

Identifying the Factors That Influence Students' Academic Performance as A Function of Teaching Qualities in Ahmed Yasawi International Kazakh-Turkish University

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Abstract

Improvement the quality of the teachers is crucially important for the nation that strives for the economic prosperity and social stability. Taking into consideration of this point of view, the paper examines the set of qualities of University teachers with regards to the student academic achievement, identify their significance and propose appropriate methods for improvement the quality of teachers in increasing the student achievement. In this chapter, we explore the importance of teachers' soft skills in establishing fair, friendly and trusting relationships between students and teachers in order to improve academic performance at Ahmed Yasawi University, Kazakhstan. The data was collected using a mixed method from students at Ahmed Yasawi University. The statistical data were collected through a quantitative questionnaire among 361 students. In order to analyze students' opinions further, ten interviews were conducted. The experience of teacher training at the University of Bath was used in the study to develop recommendations for Ahmed Yasawi University.

Keywords: *Teacher-Student Relationship, Soft Skills, Motivation, Educational Performance, Teaching Quality, Ahmed Yasawi University.*

Introduction

There is a growing number of studies on improving the quality of teaching and learning processes in higher education. These studies reveal the importance of modernizing university systems and applying innovative methods for preparing highly qualified and competitive graduates (Govender, 2015; Alsheyadi & Albalushi, 2020; Hayes & Moore, 2021). By contrast with the United Kingdom, where the university system heavily emphasizes teaching quality by providing the financial and pedagogical conditions, as well as external measures, such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), Kazakhstan's higher education teaching and learning environment is at an early stage of development, because reform or modernization is still slow (Yessentemirova., et al, 2019). Despite the difficulty of making changes to higher education institutions across the country, the necessary steps towards modernization can begin with consideration of students' opinions regarding the organization of the educational process. Jonsson (2013) believes that the use of student feedback can help improve several aspects of a university's life at once, since university management can work on specific tasks that are directly important for students' experience. In order to improve the educational environment at the university, it is critical to establish a quality relationship between a teacher and a student. It is noted in the book "Teaching to empower" (Zacarianian & Silverstone, 2020), that teachers can play an important role in motivating and inspiring their students and, for some students, helping them to define their purpose and self-identity in some instances.

During our internship at the University of Bath and subsequent visits to several universities in the UK, we were inspired to conduct this research. The relationship between teachers and students was one of the observations that we made. Our observations of the manner in which teachers and students establish relationships and work differ from those we observed in Kazakhstani universities. So we asked ourselves:

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How to teach students effectively? If a teacher wishes to provide students with the best opportunity for success, what qualities should they possess? In the following sections, the process of preparing and analyzing data collection will be described. In addition, the recommendations we came to as a result of this study will be given.

Theoretical Approach to the Concept of Competence

Teachers' qualities have been associated with personal characteristics such as high moral personalities and intellectual interests (Blaškova, et al., 2014; Shaikhova, et al., 2024). With regard to the professional and personal qualities of teachers, educational organizations such as the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) claim that teachers ought to comprehend the process through which the student learn and improve; show commitment to fostering students learning; should have profound knowledge of the discipline they teach and possess the ability to impart the knowledge to students in ways that involves student inquest (Goldhaber et., 2003). Some people might agree with the comprehensive teaching standards provided above, yet there is substantial disagreement about how teachers can demonstrate mastery of them. The perception of students regarding teaching and learning processes influence profoundly how they feel, think and behave in the quest of academic activities. These perceptions might have a significant influence on student learning (Hu & Kuh, 2002). For example, Biggs (2000) and Mooney (2001) focus on the significance of learning conditions such as student perceptions about their educators, methods of teaching, process of assessment, and curricular content. Some researches in this sphere imply that a good teacher should not be entirely constrained by scientific competencies but possess the abilities in teaching, motivating and relating to their students (Korthagen, 2004). Pedagogical study highlights the need for teachers to clarify and communicate, especially, to make the course content more comprehensible for the students. Another crucial factor is the teacher's capacity to motivate students in the learning process by encouraging central motivation, self-regulation of learning, and the development of learning strategies, that indicate a critical analysis of new ideas and lead to a deeper, longer lasting, and more organized maintenance of the perceptions learned (Lawler et al., 2007). A socio-affective dimension of education, which highlights the value of teachers building some intimacy through discussion with students, is also mentioned in several research (Davies et al., 2006). Regarding the qualities that students respect most in their professors, the literature at hand appears to be well developed. What is less evident are high achiever students' opinions of their teachers' contributions to their educational journey. Theoretical frameworks that conceive academic performance in terms of the growth of competence include teachers or mentors as essential figures. In this domain, the job of teachers or mentors include instructing students on how sequences of easy training activities can help students master more difficult tasks, together with the level of mastery required for the easier tasks to act as the foundation for more difficult skills. (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996). Gifted students in higher education appear to be more sensitive as well to the caliber of instructors in their particular fields, requiring more feedback from their instructors in terms of deep study, contemporary knowledge, and self-government to create their own knowledge (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde & Whalen, 1996). Some researchers have also underlined how crucial it is to respect students' interests and career goals because gifted individuals' involvement in the classroom is a result of their innate desire to learn (Renzulli, 2005). Some scholarly frameworks acknowledge that interactions between personal and environmental circumstances produce excellence (Gagné, 2004; Heller, 2004). Some long-term research has even shown a connection between excellent academic success and exceptional career success (Lubinski & Benbow, 2006). This component emphasizes how crucial it is to have a better grasp of the variables that lead to success since it will help to develop more qualified and motivated professionals who can face and adjust to an increasingly tough and competitive work environment.

There is no formula for teaching. Developing relationships requires integrating emotion, intuition, experience, and enthusiasm. Whenever teacher's profession is meaningful and fulfilling, it inspires students. Observation, reflection, and then devising a plan for implementation for a particular situation and among a particular group of students are the necessary steps one need to take. Moreover, it asks to recognize the peculiar responses, actions, and interests of each student and to design, develop, and test plans that will enhance their understanding of and abilities in the classroom (Zacarianian & Silverstone, 2020).

Methodology and Sample

In order to answer the research questions, it was felt that a mixed methodology would be the most appropriate approach. Hong and Espelage (2012) identify three strengths to mixed-methods research: combining two approaches can provide information that could not be obtained by using just one approach alone it can reduce error and can ensure that potential bias from one area will not be reproduced across all other areas as well as provide information from two approaches that could not be easily accessed by mixing them. By combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, it was hoped that a broader range of conclusions would be reached and that this approach could be more reliable.

Quantitative Data

All participants replied to the multiple questions by choosing one option from three. The following question was posed first: 'How did you learn to teach? And the four response options were provided to choose: *1 By teaching, 2 Through teaching experience while studying 3 Discussions with others at workshops. 4 All of the above* (See Figure 2). There were also interesting results to be found when it came to another question on the questionnaire regarding the attitude of the participants to the distribution of their time at university in accordance to their working schedules. This question was designed so that participants could reflect on how they allocated their time during the first semester (See Figure 3). Accordingly, the questions were designed to assess how much time new teachers spend on teaching and on various aspects of university activities. There was a need for this so that it could be determined what the ratio was between activities and time. In addition, it could be determined what teachers believe helps them in their professional development.

To find answer to the inquiry questions: 'How does one teach students effectively?' and 'If a teacher wishes to provide students with the best opportunity for success, what qualities should they possess?' We conducted a survey among 361 students and mainly focused on collecting data from undergraduate students (83.9% of the sample) to find out their perceptions and understanding of factors that increase their productivity when interacting with each other and professors during the learning process. It was also important to analyze the perceptions of postgraduate degree students (16.1% of the sample) so as to compare their answers with their undergraduate peers. Based on answers from the survey, the table below shows percentages of students' evaluations of different factors, including the ability of teachers to motivate students, establish a comfortable learning environment, and build open relations on the basis of equality and inclusion. To ensure that the participants completely understood the topic, a short explanation of the purpose of the inquiry was given to them before the poll began. To make the questions as accessible as possible for participants, they were then presented to them as multiple-choice questions. Each question was answered by the students by selecting one of the available options. Students were given a multiple-choice question and there was an additional space for comments (See Figure 1). The results of the survey were combined according to the topics.

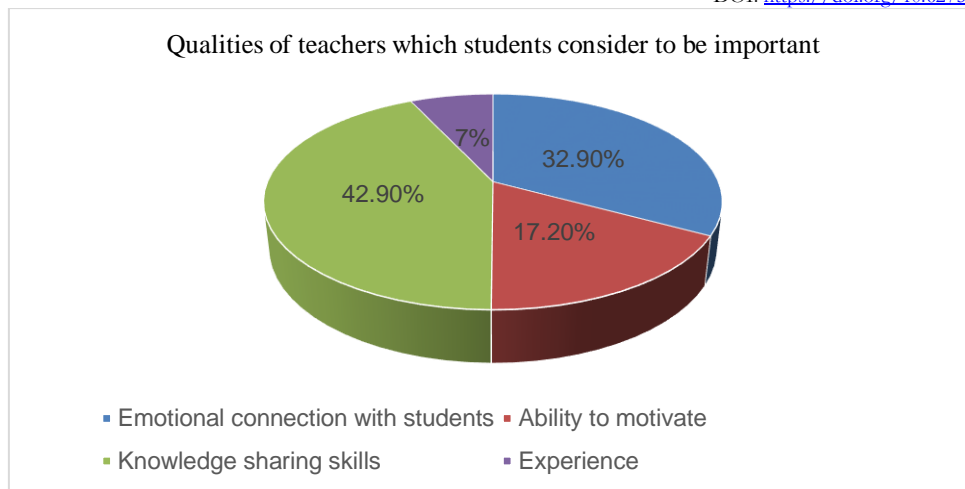


Figure 1, Results of Survey Among 361 Students at The A. Yasawi University

Students' Evaluation of Teacher's Qualities Influencing on The Educational Process in University.

The survey revealed that students value teacher's ability to maintain a friendly atmosphere in the classroom through mutual understanding. The answers of the students come down to a greater extent to a freer educational process where a relaxed atmosphere and communication is important, as well as the expertise and experience of the teachers. Four areas, including affective and emotional relationships, motivation, expertise, and instruction style, were identified from the data collection. Unexpectedly, 17,2% of students selected the motivational quality, indicating that the influence on students' topic interests and the importance of incentives for task participation are both critical. Teachers' attitudes appear to have a significant impact on students and can significantly alter learning outcomes by pushing and inspiring students to advance in their studies (see Figure 1). In other words, it appears that how teachers involve their students in their subject matter can even affect the quality and quantity of the investment that students will make in their academic work: a lot of the motivation isn't directly related to the subject matter but rather is a result of the teacher's delivery of the lesson and attitude. According to Paris & Turner (1994), for instance, it appears that how participants engage with the context—in this case, as mediated by the instructor—determines the affective outcomes and actions of students. This is corroborated by Martens & Witt (2004), who identified teachers as crucial individuals in enhancing students' interest and fostering a sense of involvement with the subjects. They continue by saying that by gradual stimulation and promotion of learning, teachers can serve as significant catalysts for the growth of these students with high potential. According to some authors, giving a student help when they need it can be regarded as scaffolding (Molenaar, van Boxtel, & Slegers, 2011). This constructivist perspective on learning—also highlighted by Savery and Duffy (1995) as the learner's "puzzlement"—is described as the stimulant and organizer for learning, whereby the instructor can create space for students to have an active role in the process of learning. Furthermore, the findings showed that when students have admiration for teachers, they turn into role models or people with whom they can identify. In order to concurrently encourage the achievement of their students, the teacher might act as a role model by modeling success. Next with a percentage of 32,9% is the affective and emotional relation category. The emotional and affective constituent is expressed in a variety of ways, with a focus on the personalities of the teachers and the values they consistently instill in their interactions with the students. These results support earlier research that found a link between a teacher's emotional involvement and students' academic commitment or viewpoints of competence (Skinner et al., 2008). The strength of the affective and emotional bond between these high achiever students and their teachers emerges as a crucial component that is highly valued. A teacher's accessibility can allow for a higher level of response to the unique requirements of these students, who appear to be drawn to the assistance of teachers. The instruction style and expertise are seen as the most important factor, with a proportion of 42,9%. The way a teacher conveys information to students might be stated to be the focus of this discussion on instruction style. Participants identify the teaching style as the outcome of the teacher's pedagogical abilities as well as their understanding of the topic matter. These results can be

supported by other research that shed light on students' experiences in general, pointing to the combination of subject-matter expertise and methodological mastery as qualities of the best teachers (Krauss et al., 2008).

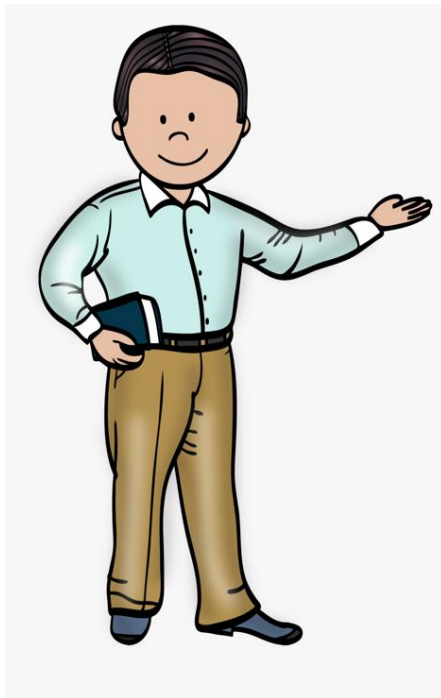
The experience of teachers, e.g. their employment in the field in which they teach, is also regarded as an important factor by 7% of respondents. A teacher with experience in the field of the subject being taught is in a better position to provide good advice to his or her students as they will be able to apply the skills acquired in class in the real world.

Despite the number of students who took part in the survey, the response statistics showed that no more than 5% answered the open questions and completed the text boxes. Unfortunately, this led us to the conclusion that students did not feel confident enough to answer questions containing open-ended options. In order to obtain more detailed information about students' views on the organization of the learning process, we interviewed ten volunteers who participated in the questionnaire. The interview group was selected by sending out invitations to fifty-five participants and ten of them agreed to be interviewed and discuss the questionnaire questions in more detail.

Qualitative Data

To get a comprehensive picture of students' attitudes towards the educational process and their teachers, it was necessary to collect data through interviews in order to get a deeper understanding of their attitudes. In an effort to reduce the risk of power imbalances in the interview and ensure that the interviewees felt comfortable with the interviewing process, we began the conversation with small talk about their interests in the university environment. During our discussion, it was also pointed out that it is very important to listen to what students have to say in order to be able to improve the quality of their university life and get the most out of their educational experience. There is no doubt that the viewpoint they have of the way university life is organized and managed is the most valuable of all, since they are the ones receiving all the benefits that come with it.

The interviews included five questions and were conducted in a semi-structured way which allowed students to talk about topics that were important to them in the form of a conversation, so they felt free to express their opinions. The results of the interview analysis made it possible to identify 6 main aspects that are important for students (see Figure 2)



Expertise and knowledge sharing skills

Ability to motivate

Ability to establish friendly

relationships with students

Teacher – practitioner

Creativity

Open mind

Creating a trust-based community

Academic title

International education

Figure 5, A Summary of The Qualities of Teachers Mentioned by Students in The Conversation

As in the survey results, the interview results showed that the most important aspects students value in teachers is their ability to motivate and establish friendly interaction with the audience. The more confident students feel in the classroom, the more productive the educational process is. In an interview, students said that they feel comfortable when they are not afraid to ask questions and speak out about certain points on topics, on the other hand, when students feel intimidated, they consider that their main task is only to answer questions based on the given material when preparing for the seminar. The third aspect in the pyramid (see Table 2) has a parallel with the data from the quantitative study where 42.9% of students voted that sharing skills are the most important for them. I asked to clarify this point and the students replied that practitioners have experience in working and solving specific problems related to specialization and coupled with academic expertise, are most motivated to achieve successful results in the educational process. The personal history of teachers motivates students to achieve great success. The ability to transfer knowledge by meticulously adding details from personal experience is one approach that makes learning more interesting.

The University of Bath Teacher Training scheme

According to the information provided on the University of Bath Learning and Teaching Center webpage, teachers at Bath become part of a growing university community and are trained to unite, motivate, and inspire each other and students. Most significantly, the center helps educators to grow personally and professionally. Through attending training, new lecturers:

Learn how to become a competent teacher and researcher with the initial understanding, skills, knowledge and confidence;

Improve the quality of student learning and/or supervision by questioning, evaluating, and developing your practices;

Critically analyze current academic practice, and develop your own practice in light of these analyses;

Develop effective and efficient academic strategies;

Develop yourself systemically, effectively, and efficiently.

The idea of unification around university values and mission is provided on every step of Learning and Teaching training (See Figure 3).



The Curriculum Development

The Curriculum Development team boasts a wide range of teaching and learning expertise that spans the HE sector and beyond, making them one of the most knowledgeable teams in the industry. Collaboration with colleagues across campus is a key characteristic of their role, and they are responsible for researching, preparing, and disseminating a variety of resources, and offering specialist advice based on best practices in pedagogy and the institution's guiding themes and principles.

Academic Staff Development

It is part of the mission of ASD to provide developmental opportunities and support for all staff, regardless of whether they are just starting out in higher education or whether they are experienced in university teaching, in relation to learning, teaching, and research in higher education.

Student Engagement

SE empower students to be active partners in their education to ensure our learning and teaching experience continually improves and develops. They work closely with staff and with the SU Bath to facilitate this goal.

Technology Enhanced Learning

TEL work with academic departments and professional services teams to provide support for the effective use of technology to enhance learning, teaching, and assessment in line with the University's Strategy and specifically

the strategic pillar focused on driving
excellence in education.

Figure 3, University of Bath Centre of Learning and Teaching Mission and Values

Four departments of University of Bath Centre for Learning and Teaching are responsible for various activities to support the academic staff and students. Each unit conducts its work based on the mission and values of the university. The clearly defined values and mission of the university help to put meaning into each developed project of the university and into all the tasks assigned to its members. **5 Recommendations for Ahmed Yasawi International Kazakh-Turkish university, potential to implement new center**

Following the example of the Center of Learning and Teaching of the University of Bath, I intend to recommend the establishment of a similar center at Ahmed Yasawi University. In the Turkic world, Ahmed Yasawi University welcomes students from more than 17 different countries in a tolerant interethnic environment. As a center of spiritual unity for the Turkic world, it has important ideological significance as an educational center in the globalized world. The special history of the university, location in a historically significant region, international connections, as well as the ambitions of its members can be used to develop the special community of Ahmed Yasawi University. The Center for Learning and Teaching at Ahmed Yasawi University will bring teachers together through training sessions and workshops. These sessions will focus on the mission and values of the university, which are aimed at the growth and development of the university's human capital in the first place. Such a center can serve as a hub that responds to the needs of both teachers and students.

Conclusion

Although empirical evidence unequivocally demonstrates that teachers have a significant impact on students, there don't seem to be any consistent, observable characteristics linked to great teachers. We found evidence in our analysis of studies on teacher characteristics and educational production functions that suggests motivational or incentive measures are more accurate predictors of teacher effectiveness than other variables, such as emotional connection and topic knowledge. The data gathered from this survey's carefully chosen participants results in the following conclusion. The three main qualities that are valued in a teacher and in the context of learning can be summed up as the following: (i) the quality of motivational competence that motivates students to study; (ii) the quality of the affective relationship that teachers establish with their students; and (iii) the capacity to transmit knowledge. These elements align with some of the guidelines for excellent practice in higher education that have been compiled by earlier authors (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Specifically, a deliberate focus on maintaining contact between students and professors; to promote active learning; to offer feedback and chances to improve performance (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The teacher is cited as a key player through several stages of learning in the three categories identified, which appear to converge to emotional and volitional factors of learning: to arouse the interest and curiosity of students to learning; to keep students engaged with learning by providing stimulating contexts and offering their availability to help when necessary; and to act as a model of passionate and successful professionals. These participants see learning as being considerably more than just the simple conveyance of information. These findings support Korthagen's position by demonstrating the intricacy of problems that arise throughout teaching and learning tasks (2004). Clearly, learning is influenced by emotional, volitional, and behavioral elements in addition to cognitive ones. Finally, this study's data collection and subsequent conclusions have consequences for higher education's teaching and learning. The information gathered emphasizes how critical it is to customize learning settings to each student's needs and personality. What then can be some beneficial, perhaps transferable techniques for students who are high achievers? The following are offered as suggestions:

Be available to discuss students' interests with them outside of the classroom.

Make space for students to explore. Give them room to grow and generate new opportunities for thought. Be a part of more than just the academic curriculum.

Express your excitement for the topic and education in general. Discuss your favorite topics and elements of your field with students.

Foster students' natural curiosity. Select common issues to address and incorporate theoretical concepts into them. To sum up, the participants are looking for and favor more inspirational settings and instructors who suit their particular academic traits. If these students demand more and better, then more and better should be provided. Of course, not every student is a high achiever or performs at the top of their class, but it is crucial that those who can reach that peak have the correct road to take them there and maintain high levels of engagement and achievement once they are on that path.

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