

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

O PAPEL DOS PROFESSORES NA AVALIAÇÃO DA QUALIDADE EDUCACIONAL: UM ESTUDO EXPERIMENTAL

EL PAPEL DE LOS PROFESORES EN LA EVALUACIÓN DE LA CALIDAD EDUCATIVA: UN ESTUDIO EXPERIMENTAL

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to answer the question "Can teachers do the educational quality evaluation tasks?", in the context of lacking experts or well-trained staff to do this task in low and middle-income countries, such as Vietnam. In this study, the training on knowledge, soft skill, performance, and attitude were tested as the tool improving the teachers' performance in evaluating education quality. The study was based on a quasi-experimental design, cross-disciplinary, and mixed-evaluation methods. The study is cross-disciplinary as it examines the difference between the comparison and intervention group concerning personal factors and job attitude. The findings indicate that providing knowledge, soft skill practice, and positive job attitude help to improve the staff's performance in assessing the quality of education. The findings presented in this paper provide evidence of effectiveness of the education quality evaluation skills training in schools.

KEYWORDS: Teacher's role. Assessing educational quality. Experimental study. Ho Chi Minh City.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é responder à questão "Os professores podem fazer as tarefas de avaliação da qualidade educacional?" no contexto da falta de especialistas ou equipe bem treinada para fazer essa tarefa em países de baixa e média renda, como o Vietnã. Neste estudo, o treinamento sobre conhecimento, habilidades interpessoais, desempenho e atitude foram testados como ferramentas capazes de melhorar o desempenho dos professores na avaliação da qualidade do ensino. O estudo foi baseado em um desenho quasi-experimental, avaliação interdisciplinar e de métodos mistos. O estudo é interdisciplinar, pois examina a diferença entre o grupo de comparação e o grupo de intervenção em relação a fatores pessoais e atitude no trabalho. Os resultados indicam que fornecer conhecimento, prática de habilidades interpessoais e atitude positiva no trabalho ajudam a melhorar o desempenho da equipe na avaliação da qualidade da educação. Os resultados apresentados neste artigo fornecem evidências de eficácia da formação de habilidades de avaliação da qualidade de educação nas escolas.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *O papel dos professores. Avaliando a qualidade educacional. Estudo experimental. Cidade de Ho Chi Minh*

RESUMEN: *El propósito de este artículo es responder a la pregunta "¿Pueden los profesores realizar las tareas de evaluación de la calidad educativa?" en el contexto de la falta de expertos o personal bien capacitado para realizar esta tarea en países de ingresos bajos y medianos, como Vietnam. En este estudio se probó la formación en conocimientos, habilidades blandas, desempeño y actitud como la herramienta que mejora el desempeño de los docentes en la evaluación de la calidad de la educación. El estudio se basó en un diseño cuasi-experimental, multidisciplinario y de evaluación de métodos mixtos. El estudio es multidisciplinario, ya que examina la diferencia entre el grupo de comparación y el de intervención en lo que respecta a los factores personales y la actitud laboral. Los hallazgos indican que proporcionar conocimientos, práctica de habilidades blandas y una actitud laboral positiva ayudan a mejorar el desempeño del personal en la evaluación de la calidad de la educación. Los hallazgos presentados en este documento proporcionan evidencia de eficacia de la capacitación en habilidades de evaluación de la calidad de la educación en las escuelas.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *El papel de los docentes. Evaluación de la calidad educativa. Estudio experimental. Ciudad Ho Chi Minh.*

Introduction

Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty. Achieving inclusive and quality education for all reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development. Thus, quality education is the 4th goal out of 17 goals for sustainable development. This goal ensures that all girls and boys complete free primary and secondary schooling by 2030. It also aims to provide equal access to affordable vocational education, to eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to a quality higher education (UNDP, 2015).

According to UNICEF (2000), quality education includes: (1) Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; (2) Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; (3) Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace; (4) Processes through which formed teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful

assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; (5) Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. This definition allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context.

VVOB's definition of quality education is quite the same as UNICEF's, but it is clearer when mentioning the roles of relevant stakeholders.

A good quality education is one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being. The learning outcomes that are required vary according to context but at the end of the basic education cycle must include threshold levels of literacy and numeracy, basic scientific knowledge and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease. Capacity development to improve the quality of teachers and other education stakeholders is crucial throughout this process (VVOB website).

Emerging countries like Vietnam are facing many difficulties in developing quality education in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The education in Vietnam is geared heavily to transfer knowledge, not to develop qualities and competence of learners; the quality of teaching staff and managers is unequal regarding regions; the infrastructure education system is still limited (NHA, 2018).

There are many ways to improve the quality of education. According to several studies, there are 15 ways to improve education quality and student achievement with outcome-based education. One of that is "Outcome-based Education & Accreditation" - enhancing of quality of education in schools, higher education by gaining accreditation. Accreditation Management System offers automated tools which enable higher education institutes to easily measure the achievement of the outcomes. It also lets an institution improve the quality of higher education accordingly (SIRIAM, 2019).

In Vietnam and other emerging countries, the implementation of the outcome-based education and accreditation has not been implemented efficiently due to the lack of qualified staff who are doing the job of education evaluators at schools and managerial offices. Our study aims to assess the teachers' capacity in doing educational quality evaluation (EQE).

Review of Related Research

Principles of education quality assurance and education accreditation

The difference between education and business quality management is the pupils, students that we teach and their many characteristics, contexts and experiences. And that means, we should apply a wide range of diversity methods to be fit for purpose in every setting. However, we can use some of the excellent and invaluable experience of business in beginning to plan and implement a consistent and whole organization approach to defining and delivering our own rationale and ambition for the quality of output we want for our schools according to national guidelines and regulations. Firstly, defining clearly the principles helps to design a quality assurance process that ensures all staff across the school or partnership can work together to embed them and ensure clearly defined outcomes are achieved. Then, focusing on how to empower all staff to work together to deliver a consistent and truly collaborative strategy from year to year. There are seven principles linked to quality assurance that will guide continuous improvement in a school, these are: (1) Positive and effective leadership; (2) Identifying the needs of all learners; (3) Engaging and empowering all staff; (4) Identifying the processes involved in achieving successful learning outcomes; (5) Defining assessment and continuous improvement strategies; (6) Data and information to inform evidence-based decision making; (7) Involving all stakeholders (CPD website).

Management of service quality is important due to increased competition, globalization and the reduction of funds allocated by the government (TEMIZER; TURKYILMAZ, 2012). And the education quality evaluation plays the crucial role in quality assurance and development. The schools should monitor the quality of all services and be committed to measure and improve it on a continuous basis (BROCHADO, 2009). Quality assurance requires the continuous self-assessment and the internal or sometimes external evaluation or accreditation. Accreditation, in education, is the process by which a professional and authorized association or agency evaluates an education institution or program of study and formally recognizes it as having met and satisfied, or exceeded, certain predetermined requirements and criteria or standards of education quality regarding local and/or international guidelines (IBRAHIM, 2014).

Education Quality Evaluation Skills

The role of secondary administrators (principals, guidance directors, curriculum supervisors, department chairs, and special education directors) is important to the success of students. Administrators equipped with the knowledge and skills to support the implementation of evidence-based practices of teachers in inclusive and accessible instructional environments are poised to be effective advocates of improved educational outcomes of all students (BOSCARDIN, 2005).

The responsibilities of a general organization's quality assurance team typically include: (1) Drafting, interpreting, and implementing quality assurance standards and procedures for the organization; (2) Evaluating new and existing regulations to ensure your quality assurance protocols fulfill requirements; (3) Ensuring product quality through regular auditing and testing; (4) Recording the results of your internal audits for reference, including statistical data about the quality of your product; (5) Identifying areas along the supply chain or manufacturing process that can be addressed to improve product quality and safety; (6) Developing formation processes for each individual who handles or interacts with the product; (7) Ensuring ongoing compliance and risk management across the organization (STOBIERSKI, 2018).

Generally, a quality assurance manager and / or staff would need to be proficient in a number of skills including: (1) Leadership; (2) Organizational and planning; (3) Communication; (4) Statistical analysis; (5) Problem-solving; (6) Specific technical knowledge (STOBIERSKI, 2018).

Strategies for improving the quality of education

The Asian Development Bank commissioned eight country case studies and five technical working papers as inputs to the policy formulation process. The case studies, undertaken by leading education research institutes in the countries concerned, analyzed the issues in education and the policies that had been developed to address the issues. The technical working papers examined selected cross-cutting issues in education development in the region. The case studies and the technical working papers were discussed at a major regional seminar involving representatives of government ministries of education, finance, and planning. Effective policies and strategies can be developed at all administrative and decision levels for the purposes of maintaining or improving education quality. Strategies may need to vary by particular political, social and economic context and by the developmental level of the

targeted education institutions. There are several strategies reported in Education in Developing Asia (2002) including: (1) Systemic Changes and Reforms; (2) Developing More Effective Teachers and Teaching; (3) Developing and Sustaining High-Quality Education Institutions; (4) Management of Teaching and Learning; (5) Monitoring and Sustaining Quality Improvement (CHAPMAN; ADAMS, 2002).

Methodology

A quasi-experiment with 70 teachers from 10 secondary schools of 2 districts in Ho Chi Minh City (Binh Tan/ intervention; Binh Chanh/ comparison) was done in 2020. Teachers in the intervention group attended the one-month training course with 10 contents to reinforce and enhance their capacity in doing EQE (see Appendix 1). Then, all teachers of both groups were tested by 40 questions (4 questions for each content) to assess their knowledge, skills, and performance in EQE. The study data were used for statistical analysis (descriptive analysis, chi-square, and t-test) to determine the intervention efficiency. And teachers' characteristics were collected to test for relevant factors which may affect the study outcomes.

Results

Summary of teachers' characteristics in 2 groups

Female teachers accounted for a high percentage (65.7%) and the average age was 33.8 ± 7.0 years old with an average of 16.2 ± 7.9 years of teaching experience. Most of them graduated from university (87.2%) and only 24.3% of them were formed on EQE. Their attitude on EQE was very positive with 94.3% of teachers feeling "normal to like much" about EQE tasks.

The 70 teachers were chosen randomly and assigned to 2 groups basing on the location of their schools. To perform further statistical analysis, we tested for the significant factors between 2 groups by chi-square or t-test. The education level and the average years of working were found significantly different, so these two characteristics were excluded in further analysis to avoid bias. The teachers' characteristic data are described in table 1.

Table 1 - Teachers' characteristics of 2 groups

	Total n = 70 (%)	Comparison group n = 35 (%)	Intervention group n = 35 (%)	p-value
Male	24 (34.3)	13 (37.1)	11 (31.4)	0.61*
Female	46 (65.7)	22 (62.9)	24 (68.6)	
Average Age	33.8 ± 7	33.8 ± 7	33.8 ± 7	1.00**
Education level				
graduated	61 (87.2)	34 (97.1)	27 (77.1)	0.01*
post-graduated	9 (12.8)	1 (2.9)	8 (22.9)	
Average years of working	16.2 ± 7,9	13.9 ± 7.3	18.6 ± 7.9	0.01**
Formed on EQE				
No	53 (75.7)	30 (85.7)	23 (65.7)	0.05*
Yes	17 (24.3)	5 (14.3)	12 (34.3)	
Attitude to EQE				
Dislike	4 (5.7)	2 (5.7)	2 (5.7)	0.88*
Normal	25 (35.7)	14 (40)	11 (31.4)	
Like	33 (47.1)	15 (42.9)	18 (51.4)	
Like much	8 (11.4)	4 (11.4)	4 (11.4)	

Source: Researcher Results

(*) *chi-square test*; (**) *t-test*

Average score regarding to contents in 2 groups

The average score of each content and total score were collected by testing all teachers of comparison and intervention group and t-test statistical analysis was used. There were only 2 contents (4 and 7) with significant differences where the scores of the intervention group were higher than the comparison group. Overall, the total score of the intervention was also statistically higher than the comparison group ($3.6 > 3.4$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$). The results are described in table 2.

Table 2 - The average score of each content and total score of 2 groups

Average score	Comparison group	Intervention group	p-value (t-test)
Content 1	3.4	3.5	0.48
Content 2	3.3	3.5	0.14
Content 3	3.4	3.7	0.06
Content 4	3.3	3.7	0.02
Content 5	3.3	3.5	0.13
Content 6	3.3	3.6	0.13
Content 7	3.3	3.7	0.03
Content 8	3.5	3.7	0.30
Content 9	3.4	3.6	0.31
Content 10	3.5	3.6	0.53
Average of total score	3.4	3.6	0.0001

Source: Researcher Results

Content 4. Assessing the results of mobilizing a team of experts and scientists at research institutions to participate in the accreditation of education quality in secondary schools. (Communication).

Content 7. Implementing the regular mobilization and connection with inside and outside staff in participating in the accreditation of education quality in secondary schools and other activities. (Communication)

Relevant factors impact the total score regarding to contents in 2 groups

We tested 4 over 6 teacher's characteristic and which factors impact the total scores within each group with the chi-square test. We excluded 2 factors (educational level and average years of working) due to significant differences ($p < 0.05$). In this study, there were no relevant factors (sex, age, previous EQE formation, and attitude to EQE) impacting the total scores.

Discussion

Current readiness of teachers in doing EQE tasks

Our survey on 70 teachers of 10 secondary schools of Ho Chi Minh City showed a low readiness for doing EQE tasks.

There were only 24.3% of teachers (17/70) attended EQE formation before joining our study. Several reasons for the low coverage of EQE formation are (1) The schools have no budget in organizing classes; (2) The teachers have no time in attending classes; (3) EQE formation is not compulsory.

There were only 11.4% of teachers (8/70) answering "like much" when doing EQE tasks. They are not all formed as EQE staff and their main task is teaching students. With the lack of EQE staff, schools require teachers to do these tasks with or without formation.

General capacity in doing EQE tasks without any specialized formation

Our 40 questions regarding 10 contents covering 6 skills that EQE staff should have, such as (1) Leadership; (2) Organizational and planning; (3) Communication; (4) Statistical analysis; (5) Problem-solving; (6) Specific technical knowledge (STOBIERSKI, 2018).

We found 8 contents with the same scores between the 2 groups (comparison and intervention). These 8 contents concerning hard skills with clear procedures, guidelines, and detailed templates and forms. This can explain the reason why EQE tasks are still being done by teachers with or without EQE formation, but the performance is at the average level.

The formation contents impact on teachers' EQE performance

The intervention group had higher scores in 2 contents (4 and 7) concerning a soft skill, particularly the communication skill as the networking skill.

With only 2 higher scores in 2 contents, the average total score of the intervention group was significantly higher than the comparison group ($3.6 > 3.4$, $p=0.0001$). This means that these 2 contents play important role in making EQE performance getting higher level and the efficiency of the EQE formation was proved.

Limitation

This study was done with 35 staff in each study group. In the future, it should be done in a larger study with more staff to have higher confidence.

Conclusion

Teachers can do the educational quality evaluation tasks. For the tasks which only requiring the hard skills (8 contents), there are no difference between 2 groups. For the task requiring soft skills (2 contents), there is a significant difference where the intervention group has higher score than the comparison group. The overall result shows that the formation helps learners who are working as the education quality management and evaluation to improve the

performance in education quality evaluation. When the staff do the job well, their achievements could assure the quality of education.

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