

Effect of the Teachers' Attire on Their Performance at University LevelShimza Toufeeq¹Amna Saleem²**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to discover the effect of the teachers' attire on their performance at the university level. In this study, the researcher applied a qualitative research design. This study utilized Saunders' Research Onion and an interpretive philosophical approach to investigate the impact of attire on teaching performance among university teachers and students. The inductive approach involved collecting qualitative data to develop a theory. The researcher employed an interview strategy to gain a deep understanding of the impact of attire on teacher performance at the university level. The cross-sectional research was conducted over a defined time frame, with data collected from 20 undergraduate students from Multan University and BZU. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich insights. The researcher personally gathered data from both universities, and NVIVO was used for analysis. Word clouds and concept trees were used to generate visual representations of the text data. Data have been collected with the help of interviews consisting of 7 open-ended questions. The findings of the study reveal that the study establishes clear guidelines and expectations regarding attire to promote a culture of professionalism within the educational setting. The study recommended encouraging teachers to dress in a manner that reflects the values and standards of the institution while allowing for individual expression and recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds and personal preferences of teachers when addressing attire-related policies.

Keywords: Teachers' Attire, Teachers Performance, Learning Environment, University Level

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Introduction

In inappropriate academic circles, the issue of the teachers' dress code has been debated for some time. For some, the way the teachers dress should not and has no impact on their work in the class, while for others it is something that may determine how they work in class. This is the reason that this research paper seeks to investigate the impact of teachers' wear on their activities at the university level (Kashem, 2019). Experience is one of the factors that in each and

every professional field has a bearing on performance. The research done in the area of teachers has suggested that with more years of practice as a teacher, they tend to become more competent in addressing the interests of the students and therefore increasing the level of achievement (Hussain et al., 2022). Also, the degree of selectivity or the prestige which an institution where the teacher has been trained may instil a positive effect on them (Marici et al., 2023).

Moreover, research has shown that there is more to the way teachers' wear and its attendant performances than meets the eye (Kashem, 2019). Besides these factors, some of the personal attributes of the teachers such as attitudes towards the subjects and self-confidence in their work could also affect performance. (Jayasooriya, 2021) state that "teachers who are concerned, inspired and are self-affirmed to make a difference in the student's lives are more likely to be effective enactors in the classroom."

These factors, even if they are well documented in the literature, the effect of how teachers' appearance affects their output remains elusive. In some studies, teachers' appearance has been reported to affect the classroom environment and students' evaluations of teachers' professionalism, which subsequently affects students' performance. Nevertheless, other authors have maintained that teachers' clothes have little significance to their productivity. Rather, other variables such as teaching effectiveness, education and experience are paramount to productivity (Marici et al., 2023).

It is necessary to delve into the details of the existing empirical literature in order to advance the research on the subject. One empirical study observed that neither teacher's attire influenced students' cognitive learning, but it influenced their affective learning as well as their ratings on implemented instruction. For instance, in the same study, when teaching assistants wore formal clothes, they were able to command more respect, and their authority in class was higher, which in turn increased students' satisfaction and engagement levels (Sebastian & Bristow, 2008).

Also, in this case, another study showed that students' perceptions of their teachers were more favorable when the instructors were in formal clothes as opposed to when they were in casual clothes. The authors pointed out that in that situation, formal clothes reinforced the authority and competence of the teacher, creating the necessary conditions for effective learning. (Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). However, this study broke new ground as no empirical relationships were found between students and teacher's dressing or absence outcomes. The authors postulated that other variables such as teaching standard, students' relation and classroom techniques were better indicators of the efficacy of teaching than the attire worn (Hajdú & Molnár, 2024).

Overall, there is a mixed view from the current literature regarding the effect of teacher attire on performance at university level. And, depending on how the data is interpreted, it seems that wearing formal dress can have a positive impact on students' perceptions of – and attitudes

towards - their teachers although this has not been definitively linked to academic performance (Jayasooriya et al., 2020). Given the bilateral and multiform nature of this phenomenon, it is apparent that there needs to be more thorough research in order to examine how teachers' clothing affects their performance and effectiveness in university classrooms.

Research Questions

1. Do you think a teacher's sense of humor or approachability influences the classroom dynamic?
2. How does teachers' communication style affect your understanding of the material?
3. In your opinion, how does a teacher's enthusiasm impact your motivation to learn in their class?
4. To what extent do you believe teachers serve as role models, and how does their attire play a role in this?
5. Can you think of instances where a teacher's clothing positively influenced your behavior or attitudes?
6. Describe how a teacher's attire might influence your overall perception of the learning environment.
7. Can you share an experience where a teacher's personality helped you overcome academic challenges or setbacks?

Literature Review

The topic of appearance and dress has bedeviled the teaching profession for decades. A professional image is not entirely necessary for a teacher, but it is also becoming an essential element to assist them in general performance and effectiveness of how they better teach. Specifically, the way teachers represent the self in the classroom can impact students' perceptions of a teacher's authority, ability to teach and approachability, as well as learning contexts within the classroom and academic achievement generally (Oliver et al., 2022).

Research conducted on the teachers' dress being affecting their performance apparently captures different perspectives, but this research is mostly university based. Studies have also shown the importance of teacher commitment, self-efficacy and academic engagement for their effectiveness and perseverance in adversity, e.g. The teacher wears a suitable dress and carries him/herself in a professional manner such that it reflects significantly on the overall appearance as well as the presenting style of the individual. For example, an instructor's own behavior while in the classroom (and out) can shape a student's perception of civility and professionalism as

noted in the study conducted by (Franklin, 2023). In other words, teachers, the way you dress and act can go long ways in influencing your students' attitudes and disposition.

Teachers' garb and grooming has been long task of focus in the realm of education - specifically higher education. Previous studies have investigated the influence of teacher attire on student impressions, academic outcomes, and classroom control. (Jayasooriya et al., 2020) study contradicts this by stating there were no apparent positive effects from teachers' choice of literature dress, suggesting the impact may be more complicated than we know. On the other hand, past research has shown that teachers' clothing can have a real impact on students' attitudes, learning and perceptions of the instructor's competence, authority and professionalism (Kashem, 2019). The researcher found from the literature reviewers that teachers' clothing can indicate a lot more than mere appearance; they could also hint towards personality, status and professional identity. Clothing was found to greatly impact first impressions on both sociability and attitudes in the classroom, affecting student interest and engagement (Ivery, 2020).

In addition, research has found a positive relationship between instructor dress and student cognitive learning, affective learning, and ratings of instruction. Alternatively, negative effects on clothing choices might lead to misbehavior in students, as demonstrated by a higher probability of teaching assistants experiencing unruly behavior due to their professional attire (Hajdú & Molnár, 2024). The results of this study underscore that the relationship between how teachers dress and teach is neither black nor white nor another way to see it; they demonstrate the multi-dimensional nature of whether teachers should wear certain clothes to improve performance in higher ed. Although more research is necessary to elucidate the finer details of this association, extant literature suggests that teachers' clothing choices affect how they are perceived by others, thereby influencing changes in the teaching and learning environment (Marici et al., 2023).

Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated how students' perception of a teacher's competence (e.g, how warm, attractive, trustworthy, credible and likeable they see them as) affect based on how that instructor dresses and address the class (Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). Even more interestingly, given their analysis of teaching effectiveness, changes of dress might influence perceptions of others, especially for underrepresented groups such as racial minorities, who might need to strategically dress in ways that help them be perceived by others as professional and competent. The prevailing literature indicates that appropriate attire as well as appearance serves as a good determinant of a teacher's performance while at work, not to mention the impression and learning experience that undergraduates have about this type of profession.

The researcher followed Saunders' Research Onion for the conduction of this study. The interpretive philosophical approach was employed to understand the perspectives of university students regarding the influence of attire on teaching performance. The research adopted an inductive approach, which involved collecting qualitative data to develop a theory as a result of the research process. The interview strategy was used by the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the impact of attire on teacher performance at the university level. The research was cross-sectional, taking place over a clearly defined time frame. Content validity and Inter-Rater Reliability was used to ensure the validity and reliability of interview. The population for this study were students from within women University (WUM) and Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select participants who could provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the research questions. 20 interviews were conducted among the male and female students of WUM and BZU. Data have been collected with the help of interviews consisting of 7 open-ended questions. The researcher personally gathered the data from the students of both universities. NVIVO was used for analysis purposes. Word clouds were used to generate visual representations of the text data.

Research Question 1: Do you think a teacher's sense of humor or approachability influences the classroom dynamic?

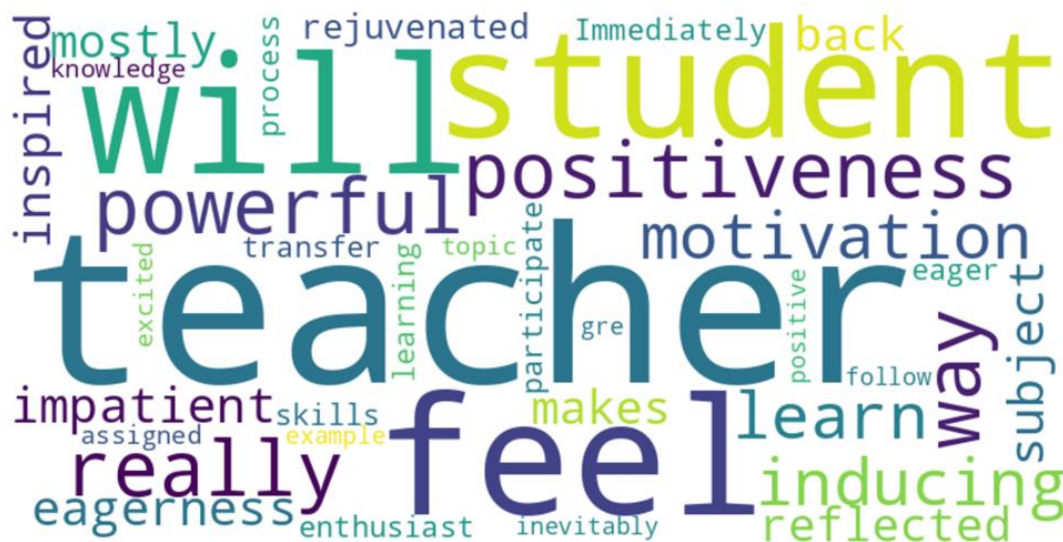
Word cloud for teachers' sense of humor



Research Question 3: In your opinion, how does a teacher's enthusiasm impact your motivation to learn in their class?

Figure no 03:

Word cloud for teacher's enthusiasm

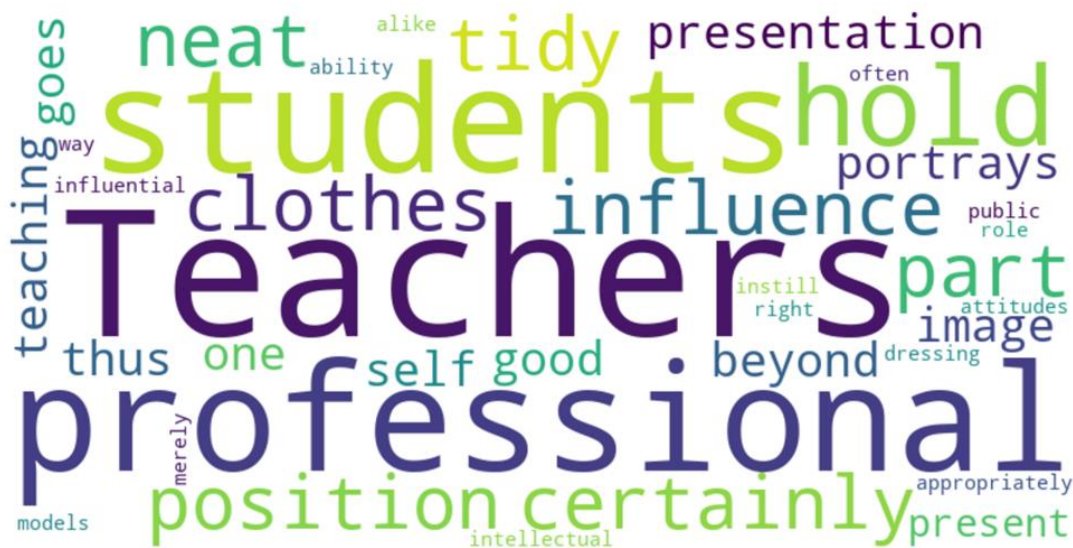


This cloud map shows that a teacher's positivity can be a really powerful way of inducing motivation in students to learn. A teacher who is enthusiastic will transfer his skills and knowledge to the students. The more frequently used words are in bold, which makes a cloud around the word organized. These words are positiveness, enthusiast, inspired, motivation, participate, etc. Some of the responses are presented here. One of the respondents said, in my opinion, "where a teacher is captivating about the topic, it is bound to be as well. Enthusiastic teachers may encourage pupils to learn and give a great teaching environment. Students can be inspired by teachers who are so enthusiastic about their jobs and, in turn, develop an interest that goes beyond simple requirements.

Research Question 4: To what extent do you believe teachers serve as role models, and how does their attire play a role in this?

Figure no 04:

Word cloud for teachers serves as role models and their attire.



This word cloud map shows that teachers hold such a position of influence that the professionals' clothes can certainly be a part of it. A neat and tidy presentation of one's self goes beyond being professional. It portrays a good image to the students, thus teaching them to present themselves appropriately to the public. The more frequently used words are in bold, which makes a cloud around the word organized. These words are influence, dressing, portrayal, presentation, intellectual, etc. One of the respondents said, in my opinion, that teachers are the most influential role models for their students because they often instil not only intellectual ability but also the right attitudes in them. By merely dressing this way, they are not only sending a message to their students about their own professionalism and respect for the learning atmosphere but also offering those correct actions and good thinking.

Research Question 5: Can you think of instances where a teacher's clothing positively influenced your behavior or attitudes?

Figure no 05

Word cloud for teacher's clothing positively influenced behavior or attitudes.

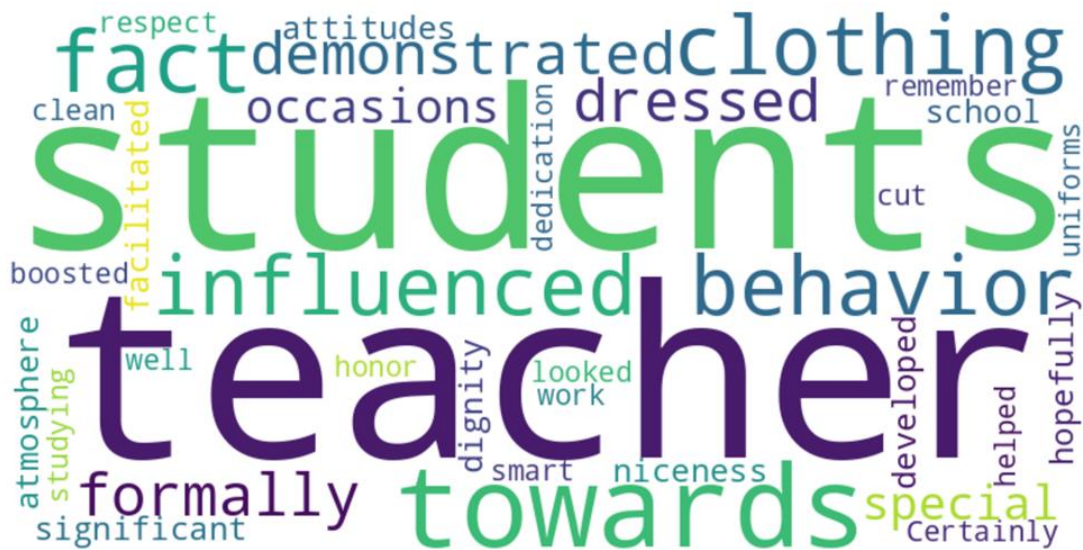


This word treemap shows that the teacher's clothes behaved as a motivation; seeing the teacher how she/he dresses could have favorably affected their conduct/outlook on things. For instance, a teacher who regularly dresses in formal attire and is particular about their grooming can be a source of respect in the class and a signal that the learning environment is respected. The more frequently used words are in bold, which makes a cloud around the word organized. These words are Dressing, professionalism, conducive, appropriate, engagement, etc. One of the respondents said, in my opinion, the outfits of a professional teacher can greatly enhance the work of students with their behaviors and attitudes. When teachers present themselves in professional attire, it may show that they are committed and capable and that they have regard for their job.

Research Question 6. Describe how a teacher's attire might influence your overall perception of the learning environment.

Figure no 06:

Word cloud for teacher's attire influences overall perception of the learning environment

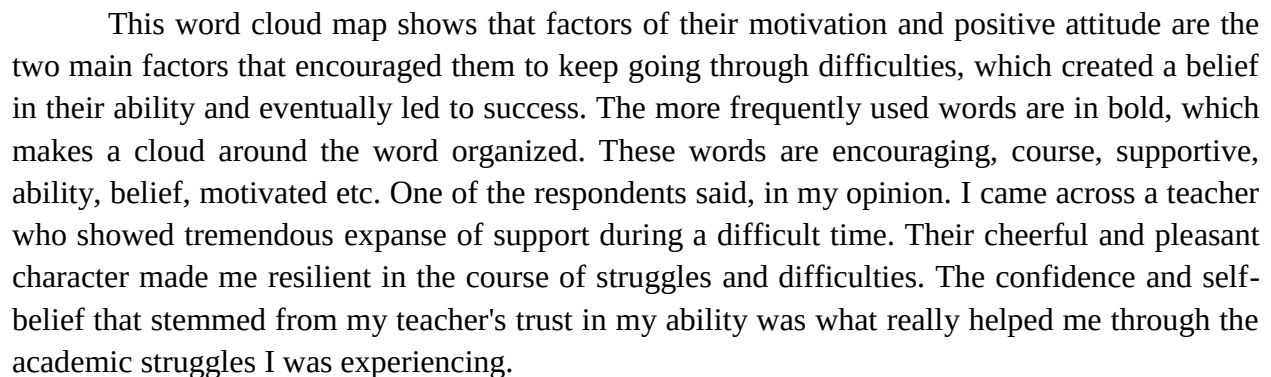


This word cloud map shows that Teachers' image through their dress code triggers the overall acceptance of the classroom as a place to learn. In a class where the dress code exhibits the subject or establishes an appropriate mood, it is a class that is led in a fashion that can lead to a better focus and better learning. The more frequently used words are in bold, which makes a cloud around the word organized. These words are dignity, hopeful, significant, developed, atmosphere, and honor. One of the respondents said, in my opinion. "A teacher can explore the options like relating the subject with real-world objects and provisions or bringing the interesting accessories every time to make the class attractive and the reality to create a connection between the subject and real world".

Research Question 7: Can you share an experience where a teacher's personality helped you overcome academic challenges or setbacks?

Figure no 07:

Word cloud for a teacher's personality helped in overcoming academic challenges.



According to the literature, the teacher's attitude has a direct effect on learners' motivation to learn in class. When the teachers are motivated to teach the given lessons, this will increase the interest levels of the students and make learning more an engaging process. Thus, the enthusiasm fosters emotional appeal and makes students look at the problem-solving strategies as an avenue to gain experience rather than a challenge. According to (Fredricks et al. 2004), interest is one aspect of energetic classroom involvement that comprises the behavioral, affective, and perceptual student changes for every enthusiastic teacher. Popular teachers use teaching techniques that can make a lesson very interesting and interesting with the use of tools and equipment needed in teaching (Franklin, 2023). This has a significant correlation with higher interest levels and motivation because students are more likely to get involved in interesting and relevant activities.

Ease of contact is very important because students are able to seek clarification or ask their instructors about issues affecting their study in confidence. The visibility of an effective teaching and learning process is in terms of the quantity, quality, clarity, source and nature of the

objectives specified, as well as the feedback and content used by the teacher. Hence, instructional quality can play a large part in the extent of the student's participation and their willingness to seek help. In other words, good teachers who study can minimize the gorgeous with which scholars may require assistance as the latter is encouraged to tackle learning objectives on her or his own (Hattie, 2009). However, it should be noted that embracing accessibility is not enough to ensure high instructional quality; both of these elements need to be adjusted for optimal results that will lead to the improvement of the student's performance (Hattie, 2009).

Many people would agree that the dressing style of a university professor is a form of non-verbal communication which determines the nature of an interaction with the learners. Teacher wear codes for the college level are flexible from formal to informal, and they have an impact on the amount of authority teachers possess, the amount of ease with which students can approach them and the amount of respect students have for them. (Ko et al., 2015) agree with this notion, stating that wearing of casual dress code makes students more comfortable and allows the instructor to easily approach them in the class. Similarly, when a professor is wearing a casual outfit, then students will feel that he or she is easy to talk to; thus, they will easily ask questions and seek assistance from the professor. Wearing those clothes means that it does not pressure the students or the professors, hence making the environment less formal. This Professor's approachability is particularly important to ensure that the students feel free to discuss with the Professor while at the same time coming to the class with an understanding that the Professor is ever willing to teach them (Ko et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Teachers' humor and accessibility make the learning environment fun and enjoyable, increasing the participation of students in the learning process. The personal characteristics, humor, and accessibility of teachers result in the demonstration of different interactions in the classroom. These characteristics help in breaking the barrier between the lecturer and the learner, bringing rapport, an essential tool for facilitating learning. A balance of humour and accessibility will encourage the students to participate fully in the learning process, apply themselves, and, therefore, increase the retention of information. Accessible teachers will be able to approach students with questions and inquiries, thus affecting the students' trust. Humour and accessibility can decrease some levels of stress and increase the quality of the classroom environment. The medium of communication is essential, as it will determine how students will understand the cognitive content. Direct and purposeful communication will help students to absorb difficult-to-understand concepts faster. Teachers who present the information in plain and simple language will help students to remember and process the information fast enough. Clear communication ensures effective transfer of the information, while interesting communication holds students' attention and involvement in the learning process. A teacher's enthusiasm will increase the

enthusiasm to learn in the classroom. An enthusiastic teacher will make the study content more engaging and literally fun, increasing the student's interest and involvement in the material. In turn, this enthusiasm will easily create an emotional attachment to the studied material and will encourage the students to perceive problem-solving as a source of experience and not a challenge. Enthusiasm enhances learning because it makes the cognitive concept memorable and interesting. It will also cause a concept to be understood and later on be remembered. Teachers should be models for their students in the transfer of both intellectual capabilities and the right attitude. Proper dressing shall communicate a sense of professionalism and respect in the learning atmosphere. That begets correctness in actions and good thinking. An adaptive teacher who adjusts the approach to the needs of the students is able to create an inclusive and effective learning process.

A teacher can contribute to building the student's character in all his actions and choices, inside and outside the class. Whatever the teacher may put on probably becomes visible words to the students. He is the kind of teacher who does not only teach what things are to be remembered and what facts are to be observed but also how it is worth remembering or what facts should be absorbed. How he dresses may send positive messages such as professionalism, self-respect, and educational relevance. Teachers need to dress professionally to communicate, set up a standard of respect and discipline, and add credibility to the teacher's authority. Neatness and fussing about dressing style show the importance of such a profession, as well as professional characteristics of sincerity, compassion, and commitment. Dressing well will have a positive influence on students' behaviour and attitude by creating an atmosphere of dignity and niceness around them, motivating them to foster respect for themselves and their subjects in the process of learning. Dress appropriately and in respect-gathering professional dress to school to help students know that respect is paramount within your class and to serve as a signal of respect for the learning environment in general.

Recommendations

Based on these insights, several recommendations emerge for educators and educational institutions seeking to optimize the impact of teachers' attire on classroom performance:

- Establish clear guidelines and expectations regarding attire to promote a culture of professionalism within the educational setting. Encourage teachers to dress in a manner that reflects the values and standards of the institution while allowing for individual expression.
- Provide guidance on appropriate dress codes for different contexts and offer support for acquiring professional attire, particularly for educators facing financial constraints.
- Recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and personal preferences of teachers when addressing attire-related policies. Embrace inclusivity by accommodating

religious or cultural attire requirements and avoiding gender-based dress codes that perpetuate stereotypes.

- Encourage teachers to prioritize comfort and confidence when selecting attire for the classroom. Emphasize the importance of feeling comfortable and authentic in one's clothing choices, as this can positively impact teacher morale and performance.

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