

# Good Teacher from Pre-service Teachers' Perspectives at The Faculty of Education in Misurata

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## **Abstract:**

Recent studies of good teacher traits based on students' opinions have helped in developing teaching practice qualities. For this reason, this study was an attempt to identify the qualities of a good teacher from pre-service teachers' perspectives and to discover how much they possess the traits that they value. The study is of the type a qualitative research. It was conducted on fifty pre-service teachers who were asked to mention good teacher qualities and then they were asked to tick the qualities that they possess. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. A qualitative method helped to extract the qualities of a good teacher from the responses of the participants. After that, a quantitative approach was used to determine the frequency of the qualities that the participants possess. The findings showed that the participants identified five personal qualities and only one professional quality. The study took place at The Faculty of Education in Misurata city.

**Keywords:** good teacher, traits, teaching, quality and perspective.

## **المعلم الجيد من وجهة نظر معلمي قبل الخدمة بكلية التربية في مصراتة**

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### **الملخص:**

من بين الأبحاث الحديثة التي ساهمت في تطوير التعليم حول العالم هي تلك التي أشركت وجهات نظر الطلاب حول العملية التعليمية ومن بينها وجهات نظر الطلاب حول موضوع

تحديد السمات التي لابد وأن تتوفر في المعلم الجيد. لهذا السبب، أُجريت هذه الدراسة كمحاولة لتحديد سمات المعلم الجيد من وجهات نظر المعلمين الطلبة بكلية التربية من جهة ولاكتشاف مدى امتلاك هؤلاء -معلمي المستقبل- لصفات المعلم الجيد التي يُقدرونها ويرون أنه من الضروري توفرها في المعلم الجيد. هذه الدراسة هي من نوع الأبحاث النوعية. تم إجرائها على خمسين من المعلمين الطلبة حيث طلب منهم ذكر سمات المعلم الجيد ومن ثم يقومون بتحديد أي من هذه السمات التي يمتلكونها هم شخصياً.

تمت عملية تحليل البيانات نوعياً وكماً. طريقة نوعية استخدمت لاستخلاص سمات المعلم الجيد من إجابات المشاركين. وبعد ذلك، تم استخدام طريقة تحليل كمية لتحديد عدد تكرار كل من هذه السمات التي يمتلكها الطلبة.

نتائج الدراسة تظهر أن المشاركين حددوا خمس سمات شخصية للمعلم الجيد وسمة مهنية واحدة فقط.

**الكلمات مفتاحية:** معلم جيد، سمات، تدريس، نوعية، وجهة نظر.

## **1- Introduction:**

During recent decades, many language scholars were concerned with teaching process and they tried to answer the question of " what a teacher can do in the classroom to make his/her teaching as effective as possible" by conducting many researches in the field of teaching/ learning second/ foreign languages. Different theories have been developed in this respect and teachers were regarded as the backbone of the teaching process, for this reason, many articles and books have been written to develop better understanding of the traits of good teachers who could achieve teaching challenges successfully in their classrooms.

### **1.1 Research Problem.**

Teachers are always subject to assessment by the institutions where they work in Libya, but the beliefs of students about what qualities a good teacher needs to possess have been neglected. For this reason, this paper is an attempt to uncover students' understanding of what makes a good teacher? And how much do they own the qualities that they value?

### **1.2 Research Questions.**

- 1- What are the qualities of a good teacher?

- 2- Are the pre-service teachers at the Faculty of Education aware of how much they own these qualities?

### **1.3 The aim of the study.**

The purpose of this study is to help the pre-service teachers at the Faculty of Education to find out the qualities of a good teacher that they possess and to shed light on other qualities that will help in leading their professional development in the future.

### **1.4 Significance of the study.**

This qualitative study is significant because the topic has never been explored within the Libyan context before and there have also been few studies done regarding engaging Libyan students in the assessment process in the field of teaching.

The study will reveal an understanding of teaching from a new perspective, "students' views", that can contribute to leading higher education in Libya towards change. And the awareness of the concept of "good teacher" will make teachers think carefully about how to obtain the most valuable qualities of a good teacher not qualities of teachers in general.

### **1.5 Limitations of the study.**

The findings of the study have to be seen in the light of two limitations: first, Coronavirus pandemic that overrun the world during 2019-2020 caused difficulties in collecting data from students and motivating them to participate in this study. Second, lack of previous research studies on the topic within the Libyan context deprived of utilizing from prior studies that can help in developing a theoretical basis for research in the same area.

### **1.6 Related studies.**

What makes a good teacher? This is not an easy question to answer because teaching is a complicated job and it demands wide knowledge of subject matters, teaching techniques, enthusiasm.etc. Some people describe a good teacher as a teacher who is able to achieve his/her lesson plans successfully inside the class (Yilmaz 2011)<sup>(1)</sup>. According to the idea of Orenstein (1976):

no one can say with certainty what constitutes a good teacher, although most of us believe many good teachers work in most schools. And since we cannot

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1- Yilmaz, A. (2011). Quality problem in teaching profession: Qualities teacher candidates feel to be required of teachers. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(14), 812-823.

clearly define a good teacher, we may define the concept almost any way we like so long as it conveys sense. (p. 201)<sup>(2)</sup>.

Ko, Sammons & Bakkum (2016)<sup>(3)</sup> and Hosgorur (2012)<sup>(4)</sup> claim that teacher effectiveness is the most important trait in a good teacher and to perform effectively, a teacher should possess extensive knowledge and specific personal qualities. Moreover, many researchers tried to determine the qualities of a good teacher but results still vary about the required traits that a teacher needs to be successful (Hayes, 2006)<sup>(5)</sup>.

Walker 2008 (as cited in Hosgorur, 2012, p. 452) states that there are twelve qualities of a good teacher. "These traits are: prepared, positive, hold high expectations, creative, fair, displays a personal touch, cultivates a sense of belonging, compassionate, have a sense of humor, respects students, forgiving and accepts mistakes." McGreevy (1990)<sup>(6)</sup>, identifies some qualities of a good teacher as: has a sense of humor, care for his students, open-minded, and share personal issues with students.

Many researchers have played in the aspect of determining the qualities of a good teacher as educational philosophers and wrote plenty of literature that identify various types of the qualities of a good teacher (Dinham 2006)<sup>(7)</sup>. Although there are various opinions about the qualities of a good teacher, all researchers agreed on what is called "professional qualities" of a good teacher as a good teacher should have extensive knowledge, be professional on his/her subject matters, hard-working and inquisitive, well prepared, and reflective. But still, the personal qualities of good teachers are subject to the liking and

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2- Ornstein, C. A. (1976). Can we define a good teacher? *Peabody Journal of Education*, 53, 201-207. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/1491579](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1491579).

3- Ko, J., Sammons, P. & Bakkum, L. (2016). *Effective teaching*. Highbridge house: Education Development Trust.

4- Hosgorur, T. (2012). A discussion of what makes a good teacher: Opinions of pre-service primary school teachers. *Procedia, Social and Behavioral Science*, 55, 451-460. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.524.

5- Hayes, D. (2006). Effective teachings: An elusive concept. *Teacher Development*, 10(1), 43-54.

6- McGreevy, A. (1990). Tracking the creative teacher. *Momentum*, 21, 57-59.

7- Dinham, S. (2006). A good teacher in every classroom. *Australian Journal Of Education*, 50(1), 95-97.

disliking of students more than the professional qualities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1998)<sup>(8)</sup>. The results of a study carried out by Ida (2017) show that:

Students assess their teachers in different aspects. Three aspects evolving from the scientific literature review such as personality traits, 8 teaching competencies, and factors contributing to the good teacher-student relationship... Students need teachers who put a lot of efforts into helping students with acquisition.

Furthermore, personal attention to students, and willingness to help them, fair treatment, and respect to each other take priority in the teacher-student relationship. (p. 146)<sup>(9)</sup>.

The traits of a teacher's personality are changing according to the socio-economical circumstances that surround him and the nature of his work has recently shifted from the traditional role to new roles as: a leader, an information provider, a participant, or an advisor (Blackie, Case & Jawitz 2010)<sup>(10)</sup>. Another change that happened in the past few decades, that there is a shift in the pedagogical engagement like student-centered inquiry that helped students to develop their critical thinking and engaged them in the process of assessment in the field of teaching like evaluating the qualities of a good teacher and the characteristics of good teaching (Haider and Jalal 2018)<sup>(11)</sup>. Studies were conducted by Feldman (1997) and Marsh (2007) (as cited in Addison & Stowell, 2012) advocate the same assumption. They say:

Research on student evaluations of teaching (SETs) has a long and fruitful history, producing several thousand publications... Some of the earliest work in the area was done by psychologist Max Freyd who suggested that his graphic rating scale could be used to measure characteristics of the teacher that he

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8- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (1998). *A guide to teaching practice* (4th ed.) London: Routledge.

9- Ida, Z. S., (2017). What makes a good teacher? *University Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 141-147, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.hrpub.org>.

10- Blackie, M. A. L., Case, J, M. and Jawitz, J. (2010). Student-centredness: The link between transforming students and transforming ourselves. *Teaching in higher education*, 15:6, 637-646.

11- Haider, A., & Jalal, S. (2018). Good teacher and teaching through the lens of students. *International Journal of Research*. 05, 13951409. Retrieved from <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/324106485>.

accepted as fundamental to the acquisition of a successful teaching technique. (p. 1)<sup>(12)</sup>.

Although many scholars tried to find out the factors that make good teachers, they found out that there is no relationship between students' achievements and a teacher's qualifications and experience. The complexity of personality traits leads to the need for new standards of qualities like what is called teaching competencies. Consequently, the complex question "what makes a good teacher?" cannot be answered without taking the account of various factors besides the teacher's qualities like student-teacher relationships, student beliefs, teaching competencies, and teaching context (Scheerens 2004)<sup>(13)</sup>.

## **2- Methodology:**

### **2.1 The sample of the study.**

The study participants were fifty male and female students from English department at the Faculty of Education, Misurata University. They were from the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and the 4<sup>th</sup> semester. The sample was selected randomly.

### **2.2 The instruments and implementation.**

This study is a type of qualitative research that aims at gathering and analyzing non-numerical data to understand opinions and generate new ideas for research (Mohajan, 2018)<sup>(14)</sup>. The first qualitative tool was a focus group which consisted of open-ended questions that helped in generating ideas among the participants and made them prepared for responding to the interview. The focus groups consisted of ten participants in each group. The second qualitative tool was an interview which consisted of two open-ended questions. In the first question, the participants were asked to mention qualities that make a good teacher. Then in the second question, they were asked to tick the qualities that they possess. The study took place during 2019-2020.

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12- Addison, W. E. & Stowell, J. R. (2012). Conducting research on student evaluation of teaching. In M. E. Kite (Ed.), *Effective evaluation of teaching: A guide for faculty and administrations*. The Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

13- Scheerens, J. (2004). *Review of school and instructional effectiveness research*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

14- Mohajan, H. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7, 23-48.

### 2.3 The Method of analyzing Data.

In this study a thematic analysis was used. Firstly, The qualities of repeated concepts were gathered under the same themes and were classified under two categories: personal and professional qualities. Secondly, a quantitative method was used to see how frequently these qualities were possessed by the participants.

### 2.4 Ethical issues.

The confidentiality of information gathered by this study and the anonymity of the participants are strongly respected.

### 3- Results:

The results showed that the participants mentioned six qualities of a good teacher: five personal qualities and only one professional quality.

Table 1. It shows the qualities of a good teacher that were mentioned by the participants

Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities
1. Motivator and 2. Lover 3. Patient 4. Friendly 5. Tolerant	1. Knowledgeable encourager

Table 2. It shows the Frequencies of quality possession by the participants

Quality	Frequency of possession 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	Frequency of possession 4 <sup>th</sup> semester
1. Motivator and encourager	48	22
2. Lover	36	13
3. Patient	2	28
4. Friendly	1	7
5. Tolerant	5	-
6. Knowledgeable	11	39

According to table 2, it is clear that motivation and encouragement were the most frequent traits that the participants of the second semester possess and the least quality they possess was patience. The participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, the

most frequent quality was knowledgeable and the least frequent quality that they possess was tolerance.

#### **4- Data analysis:**

This section presents illustrative quotations from the participants' responses that helped in extracting the research themes.

##### **4.1 A good teacher is the motivator and encourager.**

All the participants mentioned that a good teacher encourages and motivates his/her students. In addition, some of their responses were as follows:

*"Mr. X is a good teacher because he always encourages me."* Another student say, *"I love my Grammar teacher because he always gives us positive feedback."*

*"My favorite teacher always tells us about her experience and encourages us to do our best to achieve our dreams."*

*"She advises us to read books and novels to extend our knowledge."*

*"Mr. Y is my favorite teacher because he always says to me 'well done' when I answer his questions."*

##### **4.2 A good teacher shows love.**

Many of the participants see that they need that kind of teacher who is empathetic, attentive, and thinks about what is going on in their lives. Some of what they said:

*"My teacher is pleased when we get good marks."*

*"She helps me to solve my problems when I ask for help."*

##### **4.3 A good teacher is patient.**

Some participants regard their teachers good because they listen to their problems carefully and communicate patiently with their parents. Some of what they mentioned:

*"... is my favorite teacher because she gives me the chance to explain my problems to her."*

*"When my father enquires about my performance in the class, my teacher welcomes"*

*"He manages classroom behavior patiently ..."*



#### **4.4 A good teacher can develop relationships with his/her students (friendly).**

More than half of the participants believe that a good teacher develops good relationships with students to create a positive learning environment. For example, students said:

*"She is my favorite teacher because she regards us as her friends."*

*"I do not hesitate to express my feelings to my teacher."*

#### **4.5 A good teacher is knowledgeable.**

A frequent response is that a good teacher is knowledgeable. Some of the participants' responses were:

*"He answers all my questions."*

*"My writing course teacher gives us extra information that is not mentioned in the course book ...I think she is the best."*

*"Both of my favorite teachers advise us to do an extensive reading at home."*

*"I think he has a good command of his subject."*

#### **4.6 A good teacher is tolerant.**

Few participants emphasized the fact that good teachers have tolerance for their students and they show their understanding of their students' faults. Examples of students' responses:

*"I dislike teachers who lack tolerance for their students"*

*"Good teachers are forgiving and have tolerance."*

### **5- Discussion:**

Although many researchers could identify many traits of a good teacher, yet there is no agreement on a clear-cut definition of a good teacher (Stones 1994)<sup>(15)</sup>. This study identified six qualities of a good teacher from pre-service teachers' perspectives.

The participants see that a good teacher should be a motivator. Findings of many other studies indicate the same result as in Brophy (1981)<sup>(16)</sup> study which points out that students would like to be appreciated, appraised, and inspired by their teachers. Another two studies by Yilmaz (2011) and ("effective teaching

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15- Stones, E. (1994). *Quality teaching: a sample of case*. London: Routledge.

16- Brophy, J. (1981). Teacher praise: a functional analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 51(1), 5-32.

and classroom management", 2008)<sup>(17)</sup> show that good teachers are always good motivators. Participants from both, the second semester and the fourth semester, think that showing love, being friendly and patient are among the qualities that a good teacher should possess. This is compatible with the results of Hosgorur (2012) and Haider & Jalal (2018) studies that show being smiley, having love of students, listening to students' problems carefully, and communicating patiently with their parents are the most important personal qualities of a good teacher. The most mentioned quality by the fourth semester students was knowledgeable. This result agrees with what Sanders and Rivers (1996)<sup>(18)</sup> state that one of the professional qualities of a good teacher is having wide general knowledge. Besides the common qualities that were mentioned by both the second-semester and the fourth-semester participants, there was also disagreement about the tolerant quality. The participants from the second-semester only agreed with what Hosgorur (2012) states that good teachers have tolerance for their students and they show their understanding of their students' faults.

According to the results of the frequency of possession, it can be said that the most possessed qualities by the second semester or the fourth-semester pre-service teachers were; motivator, patient, knowledgeable, and lover. Stronge (2002)<sup>(19)</sup>, also identifies similar qualities of a good teacher as loves children, taking care of his/her students, listening carefully (patient). No one of the fourth-semester pre-service teachers possesses the quality of tolerance! This surprising result may give an indication that teacher training courses in the English department do not provide students with enough knowledge about the qualities that a good teacher should possess. The low level of teaching experience appears in the responses of the second-semester participants who

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17- *Effective teaching and classroom management: one and the same pedagogical approach.* (2008). South Asia: Save the Children Sweden.

18- Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). Cumulative and residual effect of teachers on future student academic achievement. *Research Progress Report*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Centre.

19- Stronge, J. H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teacher*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

possess only personal qualities: motivation, encouragement, love students, friendly and tolerance, but they lack professional qualities which were emphasized by the fourth-semester students, like being knowledgeable.

### **6- Conclusion:**

The findings of this study have led to the understanding that it does not matter for students that a good teacher possesses many professional qualities as long as he/she possesses a wide range of personal qualities. Students need teachers who put much effort into helping them with learning. Moreover, personal care to students, creating a positive learning environment, and desire to help them take priority in the teacher-student relationship. This study identified two types of teacher qualities: personal qualities were a good teacher loves students, motivator and encouraging, patient, tolerant, develops relationships with students (friendly), and being knowledgeable was the only professional-quality that was mentioned by the participants.

The engagement of students in the process of evaluating the qualities of a good teacher helped them to be aware of their weak points and shed light on the expected knowledge that they would gain from their teacher training programs. Finally, the pre-service teachers' understanding of "what makes a good teacher?" at the Faculty of Education can help to highlight new questions for future research.

### **7- Recommendations:**

Accordingly, this study recommends new areas for future research in Libya:

- To what extent that pre-service teacher training programs that are adopted by the Faculties of Education help students to gain knowledge about what makes a good teacher?
- Researches are needed to explore the ways that lead teachers to gain the qualities of a good teacher despite the lack of in-service teacher training programs in Libya.
- Further studies should be carried out to explore the relationship between the qualities of good teachers and their professional career development.

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