

Teacher Attributes in Infusing Islamic Manners (*adab*) in the Classroom: Scale Validation

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to empirically test the validity of the 4-factor model of teacher attributes in infusing Islamic manners (*adab*) in the classroom (iMIS). The Teacher Attributes Scale (TAS) was utilized which consists of four latent variables namely: self-efficacy, values, Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment. A survey instrument was administered to 798 Muslim teachers at public primary schools in the six provinces of southern Thailand who were selected by simple random sampling. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were applied to arrive at the conclusions. The results of the study supported the four factor model generated by the data collected. TAS exhibited acceptable psychometric properties. Implications of the results are discussed.

Keywords: Teacher, Attributes, Infusing, Islamic manners, Scale Validation

INTRODUCTION

In the Islamic education process, teachers play important roles in training Muslim youths to behave ethically. According to Ibn Miskawayh (Al-Din, 1994), in his book *tahdhib al-akhlaq* (Refinement of Character), teachers as trainers must impart to the young desirable knowledge, moral, customs, and behavior, to prepare them in the manner which makes them acceptable human model within the Muslim community. Therefore, the training of *adab* or Islamic manner has been considered as an important duty for Muslim teachers (Al-Attas, 1979) since they are the

best possible behavior model for their students (Quick, 2004). However, Muslim teachers are facing greater challenges in carrying out this duty especially when they are teaching in schools with secular or Western orientation where Islamic values and the spiritual dimensions are neglected (Al-Attas, 1978; Nadwi, 1997; Ul-Islam, 2003). Hence, an understanding of how teachers perceived their performance in infusing Islamic manners (*adab*) in classrooms (iMIS) and how motivated they are towards a positive work ethics within the school will not only have an impact on the performance outcome of the teachers but will also affect the extent to which the school encourages a positive work ethics of the individual to benefit the organization.

This study attempts to investigate the nature of teachers attributes in infusing Islamic manners (*adab*) construct. Specifically, the study empirically tested to confirm the 4-factor model of teacher attributes in iMIS. The study also sought to establish the extent to which the conceptualized teacher attribute model represents the data.

TEACHER ATTRIBUTES VARIABLES

The present study is based on the findings of previous research conducted by Sa-u, Nik Abd. Rahman & Nordin (2008) on teacher's perceptions of iMIS. Their findings revealed the potential variables which found to have significant correlations with the Thai Muslim teacher's perceptions of iMIS. These four attributes included teachers' self-efficacy, teachers' values, Islamic work ethics, and organizational commitment.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Teachers' self-efficacy has been studied in the context of educational research and was found to have a positive effect on teachers' attitudes and behavior (e.g. Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004; Mathews, Boon, Flisher & Schaalma; 2006). The theory is based on Bandura's (1993) self-efficacy, which stated that normally people do not undertake tasks which they feel are beyond their capability and capacity. Instead, the more convinced they are about being able to deal effectively with various situations; the more they seized the opportunities, thus increasing the probability of their success. It can be pointed out therefore, that the greater the teachers belief in their self-efficacy in iMIS, the greater they will perform effectively in iMIS.

Teachers' Values

Values contain a moral flavor of what is right, good, or desirable (Robbins, 2003). McShane & Von Glinow (2008) pointed out that personal values guide our preferences. Previous studies (Brown, 2003; Fraser & Grootenboer, 2004; McCreery, 2004; McKinney, 2004; Nesbitt & Arweck, 2003; Revell, 2005; Schweitzer & Boschki, 2004) revealed that teachers are considered as the main agents in encouraging students to be religious in secular classroom. However, they are still facing many problems such as receiving inadequate training. Fraser & Grootenboer (2004) suggested that while teachers cannot plan and predict precisely what will foster spirituality in classrooms, teachers can cultivate a climate that enhances children's spirituality. In this sense, it shows that teachers must have their own 'good' values irrespective of whether they are living in a non-Islamic environment or not. Here, we can expect that teachers who have strong values in religion will take the iMIS as their task and responsibility to be rewarded by God which will affect their performance in iMIS accordingly.

Islamic Work Ethic

The Islamic work ethic constitutes Islam's expectations with respect to one's behavior at work which includes effort, dedication, cooperation, responsibility, social relations and creativity (Rice, 1999). Essentially, when one has a close relationship with God, one's attitudes and behaviors tend to be consistent with the rules and stipulations of the religion (Ab. Rahman, Muhamad & Othman, 2006). Hence, on this basis, a person's commitment to his or her work ethic would be expected to be significantly related to his or her iMIS.

Organizational Commitment

In Islam, commitment (*ikhlaas*) plays a strong role for inner human drive (Bin Sayeed, 2007). Failing to live up to one's commitment will create a sense of shame and may work in a negative way. In organization, commitment is believed to give rise to elements of self-induced satisfaction and motivation that are crucial for performing managerial and non-managerial functions. McShane & Von Glinow (2008) pointed out that commitment is considered the strongest form of influence tactics compared with resistance and compliant. Additionally, commitment under the Islamic work ethics was found to have a direct effect on organizational commitment (Ab. Rahman et al., 2006; Yousef, 2001). The above findings provide a minimal explanation of a linkage between the organizational commitment and their behavior in organization.

Therefore, this present study proposed a model for infusing Islamic manners (*adab*) in the classroom, which hypothesized that “teacher attributes can be explained by the 4-factor model of Self-efficacy (SE), Values (VA), Islamic Work Ethics (ET) and Organizational Commitment (CO). Figure 1 shows the observed, manifest, and the latent variables of teacher attributes.

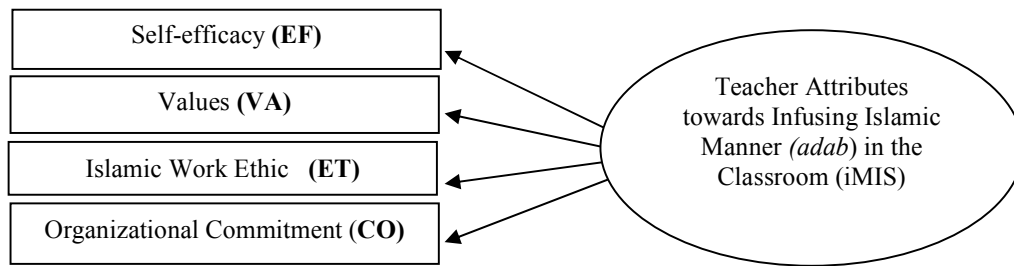


Figure 1: The Observed Manifest Variables and the Latent Variables of Teacher Attributes

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, the population was the primary school teachers working under the Office of Educational Service in the six provinces in southern Thailand. The schools of these teachers are generally operating based on Western educational model (secularized education). The teachers represent the Malay-Muslim majorities in Thailand particularly in the provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani, and Satun and also the Thai-Muslim minority provinces of Songkhla and Phatthalung. Both permanent and non-permanent teachers were selected in the study. A simple random sampling was used in selecting the participants.

The proposed Teacher Attributes Scale (TAS) was adapted from the works of Ali (1988), Hashim & Hussien (2003), and Hengpiya (2006). This questionnaire consists of: 1. teachers’ Self-efficacy in Infusing Islamic Manners (*adab*) (4 items), 2. teachers’ values of Islamic manners (4 itmes), 3. teachers’ Islamic work ethics (7 items), and 4. teachers’ organizational commitment (4 items) (see Appendix 1).

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to determine reasonable construct validity of the instrument. For cross validation, two samples were used in this study (See Appendix 2).

RESULTS

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

The first test was conducted with 237 Muslim teachers in Educational Region I of Narathiwat province (Sample 1, see Appendix 2). A PCA was conducted to validate the construct.

Table 1 shows the correlations among the 16 items supporting the use of principal component analysis (items ET9, ET10, and ET11 were excluded). Specifically, the Bartlett Sphericity Test yielded statistically significant inter-correlation $\chi^2(120) = 1435.114$, $p = .001$ with an overall MSA of .82, which exceeded the value of .60. Thus, the data matrix has sufficient correlation to justify the use of the exploratory factor analysis. The principal component analysis yielded a four –factor solution (Organizational Commitment, Self-efficacy, Islamic work ethic, and teacher’s values) representing 62.18% of the variance of the respondents’ scores on the 16-variable scale. The Eigenvalues, ranging from 1.42 to 4.80 (which is greater than 1 as required), satisfied the standards of important factors as prescribed by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham (2006). The solution extracted positive statistically significant loadings, free from factorial complexity, interpretability and variable-specific factor with four factors loading of 62.18%.

Table 1
Varimax with Kaiser Normalization Rotated of Principal Component Analysis
Factor Matrix (5 iterations): TAS (n=237)

Items	Factors	1	2	3	4	Communality
EF1	Self-efficacy		.69			.49
EF2			.81			.68
EF3			.78			.67
EF4			.71			.58
VA5	Values				.70	.61
VA6					.81	.73
VA7					.79	.69
VA8					.52	.32
ET12	Islamic Work Ethic			.73		.57
ET13				.68		.50
ET14				.80		.65
ET15				.63		.45
CO16	Organizational Commitment	.70				.58
CO17		.89				.84
CO18		.86				.79
CO19		.86				.78
Rotation Eigenvalues		4.80	2.21	1.53	1.42	
% Variance Explained		29.98	13.82	9.53	8.85	
Cumulative Variance Explained		29.98	43.80	53.33	62.18	
Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha		.88	.77	.70	.58	

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The second analysis involved 561 Muslim teachers in public primary schools in six provinces of southern Thailand (Sample 2 , see Appendix 2). CFA was conducted using AMOS 16.0, a model fitting program that determined the four-factor model and identified which of these models is supported of the hypothesized relationship was supported. CFA examines correlation among variables. To evaluate the goodness of fit of the model several commonly used fit indices (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1995), such as Discrepancy Divided by Degree of freedom (CMIN/DF), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Root Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used.

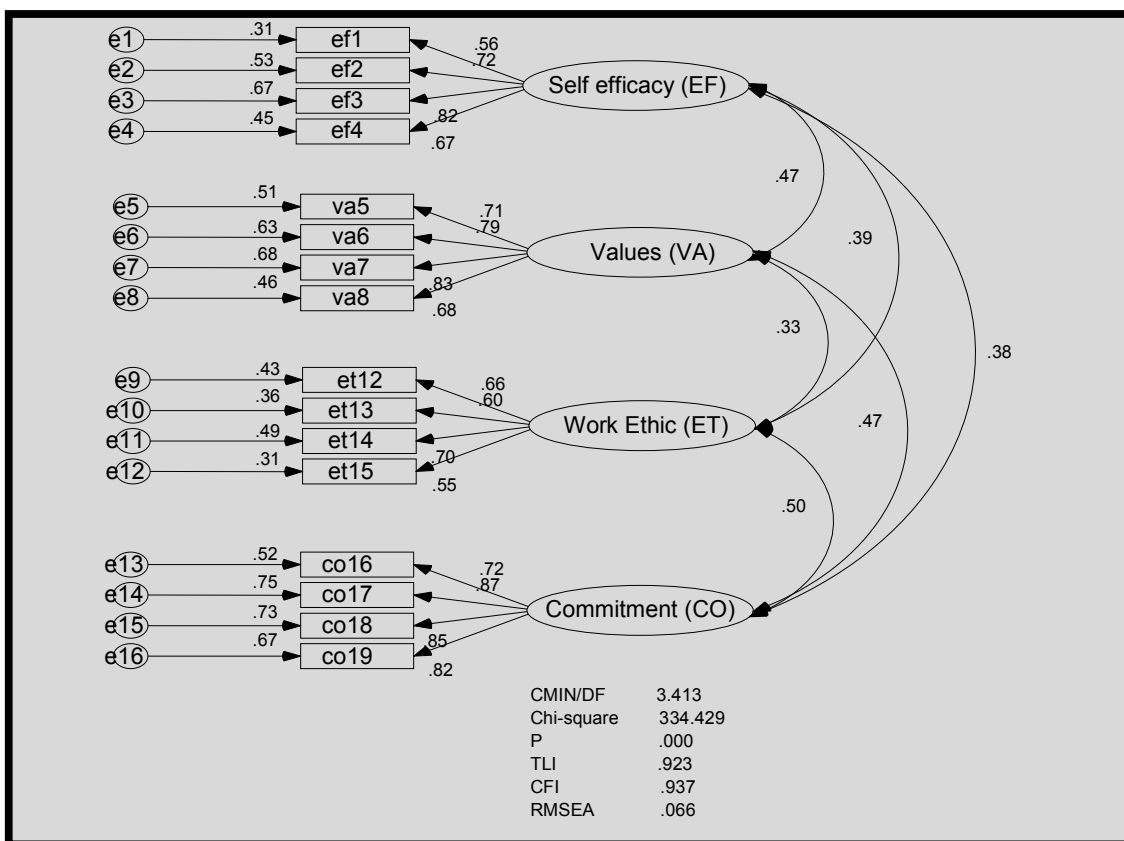


Figure 2 The Generated 4-factor model of TAS (Standardized Estimates) (n=561)

The measurement model in Figure 2 was a first order CFA designed to test the multidimensionality of the TAS. Specifically, it tested the hypothesis that the multidimensionality construct of the TAS composed of EF, VA, ET, and CO. As the evidence, the hypothesized model (Figure2) incorporated the four-inter correlated factors with 16 observed

variables. Each observed variable was hypothesized to load only into one factor. The error associated with each variable (e1 to e16) was postulated to be uncorrelated. These errors or uniqueness included measurement errors and specificity.

Assessment was made to what extent the model fit the sample data. The summaries of four-common factor model CFA results are shown in Table 2. The p-Value = .001 is lower than the expected limits ($\geq .05$). With the adjusted Chi-Square statistic was 3.413, the four –factor model was estimated to be acceptable with RMSEA (.066), TLI (.923), and CFI (.937), despite the engage value of p at .001. This is due to the sensitivity of the large sample size. The individual parameters or specifically the factor loadings were assumed and found to be greater than .5.

Table 3
Comparison of Goodness-of Fit-Measures for the Hypothesized Model

Types of goodness of fit index	Goodness of fit Statistics		
	Recommended	Hypothesized Model	Acceptable
CMIN/df	2-5	3.413	Yes
P value	Insig. ($p > .05$)	Sig. ($p = .001$)	No
TLI	.90 or more	.923	Yes
CFI	.90 or more	.937	Yes
RMSEA	.80 or less	.066	Yes

In summary, the hypothesized measurement model in Figure 2 provides a reasonable explanation of the TAS used in this study. With its four intercorrelated factors and sixteen measured variables, this model supported the hypothesis that the TAS was a multidimensional construct consisting EF, VA, ET, and CO. In general, these four factors managed to fulfill the construct validity comprising convergent validity (factor loading and variance extracted of 0.5 and above), discriminant validity (correlations among factors of less than 0.85) and acceptable reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha of above 0.7).

CONCLUSION

Results from this study revealed that the proposed teacher attributes in iMIS can be explained by 4 latent factors. There were moderate correlations between 4 constructs ranging from .33 to .50. This finding implies that teachers with only one attribute among 4 constructs tend to have other characteristics as well. These four constructs, to some extent, share similar characteristics of an Islamic teacher which was also in the findings of the study by Sa-u et al. (2008).

According to the findings, all four studied teacher attributes might partially reflect the characteristics of an Islamic teacher since all characteristics are significantly intercorrelated. For example, teachers who have a high self-efficacy in iMIS might also have a high level of iMIS values, Islamic work ethic and organizational commitment. Thus, these attributes may drive the likelihood of teachers' performance in iMIS. These results are consistent with previous findings (Phuwipirom, 1997; Sekmeti, 2007; Suri, 1993) that effective teachers shared certain characteristics that lead to success in work such as responsibility and their dedication to work ethics. This study therefore suggests that teachers who have certain characteristics in iMIS may also have particular personality traits that make them likely to engage in iMIS.

The Teacher Attribute Scale (TAS) used in the study was adapted from several sources and the results of the analysis indicated that the scales exhibit acceptable psychometric properties. Therefore, the scales are useful for those who are interested in studying the relationship between constructs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study paves the way to conduct future research to find out more on the possible attributes that may make teachers to engage in iMIS especially the Islamic teacher attributes such as the intellectual characteristics of Muslim personality (Al-Amar, 2008) and the *ummatic* personality (Othman, 2008).

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Appendix 1

Constructs and Measurement-items of The Teacher Attributes Scale (TAS)

Codes	Constructs and Measurement-items	Sources
	Construct 1 : Teachers' Self-efficacy (4items)	Hashim and Hussien (2003)
EF1	1. I have adequate skills to develop students' Islamic manners such as giving <i>salam</i> , cleanliness, table manners.	
EF2	2. I have adequate knowledge about infusing Islamic manners.	
EF3	3. I feel competent in infusing my students how to behave Islamically.	
EF4	4. Through my teaching, I have attained the objectives of developing my students' Islamic manners as intended.	
	Construct 2 : Teachers' Value (4items)	Hashim and Hussien (2003)
VA5	1. Islamic manners are useful for students' success in activities outside of school.	
VA6	2. Islamic manners are important to help improve students' achievement.	
VA7	3. Islamic manners are relevant for work success.	
VA8	4. Developing students' manners based on Islamic value helps to improve their moral reasoning.	
	Construct 3 : Islamic Work Ethic (7items)	Ali (1988)
ET9	1. More leisure is not good for society.	
ET10	2. Human relations in organizations should be emphasized and encouraged.	
ET11	3. Creative work is a source of happiness and accomplishment.	
ET12	4. Any man who works is more likely to get ahead in life.	
ET13	5. Work gives one the chance to be independent.	
ET14	6. A successful man is the one who meets deadlines at work.	
ET15	7. One should constantly work hard to meet responsibilities.	
	Construct 4 : Organizational Commitment (4items)	Hengpiya (2006)
CO16	1. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this school.	

CO17	2. I am extremely glad to choose this school over others.
CO18	3. This school has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
CO19	4. I feel a sense of pride in working for this school.

Appendix 2

Respondents' Demographic Background

Variables	Sample 1 (PCA) (n = 237)		Sample 2 (CFA) (n = 561)	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
1. Gender				
Male	84	35.4	201	38.8
Female	153	66.6	360	64.2
2. Province				
Narathiwat	237	100	140	25
Yala	-	-	120	21.4
Pattani	-	-	111	19.8
Satun	-	-	98	17.5
Songkhla	-	-	10	1.8
Phatthalung	-	-	82	14.6
3. Academic background				
Diploma	18	7.6	28	5
Bachelor degree	212	89.5	508	90.6
Master degree	5	2.1	22	3.9
Others	2	0.8	3	0.6
4. Specialization				
Education	81	34.2	190	33.9
Islamic Sciences	18	7.6	58	10.3
Mathematics	10	4.2	41	7.3
Natural Sciences	20	8.4	59	10.5
Social Sciences	43	18.1	136	24.2
Computer Sciences	6	2.5	18	3.2
Others	59	25	59	10.5
5. Age (Mean =36.3, SD =9.9)	(Mean =40.7, SD = 10.1)		(Mean =36.3, SD = 9.9)	
<25	4	1.7	32	5.7
25-30	51	21.5	190	33.9
31-35	35	14.8	106	18.9
36-40	33	13.9	54	9.6
41-45	21	8.9	51	9.1
46-50	42	17.7	57	10.2
>50	51	21.5	71	12.7
6. Teaching periods per week	(Mean = 17.1, SD =4.5)		(Mean = 17.8, SD = 4.4)	
< 10	5	2.1	25	4.5
10-15	83	35.1	131	23.4
16-20	97	40.9	268	47.8
21-25	37	15.6	122	21.7
> 25	1	0.4	3	0.5
Unknown	14	5.9	12	2.1
7. Training in infusing Islamic manners				
Have	91	38.4	264	47.1
Have not	146	61.6	297	52.9