

INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND VIRTUES OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS ON TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of five factor personality traits and virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of secondary school teachers of northern part of Kerala through quantitative method. Tools used were: NEO-Five Factor Inventory, Values in Action - Inventory of Strengths – Six Virtues (VIA-IS-V6) and Teacher Effectiveness Scale. Virtues of humanity and courage emerged as the most significant and positive predictors of teacher effectiveness.

Introduction

Education is a powerful lifelong process and means to bring desired behaviour changes in the students. The quality of it is determined by the quality of people, especially of teachers. Their contribution to the well being of the students is irreplaceable. Effective teachers are agents of transformation. The assessment of teacher effectiveness has gained great importance in the present day empirical researches. These researches reveal that personality traits are potential predictors of teacher effectiveness (Komarraju & Steven, 2005; Patrik, 2009).

Another positive predictor of teacher effectiveness is the character strengths possessed by the teachers. With the growth of positive psychology (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), the Values in Action (VIA) Project is applied to various educational programs to enhance strengths based education (Park, & Peterson, 2008) in schools. This project helps to assess twenty four potential character strengths of a person which are organised under six virtues of wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. The Values in Action Project is successfully carried out in many countries and helped to improve quality and well being of teachers, students and school community. With an aim of improving the quality of secondary school teachers , this study examines the influence of five factor personality traits and six virtues of wisdom, justice, courage, humanity, temperance and transcendence on five domains of teacher effectiveness namely preparation and planning for teaching, classroom management, knowledge of subject matter, personality characteristics of teachers and inter-personal relations.

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Background of the study

According to Hadler and Rupnar (2014), personality traits are vital determinants of teachers' work performance. Their study showed openness as the most powerful positive predictor of teacher effectiveness. In addition to it, personality traits of the teachers influenced the well-being and academic achievement of the students. They like or dislike teachers based on their personality traits (Eryilmaza, 2014; Tok and Suleym, 2009; Jones 2014). Studies conducted in terms of classroom management revealed extrovert teachers as more influential than the introvert teachers (Simin & Behdokht, 2015; Jalili & Ameri, 2015). An Australian study demonstrated that high scoring teachers in extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience effectively handle students with behaviour problems (Buttner & Pijl, 2015).

Loving, optimistic, hopeful and caring teachers who generously spend their time with the students had significant positive correlation with teacher effectiveness (Synder, Shane & Jennifer 2011). Studies on the character strengths of men and women teachers facilitate the human development program of the teachers (Pareek & Nirmala, 2016). Mollie McCullough (2015) suggested that well being of the teachers based on the development of their character strengths improved teacher effectiveness. Life satisfaction and teacher effectiveness were also associated positively and significantly with teacher effectiveness (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Significance of the study

Training and recruitment of the effective teachers are important educational concerns in all the countries. Analysis of the current education system in India suggests that primary and secondary school education system needs improvement in imparting quality education. Despite remarkable achievements in education after the independence of India, 'experimental education' (Sadoff, 2014) and learning achievements are low in primary and secondary education (Kingdon, 2007). One of the ways to improve secondary school education in India is to improve teacher effectiveness. All teachers do not possess suitable personality traits and virtues of character strengths to excel in their profession. This calls for a real research.

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the influence of the personality traits on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala.
2. To find out influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala.
- 3 To find out whether influence of personality traits is preferred over the influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala.

Hypothesis of the study

The following hypotheses are tested to attain the stated objectives.

1. There is a significant and direct influence of personality traits on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala when virtues of character strength act as a mediator variable.
2. There is a significant influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala.
3. Influence of personality traits is preferred over the influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala

Methodology of the study

Method:

This study has employed quantitative method.

Participants:

Fifty two (52) men teachers and one hundred and fifty five (155) women teachers of 17 secondary school teachers from the northern part of Kerala were the participants. Thus, sample size was 207. Their average age was 41. Data was collected from six government schools, five aided schools and six unaided schools.

Tools Used: Three standardized psychological tools used to measure the variables were:

1. NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO FFI, Form S) by Paul T. Costa, and Robert R. McCrae (1991).
2. Values in Action - Inventory of Strengths – Six Virtues (VI A - IS- V6) developed by McGrath, R. E. (2017).
3. Teacher Effectiveness Scale by Umme Kulsum (2011).

Statistical Technique used: Kolmogorv- Smirnov Test, Durbin-Watson Test and Path-analysis techniques were used as the data was non-uniformly distributed.

Analysis of the data and interpretation of results

Table1: Test of normality using the Kolmogorv- Smirnov Test and the Shapiro-Wilk Test.

| Variables | Kolmogorov-Smirnov | | Sig. | Shapiro-Wilk | | Sig. |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------|------|--------------|--------|------|
| | Statistic | df | | Statistic | Df | |
| Classroom Management | 0.15 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.86 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Knowledge of Subject | 0.17 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.86 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Teacher characteristics | 0.16 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.85 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Inter-personal Relations | 0.14 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.89 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Teacher effectiveness | 0.16 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.84 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Wisdom & Knowledge | 0.08 | 207.00 | 0.01 | 0.98 | 207.00 | 0.02 |
| Justice | 0.10 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.98 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Courage | 0.08 | 207.00 | 0.01 | 0.99 | 207.00 | 0.07 |
| Humanity | 0.06 | 207.00 | 0.07 | 0.99 | 207.00 | 0.04 |
| Temperance | 0.08 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.98 | 207.00 | 0.02 |
| Transcendence | 0.08 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.98 | 207.00 | 0.01 |
| Neuroticism | 0.07 | 207.00 | 0.03 | 0.99 | 207.00 | 0.02 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|
| Extroversion | 0.07 | 207.00 | 0.03 | 0.99 | 207.00 | 0.54 |
| Openness | 0.11 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.98 | 207.00 | 0.00 |
| Agreeableness | 0.07 | 207.00 | 0.03 | 0.99 | 207.00 | 0.06 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.10 | 207.00 | 0.00 | 0.98 | 207.00 | 0.02 |

p < .05

This test showed that data in the observed samples were non-uniformly distributed as the test was statistically significant (p < .05).

Path – Analysis

Table 2 and Table 3 cited show that prerequisites for conducting path analysis are satisfied.

Table 2: Durbin-Watson coefficient which shows that the residuals are normally distributed

| Independent variable | Sl. No | Dependent variable | Durbin –Watson |
|----------------------|--------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Humanity and courage | 1 | Preparation and planning | 1.271 |
| | 2 | Classroom management | 1.502 |
| | 3 | Subject Knowledge | 1.352 |
| | 4 | Teacher's characteristics | 1.371 |
| | 5 | Interpersonal relations | 1.362 |
| | 6 | Wisdom | 1.716 |
| | 7 | Justice | 1.839 |
| Personality | 8 | Courage | 1.968 |
| | 9 | Humanity | 1.716 |
| | 10 | Temperance | 1.725 |
| | 11 | Transcendence | 1.958 |

Since all Durbin –Watson value is between one and four, residuals are normally distributed.

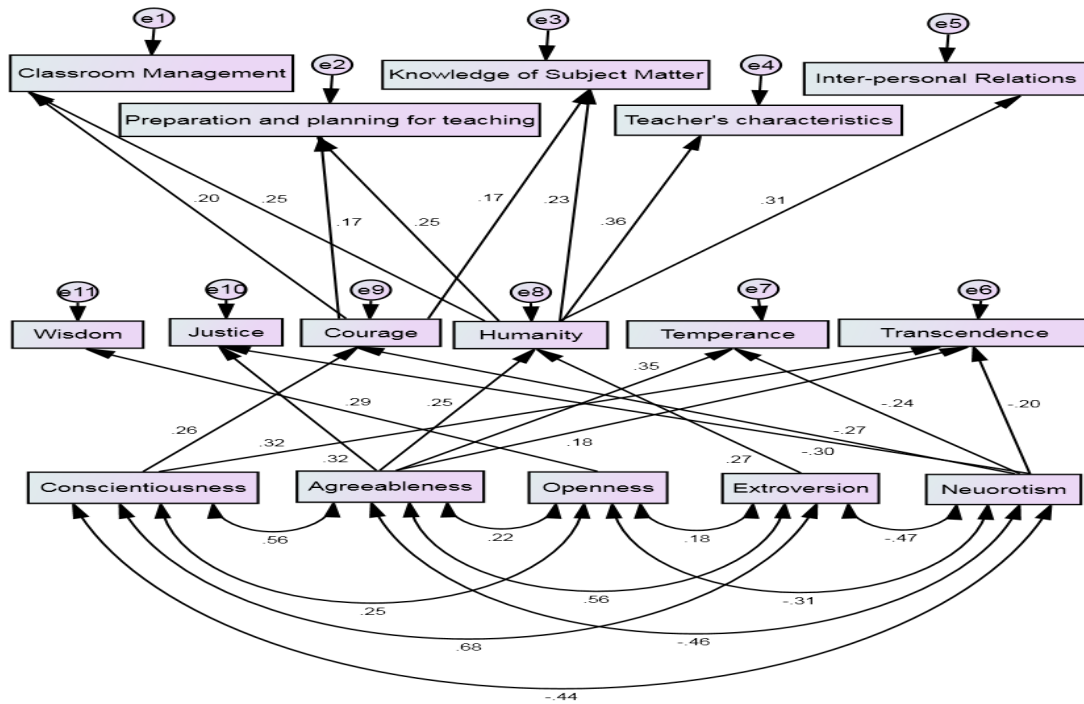
Table 3: Correlation between the endogenous variables

| Endogenous variables | Direction | Endogenous variables | R |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------|
| Neuroticism | <--> | Extroversion | -0.47** |
| Neuroticism | <--> | Openness | -0.31** |
| Neuroticism | <--> | Agreeableness | -0.46** |
| Neuroticism | <--> | Conscientiousness | -0.44** |
| Extroversion | <--> | Openness | 0.18* |
| Extroversion | <--> | Agreeableness | 0.56** |
| Extroversion | <--> | Conscientiousness | 0.68** |
| Openness | <--> | Agreeableness | 0.22** |
| Agreeableness | <--> | Conscientiousness | 0.56** |
| Openness | <--> | Conscientiousness | 0.25** |

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 3 shows that all the endogenous variables are correlated to each other.

Figure 1: Path diagram which shows the influence of personality traits and virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness



Based on the variables involved path diagram can be classified into three.

- 1) Lower Half Part of the Diagram: This part is considered to be composed of the personality traits as exogenous or independent variable and virtues of character strengths as endogenous or dependent variable.
- 2) Upper Half Part of the Diagram: In this portion virtues of character strengths are considered as exogenous or independent variable, and dimensions of teacher effectiveness as endogenous or dependent variable.
- 3) Full Diagram: While considering complete path diagram, personality traits act as the independent variable, virtues of character strengths as the mediator variable and dimensions of teacher effectiveness as dependent variable.

Path to endogenous variable is unidirectional.

Hypothesis one, hypothesis two and hypothesis three are represented within the single path diagram.

Hypothesis One: There is a significant and direct influence of personality traits on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of northern part of Kerala when virtues of character strength act as a mediator variable.

Table 4: Path coefficient which shows the relationship of exogenous and endogenous variables

| Endogenous variables | Direction | Exogenous variables | β |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------|
| Humanity | <--- | Extroversion | 0.27** |
| Humanity | <--- | Agreeableness | 0.25** |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------------------|---------|
| Courage | <--- | Conscientiousness | 0.26** |
| Courage | <--- | Neuroticism | -0.27** |
| Class management | <--- | Courage | 0.20** |
| Preparation and planning | <--- | Courage | 0.17* |
| Class management | <--- | Humanity | 0.25** |
| Preparation and planning | <--- | Humanity | 0.25** |
| Subject matter knowledge | <--- | Humanity | 0.23** |
| Teacher characteristics | <--- | Humanity | 0.36** |
| Interpersonal relations | <--- | Humanity | 0.31** |
| Subject matter knowledge | <--- | Courage | 0.17* |
| Transcendence | <--- | Neuroticism | -0.20** |
| Temperance | <--- | Agreeableness | 0.35** |
| Wisdom and Knowledge | <--- | Openness | 0.29** |
| Temperance | <--- | Neuroticism | -0.24** |
| Justice | <--- | Agreeableness | 0.32** |
| Justice | <--- | Neuroticism | -0.30** |
| Transcendence | <--- | Agreeableness | 0.18* |
| Transcendence | <--- | Conscientiousness | 0.32** |

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 4 and path diagram indicate that conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < .01$) and neuroticism ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < .01$) show relationship to courage. Courage, in turn, shows relationship to class management ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$), preparation and planning ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$) and knowledge of the subject matter ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$). Similarly, agreeableness ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < .01$) and extroversion ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .01$) show relationship to humanity. Humanity, in turn, shows relationship to classroom management ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < .01$), preparation and planning ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < .01$), knowledge of the subject matter ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < .01$), teachers' characteristics ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .01$) and inter-personal relations ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < .01$). Thus, findings indicate that personality traits of the secondary school teachers of northern part of Kerala do not influence teacher effectiveness significantly and directly when virtues of character strengths act as mediator variable in the path analysis. They influence teacher effectiveness indirectly through humanity and courage. Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis two: There is a significant influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of northern part of Kerala.

Table 4 and upper half part of the path diagram infer that virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance and transcendence do not significantly influence teacher effectiveness. Yet, courage shows relationship to class management ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$), preparation and planning ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$) and knowledge of the subject matter ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$). Similarly, humanity shows relationship to classroom

management ($\beta = 0.25, p < .01$), preparation and planning ($\beta = 0.25, p < .01$), knowledge of the subject matter ($\beta = 0.23, p < .01$), teachers' characteristics ($\beta = 0.36, p < .01$) and inter-personal relations ($\beta = 0.31, p < .01$). Thus virtue of courage of the secondary school teachers of northern part of Kerala influences the teacher effective dimensions of class management, preparation and planning, and knowledge of the subject matter. Further, their virtue of humanity influences classroom management, preparation and planning, knowledge of the subject matter, teachers' characteristics and inter-personal relations. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis three: Influence of personality traits is preferred over the influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala.

Path diagram and table 4 reveal that agreeableness ($\beta = 0.25, p < .01$) and extroversion ($\beta = 0.27, p < .01$) significantly and positively influence the virtue of humanity and then humanity significantly and positively exerts influence to all the dimensions of teacher effectiveness namely classroom management ($\beta = 0.25, p < .01$), preparation and planning ($\beta = 0.25, p < .01$), knowledge of the subject matter ($\beta = 0.23, p < .01$), teachers' characteristics ($\beta = 0.36, p < .01$) and inter-personal relations ($\beta = 0.31, p < .01$). Conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.26, p < .01$) and neuroticism ($\beta = -0.27, p < .01$) influence courage. Courage, in turn, exerts influence to class management ($\beta = 0.20, p < .01$), preparation and planning ($\beta = 0.17, p < .05$) and knowledge of the subject matter ($\beta = 0.17, p < .05$).

Nevertheless, none of the personality traits show significant and direct influence to the dimensions of teacher effectiveness when virtues of character strengths act as intermediate variable. So, it can infer that influence of personality traits is not preferred over the influence of virtues of character strengths on teacher effectiveness of the secondary school teachers of the northern part of Kerala. Virtues of character strengths have stronger influence than personality traits on teacher effectiveness in this study. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

Major findings of the study

- a) Virtue of humanity emerged as the most significant and positive predictors of teacher effectiveness and then courage.
- b) Five Factor Personality Traits had no significant and direct influence on the dimensions of teacher effectiveness when virtues of character strengths functioned as a mediator variable.
- c) Positive and significant influence of mediator variable of virtues of character strengths was stronger than the independent variable of five factor personality traits on teacher effectiveness.
- d) Personality traits of extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness had significant positive influence on virtues of character strengths. On the other hand, there was significant negative influence of neuroticism on transcendence, temperance, courage and justice.
- e) There were positive relationships between the dimensions of personality traits, virtues of character strengths, and teacher effectiveness.

Educational implications of the study

Identification of the personality traits, virtues and teacher effectiveness provide important information in rendering professional and personal counselling for teachers. This study promotes self awareness and faculty development programs. Understanding one`s own personality and others contributes to inter-personal relationships in the workplace, in the family and social life. Similarly, measuring virtues in an efficient way has impact on the well being of the persons and applications to character education and youth development. This study is associated with work related behaviours and their outcomes. Hence, it helps in recruiting effective and virtuous teachers and recruiting employees to other professions. It serves in preparing the profile of the employees and provides guidelines for the teacher education.

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