

## Effective Factors for Promoting Student Engagement in Educational Activities

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the Effective Factors for Promoting Student Engagement in Educational Activities at the Faculty of Education, Helmand University. The research employed a quantitative approach and utilized a sample of (278) students from a total population of (995), selected using the Rao Soft Sample Size Calculator. The study had a (95%) confidence interval and a (5%) error level. The primary objective of this research was to explore the effective factors for promoting students engagement in educational activities. Two questionnaires were used, one focusing on students' educational activities and the other on teachers' emotional behavior. Simple linear regression was applied to analyze the effects of the independent variable (teachers' emotional behavior) on the dependent variable (students' educational activities), with data analyzed using SPSS and Excel. The findings indicate that teachers' emotional behavior significantly influences students' educational performance and activities. Specifically, the study found that teachers' strict and serious behavior (83%), establishing communication with students' parents (80%), and friendly and sincere relationships between students and teachers (76%) have notable effects on students' educational activities. This suggests that when teachers exhibit a gentle, sincere, friendly, and supportive attitude towards students during the teaching process, students are more likely to attend classes enthusiastically and actively participate in their lessons.

**Keywords-** Educational activities, emotional behavior, academic motivation, situational emotions, social emotions.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The higher education system plays a foundational role in the development and progress of society (Paririk & Fatahi, 2005). Educational activities can be considered an investment by the current generation for the future (Dargahi, Mohedkar, & Shaham, 2009). Today, universities or higher education institutions have two primary missions: teaching and research.

An effective and efficient human workforce is the greatest factor for societal advancement. The wealthiest and most developed countries possess competent and capable human resources. Consequently, investing in human resource development is a priority for nations, with universities and higher education institutions serving as training centers.

Ensuring optimal quality in these institutions is crucial to avoid wasting material and human resources. While every aspect requires attention, the qualitative aspect of teaching has gained more importance. In Afghanistan, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education have focused on increasing quantity and made substantial progress, yet significant deficiencies in quality remain.

University administrators often prioritize physical and infrastructural issues over the quality of teaching and student learning. Providing students with motivation for human resource development is crucial for fostering a hopeful outlook and driving progress through learning, innovation, and development. Motivated students work harder and utilize their talents effectively.

Ensuring optimal performance in various aspects of higher education institutions is essential to avoid wasting resources. While progress has been made in expanding access, significant deficiencies remain in terms of teaching quality. In Afghanistan, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education have focused on increasing quantity and made substantial progress, yet significant deficiencies in quality remain. University administrators often focus on physical and infrastructural issues, neglecting the quality of teaching and student learning. Motivating students is crucial for human resource development and driving progress through learning, innovation, and development.

Lack of motivation can lead to student disengagement and devaluation of abilities, while proper motivation fosters active participation and a desire to learn. Professors should design educational activities that stimulate students' motivation, making learning and participation more appealing. Motivation arises from four factors: environment (external stimuli), mood (internal state), goal (purpose and interest), and means (resources to achieve the goal).

Neglecting the pedagogical aspect of higher education leads to a decline in educational quality, reduced student participation, poor relationships between students and professors, and decreased satisfaction. This ultimately weakens the performance of both students and professors, calling the quality of the educational system into question.

High-quality teaching in higher education is more important than ever, as it significantly impacts students and their education (Yousefzadeh & Shahmoradi, 2016). This research at the Faculty of Education and Training at Helmand University aims to understand effective methods and factors that can motivate students to engage in educational activities and further their learning.

### ***Concept of the Educational activity***

Educational activities, or learning activities, encompass the diverse range of activities undertaken by students during the learning process. Meaningful and active learning aims to develop students' capacities, enhance their ability to exert effort and engage in activities, generate knowledge, stimulate creativity, and provide impactful learning experiences. Students' learning activities play a crucial role in shaping their educational outcomes and fostering a high motivation for comprehensive learning, enabling them to gain proficiency in the subject matter (Sommerme & Boodi, 2017).

### ***Types of Educational Activities***

Teachers have the responsibility to facilitate effective, enjoyable, creative, dynamic, and meaningful learning experiences, ensuring that students actively participate in learning activities. Classroom and learning activities are crucial in the educational process because learning is an activity or process aimed at acquiring knowledge, developing skills, improving behavior, and

strengthening character. Beyond acquiring knowledge, interactions between students and teachers should be designed to foster the concept of learning, enhancing students' engagement and creativity.

Two principles are employed in the learning activity: one is a principle focused on psychology, dominated by the activities of teachers, and the other is a perspective of modern psychology, dominated by the activities of students. In the classroom and the learning process, some student activities include verbal activities, listening activities, writing activities, drawing activities, mental activities, and emotional activities (Sommerme & Boodi, 2017).

### ***Effective factors on Students educational motivation***

According to Rash (1994), motivation is a critical and significant determinant of learning outcomes. Higher motivation leads to increased effort, diligence, and persistence in achieving educational goals. Students with strong educational motivation are more attentive, take academic activities seriously, and seek additional knowledge beyond classroom instruction. Motivation and interest are pivotal in the learning process, as individuals tend to excel in tasks they find enjoyable and engaging. Factors influencing students' engagement include appealing topics, repetitive practice, and the perceived importance of academic material. Aligning classroom content with student interests enhances sustained attention and active participation.

Research conducted at Iran's Islamic Azad University on male and female students identified several factors contributing to low educational motivation among students, including teaching methods, job uncertainty, inadequate university facilities, and student disengagement (Salehi et al., 2009).

Moammarhour et al (2017) colleagues indicate that designing and implementing educational programs, personal organization strategies, learning theories and appropriate methods, group interactions, cognitive-emotional and social actions, innovation, hope and optimism towards work, personality traits, individual status, academic progress, and alignment with society are influential factors that significantly impact students' educational motivation. However, other factors such as academic pressures, gender differences, psychological issues, and demographic variables did not have a positive impact on students' educational motivation.

Molavi and Rostami (2007) highlighted future optimism, self-esteem, educational quality, marital status, and family income as crucial factors influencing students' motivation. Addressing these factors effectively could significantly enhance educational motivation among students (Molavi Parviz and Rostami, 2007, p. 15).

## **II. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The role of Lecturers requires a comprehensive understanding of their students' life circumstances,

challenges, strengths, aspirations, and personal circumstances. Effective teaching involves delivering subject matter in a manner that fosters students' intellectual and personal growth, while accounting for the Lecturers' expertise and significant activities.

Proficiency in innovative teaching approaches is essential for Lecturers to ensure that subjects are engaging and relevant to students. Failure to adopt such methods may lead to important topics being overlooked or undervalued by students.

In modern educational contexts, emphasis is placed on enabling students to master subjects through effective learning and unlearning processes facilitated by Lecturers. Lecturers often express concerns about students' lack of engagement in covered topics, which may shift the entire responsibility onto the educator. It is imperative to establish mutual collaboration with Lecturers to determine whether a student is unable to actively participate in lessons or requires assistance in clarifying and mastering subjects.

The authoritarian approach of professors towards students, the creation of a fearful classroom environment, the removal of student autonomy, the perception of students as powerless individuals, the focus solely on content delivery, and various other factors inspired me to undertake this research on promoting student engagement in educational activities at the Faculty of Education, Helmand University.

### **III. IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

Professors in higher education institutions are considered essential elements in training competent and skilled individuals across diverse fields. Emotion is a fundamental and indispensable aspect of life, without which an individual's feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and decision-making capacities would be severely impaired. In the academic context, human emotions can either facilitate or hinder the learning process, with positive emotions making cognitive activities more accessible and negative emotions posing challenges.

Given that students engage in learning both emotionally and cognitively, it is crucial for them to study extensively to improve their preparedness and performance. By doing so, students can comprehend the taught subjects easily, identify areas of difficulty for class discussions, and be highly motivated to collaborate with their professors in classroom activities.

In the 21st century, the emphasis on student performance and educational activities positions students as active and central participants in the educational process. Consequently, the interactions and relationships between professors and students are crucial. Professors who are well-versed in their teaching subjects, come to class fully prepared, and value students' actions and activities in the classroom, strive to encourage students

to participate and engage in lessons and educational activities. This is because there is a meaningful relationship between professors' emotional behavior and students' educational activities. Logical, organized, and active behavior and activities by professors lead to students also exhibiting similar behaviors and cooperating with their professors for better explanation and clarification of the lessons.

The more value a student is given in the classroom, considering their aspirations, needs, abilities, qualifications, talents, and other unique differences, the more the student becomes motivated to engage in other beneficial and effective activities. Professors in universities possessing professional and emotional characteristics will lead to students also embodying similar qualities.

In Afghan universities, there is widespread criticism regarding the relationships, behavior, and interactions between professors and students. In some cases, students are blamed; in others, professors; and sometimes, both parties are held responsible for failing to create an effective emotional atmosphere in educational environments.

#### ***Research Objectives***

##### **A. Mien Goal**

1. Identify and analyze the key factors that effectively motivate students in educational activities.

##### **B. Sub Goals**

1. Examine the impact of friendly relationships between teachers and students on students' educational activities and performance.
2. Investigate the effects of teachers' strict and serious behavior on students' educational activities and outcomes.
3. Clarify the influence of appropriate relationships between students' families and teachers on students' educational performance and participation.

#### ***Research Questions***

##### **Mien Question**

1. What are the key factors that effectively motivate students in their educational activities

##### **B. Sub Questions**

1. To what degree can positive, friendly relationships between teachers and students impact students' educational activities and performance?
2. How substantial is the effect of teachers' strict and serious behavior on students' educational activities and outcomes?
3. What role do appropriate relationships between teachers and students' families play in influencing students' educational performance and participation?

### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS**

#### ***Research Method***

This study employs a descriptive approach with practical objectives, utilizing a mixed-methods strategy.

Conducted at the Faculty of Education, Helmand University, the research uses simple random sampling ensuring that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

**Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study includes all male and female students of the Faculty of Education at Helmand University, totaling 995 students. Using the RaoSoft sample size calculator, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, a sample size of 278 students was determined. Given the lack of significant variation among the population members, the distribution of questionnaires was carried out using a simple random method, covering students from six different departments within the Faculty of Education.

**Research Materials**

Data collection involved the distribution of two questionnaires to the students. These questionnaires were obtained online, and their validity and reliability were previously established. Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha method was used to calculate the reliability, with a value of 0.87 reported by Sakiz in 2007, and an internal

consistency reliability of 0.79 reported by Sadat Hosseini and Khair. In the current study, the reliability of the questionnaires was recalculated using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a value of 0.64 for the emotional behavior questionnaire and 0.73 for the academic activities questionnaire. To determine the validity of the questionnaires, they were reviewed by ten professors before being distributed to the students, ensuring acceptable levels of reliability and validity. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and Excel software.

**V. RESEARCH FINDING**

*Descriptive analyses of data*

This study included a total of 276 participants, comprising 103 female students and 173 male students, from six departments (Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Pashto, and English) spanning from first to fourth grade.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables from the Emotional Behavior Questionnaire**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Emotional Behavior</b>					
Friendly Relationships between Teachers and Students	28	3/5	12/2	20	41
Teachers' Harsh and Strict Behavior	18	3/4	11/9	5	26
Family Involvement	6	1/7	3	2	10

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables from the Educational Activities Questionnaire**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
Educational Activities	71/8	9/5	91/8	41	98

**Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Coefficients of Research Variables**

Variable	M	S	1	2	3	4
Emotional Behavior	9/5	71/8	1			
Friendly Relationships between Teachers and Students	3/5	28/1	0/24'''	1		
Teachers' Harsh and Strict Behavior	3/4	15/3	·/17'''	0/25'''	1	
Family Involvement	1/7	6/1	0/20'''	0/23'''	0/19'''	1

These descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive overview of the participants' emotional behavior, their relationships with teachers, teachers' behavior, and family involvement, alongside the corresponding measures of central tendency and variability. The correlation coefficients further elucidate the relationships between these variables, offering insights into potential influences on educational activities.

**Inferential Analyses of Data**

In the inferential analysis of data, simple linear regression was utilized to identify the effective factors

for motivating students towards educational activities. This statistical technique enabled the researchers to clarify which factors can significantly impact students' engagement and participation in class discussions.

The key metrics considered in the analysis include the significance level (Sig), the t-statistic (T), and the standardized regression coefficient (beta, β). The standard error (SE) and the unstandardized regression coefficient (B) were also reported. The beta (β) coefficient represents the standardized impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. A higher beta value, coupled with a larger t-statistic and a

smaller significance level, indicates that the independent variable has a substantial and significant influence on the dependent variable.

Our findings are primarily based on beta ( $\beta$ ) rather than the adjusted correlation coefficient (Adjusted R Square =  $R^2$ ). A significance level of less than 0.05 suggests that the independent variable effectively explains the variations in the dependent variable and has a substantial impact. Conversely, a significance level

greater than 0.05 indicates that the independent variable does not adequately explain the variations in the dependent variable, and its impact is minimal.

This comprehensive approach to inferential data analysis provides valuable insights into the key factors that drive student engagement and participation in educational activities, enabling the researchers to make informed decisions and develop effective strategies for enhancing student motivation and learning outcomes.

**Table 4: The Impact of Friendly Relationships between Teachers and Students on Students' Academic Activities**

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	T	Sig
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	Change Rate	Significance Level
Constant	53/088	4/546		11/679	0/0001
Friendly Relationships	0/668	0/160	0/76	4/163	0/0001
ADJ.R2 = 0/56					

Table 4 indicates that 76% of the variance in students' academic activities can be predicted based on the presence of friendly relationships with their teachers. The (T) value obtained suggests a statistically significant effect at the 0.0001 level. Since this significance level is much lower than the threshold of 0.05, it is concluded that friendly interactions between teachers and students

have a substantial impact (76%) on enhancing students' academic performance and activities. This implies that teachers' emotional engagement and amicable relations with students foster an environment where students are more likely to improve their academic performance and classroom engagement.

**Table 5: The Impact of Friendly Relationships between Teachers and Students on Students' Academic Activities**

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	T	Sig
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	Change Rate	Significance Level
Constant	64/320	2/585		24/880	0/0001
Stern and Serious Behavior	0/492	0/165	0/83	2/992	0/0003
ADJ.R2 = 0/28					

Table 5 reveals that 83% of the variance in students' academic activities can be predicted based on the teachers' stern and serious behavior. The (T) value obtained indicates a statistically significant effect at the 0.0001 level. Given that this significance level is below the 0.05 threshold, it is inferred that a stern and serious

demeanor from teachers has a significant impact (83%) on diminishing students' academic performance and activities. This suggests that when teachers adopt a stern and serious approach in the classroom, students are less inclined to engage in their studies and classroom activities.

**Table 6: Impact of Teachers Establishing Communication with Parents on Students' Academic Performance and Activities.**

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	T	Sig
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	Change Rate	Significance Level
Constant	65/042	2/074		31/361	0/0001
Communication with Parents	1/108	0/324	0/80	30/420	0/0001
ADJ.R2 = 0/37					

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that the establishment of communication between teachers

and students' parents accounts for 80% of the variance in students' academic performance and activities. The

obtained t-value is statistically significant at the 0.0001 level. Given that the significance level is lower than the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that the establishment of communication by teachers with parents has a significant influence, explaining 83% of the variation in students' academic performance and activities. This suggests that when students are not actively participating in class activities,

not engaged in lessons, or not completing their assigned tasks and responsibilities properly, open communication between teachers and parents regarding the students' status and activities can prompt parents to direct their children towards their studies and activities, ultimately encouraging students to participate more actively in their learning.

**Table 7: Students' Prioritization of Three Variables**

Three Variables	Beta Standardized Coefficient	Sig Significance Level
Teachers' Strict and Serious Behavior	0/83	0/0003
Communication with Parents	0/80	0/0001
Friendly Relations between Teachers and Students	0/76	0/0001

The information presented in Table 7 suggests that students prioritize various factors in their academic performance and activities. Teachers' strict and serious behavior is found to affect 83% of students' academic performance and activities at a significance level of 0.0003. Establishing communication between teachers and parents, and informing them about students' status, affects 80% of students' academic performance and activities at a significance level of 0.0001. Furthermore, friendly relations between teachers and students influence 76% of students' academic performance and activities at a significance level of 0.0001.

## VI. DISCUSSION

This study examined the factors that can effectively motivate students to participate extensively in classroom discussions and maintain an active presence in academic settings. The findings align with many previous studies, but some additional factors have also been identified that can positively impact students' academic activities in the classroom.

According to the findings of Blazar (2016), positive relationships and behavior from teachers towards students in mathematics have made students feel happier and perform better in class. This research, conducted across various branches of education, involving both natural and human sciences students, found that sincere relationships and behavior between teachers and students significantly contribute to the improvement and effectiveness of students' academic activities.

A study by Abdullahi, Tavakoli, and Soleimani (2014) found that teachers' mastery over the subject matter, ability to establish verbal communication, setting appropriate rules for the class, and expressing expectations were emphasized factors in students' academic progress. This research indicates that imposing strict rules in the classroom without considering students' needs, demands, and issues can disrupt the

psychological atmosphere of the class and harm the positive relationship between teachers and students.

The findings of a study by Ghadami and colleagues (2007) revealed that, from the students' perspective, the most effective factors in the relationships and interactions between teachers and students include the teachers' communication skills, teaching proficiency, academic level, experience, and ethics, with more than 50% of students considering the teacher's age and gender to be insignificant. This study, conducted at Helmand University's Faculty of Education, found that mastery of the subject matter, communication skills, academic and practical experiences, close and sincere relationships with students, and teachers' compassion and kindness were factors that positively impacted the relationships and behavior between teachers and students.

According to a study by Rahmanzadeh and Najafi Niyasar (2012), as teachers' communication skills improve, so does students' motivation to learn and their academic activities. Additionally, the stronger the verbal and non-verbal communication skills of teachers, the more motivated and effective students become in their activities. This research also found that teachers should understand the individual differences among students, recognize their needs and abilities, and act as a close friend and colleague to help them overcome their issues and provide good and healthy advice when needed.

The findings of a study by Hashemi (2013-14) indicate that enhancing teachers' fundamental skills can improve students' academic performance and activities. This research also found that teachers' skills in teaching lead to greater student attention to the relevant topics and subjects. However, if a teacher displays a harsh and angry demeanor or lacks teaching skills, it creates a gap between students and learning the academic materials.

Ruiz's (2016) study results show that, under certain conditions, teachers' positive attitudes and emotions have positive effects on students, while negative attitudes and emotions have adverse effects. This research also found that teachers' goodwill and

positive behavior towards students positively influence their performance and even interests. Conversely, teachers who exhibit a stern and harsh demeanor discourage students from participating in learning activities, making them count the moments until the end of the class.

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