

**A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
CHALLENGES IN EMPLOYING CHILD-
CENTERED APPROACH IN SELECTED STATE
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENG TUNG AREA,
MYANMAR**

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Abstract: This study tried to identify the level of perceptions of teachers towards challenges in employing child-centered approach in their schools and to compare the differences in their perceptions according to their demographics. This research was conducted on a total population of 51 teachers in eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Eastern Shan State, Myanmar. The research was designed as quantitative research by using a set of questionnaire which covers teachers' demographic profiles including teachers' age, educational background, years of teaching experience and grade level. Ten challenges of teachers based on previous research and related literatures were provided in questionnaire to identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards challenges. The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). In addition to survey questionnaire, the researcher did observation and informal interview to some teachers. The study found out that most of the given challenges were perceived not challenging by the teachers in selected state primary schools in Kengtung area of Myanmar. Nevertheless, the findings of the research revealed new challenges for teachers such as language barrier, parents' involvements, time insufficiency and learning ability of students. There were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their age, educational background, years of teaching experience and grade level.

Keywords: Teachers' Perceptions, Challenges, Child-centered, Approach, Myanmar

Introduction

In this 21st century, thus, the new challenge of education is to equip the students with 21st century skills such as innovation, creativity, critical and analytical thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving skills which are essential in their real life out there after school. The ability of education system to adapt with the new trend in society has become one of crucial issues (Rao,

2004). Modern age calls for modern education system. According to Brad Haves as cited in Han (2008) we can no longer stick ourselves to old paradigms of "chalk and talk", teacher-centered approach in which learning is accepted as knowledge transmitting process. Knowledge construction becomes a matter of facts in this knowledge age. Accordingly, the idea of teaching and learning and how people learn is changed worldwide. It is very important for the schools to encourage their students for lifelong learning and pursuing their interest in and out of the schools, nowadays. The duty of educational institutions is no longer merely preparing for knowledge transmitting from knowledge experts to learners. Learning is considered as a process of constructing knowledge by active learners. Active and authentic learning as essential tools for preparing the students to meet the 21st century learning needs.

Chalk and talk instruction, repeating and rote memorization are norm in teaching and learning in Myanmar. In schools, teacher-centered approach to teaching has been practiced for several decades up to now. However, fortunately, there are endeavors by government to develop broad and balanced curriculum and learning-centered education, instructional methods not only in private but also in state schools nationwide with the help of local, national and international non-government organizations to improve quality of education (Lwin, 2012). Change brings both opportunities and challenges. Change can enable us to create and invent new and different ways of solving problems. But change in other words innovation often was seen as a problem rather than as a solution. Likewise, according to personal talking and evaluation of the project field staff on implementing child-centered approach, teachers in state schools in Myanmar see employing child-centered approach in teaching and learning process very challenging as it is a huge change for education in Myanmar.

The quality of education and experience of learning that we want to give the students depend in a large measure on the support teachers receive. Unless we ensure the conditions that support the teachers, the school may not work as effectively as they can for the students. The principals, school administrators and superintendent are responsible to involve and supportively facilitate in changing process and innovations.

Objectives

This research had three main objectives

1. To identify the demographic profiles of the teachers from the selected state primary schools particularly: their age, educational background, and years of teaching experience and grade level.

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