

Lack of Work Skills/Knowledge at Schools: Impact on Teacher-Decision to Communicate Upward

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ABSTRACT: This research focuses specifically on the impact of lack of work knowledge/skills on Teacher-Decision to Communicate the problem to the management at selected schools in Selangor. Prior research by Faizah (2011)[1] had identified Lack of Knowledge/Skills as an obstacle faced by teachers in implementing the SBA program successfully. The Lack of work knowledge needs to be communicated to the management so that the organization can function efficiently in order to achieve planned objectives.

KEYWORDS: SBA, Upward Communication, Teacher-Behaviour

I. THE SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

Haertel et al., (2008) [2] has mentioned that School Based Assessment (SBA) is a method that is entrenched in the process of both learning and teaching. SBA has several characteristics that sets it apart from other types of assessment. It permits the collection of numerous samples of performance of the student over a time period. It takes place in ordinary classrooms and are all conducted by their respective teachers.

One important feature of School Based Assessment is that it assists teachers to develop different types evaluation which is suitable for their student's needs and their own teaching style and purposes. This would not be possible in traditional teaching-learning methods considering the different skills and abilities found among students. With SBA teachers design new methods and also modify the existing tasks which will suit their set of students and also themselves. According to Fook and Sidhu (2014) [3], School Based Assessment (SBA) is a method of supervising, implementing and evaluating schedules to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of schools. Currently, educationists and authorities refer to SBA as a catalyst for a reform of education.

Towards the late 1990s, SBA has been gradually introduced into the classrooms of Malaysia and was made the policy in all government aided schools in 2014. One major reason for this is, there is sufficient research and literature to demonstrate the limitations of one centralized summative assessment (Cunningham, Hillison, & Horne, 1985) [4]. Abas, Rasali and Rahmat (2013) [5] have quoted that SBA has been utilized quite successfully around the globe since 1970s in countries, such as, Scotland, Finland, England, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The main objective of the SBA is to leave behind archaic ways of evaluating and accessing the abilities of students in their curricular and academic activities which have been through centralized evaluations. Instead of having public examinations in specified areas, SBA can be implemented in a normal classroom and at times concurrently during teaching-learning. The most frequently mentioned benefit of SBA is the capability to tune in to voices of students and as outcome students who are much satisfied because they understand that their teachers care.

II. THE CHALLENGES OF SBA

Khairiah (2008) [6] discovered that teachers experience issues in finishing the assessment according to the plan and assuring assessment authenticity, thus, leading to the investigation of whether teachers have adequate knowledge to undertake the School Based Assessment. A study by Faizah (2011) [1] mentioned that teachers are bothered about numerous assessment perspectives involving their roles and capabilities to attain the entire School Based Assessment needs. Lucy (2007) [7] has stated that in School Based Assessment teachers would require to support students individually to accomplish their own standard or band without contrasting with the other students.

Similarly, Mweemba and Chilala (2007) [8] have stated that most of the teachers faced insufficient learning and teaching materials. The difficult with materials of learning affected the feasibility of proper learning and teaching materials mainly in the new curriculum. There was an obvious lack of materials in some areas of learning, such as studies of community and technology and creative studies. Thus, it was clear that they required a lot of assistance in the form of equipment and materials such as computers, stationery, etc. Kellaghan and Greaney (2003) [9] have pointed out that supervision was another challenge in which the overall implementation encountered various obstacles. The observations from both supervision visits and the study of formative evaluation revealed that there was insufficient supervision conducted by the education authorities of the district who had been assigned to supervise, advise and assist teachers in implementing School Based Assessment.

Besides, minimal management-teacher communication and contact have been identified as added issues to supervision. Frequent communication in an organization ensures the overall well-being of the organization as it boosts the motivation levels of individuals at the workplace (Sahrir, Ismail, Muh, & Mummad, 2016) [10].

Rakotmetsi (2000) [11] and Tladi (2000) [12] mentioned that teachers are experiencing developing issues with regard to school-based assessment on a daily and regular basis. The issues namely request for social reform, supply of educational resources, varied approaches of role players to reform of education, the set-up of culture of learning and teaching and controversies around the meaning, measurement and management of classroom assessment as problems that have given rise to the need for reform of education. Brown (2005) [13] discussed that teachers would usually like to assure that their personal feeling does not matter with fair assessment of students or bias the score assessment.

The study by Nair et al., (2014) [14] examined qualitatively and quantitatively concepts such as School Based Assessment of teacher's knowledge and the problems faced when implementing School Based Assessments. Whereas the factors contributing to the implementation issues of School Based Assessments was examined qualitatively. A sample of sixty teachers of English in Dungun district, who were included in School Based Assessments from the initiation, was utilized and out of this, twenty teachers were interviewed to acquire qualitative observations. It was predicted that teachers had fulfilled planning knowledge and School Based Assessment tailored lesson. As for problems faced by teachers were not indifferent to the implementation of School Based Assessment but collaboration and teamwork among School Based Assessment teachers required to be developed. Teachers faced issues in the implementation of School Based Assessment but on the whole had a positive attitude towards School Based Assessment.

Teachers stated their issues over lack of sufficient number of staff, lack of uniformity and a feasible biasness element in grading. Teachers also faced constraints of time, lack of efficient methodologies and materials and bad facilities of information communication and technology in schools. Chan et al., (2006) [15] mentioned that teachers were worried that School Based Assessment would take their valuable amount of time in teaching and they had to finish the syllabus in a quick way. Teachers required spending hours to view the online results of students. This is a difficult task particularly for school with bad connection of internet. Teachers would have issues in logging due to congestion of system and network issue and this could lead to frustration.

2.1 Lack of Knowledge: An Issue Faced By Teachers

Lack of Knowledge has been identified as an issue faced by teachers when implementing the SBA in their respective schools. This study is about observing if this problem (together with selected Moderating Variables) affects teachers' comfort levels to such an extent that they decide to adopt the Silent Behaviour rather than communicate to the management. Lack of Knowledge is due to lack of training and exposure to the new policy. Training at school level in Malaysia is arranged by the management based on guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education under Sections 67, 68 and 69 of the Education Act 1996 (Act 550).

Gilley (2002) [16] indicated that among common reasons employees fail to transfer knowledge learned includes delayed application, fear of change, and lack of confidence. Lack of management support and participation is also an obstacle to transfer, besides organizational policies and procedures, work environment factors, management practices, and training overload. Teacher training programs need not only to provide teachers access to more knowledge, considered more deeply, but also to help teachers learn how to continually access knowledge and inquire into their work.

Furthermore, spending too much time and attention to classroom management, without realizing that their lack of knowledge of curriculum and instruction cause many of the classroom difficulties teachers face (Shields-Humphrey et al., 2001) [17]. Besides, it is likely that content knowledge for teaching affects student learning and participation.

As for SBA, a number of concerns were reported during the early stages of implementation, including teacher readiness. Besides, teachers had expressed that SBA may not be a fair way of gauging student performance because teachers utilize different teaching methodologies and assessments. Besides, schools prepare specific schedules and plans to cater needs for their students. All the exposure and teacher-training on SBA may not produce the same assessment outcome as teachers are faced with different sets of students and use varied levels of judgements on student work.

Studies also reported that teachers experienced difficulties managing, synthesizing, interpreting, and utilizing student assessment, especially with inadequate training and exposure to SBA. Even teachers with several years of teaching experience lacked sufficient knowledge of the characteristics and the overall operation of SBA (Owolabi, H.O. et al., 2010) [18].

Research in Malaysian public schools indicate that teachers do not understand about the implementation of SBA (Faizah, 2011) [1]. Other observations on the SBA exposed that teachers from the beginning interpret differently as to how SBA should be carried out and teachers lacked ideas how to assist students to achieve the maximum band in the grading system. From the viewpoint of students, it was reported that teachers had no clue as to how SBA works and believed that the authorities in the Ministry of Education had failed to gather opinions from teachers and students prior to the implementation of the system. This was supported by a representative from the Suara Guru Masyarakat Malaysia (SGMM) that the Ministry has to carry out a pilot project first after fixing the problems, only then can they go on to implement the SBA (StarEducate, 2014, February 21 & 23, March 2) [20], [19], [21].

Summing-up, the skills and knowledge of classroom inquiry include careful observation and reasoned analysis, as well as dispositions toward an open and searching mind and a sense of responsibility and commitment to children's learning (Zeichner & Liston, 1996) [22].

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF UPWARD COMMUNICATION

3.1 Teacher-Management Relationship

The study based on job satisfaction of teachers by Scott and Dinham (2003) [23] revealed that teachers derive satisfaction from matters inherent to the teaching roles, one of which is, good relationships with the management, students and parents. Furthermore, attention and support from school administrators contributes to the overall feeling of an individual's satisfaction at the work environment.

Although teachers' main concern is wages, when considering as a complete manner, teachers admit that support from management and superiors is equally important because not having professional support have been linked strongly with dissatisfaction of teachers (Pollard, Broadfoot, Croll, Osborn, & Abbott, 1994) [24].

Next, the conceptualization of efficiency of teachers is an extension of the school circumstance and interpersonal links between teachers and other individuals within the school circumstance to the teacher efficacy concepts (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) [25]. Effective communication hinges a lot on dialogues, with positive and constructive responses and feedback. Via face-to-face interaction, the management can discover and understand employees' ideas and goals, their trust in the system, their willingness to share, contribution and work towards organizational objectives; and their feelings about their overall position in the organization's operations as well as their long-term goals and aspirations with the system. This type of communication (face-to-face) is very useful for both upward and downward interaction as it paves way for healthy two-way communication. Frequent two-way communications in organizations are a positive indicator of a good employer-employee relation.

Next, the individual principal can affect the leadership process through his/her traits, role, skills, experience, and style (Yukl, 1996) [26]. Leaders must communicate information about the organization's goals and policies to employees so that they too will feel that they are part of the organization's policies and plan. Advice and guidance must be given on ways to enhance working performances, increasing one's emotional intelligence and ways to adjust and fit successfully at the workplace, focusing especially on the communication aspect (Leat, 2008) [27]. In an environment where open communication is given importance, the management need to give much attention to employees and by encouraging them for their participation through feedbacks and ideas, they can be motivated to be proactive individuals for the benefit of the organization as a whole.

The conclusion is, from the perspective of the Social Exchange Theory, teachers' overall motivation, performance, satisfaction, gains (wages), etc. can be equated with rewards that teachers obtain from a healthy relationship with the management. Whereas, dissatisfaction, lack of commitment, lack of trust, etc. all can be traced to 'costs' that influences individuals' behaviour at the work environment.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The methodology utilized in this study is based on a survey method. A pilot test was conducted to observe the reliability of the test items. On the average, the Cronbach coefficient was 0.78 (Lack of Knowledge: $\alpha = 0.78$ and Teacher Behaviour: $\alpha = 0.77$). Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) [28] recommend that a reliability index of $\leq .70$ is sufficient for Social Science studies. The survey instrument was a questionnaire distributed to a total of 320 secondary school teachers in a selected district. The return rate was 0.9125% or 292 responses. Data gathered was analysed using a Correlation Analysis, Multiple Regression (all assumptions were observed to avoid Type 1 and Type 2 errors) as well as Descriptive Statistics.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The Data Analysis and Findings in this study are discussed and presented according to the analysis of the Hypothesis and the Research Questions:

5.1 The Hypothesis

There is a correlation between the problem (LK) faced by teachers in implementing SBA and Teacher-Behaviour (choosing to refrain from communicating the issue to the management).

The hypothesis can be tested by analysing the statistical data collected from the respondents for questionnaire items. The analyses to test the hypothesis are as follows:

a. Correlation Analysis:

The following table explains that Teacher-Behaviour (Dependent Variable) is significantly and negatively correlated with Lack of Knowledge (Independent Variable) (r value is negative, $-1 < r < +1$).

Pearsons Correlation	Teacher Behaviour	Lack of Knowledge
Teacher Behaviour	1.00	-0.51
Lack of Knowledge	-0.51	1.00

The Independent Variable (IV) in this study Lack of Knowledge (LK) faced by secondary school teachers when implementing the SBA in their respective schools in the district. As problem related to Lack of Knowledge in the implementation of the SBA increases teachers may choose not to report their difficulties to the management, thus a negative correlation between the Independent Variable and the Dependent Variable.

The conclusion based on the above analysis with regards to the Independent (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV) is: There is a significant relationship between the IV and the DV. As such, the null hypothesis is rejected.

b. Regression Analysis:

The b values in the Coefficients tables of the Regression Analysis below show the relationship between the Independent Variable and the Dependent Variable.

Regression Model of Predictor (Lack of Knowledge) of Teacher Behaviour.

	b	$SE\ b$	β	F change	t	R^2	R^2 change
Constant	4.62	0.22					
LK	-0.64	0.06	-0.51	(1,290) = 101	-10.05	0.26	0.26

A multiple regression was carried out to investigate whether Lack of Knowledge could significantly predict Teacher-Behaviour. The results of the regression indicated that the model explained 25% of the variance and also, the model was a significant predictor of Teacher Behaviour, $F(1,290) = 101$, $p = 0.000$. Lack of Knowledge contributed significantly to the model ($\beta = -0.64$, $p < 0.001$). The final predictive model was:

$$\text{Teacher Behaviour} = 4.62 - 0.64 = 3.98$$

In this model, a one unit increase in the predictor variable (LK) caused a decrease of 0.64 in the predicted variable (Teacher Behaviour). There was a significant negative relationship between LK and Teacher Behaviour, which means teachers were not motivated to communicate the issue (LK) to the management.

The Regression Analysis show that the alternative hypothesis is true that there is a significant relationship between the Independent Variable (IV) and Dependant Variable (DV).

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that teachers do have tendencies to with-hold crucial information related to their work from the management. Teachers refrain from communicating to the management difficulties faced in implementing the SBA due of lack of knowledge in their respective schools.

The findings here support previous research on teacher behaviour and satisfaction at the workplace that individuals choose not to communicate for various reasons based on internal and external factors.

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