



CODEN [USA]: IAJPBB

ISSN: 2349-7750

**INDO AMERICAN JOURNAL OF
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES**<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1974404>Available online at: <http://www.iajps.com>

Research Article

**A CROSS-SECTIONAL RESEARCH TO ASSESS THE
RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF GENDER OF THE MENTORS ON
THE TEACHING OF MEDICAL STUDENTS**¹Rida Ilyas, ¹Radia Tahir Jamil, ³Dr Azka Awan¹Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore.³Allied Hospital Fsd**Abstract:**

Background: This research is based on evaluating the relative preferences of mentors based on gender by the students of Allama Iqbal Medical College. A mentor is someone who is tasked with imparting knowledge to students. To determine the effect of the mentors' gender on teaching effectiveness we distributed questionnaires to the students from 1st to 5th-year M.B.B.S.

Objective: To determine the relative preferences of either male or female mentors by the medical students.

Method: It was a cross-sectional study on the students of Allama Iqbal Medical College (1st to final year), public sector college affiliated with Jinnah Hospital from April 2016 to June 2016. A sample of 300 students was selected. Sampling technique was convenient sampling.

Data collection and Analysis: 60 students per class were given a questionnaire on basis of convenient sampling, containing 20 questions each. The data was analyzed using SPSS.

Results: In a sample size of 300, 44% preferred male mentors and 18.3% preferred female mentors while the rest had no preference based on gender.

Conclusion: Most of the students had preferred male mentors to females, based on certain attitudes that they believe the male teachers had. However, these people comprise less than half of the sample size, with a major portion not having any preference and a small portion favouring female teachers.

Keywords: Mentor, Student and Gender.

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Please cite this article in press Rida Ilyas et al., A Cross-Sectional Research To Assess The Relative Influence Of Gender Of The Mentors On The Teaching Of Medical Students., Indo Am. J. P. Sci, 2018; 05(12).

INTRODUCTION:

A mentor is someone who is considered a wise and trusted guide as well as an advisor [1]. The teacher is also another term used alternatively for a mentor. There are many causes as to why students are more satisfied with one gender over the other when considering a mentor. Some students may find it easier to communicate with a teacher and relate to them if they are of the same gender as themselves. In an American study conducted in 2010, 'the role model effect' of teachers' gender on students' achievement stated that students would be more satisfied, both academically and intellectually when taught by the teacher of the same gender [2]. Similarly, the 'gender stereotypical model' stated that boys do better when taught by male teachers and vice versa, as the male teachers could handle them and inspire them better [3]. Another study conducted in South Korea revealed that girls are more satisfied by female mentors as they are looking for a more nurturing relationship with teachers, which is best provided by female teachers [4]. An article published in the Netherlands, illustrated that female teacher are better for both male and female students, as they are usually more tolerant and have lesser conflicts with boys [5]. The 'superiority' of the female teachers over their male counterparts is of small magnitude [6]. North Carolina State University's study claimed that students tend to give lower ratings to teachers if they are females [7]. Online students' ratings of teachers described male teachers as "brilliant, intelligent and smart" while females were described as "mean or unfair" [8, 9]. These ratings are consistent with stereotypically gendered expectations. Biasing may be based on the fact that female teachers are perceived harsher than males [10]. During students' reviews of teachers in 2015, 70 out of 1 million female teachers were described as "incompetent" [11].

According to a study by Taylor J., opposite teacher-student gender has an adverse effect on students' academic score but it varies subject to subject [12]. A study in depicted that it is the teachers' knowledge, nature and background but not gender that reflects the teaching effectiveness and student's satisfaction [13]. An Asian study in 2010 concluded that the students' satisfaction is determined by the factors like subject interest, emotional intelligence and students' ability rather than the gender of the teacher [14]. Choosing the right kind of candidate is more logical [15]. Above all, it is the competence of the teacher that matters and not the gender [16]. A Pakistani article published in 2013, suggested that females, due to their better emotional intelligence, make better teachers as students are more content with them [17]. Males tend to perform better in the masculine role

[18]. A survey in Pakistan demonstrated that 76% and 63% of male and female students, respectively, favour the teachers of the same gender as themselves [19].

To conclude, gender has a major role to play in the way teachers are viewed, even in this modern era. However, the degree to which gender impacts on students' satisfaction and the overall teaching acumen of teachers is debatable.

Medicine is ceasing to be a male-dominated field with not only greater female doctors but also more female professors. The main reason for conducting our study is to access the preference for the teacher's gender, especially now that there is a greater number of female medical students than males.

METHODS AND MATERIALS:

Study Design: It is a cross-sectional study.

Study setting: Allama Iqbal Medical College established in 1975, is a co-educational college of medicine, nursing and allied health sciences located at Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani Road, Lahore Pakistan. Total strength of the college is about 1700 students. College is affiliated with Jinnah hospital which is a tertiary care Govt. hospital in Lahore Punjab.

Duration of Study: April 2016-June 2016.

Sample Size: 300 medical students.

Sampling Technique: Convenient Sampling.

Operational Definition: A **mentor** facilitates personal and professional growth in an individual by sharing the knowledge and insights that have been learned through years of experience. A student is a person enrolled at an institution who studies a particular academic subject. Gender is one having an identity with regard to individuality as male and female.

Inclusion Criteria:

- I. Both male and female students of 1st to final year M.B.B.S.
- II. Boarders and Day Scholars.
- III. Who will give consent and fill the questionnaire?

Exclusion Criteria:

All those medical students who are eligible to fill questionnaire but are not giving consent.

Variables:

Independent: Age, sex and academic year.

Dependent: Preference for male and female mentor among students.

Qualitative: Sex

Quantitative: Age and number of students from each class.

Data collection:

A questionnaire was developed and distributed among the male and female medical students of Allama Iqbal Medical College. Participation was voluntarily and confidentiality of the students was assured.

Data analysis:

Data analysis was done by SPSS.

Frequency and percentage were determined for all the qualitative variables.

Mean and standard deviations were found for all the quantitative variables.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Table – I: Age and Gender Stratification

Age and Gender		Number	Percentage
Age	17 – 19 Years	75	25.00
	20 – 22 Years	172	57.30
	23 – 25 Years	53	17.70
	Total	300	100
Gender	Male	148	49.30
	Female	152	50.70
	Total	300	100

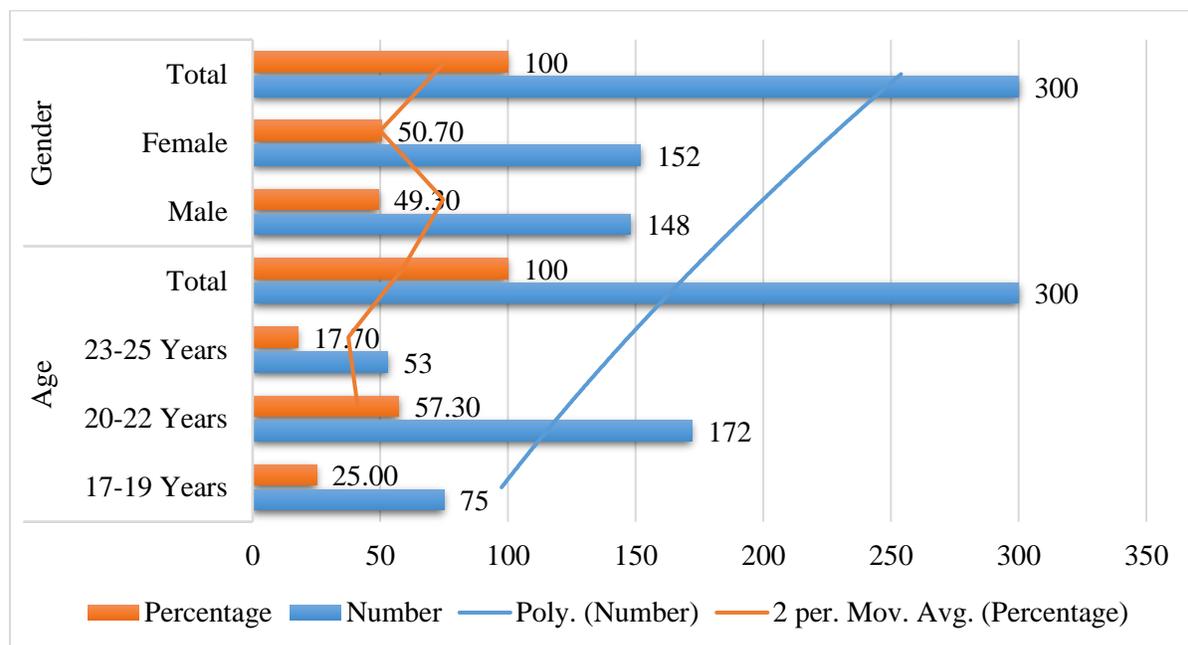


Table – II: Who do you think is a better mentor?

Gender (Teacher)	Male (Student)	Female (Student)	Total
Male	62	70	132
Female	37	18	55
Both	49	64	113
Total	148	152	300

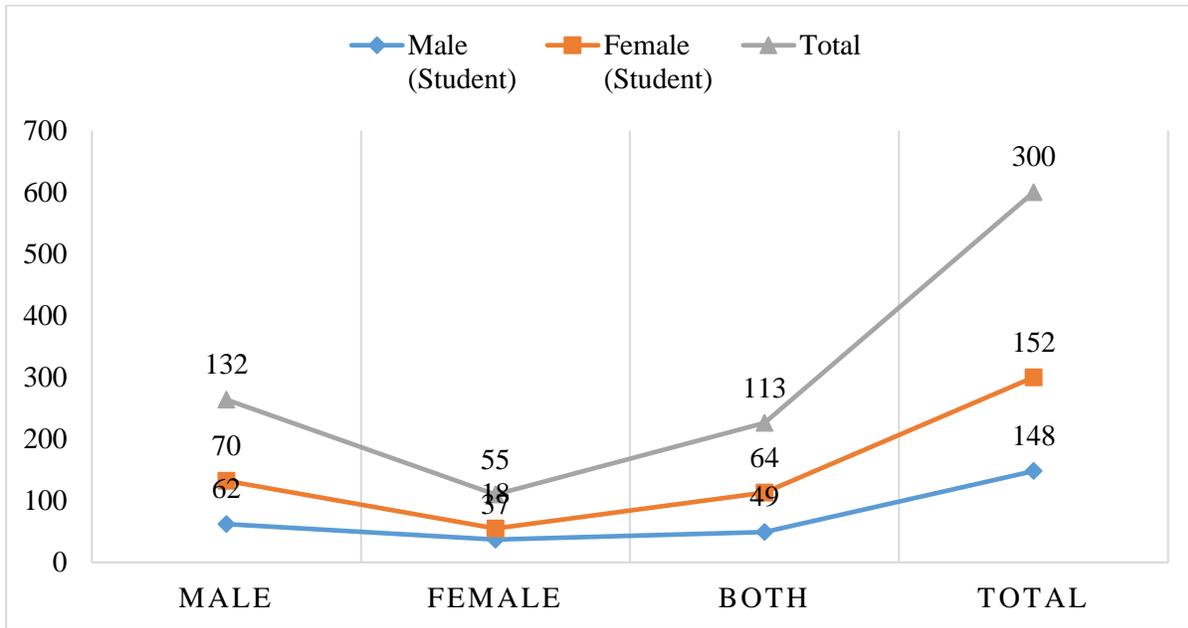


Table – III: Better Mentor – Gender (Chi – Square Test)

	Value (χ^2)	df	P-Value
Pearson Chi-Square	8.988	2	0.011

Table – IV: Who proves to be a better role model for the students?

Gender	Male (Student)	Female (Student)	Both	Total
Male	76	26	46	148
Female	46	24	82	152
Total	122	50	128	300

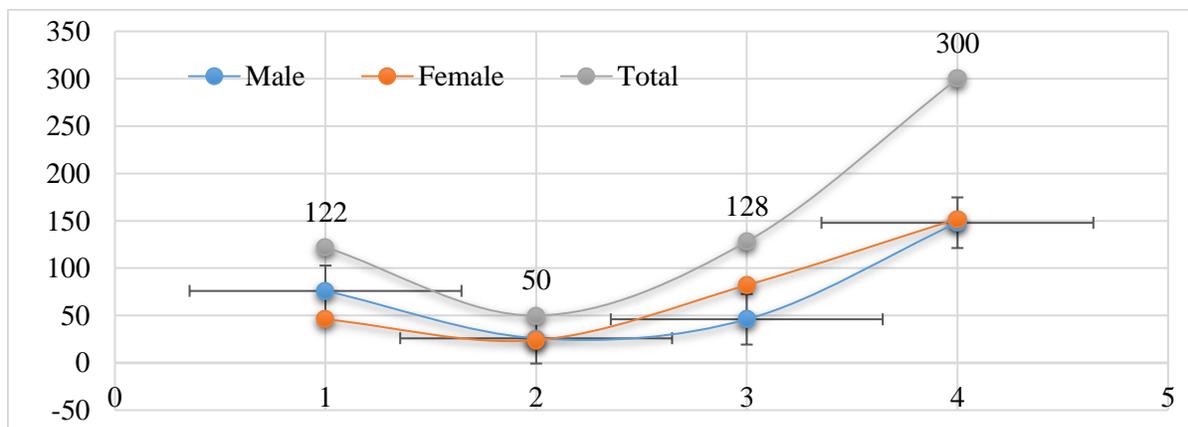


Table – V: Perception about gender approach and male mentors

Perception		Own gender approach is easier	Males are intelligent and brilliant
Strongly Agree	Number	98	69
	Percentage	32.67	23.08
Agree	Number	102	112
	Percentage	34.00	37.46
Neutral	Number	50	76
	Percentage	16.67	25.42
Disagree	Number	35	32
	Percentage	11.67	10.70
Strongly Disagree	Number	15	10
	Percentage	5.00	3.34

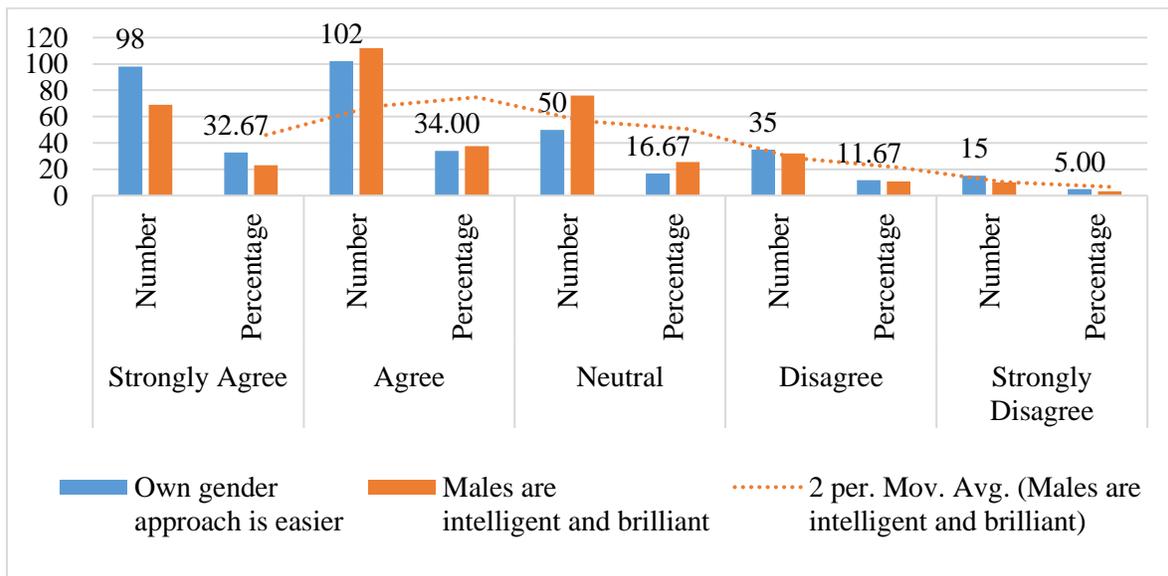


Table – VI: Professional Dedication

Professional Dedication	Number	Percentage
Male	106	35.33
Female	82	27.33
Both	112	37.33

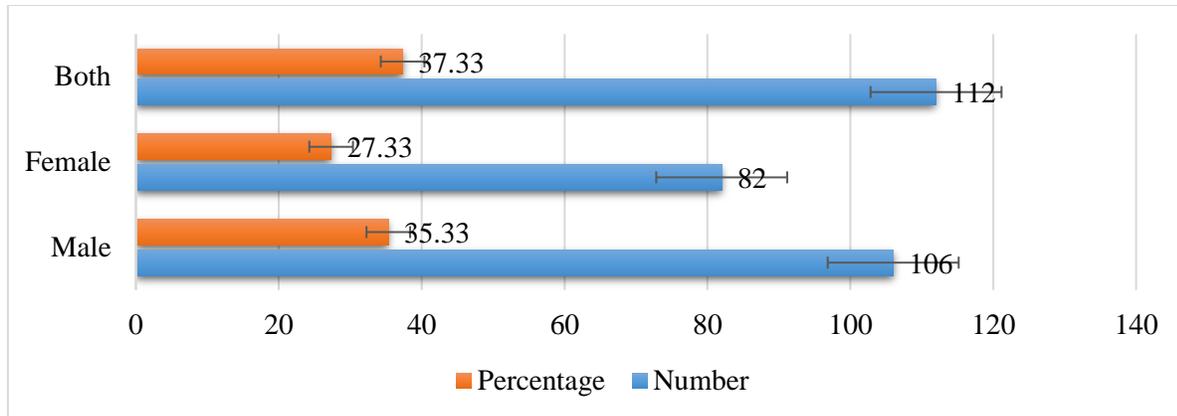
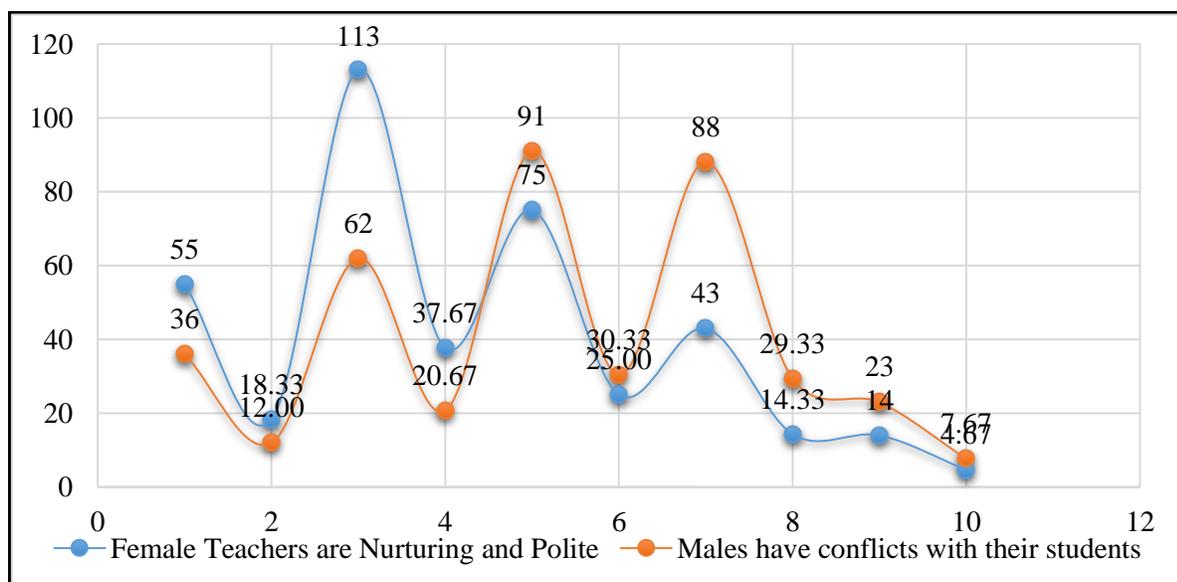


Table – VII: Perception about female politeness and males conflict

Perception		Female Teachers are Nurturing and Polite	Males have conflicts with their students
Strongly Agree	Number	55	36
	Percentage	18.33	12.00
Agree	Number	113	62
	Percentage	37.67	20.67
Neutral	Number	75	91
	Percentage	25.00	30.33
Disagree	Number	43	88
	Percentage	14.33	29.33
Strongly Disagree	Number	14	23
	Percentage	4.67	7.67



RESULTS:

The study was conducted on M.B.B.S. students from 1st year to final year of Allama Iqbal Medical

College, Lahore. The sample size was 300 students consisting of 50.66% females (152) and 49.33% males (148). Out of 300, 44% (132 students)

preferred male mentors out of which 46.9% (62) were males and 53.03% (70) were females. Those who preferred female mentors were 18.3% (55) students consisting of 37 males and 18 females). Chi-square test was applied and the results were found to be significant ($\chi^2=8.988$, $df=2$, $p=0.01$).

About 43% (129 students) agreed that both male and female teachers are equally good role models. Those who chose male mentors were 40.66% (122 students with 76 males and 26 females) while 16% (50 students, 26 males and 24 females) chose female mentors as better role models. The Chi-Square test results were insignificant ($\chi^2=17.532$, $df=2$). A majority of the answers, 37.3% (112) thought that both male and female teachers are equally dedicated towards their profession while 35.3% (106) students thought that males are more dedicated while 27.3% (82) students thought that female teacher are more dedicated. In our research, when students were asked if male teachers were more brilliant and intelligent than their female counterparts, 37.46% (112) students agreed, 25.42% (76) students were neutral, 23.08% (69) strongly agreed, 10.70% (32) disagreed and 3.34% (10) strongly disagreed. Regarding the question of who is politer and has a nurturing attitude, 37.67% (113) agreed that female teachers are politer and have a more nurturing attitude as compared to their male colleagues, 25% (75) students were neutral, 18.33% (55 students) strongly agreed, 14.33% (43) disagreed, while 4.67% (14) students strongly disagreed. When asked if male teachers have more conflicts with their students, 30.33% of the respondents (91) were neutral, 29.33% (88 students) disagreed, 20.67% (62 students) agreed, 12% (36) strongly agreed and 7.67% (23) strongly disagreed.

A vast majority of the students found it easier to approach the teacher of the same gender with 34% (102) students agreeing that they feel more comfortable with the teacher with the same gender as themselves, 32.63% (98) strongly agreeing, 16.67% (50) being neutral, 11.67% (35) disagreeing while 5% (15) strongly disagreeing.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this research was to determine the preferences of male or female mentors by the student of the medical college. We predicted that the students would prefer male mentors over female mentors. Although most of the students claimed to prefer male mentors to female mentors, they graded some attributes higher in the female mentors than in the male mentors.

While the male teachers were described as better role models and more `dedicated`, `brilliant` or `intelligent` they also gave overwhelming support to the idea that the male teachers are ones who have

more conflicts with their students [8]. The female teachers were, all in all, considered by most as being politer and nurturing than their male colleagues. This is inconsistent with previous research on the subject, one conducted in South Korea and the other in the Netherlands [4, 5]. Our study also reveals that, generally, students find it easier to approach a teacher of the same gender. The `Gender Stereotypical Model` also supports this, with previous research confirming that students tend to perform better when taught by a teacher with the same gender [3]. This model, however, does not work for all students as a study found that this `gender `match` may be more beneficial for female students than for males which are in contrast with our study in which most of the students have preferred male teachers over female teachers [5].

Our study differed slightly from previous research in Pakistan as only 41% of males and 11% of females prefer a teacher with the same gender compared to 76% and 63% of male and female students, respectively, from the previous study [19]. Our study also found that female teachers are regarded as having a higher emotional intelligence than males with more students feeling that they are more `kind` and `caring`. Indeed, research states that emotional intelligence is needed to be successful in the world of academia [17].

Overall, the teaching abilities of a teacher are dependent on the teachers` competence and not on gender, it is stated that the way to improve the educational system is to improve the quality of quality of teaching and learning, and not on selecting teachers based on gender.

CONCLUSION:

To sum up the findings, gender has no absolute role when it comes to the teaching quality or effectiveness of a mentor. Both male and female mentors are graded separately on their knowledge and skills of their subjects. The students have no specific preference for male mentors as we originally thought, although they may state that males are better in some areas of teaching, female teachers are also considered fairly competent in their role as educators.

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QUESTIONNAIRE
PREFERENCE FOR MALE AND FEMALE MENTORS AMONG THE MEDICAL STUDENTS OF
ALLAMA IQBAL MEDICAL COLLEGE, LAHORE

Serial No: _____ Name: _____
 Age: _____ Gender: _____ Class: _____

Tick the appropriate option. Multiple options will not be entertained.

1. Who do you think is a better mentor?
 (a) Male (b) Females (c) Both
2. Who do you think is more dedicated towards his/her profession?
 (a) Male Teachers (b) Female Teachers (c) Both
3. Who do you think better engages and holds attention of the students in all the discussions?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
4. Who ensures better availability and easier approach for the students?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
5. Who can better maintain the decorum of the class?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
6. Who delivers better, precise, conceptual and student-centered lessons?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
7. Who is more punctual?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
8. Who is more compassionate (takes personal problems into consideration) and empathetic towards the students?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
9. Who is more inspirational?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
10. Who proves to be a better role model for the students?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
11. Who welcomes the quires of the students and gives them a satisfactory response?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
12. Who do you prefer for career guidance?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
13. Who do you think is more trustworthy?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher (c) Both
14. Did you ever feel that changing the gender of your teacher had any impact on your academic results?
 (a) Yes (b) No
15. If yes, which gender has more positive impact on your academics?
 (a) Male Teacher (b) Female Teacher

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16. Male teachers are more brilliant and intelligent.					
17. Female teachers are politer and have a more nurturing attitude.					
18. Male teachers have more conflicts with their students.					
19. Attendance is generally lower in classes held by the female teachers.					
20. Students find it easier to approach the teacher of their own gender					