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## **CHARISMATIC TEACHING**

### **Abstract:**

Teaching is often considered a difficult job "that seems easy" (Labaree, 2000). Theory of education, educational psychology and other sciences have explored factors such as teaching methods used by successful teachers, the effects of teachers' backgrounds or teachers' personal characteristics and behaviours (for example enthusiasm, empathy, communication skills, etc.). There is no doubt students like to attend some teachers' classes more than the other's. There are some reasons make teachers attract students - the trait which appeared in pedagogical texts is called teacher charisma. To shed more light on the concept, we conducted a pilot study using the Czech translation of a Taiwanese scale measuring teacher charisma within a group of students of Czech Technical University in Prague, Czech Republic.

### **Keywords:**

teacher, teaching, motivation, students, teacher charisma

**JEL Classification:** I29

## 1 Introduction

The HE teacher's personality is a deciding quality factor in the educational process. Experts in various sciences, such as theory of education, educational psychology, philosophy and sociology of instruction have tried to analyze this issue. Different approaches have been used: deduction - when scientists described an *ideal* teacher, induction - when students evaluated their teachers, or when psychological tests backed the illustration of *real personal qualities* of teachers. Sometimes, a combination of both approaches seemed appropriate (Bryson, Hand, 2007).

We had reviewed literatures and conducted surveys about the teaching behaviours good teachers in engineering programmes had in common (Dobrovská, 2016, 2017). In our research as well as in a research conducted by J. Davies (2006), students reported various qualities - these can be divided into 3 categories. A good teacher should be an expert in his specialization, he/she should have good didactic, pedagogical and presentation skills and he should have certain human qualities (e.g. humor, disponibility, enthusiasm).

Other authors offered lists of personality attributes - principles of effective teaching in higher education. Ramsden (2003) suggested 6 key principles of a good teacher: interest and explanation, respect for students and student learning, appropriate assessment and feedback, clear goals and intellectual challenge, independence, control (by students over their own learning) and engagement. A good teacher should be able to reflect stimula from his/her students.

Students like to attend some teachers' classes because of special characteristics of their personality. We expect there are some reasons make these teachers welcome and attract students. In some resources these teachers are simply called *quality teachers* while in other cases the term *charismatic teacher* was used. Teaching charisma is described as positive behaviour of a teacher in his class, which can deeply appeal students to learn. While the teacher is perceived approachable, well prepared and sensitive to student needs, students might be committed to work harder. Students are more likely to be receptive to learning under his/her supportive social climate in the classroom. The teacher plays important role in developing such environment and has a strong impact on their students.

Taiwanese authors Huang and Lin (2014) researched the topic of teaching charisma. They identified four merits that deeply attract students and are essential for a charismatic teacher.

First, a charismatic teacher should be knowledgeable, since teaching requires an interweaving of many kinds of specialized and continuously innovated knowledge (also by Dobrovská, 2017, Minchew, 2001, Neumann, 2018).

Second, a charismatic teacher should have positive character traits such as friendliness, approachability, patience and enthusiasm (Lin and Huang, 2014) since teachers are expected to be good role models for the students and they should perform what a teacher should have. The teachers' behaviour models, attitudes, appearance and character may affect the feeling students perceive, and may even influence the interaction between teacher and students.

Third, a charismatic teacher should attach importance to teaching methods. The teachers should possess teaching skills and be able to choose the most suitable teaching method from a variety of teaching tools.

Fourth, a charismatic teacher should have a good sense of humor, since students prefer listening to teachers who incorporate humor into the lecture (also by Davies, 2006). On the basis of these indicators – knowledge, character traits, teaching methods and humor – an instrument was developed to measure teacher's teaching charisma (Lin and Huang, 2014). Taiwanese authors summarize the ITCCC (Inventory of Teaching Charisma in the College Classroom) was found a valid and reliable tool to measure the phenomenon in the accounting fundamental course in Taiwan. Less is known about the validity and reliability of the inventory outside the fundamental course (accounting). As both authors noted in their study limitations they suggested the measurement invariance of their scale across different subjects needs to be examined.

### **Study Purpose**

Assisting students in learning is one of the duties of an educator. In order to gain further insight into students' perspectives of teaching charisma we wanted to explore the possibility of using the ITCCC

- in Czech translation
- in an engineering pedagogy course

### **Methods**

We obtained the approval to conduct the research investigation in a course of psychology within the programme „Engineering Pedagogy“. Our preliminary sample was composed of 76 students from 2 regular classes within Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, Czech Technical University in Prague. The purpose of the study was explained to the students. They completed questionnaires during October-November of the 2017/2018 academic year, in the course of a psychology lecture. The average administration took 25 minutes. The entire data set was scrutinized to detect missing values, invalid values and outliers. In our sample, 24 students were female and 52 were male.

### **Measures**

Data for this preliminary study were collected by using self-report measures including a demographic questionnaire (age, gender and major) and a measure of student's perception of teaching behaviour about his/her teacher.

The Czech version of the ITCCC consisted of 23 items, comprising four subscales: „character traits“, „knowledge“, „humor“ and „teaching techniques“.

The „Character traits“ subscale had 6 items, concerned with the teacher's performance with respect to behaviours and morals (e.g. „my teacher has good moral characteristics“).

The „Knowledge“ subscale, having 7 items, concerned with the professional knowledge and pedagogical knowledge which a teacher possessed (e.g. „my teacher can solve all the course-related problems“).

The „Humor“ subscale has 7 items concerns with the teacher’s humoros style in the classroom (e.g. my teacher is a humorous teacher).

The „Teaching methods“ subscale, having 4 items, concerned with teacher teaching methodology (e.g. „my teacher uses some teaching materials that are new and interesting“).

Students rated each item on the extent to which they agreed with each statement using Likert-scale responses (ranging from 1 = never true to 5 = always true. The higher the score was, the better degree of teaching charisma.

Parallel to the Taiwanese questionnaire we added an open ended item - we asked students to complete a sentence „In my view, teacher charisma means.....“. We intended to get some more information about the student understanding of the concept (deeper understanding of the connotations).

## Results

Presented in Table 1 there is the mean and standard deviation of the English version of the ITCCC, and Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient for each factor is included as well, as published by Lin and Huang (2014).

**Table 1**

### Descriptive Statistics of the factors in the ITCCC (English version)

	Cronbach $\alpha$	Mean	SD
Character traits	.854	3.37	.738
Knowledge	.893	3.46	.794
Humor	.870	2.80	.729
Teaching techniques	.839	2.64	.929

In Table 2 there are descriptive data - the mean and standard deviation of the Czech version of the ITCCC and the Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient for each of 4 factors as obtained in our survey.

**Table 2****Descriptive statistics of the factors in the ITCCC (Czech version)**

	Cronbach $\alpha$	Mean	SD
Character traits	.828	3.56	.724
Knowledge	.844	3.88	.744
Humor	.876	2.88	.723
Teaching techniques	.822	2.58	.868

In the additional item „In my view, teacher charisma means.....“, not all the students gave the answer – of 76 respondents 60 only completed the open ended item. Charismatic teacher was mostly described by the terms „someone who is better than an average teacher, someone who is able to give good presentations, someone attractive, someone who knows more than other teachers.

**Discussion**

When we translated the questionnaire from English to Czech we had to modify slightly some expressions of several items. Nevertheless, we tried to keep connotations of all items as they had been designed in the English version (2014). However, our opinion was that subscale „Teaching methods“ (4 items) should have been treated more in detail while the subscale „humor“ (7 items) could have shortened as both factors do not have the same importance for teaching process. Also „Humor“ might be considered one of the personality traits.

Results found by our preliminary study suggest possible use of the questionnaire for assessment of students' perceptions of the quality of a teacher's teaching in professional subjects (accounting in the Taiwanese survey and psychology in our survey).

There are similarities in the statistics obtained in the Taiwanese and Czech groups of respondents (similar results in Cronbach  $\alpha$ , mean and SD). Nevertheless more surveys in larger groups of respondents are desirable, including more sophisticated statistical analysis. Such research would provide useful evidence to support usage of this inventory in different languages, surroundings and courses.

Lin and Huang (2014) mean another future research topic might be potential correlation between teacher charisma and student performance. Teachers who deliver the most engaging and interesting lectures (charismatic teachers) may be the students' favorites, but they may not always help students to learn more than the non-charismatic teachers. Past studies have brought

contradictory results. We would like to raise questions about the value of student' evaluation of teachers and „teacher charisma“ supported by one quantitative method only.

Students may be learning less than they think they are learning from those they consider the charismatic teachers has implications for how teaching effectiveness is evaluated. Many university teachers are evaluated on their teaching mostly, or entirely, by asking their students. We believe, though, that students may be evaluating their teachers based upon qualities that contribute little to actual learning. Teacher charisma represents one of many characteristics the process of learning might be determined by. With a good presenter it might seem like a student is taking more in, but it does not guarantee there has been an „aha“ moment. Hard work must be done by a learner – a teacher himself cannot do much to foster neuroconnection necessary for learning. Inner motivation represents another important factor as well as divergent thinking model. Students might learn better with a „Socratic method“ in which the teacher asks students questions to get them to think about the subject matter.

## Conclusions

Using the Czech version of the ITCCC in the conditions of engineering pedagogy course needs further researching. Examining teacher charisma seems a complex issue which requires combination of methods, preferably quantitative and qualitative ones. Relation between teacher charisma, student motivation to learn and study performance is another issue to be studied.

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