

Relationship among Self-appraisals, Others' Actual Appraisals, and Reflected Appraisals on Primary School Teachers Teaching Ability

Chun-mei Hu
Cai-zheng Yue
Hua-min He

College Education, Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences,
Chongqing Yongchuan, China
Laboratory of Cognitive Neuroscience and Mental Health,
Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences, Chongqing Yongchuan, China

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Abstract

Convenient sampling and questionnaire survey was used to investigate the relationship among self-appraisals, others' actual appraisals, and reflected appraisals on the teaching ability of 40 primary school teachers. The results of the study indicated that primary school teachers' self-appraisals on teaching ability was obviously below others' actual appraisals; generalized others had more influence on the self-appraisals of primary school teachers than specific others; primary school teachers' reflected appraisals could influence their self-appraisals; and others' actual appraisals could not directly influence self-appraisals. Consequently, we should pay more attention in developing the primary school teachers' reflective ability, change the current way of teaching reflection, improve the influence of others' actual appraisals on self-appraisals, and enhance the validity of teaching reflection.

Keywords: Teaching ability, self-appraisals, others' actual appraisals, reflected appraisals, primary school teacher

Introduction

Teaching ability is the potential possibility of achieving teaching goals and gaining teaching performance. It is composed of many specific factors, and it reflects various psychological traits which help teachers to complete their teaching tasks successfully (China Ministry of Education, 2003). Teachers' teaching ability determines their teaching efficiency

directly. Thus, the ability of carrying out teaching reflection is very important in improving the teaching ability of primary school teachers (Guo, 2011).

Teaching reflection is the core factor influencing a teachers' professional growth. It is the process through which teachers summarize and transfers their teaching experience. In this process, teachers make active exploration, monitoring, regulation, and amendment of teaching practice (Sheng & Liu, 2004). Teaching reflection includes four progresses: specific experience stage, observation and analysis stage, re-summarized stage, and positive validation stage. Teaching reflection is mainly centralized on the second stage: observation and analysis stage (Chen, 2007). In the observation and analysis stage, firstly, teachers make self-judgment on their teaching actions. Secondly, teachers realize the efficiency of teaching activities through interaction with others, such as students, parents of student, colleagues and leaders. Thirdly, teachers compare self-appraisals and others' actual appraisals, find the problem in their teaching practice, and then adjust and improve their teaching activity. From this stage, we can see teaching reflection includes self-appraisals (individuals appraise their competence or ability by themselves), others' actual appraisals (others' appraisals on individuals' competence or ability), and reflected appraisals (individuals evaluate their competence or ability by seeing others' evaluations function as a mirror in which one sees oneself). The discussion and communication between colleagues is the most effective way in teaching reflection. It makes teachers to know their colleagues' appraisals on their teaching ability, eliminate the limitation of personal experience, and adjust teaching activity immediately. So, colleagues are the important others in teaching reflection. However, how do the colleagues influence the primary school teachers' self-appraisals?

In the formation and development process of ego, social environment, especially influence from others, played an important role. How did the others influence ones' self-perception? Researchers had mainly studied the relationship among self-appraisals, others' actual appraisals, and reflected appraisals in solving this question. There were three viewpoints about the relationship among three appraisals. The first viewpoint considered others' actual appraisals to be influenced by self-appraisals directly. Others' actual appraisals influenced individuals' self-perception directly and significantly in some specific domains, such as learning and sports ability (Nurra & Pansu). The second viewpoint considered reflected appraisals to have more influence on self-appraisals than others' actual appraisals (Asencio, 2011; Trouilloud, Amiel, Philippe & Huguet, 2011). Although some researches show that self-appraisals had weak correlation with others' actual appraisals, they had strong correlation with reflected appraisals

(Hergovich, Sirsch & Felinger, 2002). The study on the middle school students' performance in math and science found that their reflected appraisals of importance and competence on the two courses could predict their self-perception (Bouchey & Harter, 2005). The other study on the racial identity of American black stated that the reason half black regarded them as black was that they considered half black as black (Khanna, 2010). Furthermore, this result was also supported by Noels' research (Noels, Leavitt, & Clément, 2010). The third viewpoint shows that others' actual appraisals could not influence self-perception directly, but could influence self-perception through reflected appraisals (Kinch, 1963; Yue, Huang, 2012; Yue, Huang, & Peng et al., 2008). The study on sport competence of teenagers found that parents' appraisals influence teenagers' self-appraisals through reflected appraisals indirectly, while reflected appraisals had been taken into account because the influence of parents' appraisals on self-appraisals became non-significant (Bois, Sarrazin, Brustad, Chanal, & Trouilloud, 2005). However, the normal college students' reflected appraisals had mediating effects on the relation of others' actual appraisals and self-appraisals on teaching ability (Hu, Yue, & He et al., 2014). So, what were the relationships among the three appraisals on the teaching ability of primary school teachers?

In the process of social environment influencing self-perception, different type of others had influenced individuals' self-concept differently. Mead (1934) discussed the different types of others which have influenced individuals' self-concept theoretically. Basically, he considered the progress of ego development to include two stages. Firstly, individuals' self-concept was composed of the attitude to him from specific others. Secondly, individuals' self-concept was composed of the social attitude from generalized others. A research found that when there were different relationship between individual and specific others, the reflected appraisals also had large differences (Yue, Huang, & Yue, 2012). The reflected appraisals on college athletes' self-perceptions of competence from coach and team members had more influence than the reflected appraisals from parents (Amorose, 2003). Another research also found that relationship with coaches had more influence on an athletes' physical self from perceptions than their relationship with parents (Jowett & Cramer, 2010). The empirical study on the accuracy of reflected appraisals also gave evidence to the generalized other' existence (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Carlson & Kenny, 2012). Comparing with specific others, generalized others' actual appraisals and the reflected appraisals had more influence on the normal college students' self-appraisals on teaching ability. Then, how did specific others and generalized others influence self-perceptions of primary school teacher respectively? What type of others had more influence on primary school

teachers' self-perception on teaching ability? However, researchers had not studied this question further yet.

Consequently, we studied the relationship among self-appraisals, others' actual appraisals, and reflected appraisals on the teaching ability of primary school teacher. In addition, we discussed the influence of the different types of others' reflected appraisals and others' actual appraisals on self-appraisals. We hope the results may give some advices on improving primary school teachers' teaching ability, helping them to carry out teaching reflection, and improve the ability of their teaching reflection.

Participants and Methods

Participants

We used convenient sampling in the study. 40 primary school teachers from 5 primary schools in Yongchuan, a district of Chongqing, completed 3 questionnaires. These questionnaires were the self-appraisals questionnaire, others' actual appraisals questionnaire, and the reflected appraisals questionnaire. 20 participants were Chinese teachers, while 20 were Mathematics teacher. A total of 282 questionnaires were distributed, and 282 effective questionnaires were retrieved back. Hence, the efficiency was 100%. Furthermore, there were 40 self-appraisals questionnaires, 121 others' actual appraisals questionnaires, and 121 reflected appraisals questionnaires.

Measures

Teaching Ability Appraisals Scale

The scale has 9 items which include teaching behavioral skills, ability of writing teaching plan, ability of carrying out research in teaching, ability of teaching reflection, ability of teaching language expression, ability of communication and cooperation in work with other teachers, ability of using multimedia teaching equipment, ability of communicating with others in work (such as colleagues, leaders, students, and their parents), and ability of mastering teaching material and syllabus (Hu, Yue, & He et al., 2014). Participants indicated their teaching ability on a 7-point scale ranging from "very bad" to "very good". Therefore, the higher the score, the higher is the appraisal on teaching ability. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale in this sample was 0.92.

Procedures

The 40 participants were divided into 10 groups. Each group had 3-5 members. Teachers from the same primary school were distributed in one group. The teachers in one group were familiar with each other. As a result, they could objectively evaluate the teaching ability of each other. Each

teacher should complete self-appraisals questionnaire, others' actual appraisals questionnaire, and reflected appraisals questionnaire. The number of questionnaires each one should complete was calculated with the formula ($2 \times \text{amounts of group members} - 1$).

However, the self-appraisals questionnaire required the teachers themselves to appraise their teaching ability. The others' actual appraisals questionnaire required the teachers to appraise others' teaching ability in the same group. The reflected appraisals questionnaire required the teachers to speculate how the others in the same group appraise their teaching ability.

Data Processing

SPSS11.5 was used to input and process data. Various methods, including one-way ANOVA, product-moment correlation and linear regression, were adopted to analyze the data. After we have analyzed others' influence on ones' self-perception, the data was also analyzed in specific others' situation and generalized others' situation. The specific others' data was analyzed when there was a one-to-one correspondence between the data of others' actual appraisals and the reflected appraisals of the same group. The generalized others' data was the means of others' actual appraisals and reflected appraisals of the participants in the same group.

Results

Differences among self-appraisals, others' actual appraisals, and reflected appraisals on the teaching ability of primary school teacher

Differences among self-appraisals, specific others' actual appraisals, and specific reflected appraisals

One-way ANOVA was used to determine the differences among self-appraisals, specific others' actual appraisals, and specific reflected appraisals (Table 1). In the analysis, teaching ability is known as a dependent variable, while specific others' appraisal methods as independent variable. The results indicated that there were significant differences among the 3 appraisal methods ($F(2,360)=18.44, p < 0.001$). Consequently, the scores of specific others' actual appraisals were far above the scores of self-appraisals and specific reflected appraisals obviously.

Table 1. Scores of self-appraisals, specific others' actual appraisals, and specific reflected appraisals ($M \pm SD$)

	Self-appraisals	Specific others' actual appraisals	Specific reflected appraisals
Teaching ability	55.26 \pm 7.04	59.20 \pm 6.30	53.65 \pm 8.42

Differences among Self-appraisals, Generalized Others’ Actual Appraisals, and Generalized Reflected Appraisals

One-way ANOVA was used to determine the differences among self-appraisals, generalized others’ actual appraisals, and generalized reflected appraisals (Table 2). In the analysis, teaching ability is known as a dependent variable, while generalized others’ appraisal methods as an independent variable. The results indicated that there were significant differences among the 3 appraisal methods ($F(2,117)=7.43, p < 0.01$). Consequently, the scores of the generalized others’ actual appraisals were far above the scores of self-appraisals and generalized reflected appraisals obviously.

Table 2. Scores of self-appraisals, generalized others’ actual appraisals, and generalized reflected appraisals ($M \pm SD$)

	Self-appraisals	Generalized others’ actual appraisals	Generalized reflected appraisals
Teaching ability	55.26±7.04	59.19±4.10	53.63±8.14

Relationship among Self-appraisals, Others’ Actual Appraisals, and Reflected Appraisals on Teaching Ability of Primary School Teacher Relationship among Self-appraisals, Specific Others’ Actual Appraisals, and Specific Reflected Appraisals

Product-moment correlation was used to determine the correlation among 3 appraisal methods of specific others (Table 3). The results indicated that there was significant positive correlation between self-appraisals and specific reflected appraisals on teaching ability. On the other hand, there was a non-significant correlation between self-appraisals and specific others’ actual appraisals.

Table 3. Relationship among self-appraisals, specific others’ actual appraisals, and specific reflected appraisals

Teaching ability	Self-appraisals	Specific others’ actual appraisals	Specific reflected appraisals
Self-appraisals	1	-0.01	0.72**
Specific others’ actual appraisals	-0.01	1	0.15
Specific reflected appraisals	0.72**	0.15	1

NOTE: *REFERS TO $P < 0.05$, ** REFERS TO $P < 0.01$, *** REFERS TO $P < 0.001$.

Relationship among Self-appraisals, Generalized Others’ Actual Appraisals, and Generalized Reflected Appraisals

Product-moment correlation was used to determine the correlation among 3 appraisal methods of generalized others (Table 4). The results indicated that there was significant positive correlation between self-appraisals and generalized reflected appraisals on teaching ability. On the other hand, there was a non-significant correlation between self-appraisals and generalized others’ actual appraisals.

Table 4. Relationship among self-appraisals, generalized others' actual appraisals, and generalized reflected appraisals

Teaching ability	Self-appraisals	Generalized others' actual appraisals	Generalized reflected appraisals
Self-appraisals	1	-0.03	0.74**
Generalized others' actual appraisals	-0.03	1	0.28
Generalized reflected appraisals	0.74**	0.28	1

Regression Analysis on Impact of Reflected Appraisals on Self-appraisals

Due to the fact that there was a significant correlation between self-appraisals and reflected appraisals, linear regression was used to discuss the causality of them.

Regression Analysis on Impact of Specific Reflected Appraisals on Self-appraisals

In linear regression, self-appraisals are known as a dependent variable, while specific reflected appraisals as an independent variable (Table 5). The results indicated that specific reflected appraisals could predict 52% variation of self-appraisals.

Table 5. Regression analysis on impact of specific reflected appraisals on self-appraisals

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	<i>F</i>	<i>B</i>	β
Specific reflected appraisals	0.72	0.52	0.52	129.40	0.60	0.72

Regression Analysis on Impact of Generalized Reflected Appraisals on Self-appraisals

In linear regression, self-appraisals are known as a dependent variable, while generalized reflected appraisals as an independent variable (Table 6). The results indicated that generalized reflected appraisals could predict 56% variation of self-appraisals.

Table 6. Regression analysis on impact of generalized reflected appraisals on self-appraisals

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	<i>F</i>	<i>B</i>	β
Generalized reflected appraisals	0.74	0.56	0.54	47.13	0.65	0.74

Discussion

Differences among Self-appraisals, Others' Actual Appraisals, and Reflected Appraisals on Teaching Ability of Primary School Teacher

The research found that there were significant differences among 3 appraisals on teaching ability of primary school teacher. Also, the scores of others' actual appraisals were above the scores of self-appraisals and reflected appraisals obviously. This results indicated that the primary school teacher undervalued their self teaching ability. There were several reasons

about why the situation emerged. These reasons are: (1) Primary school teachers were influenced by “modesty and implicit” of traditional Chinese culture. So, they were conservative and low-key when they appraised themselves. Hence, this led to low self-appraisals. (2) Chinese culture emphasizes harmony. When communicating with others, people would not express negative appraisals to others directly. Thus, they always express positive appraisals. This situation probably made others’ actual appraisals higher than self-appraisals. (3) The requirements of teachers’ ability were raised constantly. Hence, teachers should advance as time progresses. On one hand, all sectors of the society requires primary school teachers to carry out quality education. On the other hand, all sectors of the society requires them to accept new teaching ideas, theories, methods, courses, and so on. In this circumstances, primary school teachers needed to accept new teaching ideas, theories, methods, and courses continuously. These requirements made primary school teachers tired and stressed up. They always felt they do not meet the requirement. Therefore, this led to low self-appraisals on their teaching ability.

Different Type of Others’ Influence on Self-appraisals on Teaching Ability of Primary School Teachers

The results indicated that the correlation among self-appraisals, generalized others’ actual appraisals, and generalized reflected appraisals ($r=0.74$) was slightly higher than the correlation among self-appraisals, specific others’ actual appraisals, and specific reflected appraisals ($r=0.72$). The generalized reflected appraisals’ predictive power on self-appraisals ($r^2=0.56$) was slightly larger than the specific reflected appraisals ($r^2=0.52$). So, we considered generalized others’ influence on primary school teachers’ self-appraisals to be larger than specific others. Self-perception of primary school teacher was more influenced by generalized others. In daily teaching discussion and communication with colleagues, primary school teachers did not always pay special attention to specific others’ appraisals. Then, they adjusted their teaching behavior according to the generalized colleagues’ appraisals. The result reminded us that if we want to enhance the validity of teaching reflection, we should promote exchanges with colleagues and improve the influence of generalized others on primary school teacher.

Relationship between Self-appraisals and Others’ Actual Appraisals

The results indicated that there was a non-significant correlation between self-appraisals and others’ actual appraisals. So, others’ actual appraisals could not directly influence primary school teachers’ self-appraisals in the process of teaching ability reflection. Why did others’ actual appraisals not influence primary school teachers’ self-perception directly?

The answers to the question include: (1) Others' actual appraisals were not objective. Because of tough competition in daily work, teachers were reluctant to share their successful experience with colleagues and point out other shortcomings. Therefore, this made teachers to consider others' opinions to be inaccurate and useless; hence, they ignored others' appraisals (Sun, 2010). (2) The others in the process of teaching reflection were not an authority. Lack of experts' guiding was one of the reasons that led to invalid teaching reflection (Hu, 2013). In this study, participants were ordinary colleagues. They were not experts. Hence, this was the reason why others' actual appraisals did not influence self-appraisals. Primary school teachers always thought that the colleagues' teaching ability was at a comparable level with them. As a result, they did not accept the colleagues' appraisals. While exchanging colleagues for experts, primary school teachers might accept the experts' appraisals.

Relationship between Self-appraisals and Reflected Appraisals

The results indicated that there was a high correlation between self-appraisals and reflected appraisals ($r=0.72-0.74$). Therefore, it was in correspondence with other researches (Asencio, 2011; Trouilloud, Amiel, Philippe, & Huguette, 2011; Amorose, 2003). Regression analysis found that reflected appraisals could predict self-appraisals ($r^2=0.52-0.56$). Hence, the result was also supported by other research (Bouche & Harter, 2005).

The study on the normal college students' appraisals on teaching ability, found that in the process of interpersonal communication, others' actual appraisals could influence self-perception through reflected appraisals (Hu, Yue, & He et al., 2014). In this study, primary school teachers' self-perception was not influenced by others' appraisals, but was more influenced by imaginary others' appraisals, namely: reflected appraisals. The research on the characteristics of development of self-appraisals had found that individuals' dependence was enhanced gradually with the increase in age and experiences. Thus, the influence of others was weakened gradually (Yue, Huang & Yue, 2012; Feldman, 2009). In the growing up of adolescent, they paid much attention to companions' appraisals (Lin, 2002). The normal college students were novice who had a lack of teaching experience. Their main mission was studying teaching theories and methods. As such, they were more influenced by external environment, especially classmates. But with the development of primary school teachers' teaching ability and experience, their teaching self-efficacy developed gradually. They paid less attention to others' appraisals. However, it does not mean that they were not influenced by others' appraisals. Actually, they were influenced by imaginary and generalized others' appraisals. The generalized others' opinions about them, and the subjective others' appraisals (reflected

appraisals) influenced their self-perception. This shows the importance of developing the teachers' ability of teaching reflection. With the ability of teaching reflection improved, the primary school teachers could generalize and induce others' appraisals objectively. Then, the reflected appraisals could improve the teachers' teaching ability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the primary school teacher underestimated their teaching ability. The generalized others' appraisals had more influence on self-appraisals than specific others' appraisals. This indicated the importance of generalizing others' appraisals effectively. Furthermore, we should pay more attention to improve teachers' teaching reflection. In the process of teaching reflection, we should optimize the way of reflection and deploy authoritative others (such as experts, leaders). Thus, this could improve the validity of teaching reflection.

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