
QUALITIES OF A GOOD TEACHER: FROM STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Present study aimed to explore qualities of a good teacher from student perspective. 128 students (64 males and 64 females) were selected through cluster sampling technique representing all the departments located in the faculty of Arts and Social sciences, University of Karachi. The mixed method including both quantitative and qualitative research designs was implied. For qualitative data collection, three open-ended questions were formulated and for quantitative analysis, a survey questionnaire on the qualities of a good teacher developed by Clement and Roland (2020) was used. Thematic analysis was conducted based on three questions that revealed major themes and subthemes 1). What are the qualities of a good teacher? (Work-related positive qualities, personality-related positive qualities, and acceptance of diversity) 2). What are some negative qualities of the teacher? (Work-related negative qualities, personality-related negative qualities, and harassment) 3). What are your views about the student-teacher relationship? (Nature of teacher-student relationship, professional relation, and role of relationship). The percentages obtained through a survey questionnaire are discussed in reference to the qualitative analysis. Findings will help the development of teacher training programs. Teachers can improve their teaching styles and teacher trainers may focus on grooming skills among teachers to promote a better educational system.

KEYWORDS

Qualities, teacher, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, students' perspective

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a very crucial role in everyone's life. They have a great impact on one's life as after parents they are significant role models. Teachers are responsible for the educational process. The educational system can't be run without facilitators and teachers (Rao & Kumar, 2004). Every teacher has unique teaching styles and philosophies but only a few characteristics of a teacher make them a good teacher in the eyes of students. Due to advancements in technology, the way of teaching has changed globally; some teachers adapted it very smartly while some are in chaos. A teacher reveals the past, shows the present, and builds the future of a student. Teachers have the utmost potential to impact children's education. Good and effective teaching is needed to promote a healthy teaching environment. Teaching effectiveness is a term that describes a teacher who has different characteristics, competencies, and performances at all instructive levels that enable students to reach preferred outcomes (Hunt, 2009).

Teaching requires competence and essential educational skills to understand that all students have individual differences, different learning styles, different ways of adapting, and possess various personality types. Teachers with good effectiveness usually give value to their teaching styles, value teaching quality, follow the best teaching practices, and enhance students' learning. According to research, a quality teacher and teaching quality is the most essential part of student learning (Liu, Liu, Stronge, & Xu, 2016; Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff. 2013). Due to teachers' great impact on students, this profession is highly complex, and it is crucial to understand the complexity of the profession. Students' perspective on the quality of a good teacher is very important to know, what characteristics they believe are important for teachers to possess, and how we can improve the educational system. During the hiring process, it is considered that teachers should have strong teaching skills (e.g., establishing a positive classroom climate) and subject matter knowledge (Ingle, Rutledge, & Bishop, 2011). Good teachers are competent and experienced. They reflect on their practice and experiences which make them great teachers and ideal candidates in the educational system (Bernard, 2015). One of the studies was conducted on secondary school students in which they were asked to write an essay on a good teacher and an anonymous survey questionnaire was used. Results revealed several personality traits and eight teaching competencies. Students want their teacher to be helpful, give personal attention, deal with the student's problems, treat students fairly, and show respect to everyone's beliefs (Ida, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the studies was conducted on 18 teachers who registered themselves in an introductory class at Land Grant University. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews on what is a good teaching style. The results revealed that good teaching is one which is adaptable, creative, student-centered, relevant, adaptable, and challenging. And good teachers are mentors, create personal relationships with their students, are enthusiastic, respect their students, and are experts in their subject (Ruzgar, 2021). Educational researchers have developed lists of characteristics describing a “good teacher”, which is also referred to as an “ideal teacher” (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). In line with these lists, an “ideal teacher” can be defined by qualities that create a general prototype applicable to any teacher, and to which any teacher can aspire. These lists relate to teacher personalities, behaviors, abilities, and relational skills, and are oftentimes extensive and complex (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). Good teachers have humor in the way they deliver which makes a fun environment for the students (Mullock, 2003; Leibowitz, Schalkwyk, Ruiters, Farmer, & Adendorff, 2012). Research was done on Israeli students. According to them, a good teacher should have sound knowledge of the subject and should be able to deliver good teaching methods whereas the relationship between instructor and student is unimportant (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). Another research was conducted on Yemen and Saudi students. The data was collected from 90 students by asking open-ended questions. The most prominent qualities that both Yemen and Saudi students think about were kind tempered, helping, encouraging, respectful, relaxed, loving, and caring. There were some dissimilarities between Yemen and Saudi samples. The Saudis, for instance, wanted an instructor to give easy tests and assignments and to give them a chance to communicate with their teacher (Al-Maqtri & Ahmad, 2013).

Moreno (2009) emphasized that effective teachers have the skills to motivate students to reach their fullest potential in learning through their professional and personal skills. As reported by Singh et al., (2013) knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm, and communication skills are the most admirable features of a good teacher. There was no disparity of viewpoints based on cultural background, gender or disciplines like medicine and dentistry. Walker (2008) stated twelve major qualities of a good teacher. These traits are prepared, positive, holds high expectations, creative, fair, displays a personal touch, cultivates a sense of belongingness and compassion, has a sense of humor, respects students, forgives and accepts mistakes.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Teaching is a complex and challenging profession, and the role of a teacher is critical in shaping the future of students. A good teacher can inspire and motivate students, foster a love of learning, and help students to reach their full potential. However, what constitutes a good teacher is a complex and contested issue.

The present study therefore aims to explore this phenomenon.

2. Most of the studies on teacher characteristics have been conducted in different countries and it's now clear that people in different countries perceive the qualities of a good teacher differently. Another main reason to conduct this research in Karachi Pakistan was to fill the gaps in literature on thinking pattern of Pakistani university students.

3. Hence, the major aim of the research was to investigate Karachi University student's perspective on what makes an educator a good teacher as the novel insights on the topic will help teachers in making student-teacher relationships more effective.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. According to students, what are the qualities of a good teacher?
2. According to students, what are some negative qualities of the teacher?
3. What are the students' viewpoint about the student-teacher relationship?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

Cluster sampling technique was used to select a sample from all 16 departments of the faculty of arts and social sciences at the University of Karachi. From each department in total 8 participants were taken, that is a male and a female participant from each BS first, second, third, and fourth year respectively. Hence, the sample consisted of 128 Karachi University students.

Measures

Demographic Form

The participants were asked to fill out a demographic form including the participant's age, gender, department, and year of study.

Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire on the qualities of a good teacher developed by Clement and Roland (2020) was used for quantitative analysis. This is a 15-item questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, and lastly no comments. For each item, the percentages of responses were calculated showing the percentage of participants agreeing, disagreeing, or giving no comments.

Procedure

This study used a mixed method approach including a qualitative methodology which involved conducting interviews with a sample of students to gather their perceptions and experiences of what makes a good teacher along with a quantitative methodology which involved rating their views about a good teacher on a questionnaire. A sample of 128 students, including 64 males and 64 females having an age range of 18-28 years

were approached from 16 departments located at the faculty of arts and social science University of Karachi. 8 students were selected from each department (4 male and 4 female) representing all BS 4-year batches. Participants were asked to participate voluntarily in the study and those who agreed were then given informed consent to sign. They were allowed to ask if they didn't understand something or if they had some questions. Participants filled in demographic information forms and the interview was conducted using open-ended questions, which allowed students to express in writing their perceptions and experiences. After the participants responded to all three questions, they were provided with a survey questionnaire to rate their views. It was cross-checked and if there was any unfilled question, they were requested to fill that in.

DATA ANALYSIS

Participants' responses were analyzed using thematic analysis, which was used to identify the key themes and patterns in the data. To conduct thematic analysis, six steps were followed: familiarization with data, coding, generating the initial themes, reviewing themes, identifying, and naming the theme, and inscription. The overall approach used is Decontextualization, Re contextualization, categorization, and compilation. For each question, the highest percentage or most frequently occurring responses in the sample were categorized as themes while related responses were categorized as sub-themes.

Furthermore, quantitative analysis was done through participants responses on a survey questionnaire. For each item, the percentages of responses on 5-point Likert scale were calculated which showed percent of respondents agreeing, disagreeing, or expressing no comments on the quality of the teachers.

DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis of three questions revealed multiple themes and subthemes of the study that are summarized in Table-1 and are illustrated in this section. The first question on qualities of a good teacher revealed that students most frequently reported work-related and personality related qualities which are as follows:

Work-related qualities

Professionalism

Students believed that a good teacher possesses the quality of professionalism which they describe as a teacher having a professional look, competence, and loyalty to profession; is good at class management and provides disciplinary feedback to students.

Communication Skills

Students believed that a good teacher must understand the student's perspective, be good at listening, possess effective communication and interactive skills.

Punctuality

Students believed that a good teacher is punctual and is mindful of disciplinary procedures.

Personality-related qualities**Positive Traits**

Students attributed positive qualities to a good teacher including humbleness, cooperation, sincerity, politeness, and patience. They believed a good teacher treats all students equally, is a problem solver, and helps students.

Acceptance of diversity

An interesting and innovative theme students related to a good teacher was acceptance of diversity. This term as described by students relates such qualities to a good teacher as versatility and morality. In their view a good teacher keeps a positive attitude towards students regardless of their cultural, linguistic, or ethnic backgrounds and promotes professional development among students.

Responses from the second question revealed negative characteristics of teachers which are categorized under following themes and sub-themes:

Work-related qualities**Non-Professionalism**

Students describe an unprofessional teacher who lacks professional attire, is incompetent, not good at communication skills, is not punctual, doesn't cooperate with students, exhibits favoritism and biasness, doesn't guide students, criticizes them, and misuses power.

Personality-related qualities**Negative Traits**

In students' view, a teacher may possess some negative characteristics which distort their perception as a good teacher. Students mainly attributed such characteristics to teachers' personalities. In their view, rudeness, rigidity, narrow mindedness, carelessness, and poor judgment are the features they don't favor in teachers. They also don't like teachers who keep a negative attitude towards students.

Harassment

A few relevant themes to non-professionalism were extracted under this sub theme

such as teachers who are biased, criticizing, and misuse their powers are seen by students as non-professional and harassing.

Participants' responses on the third question related to teacher-student relationship revealed following themes and sub-themes:

Nature of teacher-student relationship

Students see the nature of teacher-student relationship to be pure, helpful, satisfying, and flexible. They see a good teacher-student relationship to be beneficial for students and grounded on a knowledge base.

Professional relationship

They view teacher-student relationships to be professional in a sense that students get motivation from teachers for their studies, get an appropriate learning base, and learn how to solve problems in academic settings.

Role of relationship

Students described a teacher-student relationship as friendly and caring like a parent. They see a good teacher who is most often standing on the listening and understanding side of a relationship. They believe that teachers must be humble and cooperative in their relationship with students. Good teachers provide proper guidance, develop students' problem-solving skills, and foster a strong learning base. Students further affirm that good teachers must know their original place and role in the relationship.

Table 1: Table showing summary of themes and sub-themes extracted through thematic analysis.

Qualities of a good teacher		
Work-related qualities	Personality related qualities	Acceptance of diversity
Professionalism Professional look, Competence, Loyal to profession, Class management, Disciplinary Feedback.	Positive Traits Humble, Cooperative, Compensates, Sincere, Polite, Patient, Equally treats students, Problem solver,	Accepting Diversity Versatile, Moral, Positive attitude towards, Diversity, Fostering professional Development.
Communication skills Understanding		

student perspective, Good listening, Effective communication, Interactive skills. Punctuality Punctual, Disciplinary.	Helping students.		
Negatives qualities of a teacher			
Work-related qualities	Personality related qualities	Harassment	
Non- Professionalism Unprofessional attire, Incompetent, Lacks communication skills, Lacks punctuality, Lacks cooperation, Favoritism, Biased, No guidance, Criticism, Misuse of power.	Negative Traits Rude, Rigidity, Narrow minded, Careless, Poor judgment Negative attitude.	Harassing Biased, Criticizing, Misuses power	
Teacher-student relationship			
Nature relationship	Professional relation	Role relationship	of
Pure, Helping, Satisfying, Flexible, Beneficial,	Motivates, Builds learning base, Problem solving.	Friendly, Caring, Understanding, Humble, Cooperation,	

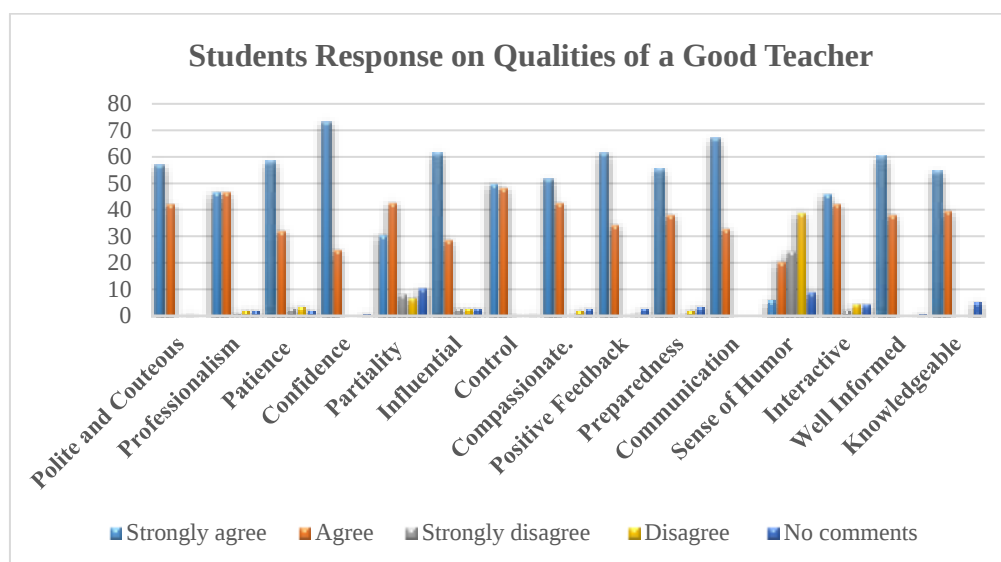
Knowledge base.	Proper guidance, Skill development, Fosters learning, Know their original place.
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Quantitative Results:**Table 2: Table showing percentages of the participant's responses on the questionnaire.**

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No comments
A teacher needs to be polite and courteous.	56.9	42.3	0	0.76	0
I expect my teacher to look professional.	46.9	46.9	1.5	2.3	2.3
Patience is one of the most important qualities of a teacher.	58.4	32.3	3.0	3.8	2.3
He/she must be confident in delivering lectures.	73.07	25.3	0	0	1.5
Partiality is the negative quality of a teacher.	30.7	43.07	8.4	6.9	10.7
Teachers' words are powerful; they can either build or destroy my morale.	61.5	29.02	3.0	3.0	3.0
He/she must be able to control the class.	50	48.4	0.76	0	0.76
Teachers must be compassionate.	51.5	43.07	0	2.3	3.0
I am motivated by teachers 'positive feedback.	61.5	34.6	0	0.76	3.0
Teachers must come prepared for the class.	55.3	38.4	0	2.3	3.8
Teachers must possess good communication skills.	66.9	33.07	0	0	0
Sense of humor is not necessary for a teacher.	6.1	20.7	24.6	39.2	9.2
Teachers must be interactive during class.	46.1	42.3	2.3	4.6	4.6

Teachers must share new information with us.	60	38.4	0	0	1.5
I respect teachers with sound subject knowledge.	54.6	40	0	0	5.3

Figure 1: Figure shows the Percentage of Students' Responses on Qualities of a Good Teacher



Major themes identified through qualitative analysis which coincide with the quantitative analysis through a survey questionnaire have been further discussed in detail.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to explore the characteristics of a good teacher from a student's perspective. Three questions were generated to collect qualitative data from the participants. The first question was related to the good qualities of a teacher, the second was related to negative qualities and the third was based on the student-teacher relationship. A questionnaire comprising 15 items on the qualities of good teachers was used for quantitative data collection.

The first qualitative question was "According to you what are the qualities of a good teacher?" The first major theme included ability/work-related qualities. A sub-theme under this category included professionalism (professional attire, being competent and

loyal to profession, managing the classroom environment, and providing feedback to students). This sub-theme has been supported by the survey responses stating that teachers should be confident while delivering lectures. 73% of the participants showed strong agreement while 25% showed agreement on it suggesting that 95% of the students believed in the stated quality. Further, teachers should be able to control class was affirmed by 98% of the participants. 93% of students strongly agreed/agreed that teachers must come prepared to the class. 92 % of students admitted that they expect teachers to look professional. Similarly, 98% of students believed that teachers should share new information with them, 95 % concurred that they respect teachers with sound knowledge, and 96% of the student's showed motivation based on teachers' positive feedback. In line with the study findings, Bernard (2015) affirmed that a good teacher has deep content knowledge and excellent verbal skills. Highly effective teachers are well-prepared before coming to class. They have lesson design and plan well-structured daily lessons, have effective time management skills, and excellent classroom management skills, and should be aware of students' needs. According to Zhang and Watkins (2007), a teacher should be innovative and must have command of the subject and have appropriate teaching methods with skills. Bullock (2015) mentioned basic characteristics of good teachers including knowledge of the material, decision-making, applying new findings in education, and good teaching ability. Shulman (1987) stated that teachers must have a good understanding of the concepts they teach and must be skilled in assessing their students. Further research shows that a good teacher keeps instructions clear (Beishuizen, Hof, van pm Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher, 2001; Murphy, Delli, & Edwards, 2004). According to Zhu et al. (2013), successful teachers are typically life-long learners and are continually familiarizing themselves with new technologies that can enhance their lessons. A research review conducted in Nigeria showed that teachers' way of delivery, classroom environment, motivation, and personal qualities are components on which teachers' effectiveness is measured (Aina, Olanipekun, & Garuba, 2015). Multiple studies support the findings on teacher characteristics that students believe are important including teacher's ability to create a positive learning environment, to effectively communicate with students, to provide clear and concise instructions, and to be approachable and supportive (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, Strong, & Lehr, 2017; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009).

A second sub-theme extracted from work-related qualities was good communication which included qualities of understanding a student's perspective, being a good listener, effective communication, and interaction with students. The findings were further affirmed through qualitative analysis as the survey findings showed 97% agreement of students stating that teachers should possess good communication skills, 88% affirmed that teachers should be interactive during class, and 91% believed teacher's words to be so powerful that either it can boost or shatter students'

confidence. Shulman (1987) underpins good communication skills as one of the qualities of a good teacher. Singh (2013) stated that communication skills are the most enviable feature of a teacher and Bullock (2015) referred communication ability as the most crucial among other qualities. Zhu and associates (2013) also affirmed that effective teachers demonstrate emotional competency, such as being empathetic and understanding and are therefore in tune with their student's needs, moods, and circumstances.

Another sub-theme extracted from work-related qualities was punctuality. Students believed a good teacher to be punctual and maintain disciplinary affairs. Butakor and Boatey (2018) studied teachers' punctuality and regularity playing an important role in students' attendance patterns. The study explored 200 students' views through a survey method. Findings suggested that disciplinary supervision on teachers' attendance was found to be effective for students' punctuality and enhanced academic performance.

A second major theme extracted from the first open-ended question on qualities of a good teacher was found to be personality-related qualities. Sub-themes categorized under this are personality traits of being polite, humble, helping, patient, cooperative, sincere, problem solver, and providing equal treatment to all students. Findings are consistent with the survey responses such as 99% students believed that teachers should be courteous and polite, 92 % attributed patience, and 95 % believed compassion to be the quality of a good teacher. One of the survey items stated that a sense of humor is not necessary for a teacher. 65% of the students disagreed, only 26% agreed on it and 9.2% preferred not to comment. The findings of other studies affirm that teenage students appreciate teachers who have a good sense of humor, and are tolerant and friendly (Lupascu, Panisorara, & Panisorara, 2014). Previous findings also affirm personality traits of maturity, friendliness, humbleness, helping, positive attitude (Beishuizen et al., 2001), patient, humorous (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), problem-solving and cooperation (Bullock, 2015). Other studies indicate that good teachers are identified as kind, friendly, helpful, patient (Aksoy, 1998; Arnon & Reichel, 2007), innovative, honest (Zhang & Watkins, 2007), compassionate, understanding, and tolerant (Tickle, 1999). Brosh (1996), stated that teachers should treat their students equally with all patience and care.

Another theme extracted from qualities of a good teacher is acceptance of diversity. Students report that teachers are more likable if they hold a positive attitude towards students regardless of their culture, language, or ethnicity. Further sub-themes relating to this concept were found to be versatility, morality, and fostering professional development in their students. Beishuizen et al., (2001) also assert that a good teacher accepts diversity. According to Zhu and colleagues (2013), a successful teacher should have a proper understanding of the social and cultural contexts of their students and

schools they teach in.

The second qualitative question of the current study was “In your opinion, what are some negative qualities of the teacher?”. Major themes extracted from this question were work-related qualities (non-professionalism), personality related qualities (negative traits), and harassment (Biasness, Criticism, misuse of power). Teachers’ non-professionalism was viewed by the students as lacking professional get-up, incompetence, lacking communication skills, non-punctual, and uncooperative. Further, they dislike teachers who display favoritism and biasness, don't provide proper guidance, criticize their students, and misuse their power. Negative personality traits that students attributed to teachers were rudeness, rigidity, narrow mindedness, carelessness, and poor judgment. They also don't favor teachers keeping a negative attitude. Another theme extracted from negative qualities of a teacher was found to be harassment which included a few similar sub-themes like negative traits but particularly characterized by teachers who show extreme criticism and biases to the extent they harass students. This finding in the context of university level has now been observed as the area of extreme concern and needs the attention of researchers. Consistent to the above qualitative findings, survey response characterizes partiality as a negative quality of teachers to which 74% students showed agreement, 15% disagreed and 11% preferred not to comment. Clement and Roland (2020), also state that partiality is a negative characteristic of a teacher. Khan (2020) mentioned that the negative attitude of teachers leads to failure and negative ego attitudes in their students. It distorts the perception of a good teacher.

The third question of the study was “what are your views on student-teacher relationships”. Three major themes were extracted which include the nature of teacher-student relationship (genuine, helpful, valuable, flexible, rewarding, intellectual), a professional relation (the teacher inspires, motivates, builds learning base, develops students’ problems solving abilities), and the role of relationship (approachable, caring like parent, considerate, humble, cooperates and provides appropriate guidance, develops skills, and acknowledges their place in relationship). The supporting survey statements to which students’ rating has already been discussed but are also relevant with teacher-student relationship themes are students get inspired by teachers who provide them positive feedback, they form a respectable relationship with those teachers having sound knowledge and take teachers words so strongly that they either enhance or damage students’ self-esteem. Most of the themes in this question were consistent with question 1 such as students believe their teachers to be humble, friendly, and cooperative in their relationship with students. Among other themes, the most prominent are parental nature, caring, motivated, and fostering a strong learning base. Studies by Aksoy (1998) and Arnon and Reichel (2007) on the teacher-student relationship revealed that a good teacher treats all students equally, listens and cares

about their problems, and individually knows each student which strongly influences students' motivation, engagement, and class performance. Clement and Roland (2020) pointed out that a teacher must be friendly so that the students don't feel intimidated by their teacher's presence. A good teacher has skills to motivate students to reach their full potential of learning through professionalism and inspiration (Moreno, 2009). Hattie (2009) found that motivation obtained by their teachers has effects on students' achievement. Studies revealed that students with positive and supportive interpersonal relationships with teachers reported enhanced positive academic attitudes and values and were more satisfied with their school (Brophy & Good, 1984; Brophy, 1999). Teachers who support students in learning can positively impact long-term success in their lives (Barile et al., 2012; Krane, Karlsson, Ness, & Kim, 2016). Therefore, to develop positive relationships with their teachers, students rated subject matter knowledge as the most common expectation from teachers (Pratt, Kelly, & Wong, 1999).

The findings of this research provide insights into the qualities that students believe are important for teachers to possess and will inform the development of teacher training programs. This study highlights the importance of listening to the voices of students and of taking their perspectives into account when developing teacher training programs. The findings are significant for university teachers in understanding students' points of view. It will help teachers to adapt to the educational system; will help them to enhance their teaching styles; to groom themselves; as well as would help in building strong teacher-student relationships.

Moreover, the findings are helpful for trainers to polish their teaching staff. This will also encourage a healthy environment for students. It will help to make the entire educational system better. Most importantly it will help students to get more skilled teachers which will eventually help in overall student achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to conduct this research on a larger sample with diverse cultural backgrounds, multiple age groups, and academic levels to get a wider view on what makes a good teacher. Further, evaluating teachers' perspectives will provide more insights on the topic.

An original theme extracted from negative qualities of a teacher was found to be harassment which has not been explored in previous studies. This finding in the context of Karachi university seems to be an area of extreme concern for students, academicians, and policy makers. Further studies can be conducted to explore this phenomenon. Perhaps a detailed view on how students see harassment by teachers, how they are affected by it, and what can be done to eradicate such issues among

teachers, can be a future line of research. Teacher trainers must focus on this area while designing their programs.

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