

## Comparative Study On University Teachers' Attitude Towards Weak and Bright Students

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<b>Article History:</b>	<b>ABSTRACT</b>
<b>Received:</b> 9 Nov, 2018	Teachers' attitude and instructional style has its influence on learners' character, learning and their educational achievement. The main purpose of the study was to explore the attitude of university teachers towards weak and bright students based on four categories of professional, reinforcement, interaction and attention aspects of teachers' attitude. Population of this study consisted of all university students. The target population was the weak and bright students of four universities of Islamabad enrolled in BS and Masters Programs of Business Administration, Economics and Computer Science. Program wise target population for four universities were identified as 10420 students. For sample selection, program wise results of previous semester were collected from respective departments and list was arranged from highest to lowest CGPA obtained by students. Five percent top bright students and five percent bottom weak students from each category were considered within sample. Finally, a sample of 1042 students was available for conduct of research. Self-developed questionnaire consisted of 33 items based on four categories of teachers' attitude was used. To access the validity and reliability different experts were involved in this pilot testing process. The collected data was analyzed through mean, standard deviations, F, t- test. The results of the study highlighted teachers have unequal treatment with the weak and bright students. Suggestions were given in the light of the findings.
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### 1. Introduction

Higher education plays a leadership role in education. There is a demand for a higher education in the world today and higher education provides people a chance to change the world. The higher education can deliver an individual with tools and expertise required to become a useful member of society, to achieve individual economic aims as

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well as to increase intelligent curiosity. Quality is a broad concept, which covers all the related functions and events that form part of the educational life in a university system. Therefore, any agenda for the assessment of quality should take into account the quality of pupils, lecturers, arrangement, student support services, syllabuses, assessment and learning source. Teacher is the main person of the entire arrangement of education. Inspires the pupils for education improves the pupils' success level are the most essential roles of teachers. Without instructor the procedure of education cannot be run. Teachers play an essential part in the renovation process to make the university as a learning association (Rashid & Mansor, 2018).

The teacher is a mentor, a planner, a promoter, a modal, and a supervisor, but he is an individual too. He feels, he observes, he thinks, and he also has a lot of attitudes about different things connected to himself and his life (Haq, 2006). A good teacher can shape a student's life. Teacher and learner connection is important for the success of both teacher and learner. A teacher must display brilliant sympathy, determination, care, morality as a being. Usually, teachers respond by, with admiration, approval or disapproval in reacting to learners (Derk, 1974). To effectively educate pupils at any level, teachers must evaluate the students' requirements and how best the info should be presented (Chen & Howard, 2010)

Sebastian (2016) admits that education is relevant only if we take care of our students. Teachers must therefore be sensitive not to the cover whole of the course but to the knowledge that has taken place in the transaction. Teachers cannot pay any attention to the learners who do not keep pace with the teaching-learning procedure. Some learners do feel ignored in the whole transaction of the system. This group of learners needs to be taken greatest care and tackled in a way that will create well output from them. In the process, they will tend to understand themselves in an apt manner and improve positive attitudes towards themselves. Teacher's attitude towards learners also affects instruction style and its influence on learners' character as well as knowledge. Teacher's attitude

towards the students is also vital in shaping classroom environment, attitudes exist of two types, positive and negative. The personal side of teaching contains teachers' attitudes in three common parts of attitude about teaching and learning, attitude towards pupil and attitude towards self (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1990).

Teachers become models for their students when they use their social and emotional competencies (Yavuzer & Gundogdu, 2012). The best rules of teaching skills are helpful for the learner and for the instructor to set for their supportive beliefs in order to inspire the learner to study (Yavuzer, 2000). While the constructive attitude of the teacher lets him/her to build a helpful connection with learners, it permits for the lecturer to develop helpful attitude towards learners as opposite to the bad, taking on a supporting part as well (Yavuzer, 2000). For a teacher, being able to cooperate with the learner and show helpful attitude such as understanding their views, show attention, asking queries, raises the learners' inspiration and achievement. While in work to give pupils at an improvement level data, practice and attitude on a certain subject matter, instructors convert hero out of learners by method of their individual actions and behavior. Encouraging behavior may lead to achievement while bad behavior lead to disappointment and as an outcome achievement can lead to optimistic ego-behavior while disappointment leads to harmful ego-behavior. For example, if the instructor involves in belittling remarks to a pupil due to his/her bad result, the bad effects of this will be expected (Gecer, 2002).

An instructor who recognizes the information and talents straight, touches his/her pupils and environments takes responsibility for his/her individual understanding and skills, produces optimistic relations with his/her pupils and can send these to learners in the best effective way (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Teachers' favorable or unfavorable approaches to their pupils have an important influence on their educational achievement. In the learning condition, instructors express their attitudes towards students with disabilities (Yara, 2009). Good (1983) in his study shows while asking difficult questions

to weak students, teachers give less wait time for answering to weak students, and are less likely to give prompts. Teacher's changeable feedback can be very confusing for weak students. According to Good and Brophy (2003) students who are expected to complete, asked more and harder questions, to be given more chances and a longer time to answer, and less often than students who are weak students. Teachers also give their high expectation students hints and help; they have beliefs that the pupils can reply the problem. Teachers' different behavior to low achievers shows their bad attitudes. Teachers need to be aware of their attitude and try to be fair in their communication with pupils who have changed characteristics with their educational success otherwise their students may suffer more due to teachers' attitude rather than personal deficiencies'

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To study the university teachers' professional, reinforcement, interaction and attention related attitude towards students.
- ii. To differentiate the attitude of university teachers towards weak and bright students.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

- i. What kind of attitude the university teachers are displaying towards weak and bright students?
- ii. What is the difference between the attitude of university teachers towards weak and bright students?

## **2. Methods and Materials**

### **2.1 Population**

Population of this study consisted of all university students. The target population was the weak and bright students of four universities of Islamabad enrolled in BS and Master's programs of Business Administration, Economics and Computer Science. Program wise target population for four universities was identified as 10420 students.

### **2.2 Delimitations of the Study**

The student was delimited to:

- i. Public sector universities of Islamabad
- ii. Students of BS and master's program of Computer Science, Management Sciences and Economics.

### **2.3 Sample**

At first phase, program wise results of previous semester were collected from respective departments and list was arranged from highest to lowest CGPA obtained by students. Further five percent top as bright students and five percent bottom as weak students from each category were considered within sample. Finally, a total sample of 1042 students was available for conduct of research.

### **2.4 Instrument**

Self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for this research. The instrument consisted of 33 items based on four categories of professional, reinforcement, interaction and attention aspects of teachers' attitude.

## **2.5 Pilot Study**

To confirm the validity and reliability, educational experts were involved in the pilot testing process. The questionnaire was modified in the light of the views of the experts. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small group of 20 BS Economics students to see whether the questionnaire items were simple to understand and easy to respond. The value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.907 which shows the reliability of the instrument, and questionnaire with 33 items was finalized for data collection.

## **2.6 Data Collection**

The questionnaire was administered personally to the respondents of the study for the data collection. The participants were asked to fill the questionnaire according to their perceptions.

## **2.7 Analysis of the Data**

The collected data was analyzed through mean, standard deviations, F, t- value. The results were drawn with the help of the data findings and recommendations were given in the light of the results.

Table 1: Comparison of students' perceptions towards their teachers' professional aspects

Variables	Student	Responses					Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
		SA	A	UN	DA	SDA					
Ask questions	Weak	65	165	7	274	10	3.00	1.192	518.426	18.867	.000
	Bright	150	326	22	20	3	1.85	0.717			
Give enough time to answer	Weak	44	148	46	250	33	3.15	1.155	156.647	16.522	.000
	Bright	115	299	57	43	8	2.10	0.888			
Listens answers patiently.	Weak	74	133	28	263	23	3.05	1.227	303.971	16.637	.000
	Bright	132	325	20	38	7	1.97	0.839			
Give hints and help in answering	Weak	44	134	47	255	41	3.22	1.163	78.189	15.842	.000
	Bright	119	294	36	55	18	2.16	1.003			
Inform about quality of answer	Weak	75	125	62	231	28	3.02	1.215	204.106	15.224	.000
	Bright	127	295	58	38	4	2.04	.845			
Timely Check assignments	Weak	67	134	48	246	26	3.06	1.201	0.950	2.933	.330
	Bright	85	161	55	196	25	2.84	1.226			
Timely feedback on assignments	Weak	56	114	43	229	79	3.31	1.266	137.887	17.842	.000
	Bright	143	251	83	34	11	2.08	.937			
Provide guidance in learning	Weak	73	147	29	252	20	3.00	1.218	157.018	13.273	.000
	Bright	119	342	26	28	6	2.00	1.201			

Table 1 depicts the professional aspects of teachers towards their weak and bright students. In all statements the calculated t-value was found significant at .000 levels because the significant value is less than alpha 0.05. There is significant difference between the teacher's attitudes towards weak and bright students in terms of asking questions, giving enough time to answer, listening answers patiently, giving hints and helping in answering the questions, giving timely feedback on assignments and providing guidance in learning. Regarding a prominent professional aspect of teachers to check students' assignments in time, the calculated t-value was found to be 2.933 which were significant at .330 levels with .950 F. So there is no significant difference between the teacher's attitudes towards weak and bright students in this regard.

Asking question is a significant aspect of a professional teaching which leads towards further process of teaching learning and it is being demonstrated differently by the teacher towards weak and bright students.

Table 2: Students' perceptions towards their teachers' aspect of reinforcement

Variables	Student	Responses					Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
		SA	A	UN	DA	SDA					
Praise on right answers	Weak	80	293	65	69	14	2.32	0.975	70.496	8.481	.000
	Bright	139	336	28	14	5	1.87	0.705			
Appreciate with good words	Weak	97	298	35	77	14	2.26	1.011	43.139	7.507	.000
	Bright	159	309	28	19	4	1.84	0.744			
Believe you can improve	Weak	75	154	23	233	36	3.00	1.264	255.540	14.641	.000
	Bright	144	301	24	40	13	2.00	0.924			
Encourages in learning process	Weak	95	238	28	116	44	2.57	1.251	1.896	-9.767	.169
	Bright	48	135	19	235	85	3.33	1.273			
Criticize on wrong answers	Weak	203	134	60	80	44	2.29	1.342	6.771	-4.615	.009
	Bright	77	225	65	114	41	2.65	1.197			
Insult in front of the class	Weak	107	234	44	73	63	2.52	1.292	18.188	-15.489	.000
	Bright	37	59	53	248	125	3.70	1.159			
Ridicule you	Weak	80	260	71	83	27	2.46	1.090	30.276	-19.571	.000
	Bright	14	44	110	288	66	3.67	0.898			
Feedback is Constructive	Weak	46	158	42	231	44	3.13	1.193	205.223	13.706	.000
	Bright	63	318	91	42	8	2.26	0.830			

Table 2 illustrates the students' perceptions towards their teachers' aspect of reinforcement and sketch of teacher's attitude towards their weak and bright students. Regarding teachers' encouragement in learning process, the calculated t-value was found to be -9.767 which was significant at .169 levels with 1.896 F. The significant value is greater than alpha 0.05, which shows that there is no significant difference between the teacher's attitude towards weak and bright students.

There is significant difference between the teacher's attitudes towards weak and bright students in expressions of praising on right answers, appreciating with good words,

believing they can improve, teachers' criticism of students on wrong answers, discouraging and insulting in front of the whole class and giving them constructive feedback. The results show that bright students were more favored by the teachers. The calculated t-value was found significant at .000 levels because the significant value is less than alpha 0.05.

Teachers beliefs are vital component and have important influence on their practices. In this study the teachers do not show any believe about the improvement of their weak students.

Table 3: Comparison of students' perceptions towards their teachers' direct interaction

Variables	Student	Responses					Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
		SA	A	UN	DA	SDA					
Teach while having eye contact	Weak	77	192	38	190	24	2.79	1.212	450.259	16.679	.000
	Bright	173	305	32	10	2	1.78	0.675			
Smile to you	Weak	47	153	49	193	79	3.20	1.263	220.811	18.386	.000
	Bright	160	266	55	37	4	1.96	0.874			
Show interest	Weak	59	114	80	189	79	3.22	1.263	109.969	14.496	.000
	Bright	101	275	87	47	12	2.22	0.938			
Give respect	Weak	89	121	31	241	39	3.04	1.296	283.666	18.140	.000
	Bright	197	261	34	24	6	1.81	0.835			
Polite with you	Weak	64	150	21	192	94	3.20	1.355	496.355	20.951	.000
	Bright	178	303	19	19	3	1.79	0.728			
Treat you well.	Weak	90	135	57	213	26	2.90	1.246	329.313	17.668	.000
	Bright	184	291	26	18	3	1.78	0.739			
Suggest something nice	Weak	73	168	22	193	65	3.02	1.325	23.751	18.879	.000
	Bright	180	298	28	13	3	1.78	0.707			
Solve learning problems	Weak	73	125	47	247	29	3.07	1.223	249.150	17.955	.000
	Bright	153	311	21	29	8	1.90	0.828			

Table 3 portrays the students' perceptions towards their teachers' direct interaction. In all statements the calculated t-value was found significant at .000 levels because the significant value is lesser than alpha 0.05. The results show that teachers have more eye contact, give more smile, showing more interest, more respect, politeness and more nicely suggest something and solve the learning problems of bright students as

compared to weak students. The study result exposed teachers' unequal treatment with the weak and bright students who were perceived to have more direct interaction with bright students.

The supportive teacher is one who creates efficiently a positive classroom environment through optimum direct interaction with the students but here the under studied teachers do not sufficiently interact with the weak students as compare to the bright students.

Table 4: Comparison of students' perceptions towards their teachers' personal attention

Variables	Student	Responses					Mean	SD	F	t-value	Sig
		SA	A	UN	DA	SDA					
Give special attention.	Weak	16	116	82	288	19	3.34	0.964	9.389	19.315	.002
	Bright	125	247	82	63	5	2.19	0.965			
Like to talk within and outside the class.	Weak	82	238	29	142	30	2.62	1.202	291.206	15.213	.000
	Bright	215	268	25	13	1	1.69	0.695			
Behave positively	Weak	80	174	15	222	30	2.90	1.264	554.628	17.908	.000
	Bright	179	308	16	16	3	1.77	0.703			
Ensure class participation	Weak	64	133	40	228	56	6.15	1.263	285.912	18.262	.000
	Bright	145	299	42	32	4	1.95	0.819			
Accept your ideas.	Weak	36	157	65	190	73	3.21	.2101	179.861	17.293	.000
	Bright	122	293	63	35	9	2.07	0.880			
Aware of academic needs	Weak	25	118	76	235	67	3.39	1.112	50.558	18.291	.000
	Bright	105	272	95	30	20	2.21	0.957			
Give special attention in their spare time	Weak	38	100	53	256	73	3.43	1.163	3.195	13.713	.074
	Bright	92	230	94	76	30	2.47	1.113			
Value the facial and body posture	Weak	40	104	77	257	42	3.30	1.112	30.814	14.229	.000
	Bright	69	272	96	77	8	2.39	0.944			

Table 4 portrays the aspect of personal attention of teachers towards weak and bright students. In these statements the calculated t-value was found significant at .000 levels because the significant value is less than at alpha 0.05. There is significant difference between the teacher's attitudes towards weak and bright students in terms of

teachers' talking with students in and outside the class, behaving positively, accepting their ideas, awareness with the needs and valuing the facial and body posture. The study outcomes in the light of learner's opinion presented that lecturer ensure the participation of bright students in class while the result shows teachers don't ensure class participation of weak students. There was no significant difference between teacher's attitude towards weak and bright students for giving special attention in their spare time and personal attention.

The study strongly highlights that the weak students are badly ignored in terms of valuing their ideas by the teacher.

### **3. Discussion**

Teacher is the key person of the whole process of education. Encourage the learners for education enhances the pupil success level and these are the significant roles of teachers. The teacher's personality and style of interaction with the students has been reported to be a very crucial variable in student's achievement. Bright student's views showed that teachers ask more questions, give hints, help in answering the questions, give enough wait time to answers, as compared to weak students. This idea is supported by Brophy and Good (2003).

Good (1983) in his research defines while asking tough queries to weak students, and are less likely to give hints, teachers give less wait time for responding. This idea also supported Frymier's (1993), his research defines in study concerning the effect of positive teacher behavior on the student's motivation level, the author has concentrated on certain behaviors for teachers such as giving feedback for student works, complimenting, wanting to listen to students and being interested. The results of the study show that teachers' nonverbal actions such as smiling, having a relaxed stance,

various gestures and facial expressions come first in improving the learning experience for students whereas the topic of the class itself comes in second.

The current study shows that teachers did not give due praise to weak students on their right answering attempts, and further they may criticize on wrong answers made by weak students. Similar findings were seen in a study by Brophy & Good (1974) who viewed that teachers criticize bright students less often; admire bright students more frequently as compared to weak students.

The study results revealed that weak students stated that teachers did not treat them well and did not behave with them positively as compared to bright students. The students complained that their teachers behave more nicely to some students. This idea supported Shah (2009) who viewed that students complained that their teachers behave nicely to some students. This idea supported Stipek (2002) who viewed that Learners who do not do well in institute constantly do not have positive relation with their instructors. Similar findings were observed in a study by Gecer (2002) which revealed that for a teacher, being able to interact with the student and display positive behavior such as asking questions, understanding their thoughts, showing interest and appreciation increases the students' motivation and success.

The current study shows that teachers believed that only bright students can improve. Instructors' difference attitude shows their negative attitude towards weak students that finally outcomes in low expectations from them. This idea is supported Tyler and Boelter (2008), who viewed that teacher's positive expectations were associated with high academic performance or academic gains; whereas negative expectations resulted in decrease in academic performance. This idea also supported (Kuklinski, Madison & Weinstein, 1995) who viewed that a significant teaching approach is to monitor your expectations and be sure to have encouraging and positive expectations for weak learners. Researchers have studied that with such support

professors can adapt and increase their expectations for weak students. This idea is supported by Whitaker (2004), who viewed that the main variable in the classroom is not the student, but the teacher. Great teachers have high expectations for their students, but even higher expectations for themselves.

The study results show that teachers have less eye contact with weak students, don't accept their ideas, did not talk with them and did not show interest in them as compared to bright students. This idea supported Good and Brophy (1991) who viewed that Teacher's attitude towards weak and bright students is different in class according to their perception. Fewer interaction teaching, fewer eye interaction and, less interaction in communication, fewer acceptances of thoughts. This idea is not supported Gecer (2002) who viewed that for a teacher, being able to interact with the student and display positive behavior such as understanding their thoughts, showing interest and appreciation increases the students' motivation and success. While working towards providing students at a certain development level information, experience and behavior on a certain topic, teachers become role models for students by way of their own behavior and attitude.

The study results show that both weak and bright students agreed that their teachers did not check their assignment in time. This idea is in contrast with Shah (2009) who viewed that Teachers check the given assignments of the students in time. The study results show that teachers did not give respect to weak students as compared to bright students. Everyone wishes his respect. The students in the class want their respect by the teacher. This idea supported Sarojini & Gopinath (2018) who viewed that more successful teacher made more extensive use of admiration during class debates, and treated pupil contributions with respect. This idea is supported by Stipek (2002) who posits a student wants to feel connected to people and feel as though he or she deserves to be loved and respected.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The bright students reported that teachers suggest something nice to them, polite with them, more concerned about them, solve their learning problems, behave with them positively, show more interest in them, teachers ensure their class participation, give them timely feedback, value their facial and body postures, give them special attention in their spare time, teachers appreciate them with good words when they perform well in class, respect them, guide and help them when they needed and teachers have believed that bright students can improve. A large number of weak students than bright students said that teachers did not talk with them in and outside the class, did not have eye contact with them while teaching, did not treat them well, did not ask them more questions, did not give them hints and help in answering the questions, did not give them enough time to answer after asking the questions, did not give them praise on right answers, did not give them much information about the quality of their answers, did not provide them guidance in learning, did not accept their ideas, did not give them a smile, did not give them constructive feedback, ridicule them and criticized them more on wrong answer as compared to bright students. Weak students described that their teachers discourage and insult them in front of the whole class. Weak students stated that teachers were not aware with the needs of weak students. Both weak and bright students agreed that their teachers did not check their assignment in time and encourage in learning process. Teachers did not give special attention in their spare time and personal attention to weak and bright students.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- a. Teachers should treat equally while asking questions to weak and bright students. Questioning as an effective strategy may help the weak students for their improvements and make them feel as concerned.

- b. Teachers should not ridicule and criticize the weak students as a results of wrong answer. Training of university teachers is recommended to cover the practical aspect of improving communication and dealing with weak and bright students.
- c. Teachers should give due consideration to the ideas generated by weak students instead of ignoring such ideas. This may help the weak students for improving creativeness among them, further bright students may be organized to work in collaborative way with weak students.
- d. The university teachers should create a positive classroom environment through more direct interaction with the weak students.

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