least importance on personal qualities.

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