



How Instructor Attire, Body Language , and Verbal Habits Impact Student Learning

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ABSTRACT

The effect of instructor attire, body language, and use of filler words were evaluated in the way these effectors affected student perceptions of the student’s ability learn. Research studies conducted by Carr, Lavin, & Davies, (2010) and Schachter, Christenfeld, Ravina, & Bilous, (1991) were used to determine the perceptions of students in the classroom. Student achievement improved when instructors wore business or business casual attire, when body language communicated confidence and authority, and the use of filler words was avoided. Prior research by Benzer, (2010), shows if instructors use body language in correct and effective ways, this will not only increase students’ interest in teaching material but also help them comprehend the language correctly and effectively. In order to evaluate the validity of the hypothesis, participants in this study were shown two videos, one with professional characteristics or one with unprofessional characteristics, to determine the impact of instructor characteristics on learning, followed by a questionnaire. The hypothesis for this study was supported by the significant results analyzed using an ANOVA test.

INTRODUCTION

- Researchers were interested in the idea that an instructors’ characteristics, professional or unprofessional could have an impact on a student’s ability to learn effectively.
- It was predicted that the professional characteristics, attire, body language, and lack of verbal disfluencies, of an instructor would have a positive impact on a students ability to learn.
- The current hypothesis was based on previous experiences and research that suggested that learning increased when a instructor had professional characteristics compared with instructors with unprofessional characteristics. (Carr, Davies & Lavin, 2010)
- Prior research by Benzer (2012), from an instructor’s point of view, also demonstrated that professional characteristics were more effective in promoting student learning.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine whether an instructors attire, body language, and speech disfluencies had an impact on student learning.
- It was hypothesized that the more professional the instructor, the more students were able to learn.
- It was hypothesized that the more unprofessional an instructor’s characteristics were, the less effective the instructor was in a classroom setting.

METHODS

Participants:

- N = 72
- Age ranges from 18 to 33
- 44 females and 28 males



Design:

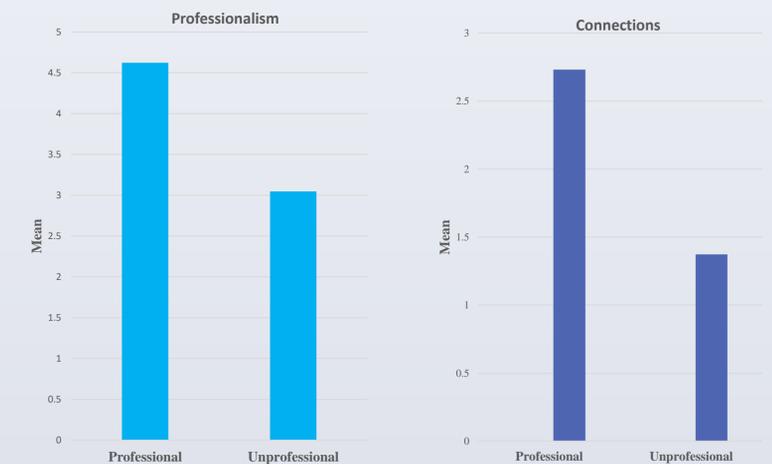
- Between subjects design
- Independent variable
 - Professional Video (well dressed, good body language, clear speech) “lecturing” in a classroom.
 - Unprofessional Video (casually dressed, poor body language, speech disfluencies) “lecturing” in a classroom.
- Dependent variable
 - Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating

Procedures:

- Participants were shown a Professional or Unprofessional video.
- Participants completed the Study Questionnaire which included 3 Manipulation check questions.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

- Results were obtained using an ANOVA test
- Significant satisfactory results were shown for professionalism
- $F(1,72) = 2.18, p < .001$
- Significant differences were seen between satisfactory ($M=4.62, SD=0.61$) and unsatisfactory mean results ($M=3.05, SD= 0.96$)



- The hypothesis was supported, this study showed that the professional attire, body language, and verbal habits of an instructor has a satisfactory impact on student learning.
- Future studies can be modified to evaluate the different standards of professional /unprofessional characteristics in different cultures, disciplines, and areas of the United States.
- The results of this study clearly illustrate the importance of the instructors characteristics on their student’s ability to learn.

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