

Personality Traits of an Ideal Teacher: A Case of COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Pakistan

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Abstract

This article explores the personality traits of an ideal teacher. It argues that higher discrimination in teacher-students perceptions may lead to dissatisfaction, lower students' performance and ultimately students' loss. COMSATS Institute of Information Technology was selected as case study. Data was collected through purposely-designed questionnaire containing nineteen attributes covering various aspects of personality of an ideal teacher. Responses of eighty-seven faculty members and three hundred and one students from various departments were finally selected for analysis purpose.

The results show that both faculty and students like teacher who is committed, having strong command on communication skills and have an ability to deal with different students. Personality traits like accommodating and agreeable attitudes and criticizing students are highly undesirable. Further, students prefer teacher who can assist them in different situations and make appropriate use of modern technology such as multimedia in education.

Introduction

This research aims to analyze the perceptions of faculty members and students towards the personality traits of an ideal teacher. The issue assumes importance in Pakistan especially with the emergence of eighty-two new universities and degree awarding status since 1990¹. Mushroom growth in the number of universities provides students' opportunities to get admissions which best meet their expectations (Kaleem and Rahmatullah, 2004). Hill, 1995 termed higher education as "pure science" which can be distinguished from person to person. He believed that in higher education the interaction between students and the staff and their influence on each other is a powerful determinant of overall satisfaction. Charles, 2001 recommended that students should be considered as the products of the colleges. The experienced faculty and staff know how to equip the students so that they can be the best in business environment.

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A number of studies have been carried out to check the impacts of faculty personality traits and its affect on students' performance; Deci and Ryan 1985, Ali and Begum 1993, McDaniel, 1994, Selina 2004. Researchers like Ju, *at al.*, 2005 also studied the affect of a teacher's behavior on students' learning. This article desires to take the research by studying variables covering various aspects of personality traits of an ideal teacher in case of Pakistan. The outcomes may help the higher management of the educational institutes to improve teachers' evaluation and selection criteria at their respective levels.

Literature Review

Personality traits of a good teacher and its impacts on students' performance are integrated and help in improving the overall educational quality. Coate, 1990 defined "quality is what our customers tell us it is not what we say it is." Nicholls, 1995 concluded that whether the "customer" is an individual student or a company, a greater understanding of buyer behavior is needed. Ali and Begum, 1993 studied some Bangladeshi Primary schools and seen that students intrinsic motivation is absolutely necessary to pursue high academic goals.

Deci and Ryan, 1985 presented the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, which argues that adults tend to have a general orientation towards dealing with children that can be viewed as ranging from supporting the children's autonomy to controlling the children's behavior. Teachers who tend to motivate behavior through the use of external controls as rewards and comparisons are considered controlling, whereas those who sought to minimize salient external controls and instead attempt to take the student's internal frame of reference with respect to problems, ideas and initiatives are considered as autonomy supportive.

Cannon and Sheth, 1994 recommended that management and faculty should set quality standards for all components of the service delivery system to ensure that student expectations are met. Swartz and Brown, 1989 give high importance to students' expectations in the establishment of quality standards, suggested internal research in order to ensure faculty expectations of service are closely tied to students' expectations. Swartz and Brown argued that expectations should be examined and analyzed so as to set standards from the customers' perspective. McDaniel, 1994 observed that authority of a teacher is the most positive element in controlling the class and in maximizing the students learning. He pointed three requirements for which one needs to be careful about (a) rules should be clear and firm; (b) teachers must use action not anger to control behavior; (c) provide structure for the classroom and the lesson. Lunenburg and Mankowsky, 2000 defined authoritarian educators said that these educators manifest suspicion and distrust of pupils, often addressing them in an unpleasant and angry manner. They react personally

and judgmentally toward students who misbehave.

Gordon, 2000 in her research focused on traits of teachers' personality that are favored or more noticed by students during evaluation. She pointed out nine personality traits agreed upon by both faculty and students. On the basis of her findings she created a list of do's and don'ts for the teachers. Powell and Peel, 2000 found that early identification of weaknesses in academic career and intervention has marked impacts on retention, improved academic performance, institutional and course commitment.

Stronge, 2002 examined the common features between INTASC (a minimum standard for new teachers) and SERVE performance indicators (a higher standard measure). He determined the necessary qualities for an effective teacher and then categorized into common features and weaker connections. Wilkson *at al.*, 2000 developed relationship between the students' performance on the basis of criterion of reading, language arts, and mathematics tests with the achievement of teacher performance measures by principals, students, and self-rating by the teachers. The study demonstrated that students rating constitute better feedback than the rating of others when the focus is the student performance.

Dorman, 2002 advocated that classroom environment is an important avenue of study for classroom teachers and school administrators who are interested in understanding the human dimensions of classrooms. Deaney *at al.*, 2003 explored students' views towards the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. They concluded that use of ICT no doubt helps achieve impressive environment in the classroom but attention towards students' voice may help us to determine how, and where judicious pedagogical exploitation of such tools can be most advantageous to the learners. Selina, 2003 considered that a positive classroom environment is the most important factor leading students' towards social motivation which according to him in turn leads to academic motivation.

DeBoer and Manon, 2004 developed a linear model to link professional development of teacher and Mathematical learning of the students. They concluded that professional development and curriculum materials lead to better knowledge, skills and attitude of teachers, which directly affects student performance and learning. Earnest, 2004 in this longitudinal study implemented over four years concluded that continuous curriculum and teachers training programs have direct impacts on students learning in achievable and practiced ways.

Ulmer, 2005 found that the cognitive behavior of teachers in the classrooms increase practical performance of students. Ju *at al.*, 2005 concluded that socially supportive and intelligent instructors have more impacts on the performance of their learners as compared to socially competitive and dull instructors. Salsali, 2005 concluded that both the

educators and students stressed on systematic and continuous evaluation as well as staff development as the primary objectives for the faculty evaluation process.

Research Issues:

The central research issues of this study are:

- Knowing discrepancies in faculty and students perceptions towards personality traits of an ideal teacher.
- Knowing the proportion of most desired and least desired variables in teachers' evaluation.
- Knowing the major determinants of teacher personality traits affecting students' perceptions.

Methodology

A convenient sample technique across different departments of COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) was adopted. Five departments were selected in total: Management Sciences, Computer Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Mathematics. Target respondents were the faculty and the students of the respective departments. The required data was collected through specifically designed questionnaire. Trained students under the supervision of an author distributed to and collected back the questionnaires simultaneously. The study finally collected 87 responses from the faculty and 301 from students representing the sample population of CIIT.

The questionnaire covered 19 factors/attributes in total. The factors were selected from the relevant literature on personality traits of an ideal teacher, discussion with senior faculty and students of different departments. In answering the questions, respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and their names were not published. Lastly, five-point Likert type questionnaire was designed ranging factors from 1 stands for "not important at all" to 5 for "very important".

The profiles of the personal characteristics of the sample population (faculty and students) are outlined in table 1. The faculty data shows that 77.0% and 23.0% of the respondents are male and female respectively. Qualification based classification of faculty includes Bachelors degree holders are 12.60%, Masters Degree holders are 74.70% and PhD degree holders are 12.60%. Sixty-seven of the faculty members hold local degrees; ten members hold foreign degrees while another ten members hold degrees from both local and foreign universities. The data also shows that 81.61% of the faculty members do not have research publications, 6.90% of the total faculty members have one or two publications and 10.34% hold more than four publications on their resume.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Characteristics of the Respondents

Faculty Profile			Students Profile		
	N	Percentage		N	Percentage
Gender			Gender		
Male	67	77.00		184	61.10
Female	20	23.00	Male	117	39.90
			Female		
Qualification			Qualification		
Bachelor	11	12.60	Bachelor	191	63.90
Master	65	74.70	Master	108	35.90
PhD	11	12.60	PhD	2	0.70
Degree Awarded			Age (Years)		
Local	67	77.00	15 – 20	157	52.20
Foreign	10	11.50	21 – 25	140	46.50
Both	10	11.50	26 – 30	4	1.30
			> 30	0	
Designation			Usual Academic Grades		
Lecturer	46	52.87	50% - 59%	7	2.30
Assistant Professor	25	28.74	60% - 69%	87	28.90
Associate Professor	4	4.60	70% - 79%	167	55.50
Professor	12	13.79	80% and Above	40	13.30
Research papers			Family's monthly Income (Rs)		
Nil	71	81.61	< 10,000	32	10.60
1-2	6	6.90	11,000 – 20,000	73	24.30
3-4	1	1.15	21,000 – 30,000	91	30.20
> 4	9	10.34	> 30,000	104	34.90

Data in case of students indicates that 61.0% and 39.0% are male and female respectively. This may be due to the nature of society where males normally join the professional institutions. Most of the respondents

(63.45%) are currently enrolled in Bachelor degree program while 35.85% and 0.70% are enrolled in Master and PhD degree programs respectively. The data also shows that 52.2% and 46.5% of the respondents are between 15 to 20 years and 21 to 25 years old respectively. Further 30.20% of the sample respondents belong to family income between 21,000 and 30,000 per month and 34.90% belong to family income greater than 30,000 per month.

Table 2
Reliability Analysis

Faculty			Students		
Cases	No of Items	Alpha	Cases	No of Items	Alpha
87	19	0.884	301	19	0.899

Table 2 is computed to analyze the reliability and internal coherence of scale. Cronbach's Alpha is applied. The results show that Alpha scores are 0.884 and 0.899 for existing perceptions of faculty and students respectively towards personality traits of an ideal teacher. In perception studies these scores are highly satisfactory and indicate the respondent's confidence and understanding towards study scale.

The article then examines whether significant gap between faculty and students perceptions towards teacher personality traits exist or not. Paired sample t test is applied to achieve the desired results which are presented in table 3. The results show that significant gap exists in case of nine statements ($p < .05$) out of the total number of nineteen statements. Further differences in mean in case of all significant statements appear with positive signs except in case of statement three "*a good teacher must be flexible and accommodating*" (-0.563), statement sixteen "*a good teacher must have an ability to assist students in difficult situations*" (-0.230) and statement eighteen "*a good teacher must use organized teaching aids (multimedia etc.)*" (-0.414). The negative signs in parentheses indicate high level of students' preferences for the mentioned statements when compared with the faculty members.

Factor analysis highlights the interrelationship among large numbers of variables. The technique condenses the information from large number of variables into a smaller set of factors with a minimum loss of information. The higher the loading value the stronger the affiliation of the item to a specific factor. According to Othman and Owen [24], a typical factor analysis suggests answers to three questions: (a) How many different factors or variables are needed to explain the pattern of relationships among these variables? (b) What is the nature of those factors? (c) How well do the hypothesized factors explain the observed data?

Table 3
Paired sample t Test

No	Statements	Mean Diff	S. D	Sig
1	A good teacher should be very committed to his profession.	0.322	0.970	0.003
2	A good teacher should be highly enthusiastic.	0.471	1.293	0.001
3	A good teacher must be flexible and accommodating.	-0.563	1.523	0.001
4	A good teacher must criticize students positively.	0.310	1.297	0.028
5	A good teacher should have an optimistic and positive personality.	0.356	1.321	0.014
6	A good teacher should have a groomed and strong personality.	0.149	1.385	0.317
7	A good teacher must assess students without biasness.	0.494	1.180	0.000
8	A good teacher must enhance students emotional and intelligence level.	0.172	1.250	0.202
9	A good teacher must create conducive learning environment in the class.	0.046	1.109	0.700
10	A good teacher must be self disciplined for rules and regulations	0.034	1.426	0.822
11	A good teacher must have appropriate interpersonal relationship with students	0.322	1.325	0.026
12	A good teacher should have strong communication skills.	0.115	0.982	0.278
13	A good teacher must effectively manage the class discipline.	-0.011	1.105	0.923
14	A good teacher must have an ability to deal with different students.	0.080	1.026	0.466
15	A good teacher must be creative and thorough in teaching strategies.	0.092	1.053	0.417
16	A good teacher must have an ability to assist students in difficult situations.	-0.230	1.107	0.056
17	A good teacher should mold students into responsible citizens of society.	-0.069	1.054	0.543
18	A good teacher must use organized teaching aids (multimedia etc.).	-0.414	1.499	0.012
19	A good teacher must be available to students during consultation hours.	-0.069	1.256	0.610

Table 4 presents factor analysis results using varimax rotation method. Scores above 0.50 are considered significant and mentioned in the

results. In loading factor one (F1) statements four (0.728), nine (0.889), thirteen (0.821) and fourteen (0.655) appear significant in both faculty and students' cases respectively. Students like teacher who creates conducive

Table 4
Factor Analysis

No	Statements	Faculty			Students		
		Factors Loading					
		F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3
1	A good teacher should be very committed to his profession.		0.883			0.773	
2	A good teacher should be highly enthusiastic.					0.560	
3	A good teacher must be flexible and accommodating.						
4	A good teacher must criticize students positively.	0.728			0.535		
5	A good teacher should have an optimistic and positive personality.					0.695	
6	A good teacher should have a groomed and strong personality.		0.671			0.766	
7	A good teacher must assess students without biasness.		0.778				
8	A good teacher must enhance students emotional and intelligence level.				0.707		
9	A good teacher must create conducive learning environment in the class.	0.889			0.565		
10	A good teacher must be self disciplined for rules and regulations						
11	A good teacher must have appropriate interpersonal relationship with students						
12	A good teacher should have strong communication skills.				0.527		
13	A good teacher must effectively manage the class discipline.	0.821			0.568		
14	A good teacher must have an ability to deal with different students.	0.655			0.554		
15	A good teacher must be creative and thorough in teaching strategies.		0.724			0.583	
16	A good teacher must have an ability to assist students in difficult situations.		0.524			0.672	
17	A good teacher should mold students into responsible citizens of society.		0.561			0.694	
18	A good teacher must use organized teaching aids (multimedia etc.).						0.732
19	A good teacher must be available to students during consultation hours.			0.678			0.681

and learning environment, effectively manage discipline in the classroom and has an ability to deal with different students. Mentioned above personality traits deal with the “classroom environment”.

Table 5
Five Most and Least Desired Personality Traits in terms of Mean Scores

Most Desired Personality Traits			
Faculty		Students	
Mean	Statements	Mean	Statements
4.86	<i>A good teacher should be very committed to his profession</i>	4.53	<i>A good teacher should be very committed to his profession</i>
4.75	A good teacher must assess students without biasness	4.49	A good teacher must be available to students during consultation hours.
4.63	A good teacher should have an optimistic and positive personality.	4.46	<i>A good teacher should have strong communication skills.</i>
4.63	<i>A good teacher should have strong communication skills.</i>	4.42	<i>A good teacher must have an ability to deal with different students.</i>
4.51	<i>A good teacher must have an ability to deal with different students.</i>	4.36	A good teacher must create conducive learning environment in the class.
Least Desired Personality Traits			
Mean	Statements	Mean	Statements
3.54	A good teacher must use organized teaching aids (multimedia etc.).	3.91	<i>A good teacher should have a groomed and strong personality.</i>
3.67	<i>A good teacher must be flexible and accommodating.</i>	3.97	A good teacher must be self disciplined for rules and regulations
4.14	A good teacher must have an ability to assist students in difficult situations.	4.01	A good teacher should be highly enthusiastic.
4.25	<i>A good teacher should have a groomed and strong personality.</i>	4.09	<i>A good teacher must be flexible and accommodating.</i>
4.25	<i>A good teacher must criticize students positively</i>	4.15	<i>A good teacher must criticize students positively</i>

Loading factor F2 deals with the traits related to the “personality” of a teacher. The results conclude that an ideal has well groomed and creative personality. He must access students without biasness and develops through teaching strategies. The last loading factor F3 covers variables related to “teaching environment”. Both faculty and students prefer teacher who is available during the consultation hours and understand the appropriate usage of information technology in education.

Analysis is also developed in a more summarized form, computing the five most important and five least important variables of personality traits of a teacher. Table 5 outlines the mean score in ascending hierarchy. The results show that three statements “*a good teacher should be very committed to his profession, a good teacher should have strong communication skills and a good teacher must have an ability to deal with different students*” appear similar in most desired personality traits. The discrepancies exist in the remaining two statements. Students also prefer teacher who is available during the consultations hours (4.49) and who creates conducive learning environment in the classroom (4.36).

In case of least desired personality traits again three statements appear similar in case of faculty and students. Both groups give least weightage to “*a good teacher must be flexible and accommodating, a good teacher should have a groomed and strong personality and a good teacher must criticize students positively*”. Faculty further considered statement “*a good teacher must use organized teaching aids (multimedia etc.) (3.54)*” and statement “*a good teacher must have an ability to assist students in difficult situations (4.14)*” as least desired. Similarly, students give less preference to statement “*a good teacher must be self disciplined for rules and regulations (3.97)*” and statement “*a good teacher should be highly enthusiastic (4.01)*”.

Conclusion

Education sector in Pakistan has passed through a phase of rapid changes during the last decade especially with the emergence of new universities both in the public and private sector. This study tries to find out the personality traits of an ideal teacher. A specific purpose build questionnaire was designed which contains nineteen attributes covering different aspects of an ideal teacher personality. The questionnaire was distributed and responses were collected through trained students. The study selected CIIT, Lahore Camps as case study and collected reaction views from both the faculty and the students. Eighty-seven responses from the faculty and three hundred and one responses from the students were finally analyzed. Respondents’ profiles as presented in table 01 outlined four areas: gender, qualification, degree awarded and designation in case of faculty and gender, qualification, age and family income in case of students.

Cronbach’s Alpha test is applied to check the reliability of the data. Table 2 shows Alpha score of 0.884 in case of faculty and 0.899 in case of

students. Both figures fall in the acceptable region. Paired sample T test is applied to find discrepancies in faculty and students perceptions towards the personality traits of an ideal teacher. Table 3 indicates that significant gap between faculty and students' perceptions exist in case of nine attributes out of total number of nineteen. Among significant variables three values (mean differences) appear with negative signs. It implies that students as compared to faculty members give more weightage to the teacher who is agreeable and accommodating, ability to deal with different students and has an ability to use modern technology in education. Factor analysis results are presented in table 4. The outcomes can be divided into three sub-groups (a) "class room environment" (discipline, conducive and learning environment in the classroom), (b) "personality" (creative, neutral and well groomed), (c) "teaching methodology" (consultation after class and use of technology like multimedia in the class).

Finally, table 5 ranks variables into five most and least desired personality traits in terms of mean scores. Both faculty and students prefer teacher who is committed to his profession, has good command on communication skills and has an ability to deal with different students. Contrary, both faculty and students do not prefer teacher who is accommodating and flexible, having strong personality or criticized the students.

Managerial Application

Education sector in Pakistan is facing serious deficiencies in the area of up to date course content, curriculum development, and delivery of quality education and infrastructure with the establishment of eighty-two new universities/degree awarding institutes since 1990. Emergence of new universities also gives students wide range of choice both in terms of available educational programs and the quality education. Present scenario of competitive environment requires strategies, which best accommodate the students demands and needs. Universities should not only focus on providing the tangible recourses but also define criteria and standards in recruiting new faculty and train the current available human capital. Further special attention should be paid towards aligning the students perceptions according to national objectives of a country and help them in developing their personality.

Further, the emergence of new inter-educational institutions competition requires reconsidering issues such as university-industry alliances, using of technology in education, delivering quality education can be some of the desired areas for future research and more importantly to further redefine the personality traits of an ideal teacher.

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