

# PERCEPTION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING CHARACTERISTICS: A CASE STUDY OF MBA PROGRAM STUDENTS OF ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

*This study determined students' perceptions of effective teaching characteristics which promote learning in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, and identified personal factors influencing their perceptions of effective teaching. The researcher selected seven personal factors (gender, age, nationality, program-time of study, academic trimester, grade point average (GPA), and work experience) to study the differences in their perceptions of Five Key Behaviors contributing to effective teaching (lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success).*

*A total of 307 responses consisting of 131 MBA Day program and 176 MBA Evening program students were collected. The responses ranked important teaching characteristics as student success, lesson clarity, task orientation, instructional variety, and engagement in learning process, respectively. Through Independent T-Test analysis and ANOVA, it was found that age, GPA, and work experience showed no difference in students' perceptions of effective teaching characteristics. On the other hand, gender, nationality, program-time of study, and academic trimester showed significant differences in students' perceptions of effective teaching characteristics.*

## INTRODUCTION

Although Thailand is classified as a developing country, it has moved rapidly from an agriculture society to an industrialized society. Higher education is one of the most important factors which has helped in developing people. People obtain higher education or even more knowledge from learning. The quality of teaching, however, is one important consideration. Determining teacher effectiveness is critical. Ornstein (1995) stated that confusion over terms, measurement problems, and the complexity of the teaching act are major reasons for the negligible results in judging teacher effectiveness.

Numerous researchers have been trying to define what an effective teacher is. Ornstein (1995) stated that investigators have examined teacher personalities, traits, behaviors, attitudes, values, abilities, competencies, methods, and many other characteristics to find the best form for being an effective teacher. Some theoretical issues may help

us in identifying effective teaching. Bolin (1995) argued that if we want to measure a teacher's effectiveness or competence, we should only need to measure how much his or her students learn, the more they learn, the better the teaching.

Perceived as a two-way interaction between teachers and learners, evaluation from students is one of the factors which measures the effectiveness of educators. Teaching is a blending of an art and a science. The educational reform movement has brought about changes in the way of teaching. Thomas (1993) stated that it is apparent that the future quality of an educational system will depend upon the effectiveness of teachers currently in the system. Good teachers are not only the ones who give knowledge to students, but also are guides for them.

Assumption University of Thailand is Thailand's first international university. Students come from various nations worldwide. The university has produced a number of graduates who are qualified in

several specializations. In this study, Master of Business Administration (MBA) program students are selected as respondents, hence the study defines effective teaching characteristics as perceived by graduate students of the MBA program, which is the largest graduate program of the university.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher developed a conceptual framework (Figure 1) for this study based on Suwandee’s (1995) study and Borich’s (1996) Five Key Behaviors Contributing to Effective Teaching. In the framework, personal factors include gender (male and female), age (21-25, 26-30, 31-35, above 35), nationality (Chinese, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, other), program-time of study (MBA Day program and MBA Evening program), academic trimester (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and above), grade point average (less than 3.00, 3.00-3.40, 3.41-3.70, 3.71-4.00), and work experience level (none, less than 2, 2-5 , more than 5 years). They were set as independent variables. Perceived effective teaching characteristics include lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success). They were set as dependent variables.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- H1: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” between male and female students.
- H2: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions

of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different age.

H3: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different nationality.

H4: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” between Day program and Evening program students.

H5: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students in different academic trimester.

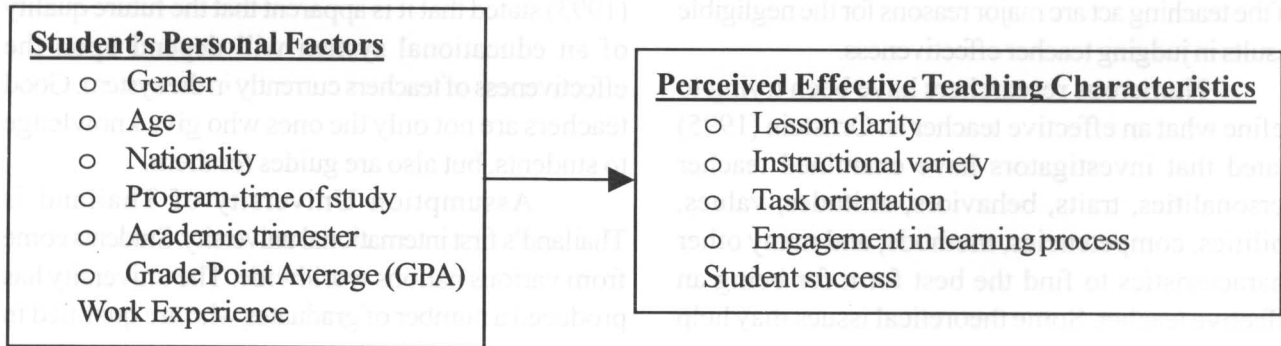
H6: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different grade point average.

H7: There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different work experience level.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The survey method was used to collect information from respondents. Questionnaires were distributed to MBA program students of Assumption University and 307 valid responses were collected. The respondents were both Day program and Evening program students which are shown below:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



MBA Program

No. of Respondents

CONCLUSION

Day Program	131
Evening Program	176
Total	307

Each questionnaire consisted of 2 parts: (1) Perceived effective teaching characteristics and (2) Student’s personal factors. All questions were stated in Likert Scales using 5 levels of agreement. Independent T-Test was used to analyze the differences in perceptions between genders and also between MBA Day program and Evening program students. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the differences in perceptions in other five personal factors. The researcher used the mean of each question to interpret respondents’ perception of the 28 traits of effective teaching. Table 1 exhibits the mean and standard deviation.

Based on the ranking of the five compositions, student success gained the highest mean score (3.932), followed by lesson clarity (3.887), task orientation (3.692), instructional variety (3.647), and engagement in learning process (3.519). All compositions were rated as important in students’ perceptions. Table 2 exhibits the average weighted mean for perception of effective teaching characteristics.

Gender, nationality, program-time of study, and academic trimester of students show differences in student perceptions of effective teaching characteristics. Age factor (21-25, 26-30, 31-35, above 35) shows differences in perceptions of the composition of lesson clarity. Nationality factor (Chinese, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, other) shows the differences in perceptions of the compositions of engagement in learning process and student success. Program-time of study (Day and Evening programs) shows the difference in perceptions of the composition of engagement in learning process. Academic trimester (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and above) shows the difference in perceptions of the composition of lesson clarity.

The factors of age, grade point average, and work experience show no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success. The ranking order of effective teaching compositions is: student success, lesson clarity, task orientation, instructional variety, and engagement in learning process, respectively.

Results

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation

No.	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Student Success	3.932	0.578
2	Lesson Clarity	3.887	0.547
3	Task Orientation	3.692	0.566
4	Instructional Variety	3.647	0.559
5	Engagement in Learning Process	3.519	0.565

Table 2: Perception Average Weighted Mean for Perception of Effective Teaching characteristics

Rating Scales	Interpretation
5.00 – 4.20	Very Important
4.19 – 3.40	Important
3.39 – 2.60	Neutral
2.59 – 1.80	Least Important
1.79 – 1.00	Not Important



# Summary of Hypotheses Testing

**Table 3: Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results**

	Hypothesis	Level of Significant
H1	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” between male and female students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.009 0.232 0.241 0.658 0.072
H2	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different age. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.324 0.689 0.762 0.389 0.443
H3	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different nationality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.234 0.164 0.368 0.030 0.042
H4	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” between Day and Evening program students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.827 0.754 0.750 0.005 0.594
H5	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students in different academic trimester. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.031 0.086 0.369 0.142 0.376
H6	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different grade point average. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.532 0.733 0.808 0.555 0.299
H7	There is no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics for the compositions of “lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, engagement in learning process, and student success” among students with different work experience level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesson clarity</li> <li>- Instructional variety</li> <li>- Task orientation</li> <li>- Engagement in learning process</li> <li>- Student success</li> </ul>	0.351 0.365 0.666 0.533 0.353

RECOMMENDATIONS

The more that instructors can develop these traits in themselves, the more they can hope to promote better learning among their students. The students perceive the success of studying in each subject is mostly related to the course instructor. Instructors should have a good plan which is able to support students through the whole trimester. The last characteristic, which was engagement in the learning process, might be caused by the learning culture of the graduate school. It is expected that MBA graduates have to rely mainly on themselves, and unlike undergraduates, are not spoon-fed with theories. In the MBA, students bring knowledge they received from the instructors to support their critical thinking to analyze and to solve problems employing case studies in most subjects. The instructors may provide more outside-class activities, which can help develop students' learning, which are alternative styles of teaching apart from those used in class. The university can develop a good guideline for instructors. Furthermore, these components of perceived effective teaching characteristics should be adopted in a student rating form for instructor evaluation. Allowing for more traits which students perceive their instructors should possess, should also be provided in the instructor evaluation form.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Since the subjects in this study were only MBA program students of Assumption University of Thailand, the results are limited in the generalization to other graduate programs and organizations. Similar researches should be conducted for other graduate programs of Assumption University of Thailand to investigate whether the students' perceptions of effective teaching characteristics are similar to those revealed by MBA students in this study. Secondly, studies should be conducted on graduate program students of other institutes to determine their perceptions. Thirdly, the results of this study presented no difference in perceptions of effective teaching characteristics among students with different age, grade point average (GPA), and work experience level. Future studies should determine whether these personal factors may be generalized to students at other programs and other institutes. Fourthly, studies should be conducted on instructors themselves, to determine their perceptions of effective characteristics they should possess. Finally, other factors should be included as independent and dependent variables in determining teaching characteristics.

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