

Research Paper

The Role of Ethical Presentation of Teachers on Students' Involvement in the Classroom

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of ethical presentation and conducts of teachers on student involvement in the classroom. In an era where student engagement is pivotal to effective learning, the role of the teacher extends beyond instructional delivery to include personal ethics, fairness, and respectful behavior. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis involving student surveys and classroom observations in undergraduate settings, the study establishes a significant positive relationship between teachers' ethical conduct and student involvement. Findings suggest that ethical behaviors such as fairness, transparency, empathy, and respectful communication enhance student participation, attentiveness, and classroom collaboration.

Keywords: *Ethical teaching, student involvement, classroom ethics, teacher behavior, learning environment.*

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1. Introduction

Ethical presentation refers to a teacher's ability to consistently demonstrate integrity, equitable treatment, and moral conduct, particularly in student interactions, assessments, and classroom decision-making. A classroom's effectiveness depends not just on academic content or instructional methods, but also heavily on the teacher's ethical conduct and professional demeanor. Ethics in the classroom encompasses values such as fairness, honesty, respect, and responsibility, which contribute to a positive and inclusive learning environment (Noddings, 2002; Campbell, 2003). These values not only set behavioral expectations for educators but also serve as guiding principles that influence students' emotional and cognitive engagement in the classroom (Sokkett, 2006). Research underscores that students tend to respond positively both emotionally and behaviorally when they perceive their teachers as ethically grounded individuals (Turhan, 2007). For instance, when teachers are perceived as fair in evaluations, unbiased in feedback, and respectful of student voices, students are more likely to be engaged, participative, and motivated (Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

This paper seeks to examine the influence of teachers' ethical presentation defined by their moral integrity, fairness, respectfulness, and impartiality on students' involvement and engagement in the classroom setting. Grounded in ethical education theories and supported by empirical findings, this study aims to shed light on the direct and indirect ways in which ethical conduct fosters a more

interactive and trusting learning atmosphere, thereby enhancing student attentiveness and participation.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the impact of ethical teacher behavior on student engagement.
- To explore the correlation between ethical conduct and classroom attentiveness.

3. Review of Literature

Noddings, N. (2002)¹ in her seminal work on *"Ethics of Care in Education,"* Noddings emphasized the moral responsibility of teachers in creating a caring, respectful, and ethically sound learning environment. She argued that ethical behavior such as fairness, honesty, and respect on the part of teachers significantly influences student engagement, trust, and participation in classroom activities.

Campbell, E. (2003)² study on *"The Ethical Teacher"* explored how moral values and professional conduct influence classroom behavior. The research found that students are more likely to participate actively and maintain attention when teachers exhibit consistency in ethical behavior, particularly in issues like unbiased assessment, equal treatment, and transparent communication.

Strike, K. A., & Soltis, J. F. (2004)³ in their book *"The Ethics of Teaching"* presents real-life dilemmas that teachers face and

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¹Noddings, N. (2002). *The Ethics of Care and Education*. University of California Press.

²Campbell, E. (2003). *The Ethical Teacher*. Open University Press.

³Strike, K. A., & Soltis, J. F. (2004). *The Ethics of Teaching* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.

explores how ethical decision-making shapes the classroom environment. According to their analysis, ethical clarity in teaching practices enhances student respect for authority and increases their involvement and motivation in academic tasks.

Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. (2011)⁴ in her research on ethical dilemmas and teacher misconduct, discovered that ethical lapses among teachers often lead to decreased student morale and disengagement. Conversely, ethically consistent behavior contributed to a positive learning environment where students felt valued and included.

Sockett, H. (2006)⁵ emphasized the role of teacher character and moral virtues in Sockett, H. (2006) emphasized the role of teacher character and moral virtues in educational engagement. His work demonstrated that ethical attributes like integrity, responsibility, and compassion are closely tied to students' willingness to participate and contribute meaningfully in classroom discussions and activities.

Turhan, M. (2007)⁶ investigated the influence of ethical leadership in educational settings. The study found that when teachers model ethical leadership behaviors such as respecting students' voices and being impartial students showed higher levels of engagement, motivation, and academic performance.

Warnick, B. R., & Silverman, S. K. (2011)⁷ in their article highlighted the importance of ethical sensitivity among educators. Ethical sensitivity, including awareness of student needs and fairness in grading, was linked to higher student trust and deeper classroom involvement, particularly in multicultural and diverse classrooms.

The culmination of the literature highlights that ethical presentation of teachers is a key determinant in fostering student involvement. Ethical behaviors such as fairness, transparency, empathy, and consistency create a trusting and secure classroom environment. This, in turn, motivates students to participate more actively, engage in critical thinking, and develop a sense of belonging within the educational space. Furthermore, the findings suggest that ethical lapses not only hinder student engagement but may also erode the legitimacy of educational authority. While ample research supports the positive role of teacher ethics on student engagement, most studies focus on general or theoretical discussions. Empirical studies in specific cultural or institutional contexts, particularly in Indian classrooms, are limited. This highlights the need for localized and evidence-based inquiry into how ethical teacher behavior affects student involvement in diverse educational settings.

4. Research Design

The study utilizes a descriptive and analytical research design, which allows for the exploration of patterns in student feedback and the examination of the connection between ethical teacher conduct and student engagement in academic settings.

⁴Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. (2011). Teachers' critical incidents: Ethical dilemmas in teaching practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(3), 648–656. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.003>

⁵Sockett, H. (2006). Character, virtue, and ethics in education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(2), 143–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930500500259>

⁶Turhan, M. (2007). The effect of ethical leadership behavior on organizational culture: An application in schools. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 7(2), 453–475.

⁷Warnick, B. R., & Silverman, S. K. (2011). A framework for professional ethics courses in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487110398002>

Population and Sampling

- **Population:** The research targets undergraduate students pursuing the B.Com program at Lakhimpur Commerce College, Assam. Specifically, the population includes 300 students currently enrolled in even-semester courses.
- **Sample Size:** A total of 150 students were selected through simple random sampling, ensuring balanced representation and minimizing sampling bias.

5. Data Collection Method

Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire shared via Google Forms. The instrument included items measured on a Likert scale, capturing students' views on teacher ethics and their own classroom involvement. To supplement the survey data, the researchers also carried out classroom observations during scheduled sessions to collect qualitative insights into real-time teacher-student interactions and classroom behavior.

Data Analysis Techniques

- Quantitative responses from the survey were analyzed using SPSS software, employing both descriptive statistics for summarization and correlation analysis to determine the relationships between key variables.
- Qualitative insights were extracted from the open-ended responses and classroom observations to complement and contextualize the quantitative findings.

6. Descriptive Overview of Respondents

variable	category	frequency	percentage
Gender	Male	72	48
	Female	78	52
Age Group	18 to 21 years	90	60
	Above 21 years	60	40
Semester	B.Com 2nd Sem.	45	30
	B.Com 4th Sem.	67	45
	B.Com 6th Sem.	38	25

Table 1. Profile of Sample Respondents
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Table 1 outlines the demographic profile of the 150 student participants in the study, focusing on variables such as gender, age group, and current semester of enrollment.

1. Gender Distribution:

- a. The sample consists of a nearly balanced gender representation.
- b. Female students slightly outnumber male students, comprising 52% of the respondents.
- c. This gender distribution helps ensure the study reflects a relatively equal perspective from both male and female students.

2. Age Distribution:

- a. The majority of the students (60%) are aged between 18 to 21 years, which aligns with typical undergraduate enrollment ages.
 - b. A significant portion (40%) is above 21 years, possibly indicating students who are pursuing B.Com at a later stage.
3. **Semester Distribution:**
- a. The highest proportion of students (45%) belong to the 4th Semester, indicating that the middle phase of the program has the most representation.
 - b. 2nd Semester students make up 30%, and 6th Semester students comprise the remaining 25%.
 - c. This balanced semester distribution allows for diverse viewpoints across different academic stages.

7. Results and Discussion

The data was collected from 150 students from undergraduate courses (B.Com) using a structured questionnaire. The responses were analyzed using both descriptive statistics (mean, percentage) and inferential statistics (correlation analysis) to assess the impact of ethical teacher behavior on student involvement.

7.1. Objective 1: To assess the impact of ethical teacher behavior on student engagement

Promoting an inclusive and productive learning atmosphere heavily depends on the ethical conduct of teachers, which significantly influences student participation. This analysis aligns with the core objective of the study examining how ethical teacher behavior affects student engagement. Ethical behavior in the academic setting is demonstrated through various attributes such as fairness, respect, responsibility, and transparency. **Interpretation:** Table 2

Statement	Mean Score (out of 5)	Interpretation
Equal treatment to all students	4.3	Teachers are perceived as fair in student interactions.
Fairness in grading	4.1	Most students find grading to be unbiased and transparent.
Respectful listening	4.4	High ethical engagement through active listening
Punctuality and responsibility	4.2	Teachers are seen as professionally accountable
Avoid favoritism	3.9	Some issues of favoritism may exist in few cases.
Encourages student views	4.3	Teachers promote open student expression
Acts as ethical role model	4.5	Teachers are strong ethical influences
Transparency in rules	4.2	Clear communication and expectations are maintained.

Table 2. Ethical Behavior of Teachers
Source: Primary Data

presents students' perceptions of teachers' ethical behavior across

multiple dimensions, based on mean scores derived from a structured questionnaire. Each statement reflects a key ethical trait or practice, and the mean scores (on a 5-point Likert scale) indicate the extent to which students perceive their teachers as upholding these values. The interpretations further contextualize the results, highlighting areas of strength and those requiring potential improvement. This evaluation provides meaningful insights into how ethical conduct by teachers contributes to student involvement in the classroom.

In today's educational landscape, student engagement serves as a crucial measure of teaching effectiveness and a supportive learning atmosphere. One of the major contributing factors is the ethical behavior of teachers, which significantly shapes students' attitudes, actions, and readiness to participate in class activities. This analysis aims to determine the ethical qualities that students value most and examine how these attributes affect their degree of classroom involvement.

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Participation in discussions	4.0	Students are moderately to highly involved
Ask questions freely	4.2	Classrooms are seen as safe spaces for doubt clarification.
Motivation to attend class	4.1	Ethical behavior of teachers fosters class attendance
Engagement due to good behavior of teacher	4.5	Strong correlation between ethics and engagement
Connection to fair classrooms	4.3	Sense of belonging rises with fairness.
Ethical conduct increases subject interest	4.2	Teaching ethics boosts interest in learning.
Participation improves when respected	4.4	Mutual respect is crucial for student confidence.

Table 3. Student Involvement in Classroom

Interpretation: Table 3 presents student responses to key indicators of classroom involvement, measured through mean scores. These indicators reflect how various dimensions of ethical behavior such as fairness, respect, and motivational support influence students' academic participation and interest. In addition to this, most students reported valuing ethical traits such as:

1. Respectful communication (92%)
2. Equal treatment (88%)
3. Fair evaluation (85%)
4. Transparency in rules and grading (79%)

Ethical teacher behaviors such as fairness, respect, openness, and encouragement contribute not only to academic development but also to emotional and psychological safety within the classroom. Students are more inclined to engage in classroom discussions when they view their teachers as ethically responsible, ask questions freely, feel motivated to attend classes, and develop a genuine interest in the subject matter. This environment of trust and mutual respect fosters a deeper sense of belonging and confidence, ultimately enhancing student engagement. In a nutshell, students show high levels of involvement, particularly when they

perceive their teachers as ethical, fair, and respectful. This reflects a direct positive impact of ethical conduct on engagement.

		Ethical Behavior of Teacher	Students' Involvement
Ethical Behavior of Teacher	Pearson Correlation	1	.76**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Students' Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.76**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1 Correlations

Interpretation: The obtained correlation coefficient ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$) reveals a strong and statistically significant positive association. This implies that students who perceive their teachers as more ethical tend to show higher levels of attentiveness and engagement, emphasizing the vital influence of ethical conduct in fostering effective and interactive classroom settings.

7.2. Insights from Open Ended Responses

- Many students expressed a strong preference for teachers who demonstrate patience, impartiality, and an open-minded attitude.
- They highlighted that educators who maintain consistency and fairness, particularly in areas such as disciplinary action and evaluation standards, contribute significantly to a sense of security and trust in the classroom.
- Moreover, students stressed the emotional importance of being acknowledged, listened to, and treated with respect factors they associate with higher levels of motivation and participation.

7.3. Key Observations

- Teachers who listened patiently and responded respectfully encouraged more class participation.
- Students avoided asking questions or engaging when teachers were dismissive or showed favoritism.
- Ethical modeling by teachers also promoted peer-to-peer respect among students.

7.4. Implications for Teaching Practice

- Teacher Training: Ethics should be an integral component of teacher training programs.
- Code of Conduct: Institutions should implement and reinforce ethical guidelines for educators.
- Feedback Mechanism: Regular student feedback can help teachers assess their ethical standing.

7.5. Study Limitations

- The research was confined to a single institution.
- It relied mainly on students' perspectives, which could be influenced by personal biases.
- The views and feedback of teachers were not incorporated into the study.

8. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that ethical teacher behaviour plays in enhancing student involvement within the classroom. Drawing on responses from 150 B.Com undergraduate students at Lakhimpur Commerce College, the study provides both quantitative and qualitative insights into the dynamics between teacher ethics and student engagement.

In line with **Objective 1**, the analysis of ethical teacher behaviour reveals high mean scores across multiple dimensions such as fairness, respectful communication, punctuality, and ethical modelling. Students overwhelmingly perceived their teachers as ethical, especially in their roles as fair evaluators, respectful listeners, and transparent facilitators. These ethical traits directly contributed to positive classroom experiences, with students reporting greater motivation, interest in learning, and willingness to participate.

Similarly, findings from **Objective 2** revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$) between students' perception of ethical teacher behavior and their level of classroom involvement. This finding suggests that when students view their teachers as ethically sound, they are more inclined to participate actively, maintain regular attendance, and take initiative in their academic pursuits. Insights from open-ended responses further supported the quantitative results. Students emphasized the importance of being heard, respected, and treated impartially attributes they associated with teachers who encouraged open dialogue, built trust, and fostered a safe learning environment. Conversely, unethical behaviours such as favoritism and dismissiveness were noted to discourage participation.

Overall, the study concludes that **ethical behaviour in teaching is not just a professional requirement, but a foundational element in cultivating student engagement**. Teachers who model integrity, fairness, and respect contribute to a classroom climate that is inclusive, interactive, and conducive to learning. These findings hold valuable implications for educational institutions aiming to improve student outcomes through ethical teaching practices.

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