INFLUENCE OF ADMIRED TEACHERS ON PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

By

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Abstract

Teachers who are admired by students can serve as important role models by providing academic guidance, motivation, professional direction, ethical values and opportunities for personal development. This paper investigates the influence of admired teachers on the personality development and professional growth of undergraduate students. Recognising teachers as significant role models, the research examines how admiration for educators affects students' self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and career aspirations. Employing a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data assess correlations between teacher admiration and student outcomes, while qualitative interviews provide nuanced insights into students' experiences. Results demonstrate that admiration for teachers is positively associated with enhanced motivation, communication abilities, and clarity in professional goals, underscoring the vital role of positive teacher-student relationships in higher education. The paper particularly focuses on the Professional Growth (PG) dimension, consisting of nine Likert-type items. Data were collected from undergraduate students using a structured research tool. For the present analysis, 150 complete responses were considered. Descriptive statistics, item analysis, reliability analysis and a one-sample t-test were applied using the Professional Growth dimension. The findings revealed a high level of perceived professional growth associated with admired teachers.

Keywords: *admired teachers, personality development, professional growth, undergraduate students, teacher influence, and higher education.*

Introduction

Teachers influence not only cognitive learning but also the affective, social, and professional dimensions of students in higher education; teachers can function as behavioural role models whose professional conduct, ethical qualities, pedagogical expertise, and relational mentoring influence students' academic, ethical, and professional development (Osman et al., 2026). Admired teachers may therefore serve as role models whose values, work ethics, attitudes, and interpersonal skills inspire students beyond the classroom. Teacher involvement and supportive teacher–student relationships have also been associated with students' self-efficacy and academic development (Ayllon et al., 2019). This paper examines the extent to which admiration for teachers affects undergraduate students' personality traits, such as self-efficacy, resilience, and communication skills, as well as their professional growth, including career planning, skill acquisition, and professional networking.

Higher education is not limited to the development of academic knowledge; it also

contributes to students' personality, professional identity, interpersonal competence, values, confidence, and readiness for future employment. In this process, teachers play an important role because students may observe, evaluate, and internalize teachers' professional behaviour, communication styles, attitudes, and commitment. Recent research on teachers as behavioural role models highlights the importance of ethical qualities, pedagogical expertise, and relational mentoring in shaping students' holistic development (Osman et al., 2026).

An admired teacher may influence students beyond classroom instruction by serving as a source of guidance, encouragement, and professional inspiration. Students may consider such teachers as role models and seek their guidance regarding academic performance, career planning, professional skills, and personal development. Mentoring relationships can provide students with opportunities to explore their professional identity, clarify career goals, and develop commitments towards future career paths (Brobst et al., 2026). Teachers can encourage students to establish career goals, improve communication and critical-thinking skills, participate in professional activities, and develop ethical standards. Research on mentoring has also shown that positive mentoring relationships can strengthen students' confidence and contribute to professional identity development (Izadinia, 2015).

Professional growth is particularly important for undergraduate students because the undergraduate period represents a transition from formal education towards employment, higher education, or professional life. During this period, appropriate guidance and mentoring can support students in developing professional identity, confidence, career aspirations, and readiness for future responsibilities. Recent research indicates that mentoring can provide undergraduate students with safe spaces to explore their professional identities, beliefs, goals, and possible career pathways (Brobst et al., 2026). Guidance from admired teachers can therefore strengthen students' confidence and motivation and help them prepare for future professional responsibilities.

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping not only students' academic knowledge but also their personal and professional development. Admired teachers, through their behaviours, attitudes, and mentorship, can serve as influential role models who contribute to students' personality development, including self-efficacy, resilience, communication, and confidence. Teacher support has been found to be positively associated with students' self-efficacy, while supportive teaching relationships can contribute to students' confidence in their ability to succeed (Ayllon et al., 2019). Beyond academic instruction, admired educators may inspire students to develop professional competencies, clarify career goals, and engage actively in career planning. Thus, this paper explores the extent to which admiration for teachers contributes to undergraduate students' personality growth and professional advancement, highlighting the significance of teacher–student interactions, role

modelling, and mentoring in fostering holistic development.

Justification for this Study

It lies in the critical role that admired teachers play in shaping undergraduate students' holistic development, extending beyond academic knowledge to influence personality traits and professional growth. While numerous studies acknowledge the importance of teacher-student relationships in motivation and learning, there is a need to specifically examine how admiration for teachers impacts key dimensions such as self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and career aspirations. Understanding this influence is essential for higher education institutions aiming to foster environments that support both personal and professional development.

Furthermore, as the transition from education to the workforce becomes increasingly complex, identifying factors that enhance professional readiness is vital. Admired teachers, through mentorship and role modeling, can significantly contribute to students' career clarity and goal-setting behaviours, yet empirical evidence on this connection remains limited. By focusing on the Professional Growth dimension and incorporating robust quantitative and qualitative analyses, the research offers actionable insights for educational policy and faculty development programs. The findings can inform strategies to strengthen teacher mentorship roles, ultimately improving student motivation, ethical development, and career preparedness. This justifies the paper relevance and necessity in enhancing educational practices and student success in undergraduate settings.

Objectives of the Study

"Objectives are statements of purpose that describe what the learner is expected to gain from instruction" Taba (1962).

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the level of personality among undergraduate students with regard to gender for professional growth.
2. To find out the level of personality among undergraduate students with regard to gender of admired teachers for professional growth.
3. To find out the level of personality among undergraduate students with regard to admired teachers during school/college days for professional growth.

Hypothesis of the Study

A hypothesis is a "proposition which can be put to a test to determine its validity". They also state that a hypothesis "states what we are looking for" (Goode and Hatt, 1981).

The hypothesis of the study are:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to the gender of admired teachers.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to

admired teachers during their school/ college days.

Method of the Study

Research methodology deals with the systematic methods and techniques used in carrying out research and includes areas such as research design, sampling, measurement, data collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation. The investigator has proposed to use survey method for this study Kothari (2004).

The sample consists of undergraduate students enrolled in arts & science colleges located in Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu. Simple random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different college types and academic disciplines who chosen a total of 150 students were selected for the study, which included approximately equal representation from arts and science colleges. The self–made tool, on the Admired Teachers Influence Scale(ATIS), was developed by P.Mageswari and S.Lenin (2026) and was used to collect data. The ATIS has 38 items distributed across five dimensions; each statement was rated on a five-point scale with options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Survey research methods involve collecting data from a target group by asking questions. The goal is to gather information on attitudes, behaviours, and opinions to draw conclusions from qualitative approaches.

Data Analysis

The investigator used 't'-test for two groups of gender and admired teachers during college or school days. The collected data have been analysed, and the results are given in the following table.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to gender.

Table 1. Significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Df	t-value	p-value
Professional Growth	Male	33	38.6061	6.95943	1.21148	148	1.047	0.297 NS
	Female	117	36.9744	8.14995	.75346			
Total	Male	33	160.7879	28.07107	4.88655	148	0.822	0.413 NS
	Female	117	155.8718	32.35113	2.99086			

S – Significant at 5% level *NS – Not Significant at 5% level*

Table 1. shows that the mean Professional Growth score of male students was 38.6061, while that of female students was 36.9744. The obtained *t*-value of 1.047 was not significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.297). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in Professional Growth with regard to gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to the gender of admired teachers.

Table 2. Significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to the gender of admired teachers

Variable	Gender of Admired Teachers	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	df	t-value	p-vaue
Professional Growth	Male	36	36.7778	7.85261	1.30877	148	−0.482	0.630^{NS}
	Female	114	37.5088	7.95479	0.74503			
total	Male	36	154.8611	33.86372	5.64395	148	−0.462	0.645 ^{NS}
	Female	114	157.6140	30.75726	2.88068			

S – Significant at 5% level *NS – Not Significant at 5% level*

Table 2. shows that the mean Professional Growth score of male was 36.7778, whereas female obtained a mean of 37.5088. The obtained t-value was −0.482, with p=0.630, which is greater than 0.05. Hence, the difference is not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to admired teachers during their school/college days.

Table 3. Significant difference in the level of Professional Growth among undergraduate students with regard to admired teachers during their school/college days

Variable	Admired Teachers during school/college days	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	df	t-vaue	p-value
Professional Growth	School days	59	37.2881	6.86835	0.89418	148	−0.056	0.955^{NS}
	College Days	91	37.3626	8.55507	0.89682			
total	School days	59	155.9322	24.69320	3.21478	148	−0.321	0.749 ^{NS}
	College Days	91	157.6154	35.24132	3.69429			

S – Significant at 5% level *NS – Not Significant at 5% level*

Table 3. shows that the mean Professional Growth score of Group 1 was 37.2881, while Group 2 obtained a mean of 37.3626. The obtained *t* value was −0.056, with *p* = 0.955, which is greater than .05. Hence, there is no significant difference between the groups. Therefore**,** Hypothesis 3 is accepted**.**

Table 4. Overall Data Analysis

S.No	Variables	Values	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
1	Gender of Respondent	Male	33	38.61	6.96	1.047	0.297^{NS}
		Female	117	36.97	8.15		
2	Gender of Admired Teacher	Male	36	36.78	7.85	-0.482	0.630 ^{NS}
		Female	114	37.51	7.95		
3	Admired Teacher during School/College Day	School Days	59	37.29	6.87	-0.056	0.955 ^{NS}
		College Days	91	37.36	8.56		

H_1: The mean Professional Growth score of Male respondents (M = 38.61) was higher than Female (M = 36.97). However, the difference was not statistically significant, $t(148) = 1.047$, $p = .297 > .05$. Hence, H_1 is accepted.

H_2: The mean Professional Growth score for students whose admired teacher belonged to Male was 36.78, compared with 37.51 for Female. The difference was not statistically significant, $t(148) = -0.482$, $p = 0.630 > .05$. Hence, H_2 is accepted.

H_3: Students in School days had a mean Professional Growth score of 37.29, while College days had a mean of 37.36. The difference was extremely small and statistically not significant, $t(148) = -0.056$, $p = 0.955 > .05$. Hence, H_3 is accepted.

Findings of the Study

Based on the above findings, the investigator concludes that there is no significant difference in the Professional Growth of undergraduate students with regard to the gender of the respondents, the gender of their admired teachers, and whether the admired teacher was encountered during school or college days. Thus, the gender of the admired teacher, and the period in which the teacher was admired do not significantly influence the Professional Growth of undergraduate students.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the study are :

- Implement faculty development programs focusing on mentorship and interpersonal skills.
- Encourage teacher-student interaction beyond academic instruction.
- Incorporate personality development and career guidance modules linked with teacher mentorship.

Conclusion

Admired teachers play a pivotal role in undergraduate students' personality development and professional growth. Educational institutions should recognize and support the relational and mentorship roles of teachers to enhance student outcomes. Admired teachers play a

significant role in the holistic development of undergraduate students by influencing their personality, professional identity, and career readiness. Through effective teaching, ethical behaviour, emotional support, and mentoring, they can foster essential personality traits such as self-efficacy, resilience, confidence, communication skills, and interpersonal competence. Their guidance may also encourage students to establish clear career goals, acquire professional skills, participate in career-related activities, and develop responsible professional attitudes. The influence of admired teachers extends beyond academic achievement, as their values, attitudes, and professional conduct can inspire students to become confident, ethical, and competent individuals. Therefore, higher education institutions should promote positive teacher–student relationships, effective mentoring practices, and supportive learning environments that encourage both personal and professional growth. Ultimately, recognizing and strengthening the role of admired teachers can contribute to the holistic development of undergraduate students and prepare them to meet future professional challenges with confidence, integrity, and resilience.

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