

Original Research Article

Evaluate the Educational and social psychology about the competencies of prospective teachers

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Abstract

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The study was designed to evaluate the opinions about the competencies of prospective teachers in the field of psychology in the training institutions of Tehran (Iran). The sample included randomly selected ten heads of teacher training institutions and hundred teacher trainers from universities and teacher training institutions. A questionnaire was developed for collection of data. Data were collected, analyzed and interpreted using the five-point Likert scale. It was concluded that majority of respondents agreed that prospective teachers will not improve the attitudes of students, not understand about the developmental stages of a child from childhood to adolescence and not formulate instructional objectives in behavioral form and weak in dealing the students in psychological way perhaps it is due to lack of training or may be some deficiencies in the course of child psychology.

Keywords: Education, Social psychology, Teacher education programs, Prospective teachers

INTRODUCTION

Psychology is one of the youngest disciplines of human being that has stemmed from venerable philosophy and from well-established natural sciences. The evolution of scientific psychology from the first ideas of the associations, empiricists and positivists in conjunction with the more "experimental" psychophysics, physiology and undeveloped psychometrics was a very complex process, in the same time puzzling and oscillating. Nevertheless, the analysis of its development can recognize two fundamental patterns of evolution. Firstly, the construction of psychology as an institution followed the path of cultural evolution of society. The leading perspective of psychological knowledge, at any moment, reflects the cultural state of society's development. Secondly, we can also notice that the fundamental philosophy underlying its paradigm had a particular pattern which dynamically corresponded to human being and the tri-unitary humanistic constitution: nature, society and culture. We can call this the "humanistic development pattern of psychology's epistemology",

while it reminds us of Maslow's humanistic pyramids. Over the years, educational psychology has been a part of teacher preparation, moving from a centerpiece in many programs, through periods when it was deemed irrelevant by some, to current concerns about its role in the reforming of teacher education and teaching. Today, psychological knowledge is used to ground reforms in teaching and schooling, particularly the call for teaching for understanding. Current standards for teacher certifications and licensure and suggestions for reform in teacher education assume that teachers will have a deep and generative understanding of learning, development, motivation, and individual differences.

The fact that teachers should possess an understanding of human development, learning and motivational theory has traditionally not been a matter of dispute. Courses focusing on these topics have been standard fare in teacher preparation programs for at least 100 years (Berliner, 1993). Unfortunately, such courses, as currently taught; rarely produce much beyond a

rudimentary understanding of their core content.

A sort of "Great Unified Theory" of Psychology, which should encompass both all three "conditionals" (as in the Buddhist *pratīyasamutpāda* concept of "dependent arising" "conditioned genesis", "dependent co-arising" or "interdependent arising" (see Puligandla, 1996)): nature, social, and culture, and all three perspectives: first, second, and third person. "We need to introduce a second-person perspective to complement our studies of consciousness in philosophy of mind, cognitive science, psychology, and the neurosciences." Inter-subjectivity would "correspond to introspection and inspection (first- and third-person forms of knowing)" (Quincey, 1999). This perspective would stress equally on all three constituents of the human tri-unity, like biogenetic structuralism theory which "is simultaneously neurobiological, phenomenological and socio-cultural, incorporating all the avenues of scientific research relevant to the study of consciousness, with a particular emphasis upon ethnographic and neurophenomenological methodologies" (Laughlin, 1999, p. 460; see also Laughlin, McManus and d'Aquili, 1990). Although the subject of teachers' learning was the focus of some early studies by educational psychologists learning to teach more than a decade ago, educational psychologists have tended not to focus on teachers' learning as an important area of study. Only in the past decade have educational psychologists turned their attention from the study of teachers' behavior to the study of teachers' thinking, cognitions, and knowledge. The studies by Leinhardt and Putnam (of networks of teachers' knowledge and script theory) and of Lampert (on the role of teachers' understanding of subject matter and interpretation of what students mean) are most salient. One can begin to see that research why and how teachers come to behave as they do. This literature and that of other researchers on teacher thinking have explored the many ways in which teachers think, plan, and decide, and how teachers' work is constrained by the world in which teachers operate. Using psychology to understand the teacher in this way might make contact with teachers in powerful ways. Such psychological windows into teachers' thinking or psychological lenses for examining teaching also open up new possibilities for metaphors that convey new ways of thinking about how to connect psychology to teacher education.

Literature Review

Managerial psychology

Managerial psychology makes a deep research about how to manager the people in the psychological level, and the theoretical development of managerial psychology in analyze and assess of the ability etc gives a good theory support for choosing talents, using talents,

training talents and keeping talents of the enterprise. The application of managerial psychology in choosing talents is starts from the position design. Choosing the talented person is firstly to design the enterprise's position. The position design is the foundation of human resources management. Next carries on the analysis to the outstanding talented person's general quality. Based on these two aspects, it carries on the match to talented person's quality and the position request. Referencing to iceberg quality model etc, main theory and according, to the science procedure and the enterprise own characteristic and the work position analysis to the work position localization, it comes the scientific talent ability quality psychological evaluation mode to suit the enterprise to select talents and configuration talents, to attain the real "person duty match". Between 1923 and 1929 Frank developed five major research institutes housed at Iowa State, Teachers College of Columbia University, the University of Minnesota, the University of California at Berkeley, and at the University of Toronto. In addition to these five major programs, grants were made to support additional smaller programs. Arnold Gesell's program at Yale received a grant, as did the Merrill-Palmer School in Detroit, the Fels Research Institute in Yellow Springs Ohio, the Child Research Council in Denver, the Harvard School of Public Health, the Brush Foundation at Western Reserve University, and the developmental psychology program at the University of Georgia. And there were still others. Within the topic area of assessment of student knowledge and learning experiences, there are issues of its relationship with the type of seminar activities that are most likely to support attainment of the goals of the assessment. Literature refers to the relationship between assessment, academic achievement (i.e. grades) and educational accomplishment (Elliott et al., 2001) and to a lack of a general theory of formative assessment in complex learning settings (Sadler, 2008). Considering that one of the challenges of applying active learning techniques is their contribution in assessing student attainment in order to establish a grade (Huba and Freed, 2000; Bean, 2001; Fink, 2003) some interesting models for evaluating student performance in learning activities were proposed. We can notice that some of them are focused on learning activities themselves while others are focused on how to tackle scoring of learning activities to take into account (Sadler, 2008; Lombardi, 2008).

Social psychology

Within the context of psychology, social psychology is the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others. The terms thoughts, feelings, and behaviors include all psychological variables that are measurable in a human being. The statement that others'

presence may be imagined or implied suggests that we are prone to social influence even when no other people are present, such as when watching television, or following internalized cultural norms. Social psychologists typically explain human behavior as a result of the interaction of mental states and immediate social situations. In general, social psychologists have a preference for laboratory-based, empirical findings. Social psychology theories tend to be specific and focused, rather than global and general. Social psychology is an interdisciplinary domain that bridges the gap between psychology and sociology. During the years immediately following World War II, there was frequent collaboration between psychologists and sociologists. However, the two disciplines have become increasingly specialized and isolated from each other in recent years, with sociologists focusing on "macro variables" (e.g., social structure) to a much greater extent. Nevertheless, sociological approaches to social psychology remain an important counterpart to psychological research in this area. In addition to the split between psychology and sociology, there has been a somewhat less pronounced difference in emphasis between American social psychologists and European social psychologists. As a broad generalization, American researchers traditionally have focused more on the individual, whereas Europeans have paid more attention to group level phenomena (see group dynamics). Environment and behaviour specialists have noted particular concerns with design features of these settings that impact the very youngest children whose age means they have very short attention spans and are easily distracted by visual movement and by noise. Until the preschool age, children are presumed to view environments egocentrically, relating them only to themselves. Gradually, this mode is replaced by a fixed frame of reference in which the child orients in the environment in relation to some fixed landmarks (Bechtel and Churchman, 2002).

Educational psychology

Educational psychology is the study of how humans learn in educational settings, the effectiveness of educational interventions, the psychology of teaching, and the social psychology of schools as organizations. Educational psychology is concerned with how students learn and develop, often focusing on subgroups such as gifted children and those subject to specific disabilities. Researchers and theorists are likely to be identified in the US and Canada as educational psychologists, whereas practitioners in schools or school-related settings are identified as school psychologists. This distinction is, however, not made in the UK, where the generic term for practitioners is "educational psychologist." Educational psychology can in part be understood through its relationship with other disciplines. It is informed primarily

by psychology, bearing a relationship to that discipline analogous to the relationship between medicine and biology. Educational psychology in turn informs a wide range of specialities within educational studies, including instructional design, educational technology, curriculum development, organizational learning, special education and classroom management. Educational psychology both draws from and contributes to cognitive science and the learning sciences. In universities, departments of educational psychology are usually housed within faculties of education, possibly accounting for the lack of representation of educational psychology content in introductory psychology textbooks. For example, educational psychologists have conducted research on the instructional applicability of Jean Piaget's theory of development, according to which children mature through four stages of cognitive capability. Piaget hypothesized that children are not capable of abstract logical thought until they are older than about 11 years, and therefore younger children need to be taught using concrete objects and examples. Researchers have found that transitions, such as from concrete to abstract logical thought, do not occur at the same time in all domains. A child may be able to think abstractly about mathematics, but remain limited to concrete thought when reasoning about human relationships. Perhaps Piaget's most enduring contribution is his insight that people actively construct their understanding through a self-regulatory process. Social cognitive theory is a highly influential fusion of behavioral, cognitive and social elements that was initially developed by educational psychologist Albert Bandura. In its earlier, neo-behavioral incarnation called social learning theory, Bandura emphasized the process of observational learning in which a learner's behavior changes as a result of observing others' behavior and its consequences. The theory identified several factors that determine whether observing a model will affect behavioral or cognitive change. These factors include the learner's developmental status, the perceived prestige and competence of the model, the consequences received by the model, the relevance of the model's behaviors and consequences to the learner's goals, and the learner's self-efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy, which played an important role in later developments of the theory, refers to the learner's belief in his or her ability to perform the modeled behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Out of the population of two hundred professional teacher trainers of different teacher training institutions I have selected five trainers from each institution. Ten heads and hundred teacher trainers from ten Universities and education colleges were taken as a sample of the study. The study was delimited to Government as well as semi-Government educational institutions. The institutions in

Table 1. Prospective teachers improve the attitudes of students

Category of Respondents	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Lowest	Total	X ²
Heads	0	1	2	5	2	10	2.74*
Teacher trainers	9	12	10	41	28	100	22.40*
*Significant	Df=4		X ² (table value) at 0.05 level=8.326				

Table 2. Prospective teachers understand the development of a child from childhood to adolescence

Category of Respondents	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Lowest	Total	X ²
Heads	1	4	1	2	2	10	4.20*
Teacher trainers	7	32	14	36	11	100	33.80*
*Significant	Df=4		X ² (table value) at 0.05 level=8.326				

Table 3. Prospective teachers formulate instructional objectives in behavioral form.

Category of Respondents	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Lowest	Total	X ²
Heads	3	3	3	3	3	10	3.60*
Teacher trainers	16	34	13	22	15	100	41.20*
*Significant	Df=4		X ² (table value) at 0.05 level=8.326				

the private sector were not included in the sample. A questionnaire was developed for heads of Teacher Training Institutions and teacher- trainers. Each item was to be responded on a five-point Likert scale. The researcher had to visit 10 sample universities and colleges of education. Most of the heads and trainers returned the properly filled in a questionnaire on the same day. However, the entire sample was covered by the researcher. The response rate was hundred percent. Data collected through the research instrument were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted. For each category of respondents, the responses were given in total on each item and were shown in tabular form. The level of confidence used in the study was .05. For the statistical treatment of data, Chi Square was applied.

Analysis

Table 1 indicates that in case of heads, the value of X² was found lower than the table value at 0.05 levels. Hence, the statement prospective teachers improve the attitude student is rejected. In case of teacher trainers, the value of X² was found greater than the table value at 0.05 levels. Hence, the statement prospective teachers improve the attitude student is accepted due to the value of Chi square but the negative responses are more than positive responses, which indicated that prospective teachers did not improve the attitudes of students.

Table 2 shows that in case of heads, the value of X² was found lower than the table value at 0.05 levels.

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CONCLUSION

The study was designed to evaluate the opinions about the competencies of prospective teachers in the field of psychology in the training institutions of Tehran (Iran). Majority of the all categories of respondents reported that

the Prospective teachers did not understand the development of a child from childhood to adolescence. The reason may be the lack of knowledge of the prospective teachers in the area of child psychology. This deficiency may be attributed to the weak programme of teacher training where the prospective teachers are not practically trained in dealing with the students' in psychological way. If they were fully trained in child psychology they would have developed and utilized this competency properly. As mentioned, it would lead to more effective practice in the classroom. The long-term results of the emphasis will be presented in various professional forums and optimistically will change the look of educational psychology courses and textbooks. Moreover, adding this element to teacher preparation will raise both the competence and profile of teachers as professionals, while allowing us to challenge on empirical grounds the popular notion that "anyone can teach." Content specific knowledge Pedagogical (general and Specific) knowledge of learners and learning Professional Knowledge Base for Teaching Includes: 1. Declarative 2. Procedural 3. Conditional Knowledge. that the psychology of teachers' learning constitutes an important new domain of knowledge in educational psychology; that the knowledge of theories and research findings on the psychology of teachers' learning may be meaningful and important for students in teacher education, and further, may enhance their teaching practice and, that knowledge of the psychology of teachers' learning may enhance the ability of faculty to teach educational psychology more effectively in teacher preparation programs.

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