

**CHANGING PERSPECTIVE OF IMMEDIACY IN
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP OF A TEACHER AND
A STUDENT (A CASE STUDY ON PRIVATE
UNIVERSITIES IN PAKISTAN)**

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Abstract:

The learning and teaching methods, with the advancement of time, have come a long way. The colossal changes in the educational environment have been brought about with the recent trends of researches being conducted in the field. This research aims to shed light on the theory that the heart of teaching effectiveness is the productive and stable class room environment and that the quality of class atmosphere is dependent on the teacher-student communication. The focus of this research has been on several questions regarding how to build and maintain immediacy along with its impact on both the teachers and students especially with regards to different tactics for both the genders. The stratified as well as convenience sampling has been used to attain the outcome of the research. Consequently, the result of this research supports the view of the prior researchers, considering and accepting the fact that the teacher's immediacy has a positive impact on students' learning, motivation, and behavior. There may be hurdles in achieving a balance in the student- teacher relationship, but it is something crucial - a closer immediacy between the students and teachers, hence, can facilitate both not only in producing successful professionals but also good human beings.

Key words: *immediacy, gender, behavior, interpersonal relationship, teaching styles.*

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1. Introduction

The concept of immediacy, particularly with regards to student-teacher association is still largely uncovered. In the context of Pakistan, most of the preceding studies have been focusing on traditional teaching methods where he or she is self centered, allowing no idea coming from students and no question arising from them, either. The present study investigates that the modern teachers (International style) usually creates a platform in the classroom where both teachers and the students get equal chance to present their views. Greater student's participation provides students with certain degree of freedom, giving them a chance to develop their creativity and resourcefulness.

The study also aims to clear certain ambiguities that strictness is not the way to deal with the modern generation instead of this one approach to understand the development of relationship is the communication skills used to develop and maintain friendships (Burlison & Samter, 1990). Closer, informal ties between both the teacher and the student will help in creating certain level of comfort which is entirely different. Reward system works better than the punishments and the performance level increases immensely if a student is attached to the teacher. In this way students are more honest in this relationship and lame excuses are avoided. Overall it also leads the atmosphere of the class to be amiable and productive.

Teachers have now learned that the respect of the individual is based on their behavior. Studies have found out the ways to create the immediacy like having the motherly love with their students, eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, learning their names, explaining the reasons for having rules, keep yourself in the shoes of your students, help their students and get involved in their problems.

1.1 Problem statement

The changing modern environment has focused on some new teaching dimensions. The dynamic change has compelled teachers to change their attitude towards students and deal them with closer immediacy. The student as well as the teachers' roles have transformed and are much more defined with a much more open and comfortable relationship which consequently affects the learning and teaching methodologies and environment.

1.2 Research Questions:

1. Does closer immediacy lead to a good teacher-student relationship?
2. Divergent perspectives of immediacy in males and females - a myth?
3. Is student behavior correlated to level of immediacy?
4. Have international teaching practices affected the teaching styles of Pakistani teachers?

1.3 Scope of the study

This research explored through literature and all the determinants, which plays role in teacher-student immediacy. Then, the data related to research has been collected from number of teachers and students by interviews conducted at Private Universities in Karachi, in order to highlight the actual determinants which significantly plays role in closer immediacy, which will possibly result in students learning and motivation.

This study will help all the educational institutions located in Karachi, in inculcating the idea regarding what sort of relation should be built among teachers and students that could improve the student's efficiency. This study has explored the relationship of gender on student-teacher immediacy which has previously not been done in the context of Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

The understanding of teacher student relationship has now been a thought provoking element in the modern era where immediacy plays a vital role. The researchers have now directed their studies towards the idea that a student learning is directly related with the teacher's immediacy. The body of the literature in this research is aligned with the preconceived idea of the previous researchers.

2.1 Role of immediacy in learning

Teacher's immediacy and student's affective learning and motivation are positively correlated with each other (Mehrabian's 1971 and Allen et al.2006 cited in Hoyer 2011). The more the teacher is closer to a student, the more he gets motivated which in turn increases the learning ability and dedication of a student towards the subject. Verbal and nonverbal immediacy is one of the most important factor in affective learning. According to (Sanders & Wiseman 1990) immediacy may be nonverbal; nonverbal cues such as smile, eye contact, nods and forward or leans bridges the gap between teacher and a student which ultimately results in quick learning. Further, Gorham (1988) states that it can be verbal immediacy such as; addressing a student by

name in order to make him or her more comfortable or praising and rewarding them by using words like we, us, the family.

2.2 Student teacher relationship paradigms

It is assumed that the heart of teaching effectiveness is the productive and stable classroom atmosphere and that the nature of the teacher student communication is dependent on the quality of the climate (Levy, Wubbels & Brekelmans, 1992).

2.3 Teacher and student gender difference on immediacy

Levy et. al (2002) state that girls and boys viewpoint regarding teachers are different. These differences in student's opinion are sometimes associated with teachers' gender. Only a few students don't resist female teachers being empowered. Females are more cooperative than males; this is the students' perceptions related to genders. It is generally accepted that the female teachers are polite, and listen and understand the students' problems. This helps student in getting closer with the teacher and pour their hearts out in front of teacher whenever they need a friend. Few teachers do treat students differently based on their genders, student genders and ethnic background (e.g. Casteel, 1996; Irvine, 1985, 1986; Simpson & Erickson, 1983 cited at Levy et. al 2002.). This type of an attitude demotivates a student towards learning as it is embedded in this profession, a concept that a teacher should be fair enough to maintain the dignity of this profession and should not be gender biased.

2.4 Immediacy impact on Students Behavior

Lee Canter (1989) states that if the teacher wants students to follow the preferred teachings, he must not only define certain set of rules, but also they must teach those behaviors beforehand so that the students must know what is being expected from him. They shouldn't assume that the student knows everything because the negative behavior of a teacher makes classroom a negative place. Undesirable students' behavior is often managed by teachers' patience and a good sense of humor instead of lessoning or embarrassing the students (Linfield 1977: Redl, 1966; Wegmann, 1976 cited in Powell and Andresen 1985).

2.5 Contextual differences in teaching style

Wong (2004) states that the teaching styles of educators vary from culture to culture. Internationally, students are encouraged and motivated towards the critical thinking, giving them

the platform to explore different ideas and form their own opinion whereas in traditional style teachers are culturally bound where there are defined and stable educational contexts.

2.6 Impacts of immediacy on Interpersonal communication and attraction

The positive relationship between a nonverbal immediacy and affective learning is just because of a good communication (Andersen, 1978, 1979; Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Kelley & Gorham, 1988; McDowell, McDowell, & Heyerdahl, 1980; Plax et al., 1986; Richmond et al., 1987). It allows people to share ideas and help them to develop positive relationships.

2.7 Past pragmatic experiences

Teacher student relationship plays an essential role in the present day. Students' personalities are now dependant on the essence of the education given to them by a teacher. Past practical experiences have seen teachers to either boosting up the students career or even breaking them down.

2.7.1 Teacher's immediacy is co relational to student's success:

Teacher student relationships in past have been interesting with some experiences which are heart touching i.e. A student, Haroon Tariq from Islamabad has scored 47 A's and broke the world record in O and A levels (Daily Dawn, 2013)

2.7.2 Teacher's immediacy is co relational to student's failure:

The phenomenon of dealing with the behavioral challenges is still existent in the society. Few incidents, in relevance, to the preceding statement, which take away the breath, are cited i.e. A primary school student attempted self immolation because of the corporal punishments by his teacher (Daily Dawn, 2003)

3. Research design

An analysis of teacher -student immediacy in an educational context is envisaged here. A study of how a teacher - student relationship can bring a positive or a negative behavioral attitude towards learning and growth of a student is the main crux of the research. This research is qualitative in nature and will help teacher and students to overcome the gap between their relationships. Therefore an interpretive research has been conducted to explore the teacher-student paradigm along with some elements of critical study.

A Case study approach has been conducted on the teachers and students of three Private Universities. The target population for the research is 322 Permanent faculty members that are hired and the 13,500 students that are enrolled in three Private Universities. Further, sample frame has been chosen from which the data has been collected and comprised.

Qualitative studies are usually based on a small number of sample sizes. Furthermore, (Bertaux 1981 cited in Guest et al, 2006) that fifteen is the smallest acceptable sample size for all qualitative research. Moreover, semi structured interviews have been recorded to dig uncovered issues that have not been anticipated before and are collectively analyzed to acquire the result of this research; with each interview in a time frame of around 20 to 30 minutes and have been recorded on a phone. A mutual consent form has been signed and anonymity has been maintained of the participants to support this study along.

3.1 Sample Frame

Two strata have been made; one for teachers (out of 322 permanent faculty only finance faculty with the experience of 10 years or more has been chosen) .Therefore, a sample frame of 18 teachers has been drawn out. Another stratum has been made for students; out of 13,500 students, only students perusing their M Phil in Business Management have been chosen which has considerably reduced the sample size to 130 students. Out of these 130 students and 18 teachers, finally, convenience sampling is used to attain the required sample size of 27 respondents. The classification of these respondents are 9 teachers and 18 students altogether from all three universities with an equal distribution from each university i.e. 3 teachers and 6 students. Further, Hermeneutics analysis approach has been used along with some elements of narrative analysis.

4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The research is based on a case study. Secondary data includes research papers, brochure of all three universities and books. Primary data was collected through in-depth, semi structured interviews of 27 respondents, which include both the teachers and the students.

4.1 Brief Profile of the students and teachers

4.1.1 Gender

Students and teachers of all three Private Universities have been interviewed. Total 27 respondents contributed their conceptions and shared their feelings out of which 65% were males and 25% were females.

4.1.2 Age

The sampling comprised of students in various age brackets i.e. 65 % of the respondents are under the age bracket of 25-35 as all of them are Master's level students. Remaining 35 % are the students under the age bracket of 35-45. In addition to this, the teachers who were interviewed were within the age bracket of 40-55.

4.2 Data Analysis & Findings.

4.2.1. Propinquity with male or female teachers

The students have been questioned about their proximity with male and female teachers; 70% of the respondents answered that the students' immediacy with the female teachers is much more than the male teachers as they are soft hearted and cooperative as compared to male teachers. Remaining 30 % believe that immediacy is gender based, which denotes that female students are more proximate to female teachers and male students to the male teachers.

The same question has been asked to the teachers; 10% teachers affirm the views of students that the similar genders are more in comfort with each other in sharing their conceptions and thoughts. Conversely, 90% informants believe that immediacy can never be predicated on gender; it depends on the nature of the student, mindset, capabilities and adaptability to get themselves open in front of others. They further fortified their viewpoint that they have been teaching for more than 10 years and they are immediate to male as well as female students, depending upon the identical mindset and the kind of support they have been probing for in their teachers.

4.2.2 Teacher's negative comportment and students' misconduct

The research question was based on the teacher's negative comportment that frequently induces students to misdeemean in the class. The students have been asked this question, where 60%

respondents supported this statement and stated that teacher's attitude and student's behavior are directly correlated with each other i.e. if the teacher is self disciplined students also show the same replication. While 40% disaccorded and negated this statement, according to them, students are naturally miscreants and have an unruly character and no matter whatever the teacher does for them they are identically tantamount.

On the other hand, the same question has been answered by the teachers; almost all the respondents concurred to the fact that teachers sometimes deport astringently with the students. The only reason is, the student misconducts compel teachers to malfeasance, for them, reverence is the only essence they couldn't sacrifice in the teaching vocation.

4.2.3 The impact of Verbal and non verbal immediacy on the students and teachers.

The respondents have been asked whether verbal and non verbal immediacy is a tool to create a level of ease between students and teachers, for which, 100 % of the respondents replied positively that teacher's verbal immediacy like praising, motivating, calling names, acknowledging students and nonverbal immediacy like teachers smile, nods, and facial expressions make students feel more relaxed and comfortable and also gives a teacher a positive classroom environment to teach.

4.2.4 Teachers' communication and interpersonal skills

Teacher's method of communication is a key to create immediacy and the response rate is 100%. Teachers and students of all three Private Universities believe that it is the communication which brings a teacher more proximate to a student. Good communication magnetizes the students which helps them to make them listen and understand the view point of their teachers. Similarly, the teacher also expects a clear communication from the student's side, so that they can understand their need and help them to their best in order to make their careers and withal to engender good human resource in the market.

4.2.5 Long lasting impact of teacher-student relationship.

Teacher student relationship and its impact on student life have been investigated. Students and teachers shared their past experiences. Students stated that they still have some teachers to whom they are proximate to for different reasons. They believed that those teachers provided them path

to their careers or guided them in such a way that they followed the fundamental principles of daily life. Similarly, the teachers affirmed the view point of the students and stated that they have few students whom they are in contact with even after a couple of years they have been passed out.

4.2.6 Changing dynamics of the teacher-student relationship.

The trends of a teacher student relationship has now spiraled into a new incipient dimension. 60% of the students and almost all the teachers believed that the teachers are now much more cordial and informal due to less difference in age groups or media being getting advanced, where students are now not only auricularly discerning but withal participating and contributing during the lessons. Whereas 40 % of the respondents (students) still have the same concept that teachers are rigid and less cordial to them and are following same teaching practices as afore, they have unbending mind sets and are not ready to transmute.

4.2.7 Affect of students' positive attitude on teachers

The research explored the other side of the relationship. Most of the researches have been conducted on teacher's immediacy impact on students. This question has been answered interestingly by both the teachers and the students. Only 25 % of the student's realized the fact and are cognizant about the verity that it is not only the teachers who create immediacy. It is the other way around too i.e. student's immediacy also creates a positive impact on teachers. Rest 75 % respondents feel that teachers are being paid for their service and for them, students response is of no value.

Conversely, the teachers responded to this question quite emotionally. Almost 60% of the teachers responded that they have been appreciated by their students at least once in a career; with some being awarded by the students with some appreciation emails and mementos while others are being given a standing ovation by their students. The remaining respondents had grudges in their hearts that students are self centered and they only create a relationship with their respective teachers for their personal benefits or till they get their work done.

5. Conclusion

The research was conducted to shed the light on emerging trends in a teacher-student relationship, the purpose of which is to find the correlation among teacher's immediacy and its impact on teacher-student relationship.

In current literature, we find that teacher's immediacy and student's motivation and learning are positively correlated with each other. The findings seem to support the viewpoint and conclude that teacher's immediacy is positively correlated with students' learning and motivation. The students of Private Universities are quite closer to their teachers and they strongly believe that this is one of the most effective ways to make students learn.

Likewise, the research endorses that it is the communication which brings a student closer to a teacher. The students of Private Universities in this study shared their experiences; mostly stating that their learning is based on the classroom environment. There are only a few classes where teachers create an environment of ease and it seems that the classmates are more of a family rather than the competitors.

Evidently, the teaching methods in Western countries are more focused on exploring and learning new dimensions rather than to fix the information in their minds which corroborates with the findings of this study i.e. the teaching styles have changed but few of the teachers are still reluctant to adopt the new teaching techniques and methodologies and remain adamant about altering them.

5.1 Recommendation:

- The understanding of the relationship has changed as the over time, and will further change with the new concepts and creative ideas emerging as the next generation will be moving on more rapidly as compared to the existing one. The research clearly indicates that the dynamics of teacher-student immediacy have considerably changed.

- The major problem observed amongst the teachers is that they consider themselves to be full of knowledge and whole sole authority. This must change, the teachers must be humble, down to earth, should provide students with an open forum to speak and accept their views..
- The government and the private sectors should raise the pay of teachers in order to fulfill their basic needs so that they could then focus on aspects like building a good immediacy with students.
- Conversely, the students must also fulfill some responsibilities; the students of our time only focus on exams and grades, they study for the sake of clearing the exams and therefore don't have their minds open to understand the concepts.

5.2 Limitation of Research

It is imperative to align the findings of the study with the limitations of this research.

- This research is limited to Karachi based on the students and teachers of three different Private Universities.
- The response of the students and teachers can be influenced by many factors, i.e. they may not have wanted to share their feelings.
- Only those students and teachers, who have shown interest, took part in research.
- Lastly, depending on age or maturity, the respondents might have answered the questions technically.

5.3 Areas of further study

- I believe that the past researchers have mostly focused on researching teacher's immediacy and its impact on students but no work has been done on students' immediacy and its affect on teachers.

- A large quantity of research work has been conducted on teaching styles and teacher-student immediacy internationally but no work has been carried out in the Pakistani context.
- Not only this, but the researchers must additionally focus on the determinants that influence our academic culture and teaching/learning methodologies with reference to teachers as well as students' tribulations.

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