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SHOULD YOU REWARD MORE THOSE TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATE MORE? A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF IN-SERVICE TOURISM TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

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Abilities to participate and communicate in different social settings is considered to be very important qualities for tourism graduates. Tourism educators are supposed to inculcate these qualities in the students and one the finest means of training. Yet, educators, especially those who belong to the 'old school' find it difficult to forego the teacher-dominant one-way lecture method. Thus, 'student-centered learning' and 'teacher-as-facilitator' are some of the vital-most values that are aimed to be imparted through training programs for in-service academic staff in tourism. Resource persons who handle tourism teacher training program sessions believe that these objectives could best be achieved by rewarding with higher grades those participants who interact more during the sessions. The basic assumption behind this is that encouraging teacher-participants who interact more shall instill in them the spirit of the aforesaid values, which they shall later enact in their professional lives as tourism teachers. The present study conducted in India critically examines this assumption and establishes that rewarding teacher-participants for their interaction might in fact defeat the very same purpose for which the scheme was primarily introduced. The astonishing finding is that those teacher-participants who participate more during the sessions of the in-service training programs constitute the most 'dictatorial' ones in their regular teaching roles along with their least participating colleagues. Those who participated moderately were noted to be the best tourism educators in terms of their facilitating student participation and encouraging student centered learning.

Keywords: *tourism education, in-service teacher training programs, the value of interaction in learning, interaction as a teacher-participant, interaction as a teacher, India*

INTRODUCTION

Radical changes have been taking place in the higher education scenario in tourism. With the changing course content, novel techniques

and methodologies of imparting education have also been introduced at various levels of education. Teacher is no longer the cornerstone of the evolving educational system, whose role has got diametrically shifted from that of a teacher to one that facilitates learning (Houldsworth and Mathews, 2000).

Four paradigms have dominated the debate on teacher education in recent years: the behaviorist orientation; (2) the personalistic orientation (3) the traditional-craft orientation; and (4) the inquiry orientation (Zeichner, 1983). In the context of tourism education, especially for those educational programs in tourism that aim to train students to work in the industry, it has been noted that the first two are vital (Ruhanen, 2005). Collaborative learning is an area that is receiving increasing attention in tourism academic fields. This is because cooperative, group-based, shared, de-centralized, and interactive learning has many benefits to individual student learning (Slavin, 1996). Student-Student-Teacher interactive learning approaches such as role-play have been found to be valuable methods of bridging the divide between academic knowledge and practical skills, a problem often cited in tourism and hospitality management education. Such approaches have been found to contribute towards deeper learning by enhancing students' interest, motivation, participation, knowledge, and skill development, according to Ruhanen (2005).

The present paper examines how rewarding teacher-participants in in-service tourism teacher training programs for their training-class-participation is related to their behavior in the regular classrooms as a participatory teachers. The commonsensical viewpoint that the former has an unproblematic positive relationship with the latter is challenged in the face of empirical evidence. The study discloses that those teacher-participants who participate more during the sessions of the in-service training programs constitute the most 'dictatorial' ones in their regular teaching roles along with their least participating colleagues. Those who participated moderately were noted to be the best tourism educators in terms of their facilitating student participation and encouraging student centered learning.

TOURISM TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Like in the rest of the world, initial phases of tourism education in India were fraught with significant confusion. The multi-dimensionality of tourism phenomenon has made it difficult for any single discipline to

comprehensively grasp its nuances. Tourism education is faced with issues of integrated curricula and it could be a long time before a consensus is achieved. The system of tourism and hospitality higher education in India is divided into academic higher education and technical or vocational streams. Over the past years, tourism higher education in India has witnessed rapid growth in numbers and increasing diversification in program names.

Historically, higher education institutions in India have begun to offer certificate, diploma, graduate, and post-graduate programs in tourism from the early 1980's. One salient feature of all these programs was that the programs were not offered under an eclectic Faculty of Tourism Studies, but as naïve disciplinary extensions of the Faculty concerned that hosted the program. For instance, the History Departments of some universities started MA Programs in Tourism focusing historical and cultural tourism; the Geography Departments started MSc (Tourism) focusing geography of tourism; the Business Administration Departments started Mater of Tourism Administration, and so on. Recently, due to sheer market pressures, most of these programs, including those run under the Departments of History and Geography, have been rechristened as MBA (Tourism) at the post-graduate level and BBA (Tourism) at the under-graduate level. This was just a facial polishing with no change in the disciplinary orientation. Yet, this change has brought about a widespread realization that tourism is a profession and tourism education is professional education. This happened despite the fact that the traditional business schools in the country have always been reluctant to introduce higher education program in tourism. In fact, none of the premier business schools, including the government funded Indian Institute of Managements (IIMs), has got a tourism or related academic program in their course portfolios.

The philosophy of Indian education emphasizes holistic development of an individual's potential for the benefit of the society and the nation (Singh and Singh, 2004). A vulgar and misinterpreted adaptation of this can be observed in most of the modern Indian university curricula leaning heavily on theories and concepts, sparing lesser scope for soft-skill development. Also, students asking questions and intervening during class sessions were looked down upon as disrespect to the teacher. Despite constant professionalization efforts from various quarters, tourism programs too remained, by and large, heavily theory-ridden in content and lecture-driven in delivery. If at all there are some changes, all that took place in the late 1990's or even later. This is, however, a long gap after the need for change in the Indian higher educational scenario

was realized and formally put on record long back by Kothari Commission (1964-66). The report stated that “the dull pointless method of giving lectures and dictating notes on knowledge invented in the past keeps on passing from generation to generation...such knowledge as shared by this method often remains as a dead mass in the learner’s memory...the incalculable loss involved in this unimaginable approach can and should be avoided.” The National Policy of Education-India (1986) emphasized the need to organize specially designed orientation and refresher courses for the new entrants into the teaching profession. However, much remained the same with no major alternation until the late ‘80s.

In the year 1988, Universities Grants Commission (UGC) of India introduced the concept of Academic Staff Colleges (ASC), which would take care of the learning needs of the teachers in the higher education institutions of India, including tourism teachers. From then onwards, the ASCs have begun to offer two types of courses of 2-4 weeks duration: Orientation Programs and Refresher Programs. Orientation Programs are aimed at sensitizing the participants in areas like teaching methodology, educational philosophies, content development, etc. Refresher Programs are tailored to upgrading and updating the disciplinary knowledge of the participant in his area of specialization and other related disciplines. As of now, there are 51 ASCs across the country. Besides, the UGC has also identified as many as 74 institutions to organize and conduct refresher courses for faculty members in their chosen areas of specialization. ASCs facilitated a framework that advocates the development and implementation of a specific teacher-education policy, to bring higher education closer in line with national educational policies.

The Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) had been offering training programs ever since its inception in 1983. IITTM was established under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India, as an apex centre of tourism learning, primarily to serve as a human resource wing of the Ministry of Tourism. The institute initially conducted several conferences, seminars, workshops etc. on various chosen themes related to tourism and travel education. In the next phase, it has entered further into the role of training the trainers by launching Refresher Programs in Tourism in collaboration with the University Grants Commission of India. For this, IITTM has been accredited with the status of an Academic Staff College (*See* IITTM, 2006). In addition to IITTM, a few universities like Himachal Pradesh University, Garhwal University, Kurukshetra University, University of Lucknow, Marathawada University, etc too offer Teacher Orientation and

Refresher Programs in the area of tourism. In addition to these, there are no formal program.

ENCOURAGING LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Though faculty members in the institutions of higher learning do not require any formal professional qualification in teaching other than a post-graduate degree or so, short term in-service training has now come to be recognized as a significant step in professional development in higher education (Zeichner, 1999). Teachers who underwent formal service-preparation programs are more likely to be effective teachers than those who do not have such training, notes Richardson (1990). As of now, all across the world, such training programs are regularly being offered to teacher-participants equally or more to develop proper attitude as to refresh domain expertise.

Castle *et al.* (2006) observes that Professional Development School trained teachers make a significantly more positive impact upon many aspects of their professional lives than their untrained counterparts. The impacts include better planning, instruction, management, assessment, and a superior sense of ownership of their institutions. Most research on the relationship between teacher characteristics and pupil achievement focuses on salaries, experience, and education. The effect of in-service training and how the values acquired from it influences teaching has received negligible attention (Angrist and Lavy, 2000).

Many educational experts have stressed the need to convert classrooms into participatory learning spaces. According to Karp and Yoels (1976), our educational system is the biggest culprit for making students to think that instructors are uncrowned experts and that the duty of students is to listen passively. Evidence suggests that cooperative learning promotes higher order and critical thinking (McKeachie, 1990; Smith, 1977). While tourism curriculum should have the components of general, business, experiential, and tourism knowledge specific (such as industry dynamics, operations, laws, planning and geography) components, experience education is the most-vital one, notes Koh (1995). This is because, experience education instills in the learner the essential attitude required to work in the hospitality industry. Industry recruiters prefer to recruit for the right attitude more than knowledge since it is easier to feed the latter than the former. The predominance of customer relationship as a recurring theme in tourism education has been

noted by Churchward and Riley (2002), according to whom the commercial nature of tourism dictates that the learner should acquire a range of soft skills including the ability to effectively interact and negotiate. The learner of tourism should master as to how to make the customer feel as if he/she were the king but at the same time impress upon the king with suggestions and solutions.

One way communication from the lecturer to the student, a legacy that the Indian higher education system got from the British colonial times onwards, was hard to disown and is still being practiced as the major-most means of content delivery. Yet, one way lecturing within the four walls of the classroom is antithetical to the traditional Indian educational practice. In the ancient India until the colonial times, a system known as Gurukula System of Education was the predominant mode of schooling. At the Gurukula, all the aspects of one's personality are developed utilizing an integrated curriculum that empowers the student to know oneself and develop the confidence and empathy to utilize knowledge for serving the society. Gurukula encompasses intellectual cognitive abilities but extends it to include the development of intuition, aesthetics and a futuristic and ecological perspective based on universal outlook. Despite criticisms of sorts, one of the outstanding features of this system was that the disciples learned things through participative learning method in the real life setting.

Educational methods that facilitate students' willingness to raise questions or offer comments are likely to enhance their intellectual development, reveals a study by Fassinger (1996). Gurukula education could be a good example for this. Though quite lately, since the late 1990's, the central and various state governments in India have been acting upon the reports of commissions constituted to look into the maladies of the post-colonial system and one area where immediate improvement sought is in the lecturing method.

To aid the reorientation from one way lecturing to more student centered instructional procedures, in-service teacher-training program participants are being given special training in the recent past. Two of the supposedly vital-most values that are intended to be imparted to the teacher-participants throughout the various sessions of the training program are 'student-centered learning' and 'teacher-as-facilitator' (Ramsden, 2003). Resource persons who handle sessions as well as the organizers of the teacher training programs believe that these objectives could best be achieved by rewarding with higher grades to those participants who participate/interact more during the sessions. The conjecture behind this approach is that encouraging teacher-participants to

interact more shall instill in them the spirit of the aforesaid values, which they shall later enact in their professional lives as teachers.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Teacher educators studying their own practices with methods like life history and autobiography and focusing on the connections between their lives and works in teaching and teacher education programs has achieved the much needed respect in educational research (Clandinin, 1995; Zeichner, 1999). The beginnings of the present research may also be traced back to the self study of one of the in-service teacher training programs that the present researcher attended with one of his colleagues, during 2004. Before attending the program, the colleague had regularly been rated by his students as one of the most imposing and autocratic teachers that they have ever encountered and who never gave any room for classroom discussion. His students were not allowed to ask a question of doubt during, or even after, the lecture. This being the case, to the researcher's surprise, this colleague was found to be the most participative of teachers during the sessions of the program and was declared as the topper.

Later, the researcher has had a series of self reflections about this anomaly. He had been rated by his students as one of the best teachers in terms of providing ample opportunities for class participation. The filled-in student feedback forms contained a lot of favorable qualitative comments too in this regard. Critically analyzing own behavior as a participant of the aforesaid program, the researcher noticed that he remained as a silent spectator and did not participate much in any of the sessions due to the overwhelming thought that subconsciously brimmed up often in mind that his own intervention would reduce the opportunity for the fellow participants to participate to that extent. In other words, he could not keep aside his dominant identity as a participatory and nurturing teacher even as he was given to enact the role of a participatory student during the training program—the very same reason for which he gave generous opportunities for his own students to participate in the regular graduate program sessions. If the above explanation is correct, the popular wisdom that a teacher-participant's intensity of interactions during the teacher training program sessions and his or her adopting participatory learning style in the regular classroom are positively associated requires some serious rethinking.

The available scholarly literature on this issue is very limited. How individual students and their exhibited personality characteristics mediate teacher perceptions is not clearly understood (Hammond, 2006). Good (1981) presented some of the subtle processes that predispose resource persons to call on one group of learners more than another group: a resource person who solicits responses from learners does not haphazardly pose questions and randomly focus on one of the many waving hands. He has a reason for asking questions, and he tries to call on pupils who are capable of satisfying this purpose, often based on his past experience. Hall and Sandler (1982) term it the 'Chilly Syndrome'. Also, teachers sometimes fail to provide response opportunities to low achievers because they wish to avoid raising these learners' anxiety levels or embarrassing them in front of their peers. A study by Brophy and Good (1974) revealed that those who are active and intelligent were given more opportunities to participate in the classroom discussions mainly due to their potentially disruptive nature. In the context of teacher training programs, while trainers deliver messages to participants as to what behaviors and traits are appropriate for the student role, opportunities that these participants have got to publicly respond in the classroom are not equal: the 'smarter' ones grab the bigger pie. Those who do not allow their students to participate in the regular classroom participate the maximum as attendees of the training program (because they like to talk), sometimes to the extent of not even allowing the trainer to carry forward with the lesson!

In the light of the above discussion, the association between a teacher-participant's participation during the teacher-training sessions and his or her adopting cooperative learning style in the regular classroom was sought to be empirically verified. The hypothesis is formally stated below:

Hypothesis: There is a significant positive association between a teacher-participant's participations during the teacher training program sessions and his or her adopting participatory learning style in the regular classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD

The questionnaire was administered to a convenient sample of 60 tourism and hospitality management educators who attended a two-week in-service training program during 2005-2006. Respondents were asked to give their ratings across a 7-point scale for the following questions:

- To what extent do you like class participation from your students?
- To what extent do you participate in your role as a teacher-participant during this orientation program?

The sample consisted of 38 males and 22 females; of all the respondents, 16 had doctoral degrees and the remaining had at least a post-graduate qualification. The age of respondents varied from 27 yrs to 45 yrs and the average age was calculated to be 34 yrs, app. Similarly, the number of years of teaching experience varied from 1-11 years but the average years of work experience was only 3.5 yrs, app. All the respondents were from within India working full time in various colleges and universities and teaching tourism or allied subjects at undergraduate level, post-graduate level, or both.

The data thus collected was inputted into the SPSS software to examine the inter-variable correlation. The output table is displayed below (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlations

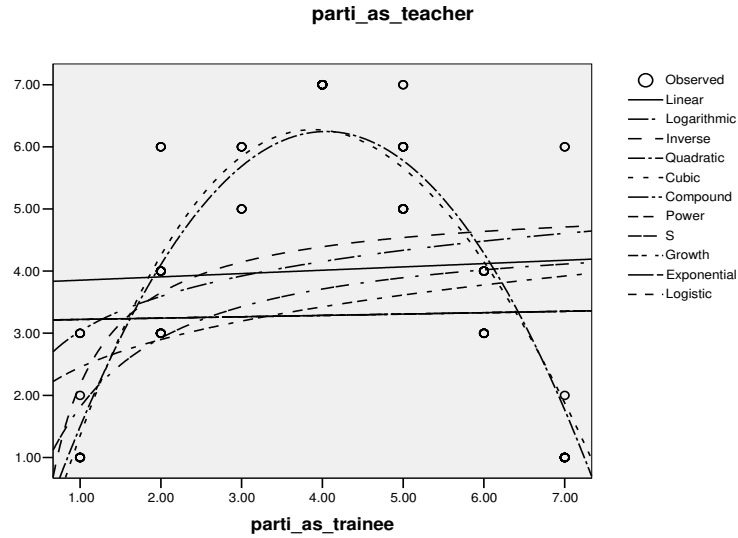
Correlations			
		parti_as_ trainee	parti_as_ teacher
parti_as_trainee	Pearson Correlator	1	.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.689
	N	60	60
parti_as_teacher	Pearson Correlator	.053	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.689	
	N	60	60

The analysis shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient is negligibly small (0.053) and is insignificant ($p > 0.1$). This implies that there is no association between a teacher participant's intensity of interaction during the teacher training program and his or her encouraging participatory learning in the regular classroom. The fact that there exists no significant negative correlation either means that it is impossible to conclude that the higher the participation the training sessions the lower the degree of adoption of participative learning styles in the regular

classroom. But, is it not against intuition that there is no relation whatsoever between these two variables? What if there existed a relationship, which is but nonlinear that a Pearson correlation analysis could not unearth?

It was decided to match the standard curves to the data distribution to see if the latter fits into any of them. The Curve Estimation procedure available with SPSS produces curve estimation regression statistics and related plots for 11 different curve estimation regression models. The output diagram is presented below (Graph 1).

Figure 1. Curve Estimation



The graph as well as the model summary and parameter estimates (Table 2) implies that Quadratic ($R^2=0.709$) and Cubic ($R^2=0.712$) models give the two finest fits. Though other models like Inverse and S-Curve are also significant, their R^2 values are negligibly small. The shapes of quadratic and cubic curves are similar except that the latter is 3-dimensional. Since the quadratic curve gives the best and statistically significant fit and it explains in relatively simpler terms the basic shape of the curve (principle of parsimony), it can be concluded that the distribution of “permitting participation in the regular classroom” upon

“own participation during the training program sessions” is quadratically related.

Table 2. Model Summary and Parameter Estimates

Model Summary and Parameter Estimates

Dependent Variable: parti_as_teacher

Equation	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates			
	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1	b2	b3
Linear	.003	.161	1	58	.689	3.800	.053		
Logarithmic	.064	3.952	1	58	.052	3.031	.810		
Inverse	.164	11.357	1	58	.001	5.133	-2.965		
Quadratic	.709	69.306	2	57	.000	-2.143	4.149	-.513	
Cubic	.712	46.178	3	56	.000	-2.998	5.114	-.790	.023
Compound	.000	.023	1	58	.881	3.200	1.007		
Power	.052	3.153	1	58	.081	2.451	.241		
S	.156	10.715	1	58	.002	1.551	-.958		
Growth	.000	.023	1	58	.881	1.163	.007		
Exponential	.000	.023	1	58	.881	3.200	.007		
Logistic	.000	.023	1	58	.881	.312	.993		

The independent variable is parti_as_trainee.

CONCLUSION

The present study unravels that it is neither the most participative nor the least participative teachers during their in-service training programs that make the best participatory tourism teachers in the regular classrooms, but, instead, it is the average participants (see the shape of the quadratic curve given in the graph 1). The least participative teacher participants may have certain inherent deficiencies which get reflected in both the situations (i.e., during regular classroom as well as during training program environments) making them to be poor performers across both the variables. Likewise, their utmost participative counterparts too perform poorly since their hi-participation during the training program is reflective of nothing but their inability to forget their habitual nature as non-stop sermonizers in the regular classroom. On the contrary, the moderately participative teacher participants of the training program excel

themselves as the best: they express their views and contribute to the class proceedings but simultaneously give room for alternative voices to come up; both during the training program and in their roles as tourism teachers in the college or university.

This conclusion should be a vital guideline for the academic staff colleges as well as other similar institutions that are in the business of training the academics to become superior teachers. By rewarding the over-participants more than the moderate participants, they would be doing a great injustice. Over a period of time, this practice positively reinforces an undesirable trait (Skinner, 1968) which should in fact be engineered to attenuate once someone attends an academic Orientation Program or similar programs.

Note that this research does not conclude that those teacher-participants that participate more are inferior in any respect. In fact, they may have more advanced critical thinking ability and higher order learning capacity as individuals. Also, they may turn out to be the best teachers in certain specialized situations. Nor do we advocate the closure of teacher training programs the way Popham (1971) did in conclusion of his investigation. Apart from the teacher's motivating the students, other factors such as classroom size, climate, peer diversity, nature of the subject studied, culture, etc. have been found to be influencing student propensity to interact (Devadoss and Foltz, 1996; Truong *et al.*, 2002). What we can conclude from this study is only that these individuals, as teachers in the regular classroom, de-promote the very same values that they allegedly exhibit in the training classroom.

While stressing that the study was conducted among a sample of tourism academics who were participating an in-service training program, the results could still be generalizable to the wider academic fraternity. However, the results of the study deserve special relevance for tourism since it is one of the disciplines where interaction and participation are some of the most sought after values.

Productive strategies for evaluating outcomes are becoming increasingly important for the improvement, and even the survival, of tourism teacher education (Hawkins, 2005). The demands of an increasingly globalizing tourism economy underscore the importance of experiential and collaborative learning in the field of tourism. However, it is an unusual but convincing conclusion that promoting collaborative learning in the tourism teacher training programs does not positively reinforce the same in the regular classrooms. This paper is concluded with the optimism that our research has been able to unpack a deep rooted myth, for quite a long time assumed to be the truth, de-facto.

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