

From Teaching to Training: Work Adjustment of Teachers-Turn-Teacher Trainers in A Malaysian Teacher Training Institute

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ABSTRACT

Day by day, more and more teachers are recruited as teacher trainers. Changing work role from a teacher to a trainer requires them to adapt to new work responsibility and tasks. In this study, they are known as teachers-turn-trainers (TTTs). These newcomers need personal and work adjustment during the transition years. This article explores the relationship between the individual-related factors, job-related factors and organizational-related factors; and work adjustment of the TTTs. Self-administered questionnaires which contains 62 items were collected from the respondents and analysed. The need to study stems from the fact that the IPGs are experiencing changes in terms of vision and mission. Based on the Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA), this article reports the findings of the study. Results show that there is a significant relationship between work adjustment and two of the variables selected: Attitudes (.419) and Proactive Personality (.502). Based on Guilford's rule of thumb, there is a positive and moderate relationship between both the independent variables and work adjustment. In the fast and competitive world, Malaysia is an aggressively developing country. The vision, mission and goals of the Malaysian Education system, need to be supported by many studies. While the body of research seems to be growing on work adjustment abroad, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the number of studies regarding work adjustment in Malaysia is still insufficient.

Keywords: *work adjustment, teaching, training, newcomers*

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INTRODUCTION

Some experienced teachers wonder if they are destined to follow the same routines for the next 20 years while others want a change in their profession. One way of changing and developing is to move into teacher training. These teachers are known as teachers-turn teacher trainers (TTTs). After they have been promoted to the teacher training institutes, while battling a great urgency to become a competent and efficient trainer in their beginning years, they are also struggling in course preparation, practicing their teaching skills to a set of adult learners and administering test and assessment which are far different from schools. For some teachers, their career paths may be hard to change. However, some may want to leave as they feel the pressure of teaching too many students or marking too many scripts in school. In support of the above, (Egu, Ememe, Obike, &

Clement-Ukandu, 2014) observed that these two factors contributes as the biggest cause of stress sets in making them want to leave.

There are a lot of studies done on work adjustment. LaRocco and Bruns (2006) have identified the significance of past working experience specifically in the field of education in research universities located in the Northeast, South, and Midwest of the United States. Sohail, Rajadurai and Rahman (2003) have disclosed the disappointment of new academics with their incapability to handle their job workload namely in teaching and administrative work. There are also studies on work adjustment within the Malaysian context. For instance, Aida Hafitah and Maimunah (2007) have reported that the cross-cultural work adjustment among the expatriates in Malaysia is significant and imperative.

The discussion in this paper shall continue with the description of the three factors related to work adjustment of TTTs which are individual-related factors, job-related factors and organizational-related factors. These factors are derived from The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) developed by Dawis and Lofquist (1984). It is then followed by another section on methodology which shall discuss the sample, instrument, data analyses, and findings and discussions. The section on conclusion and implications for Human Resource Development and future research will conclude the chapter.

METHOD

Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. Foundations of research are built and conducted over a structure called methodology (Remenyi et al. 2013).

SAMPLE

The sample population in this study consisted of TTTs working in IPG Kampus Pendidikan Teknik located in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. Profiles of the TTTs were obtained from the In Service Training unit of IPG Kampus Pendidikan Teknik. Out of 29 TTTs who took part in this study, 55.2% are male. A large majority of the respondents (96.5%) holds a Master degree while another 3.5% is a Ph.d holder. More than three quarter (86.2%) are Malay, 3.4% Chinese, 6.8% Indian and 3.4% are other ethnics of Malaysia. Nearly all of the TTTs (96.5%) get a teaching hour of less than 10 hours per week. It is interesting to note that only 10.5% always bring home office work to do during the weekends while (89.5%) of the respondents noted as never or only sometimes bringing back office work. 25% of them have more than five years working prior to their appointment as a teacher trainers. The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Background variables of respondents (n=29)

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	16	55.2
Female	13	44.8
Married		
	27	93
Race		
Malay	25	86.0
Chinese	1	3.5
Indian	2	7.0
Others	1	3.5
Education background		
Ph.D	1	3.5
Masters degree	28	96.5
Average teaching hours		
Less than 10 hours	28	96.5
More than 10 hours	1	3.5
Office work on weekends		
Never	1	3.5
Sometimes	25	86.0
Always	3	10.5
Prior working experience		
Less than 1 year		
Between 1 to 3 years	7	24.5
Between 3 to 5 years	14	49.0
> 5 years	8	26.5

INSTRUMENT

This study used questionnaires as its tool in data collection as it is most relevant in a survey (Babbie, 2005). Other than that, it is the most common method used due to its ability to cover a wider scope and areas of population. The questionnaire was designed to gather data to examine the relationships between the selected independent variables and work adjustment. In this study job satisfaction is the indicator or component of work adjustment. Mishra (2013) groups the characteristics of job satisfaction as attitudes towards specific job factors, individual characteristics and group relationship outside the job. The questionnaire contained 9 items in Section A which is the Demographic Profile

section and 62 items in Section B. The variables in Section B are Proactive Personality, Personality Traits, Locus of Control, Attitude, Intensity for Feedback, Organisational Socialization, Mentoring and Self Efficacy. The final part of the questionnaire is an open ended question on reasons for leaving schools and joining the institute as trainers. The questionnaire was then distributed to 31 TTTs serving at IPG Kampus Pendidikan Teknik, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan.

As the TTTs come from various departments, questionnaires were delivered personally to them and telephone calls were made to remind the respondents. Although most responses were received by dropping them in the researcher's pigeon hole and personal contacts there were also responses received through emails. Participation was voluntary and not compensated. To assure confidentiality, code numbers were assigned to each participant and written on the cover page. This is done to the knowledge of the respondents. Response rate calculated against the original sample were 93.5%, yielding a final sample of 29 TTTs.

DATA ANALYSIS

Several data analysis techniques were used in this study in accordance with the three hypotheses formulated earlier. Other than Cronbach's alpha for the reliability test, descriptive statistics were used to provide the basic information about the variables and Pearson correlation to look at the correlations between the variables. A statistical program IBM SPSS 23 was used in the statistical analyses.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A Cronbach alpha test was utilized to determine the reliability of the questionnaires used in the study. Cronbach's alpha indicates the extent of internal consistency for a set of items where at 0.70 or higher can satisfy a conservative minimum level of reliability (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The alpha values of the subscales of the instrument ranged from .565 to .937 as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Instrument Reliability (n=62)

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Proactive Personality	5	.767
Personality Traits	6	.662
Locus of Control	4	.715
Attitude	5	.739
Intensity for Feedback	4	.929
Organisational Socialization	10	.934
Mentoring	10	.929
Self-Efficacy	8	.937
Job Satisfaction	5	.565

To examine if there is a relationship between work adjustment of TTTs and the individual-related factor, job-related factor and organizational-related factor a correlation analysis was utilized. The $p < .05$ level of significance was employed. As been depicted from Table 3, there is a significant relationship between work adjustment and two of the variables selected. They are Attitudes (.419) and Proactive Personality (.502). Based on Guilford's rules of thumb, the strength of the relationship shows comparable result. Therefore, there is a positive and moderate relationship between both the independent variables and work adjustment. This also illustrates that they have potential significant relationship towards the dependent variable.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of the variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No Variable	(r)	(r)	(r)	(r)	(r)	(r)	(r)	(r)	(r)
1 Proactive personality	1								
2 Personality traits	.555**	1							
3 Locus of control	.254	.516**	1						
4 Attitude	.478*	.431**	.502**	1					
5 Intensity for feedback	.323*	.561**	.702**	.382*	1				
6 Organizational socialization	.351*	.319*	.631**	.595**	.305	1			
7 Mentoring	.372*	.407*	.400*	.596**	.245	.765**	1		
8 Self-efficacy	.274	.219	.477**	.515**	.304	.832**	.687**	1	
9 Job-satisfaction	.502*	.013	.177	.419*	.043	.165	-.006	.269	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Other than the correlations, respondents also reported their reasons for leaving schools and joining the institute as trainers. The most commonly cited push factors that drive them out from schools to serve as a trainer are seeking for better prospect and fulfilling family's wish. Thus, they would find any possible way to move out from schools looking for a greener pasture.

Meanwhile there are three pulling factors, which took them into the IPGs. They are promotion and salary increment, multiplying effect and expanding experience and upskilling. These factors are thought to be the strongest forces which have pulled them into training.

Other than that, TTTs are also looking for multiplying effects which will give them more satisfaction in delivering knowledge to many people when they join the IPGs. As LaRocco and Bruns (2006) put it "we had been successful in our former careers in childhood education and left because we believed that preparing future educational professionals was a way to make an even greater contribution to the field". This is very much related to one's passion where the shift is purely for the love and interest in disseminating knowledge. This could happen even to a person who is very contented with his or her present state as a teacher.

In terms of expanding experiences and upskilling, the IPG offers more opportunity for the TTTs to venture into new work roles and also experiencing new work environment. Johnston (1998) reflected teaching as not simply a matter of disseminating but also transforming and extending knowledge and seeing the impact of the knowledge. This could be achieved through a series of activities such as classroom debate, continual examination and challenging both content and pedagogy. He furthermore stated that teaching, research, application and integration are important to meet the needs of the contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

Human resources are one of the most valuable assets for an organization and a nation to stimulate its economic growth. Without human resources, a nation will not prosper and in the long run becomes weaker. Investment in education and training in its various forms to human resources or employees will produce a competent workforce and better productivity in the long run. At present, there is not enough literature and little attention is given to work adjustment and its impact on career growth of employees particularly the TTTs.

In this study, work adjustment is measured through job satisfaction. This is in line with the key principle of work adjustment theory where satisfactory adjustment requires a correspondence between a worker's performance and job satisfaction. Two variables from job-related factor and organizational-related factor showed significant relationships toward work adjustment.

This study has certain limitations that provide venues for future research. First, individual-related factors, job-related factors and organizational-related factors are not the only criteria for work adjustment of the TTTs. Other criteria such as field of study, effort,

and Multiple Intelligences could also be included. Next, future research should include assessment from multiple sources including spouses, peers, subordinates, and superiors. Finally, it should be noted that due to the small number of respondents, it is still premature to arrive at a conclusive statement on the relationships between the independent variables and the work adjustment. Had it done on a bigger population it will produce a different set of results.

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