

## Human Factor in Teaching: Teacher Perspective-I

Kenan Kapukaya<sup>1</sup> & Yunus Yildiz<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1&2</sup>English Language Teaching Department, Faculty of Education, Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq

Correspondence: Kenan Kapukaya, Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq

Email: kenan.kapukaya@tiu.edu.iq

Doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v10i1p308

**Abstract:** Without a human element, teaching can never provide students with what they want. In this qualitative study, educator perspectives on what is good for great teachers were explored through a 3-statement google form. To better understand what "a great teacher" means, one hundred educators from four countries (Nigeria, Georgia, Cambodia, and Iraq) were asked to fill out an online questionnaire. This research shows that, despite some commonalities, there are various definitions of a great teacher across countries. These different perspectives positively or negatively affect teacher-student relations and education quality in institutions from country to country.

**Keywords:** Great Teacher, Educator, Human Element

### 1. Literature Review

Being an excellent educator is crucial; students will always hold fond memories of their best teachers. Throughout time, there have always been a select few who have swayed the opinions of the public. These educators have made it their mission to improve society (Dayan & Yildiz, 2021). Slavin (2003) asks a few questions to find answers about the quality of teachers, like: 'How do you define a great teacher? Do you think it's the capacity to make people laugh and feel cared for? Is it preparation, effort, and self-control? What is the ability to lead, to inspire people around you, to make an impact via your words, and to communicate your ideas clearly?' He states that inspiring teachers "appear to have a magic, a charisma that we mortals could never aspire to achieve." On the other hand, "Good teaching is not innate, it can be acquired, but some believe that good instructors are born that way" (Kane et al., 2004).

The complexities of education and teacher training have been described by numerous researchers (Fives, 2015; Harris & Sass, 2011; Kapukaya, 2012; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Due to the depth of the problem, there is no generally agreed-upon standard for what constitutes effective teaching or excellent teachers (Trigwell, 2001; Stronge, 2018). The capacity to "generate passion and enthusiasm in the subjects" is a hallmark of great educators (Carbonneau, et al., 2008; Celik & Yildiz, 2017). The ability to motivate oneself is correlated with the success one experiences. The educational science field has not caught up with the accuracy of educational literature. Methods classes and areas of topic specialization continue to be essential components of teacher education.

Received: November 4, 2022

Accepted: December 25, 2022

Kapukaya, K., & Yildiz, Y. (2023). Human Factor in Teaching: Teacher Perspective-I. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 10(1), 308-319.

The idea behind this course is that getting a thorough grounding in a subject and in the best practices for teaching it will make you a better and more effective educator. Until recently, teachers were expected to figure out how to enhance their teaching on their own, through trial and error, and by independently pursuing the necessary professional development (Moeini, 2008). A teacher's training goes beyond simply mastering a set of methods and techniques. Teachers' inherent biases about subjects in which they feel inadequate must be addressed.

Musaraj (2011) contends that it is crucial to prioritise the enhancement of the educational experience for students as individuals. It is the only way for a teacher to genuinely be a human, and not just some faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement or a sterile pipe through which knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next.

Educators such as Poekert et al. (2016) (see, for example, Armstrong et al., 2009; Schuck et al., 2012) have broadened the focus of education beyond simply confidence in one's ability to engage in continuous self-improvement and imparting knowledge. The authors make a compelling case that the goal of education is not simply to impart knowledge but rather to foster the development of citizens who are responsible and active participants in society. To say that effective teaching is not just a matter of one person with more information passing on that information to another person is an oversimplification (Peng et al., 2021). If this were the case, those working with students and teachers of the English language today would have fewer obstacles to overcome. The training in materials and processes is not the source of influential and inspiring qualities; rather, the internal people resources are the source of these qualities.

Good educators are well-versed and skilled communicators (Kenjabayev, 2020). The most significant obstacle for educators is maintaining students' attention for the duration of the class. Although teachers are expected to be adept at class management, many nevertheless struggle with it. Frequently, students are unmotivated, unwilling, uninterested, and drowsy (Yildiz, 2015). A bridge of communication or similar equipment is needed to facilitate this interaction between educators and students. Human dimensions of teachers represented by suitable personality features become the pillars of the bridge of connection.

Hildebrand (1973) sought methods to identify and explain good teaching and found five components of effective performance, including "instructor-group interaction, instructor-individual student contact" (p. 46). The qualities that successful educators should have, and display are defined in further depth by Murphy et al. (2004).

They control the classroom, do not have to yell, and are fair. In addition, good teachers help students and are kind and respectful. Finally, good teachers take the time to get to know their students and their circumstances and treat them respectfully (p. 74).

According to Reynolds (1995), activities such as considering the qualities of the learner and the human aspect of teaching are required to be adhered to throughout the entirety of the educational process. A capable educator is one who is able to perform all of the responsibilities required for effective teaching. The best teachers are those who are well-organized, competent managers, considerate in the sense that they head off problems in the classroom and with student behaviour before they arise, friendly and

approachable, warm and empathetic, and who have high standards for both themselves and their students (Kleiner, 1998).

The "human element of teaching" includes a strong emphasis on the use of humor: Research suggests that when individuals find something entertaining, they pay greater attention to it and are more likely to remember it later (Carlson, 2011). Plus, humor has an energizing effect and can make people feel more engaged and enthusiastic about what's going on (Cheng & Wang, 2015; Kapukaya, 2020). These advantages are substantial because they imply that humour could be a useful tool in educational environments, both for instructors looking to improve their own teaching and for students looking to improve their own learning.

An effective teacher must be dedicated and motivated, positive and consider the needs of the students (Santrock, 2008). Therefore, it is our responsibility to teach children and pique their interest in the subject. One of the most effective tools accessible to teachers to assist them in carrying out this objective is humor and playfulness. It is a method for professors to interact with students (Wolk, 2003). In considering the science and art of teaching excellence, James (1977) proposed that both are involved in piquing students' interests:

In teaching, one must take his learner into such a state of interest in what he will teach him that every other object of attention is banished from his mind. Then reveal it to him so impressively that he will remember the occasion to his dying day, and finally fill him with devouring curiosity to know the next steps in the subject area (p.24).

Creating such an exceptional learning environment is a challenging undertaking for a teacher. However, instructors who cannot establish a communication bridge with their students through acceptable personality traits and human dimensions will never be remembered as excellent teachers. The "legendary" teachers of Scheidecker and Freeman (2015), "exemplary teachers" of Gentry et al. (2011), and "a good VET teacher" of Smith and Yasukawa (2017) have excellent professional competence. However, they cannot be called "legendary," "exemplary," or "good" unless they incorporate human dimensions into their teaching activities. In their assessment of research on the characteristics of great teachers, Hativa et al. (2001) found that "exemplary teachers have a strong rapport with students, demonstrate high expectations of them, encourage them, and maintain an overall positive classroom environment" (p.703).

The human dimension gives all teachers their power as effective influencers, whether in the classroom, the sports arena, or the home. If you review the list of qualities that made your best teachers effective, you probably noticed that so much of what made a difference in your life was not what they did but who they were as human beings. They exhibit certain characteristics that help you to trust and believe in them (Kottler et al., 2005, p. 3).

Educators, according to Tosun and Yildiz (2015) and Yildiz (2019), have a moral obligation to make personal sacrifices in order to foster respectful and well-rounded young people. Khan and Yildiz (2020) also note that students are content when their ideal school lives up to or exceeds their expectations. Therefore, educators must have a strong sense of service and diplomacy to deal with this reality. Ali et al. (2020) come to the conclusion that businesses and communities should gain from each other equally.

Entrepreneurs in the service industry, especially teachers whose goal is to foster a thriving community, may find success in this area (Yildiz & Dayan, 2022).

Last but not least, a great educator is defined by more than just their subject matter expertise or even their preferred methods of imparting that expertise to their students. When there is trust and respect between a teacher and their students, learning takes place at a deeper level and produces better results. Consequently, teachers should focus on the interpersonal aspects of their lessons.

## 2. Methods

In this qualitative study, an online questionnaire was prepared to collect data to find the teachers' best features from the teachers' perspective. The questionnaire was applied in Nigeria, Georgia, Cambodia and Iraq. The features were determined after several discussions with colleagues and English language instructors at Tishk International University.

## 3. Research Sample and Participants

One hundred educators, both male and female, aged 23 to 51, were chosen at random (25 teachers in each country). The teachers were requested to carefully read the Google form questionnaire, think about its contents, and pick its most crucial aspects. Teachers who took part in this survey are from Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges, International Black Sea University's English Prep School in Georgia, Zaman University's English Prep School in Cambodia, and Tishk International University in Iraq. We chose these nations because each would serve as a stand-in for others in its region regarding history and culture. Therefore, the participants' preferences in Nigeria, Georgia, Iraq, and Cambodia all represent different aspects of the Middle Eastern, Western, African, and Southeast Asian cultural contexts, respectively. This way, we can find out if there are regional variations in what makes for a great educator.

Table 1: Nigerian teachers' preferences

	1 <sup>st</sup> · Feature	2 <sup>nd</sup> · Feature	3 <sup>rd</sup> · Feature	Total Score	Percentage
friendliness	9	1	4	33	44.00%
modern methods	1	2	0	7	9.33%
discipline	11	8	2	51	68.00%
technology	0	7	2	16	21.33%
competence	2	1	4	12	16.00%
tolerance	1	3	6	15	20.00%
patience	1	3	7	16	21.33%

Numbers in the following table represent the frequency with which different educators chose the first, second, and third characteristics in the same row. For instance, nine people in the first row ranked friendliness as the most important quality, while a single person ranked it second and four people ranked it third.

Three points are attributed to the first Feature, two to the second, and one to the third to account for their respective feature weights. Their overall friendliness rating is 33, which is the product of the following multiplicative factors:  $(9*3) + (1*2) + (4*1) = 33$ . If all subjects rank friendliness as their most important characteristic, then the maximum score is 75. Total points are divided by the possible points to get the percentages for each Feature in Table 1.

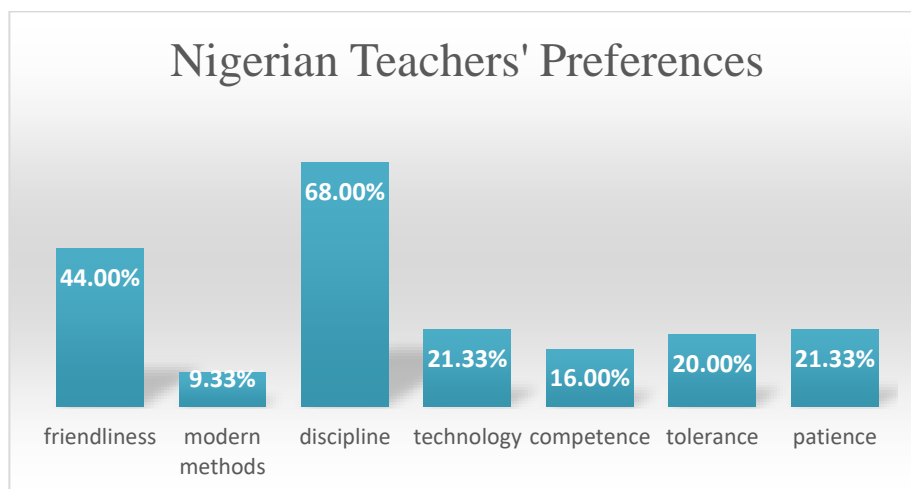


Figure 1: Nigerian teachers' preferences

Table 1 shows the results of a survey administered to twenty-five, Nigerian educators. Sixty-eight percent of teachers in Nigeria believe that discipline is the single most important trait for an effective educator. With a large margin of 44%, discipline is prioritised over friendship. Educators' low priority placed on competency (16%) is significant. The low standards for competency among students and faculty may be attributable to the low quality of education provided in Nigerian institutions. The most noticeable variation when comparing Table 1 to the present is the implementation of cutting-edge pedagogical techniques. The majority of educators in Nigeria rank methods dead last. Figure 1 shows that when asked what qualities they valued most in a teacher, Nigerian educators most cited being authoritative and enforcing classroom discipline. Table 1 shows a wide range of views regarding what makes an outstanding educator.

Table 2: Georgian teachers' preferences

	1 <sup>st</sup> .	2 <sup>nd</sup> .	3 <sup>rd</sup> .	Total Score	Percentage
friendliness	5	4	8	31	41.33%
modern methods	2	11	4	32	42.67%
discipline	1	4	7	18	24.00%
technology	2	2	3	13	17.33%
competence	10	0	1	31	41.33%
tolerance	4	1	1	15	20.00%
patience	1	3	1	10	13.33%

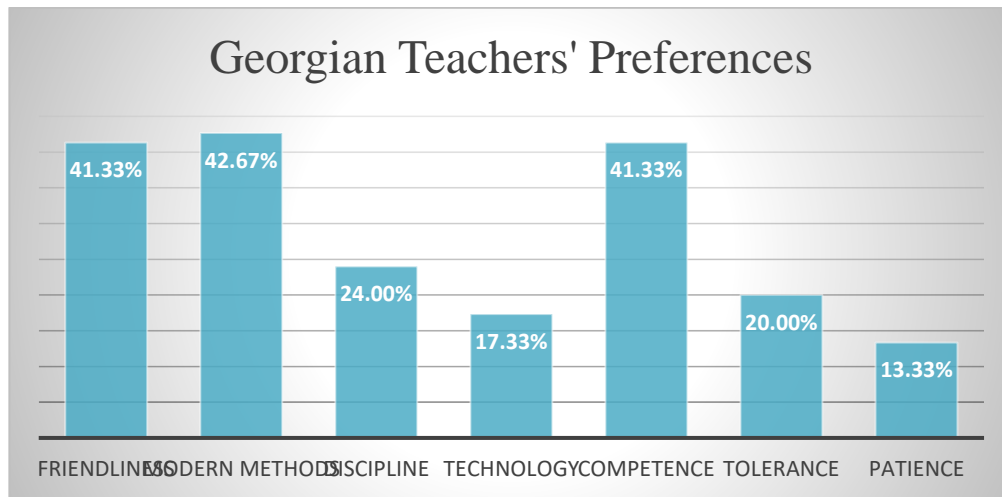


Figure 2: Georgian teachers' preferences

The tastes of Georgian educators vary greatly—most (43%) in Georgia value using cutting-edge strategies to educate their students. Competence (41%) and friendliness (41%) follow cutting-edge pedagogical practices. For the first time, friendliness ranks lower than other characteristics in this data. Georgia was a part of the Soviet Union, which had cutting-edge technology at the time; therefore, Georgian educators prioritized using cutting-edge teaching methods over being warm and welcoming. One-fifth of Georgian educators think patience is not crucial for successful educators. Based on the information above, Georgian educators value personal connection, technological pedagogy, and competency equally.

Table 3: Cambodian teachers' preferences

	1 <sup>st</sup> Feature	2 <sup>nd</sup> Feature	3 <sup>rd</sup> Feature	Total Score	Percentage
friendliness	10	3	2	38	50.67%
modern methods	8	4	3	35	46.67%
discipline	3	7	5	28	37.33%
technology	0	3	1	7	9.33%
competence	1	1	2	7	9.33%
tolerance	0	5	3	13	17.33%
patience	3	2	9	22	29.33%

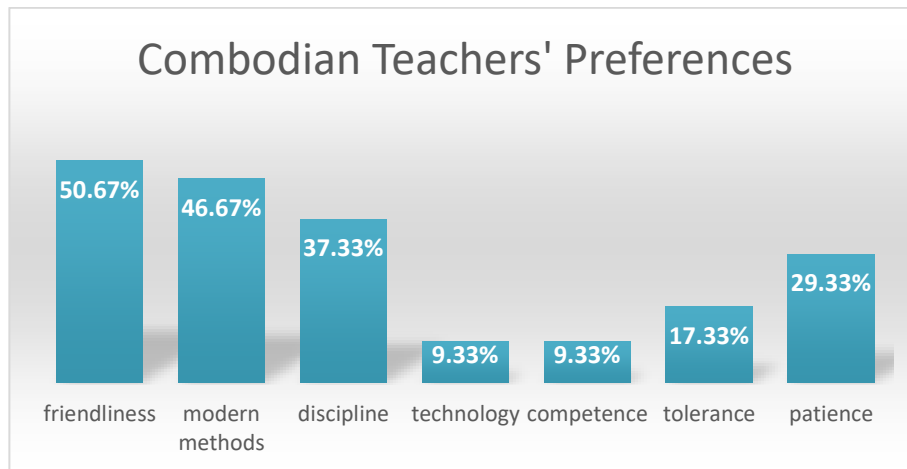


Figure 3: Cambodian teachers' preferences

According to Table 3, a majority of Cambodian educators believe that exceptional educators are friendly (51%), proficient in the use of contemporary teaching methods (47%), and disciplined (37%). A significant percentage of people place a premium on patience (29%). With the same percentage of respondents (9%), Cambodian educators rank technological proficiency and competency dead last.

Table 4: Iraqi teachers' preferences

	1 <sup>st</sup> Feature	2 <sup>nd</sup> Feature	3 <sup>rd</sup> Feature	Total Score	Percentage
friendliness	8	5	2	36	48%
modern methods	4	7	3	29	38.67%
discipline	2	2	5	15	20%
technology	1	1	1	6	8%
competence	4	2	3	19	25.33%
tolerance	4	6	7	31	41.33%
patience	2	3	4	16	21.33%

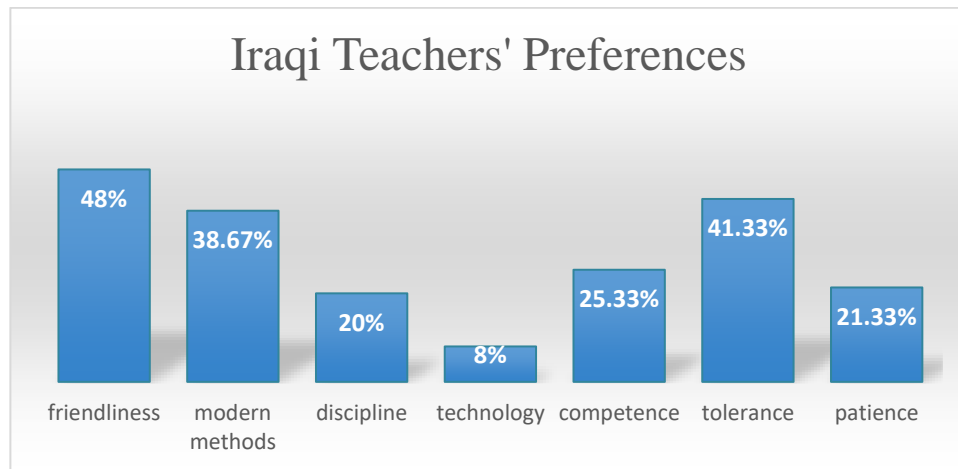


Figure 4: Iraqi teachers' preferences

Twenty-five teachers from Iraq were asked to answer the questionnaire given in Table 4. The first Feature is that Iraqi teachers believe that excellent teachers must possess friendliness (48%). Tolerance comes after friendliness (41%). Significantly, teachers put discipline in the last place (20%). Students' reactions to discipline issues may be the reason. They do not accept being pressured by the lecturers because Iraqi schools are generally over-disciplined institutions. When Table 4 is studied, the most significant difference is the use of technology. Iraqi teachers put technology in the latest place (8%). In Figure 4, collected feedback from the Iraqi teachers, excellent teachers put friendliness first, which means they are mainly open-minded, considerate and tolerant. The data from Table 4 indicate the differences in opinion of what constitutes an excellent teacher.

#### 4. Conclusion

Building and maintaining relationships is the foundation for the benefits of the teaching profession. In the study's participating nations, educators regarded as excellent in one cultural context might be less excellent in another.

Less developed nations accept discipline better than more developed ones do. Expectations are influenced by a country's historical background, particularly concerning authoritative management. Teachers should re-evaluate their ideas of what makes a great teacher and consider the expectations of their students as well. Teachers in more developed nations view competence and modernity in the classroom as signs of excellent teachers.

#### 5. Implications

To be an excellent educator, you need more than just knowledge of the subject and a set approach. An important consideration for all great educators is the students they teach (Kottler et al. 2005). Human considerations are paramount:



Children appreciate people who are genuinely caring and loving toward them. That is why the best teachers are so much more than experts in their fields and more than interesting personalities- they are individuals whom children trust; they are adults who are perceived as safe, kind, and caring. Compassionate teachers will benefit from the doubt from students even when they are in a bad mood, given difficult assignments, or have to teach relatively boring units (p.11).

Many people believe that their personal lives and their professional careers are separate spheres. The professional and personal lives of educators are intrinsically linked (Whitaker, 2013). One of the earliest contemporary educators to draw attention to the connection between teachers' personal lives and professional success was Jersild. Jersild (1955) argued that self-awareness is the most crucial aspect of building good self-acceptance attitudes. To assist others, one must be aware of his or her skills and weaknesses to express oneself most effectively. Arnold (2017) concurs that continual, balanced human, vocational, spiritual, and recreational development is necessary for every teacher's professional and personal success.

In most cases, educational policymakers emphasize professional value-related qualifications. According to the study, human values are just as important as professional ones. Therefore, there must be an evaluation technique for determining exceptional teachers' qualifications. There is no standardization of values and views. They differ from one society to another. Consequently, not all cultures have the same conception of what makes a great educator. To avoid being dissatisfied, educators must consider cultural differences.

## References

- Ali, S. H. K., Khan, N. S., & Yildiz, Y. (2020). Leadership effects on CSR employees, media, customer, and NGOs. *Management and Economics Research Journal*, Vol. 6, Article ID 961566, 11 pages.
- Arnold, R. (2017). *Power of Personal Mastery: Continual Improvement for School Leaders and Students*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Armstrong, D.G., Henson, K.T., & Savage, T.V. (2009). *Teaching today: An introduction to education* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Carbonneau, N., Vallerand, R. J., Fernet, C., & Guay, F. (2008). The role of passion for teaching in intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. *Journal of educational psychology*, 100(4), 977.
- Carlson, K. A. (2011). The impact of humor on memory: Is the humor effect about humor?. *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*, 24(1), 21-41.
- Celik, B., & Yildiz, Y. (2017). Commitment to the teaching profession. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 4(2), 93-97.
- Cheng, D., & Wang, L. (2015). Examining the energizing effects of humor: The influence of humor on persistence behavior. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 30(4), 759-772.
- Dayan, S., & Yildiz, Y. (2021). Evaluation of Mevlana and Bediuzzaman's Poems Starting with " Listen" in Terms of Similar and Different Aspects. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 8(4), 127-136.

- Fives, H., Laccatena, N., & Gerard, L. (2015). Teachers' beliefs about teaching (and learning). *International handbook of research on teachers' beliefs*, 62(3), 249-265.
- Gentry, M., Steenbergen-Hu, S., & Choi, B. Y. (2011). Student-identified exemplary teachers: Insights from talented teachers. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(2), 111-125.
- Harris, D. N., & Sass, T. R. (2011). Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. *Journal of public economics*, 95(7-8), 798-812.
- Hativa, N., Barak, R. & Simhi, E. (2001). Exemplary university teachers: Knowledge and beliefs regarding effective teaching dimensions and strategies. *The Journal of Higher Education* 2 (6), 699-729.
- Hildebrand, M. (1973). The character and skills of the effective professor, *Journal of Higher Education*. 44 (4), 41-50.
- James, W. (1977). The principles of psychology. In J. J. McDermott (Ed.), *The writings of William James: A comprehensive edition*, (pp.21-74). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jersild, A. (1955). *When teachers face themselves*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kane, R., Sandretto, S., & Heath, C. (2004). An investigation into excellent tertiary teaching: Emphasizing reflective practice. *Higher Education*, 47. 283-310.
- Kapukaya, K. (2012). The missing component of teaching: Human dimension. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 2 (1), 114-123.
- Kapukaya, K. (2020). Multiculturalism and motivation on foreign language learning. *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (International Journal of Social Sciences)* 4(19), 74-110
- Kenjabayev, J. (2020). The role of information communication technology teaching english language skills among the learners in teacher education. *Scientific research results in pandemic conditions (COVID-19)*, 1(04), 26-31.
- Khan, N. U. S., & Yildiz, Y. (2020). Impact of intangible characteristics of universities on student satisfaction. *Amazonia Investiga*, 9(26), 105-116. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2020.26.02.12>
- Kleiner, C. (1998, October 26). Make room for sergeants. *U.S. News and World Report*, 69-70.
- Kottler, J.A., Zehm, S. J., & Kottler, E. (2005). *On being a teacher: The human dimension*. California, USA: Corwin Press
- Moeini, H. (2008). Identifying Needs: A Missing Part in Teacher Training Programs. *Seminar.Net*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.7577/seminar.2488>
- Murphy, P.K., Delli, L.A.M., & Edwards, M.N. (2004). The good teaching: Comparing belief "s of second-grade students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 72(2), 69-92
- Musaraj, A. (2011). Albania, the human factor and sustainable development: a lesson from the present. *Academicus International Scientific Journal pISSN*, 2079-3715.
- Opfer, V. D., & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of educational research*, 81(3), 376-407.
- Peng, M. Y. P., Feng, Y., Zhao, X., & Chong, W. (2021). Use of knowledge transfer theory to improve learning outcomes of cognitive and non-cognitive skills of university students: Evidence from Taiwan. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 583722.

- Poekert, P., Alexandrou, A., & Shannon, D. (2016). How teachers become leaders: An internationally validated theoretical model of teacher leadership development. *Research in post-compulsory education*, 21(4), 307-329.
- Reynolds, A. (1995). The knowledge base for beginning teachers: Education professionals' expectations versus research findings on learning to teach. *Elementary School Journal*, 95(3), 199-221.
- Santrock, J.W. (2008). *Educational Psychology*. New York: Mc Graw Hill
- Scheidecker, D., & Freeman, W. (2015). *Bringing out the best in students: How legendary teachers motivate kids*. Simon and Schuster.
- Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., Buchanan, J., & Russell, T. (2012). *Beginning teaching: Stories from the classroom*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Slavin, R. E. (2003). *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice*. United States of America: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Smith, E., & Yasukawa, K. (2017). What makes a good VET teacher? Views of Australian VET teachers and students. *International Journal of Training Research*, 15(1), 23-40.
- Stronge, J. H. (2018). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Ascd.
- Tosun, M., & Yildiz, Y. (2015). The Role of Moral Values and Systematic Informing in Aim-Based Education. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 2(2), 40-44.
- Trigwell, K. (2001). 'Judging university teaching', *The International Journal for Academic Development* 6(1), 65-73.
- Whitaker, T. (2013). *What great teachers do differently: 17 things that matter most*. Routledge.
- Wolk, S. (2003). Hearts and minds. *Educational Leadership*, 61(1), 14-18.
- Yildiz, Y. (2015). Time spent in target language-oriented extracurricular activities and foreign language students' satisfaction. In *5th International Research Conference on Education*.
- Yildiz, Y., & Dayan, S. (2022). A Tiny Look at Hizmet (Service) Movement Teachers' Diplomatic Mission. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 5(6), 188-191.
- Yildiz, Y. (2019). A Tiny Comment to Utilizing Religious Sources to Create Environment-Friendly Citizens. *Asian Social Science*, 15(6). <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v15n6p101>

## Appendix

Dear colleagues,

We would like you to respond this one-minute survey if you may.

The primary goal of this survey study is to determine, from a teacher's point of view, which dimensions of character are most crucial in a successful learner. We'd appreciate it if you could take a look at the attributes listed below and rank them in order of significance.

Pick the top three qualities that, in your opinion, make a good teacher great.

- A. friendliness towards students
- B. using up-to-date modern methods
- C. discipline
- D. using technology in class
- E. competence in the relevant subject
- F. tolerance/flexibility
- G. patience

Choose only one Feature that represents the excellent teacher next to the statement.

1. In my opinion, the 1<sup>st</sup> important Feature of an excellent teacher is:
2. In my opinion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> important Feature of an excellent teacher is:
3. In my opinion, the 3<sup>rd</sup> important Feature of an excellent teacher is