

## Is There a Relationship Between Business Studies Teachers' Teaching Styles and Students' Motivation to Learn?

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to find out whether the business studies teachers' teaching styles influence their upper six students' positive attitudes towards the business studies subject at secondary schools in Malaysia. It uses 189 students who were in the upper six form. A questionnaire and interviews method for data collection were used. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as t-test, Pearson correlation, one-way and two-way ANOVA were applied. The results showed that the students preferred personal style of teaching approach of their teachers. However, their interest in the business studies subject was just moderate. There was no significance difference in terms of the preferred personal teaching styles based on the students' gender. On the other hand, there was a significant correlation between the preferred teaching style and the students' interest in the subject matter and a slight difference between the different races of students in terms of preferred teaching styles.

**Key words:** Business studies, teaching styles, motivation and learning, slight difference, races, positive attitudes

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### INTRODUCTION

The business studies subject was introduced in 1998 as one of the subjects for form six students in Malaysia. Based on the High School National Examination results (HSNE) between the years of 1999 and 2005, there were only slight increased in the overall results in the year of 2002 (2.66%) and 1% in the year of 2004 for candidates to pass with a principal. On the other hand, the examination results of the subject started to decline since, the year of 2000 (by 3.18%) and the year of 2001 (by 0.22%) which only a total of 69.02% of the candidates passed with a principal. In the year of 2003 and 2005, the results declined again by 3.81 and 3.88% (Malaysia Examination Board, 2000-2005).

Based on a few earlier studies' results related to the performance of these students in the national examination are still not very encouraging. There are many factors that might caused for the declined in the results such as students' attitudes, teachers' teaching approach, study skills and others.

In an earlier study by Abd Rahim, he found out that one of the factors that caused the decreased in the percentage of passing with principals among the upper six students was teachers took for granted when teaching

this group of students who were considered as adults (pre-university level). Abd Majid added that teachers' teaching styles and techniques tend be conversational type and teacher-centered. Teachers tend to provide list of facts for students to memorize instead of using more effective teaching methods such as inquiry, constructivism, mastery, contextual and other teaching methods which stimulate an active learning among students. Rosalind's study which involved 260 form two and five students in a secondary school in the Sri Aman town in Sarawak, Malaysia found out that teachers used all the four Grasha's teaching styles clusters in teaching Malay language subject. The most dominant teaching styles which were used by the teachers in the school were the formal, personal and facilitator styles. Nasir's study confirmed Rosalind's study's findings. Nasir used 180 students from four secondary schools in Semporna city, Sabah, Malaysia found that there was a significant relationship between all teaching styles and the attitude of students toward the history subject. Nasir also found that the personal teaching style is the most dominant style used among the history teachers in the school. On the other hand, Siti Zubaidah's study towards 120 form 4 students from the science stream in Sepang city, Selangor, Malaysia found that the students preferred

teachers who used facilitator teaching style rather than other teaching styles. Dressel and Marcus (1982)'s and Woods (1994)'s pointed out that teaching styles which is a discipline based and teacher-centered encourage students to absorb learning materials passively and compared to the student-centered teaching styles which encourages students to actively involve in the learning process. John added that lecture-teaching style is an example of a teacher-centered teaching style which is not suitable to apply in all learning situations. Student-centered teaching style tend to focus more on students' participation which allows for their positive cognitive development. In this situation, teachers will help students to understand the process of acquiring knowledge rather than accept knowledge as the end product. A research conducted by Grasha (1996) using 761 classrooms able to categorize teaching styles into four clusters.

Those clusters are cluster 1-expert/formal styles, cluster 2-personal/expert/formal styles, cluster 3-facilitator/personal/expert styles and cluster 4-delegator/facilitator/expert styles. Grasha found out that the teaching styles most used by teachers are cluster 1 (38%), cluster 2 (22%), cluster 3 (17%) and cluster 4 (15%). Felder and Henriques (1995)'s study found out that the teaching styles used by teachers which were suitable or not suitable with the student's learning process will make students feel bored and disappointed or even ignore the whole learning activities. Their findings were also supported by Hyland (1993)'s study. With regard to attitudes, there were many studies which tried to define and measure students' attitudes towards their teachers or subject matter.

Gogolin and Swartz (1992) measured students' attitude towards science subject using six aspects such as their presumption towards teachers, anxiety towards science, the important of science to society, self-concept in sciences, excitement in science and motivation in science.

Brady *et al.* (2009) studied students' attitude toward business studies subject based on their perceptions on the influences of text books usage, exposure of business studies among teachers, talks about business opportunities and exposure of practical training. John *et al.* (2008) who conducted a research on 244 university students taking business studies program and 197 university students not in the business studies program. The research found that teaching approach in business studies courses affected students' attitude and ability to make decision.

**Purpose of study:** This study intends to find out whether the upper six form secondary school students who take

business studies are motivated to learn the subject matter because of their teachers' teaching styles. Thus, this study tried to answer the following questions:

- What teaching style/s used by teachers that are most preferred by the business studies students?
- What is the level of the business studies students' attitude towards the subject?
- Is there a relationship between students' preferred teaching styles and their attitude towards business studies subject?
- Is there a significant difference of the students' preferred teaching styles based on gender and race?
- Is there a significant difference of the students' attitude towards business studies based on gender, race and business family backgrounds?
- How does the students' preferred teaching styles influence their attitudes towards the business studies subject?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed survey method. Data was collected using a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire consisted of three sections such as demographic (section A), teaching styles (section B) and attitude towards business studies subject (section C). The items for the teaching styles were adapted from Grasha (1996)'s instrument and the items for the students' attitude were adapted from Gogolin and Swartz (1992). The reliability of the questionnaire based on Alpha Cronbach value was 0.81. The responses for each item were based on the 5 Likert scales. The respondents were 189 form six students from seven secondary schools in Johor Baharu's district. For the interviews, two male and female students were selected purposely. Descriptive statistics such as means was used to measure the students' preferred teaching styles towards business studies. Inferential statistics such as t-test, Pearson correlation both one-way and two-way ANOVA were used to determine the relationships between the variables. Qualitative data were analyzed using constant comparative data analysis method.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 189 upper six students selected as respondents, 54 were males and 135 were females. Overall, there were 130 Malays, 88 Chinese and 21 Indians. Also, 88 of the respondents from the total of 189 come from business family backgrounds and the rest did not.

Table 1 shows the mean values of the preferred teaching styles by the students. The mean values for the preferred teaching styles were expert (3.94), formal authority (3.55), personal (4.04), facilitator (3.97) and delegator (3.72). The mean values showed that students preferred the personal teaching style the most.

The attitudes of the students as shown in Table 2 towards the business studies subject were moderate (mean = 3.09). The correlation between the students' most preferred teaching styles and their positive attitude towards the business studies subject was quite low ( $r = 0.346$ ) as shown in Table 3.

However, the correlation was significant ( $p = 0.0000$ ) at the level of  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed). In terms of the students' most preferred teaching style and attitude towards the subject matter both had no significant difference ( $p = 0.413$  and  $p = 0.109$ ) based on gender at the level of  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed; Table 4 and 5). The one way ANOVA test (Table 6) showed that there was a significant difference in terms of the preferred teaching styles based on race ( $F(2,186) = 4.056$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ). In terms of the personal teaching style as shown in Table 7, the Malay students scored mean = 3.8946 ( $sp = 0.3993$ ;  $n = 130$ ) followed by the Indian students scored mean = 3.7940 ( $sp = 0.3759$ ;  $n = 21$ ) and lastly, the Chinese students scored mean = 3.6908 ( $sp = 0.3988$ ;  $n = 38$ ).

Table 1: The mean scores for the preferred teaching styles by the students

Teaching styles	N	Mean±SD
Expert model	189	3.9358±0.45649
Authority formal model	189	3.5489±0.61122
Personal model	189	4.0390±0.48980
Facilitator model	189	3.9716±0.53168
Delegator model	189	3.7169±0.54736

Table 2: The mean scores for the students' attitudes toward business studies

Students' attitude	N	Mean±SD	Interpretation
Students' attitude	189	3.0920±0.22479	moderate

Table 3: Correlation value between the preferred teaching styles and students' positive attitude toward business studies

Correlation	N	r	r <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Correlation	189	0.346	0.12	0.000**

Table 4: t-test for students' preferred teaching style based on gender

Gender	N	Mean±SD	t-test	Sig.
Male	54	3.8806±0.40509	0.821	0.413
Female	135	3.8272±0.40289	-	-
Total	189	3.8425±0.40316	-	-

Table 5: t-test for students' attitude toward business studies based on gender

Gender	N	Mean±SD	t-test	Sig.
Male	54	3.1335±0.20820	1.610	0.109
Female	135	3.0755±0.22974	-	-
Total	189	3.0920±0.22479	-	-

\*\*Significant at the level  $k$ ;  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)  $\alpha$

Further test using the Post-hoc test showed that there was a significant difference between the Malay students and the Chinese students ( $p < 0.05$ ) as compared between the Malay students and the Indian students.

The two-way ANOVA test showed that there was a significant difference in terms of students' attitude towards the business studies subject between the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians ( $F(2,183) = 3.691$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and no significant difference based on their business family backgrounds ( $F(1,183) = 2.016$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This showed that the students' business backgrounds did not provide any influence on the students' attitude. Apart from that there was no interaction effect between race and the students' business backgrounds indicated as  $F(2, 183) = 0.485$  and  $p = 0.617$  (Table 8).

**Interview results:** Four students were interviewed. Three of them preferred the personal teaching style and one of them preferred the facilitator teaching style. Similar to the quantitative results their, the attitude toward the business studies subject was just moderate. All the four respondents admitted that the teaching styles of their teachers did influence their attitude toward the subject matter as depicted in the quantitative findings which showed a weak correlation between the two variables. The male respondents preferred the personal teaching style while the female respondent preferred the facilitator teaching style.

When asked more detailed questions, the respondents said they did not like teachers talk too fast, take a long time explaining facts, gave too many written exercises and cannot simplify their explanations. The respondents preferred that teachers use a variety of teaching approaches can easily understand what they said, stress on the main points to be understood and

Table 6: The one-way ANOVA analysis for the preferred teaching styles by the students based on race

Variance	Sum of square	DK	F-test	Sig.
Between group	1.277	2	4.056	0.019**
Within group	29.280	186	-	-
Total	30.557	188	-	-

Table 7: The Tukey post hoc test for the preferred teaching styles by the students based on race

Races	Mean difference	Sig.
Malay-Chinese	0.2038	0.016**
Malay-Indian	0.1006	0.529
Chinese-Indian	-0.1033	0.605

Table 8: The two-way ANOVA for the mean scores of students' attitudes toward business studies subject

Variance	Sum of square	DK	F-test	Sig.
Race	0.363	2	3.691	0.027**
Experience	0.099	1	2.016	0.157
Race*experience	0.048	2	0.485	0.617

\*\*Significant at the level  $k$   $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)  $\alpha$

lastly provide a lot of examples. Overall based on triangulations of data, the respondents preferred personal teaching style. The reason was this style encouraged teachers to tell students how to learn and understand the subject matter.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, teachers' teaching styles play an important role in influencing the students' positive attitudes towards a subject matter. The results also showed that students preferred student-centered teaching style such as the personal model even though, the qualitative findings suggested that students still wanted that teachers use a variety of teaching styles in addition to it. The personal teaching style allows students to learn from their teachers how to learn and considers their teachers to be their role model. On the other hand, students attitude towards the business studies per say was only moderate.

This could be explained based on many previous studies that most Malay students came from the non-business family backgrounds. The findings also showed that there was a weak significant correlation between teachers' teaching styles and the students' attitude. Thus, teachers must be aware of their responsibility to employ appropriate teaching styles that students like. On the hand, there was no significant difference in terms of the preferred teaching styles among the male and female students. This finding is in contrast with Siti Zubaidah's study which found that male students tend to like personal teaching styles.

However, the qualitative findings of this study confirmed Siti Zubaidah's assertion which says that the male students prefer personal teaching style. The finding also showed that there was no significant difference in terms of students' attitude towards the subject matter based on gender. Recently, many studies had shown that gender had no influence on many aspects of variables

(Lindsey, 1990). Interestingly however, there was a significant difference between the Malay students and the Chinese students in terms of the preferred teaching styles. Again, this could be explained by cultural factors.

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