

# Relationship between Teacher Interpersonal Behaviour and Students' Learning Motivation in Geography

Ugyen Dema

karmaugyendema@gmail.com  
Samtse College of Education  
(BHUTAN)

**ABSTRACT:** *This study examined the attitudes of Class 10 students in western Bhutan regarding the interpersonal behavior of their Geography teachers and the correlation between these perceptions and their motivation to learn the subject. A convergent parallel mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating survey questions, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The study was conducted at 22 secondary schools across five Dzongkhags, involving 303 students and 26 Geography instructors. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, while qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis. Students generally rated their instructors positively, with the highest average scores for leadership ( $M = 4.35$ ), understanding ( $M = 4.34$ ), and helpfulness/friendliness ( $M = 4.16$ ). Uncertainty ( $M = 1.55$ ) and dissatisfaction ( $M = 1.83$ ) received the lowest ratings, resulting in an overall teacher behavior score of 3.07. Students were highly motivated to learn Geography ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), with grade motivation being the highest ( $M = 4.11$ ). A statistically significant and moderate correlation was found between perceived teacher behavior and student motivation ( $r = .472$ ,  $p = .015$ ). The study suggests that Geography teacher training should emphasize active listening and emotional awareness to enhance classroom interactions and boost student motivation.*

**KEYWORDS:** teacher and student, interpersonal behaviour, learning motivation, relationship, Geography.

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## 1. Introduction

Teacher interpersonal behaviour (ITB) plays a crucial role in the daily teaching and learning process. The importance of teacher-student relationships for better teaching and learning has been proved in the following studies. According to Den Brok, Fisher, and Koul (2005), teacher interpersonal behavior is strongly related to students' achievement and motivation in all subject areas and a healthy teacher-student interpersonal relationship is a prerequisite for engaging students in learning activities. Teachers' attitudes include verbal and non-verbal behaviors exhibited by a teacher with a determination to transfer education to the learners within an academic setting. In this light, teachers are being entrusted by students with their personal and academic challenges as they venture through their educational journey.

Education has been the priority for all the people in Bhutan and it is given importance by the government too. Moreover, on several occasions, his Majesty has emphasized the need for teachers

to strive to earn the respect of students and inspire them to fulfil their hopes and talents. For instance, His Majesty the Fifth King (2012) mentioned, "I will always support teachers throughout my reign. I will give you more importance and more recognition than any other sector because you are going to make the greatest difference to the future of our country". Moreover, it was stated that the future of our nation lies in the hands of our children (his Majesty the fifth King, 2009). Hence, for the students to be capable leaders of tomorrow, they should be guided by the teachers with proper interpersonal behaviour from the grass-roots level.

Interpersonal relationships between teachers and students can be a fundamental requirement for achieving the national goals associated with gross national happiness because values of good relationships taught in the school pervade throughout their lives making profound contributions to the nation as a whole. Jamtsho (2004) claimed that teachers can make learning pleasant or punishing; they can motivate and

create fear; they can produce excited anticipation or dread. Therefore, it becomes clear that teachers' interpersonal attitudes have an impact on student's motivation to learn Geography. In addition, Den Brok et al. (2006) mentioned that the healthy teacher-student interpersonal relationship is very important and requisite for the students to engage in learning activities. Hence, the interpersonal behavior of the teacher can play a major role in improving the learning abilities and performance of the students.

The present study aims to explore how Class 10 students in western Bhutan perceive their Geography teachers' interpersonal behaviour and how these perceptions relate to their motivation to learn the subject. By examining both students' views on teacher behaviour and their levels of learning motivation, the study seeks to understand the nature of the relationship between these two factors. To achieve this, the research is guided by one main question: *What are the perceptions of Class 10 students regarding the relationship between teacher interpersonal behaviour and their motivation to learn Geography?* To support this inquiry, three sub-questions are addressed: (1) *How do students perceive their teachers' interpersonal behaviour?* (2) *What is the level of motivation among Class 10 students in learning Geography?* and (3) *What is the relationship between teacher interpersonal behaviour and students' motivation to learn Geography?* Together, these questions provide a framework for examining how teacher-student interactions may influence students' engagement and motivation in subject-specific learning contexts.

## 2. Literature review

Interpersonal behavior refers to the verbal and non-verbal actions used in human interactions to communicate attitudes and build relationships (Argyle, 1994). In an educational setting, this includes the ways teachers interact with students, which can strongly affect students' learning experiences and motivation (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

Interpersonal tradition first originated in the writings of Harry Stack Sullivan in the year 1953 where he highlighted the importance

of interpersonal relationships for healthy personality development and adaptive personality functioning. Sullivan believed that we react not to how things are, but rather to our subjective experience of them and the meaning they have for us. The concept of Sullivan was adapted by many other researchers and it was also documented by the Kaiser Foundation Research Hospital and by Leary in 1957.

Adapting the Leary Model to the context of education, Wubbels et al. (1985) labeled the two dimensions, Influence (Dominance-Submission) and Proximity (Opposition-Cooperation). They structured interpersonal teacher behaviour into eight segments: leadership, helpful/friendly, understanding, giving students freedom and responsibility, uncertain, dissatisfied, admonishing, and strict.

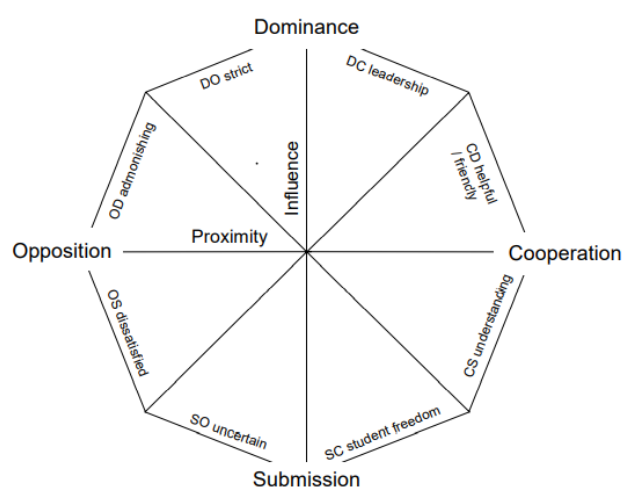


Figure 1. The model for teacher interpersonal behaviour

Note. Adapted from model for education by Wubbels et al., 1985.

This model is the circumplex model which assumes that the eight interpersonal sectors can be represented by two independent dimensions (Influence and Proximity). In the above figure, the sections are labeled DC, CD, and so forth by their position in the coordinate system. For instance, sectors such as "leadership" and "helpful/friendly" are characterized by both Dominance and Cooperation. In the DC sector, the Dominance aspect succeeds over Cooperation. The students might have seen

their teacher as enthusiastic and motivating if the teacher displays DC behaviour. Likewise, a teacher might be seen as helpful, friendly, and considerate if they display CD behavior since the adjacent CD sector includes behaviours of a more cooperative and less dominant type.

This model was adapted have found a positive effect for both teacher Influence and Proximity on motivation. For instance, the findings of Den Brok et al. (2005) shows that there is a positive teacher-student relationship, in which the teacher is perceived as both in control (highly influential) and cooperative (highly proximate) by students in motivating the students toward learning the subject and the better outcome in the subject-specific. Similarly, Georgiou and Kyriakides (2012) stated that both teacher influence and proximity were found to be associated with student motivation in the Greek language. Although the Leary Model has seen limited application in Bhutanese schools and in Geography education globally, it remains a suitable framework for this study. Its focus on teacher influence and proximity has been shown to positively impact student motivation in other subject areas. Using this model allows for a structured analysis of teacher-student interactions and addresses a research gap, making it relevant for exploring how teacher interpersonal behavior affects motivation in learning Geography in the Bhutanese context.

## 2.2. Understanding motivation

Motivation is commonly defined as the process that initiates, directs, and sustains goal-directed behavior (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). In educational contexts, it influences how much effort students put into learning and how persistent they are in achieving academic goals. According to Filgona et al. (2020), learners' motivation is probably the single most important element of learning. Moreover, Steward et al, (2010) mentioned that motivational alignment is considered a driving force that inspires the person to engage in the task. Motivation plays a crucial role in academic success, as it influences students' choice of learning strategies, persistence in tasks, engagement levels, and overall achievement

(Schunk et al., 2008). It serves not only as an internal drive but also as a key predictor of learning outcomes (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Highly motivated students are more likely to set goals, self-regulate, and respond positively to challenges, while low motivation can lead to disengagement and underachievement.

## 2.3. Level of motivation in learning Geography

In this study, the level of motivation refers to the degree to which students are engaged, interested, and willing to put effort into learning Geography. The student's level of learning motivation was studied by various researchers in different countries. For instance, in Indonesia, Warsani and Ruhimat (2016) found out that the students have a high level of motivation in learning Geography.

## 2.4. Factors influencing students' learning motivation

Glynn et al. (2011) developed a well-validated and widely used Science Motivation Questionnaire that captures multiple dimensions of student motivation relevant to academic learning. Their model's comprehensive coverage of constructs like intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, self-determination, grade motivation, and career motivation aligns well with this study's aim to explore diverse aspects of motivation in Geography. Therefore, their framework provides a reliable and appropriate foundation for assessing learner motivation in this research.

### 2.4.1. Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation was defined by Zacccone & Pedrini (2019) as cited in Deci and Ryan (1985) as the expression of behavior done for their own sake of pleasure and satisfaction. In this research, intrinsic motivation is connected to both curiosity and the ability to learn Geography. It is known that the driving force for learning is motivation. Numerous studies revealed innumerable advantages of intrinsic motivation in the context of learning.

Therefore, intrinsically motivated students are more likely to stick with tough work and other constructive classroom activities, as well as

perform better academically, than extrinsically motivated students, who may need to be enticed to complete the prescribed chores.

#### **2.4.2. Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1997). People's self-efficacy beliefs influence how they feel, think, motivate themselves, and act.

In the field of educational research, self-efficacy has received much interest and there has been a great deal of evidence that there is a strong connection between self-efficacy and motivation. Taheri et al. (2018), revealed that self-efficacy has a significant relationship with academic motivation. Moreover, many studies (Brown, 2010; Husain, 2014) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and their motivation. Hence this study explores the students' level of motivation in learning Geography driven by their self-efficacy.

#### **2.4.3. Self-determination**

According to Blaschke (2012), self-determined learning is a process in which students take charge of identifying learning needs, articulating learning goals, locating learning resources, implementing problem-solving strategies, and reflecting on the learning process to challenge existing assumptions and expand learning capabilities. Self-determined people are causal agents; they cause things to happen in their lives. They have a clear objective in mind and use problem-solving and decision-making skills to achieve it, (Wehmeyer, 2002). Therefore, self-determination is a part of an intrinsic motivation that motivates an individual to do things.

#### **2.4.4. Grade motivation**

Grade motivation is the external force that triggers students to learn, and hence, it falls under extrinsic motivation. It is believed that grades can motivate students to learn more and that the more difficult the grading system is, the better the results will be. (Astina et al., 2017; Yildirim, 2017) found a positive correlation

between grades and students' level of motivation in learning.

However, studies have also found the drawbacks of grades in students' learning motivation. Research has indicated that external rewards have negative effects on student interest, motivation, and learning and that students' motivation to learn diminishes when they receive grades (Condry & Koslowski, 1977; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Thus, the current study finds out if grade motivation has an impact on students' learning motivation in the Bhutanese education context.

#### **2.4.5. Career motivation**

Career Motivation is the urge to exert effort to achieve one's job objectives. London (2014), defined Career motivation as the set of individual characteristics and associated career decisions and behaviours that reflect the person's career identity, insight into factors affecting his or her career, and resilience in the face of unfavorable career conditions. Shin et al. (2016) found that career motivation has a direct influence on science learning. However, it was less studied on how career motivation influences students in learning geography. Therefore, this study also explores how career motivation inspires students to learn geography.

#### **2.6. Relationship between teacher interpersonal behaviour and student's motivation towards learning geography**

Teacher interpersonal behaviour plays a key role in motivating students towards learning and was proved in several studies conducted by various researchers in different areas. For instance, Omozele (2017) and Martin (2014) mentioned that teachers have good leadership skill, who are helping or friendly, and understanding are correlated positively with learners' motivation towards learning. Moreover, it was also stated by Martin and Dowson (2009) that connective instruction explicitly positions relatedness as an instructional need and that academic development is promoted when this need is met.

In the context of Bhutanese education, there



is no single study conducted on the interpersonal behavior of a teacher to date. However, it was revealed in the study of Dorji (2004) that classroom disruptive behavior in Bhutanese schools is determined by the teacher-student relationship. In addition to that, in the study of Gyamtsho et al. (2015), it was mentioned that teachers neglecting their students, teacher behavior and personality, and poor teacher-student relationships are a few of the factors that have resulted in students' disruptive behaviors and early drop out in Bhutan. Therefore, these studies show that the interpersonal behaviour of a teacher has a significant impact on students in many ways. However, limited research has explored this relationship specifically within the context of Geography education in Bhutan, highlighting a gap that this study aims to address.

### 3. Methodology

Based on the pragmatist paradigm, this study adopted a Convergent parallel mixed method to analyze the relationship between teacher interpersonal behavior and the student's learning in Geography. Creswell et al. (2018) mentioned that in the convergent parallel mixed method, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results. Hence adapting this design allows simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data, helping to cross-validate findings. This approach offsets the limitations of each method and provides a more complete understanding of the relationship between teacher interpersonal behaviour and student motivation.

Based on the simple random sampling strategy under the probability sampling technique, the respondents for this research were focused mainly on the students of class 10 and geography teachers from the schools of the western region which included Thimphu, Haa, Paro, Chhukha, and Samtse dzongkhag.

Focus group discussion and purposive sampling interviews were used for collecting qualitative data since the researcher was aware of the interview participants. According to

Latif (2010), focus group discussions offer a natural setting where participants influence and are influenced by others. Mishra (2016) adds that they are effective for gathering people with shared backgrounds to explore specific topics. Therefore, conducting focused group discussions with the teachers to explore some strategies and ways to enhance the interpersonal behaviour of a teacher in the schools was best answered rather than doing an individual interview. A face-to-face interview was conducted with the selected students to further discuss on the interpersonal behaviour of geography teachers and their motivation towards learning geography. According to Opdenakker (2006), face-to-face interviews allow interviewers to observe social cues like tone, body language, and facial expressions, adding depth to verbal responses. This method was also more suitable than focus groups, as students felt more comfortable sharing honest views about their teachers individually.

#### 3.1. Sample size

Adapting Yamane's (1997) formula at the confidence level of 95%, the sample consists of 303 students in total including 151 males and 152 females, and provided their responses by focusing on 26 Geography teachers in total. To match the total sample of students and teachers which is necessary for a few of the test operations, the sample size of the students was condensed to 26 by calculating the mean. For qualitative data, six face-to-face interviews were conducted with the students based on purposive sampling. Two focus group discussions consisting of 4 members each were conducted.

Interviews were used in this study to complement the survey data by providing richer, more detailed insights that questionnaires alone could not capture (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). As Merriam (2009) notes, interviews allow researchers to explore participants' perspectives in depth. Therefore, a semi-structured interview format was adopted to probe responses further, ensuring the collection of meaningful, context-specific data on teacher interpersonal behaviour and student motivation.

### **3.2. Student's perceptions on teacher's interpersonal behaviour**

Students' perception of the teachers' interpersonal behavior was explored, using the adapted modified Australian version of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) designed by (Wubbles, 2005). Reliability and validity of the measurement tool (QTI) were confirmed through a pilot test conducted with 20 students at Samtse Higher Secondary School. Using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), the analysis yielded a coefficient of 0.80, indicating a high level of internal consistency. According to Mulder (2015), values between 0.60 and 0.80 reflect acceptable reliability, supporting the use of the QTI in this context. This result suggests that the instrument is dependable for assessing students' perceptions of teacher interpersonal behaviour. Establishing strong reliability and content validity through expert review enhances the credibility of the study's findings and overall trustworthiness.

The study adapted the *Attitude Scale towards English* (ASE) to measure students' motivation in learning Geography. Originally developed by the Dutch Central Institute of Testing (CITO), the questionnaire includes items that assess students' attitudes and motivation across various dimensions, such as interest, perceived relevance, and effort. Although initially designed for English, the instrument has been adapted by several researchers for other subject areas, including science and social studies (Kuhlemeier et al., 1990). In this study, minor contextual modifications were made to align the items with Geography learning. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Its adaptability, past use across subjects, and validated structure make it suitable for assessing motivation in this context.

### **3.3. Data collection procedures**

Data were collected using a convergent parallel mixed method, gathering quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. Quantitative data came from a survey questionnaire measuring students' motivation and perceptions of teacher

interpersonal behavior. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with students and teachers to explore experiences in depth. Focus group discussions with students provided collective insights. This simultaneous collection allowed triangulation and a richer understanding of the relationship between teacher interpersonal behavior and student motivation in learning Geography.

### **3.4. Data analysis procedures**

This study employed Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software to analyze the data. Statistical tests such as descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential (Pearson's correlation) were conducted. Using these tests to measure the level of significance of the relationship between teacher ITB and Students' motivation towards learning is appropriate for this study.

This study adopted thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews and FGD which included data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and concluding with the final write-up. Thematic analysis is accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research as mentioned by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, thematic analysis can provide a rich description of a data set and summarize essential elements of a large amount of data. Additionally, data triangulation was carried out to confirm the accuracy and appropriateness of the data which were analyzed. The analyzed data for teacher interpersonal behaviour and the student's motivation towards learning geography were presented by using various relevant graphics such as tables, graphs, and diagrams.

### **3.5. Ethical consideration**

Ethical consideration is a vital aspect of research, as it ensures the protection of participants, fosters trust, upholds research integrity, and prevents misconduct that could reflect poorly on affiliated institutions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Before beginning this study, approval was sought from Samtse College of

Education. Additionally, permissions were obtained from relevant authorities including the Chief Dzongkhag Education Officer, Thromde CDEO, and the principals of the selected schools. To maintain confidentiality, participant identities were coded (e.g., Std 1, Std 2 for interviews and T1, T2 for focus group discussions). Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, data collection methods, analysis procedures, and how their data would be stored and used. They were also assured of their right to review and amend their interview transcripts and questionnaire responses. Importantly, participants were informed that the collected data would be used solely for one publication and that no harm or risk would come to them from participating.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1. How do students view their teacher's interpersonal behavior?

Teacher ITB includes eight dimensions such as Leadership, Helpful/Friendly, Understanding, Student Freedom, Uncertain, Dissatisfied, Admonishing, and Strict. The table 1 shows how students have viewed their geography teacher's ITB in general and found that they perceive their Teacher's ITB as moderately positive with the mean score ( $M=3.07$  and  $SD=.51$ ) as shown in the table. Among 8 types of teachers ITB, students have rated high in all positive parts of teacher ITB and rated moderate level for the negative types of teachers ITB. Therefore, this study concludes that in general, teachers' ITB were rated "*moderately positive*" based on students' perceptions.

The qualitative data revealed that most students viewed their Geography teachers positively. For instance, 12 out of 15 interviewed students described their teachers as friendly, helpful, and understanding. One student stated, "*Our Geography teacher always helps us with our doubts without getting angry. She listens and explains everything clearly.*" In addition, some students described their teachers as role models. As Student 1 noted, "*My Geography teacher is some one everyone respects. He's good in studies and discipline — we all want to be like him.*"

Table 1. Student's view on teacher ITB

	Mean	Standard deviation
Leadership	4.35	.48
Helpful/friendly	4.16	.52
Understanding	4.34	.50
Student freedom	3.02	.50
uncertain	1.55	.48
Dissatisfied	1.83	.46
Admonishing	2.38	.61
Strict	2.85	.55
Overall	3.07	.51

However, a few students perceived their teachers as too strict or easily angered. One said, "*Sometimes he shouts even when we make a small mistake. It makes us scared to ask questions.*" These contrasting views indicate that while most students in the western region of Bhutan experience positive interpersonal behavior from their Geography teachers, a minority still perceive them as overly strict or unapproachable.

Both quantitative and qualitative studies show that pupils usually rate their professors' interpersonal behavior positively. High ratings in leadership, comprehension, and friendliness are consistent with interview responses emphasizing teacher support. However, the occurrence of some negative feedback indicates variation in individual teacher-student relationships.

The findings of this study corroborate the idea of Bosker et al. (2011) who found teachers' interpersonal behavior is perceived positively by their students. Likewise, teachers' leadership behavior was rated high in the study of (Brok et al., (2005). Further, students' indication of understanding and helpful Geography teachers in school and the teachers being looked upon by students in every field is consistent with the findings of Vijayan et al. (2016) who mentioned that teacher serves as a powerful model in providing examples for students to support each other with words of encouragement, questions for clarification, and entry for collaboration.

This finding can relate to the Bhutanese student's nature of respecting every teacher in the schools. It is evident that students in the school show their respect towards teachers and tend to speak positive things about their teachers when asked by anyone from outside the school. Teachers are also expected to be exemplary in the schools. Nevertheless, one participant perceived their geography teacher to be strict and someone who gets angry frequently which is in line with what other studies (e.g., Bosker et al., 2011; Telli et al., 2007) have found in their respective studies. Moreover, it was revealed in the findings of Gyamtsho et al. (2015) that having a problem with teachers and a lack of support from the teachers have led them to drop out of school which indicates that teachers and students don't always share a good interpersonal relationship in the schools. Therefore, this study might help the teachers to reflect on the kind of behavior that they possess and the way they get along with the students in the schools as they are being looked upon by students in every field.

#### 4.2. Student's level of motivation

This part of the section presents class ten students' level of motivation for learning geography which is covered through five main themes, such as Intrinsic Motivation, Self-Efficacy, Self-Determination, Grade Motivation followed by career motivation.

Pupils' motivation to learn Geography was divided into five levels based on their mean score. A mean score of 4.50 – 5.00 indicates the highest degree of motivation, 3.50 – 4.49 indicates a high level of motivation, 2.50 – 3.49 indicates moderate motivation, 1.50 – 2.49 indicates low motivation and a mean score of 1.00 – 1.49 indicates the lowest level of motivation for learning Geography as per Khan and Best (1998).

The overall analysis of the quantitative data on the level of motivation in learning Geography based on five themes is shown in figure 2. Students were motivated by grade motivation with a mean score of ( $M=4.11$  and  $SD=1$ ) and least motivated by self-determination with a mean score ( $M=3.44$  and  $SD=1.06$ ). Overall, the mean score for the level of motivation in learning

Geography is  $M=3.80$  and  $SD=.52$ . This shows that students of western Bhutan have a high level of motivation in learning Geography.

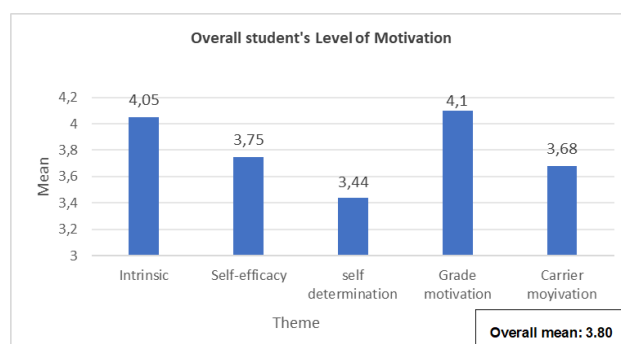


Figure 2. Student's level of motivation in learning Geography

The qualitative findings have also found that the students were interested in learning geography. The reasons for their motivation towards learning were also stated by every participant. For example, one of the students has mentioned, "Yes, I do have lots of motivation towards learning geography because I have got an interesting geography teacher who is very enthusiastic about geography subject". Moreover, it was found that most of the student's motivation level was above 80% which shows that their motivation level in learning geography is very high. Hence, these results show that students are highly motivated in learning Geography subjects and they are motivated more by the marks that they secure in Geography.

Survey and interview data demonstrate that, while children are highly motivated, it is mostly driven by grades and teacher influence. Intrinsic motivation and self-determination appear to be weaker, suggesting a possible area for pedagogical development. The findings of this study align with the result of Warsani and Ruhimat (2016) who found students' high level of learning motivation in geography. This also accords with the study of Kapa (2016) who found a positive learning attitude of students in geography subject which shows that students were motivated to learn geography. This could be because students perceive geography as an interactive subject where outdoor learning is possible as shared by the majority of the students in the interview. Another possible explanation for the reason



can be the teacher's interpersonal behavior. For instance, almost all the students mentioned in the interview that they were motivated to learn geography since their teacher enthusiastically talks about the subject and never fails to teach geography through various strategies.

This finding corroborates the idea of Yildirim (2017) who found students' high level of motivation through their performance. This might be because students perceive that it is important for them to score better marks in the test and examinations. For instance, students have rated highest in the item "Getting good marks in geography is important for me".

Students were less motivated by self-determination compared to other factors which contradicts the study conducted by (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Ryan, Kuhl, Deci, 1997) cited in (Joo et al., 2013). It seems that students feel geography is a minor subject and they can even fail during examinations in geography as it was evident from the item analysis of the theme self-determination which showed that students spend less time in learning geography and they do not put much effort too. Therefore, when students are externally motivated with grades and rewards, their intrinsic motivation appears to be diminished. Studies of Tapia and Marsh (2001) mentioned that students' mental attitude towards learning is extremely important to be successful and to get learners involved in geography lessons thoroughly which shows the importance of the student's intrinsic motivation in learning. Therefore, the related stakeholders need to explore further additional factors that motivate students' learning and incorporate relevant strategies for further enhancement which will ultimately help in the academic performance.

#### 4.3. Correlation between teacher ITB and student's motivation

The relationship in this study refers to how a teacher behave, act and communicate with students and whether these teacher attributes motivates students in their learning or not. This section presents the possible correlation between teacher ITB and the student's motivation, the correlation between positive teacher ITB and student's motivation, and Negative Teacher ITB and student's motivation.

One of the most powerful variables in a learning environment is the interaction between a teacher and their students. This is a critical factor influencing students' achievement and academic motivation. Positive and supportive relationships between students and teachers help pupils develop a sense of belongingness and motivate them to participate in various classroom activities.

##### 4.3.1. Possible correlation

The scattered plot (Figure 6) displays that there is possible positive correlation between two variables with  $r = .472$ ,  $n = 26$ ,  $p = 0.015$ .

##### 4.3.2 Positive teacher ITB and student's motivation

Positive Teacher Interpersonal Behaviour includes the four positive interpersonal behaviours which were categorized into four themes (Leadership, Helpful/Friendly, Understanding and Student Freedom). A Pearson's correlation was computed to access the relationship between the Positive ITB of teacher and the Student's Motivation towards learning. There was significantly strong positive correlation between the two variables,  $r = .629$ ,  $n = 26$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Table 2. Overall correlation between teacher ITB and student's motivation

Correlations			
		Overall ITB Mean	Overall Motivation Mean
Overall ITB Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.472*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.015
	N	26	26

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Relationship between positive teacher ITB and student's motivation

Correlations			
		Positive ITB	Overall Motivation Mean
Positive ITB	Pearson Correlation	1	.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	26	26

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.3.3. Negative teacher ITB and student's motivation

Negative Teacher ITB includes the other four negative interpersonal behaviours of the teachers (Uncertain, Dissatisfied, Admonishing and strict) in four different themes. Pearson correlation analysis examined that there is no correlation between the variables, negative Teacher ITB and Student's Motivation towards learning geography,  $r = -.211$ ,  $n = 26$ ,  $p > .300$ . This indicates that teachers with negative ITB demotivate students towards learning.

The statistically significant positive correlation in positive ITB and statistically negative correlation in negative ITB conveys that if the teacher interpersonal behaviour is positive, it motivates students in learning and negative ITB of the teacher demotivates students' learning as per the students' perspectives.

The findings of quantitative data were also supported by the qualitative data. Majority of the student participants in the interview have stated that their geography teacher is friendly, interactive, positive minded and have the will to help every student when they are in need. Students also said because they have a close relationship with their geography teacher, they can learn a lot in Geography subject. One of the participants expressed, "I share a close relationship,

something like a mom and a daughter's relation with her because she provides motherly care and guidance in our studies and I can learn a lot from her". In addition to that, qualitative analysis was also done on the interaction frequency between teacher and students which revealed that teacher always interact with students in the class, clear their doubts personally, joke with students and keeps the class alive all the time.

However, one student participant expressed that there is no proper interpersonal relation with their Geography teacher. It was also reported that since their Geography teacher is strict and do not understand their problems, they are not able to clarify his doubts with a teacher and hence learn less from him. Moreover, it was also stated by one of the participants that their Geography teacher interacts very less with them in the class and teacher is found to be angry for most of the times though he doesn't miss the classes.

Similarly, while discussing about the challenges that the students face in dealing with their geography teacher, one student added: "We are not able to understand what he teaches us in the class. He gets angry and hits us for a little reason which is even against the government rule. He never jokes in the class and remains serious all the time. That's why we are not able to ask our doubts and makes us feel sleepy in the class."

Table 4. Relationship between negative teacher ITB and student's motivation

Correlations			
		Overall Motivation Mean	Negative ITB
Overall Motivation Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	-.211
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.300
	N	26	26

However, there were majority of students with opinion that they feel comfortable working with their Geography teacher in the classes and school. For example, one student has mentioned, *“Yes, I like working with my Geography teacher because she understands me very well about my abilities and disabilities. So, I feel comfortable working with her all the time”*. Therefore, the result of interview shows that there is a variation in the opinion of students regarding the kind of relationship that they share with their teachers in the school.

Analysis of focused group discussions with the teachers has expressed that the interpersonal behaviour of a teacher influences the student's motivation in learning. One of the participants from a group shared: *“If teacher can touch student's heart by understanding each individual and be helpful in terms of academic and personal matter, students will feel close and free to clarify their doubts and share whatever problems they have and this will ultimately motivate them towards learning. We feel that teachers play an important role in students' motivation to learn.”*

The view was also supported by the other FGD 1 who stated: *“Every student looks upon their teacher in anything they do. They feel much closer to the teachers who are frank and understanding. They also feel very comfortable asking whatever doubts they have when the teachers are frank and approachable and thus help in motivating them in their studies.”*

The statistical correlation and participant accounts are very similar: good teacher behavior directly increases student motivation. Negative teacher behavior may impede motivation, although its influence is less constant. Furthermore, teacher-student relations tend to differ by school site, with urban instructors reporting more discipline issues and rural teachers finding pupils more respectful. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between the Teacher's Interpersonal behaviour and the Student's motivation towards learning geography.

These findings align with the studies of

(Omozele, 2017; and Martin, 2014) who found that teachers who have good leadership, are helpful/friendly, and understanding behavior correlate positively with students' learning motivation. To this claim, de Brok et al. (2005) stated that teachers can affect the motivation of students to learn internally as well as externally. Moreover, Yildirim (2015) mentioned that teachers play a crucial role in motivating students towards learning. In addition, it was revealed in the studies of (Gyamtsho et al. 2015; Dorji 2004) that the students' disruptive behaviors and their motivation in studies can be determined by the teacher-student relationship that they share. Hence, the study found that the teacher-student relationship demonstrates to have profound effects on the student's learning motivation.

Participants reported that, at times, they are demotivated when they are not able to clear their doubts as they are not able to approach to their teachers. On the other side, some students shared about the positive relationship that they have with their Geography teachers which have motivated them to learn Geography. To a certain extent, variation in students' opinion could be because of the type of interpersonal behaviour that teachers possess, however, the attitude and the behaviour of the student themselves might have also contributed to the variation of the teacher's interpersonal behaviour. This is because, teachers have shared during the FGD that if they are lenient and friendly with the students of urban schools, students try to take advantage and overtake them. Whereas in the schools of rural areas, students were usually obedient and decent hence teachers are approachable too. The variation in how teachers interact with their students as mentioned above is mainly because of the kind of attitude and behaviour that students possess in different schools. This finding indicates the importance of teacher interpersonal behaviour in students' learning motivation. Therefore, this study concludes that the teacher's interpersonal behaviour determines the student's motivation towards learning Geography and it is hence important to enhance the teacher's interpersonal behaviour.

## 5. Conclusions, limitations, and recommendation

The analysis of the quantitative data revealed that geography teachers have positive interpersonal behaviour as per the perception of class ten students in the western region which is in line with many other studies conducted by various researchers. In addition, this study revealed that the student's level of motivation is high as the interview with the students supported the result.

Further, the Pearson correlation test concluded that there exists a positive correlation between teacher ITB and the student's motivation towards learning geography. Similarly, teachers and students have shared that there is a positive relationship between the two.

There are various limitations to this study that may have influenced its quality. As a result, interpreting the findings of this study should be done with caution, bearing in mind the following limitations.

Firstly, the findings and conclusions gained from this study may not apply to the total population in all the districts due to the small sample size and research site being used. Moreover, the findings may not be generalized to all the geography teachers in the country since this study focused only on 26 Geography teachers in the schools of western Bhutan. The inclusion of all the geography teachers in the study would have provided a wider perspective and understanding of Geography teachers in the country.

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Another drawback is that a lack of comparable research has been conducted in Bhutan on this topic. The literature review of this study was based on research from other countries. Since the study was conducted in a different setting, the results may have been marginally influenced by the cultural background of other studies; yet, it is possible to claim that the essence of findings remained the same.

### 5.1 Recommendation

Since the study proved that the Interpersonal behavior of a teacher plays an important role in motivating the students to learn Geography, it is recommended for the relevant stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Dzongkhag, and schools to plan and implement professional development programs for teachers which can help them in enhancing their interpersonal behaviour to motivate students in learning.

Students' motivation is one of the key elements to excel students in learning Geography. Although this study revealed a high level of student learning motivation, it is still important for the teachers in school to explore further what motivates students the most and incorporate appropriate strategies to enhance learning motivation.

The study was conducted based on the students' perspectives, therefore, further study on the same topic based on teachers' perceptions in Bhutan is recommended. Moreover, this study recommends conducting a study on the same topic with large sample size, using different motivational aspects to generalize the findings to the whole population of the class ten students in Bhutan.



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