

# THE EFFECTS OF A TEACHER’S OUTLOOK ON STUDENT’S MOTIVATION TOWARDS LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

*The current study aimed to explore the impact of teachers’ outlook in the schools of Karachi. The study employed the qualitative research methodology to seek in-depth knowledge of the issue. The students of grade VIII-X in Karachi were the population for the study. Convenience random sampling technique was used for the detailed individual interviews. For data collection a semi-structured questionnaire was prepared. The main findings were that teachers’ outlook had no direct impact on students’ performances however; significance was found with students’ motivation. The study suggests that as teachers’ outlook has a significant effect on students’ motivation and they idealize their teachers towards personality development, thus teachers out look and personality should also be given prime importance.*

**Keywords:** Outlook, Motivation, Dressing, Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

It is generally assumed that first impression is the last impression therefore, a person’s outlook is considered to be important. Usually, teachers are required to be experts in their subject therefore; it is observed that more focus has been given to the subject knowledge. Being the knowledge giver having extensive subject command is considered to be vital, however, the teacher’s outlook has not been given much importance and not been thought of that importance which it could have on students. Students not only learn the subject matter from their teachers but their teacher’s dressing and presentation could also motivate them towards learning. Therefore, only subject command is not vital but other factors also need to be considered to motivate students towards learning.

Teacher’s appearance is gaining widespread recognition among the educational researchers and practitioners due to its immense effects on students’ motivation. As when they see their teachers dressed appropriately,

they presume that they could also do the same (Kashem, 2019). Not only the teacher's expertise for a subject is vital for students' motivation but their outlook and presentation also set an image in the student's mind. It is generally observed that first impression is the last impression, in case of a teacher as soon as the educationists enter the classroom learners form a perception about the teacher by the way they dress.

Certainly, one's appearance has a lasting impact on minds, it is not only restricted to clothing but basic hygiene also holds importance in creating an individual's image. Therefore, when young learners were questioned about the importance of a teacher's outlook on their progress and motivation, they were more self-motivated to excel in those subjects where teachers were impactful. Moreover, subject expertise could not be denied but the teachers coming to teach must follow a dress code to be presentable.

## **Literature Review**

Different researchers have conducted their studies on the importance of the outlook of teachers and their impact on students. In Pakistan, teachers are mostly underpaid and are deprived off.

## **Dressing**

Dressing does not show any relation with student's learning however, the teachers' outlook leaves a learning impression on students' minds as the first impression is always everlasting. When students see their teachers with a smart outlook, they tend to assume that smart presentation is possible (Kashem, 2019). When individuals dress formally it not only defines the standards but it is also a source to attain respect, competence and setting up boundaries. Students also form opinions on the basis of teacher's dressing and classify them as professional or unprofessional (Carr, Levin and Davies, 2009). It is also statistically proven that there is an important relationship between teachers' outlook and students' motivation (Ali, 2009).

Teacher's dressing gives an insight on the personality of a teacher therefore, it is considered that teachers who dress properly seem systemized, well informed about their subject and organised; however, teachers who dress informally are judged as friendly, understanding and lively by the students (Rollman, 1980). There is a close relation found between physical appearance and task performance, moreover, the attire forms a first impression and has a strong impact on the social skills of a person (Conner, Peter and Nagasawa,

1975). Teachers have an important role in the learners' accomplishments academically. Moreover, their attributes could immensely affect students' performance (Rockoff, 2004). Generally, a person's personality could be evident through appearance when chosen wisely (Johnson, Francis and Burns, 2007). Moreover, clothing sense could also be an indicator of responsibility, power and one's potential to excel (Bowker,2001). Students perceive their teacher's formal dressing positively and give more authorization of ideas, furthermore, optimistic teachers should dress up in a professional manner to make classroom learning friendly (Cornelius and Harrenkhol, 2004).

Mixed results have been found in recent studies on the effects of teachers' professional attire (shirt and tie; dress pants/skirts/shoes). For instance, Freeburg and Workman (2010) investigated the teacher attire in American schools as shown in the media. They discovered that a teacher's appearance influences not just their career identification but also their teacher serving as an example for students. According to research by journalists, teachers serve as role models for their students, thus their appearance is crucial for conveying respect and authority (Aguilar, 2005). According to Steinburg (2003), teachers' appearance helps the school's reputation in the community by promoting a professional and favourable one.

Jones (2006) concurs that students' first perceptions of a teacher's professionalism are based on their voice, look, and words. According to other researchers, children usually view professional clothing on teachers favourably compared to informal clothing.

## **Personality**

The Latin word "persona," which means "mask," is where the term "personality" originates. According to different researchers, it has different definitions. For instance, personality is the dynamic arrangement of the psychophysical systems that define an individual's qualities, conduct, and cognition (Allport, 1961). A person is distinguished from others by their unique combination of traits. (Weinberg and Gould, 1999).

Additionally, personality has an impact on how people behave, think, feel, and approach socialisation and their way of life. In a larger sense, personality refers to the characteristic of the mind and body that distinguishes one from the other and governs thoughts, feelings, and the way in which one thinks and organises information. The teacher's attitude toward the students affects

their ability to learn. When students have opportunities, they are significantly more likely to learn.

### **Personality Types**

Therefore, the instructor should encourage their ability to communicate while being calm, patient, and persistent. To help the students advance their knowledge and abilities in all subject areas, he should have a positive demeanour. As a consequence, they won't be badly impacted by the teacher's personality. Analysing a teacher's personality involves addressing both introverted and extroverted personality types. An introverted teacher, for instance, is more guarded and stays to themselves. He also likes to be alone and is typically reticent. However, an extrovert teacher is one who is less rigorous, more conversational, and adept at getting along with others, particularly his students. An extrovert instructor is also open-minded, self-assured, and focused on the outside world. As a result, we may assert that an extrovert teacher is still essential, that is, a teacher who has the potential for extensive empathy and deep inner touch. It is an expression of one's "inner being" or "psychological being." (Maazouzi, 2019).

The skills and traits required to be a successful teacher are the same ones that characterise a good education. Eight fundamental qualities make up a good teacher: material knowledge, decision-making, the capacity for critical thought and problem solving, self-awareness and self-correction, reflection, identification of students' needs as learners, application of new findings in education, teaching and communication skills.

These characteristics can be grouped into two categories, the critical-thinking educator and the self-reliant educator (Ari, 2008). A teacher who understands that the nature of knowledge and skills directly impacts his or her students and environment takes responsibility for his or her own knowledge and abilities, cultivates strong connections with students, and can communicate these to students in an effective manner.

### **Teachers' Communication**

It is impossible to ignore the role that teachers have in their students' achievement and personality development during this entire process. The teacher shapes students' lives by communicating with them in a positive or negative manner and by how this is reflected in their behaviour. This can have a positive or negative impact on how they view themselves or other

people in general, which can affect how well they can communicate, conduct research, and be creative (Ataunal, 2003). Students directly mimic and adopt instructors' attitudes and behaviours, which places a heavy burden on educators. Studies conducted now clearly demonstrate the impact on pupils of teacher-student interactions, instructors' approaches to students, and particularly the impact of their dressing.

Students directly mimic and adopt instructors' attitudes and behaviours, which places a heavy burden on educators. Studies conducted now clearly demonstrate the impact on students of interactions between instructors and students, approaches teachers take toward students, and particularly how students perceive these things. The ability of a teacher to engage with pupils and exhibit positive conduct, such as by comprehending their thoughts, demonstrating interest, and expressing gratitude, boosts students' motivation and achievement. Teachers set an example for their pupils by modelling appropriate conduct and attitude while attempting to provide knowledge, experiences, and behaviour on a particular topic to students at a certain developmental stage. Negative attitudes result in failure, whereas positive attitudes do (Ulug, Ozden and Eryilmaz, 2011).

The teacher's conduct and method are: Success results from having a positive attitude, whereas failure results from having a negative attitude. Focusing on specific teaching behaviours such as providing comments on students' work, praising, wanting to listen to students, and showing interest in the research on the impact of good teacher behaviour on students' motivation levels (Frymier, 1993). According to the study's findings, teachers' nonverbal behaviours—such as smiling, adopting a relaxed posture, and displaying a variety of facial expressions—have a greater impact on students' learning than the actual subject matter of the lesson. The teacher's attitude is the primary influence on student achievement; other elements, such as the student's work, also have an impact (Yavuzer, 2000).

## **Clothing**

The clothes one wears affect the opinion of the viewer whether it is a student or any stranger; therefore, these are more than just attire. The way of dressing enforces immensely favourable belief of the likeness and positive behaviour pattern of the students. An optimistic imprint has a constructive mesosphere of learning in students' minds (Kashem, 2019). Dressing formally is not only a part of following norms. The importance of wearing

formal attire extends beyond simply adhering to social rules to gaining respect, maintaining professionalism, and maintaining social distance. In a previous study, students' judgments of what constitutes "professional" and "unprofessional" clothes varied (Carr, Lavin and Davies, 2009). Dress has an effect on the processing style, which evaluates changes in how objects, people, and events are perceived, in addition to its cognitive effects (Slepian and Gold, 2015). Clothing conveys how people are treated and is influenced by how others see us (Reid and Morrow, 1997). A person is characterised as reasonable and competent when wearing professional attire, but friendly and laid-back when wearing informal apparel (Peluchette and Karl, 2007). Gender has no impact on faculty assessments, according to Tatro, however, numerous factors with a very small impact frequently affect students' ratings (Bassett, Staton-Spicer, and Whitehead, 1979).

Based on what the teachers were wearing, participants made assumptions about other people, attributing these assumptions to forceful appearance dimensions or sociable appearance dimensions. Although wearing a suit boosts views of authority, friendliness, and attractiveness (Brase and Richmond, 2004) professional women are expected to wear a suit more frequently than men. Regarding appearance, teacher credibility consists of three elements: plausibility, dependability, and goodwill (Kwon and Hillery, 1998). However, more emphasis is placed on authority, credibility, and student happiness (Teven and Herring, 2005). Once more, attire and dress code can affect how others view their standing (Fortenberry et. ell, 1978). Robertson once more distinguished between the manifestations of a person's dress code based on generational distinctions.

Herring (2005) emphasised that for a self-presentation to be successful, the audience (i.e., the instructor) must be persuaded of the presentation's genuineness. For this to be successful, even the impressionist must be aware of what his audience anticipates, understand how judgments are formed, and have sensitivity to the needs of the particular social environment. Meaning that new students must rapidly grasp the role they must play, the position they must fill, and the regulations they must abide by in order to successfully manage the needs and expectations of school. They must understand how an institution operates and must gain the required organisational expertise. Some students may have an innate sense of how to provide a good first impression.

Regardless of whether the person is conscious of it, presenting oneself

is a necessary component of all social interactions. In order to define the situation, set expectations, and adjust their own behaviour accordingly, people who engage in social interactions continually seek information from one another. The desire to control how others perceive them may arise from a belief that the perceptions others have of them are relevant to their ability to accomplish a particular goal that is valuable or important to them, or from a need to bridge the gap between the perceptions they want others to have of them and the perceptions they believe others actually hold of them.

In a quasi-replication of the Melville and Maddalozzo studies (1988) and Bryant and Curtner-Smith (2008), Pennington and Coworkers (2020) found that students as young as nine years old have stereotypes about physical educators based on their age, and that they preferred and had higher perceptions of a younger teacher than one who appeared to be older while teaching the same lesson (Pennington, Curtner-Smith, and Wind, 2020).

A small number of studies in sport pedagogy have attempted to ascertain whether a physical education (PE) teacher's apparent level of fitness has any impact on student learning or an impact on students' perceptions of the teacher's teaching quality. These studies were motivated by a number of 1970s studies that found that teachers' physical appearance and choice of clothing had an impact on students' perceptions of educators' teaching quality (Feshbach, 1972; Landers, 1973).

Several physical education scholars study the influence of teachers' physical perspective on the Acquisition of Knowledge and Awareness in Sports Students teacher. Fundamental research along this line suggests that teachers' appearance, that is, the clothing choices influenced student perceptions of educator teaching quality.

Still, only a relatively limited amount of research has examined the effects a Look has on Teacher Effectiveness. Informed by several studies done in the 1970s that found students' evaluations of instructors' teaching ability were influenced by their physical appearance and wardrobe choices (Feshbach, 1972; Landers, 1973; Molloy, 1975; Chaikin, Gillen, and Derlega).

The question of whether a physical education teacher's apparent level of fitness has any bearing on students' learning or their perceptions of the teacher has been addressed in a small number of sport pedagogy studies (Melville and Maddalozzo, 1988; Thomson, 1996; Dean, Adams, and Comeau, 2005). The students played one of two very identical video recordings of a physical

educator presenting and discussing fitness-related issues to two randomly selected high school classrooms (Melville and Maddalozzo, 1988).

## **Aesthetics**

Aesthetic preferences are recognized to be vital in determining how people are seen and can have a big impact on daily social decisions (Kiiski, Cullen, Clavin and Newell, 2016). In many facets of our lives, including dating and relationship suitors and elected officials, our subjective partiality for others dictates our decisions, even when more logical and objective information is available (Langlois, Kalakanis, Rubenstein, Larson, Hallam and Smoot, 2000; Cornwell, Smith, Boothroyd, Moore, Davis, Stirrat and Perrett, 2006; Olivola, Funk & Todorov, 2014). These potentially negative biases in educational and pedagogical theories have an impact on students' learning as well as their evaluations of the instructors' competence and capacity as role models (Pennington et al., 2020).

Aesthetic preferences may be sculpted and developed by even a momentary glance at a person we may have never met (Albright, Kenny and Malloy, 1988). These preferences are most frequently influenced by facial physical traits and physical appearance (Valentine, Darling and Donnelly, 2004). This implies the significance of comprehending how these quick perceptions affect judgement in regular social situations. Numerous social psychology researches that focus on face perception demand for a better understanding of the ageing-related variables that influence attitudes and prejudice. By doing this, we may learn more about the perceptual basis of social happenings in real-world circumstances (Langlois et al., 2000; Cornwell et al., 2006; Olivola et al., 2014)

The idea that instructors significantly influence students' learning and accomplishment is supported by a substantial body of research in the educational literature (Sadeghi and Nikou, 2012). Surprisingly, however, experts have paid little attention to the influences of instructors' traits on students' communication skills in the context of learning and mastering English (Borg, 2007). So far, however, little if any empirical data exists to enable us to establish which set of English as a Foreign Language instructors' attributes corresponds with favourable students' learning results (Akbari and Allvar, 2010).

The importance of personality traits in these processes have been



underscored by research on the nature of language acquisition and instruction, new research in the subject of language.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study was framed to find out whether teachers' outlook has an impact on student's motivation and performance. The objective set for this research was to explore the effects of the teacher's outlook on students' motivation towards learning. The study was outlined to look for the relationship between teachers' outlook and students' motivation and performance amongst the students of grade VIII-X. The research also aimed to explore students' perception about their teachers' outlook along with the impact it has on their attitude towards learning.

### **Research Question**

In order to find out the significance of teachers' outlook and its impact on students motivation and performance amongst the students of Grade VIII-X, this study posits the following research questions:

- How does a teacher's dressing or outlook affects on students' motivation and performance?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data collected for this research was through interviews. There are multiple ways through which this could be done however, this phase also depends on the type of research opted (Morgan and Harmon, 2001). The sampling techniques and the types of research were vital to proceed with the research. Considering the research types; there are two types of research methods: qualitative and quantitative. Since this research aims at finding the impact and the effects of the teacher's outlook and collects information through open ended questions therefore, it is qualitative research aimed towards finding the impact that a teacher's outlook has on the learners. To find out about the impact of teachers' outlook different schools were contacted to gather data. The schools gave an appointment to visit where randomly students were selected of the respective grade for interviews. At first, the permission forms were signed by the schools' administration and parents. The participants were chosen whose parents gave permission and showed their own interest in participating in the study voluntarily. The participants consent was taken before the research as each interviewee signed a letter of

consent before sharing their views. Data was collected by visiting different schools and conducting one to one interviews, each interview lasting around 30 minutes. Different institutions emphasise the importance of a teacher's outlook; some of them tend to complain about the cooperation of teachers in this regard (Sheikh, 2019). They not only believe that a teacher must be equipped with subject expertise which is the primary requirement however, appearance and the way they dress is also crucial therefore, could not be neglected. Therefore, the teachers present in the institutes were also been observed and few participants mentioned the names of their teachers as well who left an impact on their personality.

### **Tool**

A research tool is used to measure a variable or to collect data. A semi structured questionnaire with a total of eleven questions was used. The questions were open ended where the purpose was to explore the samples' viewpoint. All data collected through interviews from the students of Grade VIII-X were recorded and transcribed.

### **Participants and Data Collections**

The participants of this research were the students of Grade VIII-X studying in the schools in Karachi. However, this group of participants was derived from the population of the students studying in different schools in Karachi Central. To further funnel it down, since the research focuses on the students studying in grade VIII-X therefore, children in all the schools in Karachi were the considerable population for this research. However, sampling technique for choosing certain individuals or a small portion of the population in order to draw conclusions about the population as a whole was used. A portion of the population that has been chosen to be representative of the entire population is referred to as a sample. Only the real population as defined by the sample frame is the subject of generalisations. Convenience/ purposeful sampling, quota sampling, and other non-probability sampling methods (Acharya et. al, 2013). Therefore, for this study convenience random sampling techniques were used to draw the sample from the given population for research. The reason for choosing this technique was the researcher's access to these schools and time constraint. Therefore, a total of ten students of different private schools between grades VIII-X were considered to be part of this study. Individual interviews were conducted for about half an hour each approximately.

## **Ethical and Legal Considerations**

Prior permission was taken, and consent forms were sent out to the participants. For the protection of personal and institutional privacy, the names are not disclosed.

## **Data Analysis and Results**

The data was analysed, where the large chunked collected data is divided in fragments to make it meaningful and derive results. Data was recorded, all the interviews were transcribed therefore, results were derived after analysing the data. After analysis the results portrayed a clear picture about the effects that the outlook has on the students' motivation and their performance. It was evident that students were more inclined and admired those teachers who presented themselves well; however, the teacher's outlook did not show any direct relation to their performance in a particular subject. They idealised their teachers and learnt from their dressing sense whereas, it did not compel them to perform well in a particular subject.

### **Teachers' Age**

Teacher's age played a vital role in the student's motivation as they were of the perception that young teachers dress well and they could easily relate to their teacher. As during an interview a student commented, "I really like my young English teacher as she wears vibrant colours and modern cuts which make me work hard and be attentive in her class." It was also derived that the learners guessed their teachers' age by their dressing too. Another student shared, "Since we cannot ask personal questions like age, family so directly with our teachers therefore, their dressing sense gives us an idea about their age." The students showed their interest in the subjects which are taught by young and smart teachers.

### **Clothing**

The most common response from all the students was dressing; especially clothing and hygiene are the factors that define the teachers' personality. A student said, "As the day passes I get tired of studying so when I see my teacher properly dressed up and presentable it gives me positivity to attend the class." Since teachers are the role models and represent the school therefore, effective teaching style and the teachers' outlook were the key factors that were derived after analysing the data as the contributors towards students' motivation for learning.

## **Performance**

Students' performance is dependent on multiple factors as mentioned by the student, "My performance or score in any subject is my hard work, my teacher's dressing does not have anything to do with it." Another student also shared the same view as, "I like my teachers who are presentable but my grades are high or low because of my interest in the subject." Therefore, there was not any direct relationship seen of teachers' outlook on students' performance as upon inquiry it was concluded that there are multiple other factors like student's interest in studies and their environment etc. that bring out favourable performance out of a learner.

## **Gender**

Students preferred their male teachers to be dressed in formal attire, 6/10 students agreed that male teachers who dressed in western clothes were more inspiring as compared to the one who wore eastern clothes, that is, shalwar kameez. Only the religious studies teacher was excluded from this conclusion as students believed that if the religious studies teacher would dress in an eastern way that would be acceptable however, in the schools where the research was conducted not many teachers were found wearing eastern clothes. Students liked those female teachers who dressed in a modern way and irrespective of the students' gender.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The aim of the research was to find the effect of teachers' outlook on student motivation and performance, therefore, after the research it was concluded that teacher's outlook does have an effect on motivation however, the students opine that it does not affect directly on their performances. At the end of the research, after interpreting the results it could be recommended that management must pay attention to the teacher's outlook irrespective of their subject. Schools must have a detailed section on dress code in the code of conduct which teachers could refer to. Further, teachers are a role model therefore; they must be presentable which can impact positively towards learners' motivation. Educational institutions should pay attention to its staff presentation; workshops on personal grooming could be beneficial. Workshops do not only provide a learning platform but a chance for teachers to socialize and discuss problems faced by them at the schools. Further, students get inspired by their teachers so teachers should pay attention to their

dressings as they could provide guidance to their students to be presentable professionally. To make teachers understand the importance of their dressing and outlook the management can introduce concepts like “Well Dressed Employee of the Month.” These initiatives could make a difference where teachers can understand the importance of being well dressed and how it encourages students positively.

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