

**Good experience? The impact of students'
background on students' perceptions of an
effective part-time lecturer**

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Why part-time lecturer (PTL)

- Cut personnel expenses: especially for self-financing institutes
- Economic conditions: more graduates of graduate schools take up part-time jobs
- Provide flexibility in staffing
- Access lecturers who are not available on full time basis
- A way to recruit special talents

PTLs as effective lecturers

Different parties judge PTLs from different angles:

- Researchers: PTLs' contributions to students' performance and academic result
- University administrators: PTLs' impact in the operation of the school
- Students: their experience from interacting with the PTLs

Earlier study

Poon & Lau (2014a, 2014b) surveyed tertiary level students in a self-financing tertiary institute to investigate students' preference for their part-time lecturers.

The questionnaire

- The questionnaire asks students to think of an effective PTL when they ranked, in a Likert scale of 1 to 5, how close the statements in a 31-item list matched the traits or behaviour of the effective PTL they have in their minds.
- Both Traits (Formal qualification + Social Desirableness + Teaching Related Competencies) and Behaviours (Teaching related behaviours + Relationship oriented behaviours) of PTL are investigated.

Traits and Behaviours of Effective PTLs Ranked According to Mean Scores

Traits* / Behaviours	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Skewness	% of positive answer
Good presentation skills	4.43	.755	-1.349	90.2
Use real-life example in teaching	4.32	.638	-.505	91.5
Interesting class	4.29	.752	-.860	86.7
Share experience in studying	4.18	.711	-.650	86.6
Good subject-related knowledge	4.16	.764	-.833	82.7
Provide prompt reply to questions	4.16	.684	-.470	86.2
Give students chance to speak	4.15	.634	-.236	87.1
Spend additional time to help students	4.12	.729	-1.019	86.7
Good language skills	4.09	.802	-.947	84.4
Encourage students to study	3.99	.710	-.283	77.8
Provide opportunity to communicate	3.95	.652	-.822	82.7
Modify course to fit students' needs	3.94	.797	-.857	77.3
Lots of teaching experience	3.90	.831	-.513	72.0
Keep Smiling	3.83	.772	-.060	66.1
Give tips/hint for exam.	3.81	.917	-.428	64.9
High academic qualification	3.77	.745	-.787	70.4
Work experience	3.77	.769	-.411	67.4
High professional qualification	3.73	.722	-.641	68.1
Recognize good performance	3.68	.783	-.372	61.3
Use new approach in teaching	3.66	.805	-.518	61.9
Provide career consulting	3.65	.769	-.157	59.7
Easy pass	3.54	.988	-.055	46.9
Using Cantonese in teaching	3.41	.870	.044	43.5
Good computer skills	3.39	.789	-.309	45.8
Strong research record	3.37	.807	-.292	45.2
Provide psychological consulting	3.36	.858	.044	40.4
High career achievement	3.30	.867	-.247	42.2
Applying IT in teaching	3.25	.752	-.184	37.2
Physical appearance	3.07	.908	-0.70	29.6
Social status	2.88	.802	-.052	20.3

Finding of the earlier study

- The top ranked characteristics of the preferred PTLs are mostly related to teaching such as good presentation skills and good subject related knowledge of the PTL.

A new question

Will the background of the students affect their perceptions of an effective PTL?

Research Hypothesis for this study

- **Hypothesis 1: “Students’ background has a significant correlation to their preferences for the *traits* of the PTL”.**
- **Hypothesis 2: “Students’ background has a significant correlation to their preferences for the *behaviour* of the PTL”.**

Background as measured by

- Study experience (Chan, 2006): Years of study after Secondary Five
- Gender (Keri, 2002)
- Study mode (Ng, Murphy & Jenkins, 2002): Full-time/ Part-time
- Level of the study programme (Ting, 2000): Top-up degree, Associate degree or Executive diploma

Student Groups Surveyed

Group	Full/Part time	Level of programme	Number of students invited to participate	Number of questionnaire accepted	Percentage of the accepted questionnaires
1	Full-time	Associate Degree	54	34	15.1
2	Full-time	Associate Degree	80	34	15.1
3	Full-time	Associate Degree	40	25	11.1
4	Part-time	Executive Diploma	28	27	12.0
5	Full-time	Top-up Degree	59	49	21.8
6	Part-time	Top-up Degree	28	20	8.9
7	Full-time	Top-up Degree	30	20	8.9
8	Full-time	Top-up Degree	24	16	7.1
Total			343	225	100.0

Analysis

- Using SPSS version 15, Descriptive statistics and Pearson Correlation Test are used to analyse data collected in earlier study by Poon & Lau (2014a, 2014b).
- Correlations that are significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) are considered as **significant**

Good Experience: Have you met an effective PTL?

	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of program
Met an effective PTL	-.124	-.157(*)	-.196(**)	-.078

Background and Formal Qualification

	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
High Academic Qualification	.143(*)	-.048	.046	-.057
High Professional Qualification	-.004	-.002	.021	-.067

Background and Social Desirableness

	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
High Career Achievement	-.050	.003	.051	-.111
High Social Status	-.041	-.030	-.099	-.092
Strong Research Or Publication Records	.023	.074	.041	-.034
Good Physical Appearance	-.102	-.031	-.039	-.106

Background and Teaching Related Competencies

	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
Subject knowledge	.097	.062	.281(**)	.006
Work experience	.230(**)	.117	.254(**)	.159(*)
Teaching experience	.060	.048	.149(*)	.030
Language	-.089	.110	.067	-.042
Presentation Skills	.130	.050	.234(**)	.014
Computer skills	.046	.109	.096	-.052

Background and Relationship Oriented Behaviour

	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
Share experience	.086	-.008	.220(**)	.000
Prompt reply	.142(*)	.076	.202(**)	.183(**)
Smiling	-.117	-.046	-.072	-.222(**)
Psychological consulting	-.169(*)	-.042	-.170(*)	-.119
Career consulting	-.056	-.005	-.089	-.060
Communication	-.033	.161(*)	.066	-.046
Interesting	.045	-.028	.178(**)	-.111

Background and Task Oriented Behaviour

	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
Encourage	.032	.132	.068	-.106
Real example	.311(**)	.099	.417(**)	.093
Recognize reward	.007	.075	-.020	-.122
Additional time	.011	.017	.091	-.009
Chance to speak	.102	.086	.153(*)	-.096
Easy pass	.064	.061	.017	-.044
Tips/hint for exam	.125	.113	.084	-.061
Cantonese	-.198(**)	.018	-.164(*)	-.223(**)
Modify course	.069	.172(*)	.132(*)	-.026
Apply IT	.097	-.013	.116	-.092
New approach	.116	.123	.244(**)	.062

Summary 1: Correlation with Traits

Traits	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
High academic qualification	.143(*)	-.048	.046	-.057
Good subject-related knowledge	.097	.062	.281(**)	.006
Many years of work experience	.230(**)	.117	.254(**)	.159(*)
Many years of teaching experience	.060	.048	.149(*)	.030
Good presentation skills	.130	.050	.234(**)	.014

Summary 2: Correlation with Behaviours

Behaviour	Year of study	Gender	Full /Part time	Level of programme
Share his/her past experience in Studying	.086	-.008	.220(**)	.000
Provides prompt reply to questions or e-mail	.142(*)	.076	.202(**)	.183(**)
Keep smiling	-.117	-.046	-.072	-.222(**)
Provides psychological or personal consulting	-.169(*)	-.042	-.170(*)	-.119
Provides students with opportunity to communicate with lecturers or tutors	-.033	.161(*)	.066	-.046
Makes the class interesting	.045	-.028	.178(**)	-.111
Applied updated real life examples in teaching	.311(**)	.099	.417(**)	.093
Give students chances to speak and to ask questions	.102	.086	.153(*)	-.096
Conduct class in Cantonese	-.198(**)	.018	-.164(*)	-.223(**)
Modifies course content to suit the needs/interests	.069	.172(*)	.132(*)	-.026
Uses new teaching approach	.116	.123	.244(**)	.062

Conclusion 1

- The result of the study partly supports **Hypothesis 1: “Students’ *background* has a significant correlation to their preference for the traits of the PTL”**.
- In terms of items related to **Traits** of the PTL, the *Study mode* of the students (Full-time/Part-time) shows significant correlation with four of the twelve traits analysed in this study. *Year of Study* shows significant correlation with two traits items and *Level of programme* shows significant correlation with one.

Conclusion 2

- The result of the study also partly supports **Hypothesis 2: “Students’ *background* has a significant correlation to their preference for the behaviour of the PTL”**.
- The *Study mode* of the student shows significant correlation with nine of the eighteen items study in this study. *Year of study* shows significant correlations with four behaviour items. *Level of programmes* shows significant correlations with three items and the last background factors, *Gender*, show significant correlations with only two behaviours items.

Conclusion 3

- The data tend to indicate that part-time students have a preference set that may be very different from that of full time students.

Recommendation for teacher

- To meet the needs of different students, teachers should modify their teaching and social behaviours according to the background of the students. There is no “One best way” that can be used to teach all students.

Recommendation - Administration

- School administration should take a more contingent approach in teaching assignment. For example, the selection criteria of teachers for part-time and full-time students need not be the same

Reference

Poon, T. & Lau, J. (2014a) “Who are the Preferred Part-time lecturers? – Students’ Perceptions in a Hong Kong Self-financing Institute”. *Conference paper presented at the Conference on Tertiary Education, 2014*, Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE), Hong Kong, 13th November.

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