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Teacher Judgment of English Language Competency and Students' Personality Factors: A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT Teacher judgment is a cognitive and social process that has received limited attention in educational research. The objective of the present study is to examine the effect of personality similarity on teachers' judgment of students' English language competence. The cross-sectional survey design has been selected in the descriptive study. The sample has been drawn from public elementary schools and comprised 97 English language teachers and their 456 students. Multiple regression analysis has been performed to analyse the effect of personality similarity, socioeconomic status, and gender on teacher judgment. It has been found that personality similarity, socioeconomic status, and gender significantly predict teachers' judgment. It can be concluded that teachers judged students positively who exhibited a high personality similarity with them. The awareness among the teachers to create inclusive learning environments and mitigate judgment bias should be developed by teacher training programs.

INTRODUCTION

A prominent obstacle to educational equity is teacher bias, which is usually based on students' background variables (Yan et al. 2025). Accurate assessment of students' competence is widely regarded as a crucial aspect of professional skills amongst educators (Curran 2023; Muller et al. 2026; Rubie-Davies and Hattie 2025). Informal teacher judgment involves evaluations of students' abilities, which are used to plan instruction and provide feedback to stakeholders (Kaufmann 2024; Kosel et al. 2024). Such judgments shape students' educational experiences, including their academic outcomes and self-perceptions. However, teacher bias impedes social mobility and student learning (Yan et al. 2025). Teacher judgment influences learning processes (Briceno et al. 2018), academic self-concept and educational trajectories (Johnston et al. 2019; Levy-Feldman 2025), and informs decisions on grading and instructional content. It gives feedback to students and parents (Adhikari and Poudel 2024) and helps teachers make decisions about instructional strategies and pedagogical methods (Kaufmann 2024).

The teacher judgments are subject to systematic errors (Kosel et al. 2024; Sudkamp et al. 2012). Research has shown that informal judgment can lead to biased student assessments, thus impacting the validity of the assessment procedures (Lorentz et al. 2023; Neuenschwander and Garrote 2024; Trajkovski and Hayes 2025). Teacher expectancy bias is a contact between relational perception and cognitive heuristics. In multifaceted classroom settings, teachers continuously infer multidimensional information regarding learners' attitude, participation, behaviour and performance under circumstances of restricted time and cognitive resources (Rieu et al. 2024).

Such a situation elevates dependence on implicit plans and affective impersonations that may spread beyond noticeable achievement indicators. Though some integral components like gender and socioeconomic status have gained scholarly attention, less focus is placed on psychological cor-

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respondence between teachers and students. Ideally, teacher judgment should reflect students' competence or aptitude, but can be swayed by other factors related to the student, teacher, or both. Studies have identified several influences on teacher judgment, such as personality similarity with students (Doyle et al. 2024; Harklau and Ford 2022), student gender affecting perceptions of mathematics abilities (Klapproth and von der Lippe 2024), ability grouping (Barry et al. 2022; Johnston et al. 2019), and favouritism (Peter et al. 2024; Hussain et al. 2020).

English language competence establishes an eminent position for probing expectancy bias, as its assessment usually involves holistic and explanatory judgment. Unlike subjects that mainly rely on objective responses, language evaluation often integrates fluency, grammar, classroom participation, communicative confidence and expressive clarity. These extents need teachers to incorporate performance with broader imprints of student capability and engagement. As English works as a high-prestige foreign language having high social value, mobility and educational appreciation, assessments may also interconnect with wider social orders and identity markers (Luo and Chan 2023; Djiwandono and Ginting 2025). Therefore, English language assessment delivers a theoretically pragmatic context in which psychological resemblance and social identity features may meet to impact a teacher's judgment beyond the assessable achievement results (Treadaway and Read 2024).

This study examines how personality, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender affect students' English language competence (ELC) in Pakistan. English holds a high prestige, as it is taught as a second/foreign language. In contrast to the Western world, teachers in Pakistan are not required to provide judgments. Hence, no prior research has explored teacher judgment in the country and despite significant educational and gender inequalities, this is an unexplored area. Given this limited focus, judgment bias may be more pronounced in Pakistan than in other regions.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate the impact of personality similarity between teachers and students on teacher judgment of students' English language competence.
2. Examine the impact of students' demographic variables (socio-economic status and gender) on teacher judgment of students' English language competence.

Context of the Present Study

The present study has drawn samples from Faisalabad, which is the third largest city in Pakistan by area and population. The selection of public schools solely as the sample of the study enhances the comparability of students' English Language Competence (ELC), as they use the same textbook prepared by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Punjab. Comparing students from different schools using varied textbooks poses significant challenges. Aftab (2011) evaluated English textbooks used nationwide and identified seven distinct types of textbooks. Tasleem et al. (2025) analysed the English course books and found that multiple types of textbooks are offered. Furthermore, comparing students' ELC across different school types was beyond the scope of this study.

Public schools mostly serve children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, but some children from higher SES are also enrolled. These children likely have parents who do not prioritise high-end education. Sometimes, parents are educated (a primary socio-economic status indicator) but cannot afford expensive schools due to low income (a secondary socio-economic status indicator). Government statistics show that students from low-income backgrounds have higher dropout rates and often do not pursue university education. Therefore, an empirical investigation of dropout factors is crucial. Faisalabad statistics reveal a gender disparity, with male and female literacy rates at 59 percent and 46 percent, respectively (Faisalabad District Government Portal 2023). Thus, gender was a significant factor warranting examination in this study.

Public school teachers typically possess a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, in addition to a bachelor's degree in any field. The B.Ed. program is a pre-service teacher training course extending one year and covering core pedagogical courses, including classroom assessment and evaluation. The teachers who participated in this study were trained in the fundamental principles of classroom assessment. Public school teachers also engage in in-service training. However, no further data were collected regarding the number or na-

ture of the training sessions attended by the participants.

Literature Review

Previous research has demonstrated that accurate assessment of students' abilities and aptitudes, and subsequently tailoring instruction, significantly impacts teaching quality (Helmke and Schrader 1987; Urhahne and Wijnia 2021). Teachers assess students' performance both formally and informally, which helps teachers in four primary areas of curriculum and instructional material selection, classroom instruction, classroom climate, and assessment. Moreover, teacher evaluations influence their expectations of individual students based on perceived abilities and shape how students' abilities and aptitudes are communicated to parents. Assessing students' abilities and aptitudes aids in adapting instruction and shaping teachers' expectations, which can, in turn, influence students' interest in learning and their academic performance. Consequently, teachers' decisions and judgments play a crucial role in students' learning and achievement.

Student performance scores are influenced by teachers' perceptions of their abilities. Hattie (2017) conducted a meta-meta-analysis of educational research and identified teachers' estimates of achievement as the third most significant factor affecting student achievement, following collective teacher efficacy and self-reported grades. Johnston et al. (2019) found that teacher judgment holds causative significance, directly affecting students' self-concepts. Additionally, Forster et al. (2022) examined the impact of a teacher's judgment on reading progress and found that teachers who assessed students higher than their actual performance facilitated improved learning and performance.

Teacher evaluations may be influenced by biases from non-academic factors such as personality similarity, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender. Campbell (2015) posits that disparities in teacher evaluations may be attributed to gender, SES, special educational needs, language, and ethnicity, all of which affect students' academic performance. Leest et al. (2021) identified that teacher evaluations are affected by students' SES, with higher SES students receiving more favourable assessments. They contend that this advantage increases these students' admission to academic tracks, undermining educational equity and perpetuating societal inequalities rather than addressing them, a fundamental goal of sustainable education.

Education System, Teacher Education and Teacher Judgment in Pakistan

The state must provide free compulsory education to children aged 5-16 years (National Assembly of Pakistan 2012). Compulsory education includes primary (grades 1-5), elementary (grades 6-8), and secondary (grades 9-10). Pakistan has approximately 30 million school-age children attending elite private schools, low-cost private schools, public schools, madrassas, or remaining out of school (UNICEF 2020). Free education is limited to public school. Pakistan faces quality and equity challenges, with high dropout rates and gender disparity (Hanif 2023; UNICEF 2023). Punjab Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF (2022) reported a 10 percent dropout rate per middle school grade, with a 56 percent completion rate. Teacher education requires either a 4-year B.Ed. Honours after grade 12 or a 1.5-year B.Ed. diploma after a Bachelor's degree, with both including assessment courses.

The role of a teacher's judgment in Pakistan differs from that in many other regions worldwide due to the absence of a tracked education system. In Pakistan, students are educated within a uniform school system and curriculum, regardless of their diverse abilities. Consequently, the presence of students with varying abilities within the same classroom may pose challenges for teachers in accurately assessing students' capabilities, potentially leading to biases in their judgments. As noted by Leest et al. (2021), teacher judgment can be affected by factors such as students' gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and the degree of personality similarity between teachers and students.

English Language and Its Significance in Pakistan

English is taught as a compulsory subject from preschool in Pakistan and serves as the medium of instruction for science, social studies, and mathematics (Channa 2017; National Education Policy 2009). Since the establishment of Pakistan, English has represented power and dominance (Shamim 2008). As Pakistan's official language, English is

required for professional roles and higher education (Haider 2017). English is essential for international communication and commerce, and English proficiency signifies education and is crucial for securing employment (Haider 2018).

Access to the English language is influenced by socioeconomic status (SES). Akram and Ghani (2013) found that students with high SES show greater motivation and positive attitude toward English language learning. Conversely, individuals from low SES backgrounds have limited access to the English language due to the multiple school systems in Pakistan (Haider 2017). Coleman (2010) noted that English holds limited functional value for individuals from rural areas, as they are rarely engaged in high-profile professions where English is used. Furthermore, Education First (2021) reported that Pakistan ranks low in English proficiency, positioned 63rd among 112 countries evaluated. According to the International Monetary Fund, these disparities arise from inadequate budget allocation and an ineffective educational system (Brollo et al. 2021). Therefore, the significance of the English language cannot be overstated, and effective English instruction could mitigate educational inequalities in Pakistan.

Haider (2018) suggests that teachers may positively assess students with high SES in English language competence (ELC). Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction posits that students' habits influence teachers' perceptions of performance. Students from high SES backgrounds may be perceived as superior performers in English based on parental education and exposure to English through media. In contrast, students from low SES backgrounds may have limited access to English books, television, and the Internet, resulting in minimal practice at home. This indicates that SES may be a key factor in English language learning and in teacher judgment.

Teacher Judgment

Evidence indicates that teacher judgment is essential for teaching and learning (Helmke and Schrader 1987; Biesta 2015; Rausch et al. 2015). This involves analysing students' performance and is a fundamental component of teachers' professional competence (Ready and Wright 2011). Inaccurate judgments can lead to ineffective teaching (Helmke and Schrader 1987; Baumert and Kunter 2006; Biesta 2015). Teacher judgment involves observing students' learning, comparing it to a reference framework, and formulating a response to their learning level (Sadler 1998). Assessing students' achievements presents a significant challenge. Research has shown discrepancies between teachers' judgments and student performance on standardised tests (Sudkamp et al. 2012). Rausch et al. (2015) found variations in different teachers' judgments, indicating that moderator variables influence teacher judgment. These variables include teacher-related factors (experience), student-related factors (gender, SES), or combinations (personality similarity), as well as judgment task requirements and test characteristics (task difficulty).

Teacher Judgment and Student Gender

Olczyk et al. (2023) investigated teacher judgment and gender achievement disparities at the primary school level in Germany, England, and the United States. Their findings showed a positive bias favouring boys in mathematics and girls in the language domains. They theorised that gender bias would be more pronounced in countries with greater gender inequality, suggesting such bias in Pakistan, where gender inequality is higher (UNICEF 2023). Campbell (2015) studied the impact of gender, income, language, ethnicity, and special educational needs on teacher judgment, finding that labelling students leads to bias and educational inequality. Bonefeld et al. (2021) revealed that gender stereotyping affects the perception of females' mathematical abilities as inferior to males. Based on these findings, personality similarity, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender may influence teachers' judgments of students' English Language Competence (ELC) in Pakistan. Investigating and mitigating these biases, as suggested by Olczyk et al. (2023), can enhance educational equity in the long run.

Big-5 Personality Model, Personality Similarity and Teacher Judgment

According to the American Psychological Association (APA 2024), personality comprises traits, motivations, interests, values, self-concept, skills, and emotional patterns that shape one's approach to life. The Big Five personality theory conceptualises personality through openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Openness relates to imagination

and curiosity, conscientiousness to goal orientation, extraversion to sociability, agreeableness to cooperation, and neuroticism to negative emotions. These traits are highly relevant in classroom settings.

Personality similarity refers to the resemblance between individuals' psychological traits (Montoya and Horton 2013). Higher similarity enables more accurate assessment of ability. The present study assessed teacher-student similarity using the Big-5 personality traits. Rausch et al. (2015) found that personality similarity between teachers and students affects global judgment but minimally impacts task-specific judgment. Authors proposed two reasons for bias, that is, information processing suggests judging similar individuals positively (Kruglanski and Ajzen 1983), while Byrne and Clore (1970) reinforcement model links similarity to consensual validation. Hein and Shaukat (2019) found that teachers' personalities impact student outcomes. These findings suggest that personality similarity influences teacher judgment, with teachers judging similar students more positively because of aligned learning styles.

Teacher Judgment and Students' SES

Leest et al. (2021) investigated how students' socioeconomic status (SES) affects teacher evaluations, finding that high SES students were evaluated more favourably compared to low SES students. Students from high-SES backgrounds were more likely to receive recommendations for higher-track schools, whereas those from low-SES backgrounds were directed towards lower-track schools. This suggests that biased teacher evaluations can contribute to educational inequities and impact students' opportunities for social mobility. Olczyk et al. (2023) examined the relationship between students' social origins and inaccurate teacher evaluations. Their findings revealed that in England and Germany, teachers tend to overestimate the abilities of students with highly educated parents and underestimate those with less educated parents. However, such discrepancies were not observed in the United States. Therefore, SES may influence teacher evaluations, although the findings vary across different contexts.

Rationale of the Study

There are investigations that focus on teacher judgment but to the researchers' knowledge no past study has examined it in the Pakistani context. However, Hussain et al. (2020) studied the impact of teacher favouritism on academic sabotage at the university level, finding a significant effect and recommending a transparent educational system to reduce biases. Asif et al. (2021) used a large dataset to profile out-of-school children in Pakistan, concluding that poor student performance, social factors like poverty, child labour, school management, and teachers' personalities and training significantly affect student dropout rates. Although no studies have specifically investigated the relationship between teacher judgment and personality similarity, it can be inferred from the existing literature. This study aimed to examine the personality similarity between teachers and students, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES) on teachers' judgment of students' educational learning capacity (ELC).

Expectations Based on Past Research

The degree of similarity between teachers' and students' personality traits is anticipated to influence biases in teachers' assessments of students' English Language Competence (ELC). Additionally, students with higher socioeconomic status (SES) are expected to receive more favourable evaluations from teachers than those with lower SES, regardless of their actual ELC. Furthermore, teachers may assess students differently based on gender, irrespective of their actual ELC. The primary research questions of the current study are as follows.

RQ1. What is the effect of personality similarity between teachers and students on teacher judgment of students' English language competence?

RQ2. What is the effect of students' socio-economic status on teacher judgment of students' English language competence?

RQ3. What is the effect of students' gender on teacher's judgment of students' English language competence?

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant effect of personality similarity between teachers and students on teachers' judgment of students' English language competence.

H2: Students' SES significantly affects teachers' judgment of students' English language competence.

H3: There is a significant effect of students' gender on teachers' judgment of students' English language competence.

METHODOLOGY

Sample of the Study

The sample was obtained from public schools through simple random sampling of elementary schools in the region. Teachers who gave consent to participate in the study and have minimum five years of experience were included in the study. Furthermore, consent was obtained from the students and their parents. Students were randomly selected for the study. The sample included 97 teachers (female = 45, male = 52) and 456 students (female = 203, male = 253) from 97 classrooms. The descriptive statistics for teacher and student sample are given in Table 1. Data collection occurred at the year-end for grades 6 and 7, with students aged 11-13 years. Only English language teachers participated in the study, as the study measured students' English Language Competence (ELC). The teacher-student pairing resulted in 456 dyads. To maintain authentic teacher judgment data, the teachers did not assess all the students in their classes. Each teacher evaluated between four and six students, averaging 4.7 students per teacher.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for teacher and student sample of the study

	N	*Female*	*Male*	*M (age)*	*SD (age)*
Teachers	97	45	52	37.3	9.70
Students	456	203	253	12.2	.81

Research Instruments

English Language Competence

In Pakistan, English language instruction develops five competencies of speaking and listening, reading and critical thinking, formal and lexical, writing, and ethical and social development (Nudrat and Nickson 2022). This research focuses on reading comprehension, critical thinking, and formal-lexical knowledge, which were chosen for their suitability for multiple-choice testing. A multiple-choice test ensured objective scoring and reduced evaluator bias. Senior English teachers with ten years of experience designed the test for its content validity. Three university English faculty members validated and revised the test, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of .81. The test included 3 reading passages and 26 multiple-choice questions. Students read texts and answered MCQs, with 20 items assessing reading comprehension and six evaluating language knowledge. The test measured English Language Competency (ELC), serving as an independent variable predicting teacher judgment to control for overestimated effect.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the students' ELC scores. The test results indicate that the students exhibited low to moderate proficiency in ELC. These outcomes were anticipated, as students in public schools typically do not perform well in English language assessments, particularly when the test content is not derived from their textbooks, thereby eliminating the possibility of rote-learning.

Personality Similarity

Teachers' and students' personality traits were measured using the Big Five Personality Inventory-10 (Rammstedt and John 2007). The instrument contains 10 items, with two items measuring each trait of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The English version measures the personality similarity between teachers and students. The teachers confirmed the students' understanding of the BFI-10 in English. The items were rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Noreen et al. (2019)

Table 2: Descriptive data and intercorrelations for students' English language competence scores, teacher judgment and personality similarity

	N	*M*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*	*ELC*	*TJ*
English language competence score (ELC)	456	14.5	5.1	7	24		
Teacher judgment (TJ)	456	16.7	4.3	10	23	.34*	
Personality similarity	456	.15	.19	-.35	.45	.07	.32*

*$p < .05$

validated the Big-5 personality inventory in Pakistan using a 5-point Likert scale. The study's Cronbach's alpha for BF1-10 was .82, indicating good internal consistency. The sum score was used as the personality index for each student. Following Kenny et al. (2006), the intraclass correlation calculated the teacher-student personality similarity index, considering the profiles' shape, spread, and level. An intraclass correlation was computed for each teacher-student dyad based on personality scores, yielding one similarity index per student.

Teacher Judgment

The present study utilised task-specific teacher judgment, wherein educators were tasked with assessing each student's performance on the English Language Competence Test (ELCT). Consequently, the ELCT was administered to teachers who were instructed to evaluate each student's performance on each test item in a dichotomous manner (correct/incorrect). Teachers were required to correlate the domain assessed by the test with the students' capabilities as retained in their memory, subsequently forming a judgment of their English Language Competence. Each student was assigned a cumulative score by the teacher, which is referred to as teacher judgment.

Students Socioeconomic Status and Gender

The first section of the questionnaire collected demographic information on SES, gender, and age. As suggested by the American Psychological Association (APA 2024), SES was computed through parents' education and monthly income, which are significant determiners of SES. The data were categorised based on these factors, and values were assigned. The study calculated the SES index for each student by combining both factors. Lower values indicate low SES, and higher values indicate high SES. The authors planned five categories of lower, upper lower, middle, upper middle, and higher. However, no data fell in the upper middle and higher categories. Therefore, these were deleted as no parents from these classes enrolled in public schools. The final sample included 106 students from the lower class, 189 from the lower middle class, and 157 from the middle class. Student gender was coded as male = 1 and female = 2. The second section included the BFI-10.

RESULTS

The results section presents and interprets the findings obtained from descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses to analyse the research questions and hypothesis of the study. The data were analysed using SPSS version 26, employing calculations of scale reliability, descriptive statistics, and correlation among variables. Moreover, the study employed both linear and multiple regression analyses to examine the data. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation for the personality similarity index, teacher judgment, and students' English language competence scores. The personality similarity index mean score was 0.12 (SD =.21), which indicates substantial variation, showing that some students exhibit greater similarity to their teachers than others. Moreover, it further indicated that though some teacher-students dyads shared similarities, the overall similarity levels were modest. The mean score for teacher judgment was 16.7 (SD = 4.3), showing a diverse range of judgment by teachers regarding students' ELC. Furthermore, it indicates that teachers differed notably in how they assessed students' English Language Competence (ELC). Table 2 further shows that teacher judgment demonstrates a significant positive correlation with English language competence (r = 34*) and personality similarity (r = 32*). This suggests that teachers were inclined to give higher scores to students with better English language competence, but also to those students who were more similar to them in personality.

This study further employed linear and multiple regression analyses to examine the data. Regression analysis facilitates the estimation of the extent to which variations in the independent variable predict changes in the dependent variables. Table 3 presents the results of the linear regression analysis, in which students' ELC predicted

Table 3: Linear regression analysis predicting teacher judgment of English language competence from students' English language competence scores (students *n* = 456, teachers *n* = 97)

	â	*SE*
English language competence	.39*	1.21
R^2	.14*	
Adjusted R^2	.13*	

*$p < .05$

teacher judgment. The findings indicate that students' ELC significantly predicted teacher judgment ($\beta = 39^{*}$) and accounted for 13 percent of the total variance. This shows that teachers' judgment was partially grounded in students' actual language competence.

However, when personality similarity was included in the multiple regression model, it significantly predicted students ELC ($\beta = .35^{*}$), increasing the explained variance from 13 percent to 25 percent (see Table 4). Thus it can be inferred that personality similarity contributed an additional 12 percent to the variance in teacher judgment, even after controlling for students' actual ELC. The correlation between predictor variables was negligible (r = .01), indicating that the independent variables were operated independently. The hypothesis was confirmed by this study. Therefore, the findings suggest that teachers tended to overestimate the ELC of students who were more similar to them in personality. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted, which reveals that personality similarity has a significant effect on teacher judgment.

Table 4:Multiple regression analysis predicting teacher judgment of English language competence from students' English language competence scores and personality similarity (students *n* = 456, teachers *n* = 97)

	â	*SE*
English language competence	.39*	1.21
Personality similarity	.35*	1.03
R^2	.26*	
Adjusted R^2	.25*	

*$p < .05$

Table 5 presents the findings of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the impact of ELC and SES on teachers' assessments of students' ELC. Multiple regression analysis was performed. As previously indicated in Table 2, ELC accounted for 13 percent of the variance in teacher judgment. The results demonstrated that SES significantly predicted teacher judgment ($\beta = .32^{*}$), indicating that students with higher SES were perceived as higher achievers than their actual English language proficiency. The total variance explained by SES was 7 percent. This finding suggests that teachers were more likely to rate students from higher socio-economic backgrounds as having better English language competence, regardless of their actual performance. Thus, SES exhibited a bias in teacher judgment, favouring students from more advantaged backgrounds. Consequently, this hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 5: Multiple regression analysis predicting teacher judgment of English language competence from students' English language competence scores and students' SES (students *n* = 456, teachers *n* = 97)

	â	*SE*
English language competence	.39*	1.23
Socio-economic status	.32*	1.19
R^2	.21*	
Adjusted R^2	.20*	

*$p < .05$

Table 6 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis predicting teacher assessments of students' ELC based on ELC and student gender. Interestingly, the study found that gender significantly influenced teacher judgment of students' ELC. Specifically, female students were rated more favourably than male students in terms of their English language competence. The results showed the presence of gender-based differences in teacher perceptions about students' competence, with a tendency to assign higher competence levels to female students.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis predicting teacher judgment of English language competence from students' English language competence scores and student gender (students *n* = 456, teachers *n* = 97)

	â	*SE*
English language competence	.39*	1.21
Gender	.27*	1.11
R^2	.20*	
Adjusted R^2	.18*	

*$p < .05$
Note: Gender is coded as male = 1 and female = 2

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while teacher judgments are influenced by students' actual English language competence, they are also significantly shaped by non-academic factors such as personality similarity, socio-economic status, and gender. These factors contribute additional explanatory power and indicate potential biases in teacher judgment. The possible reason for judging students from higher SES as better in English language competence is because English is linked with higher status in Pakistan and only educated

parents and/or families are familiar with English language. Moreover, empirical research has shown that girls are better in language skills than their male counterparts.

DISCUSSION

The present study has found that personality similarity influenced teacher judgment. This applies that teachers in Pakistan might lack in these competencies and are less aware of judgment inaccuracies caused by sympathy or attraction. Therefore, teachers are not conscious while judging students' and overestimate or underestimate students' performance on the basis of their personality similarity with them. The literature on teacher judgment in Pakistan is insufficient. Only a study conducted by Hussain et al. (2020) has been reviewed. Hussain et al. (2020) investigated the effect of teacher favouritism and found that teacher' favouritism results in academic sabotage and affects transparency in students' grades. The findings of the present study are in line with previous studies. The findings are in line with Bijl et al. (2025) who found that teacher expectations and behaviour cause unequal opportunities for students. The study also confirms the findings of Lindvall-Östling (2024), reporting that biases of teachers negatively impacts students' learning experiences. The findings of the study are in line with the study conducted by Urhahne and Wijnia (2021). They found that teachers' competencies for accurate judgments are affected by students' characteristics.

The influence of socio-economic status (SES) further reflects the socially structured nature of teacher judgment. Students from higher SES backgrounds were evaluated more positively, suggesting that teachers may associate socio-economic advantage with higher competence. The study confirms the literature that teacher bias continues to play a significant role in shaping student academic outcomes and reinforcing inequality. Yan et al. (2025) conducted a systematical review of multiple studies and found that data consistently shows the negative association between students' achievement and teacher bias particularly for students from low SES and minority groups. Therefore, they stated that teacher bias causes educational gaps. Doyle et al. (2022) found that teachers judged students from low socioeconomic as inferior to students from high socioeconomic students academically. Batruch et al. (2019) found high SES students received second chances for academic school tracks, while low SES students did not.

However, Leest et al. (2021) studied Holland after education reforms that produced teacher judgment-based and standardised test-based recommendations. They found that while teacher judgments favoured high-SES students, this variance was mainly explained by prior performance, with SES having a minimal direct effect. These findings indicate that teacher judgment bias can be controlled through policy reforms. The finding that female students were evaluated more favourably is consistent with recent research demonstrating that implicit biases continue to shape educational evaluations across different contexts. Muller et al. (2026) found that teachers systematically devalue students with special needs and particularly female students among children with special needs. Lamba et al. (2024) argued that marginalised groups such as females are judged negatively in academics. Bonefeld et al. (2021) found teachers judged girls as less competent and boys as more competent in mathematics.

The present study found that teachers are positively biased towards female students in ELC test performance, due to overestimating females' English abilities while underestimating males. These factors explain teachers' positive judgment of girls in ELC. Therefore, these might be the reason for teachers' positive judgment of girls in ELC in the context of the present study. This might also be because of gender stereotyping because Campbell (2015) found teachers overestimated boys' ability and underestimated girls' ability in the domain of mathematics. In summary, personality similarity, SES, and gender can moderate teachers' judgment of students' achievement, aligning with Sudkamp et al. (2012), who found that teacher judgment can be inaccurate.

Such biases are often rooted in socially constructed expectations about behaviour and competence, which can influence how teachers interpret student performance. The findings support recent scholarship emphasising that implicit bias remains a persistent challenge in education, influencing not only teacher expectations but also student outcomes and institutional practices. The study also confirms the findings of Lindvall-Östling (2024) and Romano (2025).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study contributes empirical evidence to the understanding of teacher judgment and its accuracy. The findings indicate that teacher judgment, along with students' socioeconomic background and gender, significantly predicts students' English language competence. Notably, personality similarity and students' English-language competence accounted for nearly equivalent variance in teacher judgment. Furthermore, the study revealed that teachers consider the subject domain and students' background variables, such as gender, when assessing students' competence. Consequently, both the subject domain and student background variables are crucial for the accuracy of teachers' judgment. Additionally, the study's findings demonstrate that inaccuracies in teachers' judgment exacerbate educational inequalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that teachers should be trained to be aware of the factors that can cause teacher bias. Pre-service and in-service teacher training should include evidence-based anti-bias interventions to reduce teacher bias and its impact on students' achievement and to improve educational equity.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

National education policies and school policies do not explicitly address teacher judgment accuracy and bias, which affect instructional decisions and contribute to educational inequities. Presently, the National Professional Standards for Teachers views assessment as a tool for planning instruction and providing feedback but does not consider how teacher judgment may be influenced by background variables. While current teacher education policies focus on quality assurance, this study suggests implementing equity-focused policies. The National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education should include content to train teachers to mitigate biases and understand how background variables affect judgments. Teachers should be trained to support disadvantaged students and provide inclusive learning environments for them.

Students need respect, care, empowerment, and support to succeed. Teacher training programs should inform teachers about the negative effects of biased judgments and their role as supportive factors in students' academic lives. In Pakistan, which faces challenges such as poverty, low education budgets, and lack of quality education, teachers should not discourage students' education. Teachers' biased judgments affect students' motivation and well-being, requiring a thoughtful assessment of students' abilities. The policy revisions can help control judgment bias and teacher training should address unbiased judgment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study examined teacher judgment in English language only, hence future research may investigate judgment accuracy in other subject domains to understand factors affecting accuracy across domains. Although the current study measured personality similarity using a standardised Western personality inventory, it might not cover some aspects of the Pakistani personality. The inventory showed good reliability, and because of the Western-based personality model, the findings are relatively generalisable. However, implementing local personality models in future research may yield more reliable results.

The author measured students' ELC through self-developed tests, but standardised tests like PISA could provide more objective measures of language competence. Owing to constraints, this study examined only three components of the language domain, hence future research should examine all five elements. This study investigated personality similarity, SES, and gender's impact on teacher judgment in public schools only. Research across school types is needed, as teacher training varies among them. For example, elite private schools provide exclusive training to mitigate biases, whereas low-cost private schools often lack trained teachers. More studies should examine teacher and student variables affecting judgment accuracy.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest.

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