

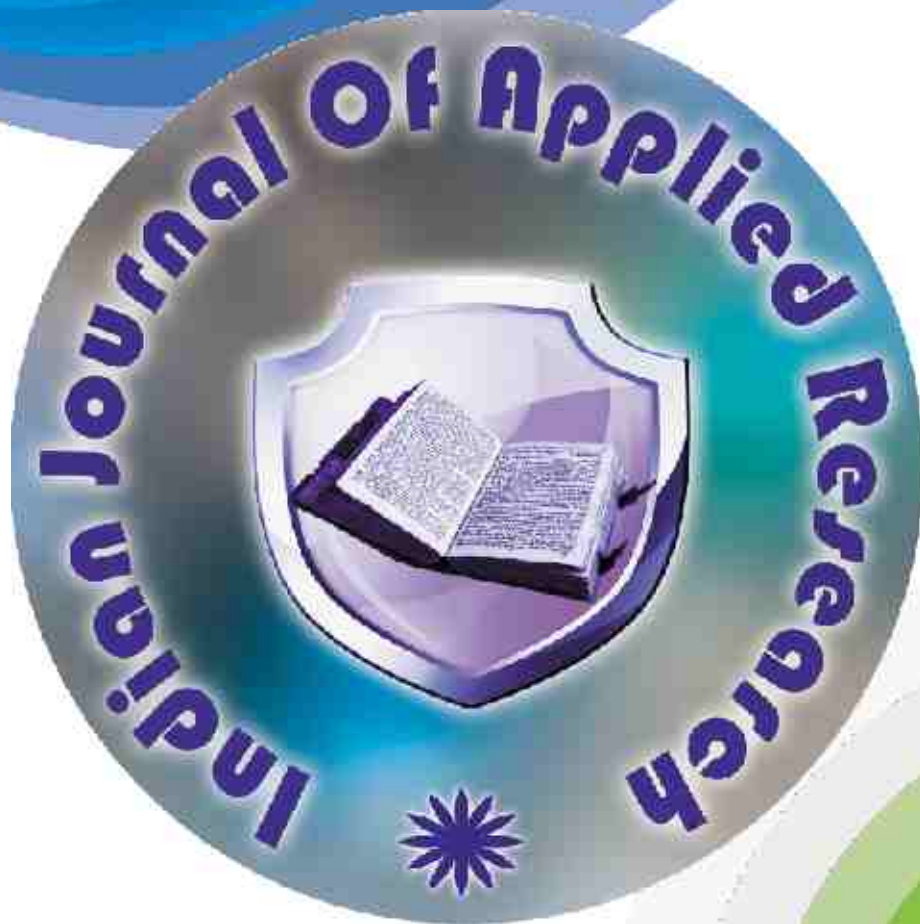
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## Modeling The Traits Of An Effective Teacher At Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aims at developing a model of interdependent traits exhibited by effective teacher at higher education. Here, empirical inferences are drawn based on the primary data collected from the student respondents through a structured questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to develop the model. A default model is built based on the review of literature, and the primary data was applied in an interdependent model format. The Chi-square value for the model is insignificant. Further, Various indices validating the model fit are generated like; GFI, AGFI, PGFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, PNFI, RMSEA, and RMR. Overall, it is deduced that the empirical data fit's the theoretical model. Hence, the default model 'a teacher with academic proficiency and disciplined approach, having values and ethics, can create intellectual exuberance in the class' is accepted.*

**Keywords : Effective teacher, teaching experience, intellectual exuberance, pedagogy.**

### Introduction

Teachers play an important role in determining the educational outcomes of students, yet relatively little is known about the characteristics that make some teachers distinctive and more effective in promoting student achievement than others. If the attributes that constitute teachers' effectiveness could be determined, they could be used to identify and hire the most desired teacher candidates and also to provide a mechanism for evaluating and compensating existing teachers. As some teacher characteristics are malleable, determining a model having greatest impact on student learning could also be helpful in designing teacher training and development. Even though a lot of literature on 'quality teaching' is available but there is little agreement about the factors that collectively contribute in terms of a model towards the teacher's ability to raise student achievement (effectiveness). Previous studies have focused primarily on readily observed characteristics like experience, educational attainment, course status and subject specialisation on the effectiveness of teaching. Therefore, the study aims at identifying the specific model representing characteristics of an effective teacher at higher education.

### Literature Review

A wide number of studies have investigated the characteristics of effective teachers which influence students' learning and achievement (Lang 1992; Lowman, 1995; Witcher, 2001). These studies asked students to identify effective teacher characteristics by means of self-report questionnaires or interviews. Lang (1992) developed a list of 32 characteristics of effective teachers through interviews with college teachers, and asked 167 participants (administrators, chairpersons, college teachers, and students) to identify and rank three characteristics considered important to teaching. Shulman (1987), phrased pedagogical context knowledge, making the case that teachers must know how to teach the specific content effectively, knowing what is likely to be easy or difficult for their students to learn, how to organise, sequence, and present the content to cater to the diverse interest and abilities of students. Elbaz (1981) note that teachers'

knowledge is rooted in the details of particular classroom experiences especially stressful and problematic.

According to Garcia (1991) an effective teacher needs to be Adaptable, caring, collaborative, committed, confident, creative, dedicated, demanding, energetic, knowledgeable, persistent, and resourceful. From Goodwin & Stevens (1993) viewpoint, effective teacher should be Enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Lowman (1996) found that exemplary teachers excelled in one of the two dimensions: the ability to generate intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport in students. Lowman (1996) found that exemplary teachers excelled in one of the two dimensions: the ability to generate intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport in students. Lowman (1996) further investigated 500 teaching awards nomination and found 39 descriptors of effective teacher characteristics. Henjum (1983) described the traits of an effective teacher as emotionally stable, enthusiastic, motivated, participating, self-assured, strong will power, unfrustrated, venture sum. Lang, Mekee & Conner (1992) characterized an effective teacher as Challenging, Communicator, encouraging, flexible, friendly, knowledgeable and prompt. Witcher, (2001) effective teachers by asking the participants to identify, rank, and define three to six characteristics that excellent teachers possessed. They found a total of 125 characteristics which were classified into the following six categories: student-centeredness, enthusiasm for teaching, ethicalness, classroom and behavior management, teaching methodology, and knowledge of subject. According to the studies of Outzs (1982), a teacher must be Confident, dedicated, Enthusiasm, intelligent, knowledgeable, organized, optimist, patient, sensitive in order to be effective. Weaver, Wenziaff & Cottrell (1993) characterized the effective teacher as Challenging, Communicator, enthusiastic, humorous, listener, tolerant.

### Objective And Methodology

The study aims at developing a model of interdependent traits exhibited by effective teacher at higher education. Students being the ultimate recipient of the teaching service and in direct contact with the teachers, can be considered as the best judge for measuring effectiveness of a teacher.



The study draws empirical inferences based on the primary data collected from the student respondents through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire deals with the traits, characteristics and behaviour of the teacher considered and felt by the students to be the most ideal and effective at the college they are studying. The responses collected on different variables drawn from the literature on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The students of arts and science colleges situated within the corporation limits of Chennai were considered for the study.

In order to get proper representation from all the relevant groups and to avoid the possibility of getting a skewed respondent distribution, it is decided to fix a minimum frequency level relating to the student profile categories. Hence, samples were drawn using purposive sampling method. It is decided that out of the total respondents at least 35% should be female, minimum of 25% respondents should belong to post graduate or above category and at least 40% should belong to science stream. In total 330 questionnaires were issued out of which 284 were complete in all respects and were used for the final study.

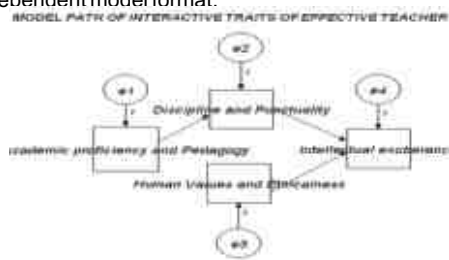
A pretest of the instrument was done using the first twenty five complete responses in order to check the reliability of the instrument using Alpha (Cronbach). A reliability score of 0.796 was achieved. The null hypothesis (Ho) for the study is 'The empirical model of interdependent traits exhibited by effective teacher at higher education fits the theoretical model'. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to develop the model of interdependent traits exhibited by effective teacher at higher education. The analysis of data was done using AMOS student version.

**Analysis And Interpretation**

As the objective of the study was to draw a model of interdependent traits of an effective teacher at higher education, certain factors characterizing effective teacher at higher education were identified based on the previous researches. These factors are

- i) Academic proficiency and Pedagogy
- ii) Discipline and Punctuality
- iii) Intellectual exuberance
- iv) Human Values and Ethicalness

The information was collected from student respondents on the above factors based on different variables elaborating each of the specific factors. A default model is built based on the review of literature, and the primary data was applied in a interdependent model format.



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The default model suggests that 'a teacher with academic proficiency and disciplined approach, having values and ethics, can create intellectual exuberance in the class.'

The outcome of the analysis is exhibited in Table1. The Chi-square value for the model is 5.550, having a 'P-value' of 0.136. As the 'P-value' is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and the theoretical model fits the empirical data. Further, Various indices validating the model fit are generated like; GFI, AGFI, PGFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, PNFI, RMSEA, and RMR. The values of these indices are expected to range between 0 and 1. Where, the value '0' implies a poor fit and '1' shows a perfect fit. Goodness of fit index, Adjusted goodness of fit index, Normed fit index, Incremental fit index, Tucker-Lewis index and Comparative fit index are ranging between 0.65 to 0.99, indicating a good fit. However, Parsimonious Goodness of fit index, Parsimonious normed fit index and Relative fit index value were on a lower side. The Ideal value of Root mean square error of approximation should be about 0.05, that matches the model value. Overall, it can be deduced that the empirical data fit's the theoretical model.

TABLE 1: Values of the relevant indices

INDICES	VALUE
Chi-Square	5.55, df.3, P value: 0.136
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	0.990
AGFI (Adjusted goodness of fit index)	0.968
PGFI (Parsimonious Goodness of fit index)	0.297
NFI (Normed fit index)	0.734
RFI (Relative fit index )	0.469
IFI (Incremental fit index )	0.851
TLI (Tucker-Lewis index)	0.657
CFI (Comparative fit index)	0.829
PNFI (Parsimonious normed fit index)	0.367
RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	0.055
RMR (Root mean square residual)	0.539

**Conclusions**

Even though teachers at higher education work in a heterogeneous environment, they are expected to be receptive to students' profile, institutional work culture, academic changes, infrastructure and facility gaps, peer pressure and so on. The best teachers do not always behave in a similar way but their handling of classroom situations brings confidence among the students. Such behaviour inspires and motivates the students in approaching the studies in a more receptive and open way. Effective teacher work in a variety of ways to suit a variety of situations, as he is 'a teacher with academic proficiency and disciplined approach, having values and ethics, and can create intellectual exuberance in the class.'





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