

The Relationship between Teachers' Attitudes toward their Students and Students' Achievement at the Secondary School Level

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive-correlation study sought to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward their students and students' achievement at the secondary school level. The population of the study consisted of 436 male teachers who were teaching in public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Charsadda District. Through the use of random cluster sampling, 210 teachers made up the sample for the study. Data were gathered for the study using the Teacher Attitude Index (TAI), which was created by Schulte et al. (2005). The B.I.S.E. Peshawar's IX annual examination results from 2017 were used to calculate the students' achievement scores, and the average performance of the teachers in their subject area during the 2017 session was also collected for the purpose. The results of the data analysis indicated a positive relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' attitudes toward them. Teachers' attitudes toward their students were a strong predictor of students' achievement. The teachers' positive attitudes toward students need to be improved by psychological coaching as part of their training in pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.

Keywords: Attitude, Achievement, Secondary School Level

INTRODUCTION

The main concern of this research study was to ascertain the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward students and their academic achievement. Excellent student performance has always been a top concern for teachers and decision-makers. Education researchers are inquisitive and have examined a range of factors that influence students' academic performance. Academic achievement is vital, and factors related to students, the school environment, the curriculum, the teaching-learning process, and the home environment can all have an effect on achievement either alone or in combination with other variables (Bhat, & Hemant, 2015). Similar findings were made by Atchia and Chinapah (2019), who found that socioeconomic, educational, and school leadership variables could be accountable for a significant 90.1% of students' academic achievement. Academic achievement is assessed by complex scores that depend on various factors, which include personality traits and other individual characteristics (Batool, 2019). It's interesting to note that while several factors have been related to students' academic success, but there is lack of information regarding the relationship between teachers' attitudes and academic achievement in country. This formed a contextual gap as the present population has never

been thoroughly investigated, which has varied linguistic and sociocultural contexts. It created the need to carry out the study to make certain whether attitudes are important characteristics of teachers that effect academic achievement.

Attitude influences what people see, hear, think, and do. It also involves mental preparation in regard to behaviours, postures, or beliefs. People often have a tendency to react in one of two ways to things: either positively, such as values, or negatively, such as prejudice, to certain individuals, groups, or institutions (Barros & Elia, 2017). The study of teachers' attitude towards students is significant because a supportive relationship between educators and students fosters a healthy learning environment for pupils (Maliki, 2013).

Students' motivation and achievement are increased when teachers establish strong relationships with them and exhibit positive behaviours like showing them respect, consideration, and understanding. By their own behaviours and attitudes, teachers set an example for their students. Teachers having positive attitudes might influence the students' success but teachers with negative attitudes may lead students' failure (Ulug, Ozde, & Eryilmaz, 2011). According to Vaughn (2012), research is required to ascertain whether any links exist between specific teacher dispositions and student achievement if instructors' dispositions, instruction, and assessment are oriented toward student achievement.

According to Khamari and Guru (2013), achievement is the result of a person's performance, gain, or accomplishment in finishing a task. Academic achievement is defined as a student's functional level across various topics as indicated by their grades or scores. It displays a certain kind of learning outcome and demonstrates how well the learner performed during the procedure. Finding the relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic performance will improve the calibre of teachers (Scrivner, 2009). A study of students' achievement and its consequences for education would be meaningful to achieving excellence in learning.

Current educational trends place the responsibility of fostering students' intellectual and moral growth on educators and educational institutions. A quality education is partly determined by the skills and traits of a skilled instructor. Soric (2011) Stated that an important duty for schools is to identify and remedy issues influencing students' achievement.

Statement of the problem

The main purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between teachers' attitude and academic achievement at the secondary school level. Alarming statistics in 2017 indicated that students' completion rates at the lower/ higher secondary levels were 46 % and 36 % respectively and the main causes for these low retention rates were poor quality of education, teacher absenteeism, lack of school facilities, and poverty (UNESCO, Report, 2019).

The present government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan has shown a profound concern about the quality of education and has stressed in the Education Sector Plan (2022) on hiring highly qualified teachers, providing Continuous Professional Development, textbooks, examination reforms, and various in-service training programs. Despite various efforts to improve the academic achievement of students studying at the secondary school level, only 59 % of the students passed the annual examination. The female passing rate was 64.7 % and the male students passing rate was 56.2 % which was a very low rate (BISE Peshawar result from Gazette, SSC Annual Examination 2022). A possible reason for this may be the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of teachers (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008). Better academic accomplishment is largely influenced by teaching behaviors, which are influenced by attitudes. According

to Ulug, Ozde, and Eryilmaz (2011), the teacher plays a crucial role in education and is responsible for the majority of academic achievements. Teachers engaged in all those learning activities critical to the social, moral, and mental growth of their students. Teachers have to create a conducive school environment to facilitate the learning process for which a proper attitude is required.

Objective of the Research Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To measure the attitude of teachers towards their students.
2. To determine the relationship between teachers' attitude toward students and their academic achievement.

Hypotheses of the Research Study

It was hypothesized that there was no relationship between teachers' attitudes toward students and academic achievement at secondary school level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of pertinent literature centres on the attitudes that teachers have for their students and how those sentiments relate to students' academic success. In the country, secondary school teachers are constantly under pressure to raise their students' success levels. Numerous factors have an impact on students' performance. The way teachers treat their students is one of these. The purpose of this information is to help you better understand the educational procedures followed in public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Concept of Teachers 'Attitude toward Students

An attitude is a predisposition to categorise things, people, or actions and react to them in a predictable way (Renthlei & Malsawmi, 2015). Since attitude cannot be seen with the naked eye, it must be deduced from the objective evaluations of others. Prior research by Herrera (2010) revealed that subject-matter expertise, training, community service, self-awareness, and approach to the classroom can all be used to explain teachers' attitudes. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions encourage or restrict teaching and learning in the classroom. In a similar vein, Soibamcha and Pandey (2016) argued that attitudes are acquired through life events and shape how people act toward certain problems, things, people, circumstances, or occupations. Personal, intricate, and curiously structured, attitudes are the result of responses to events in life.

Teachers' beliefs impact their actions, assessments, and viewpoints in the classroom. The interactions between teachers and students, as well as the way they treat and assess their students, can be used to examine teacher expectations. Different attitudes are held by teachers toward their students, according to Ahmad and Sahak (2009). Some of them think that pupils need to be forced to study hard because they are indolent or lack discipline. These educators adopt a conservative and authoritarian stance toward their pupils and the class. Some educators, however, think that each pupil is an individual who is capable of self-direction and self-control. These teachers take on a democratic demeanour with their pupils. When dealing with wayward students, they apply reason and moral persuasion rather than reprimands or punishment. Students' academic performance is impacted by the attitudes of their teachers.

Open communication should characterize the relationship between students and teachers. Less students will be eager to engage and pick up new skills in an authoritarian setting. In order to inspire children to learn, teachers must provide support for their pupils and set high expectations for them. Good relationships with students are facilitated by a positive attitude on the part of the instructor, and this in turn leads to positive behaviour on the part of the students. While some educators categorise children according to their social class, others describe them as less capable or quick learners.

According to Hinnant, O'Brien, and Ghazzarian (2009), fast learners experience pleasant learning environments, which helps them build a positive self-concept and demonstrate more accomplishment than slow learners. It is argued that educators who want to see positive changes in the lives of their pupils should be disposed to teach them objectively, thereby recognising the significance of educators' moral and ethical convictions and actions.

Hornstra, Dennessen, Bakker, Bergh, and Voeten (2010) claim that instruction affects students' thinking and cognition, which mediates learning and success. Teachers' reactions can be influenced by their attitudes. In the classroom, teachers must manage a large number of children and must act quickly. The relationship between a teacher's attitude and students' academic performance is therefore mediated by their nonverbal behaviour. There is a pressing need to raise awareness of the impact that teachers' attitudes have on students' education.

Teachers' Attitude and Academic Achievement

Teachers' Professional dispositions refers to their interaction with coworkers, students, parents, and the community, their views, values, and attitudes—both expressed vocally and nonverbally. These constructive actions support students' growth and learning and are crucial to their success (Hallam, 2009). Folashad (2009) indicated a positive correlation between teachers' attitudes toward students and the performance of students and discovered no significant relationship between the students' performance based on the gender of teachers. On the other hand, Scrivner (2009) discovered no connection between mathematics students' achievement and teachers' attitudes toward students. However, a positive association was identified between teachers' attitudes towards curriculum and professionalism and reading achievement.

Further, Mahmood (2011) also discovered a positive correlation between instructors' attitudes and their performance and job satisfaction. It was stated that instructors' attitudes and job satisfaction were positively correlated with their output. Similarly, Soric (2011) found that teacher attitude and student achievement were positively correlated. Positive attitudes from teachers have an impact on students' personalities and live performances (Ulug, Ozde, & Eryilmaz, 2011).

Furthermore, Vaughn (2012) discovered a strong relationship between the academic success of students and the attitudes of teachers on their own efficacy and classroom management in relation to their confidence in their ability to instruct all pupils. However, no meaningful associations were discovered between students' achievement and inclinations for instructional tactics. Teachers' disposition and students' performance did not correlate, according to Owede and Yusuf (2014), although there was a correlation between teachers' reflective practise and students' performance. Ries (2015) discovered no discernible relationship between instructor attitudes and student achievement. Ahmadi (2015), on the other hand, demonstrated how the material in art books did not meet the needs of the students. A significant correlation was observed between the success of pupils, teachers' attitudes, and their teaching experience. One could claim that instructors' attitudes toward their students have an impact on their actions, which in

turn has an impact on students' academic performance. Through a survey of teachers' attitude toward students, the study will contribute to the body of existing material.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using a quantitative research approach, a descriptive-correlation study was conducted to ascertain the correlations between academic achievement and teachers' attitudes toward the students. Teachers working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's government secondary schools were among the study's participants. The population of District Charsadda in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was chosen to be accessible. In the Charsadda district, there were 76 secondary schools and 436 secondary school instructors. A sample of 210 teachers was selected for the study using a random cluster sampling technique. The Teacher Attitude Index (TAI), designed by Schulte et al. (2005), was applied by the researcher for the collecting of data. TAI is a valid and accurate technique for assessing teachers' attitudes and utilizes a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Scrivner, 2009). The reliability test was conducted through pilot testing in order to evaluate the instrument's dependability within the setting of Pakistan. The results indicated a good range for Cronbach Alpha.

Table 1
Reliability coefficients for dimensions of teachers' attitude

#	Dimension	No of items	Mean	Alpha
1	Teachers' Attitude towards Students	11	4.1	0.84

The scale's internal consistency and dependability are demonstrated by the table 1, which reveals that the items' or constructs' Alpha values were above 0.7.

The items in the scale were translated into Urdu to make them more intelligible for the respondents and were given along with original statements. The academic scores of the students were derived from their performance in the Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE) Peshawar's annual examination for class IX, and the average result of teachers in their subject area in the 2017 session was acquired for the purpose.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Teachers' perceptions of their students were measured using one sample t-test.

Table 2
One Sample t-test for Teacher Attitude towards Students (N=203)

One-Sample t-Test							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Test Value = 3							Mean Difference	Upper
M	SD	t	df	Sig.	Lower	r		

Teacher attitude toward students	4.20	0.46	37.46	20	.000	1.203	1.14	1.27
			0	2				

P<0.05

Table No. 2's data showed that teachers' attitudes toward their students had a mean value of 4.20, above the midpoint 3. The t-value was 37.46 & p<0.05, indicating statistical significance. Thus, it was evident that most teachers' comments fell into the agreement category.

Testing of Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis, which examined the connection between secondary school teachers' attitudes toward their students and academic achievement, was tested using Pearson correlation and linear regression.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Teacher Attitude towards Students and Students' Academic Achievement (N=203)

	Variables	Pearson coefficient (r)	with student achievement	sig
1	Teacher attitude toward students	0.621		.000
2	Student average score			

P<0.05

A statistically significant and positive linear association (r=0.621, p=.000<.05) was observed between the academic accomplishment score of students and the attitude of their teachers toward them, as indicated by Table No. 3. The null hypothesis was disproved on the basis of the aforementioned data, which also revealed a positive relation between teachers' attitude toward students and academic success.

Table 4

Coefficients Indicating Predictability of Students' Academic Achievement through the Dimension of Teacher Attitude towards Students' (N=203)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-13.610	5.198		-2.618	.010
	Teacher Attitude toward Students	11.101	1.825	.528	6.083	.000

p<0.05

According to Table 4, a teacher's attitude toward students significantly predicted and contributed to the academic achievement of the pupils ($\beta = 0.528$, $p = .000 < .05$). Students' academic accomplishment score rises by .528 units for every unit (=1) that their teacher attitude toward students score rises.

DISCUSSION

Although it was predicted that there would be no correlation between teachers' attitude toward their students and their academic achievement, the study discovered a strong positive association between the two. The present discovery aligns with other research (Folashade, 2009; Ulug, Oze, & Eryilmaz, 2011) that also demonstrated a positive correlation between teachers' attitudes towards their pupils and their academic success. However, Scrivener (2009) did not detect this correlation. One explanation for this could be the influence of regional or societal norms on the conduct of educators. According to Ahmad and Sahak (2009), maintaining and promoting positive teacher behaviour depends heavily on the attitudes of instructors and the attachment that teachers have with their students' work. Teachers that communicate well with their pupils are better equipped to give constructive criticism. Both within and outside of the classroom, teachers should serve as positive role models for their students. It is maintained that whereas poor communication has the opposite effect, excellent communication between teachers and students enhances learning and fosters positive self-esteem.

The attitudes of teachers are context-driven results derived from experience that are formed over time through interactions. People can alter their attitudes by being aware of new ways to interact with their surroundings. There is a relationship between professional and educational change, and instructional programmes have the power to alter teachers' attitudes. Students are impacted by the unfavourable attitudes of teachers. Pre-service and in-service training should be given careful consideration, and the process should start with teachers being recognised professionally. Teachers ought to consider their teaching practises and determine which ones need to be changed. To find answers, educators must comprehend the issues they face (Barros, & Elia, 2017).

LIMITATIONS

The study used a self-reported survey, the results may not accurately reflect the true picture of teachers' responses to the statements of the instrument. Mental habits are not restricted to the questions on the surveys and are not always caught by a predetermined list of statements of the instruments utilized in the research (Vaughn, 2012). Further the study was limited to a small sample size that may introduce bias into the results. Moreover, the study was restricted to higher secondary and government schools in the Charsadda district. It is probable that private schools and schools in other districts have distinct school climates, which could have an impact on how teachers acquire their dispositions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was determined that most teachers had positive attitude toward their students. Further, the study revealed a positive and statistically significant relationships between teachers' attitudes toward their students and academic achievement. Teachers' attitudes toward their students were a good indicator of their academic achievement. Therefore, it was recommended that in order to see even more progress, teachers should adopt a more positive attitude toward their students. It is possible to plan specific activities to foster a good rapport between teachers and students. In the end, it will assist in increasing their motivation to learn. The improvement of favourable attitudes toward students should be the main goal of pre-service and in-service teacher training programme. To increase their positive attitude toward students, teachers should receive psychological coaching as part of their training.

Directions for Future Research: To further support the findings, observational and interviewing methods might be used in subsequent research. In order to increase the validity and make it a useful tool

for possible policy changes, future research may also be carried out with a larger sample size and a broader coverage involving both public and private schools in urban and rural settings.

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