

# Principals' Perception Regarding Factors Affecting The Performance Of Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the perception of principals on how the factors of subject mastery, teaching methodology, personal characteristics, and attitude toward students affect the performance of teachers at higher secondary level in the Punjab. All principals of higher secondary level in the Punjab were part of the population of the study. From the population, 120 principals were selected as the sample. A questionnaire was developed and validated through pilot testing. The data obtained were tabulated and analyzed by using statistical techniques of mean and standard deviation. The major conclusions of the study were that the factor of subject mastery was perceived to be influencing the performance of teachers maximally, but the factor of attitude toward students was affecting the performance of teachers minimally. The remaining two factors - teaching methodology and personal characteristics - were perceived to be at the intermediary level.*

**Keywords:** subject mastery; teaching methodology; personal characteristics and attitude toward students

## INTRODUCTION

 Education plays a pivotal role in the advancement of a nation. It is a source of acquiring knowledge and transmitting values and culture to the young lot of the society. These educational goals are achieved through teaching and learning experiences being offered in schools and colleges. There has been a spiraling demand for more robust academic experiences and effective learning at all levels of education, especially at the secondary and higher education levels in Pakistan.

Teaching is an arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which a learner tries to overcome the learning problems (Iqbal, 1996). It comprises a series of actions intended to facilitate learning as teaching is a multidimensional set of activities (Torrington et al., 2003). The teachers, therefore, need to be competent in the content, as well as in the way to deliver that content (Smith, 2002), in order to facilitate learning, thus knowing the 'how' of teaching is as important as the 'what' of teaching (Parson et al., 2001).

Teachers play a basic and dynamic role in an educational system. It is said that good performance of students depends upon effective teaching of their teachers. One of the most difficult problems in educational research is that of recognizing the teacher's effectiveness; i.e., discriminating between more effective and less effective teachers (Coleman, 1998). The personality, or the distinctive qualities of the teachers (Allen, 1990), as their confident role model, and positive professional attitudes; i.e., their attitude toward the students, also tend to influence students' learning and teaching effectiveness (AIOU, 2003).

The effectiveness of teachers depends, to a greater extent, on the knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes and values they bring to their classrooms (Anderson, 1991). In order to enhance the teaching effectiveness, all the teachers' effectiveness models should be used (Cheng, 1996). Competent teachers apply broad, deep, and integrated sets of knowledge and skills as they plan for, implement, and revise instruction. Technology proficiency is but one dimension of teacher competence (Siddiqui, 2004).

Teacher education is one context in which teaching occurs. It is an especially interesting context because teaching is the basis of the objectives guiding teacher education programmes, as well as a process by which these objectives are attained, and the main outcome by which the success of the programmes is judged. Different models of teacher education are used for professional development (Dunkin 1987).

As teaching is considered to be a complex activity (Medley, 1982), the scholars and researchers in the field of education have since long been exploring and analyzing the teaching phenomenon; however, it is universally recognized that teachers' instructional performance plays a key role in students' learning and academic achievement (Panda and Mohanty, 2003), as performance is the action of a person or group during the task (Taneja, 1989). The teachers are the pivot of any educational system (Government of Pakistan, 1972) - the authority figures providing the direction for students' behavior (Bernard, 1972). Kreitner (1995) viewed that the teachers' performance is the product of their ability and motivation.

Factors affecting the performance of teachers are of two types - the external factors and the internal factors. There are many external factors effecting how a teacher makes discussion in the classroom. While it is difficult to attach any order of significance to these factors, because every teacher is different, they will include, to some degree, the expectations of the community, the particular school system in which the teacher is employed, the school itself, the grade policies, the parents, and the students. Many of the expectations from these external factors will appear conflicting and it is the e-classroom teacher who must weld these into a workable framework while integrating a range of internal factors, such as the individual teacher's beliefs about how children learn most effectively, the teaching methodology they choose, their own preferred ways of thinking, acting and seeing the world, learners and learning, plus the availability of resources - both human and physical (Cheng, 1996).

Previous research shows a number of factors that influence the teachers' performance. For instance, Ferris et al (1988) identified teachers' performance on seven dimensions:

1. preparation and planning
2. effectiveness in presenting subject matter
3. poise
4. relations with students
5. self- improvement
6. relations with other staff
7. relations with parents & community

Swartz et al. (1990) judged the teachers' performance on five teaching functions: 1) instructional presentations, 2) instructional monitoring, 3) instructional feedback, 4) management of instructional time, and 5) management of student's behavior. Jahangir (1988) evaluated teachers' performance on four categories of teaching behavior: 1) intellect, 2) teacher's personality, 3) teaching techniques, and 4) interaction with students. Riaz (2000) measured teachers' performance on such factors as teaching competence demonstrated, motivational skills, teachers' attitude toward students, and fairness in grading.

For this research study, the authors selected four main core factors - 1) subject mastery, 2) teaching methodology, 3) attitude toward students, and 4) personal characteristics of the teachers - on the basis of the most recurring factors in the literature and the common sense approach which suggests that competent teachers should display these skills to instruct the students well. The study was therefore carried out to judge teachers' instructional performance by obtaining views of concerned educators and students on the degree of presence of these factors among teachers at the higher secondary level of education.

It was assumed that educators and students pertaining to the higher secondary level could provide us better judgment about instructional competence of their teachers as a substitute to direct observations of teachers while teaching in the classroom. The study was thought to be significant because the research on teachers' performance at the higher secondary level was highly lacking in Pakistan. The results of the study might provide an information base for the state of art leading to future planning at the governmental level for faculty development and in-service teachers' educational programs in Pakistan.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of the study was to judge principals' perceptions regarding factors affecting the performance of teachers at the higher secondary level in the Punjab.

**PROCEDURE**

A sample of 120 principals was selected for the study. A five-point rating scale questionnaire (Kim, 1991) containing 28 closed ended items was developed for the study. Closed ended items are those which have restricted response options. The researcher personally visited 90 government higher secondary schools and 30 government intermediate colleges of the Punjab province to gather the data.

The first seven items (1-7) pertain to the first factor - attitude toward students. The next seven items (8-14) refer to the second factor - subject mastery. Further, the next seven items (15-21) pertain to the third factor - teaching methodology, and the last seven items (22-28) refer to the fourth factor - personal characteristics.

The completed questionnaires were collected with a 100% response rate. The data obtained were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using statistical techniques of mean and standard deviation to obtain the perception scores of principals at the higher secondary level regarding teachers' performance on the factors of subject mastery, teaching methodology, personal characteristics, and attitude toward students.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 indicates that the overall mean of principals' perception scores regarding teachers' performance was 114.03 out of a maximum performance score of 140, which indicates average performance. However, the highest mean score was on the factor of subject mastery (28.93); the second highest mean score was on the factor of teaching methodology (28.91), followed by personal characteristics (28.55); and the low mean score was on the factor of attitude toward students (27.65). The individual variations in principals' perception scores around the mean were very small (2.52 to 2.64).

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Principal's Perception Scores about Teachers' Performance on Each Factor**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No. of items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S. D.</b>
Attitude toward students	7	27.65	2.52
Subject Mastery	7	28.93	2.64
Teaching Methodology	7	28.91	2.63
Personal Characteristics	7	28.55	2.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>114.03</b>	<b>10.41</b>

From the results in Table 1, it was concluded that principals perceived that teachers were strongest on the factor of subject mastery, weaker on the factors of teaching methodology and personal characteristics, and the weakest on the factor of attitude toward students.

**DISCUSSION**

The principals were unanimously of the view that the factor of subject mastery was the strongest among the four factors of teachers' performance, but the teachers were found to be weakest on the factor of attitude toward students. However, they were judged weaker on the factors of teaching methodology and personal characteristics. It was suggested that the teachers should improve on the weaker or weakest factors for the betterment of their job performance.

Previous research has shown that the factor absenteeism was dominant among the seven dimensions of teachers' performance and a suggestion was given to improve the dominant factor for the welfare of learners'

achievement (Ferris, et al., 1988). It was noted by Jahangir (1988) that the factor “techniques of teaching” was perceived to be weakest among the four factors of intellect, personality, techniques of teaching and interaction with students.

Future researchers will look at investigating, in more detail, the other factors affecting performance of teachers at the higher secondary level in Punjab, or the same factors of the present study can be judged in the other provinces of Pakistan or at the national level.

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