

# Pupil Perception of Teacher Effectiveness and Affective Disposition in Primary School Classrooms in Botswana

**Molefhe, Mogapi and Johnson, Nenty**

Educational Foundations, University of Botswana

**Abstract.** Teacher effectiveness, in the eyes of learners, in the classroom is to a large extent determined by the atmosphere created by teachers' classroom behavior especially the degree to which a teacher 'carries the class along' during lesson. Children are leading the way in demanding accountability from teachers and one important expectation is a classroom which is psychologically conducive for learning. Such classroom tends to induce from the learners desirable affective behaviors that are conducive for teaching and learning. This study aims at finding the relationship among pupil- perceived teacher effectiveness and their own level of exhibition of desirable related behavior in their classrooms. Survey data was collected from 472 learners taken from 29 primary schools drawn through stratified random sampling method from urban private schools and rural remote areas in Botswana. The relationship between pupil's perceived teacher effectiveness factors and their own affective disposition in the classrooms were found using Pearson correlation analysis. The results showed that generally pupil's perceived level of their teachers effectiveness in terms of classroom assessment behavior, teaching strategy, provision of feedback and their overall effectiveness in teaching English language have significant influence on their interest in the following key areas; subject of study (e.g., English Language) , classroom environment, perceived level difficulty of learning English, preference for group work in the class and general attitude towards the going-ons in the class. The findings were discussed and related recommendations made.

**Key words:** teacher effectiveness; affective dispositions; primary schools; pupil input; Botswana.

## Introduction and Background

Children are leading the way in demanding teacher accountability on the classroom (Cox, Dyer, Robison-Pant. & Schweisfurth, 2010). One important attribute pupils expect from their teachers is a classroom which is

psychologically conducive for learning. The way primary pupils perceive their teachers in terms of effectiveness tends to influence their affective disposition in the class room. Such perception can make the pupil cool and withdrawn or lively and active in the class. Pupils that perceive their teacher as ineffective tend to feel that there is not much they can learn from the teacher, and this can ultimately affect their performance in the class. Learning under a teacher one perceives to be effective prompts attention, participation, and good feelings in the classroom. Hence a pupil's perception of the effectiveness of the teacher in front of him/her in a classroom situation tends to be governed by, to an extent, the quality the affective and cognitive environment he/she has created in the classroom.

Teacher effectiveness becomes a significant factor to which pupil easily attribute their performance (Ee & Cheng, 2013; Hughes, 2012; Metto & Makewa, 2014). For example, according to Akiri and Ughurugbo (2009) "Poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been linked to poor teachers performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitude to work and poor teaching habits which have been attributed to poor motivation" (p.109).

In this study, teacher effectiveness as an important factor in classroom climate was defined in terms of learners' perception of their teacher's classroom teaching behavior, teaching strategy; assessment behavior; provision of feedback; effective use of visual media; and effectiveness in teaching English.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

To Medley and Shannon (1994) teacher effectiveness exists in three dimensions: (1) the degree to which a teacher achieves desired effects on students; (2) the extent to which a teacher has the requisite knowledge and skills; and (3) how a teacher behaves in the process of teaching. While the first one incorporates mainly affective behavior; the second one is mainly cognitive; and the third one mainly psychomotor, with some component of both cognitive and affective behavior. As key operators in a service industry good social foundation and interpersonal skills are necessary skills that must be possessed by all teachers for them to be effective in the classroom. Exhibition of these skills creates a conducive classroom environment which enhances learning. For example, it is difficult for a child to learn from a teacher he/she deems unfriendly. Teacher training programmers tend to overlook this essential behavior of the teacher.

The nature of the classroom atmosphere determines the quality of the relations, strategies and processes that goes on in the classroom of the classroom and "personal interaction is valued more by primary school students than qualities related to teaching and learning" (Jeffery, 2001, p. 2). Teacher's emotions therefore are considered to be important factors in teacher training, development and practice because they affect teachers' commitment, interest and personal welfare (Jeffery, 2001). Personal interaction is an aspect of what might be termed effective personality, which is a large component of classroom climate.

Possession of necessary knowledge and skills is fundamental to effectiveness in teaching and a teacher is effective to the extent that he/ she exhibits these skills. An

effective teacher is one that is versed in the content to be taught and competent in the skills to be imparted. Even if the teacher possesses very good interpersonal skills and is very good in his/her subject matter but lacks the skills on how to deliver the materials he/she cannot be said to be effective (Nikolova, Todorova, & Valcheva, 2006).

The extent to which a teacher possesses and exhibits these skills attracts or repels pupil's attention, participation and involvement in the classroom, and tends to develop in them some favorable or unfavorable dispositions in primary school classrooms. Such affective disposition may include perception of the classroom as being conducive or nonconductive to learning; or the disposition might engender difficulty in learning the subject or preference or lack preference for group work. The disposition might also make learners to develop favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the subject matter (Cole, 2008).

### **Problem and Purpose of the Study**

The lack of ability to create and maintain a conducive classroom atmosphere, which is an important aspect of effectiveness in teaching, limits pupil's ability to develop favorable dispositions during classroom processes. This ultimately has an unfavorable effect on learning. Teacher training programmes do not tend to take trainees' emotional or affective development into serious consideration during training, but according to Medley and Shannon (1994), teacher effectiveness involves, among others, the degree to which a teacher achieves desired or favorable effects upon students. This provides an overriding foundation for the development of favorable cognitive behavior. The absence of a classroom with conducive affective or emotional atmosphere, does not enhance the replication of the favorable emotional or affective behaviors by the pupil, and also does not maximize learning by the pupil. This study aims at finding the relationship among pupil perceived teacher effectiveness factors and their own level of exhibition of related behavior in their classrooms.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The main hypothesis of the study is that pupil perception of teacher effectiveness has a significant influence on their affective dispositions in primary classrooms. This will be tested at .05 alpha level.

### **Literature review**

Akiri and Ugborugbo's (2009) study with a population of Nigerian teachers found that teachers who were rated as ineffective actually produced students of lower academic ability. However, the difference found in the mean performance of the students was statistically not significant. This agrees with an earlier study by Adu and Olatundun (2007) which found that effective teacher produced high performing students. Lamb, Schmitt and Cornotto (2010), expressed the same sentiments when they observed that students' ratings of classroom processes correlate positively with teacher's level of effectiveness.

Literature sources show that the learner is the main customer in the educational system. The learning and teaching process cannot take place without learners going to school and attending classes. For example, it was noted in

Education for Kagisano (1977) that:

The principal aim of education is individual development. The individual is of unique value and it is only through change in the development capacities and attitudes of individual that society changes. The focus of education in schools and classrooms should therefore be upon learners; enabling them to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior that will give them a full, successful life and continued personal growth; and of education in school and equipping them to participate affectively in a rapidly changing society (p. 23).

It therefore follows that educational policy and practice be centered on the needs of the learner. However, educational research that seeks to identify variable that influence school and teacher effectiveness tend to concentrate on such inputs as availability and quality of resources, teacher experience, teacher motivation and school management issues, to mention but a few of the key input variables. Sawchuk (2010) observed that researchers tend to focus on education administrators, school heads, and other practitioners in the field of education but less attention is given to the learners themselves. Learners as the central players in the process of learning can offer valuable information with respect to which teacher are the most effective.

The same viewpoint is expressed by Charakupa (1995) in a study entitled 'Why we learn Science: A time to listen to junior high school pupils in Botswana'. The author made a comment to the effect that:

Normally when science curricula are drawn up in Botswana, learners are not considered as participants for official planning purposes. It therefore follows that such learners may not be aware of why they are required to study science since it is not common practice to provide students with policy documents (p. 201).

Research continues to show that delivery of education differ markedly by region or location and these variations can negatively or positively affect each learners experiences. Primary schools in urban centers characteristically have access to better educational infrastructure such as libraries, electricity, computers and other instructional resources. These have a positive bearing on the teaching and learning process. Rural and particularly remote primary schools in Botswana, on the other hand, have limited access to the important instructional resources resulting in less than satisfactory learning and teaching environment. Research works focusing on school effectiveness and variables that influence it have documented qualitative difference between regions, as the following quotation clearly indicates:

The first reason is that some schools are located in privileged areas in the sense that students in these schools come from homes whose parents care about their child's education, ensure that their children are well fed, try to help their children to learn to read as possible, show interest in school work, provide ready access to books in the home and so on. (Postlethwaite & Ross, 1992, p 1)

The apparent diversity and complexity of educational enterprise makes it even more imperative that educational planners, policy makers, school administrators, teachers and other key stakeholders put in place process and procedures that will ensure systematic incorporation of learner perspectives in

the day to day school activities. The United Nations (1989) recognized the need for soliciting and implementing the learners' views by publishing the Convention on the Rights of Children (Resolution 44/25) that was ratified by the General Assembly of 20<sup>th</sup> November 1989. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) states that:

States Parties should assure the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Therefore, there is evidence in the literature indicating that learners are the main recipients of educational service provided within a country. Secondly evidence seems to point to a situation where the learner's views and ideals are not adequately incorporated into mainstream decision making machinery. The current study attempts to solicit learners' views and perceptions regarding teacher effectiveness and investigates how these perceptions influences their attitudes towards school work.

### Methodology and Design

The study followed a quantitative research approach as the data collected is analyzed using quantitative techniques. The study used a survey design to determine the degree of association between pupil perceptions of teacher effectiveness and their own perceived affective depositions in the classroom. A questionnaire was distributed to learners in primary schools to capture their views in relation to teacher effectiveness variables.

#### Sampling

Survey data was collected from 472 learners taken from 29 primary schools drawn through stratified random sampling method. Private schools located in an urban environment and public remote schools were sampled to ensure a representation of the population subgroups in the country. It was necessary to sample from a larger pool of rural remote schools so as to be faithful to the apparent geographic diversity in the country. Table 1 shows the proportion of the sample to the total population. In each of the sampled schools, all the Standard 7 pupils were given a questionnaire to complete. A total of 472 learners completed the questionnaire. They ranged in age from 11 to 13 years.

Table 1

Sampling Guide

	Urban school	Remote school	Total
Population (n)	15	39	54
Sample (n)	6	13	19
Sampling Ratio (%)	40	33	35

### Instrumentation and Data Collection

A Pupil Questionnaire made up of 44 Likert-type items was developed and used for collecting data from the pupils sampled for the study. This measured, on the part of the pupil; learners' perception of: interest in English language (3 items), classroom environment (7 items), difficulty in learning English language (2 items), preference of group work (2 items), and attitude

towards class (8 items). On the part of the teachers; learners' perception of: classroom teaching behavior (5 items), classroom assessment behavior (2 items), teaching strategy (3 items), provision of feedback (3 items), effective use of visual media (2 items), and effectiveness of teaching English language (7 items).

The researchers secured the permission to carry out the study under the auspices of Examination, Research and Testing Division (ERTD) of the Ministry of Education. The permission of the head-teachers and the teachers were secured through a letter written in advance before the researchers visit. On each appointed day, the researchers visited the schools and administered the questionnaire to all Standard 7 pupils in each of the 19 schools in the study.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

To test the single but composite hypothesis for the study, a Pearson correlation analyses between each aspect of the pupil perception of teacher effectiveness variable and each of the affective disposition in primary classroom variables were carried out. The results gave the entries in a correlation matrix presented in Table 2. These show that except for the relationship between pupil's perception of teachers effectiveness in the use of visual media and both preference of group-work and attitude towards the class, all the other relationships were significant at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 2).

Generally teaching behavior as perceived by pupils was found to significantly related to pupil's interest in the subject- English language, Classroom environment, their perceived level difficulty of learning English, their preference for group work in the class and their general attitude towards the going-ons in the class. Positive correlations were also found between teacher's affective depositions and pupils' perception of the teacher's teaching effectiveness in terms of classroom assessment behavior, teaching strategy, provision of feedback and their

Table 2

Matrix of Pearson Correlations among variable representing Teacher Effectiveness and Pupil's Affective Dispositions in the classroom.

	Interest in English language	Classroom environment	Difficulty in learning English language	Preference of Group work	Attitude towards class
Classroom teaching behavior	.214*	.170*	.110*	.252*	.225*
Classroom assessment behavior	.316*	.316*	.095*	.130*	.275*
Teaching Strategy	.220*	.222*	.099*	.204*	.150*
Provision of Feedback	.350*	.298*	.109*	.210*	.174*
Effective use of visual media	.086*	.190*	.086*	.068	.011
Effectiveness in teaching English	.291*	.211*	.170*	.257*	.325*

\* $p < .05$ ;  $df = 469$ ; Critical  $r = .082$

overall effectiveness in teaching English Language. Pupil's perceived level of teacher effectiveness in the use of visual media was found to have a significant influence in their interest in the subject matter and the extent to which they perceive the subject to be difficult or easy.

#### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study has established a significant relationship between learners perception of teacher effectiveness and how the level of effectiveness influence their attitude towards learning in general. Specifically, the study has established a significant relationship in four key areas. The four key areas are teacher's teaching behavior, classroom assessment skills, provision of feedback and effective use of visual media.

#### **Teacher's teaching behavior**

Variables that influence the perceived effectiveness of the teacher include content presentation ability, ability to use group work and close supervision of the class. Effective teachers not only present content clearly but ensure that all learners understand the current information before proceeding to the new material. Dividing learners into groups and walking around the class to assist and provide feedback to groups enhances learning and thus improves teacher effectiveness. Therefore, group work by itself is not very effective; it has to be supported by supervision and provision of feedback to the group members.

### **Classroom Assessment Skills**

Formative assessment in the classroom allows the teachers to determine whether the learners are following or not. In most cases teachers are the ones who pose questions: but questions from the learners themselves may provide more useful diagnostic information that the teacher can use to assist the class or the individual child. According to the views of the learners; effective teachers encourage learners to ask questions and at the same time they show appreciation of the contribution that the learner is bringing into the classroom. Therefore, the teacher should be able to set up learning and teaching environment where learners are free to ask questions and learners are also free to stop the teachers at any time if they do not understand the information.

### **Provision of Feedback**

For formative assessment at the classroom level to be effective, the teacher should constantly provide the learners with relevant and timely feedback. This allows the learner to see how well they are progressing and identify and act on problematic areas. Learners perceive effective teachers as those who give assignments (homework), marks accordingly and provide relevant and timely feedback.

### **Effective Use of Visual Media**

Though information and communication tools are gaining popularity in schools, teachers especially in primary schools still have to do a lot of writing on the blackboards. In some schools the board is the main medium that the teacher uses to teach on a daily basis. Therefore, the condition of the board and the teacher's level of effectiveness in using it directly impacts on the learner. One way of creating a conducive learning environment in the classroom is to make sure that the information written on the board is legible so that learners can copy it on to their exercise books.

The big question for this study was how well primary pupil's perception of the learning environment created by a teacher in the class influence their development of effective behavior conducive to learning in that class? In other words, to what extent do pupils hold teachers' behavior in their classrooms accountable for their own behavior and how does teacher induced behavior impact their learning of English Language? Essentially, the perception of students are used to evaluate the level at which the teacher is able to teach effectively. Numerous research studies have been carried out to determine the relationship between teacher effectiveness and learner performance (e.g., Akiri & Agborugbo, 2009; Akiri, 2013; Onyekuru & Ibegbunam, 2013). Suffice to mention at this juncture that the studies produced contradictory results. For example, Akiri (2013) tested the significance of the relationship between teacher effectiveness and learner performance using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. A positive correlation was established but the results were not statistically significant. Following from the findings of the study, the researcher subsequently noted that students' grades and test scores do not reflect the quality of instruction because teachers' input is not the only factor that influences student academic performance in schools.

Similarly, Starr (2002) had identified peer influence, race, ethnicity, gender, motivating income, intellectual aptitude of the students, personality of students, self-confidence, and previous instructional quality received by students, house-hold environment, and parental education as student's related

factors that influence the academic performance of students

On the other hand, a study by Onyekuru and Ibegbunam (2013) found a significant relationship between teacher effectiveness and teaching experience. Also, Medley and Shannon (1994) also found a significant relationship between teacher effectiveness and the performance of learners in the classroom. The current study has provided more evidence in support of a positive and significant relationship between teacher effectiveness and learner performance. Teacher effectiveness construct in this case is indicated by pupils' response to survey items that required them to rate the level of effectiveness of their teachers. The evidence shows that pupils associate teacher effectiveness with the ability of the teacher to create a conducive learning environment that caters for the cognitive as well as the affective dispositions of learners. It is difficult for a learner to learn from a teacher whom one does not appreciate in terms of his/her teacher's classroom teaching behavior; teaching strategy; assessment behavior; provision of feedback ; effective use of visual media; and effectiveness in teaching English.

A warm personal interaction skill, which is a large component of one's affective personality, is valued more by primary school students. Teacher emotions therefore are considered to be important factors in teacher training, development and practice because they affect teachers' commitment, interest and personal welfare (Jeffery, 2001). This study has shown that teacher effectiveness variables relate significantly to the affective behavior exhibited by the pupils in the classroom. A conclusion can be drawn that pupils tend to adjust their behavior according to the personality of class teacher. A part from the professional personality, the affective personality of teachers matter in the type of learning environment they create in their classroom. Here it is shown that pupil's perception of some aspects of the teacher's affective personality has significant influence on pupil's difficulty in learning the subject; preference or lack of preference for group work; favourable or unfavorable attitude towards the subject; and interest or lack of interest in learning the subject. The views of the learner play an important role in the way learners themselves appreciate the teaching and learning processes within the classroom. This perception is an important determining factor in the child's attitude towards the subject and learning itself. Therefore, incorporating learner's affective feelings both at the policy generation and implementation levels should be standard practice. This will go a long way in making learning and teaching more meaningful and transparent to learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Additionally, teacher training and development both at the pre-service and in-service should incorporate modalities that will assist teachers to develop positive affective dispositions that will benefit learners in the classroom.

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