



PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTION AND TEACHING-RELATED BEHAVIOUR OF UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA TEACHER TRAINEES

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Abstract:

Even among teachers who are very dedicated to teaching as a career, attribution tends to play a role in them contributing to society by shaping and molding young minds. If teachers have a negative attitude towards teaching then they will certainly not be willing to teach as expected and this will affect the education system. The exploratory study is meant to determine the influence of teaching related behaviours on the programme performance, that is to say, how attribution to performance as perceived by University of Botswana (UB) teacher trainees is influenced by teaching related behaviours. To test the three hypothesis, data was collected through a survey from a sample of 195 UB teacher trainees using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using one sample t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings showed that UB teacher trainees are having a significant positive attitude towards teaching as a career but significantly not willing to teach. Thus, attribution for failing by UB teacher trainees has a significant influence on their perception of teaching as a career, their feelings about UB teacher training programme, their attitude towards UB teacher training programme and their willingness to teach. Discussing the findings was done as well as recommendations.

Keywords: attribution for failing; attribution for passing; student teachers willingness to teach; student teachers attitude towards the training programme; attitude towards teaching

1. Introduction

Many studies have shown that attribution can influence students' performance in many respects. With the unemployment going up in Botswana yet with an overall population of less than 2.5 million people, most young people find themselves going for careers

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they are not really interested on them. Rania, Siri, Bagnasco, Aleo, and Sasso, (2014) stressed that the academic performance of the students can be influenced through ecological viewpoint, interpersonal relationship of social settings and environmental conditions. He added that according to ecological model the students' degree programme or a different year level can affect academic performance, wellbeing, self-esteem and perceived climate. Causal attribution is one of the theories playing a major role in decisions making when it comes to career paths. Passionate teachers are committed and dedicated to their schools and a good education achievement is an outcome of this commitment and dedication.

When we familiarize ourselves with needed and unwanted results, we can then attribute something peculiar which can reduce or improve our motivational behavior. It has been well researched that individuals are different in their tendencies to attribute achievement results to ability and effort. There are many other environmental factors that play a major role in achievement factors. Thus, the attribution route is significant in determining learning and teaching (Weiner, 1972).

2. Theoretical Background

Weiner et al. (1971) advised that four attribution groups (ability, task difficulty, effort, and luck) are the most shared and overall of the perceived reasons for success and failure. Research in the field of attribution theory and academic achievement proposes an association between a student's attribution style and attainment. Philosophers indicate that attributions influence individual responses to success and failure. They also show that individuals use attributions to explain and justify their performance. Weiner and his acquaintances offered an attributional model which presumed that, upon facing success or failure, individuals make causal judgments, and these decisions can secondarily determine attainment actions through an person's performance expectancy and affective replies (Weiner, 1985).

A clan of theories has developed to light up how and why things happen the way they occur. This set of theories, jointly called Attribution Theory, endeavors to define and clarify the mental and communicative procedures involved in daily clarifications, most typically descriptions of individual and social events (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008).

The present conceptual framework of attribution theory has cross-cultural claims and validity. The assumption that effort and ability are perceived across cultures in the same manner on the measurement of controllability has been argued by many authors.

2. Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Attributing performance to teacher effectiveness and development has always been in existence. Society questions the development of teachers and whether or not they choose teaching without passion and as a last option in their career. If teaching is experienced positively, then teachers can be developed, motivated and perhaps willing

to teach but if they feel teaching is not recognized, this might lead to unpleasant consequences in the society.

2.1 Research Hypotheses:

- That to which UB teacher trainees attribute their failing performance in the programme significantly influences their perception of teaching as a career.
- That to which UB teacher trainees attribute their failing performance in the programme significantly influences their willingness to teach.
- UB teacher trainees' attribution of their failing performance in the programme significantly influences their willingness to teach.

2.2 Review of Literature

A study by Suarez and Sandiford (2008) focused on the relationship among a high risk course, low success rates, and attribution by examining the difference in the attributions passing and failing students gave for their performance in College Algebra. Students from a large urban community college in South Florida (n = 410) self-reported their performance on an in-class test by providing open-ended attribution statements to explain the cause of their performance. The open-ended attribution statements were coded in relation to ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck and compared using a Pearson chi-square procedure. The quantitative data compared the passing and failing groups and their attributions for performance on the test using One-way ANOVA and Pearson chi-square procedures. The results of the quantitative data comparing passing and failing groups and their attributions along the dimensions measured by the CDSII indicated statistical significance in locus of causality, stability, and personal controllability. The results comparing the open-ended attribution statements indicated statistical significance in the categories of effort and task difficulty.

Attributions play a powerful role in the academic world. Whether students attribute their performance to ability, effort, task difficulty, or luck affects students' self-esteem, expectancies of success, the outcome of the task, and gender-related variables. One of the most important factors is expectancies, which have been shown to be fairly good and consistent predictors of attributions (Shrauger, 1975). Projected consequences are more likely to be ascribed to inner causes (e.g., ability and effort) than are unanticipated consequences.

Dweck (1975) specified that inspiring students to attribute their poor performance to unbalanced causes leads to both improved effort and performance. She explained that students who see their intelligence as a stable trait react to failure very differently from students who view their intelligence as unstable. Consequently, students' thoughtfulness of their attributional styles may help them recover their academic performance. A comprehensive study conducted by Eccles, Meece, Adler, and Kaczala (1982) used a range of eight likely reasons for success and failure in mathematics. The sample which included childhoods from 11 to 16 years ranked the relative importance of reasons. Short and long term effort, ability, and teacher's help were the most important reasons for success. Lack of effort and

ability, and task difficulty were the most important reasons for failure. A total of 104 students were identified and participated in a causal attributions by college-age students regarding their academic achievement study conducted by Genet (2013) and the majority of the respondents 42.32(+7.08SD) tend to attribute the cause of academic achievement to internal factors (ability & effort) while the remaining 32.69(+7.96SD) to external factors (context & luck).

2.3 Methodology and Research Design

This is a survey inferential study where the opinions of UB teacher trainees were analysed. The 195 questionnaire were completed as a sample of bachelor degree students taking Post Graduate Diploma Education (PGDE) who intend to take teaching as their career on various subject areas. The 6 Likert scale was from very strongly agree to very strongly disagree. After the pilot, the cronbach alpha reliability assessment indicated that for willingness to teach, alpha was .82 with 7 items, for attitude towards teaching alpha was .83 with 6 items while alpha for attitude towards the program was .86 with 5 items. They were considered good measures of the dependent variables in this study. The independent variables were influence of attribution for passing and failing each with 4 levels.

2.4 Data Analysis – Results and Interpretations

H₀₁: UB teacher trainees:

- are not significantly willing to teach
- are significantly not having a positive attitude towards teaching
- do not have a positive attitude towards UB teacher training programme

The hypothesis was tested by conducting two population t-test analyses of UB student teacher responses to items on willingness to teach designed to determine the level to which students teachers are willing to teach upon completing the teaching program as well as their attitude towards the UB teacher training program intended to measure the attitude of the student teachers towards the training programme.

Table 1: One Sample t-Test Analysis of the Level to Which UB Teacher Trainees is Willing to Teach, attitude Towards Teaching and their Attitude Towards the Training Programme

Variable	n	μ	\bar{X}	SD	SE	Mean Diff.	t-value	p <
Attitude of students trainees towards the training programme	183	17.50	9.97	4.37	0.32	-7.53	-23.32	.000
Level of willingness to teach	179	24.5	16.63	6.26	0.47	-7.87	-16.82	.000
Level of attitude towards teaching	176	14.00	15.90	5.91	0.45	1.90	4.27	.000

p < .05 (2-tailed).

On a 6 option item, the population mean was determined to be 3.50 for each item and the population mean was compared to the observed mean from the SPSS output analysis as shown in Table 1.

For attitude of student trainees towards the teaching programme, this resulted in a negative t-value of -23.32 which was found to be significant at beyond .05 alpha level. With the negative t-value, it shows that UB teacher trainees are not from a population with a positive attitude towards the training program. Equally, student teachers are not significantly willing to teach given a negative t-value of -16.82 which was significant beyond .05 alpha level. However, for level of attitude towards teaching given their knowledge with the teaching profession, the t-value obtained was 4.27 which was found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.96, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, UB teacher trainees have a positive attitude towards teaching to a significant level as a profession.

H₀₂: Attribution for passing by UB teacher trainees has no significant influence on their perception of teaching as a career and motivation to teach.

Table 2: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Influence of Attribution for Passing (AfP) on Perception of Teaching as a Career and Motivation to Teach Among UB Teacher Trainees

Variable	AfP	n	\bar{X}	SD	SE	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Perception of Teaching as a Career	Ability	33	11.18	3.07	0.53	Between groups	134.45	3	44.82	3.19	.025
	Effort	42	9.26	4.02	0.62	Within groups	2557.96	182	14.06		
	Task difficulty	15	11.40	3.64	0.94						
	luck	96	9.33	3.85	0.39	Total	2692.41	185			
	Total	186	9.81	3.81	0.28						
Motivation to Teach	Ability	34	1.65	0.77	0.13	Between groups	9.56	3	3.19	4.72	.003
	Effort	42	2.26	0.80	0.12	Within groups	129.021	191	0.68		
	Task difficulty	17	1.76	0.83	0.20						
	Luck	102	2.14	0.84	0.08	Total	138.59	194			
	Total	195	2.05	0.85	0.06						

To test this hypothesis two one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were carried out to determine the extent to which attribution for passing influences student teachers' perception of teaching as a career and their motivation to teach (see Table 2). For perception of teaching as a career, the analysis gave an F-value of 3.19 with 3 and 182 degrees of freedom. This was found to indicate a significant influence at beyond the .05 alpha level. So the null hypothesis was rejected.

Likewise, for motivation to teach, the F-value was found to be 4.72 which again, with 3 and 191 degrees of freedom was found to be significant at beyond the .05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis was also rejected for them being motivated to teach. In short, attribution for passing had significant influence on their perception of teaching as a career and their motivation to teach.

Table 2 also shows that luck is attributed for passing both towards their perception of teaching as a career and their motivation to teach. When this development was tested statistically using Fisher's least significance difference (LSD) test, it was found that those who attribute passing to luck significantly perceive teaching as a career for those with ability. The post-hoc Fishers' LSD analysis also showed that UB student teacher trainees' attribution of their passing performance in the programme to effort significantly perceive ability as responsible for their motivation to teach.

Ho₃: Attribution for failing by UB teacher trainees has no significant influence on their perception of teaching as a career, their feelings about UB teacher training programme, their attitude towards UB teacher training programme and their willingness to teach

Testing this hypothesis, a four one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were carried out to determine the extent to which attribution for failing influences UB teacher trainees perception of teaching as career, their feelings About UB Teacher training programme, their attitude towards UB teacher training programme and their willingness to Teach. (see Table 3). For perception of teaching as a career, F-value of 2.95 with 3 and 179 degrees of freedom. This was found to indicate significant influence at beyond the .05 alpha level. So the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the UB teacher trainees' attribution for failing significantly influenced their perception of teaching as a career.

Also, for their feelings about UB teacher training programme, the F-value was found to be 3.17 which again, with 3 and 169 degrees of freedom was found to be significant at beyond the .05 alpha level. Hence the null hypothesis was also rejected for their feelings about UB teacher training programme. That is to say, UB teacher trainees' attribution for failing significantly influenced their feelings about UB teacher training programme.

For attitude towards UB teacher training programme, F-value of 3.16 with 3 and 172 degrees of freedom was found to indicate a significant influence at beyond the .05 alpha level. So the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the UB teacher trainees' attribution for failing significantly influenced their attitude towards UB teacher training programme.

Table 3: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Influence of Attribution for Failing (AfF) on Perception of Teaching as Career, Feelings About UB Teacher Training Programme, Attitude Towards UB Teacher Training Programme and Willingness to Teach Among UB Teacher Trainees

Variable	AfF	n	\bar{X}	SD	SE	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Perception of Teaching as a Career	Ability	22	8.32	4.02	0.86	Between Groups	123.41	3	41.14	2.95	.034
	Effort	94	9.73	3.94	0.41						
	Task difficulty	42	9.67	3.50	0.54	Within Groups	2492.70	179	13.93		
	Luck	25	11.52	2.93	0.59	Total	2616.11	182			
	Total	183	9.79	3.79	0.28						
Feelings about UB Teacher Training Programme	Ability	20	7.80	3.91	0.86	Between Groups	135.19	3	45.06	3.17	.026
	Effort	87	9.29	3.69	0.40						
	Task difficulty	42	9.26	4.22	0.65	Within Groups	2403.64	169	14.22		
	Luck	24	11.25	3.04	0.62	Total	2538.82	172			
	Total	173	9.38	3.84	0.29						
Attitude towards UB Teacher Training Programme	Ability	20	7.75	3.70	0.83	Between Group	174.73	3	58.24	3.16	.026
	Effort	92	10.23	4.54	0.47						
	Task difficulty	40	9.45	3.95	0.62	Within Group	3173.82	172	18.45		
	Luck	24	11.54	4.31	0.88	Total	3348.54	175			
	Total	176	9.95	4.37	0.33						
Willingness to Teach	Ability	21	13.52	6.31	1.38	Between Group	425.84	3	141.95	3.84	.011
	Effort	89	16.74	6.18	0.66						
	Task difficulty	39	16.05	6.32	1.01	Within Group	6240.03	169	36.92		
	Luck	24	19.58	4.96	1.01	Total	6665.86	172			
	Total	173	16.59	6.23	0.47						

Similarly, for their willingness to teach, the F-value was found to be 3.84 which again, with 3 and 169 degrees of freedom was found to be significant at beyond the .05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis was also rejected. Indicating that UB teacher trainees' attribution for failing significantly influenced their willingness to teach.

Again, UB teacher trainees attribute luck of their failing performance in the programme towards their perception of teaching as a career, their feelings about UB teacher training programme, their attitude towards UB teacher training programme and their willingness to teach. The demonstration was tested statistically using Fisher's least significance difference (LSD) test and it was found that attribution of failure to luck significantly influenced their perception towards teaching as a career to those with ability. Similarly, those who attributed their failing performance in the programme to luck significantly have the feeling that the teacher trainee programme is for those with ability and thus willing to teach.

3. Summary of Findings

Although the UB teacher trainees' have a significant positive attitude towards teaching as a profession, they have a significant negative attitude towards the training programme and they are significantly not willing to teach.

In short, attribution for passing had significant influence on their perception of teaching as a career and their motivation to teach. Attribution for failing by UB teacher trainees has a significant influence on their perception of teaching as a career, their feelings about UB teacher training programme, their attitude towards UB teacher training programme and their willingness to teach

3.1 Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

UB Student teachers are having a significant positive attitude towards teaching but they have a significant negative attitude towards the training programme and therefore significantly not willing to teach. It's important that the student trainees see teaching as a profession that is imperative in skill and knowledge development, therefore are critical in the process for the educational outcomes to be realized.

The study has demonstrated that there is a relationship between attribution for passing or failing attribution with perception of teaching as a career by UB teacher trainees. When the student teachers attribute performance to luck, we start getting worried since they are expected to instill hard work to future generations as teachers. In their study, Fetogang and Macheng (2015) did find out that teachers considered themselves to be having good test development skills and good knowledge of skills necessary for the society. Student teachers must be willing to teach once they complete the program and that means they must be involved as much as possible in the decision making relevant to them concerning the implementation of the training program they are to undertake.

It was found that University of Botswana teacher trainees who attribute passing to luck significantly perceive teaching as a career for those with ability. Similarly, those

who attributed their failing performance in the programme to luck significantly have the feeling that the teacher trainee programme is for those with ability and are willing to teach. Dweck (1975) explained that students who see their intelligence as a steady feature react to failure very differently from students who view their intelligence as uneven. Consequently, students' reflection of their attributional styles may aid them recover their academic performance.

If the student's teachers are motivated enough to have a positive perception towards teaching, then it follows that they will be able to pass that position to their students creating a sustainable positive view regarding teaching for those who would like to take it and continue as their career.

3.2 Recommendations

Reviewing the training curriculum by ensuring that lecturers make their lessons more appealing so that student teachers can have a positive attitude about the training program and perhaps that will encourage the upcoming generation to be more willing to teach. If the student teachers are motivated then it's assumed that they will motivate their students to work hard for them to be productive teachers since they will have a positive attitude towards teaching as a profession.

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