Student Self Esteem and Their Perception of Teacher Behavior: A Study of Class Grouping System in Pakistan

Dr. Zeenat Ismail

Professor Department of Social Sciences Institute of Business Administration – Karachi Pakistan Tel: +92(333) 3775545, Fax: +92(21) 99215528. E-mail: zismail@iba.edu.pk

Aeman Majeed Student of Institute of Business Administration Pakistan

Abstract

This research aims to study the effect of classifying students on the basis of their past academic records on their self esteem and their perception of teachers as supportive or controlling. The study specifically applies to the Between Class Ability Grouping System and generally applies to normal teaching practices across Pakistan. The research was conducted using data collected from participants of schools in Karachi. Their self esteem measures were recorded and their perception of teacher behavior was recorded. Independent sample t tests were conducted on the data to verify the effect of classification of students on self esteem and teacher perception. The results showed that higher levels of self esteem were recorded in high performers of class that in low performers, (t=7.221, df=56, p=0.05). Moreover, high performers found their teachers as more supportive than low performers (t=10.509, df=56, p=0.05).

Key Words: Self Esteem, Perception, Teacher Behavior, Between-Class Ability Grouping, High Achiever Category (HAC) and Low Achiever Category (LAC).

Introduction

Education plays a vital part in our life today and it is a subject that has been frequently explored by researchers the world over. It is through extensive researches that better systems have been developed in the field of education to impart knowledge effectively and to understand better the student-teacher psychology. Unfortunately, very little research has been done regarding the subject in Pakistan and seeing the potential to investigate and develop better understanding of the educational psychology, the research on Students' Self Esteem and their Perception of Teacher behavior has been conducted.

One of the areas which intrigue researchers the most in the field of education is the perception of students regarding their teachers and the effect it has on their performance in class. One such research has been carried out in Malaysia which measured the relation of Students' Perception of Teacher Behavior and Student Self Esteem when students are categorized into groups on basis of their academic performance (P. Kususanto, H. Ismail & H. Jamil 2010). Seeing the relevance of such a research, the research has been conducted to learn more about the impact of grouping in Pakistan. In Educational Institutions in many countries (e.g. Malaysia), it is a common practice to divide students of a single class into groups on basis of their academic achievements and learning abilities. This is called the Between Class Ability Grouping (BCAG) system. It is believed that this grouping practice creates a conducive, learning environment for students of quite similar achievement level (Hassan Suleman & Abiddin 2009). Some recent researches conducted in Malaysia show that BCAG is needed to deliver better instructions (Hassan *et al.*, 2009; Yahya, Suboh & Zakariya 2005). However it is worth exploring whether this practice of dividing students into groups of "High Achievers" to "Low achievers" effects the self esteem of students and hinders low achievers into improving their academic record. Furthermore, it is also interesting to know whether student grouping has an effect on student perception of teacher behavior.

Thus this research aims to reveal the relation between students assigned to High achievers' category (HAC) and their counterparts assigned to Low achievers' category (LAC) in terms of their perception on teachers' behavior, and its influence on their self esteem. It is important to note that even though the BCAG system is not practiced in Pakistan, the tendency to informally group students on basis of past academic achievement is widely practiced, which produces the same effect as the BCAG system and thus makes this research very relevant.

Key Words

The keywords that are relevant to this research are explained below:

Self Esteem: Self esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of one's self worth or self image (A. Maslow 1954 and Rogers 1980). In the case of class room interaction, Students' Self Esteem is relevant to this research. The higher a student rates himself/ herself in terms of self esteem the more likely it is that the student has high class participation and evaluation in terms of student performance (Rendall *et al.*, 2009).

Perception: The process of using the senses to acquire information about the surrounding environment or situation.

Teacher Behavior: The behavior students sense teachers to have in terms of encouraging learning and being supportive or having a controlling behavior to discipline the class.

Between-class Ability Grouping: BCAG Between-class Ability Grouping is by far the most common type of ability grouping in secondary schools. It refers to a school's practice of separating students into different classes, courses, or course sequences - curricular tracks - based on their past record or academic achievements.

HAC: (High Achiever Category) the students who have a record of consistently ranking in the top 10 high achievers in terms of academic achievements in class.

LAC: (Low Achiever Category) the students who have a record of consistently ranking in the bottom 10 in terms of academic achievement in class.

Literature Review

Many Studies have already been carried out in this area of research in one way or the other. Among them includes the study which suggests that students' perceptions of teacher behavior has significant impact on their self esteem (P. Kususanto, H. Ismail & H. Jamil 2010). This finding also supports the theories brought forward by previous researches saying that, it is not the evaluation of oneself alone that generated self esteem; how a person thinks others would value him or her would also generate his/her self-esteem. (Bandura 1997, Burns 1975, 1982; Coppersmith 1967, Horrock's and Jackson 1972, Myers 2008, Stryker 2002). Other studies (by Good (1981) and Slavin (1987) noted in addition that teachers assigned in LAC seemed to have more of lower expectations on the students than the y were reported to have higher expectations in LAC.

Teachers' Behavior:

It is important to note that Teacher Behavior is one of the key determinants in deciphering students' performance in class (Rosenthal, 2002). Moreover the research by Karabenick, (2004) shows that the perceived behavior of the teacher as opposed to the actual behavior also has significant effect on the student performance. When students are labeled as belonging to a particular category of achievement, the teachers tend to develop a respective expectation from the students. Myers (2008) stated that teachers were likely to expect, students from HAC to be eager to improve academic achievement, and students from the LAC likely to have disciplinary problems. It was discovered that each of these expectations led teachers into behaving in a certain manner towards the students because of which, the commendable performance (in case of HAC) and poor performance (in the case of LAC) became a result of the self-fulfilling prophecy (Pygmalion effect) rather than student motivation (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1992 and Rosenthal, 2002).

Good, T. L. (1981) made a fundamental discovery in Teacher behavior revealing that towards slow or low performing students, teachers were likely to pay less attention, give less time to answer questions, provide less follow-up questions, call upon less frequently, criticize more often for incorrect answers and praise seldom when they gave correct or marginal responses. Furthermore he discovered that low performing students were given less feedback, were demanded less in terms of effort and were interrupted more frequently.

In addition, Al Fadhli and Singh (2006) found that towards the students of HAC, teachers based their expectations on students' ability, and towards students of LAC, teachers based their expectations on personal characteristics.

For this research, teachers' behavior would be divided into 2 categories: (1) Teachers' Supportive Behavior and (2) Teachers' Controlling Behavior. Thus on the basis of these, the students' perception of whether they find their teacher more supportive or do they find them more controlling can be measured.

Students' Self Esteem

Self esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of one's self worth or self image (Maslow, A. 1954 and Rogers 1980). An adequate level of self esteem would elevate students' beliefs in their ability, which in turn, would elevate their performance, both academically and non academically. (Rendall *et al.*, 2009). Not only this, but a person who grades himself/ herself high in self esteem tends to have a high self esteem in all areas (Larson & Buss, 2008). Thus it can be concluded that in a significant degree, self esteem has an impact on student academic achievements and future success. Therefore it seems appropriate to measure the effect of Students' perception of their Teachers' Behavior on their Self esteem. One of the things which most effects self esteem is the teachers' expectations. However, since teachers' expectations are only prominent through the teachers' overt expression, it is more meaningful to measure what students perceive their teachers' behavior or expectation to be rather than to measure the teacher expectation itself.

Research Questions

Q1. Is there any difference between students of High Achiever Category (HAC) and Low Achiever Category (LAC) students in terms of perception of teacher behavior?

Q2. Is there any difference between students of High Achiever Category (HAC) and Low Achiever Category (LAC) students in terms of their self esteem levels?

Q3. Is there any correlation between students' perception on teachers' behavior and student self esteem levels?

Method

Participants

A sample of 58 students was taken from some Public schools in Karachi, Pakistan. The age limit was fixed to a range between 14 - 18 years of age, such that all participants were students of higher secondary. The participants of the category of High Achievers were defined as those students who consistently scored top grades, ranking among the best scorers in class. The participants of the category of Low Achievers were defined as those who consistently scored below the average score in the class.

Instruments

- Self esteem was measured by the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965). It is a 10 item, self report of self esteem used universally.
- To measure Students' Perception of Teachers' Behavior, 2 scales have be developed on the basis of the findings of Good (1981) and Oaks (1985), which have been approved by the University of Technology Malaysia. One scale measures the Students' perception of the Teachers' Supportive Behavior and the other measures the Teachers' Controlling Behavior.

Hypothesis

H1: Students belonging to High Achiever Category (HAC) will have High Self esteem levels than students belonging to Low Achiever Category (LAC).

H2: Students belonging to High Achiever Category (HAC) will perceive their teachers more supportive than students belonging to the Low Achiever Category (LAC).

H3: Students belonging to the Low Achiever Category (LAC) will perceive their teachers as more controlling and non supportive than those in High Achiever Category (HAC).

Procedure

For the purpose of this Research, two prestigious Schools of Karachi were approached, The C.A.S. School and The Jaffar Public School. An assorted sample of 10 students participated from the Jaffar Public School and 48 students participated from The C.A.S. School which included both boys and girls. The participants were first handed out the Rosenberg Self esteem Scale in which they were asked to answer 10 questions rating themselves on a 4 point scale.

The second questionnaire the students were asked to fill out, measured the students' perceptions of their teachers' controlling behavior. This had 10 questions the response to which was on a scale of 1 to 4. The last questionnaire measured the students' perception of teachers' supportive behavior. This also had 10 questions and the responses required a rating from a range of 1 to 4. The participating students were divided into categories of HAC and LAC, with the help of their school academic records, and with the cooperation of the School teachers. The results recorded by the instruments were analyzed on the basis of measures of mean, variance and t-tests.

Research Design and Statistical Procedure

This research is framed using a quantitative empirical-analytical design and provides graphical analysis where necessary. This descriptive study compares data collected from the sample of 30 students belonging to the HAC and 28 belonging to the LAC studying in Public Schools at Karachi, Pakistan. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS v 17.0.

Results

The first analysis was made to see the difference in scores of Self esteem in both the categories of students, HAC and LAC. The average scores obtained from each category are shown in the figure 1 given below.



It was noted that the average score of self esteem was higher reaching 35.1, whereas the self esteem score of students belonging to the LAC was significantly lower measuring 26.3. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the data from both the groups and the Table 1 shows the respective results obtained.

Table 1. Difference in Student Self Esteem between student groups of HAC and LAC

Table 1.1 Group Statistics

	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self Esteem	HAC	30	35.13	1.306	.238
	LAC	28	26.36	6.522	1.233

The Table 1.1 shows the Standard Deviation from mean to be 1.306 in the HAC category and the Standard deviation in the LAC category to be 6.522. It is clear that there is more deviance form the mean in self esteem among the students of LAC. It was observed that even in the LAC students some of the individuals despite having a low academic performance, had high self esteem scores. This can be attributed as the case where individuals learn to value themselves on basis of other activities and not just academic records

	-	Levene's Equal Varia	ity of	t-test for Equality of Means						
										fidence Interval of Difference
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	Lower	Upper
Self Esteem	Equal variances assumed	39.008	.001	7.221	56	.001	8.776	1.215	6.342	11.211
	Equal variances not assumed			6.991	29.02 1	.001	8.776	1.255	6.209	11.344

Table 1.2 Independent Samples Test

The results found that there is significant difference between self esteem scores of students in the High Achievers' Category HAC and the Low Achievers' Category LAC (t=7.221, df=56, p=.05). The t- value 7.221 and more precisely, the value obtained for Sig. 2-tail 0.01, which is below the p value of 0.05, shows the Ho can be rejected and the claim is verified that Self esteem measures will be high for students belonging to the HAC than for students in the LAC. As shown by the table 1.1, the mean score for HAC students is 35.13, which is higher than the mean score for LAC which is 26.36. This goes to show that students belonging to high achiever category do tend to have a higher self esteem. This is perhaps because of the encouragement and approval they receive from the teachers on their academic performance. However, it should be noted that as the general trends of self esteem are measured, it is beyond the scope of this research to address the causation of the increased or decreased self esteem scores.

The difference between students of HAC and LAC in terms of Teacher Controlling Behavior and Teacher Supportive Behavior

The second analysis done was that, comparing the difference between both HAC and LAC students in terms of their perception of the teachers' behavior. On the whole, the scales provided to the students took measures of how students rated their teachers in terms of controlling behavior. It was observed that those students who perceived their teachers as more controlling had the tendency of perceiving their teachers as less supportive. On the other hand, those students who perceived their teachers as more supportive also found their teachers less controlling. The difference between the scores from both the groups of LAC and HAC is shown below in Figure 2.



As shown by figure 2 the students belonging to HAC found their teachers less controlling with the mean scores of 24.3 and rated them as more supportive with a mean score of 30.3. On the other hand, students belonging to LAC found their teachers more controlling, rating them at a mean score of 30.1 and less supportive with a mean score of 23.2.

The data was also subjected to statistical analysis by applying independent variable t-tests for both the categories. Table 2 and table 3 show their respective results.

	Category	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Teacher Controlling	HAC	30	24.33	3.144	.574
	LAC	28	30.14	2.953	.558

Table 2.0 Group Statistics

Independent	nt Sample	s Test

	-	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances t-test for Equality of Mean					ns			
									95% Con Interva Differ	l of the
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	Lower	Upper
Teacher Controlling	Equal variances assumed	.458	.501	- 7.241	56	.000	-5.810	.802	-7.417	-4.202
	Equal variances not assumed			- 7.257	55.99 7	.000	-5.810	.801	-7.413	-4.206

The mean values for teacher controlling behavior for the students belonging to HAC are 30.14 which are higher than the mean scores of 24.33 for the perceived teacher controlling behavior for student belonging to LAC. Moreover this difference in scores is known to be significant according to the rulings of the independent variable t-test. The obtained sig value is 0.01 which is lower than the p value of 0.05 goes to show that the H₀ may be rejected. The result may be summarized as t(56) = -7.241, significant.

Thus it may be clearly stated that students belonging to the HAC category perceive their teachers as less controlling than students from LAC.

The difference between students of HAC and LAC in terms of Teacher Supportive Behavior

Then the difference between the scores of students belonging to HAC and LAC were analyzed on the basis of their perception of how supportive they perceived their teachers to be. These results are shown below in Table 3.1 -3.2

Table 3: The difference between students belonging to HAC and LAC in terms of their perception	n of Teacher
Supportive Behavior	

			1		
	Category	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Teacher Supporting	HAC	30	30.30	2.914	.532
	LAC	28	23.18	2.161	.408

 Table 3.1 Group Statistics

As shown by the table 3.1, the mean value for teacher Supporting behavior is 30.30 in students from HAC where as it is 23.18 in students from LAC. This means that students in the HAC find their teachers more supportive than students in LAC. The Standard deviation in HAC is 2.914, which is higher than standard deviation of 2.16 for LAC.

		Levene for Equ Varia	-			t-test f	or Equali	ity of Me	ans	
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					l of the
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differe nce	Std. Error Differe nce	Lower	Upper
Teacher Supportin g	Equal variances assumed	1.674	.201	10.5 09	56	.000	7.121	.678	5.764	8.479
	Equal variances not assumed			10.6 17	53.3 49		7.121	.671	5.776	8.467

 Table 3.2 Independent Samples Test

Table 3.2 shows the t value is 10.509, the Sig value is 0.201 and the value of sig 2-tailed obtained is 0.00, which is under the p value of 0.05 when considering a 95% confidence level. Thus the Ho can be discarded and it can be comfortably claimed that the difference in the values obtained for Teacher Supportiveness are not a matter of chance. There is a significant difference in the perception of HAC and LAC students in the terms of Teacher Supportiveness.

The Students of HAC may find their teachers more Supportive as Teachers may be more inclined to guiding students with high academic potential. As opposed to this, students belonging to the LAC may perceive their teachers less supportive due to the teachers' lack of interest in students who have poor academic records and may have more disciplinary problems perhaps. Whatever the case may be, it is again worth noting that it is beyond the scope of this research to address the causation behind the difference in scores for both the groups.

Discussion and Conclusion

The statistical analysis showed that there was significant difference between the scores of HAC and LAC in terms of Self esteem (t=7.221, df.=56, p=0.05). This goes to show that perhaps academic performance is indeed one of the major factors which contribute to the self esteem of individuals between the ages of 14 to 17 years. Another factor which differs in the groups of HAC and LAC is the social acceptance they get form teachers and peers around them. The social acceptance for HAC students is perhaps more than the social acceptance for LAC which in turn contributes to the higher levels of self esteem in HAC and lower levels of self esteem in LAC. However it was noted that the group of LAC had more variance in self esteem, where some individuals had high scores. In such cases, self esteem can be high when achievement by individuals is not considered as in the academic fields alone. The individuals may have learnt to value themselves due to other factors as well.

The statistical analysis showed that there was a positive perception of teachers from HAC students where they perceived teachers to be more Supportive and less Controlling. This is perhaps because they perceive higher expectancy from the teacher and the teacher in turn perceives higher expectancy form these students. More attention is given to them, their misbehavior is overlooked more often and they are praised often for their academic achievements. This helps in forming the *Teacher Supportive* perception and reduces the *Teacher Controlling* perception. On the other hand, students belonging to the LAC have lower mean scores for perception of Teacher Supporting and higher scores on Teacher Controlling behavior.

This is perhaps because those students having low performance in class tend to cast a negative impression on the teachers, which in turn leads to lower the expectancy of teachers towards them. Also those students in LAC tend to concentrate less on studies and disrupt the class more often due to lack of discipline. This causes the teachers to be more controlling towards them, restraining them from misbehavior and often giving harsh warnings. This causes the students to perceive the teachers as more *Controlling* and less *Supporting*.

Practical Implications and Future Research

The findings of this research are vital in developing better student grouping systems and creating a more conducive learning environment. In a system where BCAG is continued to apply, it is important to have different instructional strategies regarding the difference between low and high achievers. Also the teachers should try to refrain from the tendency to have a bias in their behavior towards students not label them on the basis of academic achievement alone. It should be noted that on the basis of past academic records, teachers tend to eliminate any future academic potential in students from the low academic achievement category when they display less supportive behavior and more controlling behavior. For the purpose of future research the hypothesis proved by this research may be tested with multiple regression and correlations, to check whether one factor influences the other. For example it may be tested whether the negative perception of the teacher contributes to the negative behavior of students. Furthermore this research gives room to exploring further the concept of impressions and their contribution in the imparting of knowledge by the teacher to an assorted group of students. Will a teacher tend to impart more knowledge to a student whom he/she favours on the basis of impressions? Favoring is a leading subject of concern in the academic field in Pakistan. Through measures of student perception of teacher behavior and student self esteem, teachers can be trained to avoid practicing favoritisms towards students. Another study that can be conducted is that based on labeling students on basis of academic achievement and measuring their perceived locus of control. This will allow teachers to inculcate better grouping strategies and enable them in guiding students to improve their own academic performance by putting in more effort on their part. The more internal locus of control students perceive to have the more improvement teachers will tend to see in their academic performance.

Limitations and Delimitations

- The research has a small sample size, taken from two Private Schools of Karachi which might not be truly representative of the population in the entire country. For the purpose of future research it is proposed that a larger sample be taken from participants with a more diverse background.
- It was felt the questions in the instruments of Self Esteem and Teacher Perception at times led students to respond positively in contrast to actual responses they might have felt in reality.
- It is important to realize that the official system of BCAG (Between Class Ability Grouping) is not practiced in Pakistan. Therefore, the impact of academic achievement on Perceived Teacher Behavior and on Self Esteem is lessened. This is because students are not categorized into the formal groups in non BCAG systems and do not have to face a social label to the extent it is prevalent elsewhere in BCAG systems. This problem can be overcome by taking measure of how students tend to rate themselves. What category do they find themselves belonging to 'High Achievers' or 'Low Achievers'?

Consent Access and Human Participants' Protection

Consent letters were dispatched to all participant schools and prior information about the research was disclosed. The relevant information regarding the research was given before participation and participants were debriefed after the research. The names of individuals required on the forms were used in order to identify what category they belonged to, and confidentiality was maintained after the process of data collection was completed.

Scales

The following Scales were used to measure Self esteem, Perception of Teachers' Controlling Behavior and Perception of Teachers' Supportive Behavior.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

The scale is a ten item Likert scale, with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 High School Juniors and Seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State.

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle **SA**. If you agree with the statement, circle **A**. If you disagree, circle **D**. If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	А	D	SD
2.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	А	D	SD
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	А	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	А	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	А	D	SD
6	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	А	D	SD
7.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	А	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	А	D	SD
9.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	А	D	SD
10	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	А	D	SD

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self esteem. The scale may be used without explicit permission.

The Morris Rosenberg Foundation c/o Department of Sociology University of Maryland 2112 Art/Soc Building College Park, MD 20742-1315

Perception of Teachers' Behavior

Based on the findings of Good (1981) and Oaks (1985), two scales have been developed to measure perception of teacher behavior. These have been reviewed by a panel of external experts in the field of class room interaction and social psychology and have been approved by the University of Technology Malaysia.

The *students' perception on teachers' controlling behavior* and *students' perception on teachers' controlling behavior* questionnaire is a 4 points scale with 20 survey items. Each engagement domain is represented by a subscale. There are 10 items for each construct. The students' response scale ranges from Strongly Disagree (=1) to Strongly Agree (=4). Internal consistency of the questionnaire is assessed using Cronbach's alpha). A reliability study was conducted using the same population as for other instruments. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 is showing the structure of the questionnaire used for the instrument in this study.

Figure 4.1¹

Teachers' Controlling Behavior

Ind	no	Item	1	2	3	4
	Con	trolling behavior of the students				
		My teachers are				
1	1	paying attention to students with disciplinary problems				
2	2	praising good behavior, regardless how good/bad the academic performance is				
3	3	often asking for total silence during class				
4	4	frequently punishing misbehavior student				
5	5	likely to prefer silent students than students who actively asking academic questions				
1	6	frequently giving disciplinary warning				
2	7	more likely to spot disciplinary problems, no matter how small they are				
3	8	expecting students to be discipline, without focusing on academic performance				
4	9	more likely to scold students with discipline problem, instead of students with low academic performance				
5	10	seldom praising students with good exam result				

Figure 4.2^2

Teachers' Supportive Behavior

Ind	no	Item	1	2	3	4
		portive to teaching and learning activities	-	_	U	<u> </u>
		My teachers are				
6	1	often encouraging active academic discussion among the students				
7	2	often asking questions about the subject to check the comprehension				
8	3	more likely to give learning advice, regardless the students' disciplinary problems				
9	4	more likely to praise on good performance more than good behavior				
10	5	more likely to remember students by academic performance, instead of by disciplinary matters				
6	6	pay less attention to small disciplinary problem to students with high academic achievement				
7	7	often giving oral quizzes and letting students to answer questions				1
8	8	often tell students that he/she has an expectation of good marks, no matter how bad the behavior was				
9	9	more likely to warn low-performers about the bad marks				
10	10	pay more attention to students with high academic achievements, regardless to her/his disciplinary records				

¹ This scale was obtained from the original research conducted in Malaysia, *Students' Self esteem and their perception of Teacher Behavior*. It was provided by the researcher Prehadi Kususanto, University of Science and Technology Malaysia. ² This scale was obtained from the original research conducted in Malaysia, *Students' Self esteem and their perception of*

Teacher Behavior. It was provided by the researcher Prehadi Kususanto, University of Science and Technology Malaysia.

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