Qualities of an Ideal English Language Teacher: A gender-based investigation in a Saudi Context

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Abstract

Identification of the attributes that are associated with an ideal English language teacher has been a major area of interest worldwide but there seems a scarcity of relevant studies in the Arab world. The present study is an attempt to fill this existing gap by identifying the qualities of an ideal English language teacher as perceived by Taif university undergraduates along gender lines. Two hundred and sixteen male and female undergraduates responded to a 32-item Likert scale questionnaire. Independent-samples t-test has been run to calculate descriptive analyses and identify any gender-based differences. It has been revealed that Saudi EFL learners have reported quite higher liking for personality and professional characteristics of ideal English language teachers. In both these categories female participants have exhibited slightly higher values. The comparative analyses have also disclosed that there do not exist major statistically significant differences in the perceptions of male and female participants of this survey. It is highly recommended that EFL faculty working in Saudi universities should try their level best to be available to help their students, be dedicated and committed, exhibit an exemplary attitudes, explain according to the level of their students, keep themselves abreast of the latest developments to ensure up-to-date knowledge of the subject, provide their students with clear instructions and accurate answers, exploit group/pair work effectively, use modern teaching aids and help their students to become independent learners. Finally, it may be said that those EFL English language teachers are liked who have the ability to motivate and inspire their students through their personality and professional qualities to exploit their optimum potential to maximize their language learning possibilities.
Key words: ideal teacher, personal quality, professional quality, gender-based differences

1. Introduction

The significance of English language across the globe do not need any evidence and its role in the world of communication, education, media, business and governments etc. is widely reported (Javid, 2010). This ever-increasing need of English language initiated an era of English language teaching throughout the world and Saudi Arabia is no exception in this regard. It has been found out that some EFL teachers are considered more successful than others because of certain reasons. Their professional skills and commitment, language proficiency, teaching methodology and several personality qualities distinguish them among their colleagues. Ideal EFL teachers occupy a significance role in ELT because they facilitate the students to achieve the required proficiency in the target language, motivates them by highlighting the importance of English internationally as well as for their academic success and polish the overall personality of their students by acting as a role model for them. The role of an ELF teacher is rather challenging because they are different from other teachers and have to create healthy and productive environment in the language classes by engaging them through exploiting various techniques.

Teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating the learning process and their success mainly depend on those behaviours that help them achieve the aspired learning outcomes such as high grades, positive attitudes towards learning and enhanced learning skills (Borich, 1996). Successful teaching is not a static and stereo-typed activity that can be achieved only through applying teaching methods. Research has offered valuable insights into the fact that identification of behaviours associated with effective teaching has a long history. Beishuizen et al. (2001) have reported that "good teachers have been studied ever since Plato described how Socrates taught by asking questions of his audience" (p. 185). Although there has been an agreement among researchers to investigate this much sought-after domain, yet there existed much controversy on the qualities that make effective teachers (Raymond, 2008; Stronge, 2002). It has been found out that researchers have tried to answer this knotty question through different perspective.

A growing mass of research has attempted to identify the qualities of ideal English language teachers from the perspective of the main stake holders, such as students (McBer, 2000; Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, & Minor, 2001; Saafin, 2005; Wang et al., 2007; McCabe, Feghali, & Abdallah, 2008; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002) and administration separately or comparative studies to identify the differences/similarities in their

perceptions (Krueger, 1997; Raymond, 2008; Walls, Nardi, von Minden, & Hoffman, 2002; Miller et al., 2001; Beishuizen et al., 2001). Majority of the studies reported in the field of effective teaching have investigated university students in general and that is also in the western context (Emanuel & Adams, 2006; Griemel-Fuhrmann & Geyer, 2003; Kember, Jenkins, & Ng, 2004; Kember & Wong, 2000) whereas identification of these qualities from the perspective of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students is less frequent and scarce (Raymond, 2008; Park & Lee, 2006; Chen, 2005). This study is an attempt to fill the gap and investigated Saudi undergraduates' perceptions on gender lines of the personality/ability characteristics of ideal English language teachers.

2. Review of literature

The quest of educationists to find out the characteristics of ideal teachers has been a long history and this question has concerned the educationists of the oldest times as well. It has been reported that "teachers are those who convey the truth, pass on the knowledge, and clarify the doubts" (Confucius cited in Chen & Lin, 2009, p. 220). Research has also offered insights that just conveying knowledge is not what makes an ideal teacher (Richardson, 1997). Talking about the concept in a more detailed manner, William Arthur suggests that "the mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains and the superior teacher demonstrates and the superior teacher inspires" (ThinkExist, 2009). Review of relevant literature reveals that in addition to conveying the contents, an ideal teacher is "an artist whose practices defy notions of what is good or bad as well as what is right or wrong" (Dewey, 1933 cited in Chen & Lin, 2009, p. 220).

It has been posited that positive qualities such as professional, systematic, organizer, reliable, confident, regular, active, intelligent are associated with the concept of an ideal teacher (Chen & Lin, 2009). Anderson (1991) has stated that "… an effective teacher is one who quite consistently achieves goals which either directly or indirectly focus on the learning of their students" (p. 18). Dunkin (1997) stated that efficiency of an ideal teacher is determined by the degree to which they achieve the desired effects upon students. It is considered important for ideal language teachers that through their day to day behavior with their students they achieve their desired set goals and try to materialize the objectives which have been set to solve the language problems of their students. Thus, motivating and stimulating the students is counted as the most significant quality which a language teacher skillfully exploits around the whole ambiance of the language classroom to maximize the learning possibilities.

Much research has offered valuable insights into the fact that for better teaching learning process, the role of ideal teachers is paramount (Javid, 2014). Therefore the identification of personality and professional qualities has been a major area of research since long and learners of different ages have been intensively investigated in various academic contexts (Raymond, 2008). Based on the prevalent educational philosophies, research has reported that ideal teachers have been perceived differently especially during the second half of the 20th century. It was reported that:

> "effective teachers were viewed as 'ideal teachers' in the 1950s, 'analytic teachers' in the
> 1960s, 'effective teachers,' 'dutiful teachers,' and 'competent teachers' in the 1970s, 'expert
> teachers,' and 'reflective teachers' in the 1980s, and 'satisfying teachers' and 'diversity
> responsive teachers' in the 1990s" (Cruickshank and Haefele, 2001 cited in Wang, et al.,
> 2007, pp. 22-23).

In English language teaching, ideal teachers may vary depending upon factors such as language proficiency, teaching styles, personal traits, and preferred teaching materials (Huang, 2010). Research suggests that an ideal teacher is the main actor or role model in the classroom who runs, administers and manages the students. A language teacher rather shoulders the additional responsibility of curriculum developing as well and influences the tone and direction of the classroom (Uduma, 2011). Curtis and Cheng (2001) posit that ideal teachers contain knowledge, exceptional skills and distinctive personality characteristics. Brown (2001) has presented his own vision of the characteristics of an ideal language teacher and classified these into four components: practical knowledge, tutorial skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities. Burton (2000) reiterates that ideal teachers should have distinctiveness, reciprocity, required knowledge and professionalism. According to him, these qualities play a role in effective teaching which may be classified under three main categories: professional knowledge or achievements, personal characteristics and teaching style. Markley (2004) has suggested that the role of ideal teachers cannot be underestimated for better learning especially inside the classroom. Recent research findings have concentrated upon two major characteristics of good teachers: their personality and their professional ability. Beishuize et al. (2001) have suggested that "teachers who engage in student-focused practices are, in contrast to those who operate within a teacher-centred paradigm and engage largely in teacher exposition, seen to be effective operators by students. These teachers engage students in active and group work

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tasks, activities of student choice, and discussions"(p. 33). Personality Characteristics belong to the physical rather closer interaction of the teacher with the students.

Identification of the qualities of an ideal language teacher is an ongoing research area and a growing mass of research is being conducted to find out these characteristics. Anderson, Evertson, and Brophy (1979) have reported that ideal teaching primarily associated with "What actually the teachers do in the classroom" similarly "how do the students perceive", … "in this context 'process' and the 'product' leads towards learning steps respectively" (p. 193). The characteristics of an ideal teacher are investigated from two main perspectives: personality and professional traits. Research has reported that ideal teachers are considered as the role models whose personality characteristics are highly effective and influential as have been highlighted by many researchers. The findings of numerous studies revealed that students perceived ideal teachers' personality characteristics like warmth, enthusiasm, and sociability as the most desired ones (Feldmen, 1986; Basow, 2000). The other main category of the characteristics related to ideal language teachers is their professional competence and it has been reported that if a teacher is highly qualified, he may be able to satisfy his students' linguistics needs but for language students the situation is somewhat different because language students are usually more demanding than others (Basow, 2000; Radmacher & Martin, 2001; Raymond, 2008).

2.1 Personality Qualities
Research reveals that personality characteristic include "… familiarity, compassion, and enthusiasm and closeness … perceived corporal and emotional nearness of the teacher towards their student …" (Walls et al., 2002, p.40). A growing mass of research has suggested that an ideal teacher not only provides the students a right track in the case of teaching learning process but also motivate them to follow their personality characteristics that paves the way of a successful life as it is mentioned that "teacher's personality is highly associated with establishing teacher-student relationship" (Chen & Lin 2009, p. 227).

It has also been reiterated that the qualities that contribute the most towards learners' learning are the ones that may be summed as being purposeful, aim-oriented, relaxed, warm, supportive, a sense of order and humor embodied in teacher to make him an ideal (Kumaravadivelu, 1992 cited in Açıkgoz, 2005). Along with the above-mentioned qualities of an ideal teacher, he also considers several other qualities such as showing mutual respect, rapport and care as extremely important because through these positive feelings ideal teachers convey to their students that they respect their feelings and emotions, understand them, engage them in the academic matters of the classroom. This kind of attitude creates a conducive learning atmosphere that motivates the learners to achieve higher proficiency in the target language. Barnes (2010) has conducted a study in a Korean university and investigated university undergraduates' beliefs about the qualities of effective EFL teachers and concluded that the participants of the study considered those EFL teachers ideal who " are friendly, develop interpersonal relationships, share personal life experiences, care about students, are patient, listen to students, have a positive attitude in general, have charisma, understand the students educational background, understand the different student levels, & have a sense of humour" (p. 143). Açıkgoz (2005) have reported that learners value these personality qualities that reflect in the evaluation of their teachers as well. A growing mass of research indicates that personality qualities such as their warmth, enthusiasm, and extroversion are the ones which distinguish ideal teachers from the teachers who are not liked by their students (Açıkgoz, 2005; Basow, 2000; Guerrero & Miller, 1998; Marsh & Roche, 1997; Radmacher & Martin, 2001 etc.).

2.2 Professional Qualities
Second major component that makes an ideal teacher are their professional qualities. These qualities enable the teachers to teach language learners effectively because these are directly related to the professional skills of the teachers. These qualities provide a solid basis for an active interaction between teachers and students in an English language class. McBer (2001) has stated that

> "professional characteristics are deep-seated patterns of behaviour which outstanding teachers display more often, in more circumstances and to a greater degree of intensity than effective colleagues. They are how the teacher does the job, and have to do with self-image and values; traits, or the way the teacher habitually approaches situations; and, at the deepest level, the motivation that drives performance" (P. 19).

It has been stated that these professional qualities are based upon learned or proficient cognitive and psychomotor skills such as the skill to operate a computer or handling multimedia , or the ability to efficiently relate difficult theoretical topics to real-life examples (Raymond, 2008). It is also suggested that these qualities actually include the innermost aspects of an ideal EFL teacher including being proficient, knowledgeable and trained (Beishuizen et al., 2001). Walls et al. (2002) have reported that ideal teachers always focus on creative

work and are anxious on devising ways of creating a conducive teaching/learning atmosphere by exploiting their professional skills such as being well-organized, pre-planned, and understandable (Walls et al., 2002). Barnes (2010) has conducted a study in a Korean university and investigated university undergraduates' beliefs about the qualities of effective EFL teachers and concluded that the participants of the study considered those EFL teachers ideal who are ……… "enthusiastic about EFL lecturing, give clear explanations, use good examples, use a variety of lecturing methods, correct all errors, ……. use group work, ……. encourage student participation in class" (p. 145) and "are well qualified for EFL lecturing, have a good knowledge of grammar, have a good knowledge of vocabulary, well prepared every lesson, provide a syllabus detailing course content and methodology, tell students the lesson objectives each lesson, stick to the syllabus, & make their own supplemental material" (p. 148).

Witcher (2003 cited in Chen & Lin, 2009) investigated college students in his quantitative study and the findings revealed that the participants favoured those teachers who bear professional competence and ensure student-centered teaching, are competent and have thorough knowledge of their subjects. In a review study, Feldman (1988) has thoroughly reviewed thirty one studies which investigated faculty members and students to identify the characteristics which according to them are considered important for ideal teachers. The intensive review has transpired that the students considered those teachers as ideal who are interesting, having good elocutionary skills, and are available and helpful. They have emphasized more on instructional outcomes as an indicator of effective teaching. On the other hand, the faculty members have placed more emphasis on being intellectually challenging, having the ability to motivate, act as role models and work hard to make their students life-long learners as the characteristics that constitute ideal teachers. Janene (1987) has investigated the characteristics of ideal teachers from students' perspective and reported that the participants of the study considered those teachers ideal who are patient, polite and thoughtful.

Açıkgoz (2005) conducted a study in the Turkish monolingual setting and used a questionnaire to elicit the participants' responses towards professional, pedagogical and personal qualities of ideal teachers. The data indicated that pedagogical and personal scores of students were the top rated findings whereas the responses to the professional characteristics of teachers were significantly lower than the two other factors. It has been suggested that the discrepancies among the three groups of participants might be due to the institutions' and teachers' different missions and purposes as well as students' point of views. Additionally, there are factors that may restrict the generalizability of these findings at first sight: the majority of the sample consisted of female students with a minority of male participants. Though the study did not intend to identify gender-based differences, the findings have revealed that the female students were more sensitive to the interpersonal characteristics of their teachers confirming the findings of the previous research in this respect (Smith, Medendorp, Ranck, Morrison, & Kopfman, 1994).

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This is a survey research and the researcher selected a type of cross-sectional survey to gather perceptions of a predetermined sample that was drawn from the population of Saudi EFL undergraduates. Survey research is one of the most common forms of research engaged in by educational researchers. It involves researchers asking a large group of people questions about a particular topic or issue. Along with collecting theoretical data from various resources, the data regarding the empirical work for this study was collected through administering a Likert-scale agree-disagree structured questionnaire to generate the participants' perceived responses towards their preferences of the qualities of an ideal English language teacher.

3.2 Research Questions

This study will be directed by the following research questions:

    a.   What are male Saudi university undergraduates' perceptions of an ideal EFL teacher's qualities?

    b.   What are female Saudi university undergraduates' perceptions of an ideal EFL teacher's qualities?

    c.   Are there any statistically significant gender-based differences in the perceptions of both sample groups regarding the qualities of ideal EFL teachers?

3.3 Null Hypothesis

There will not be any gender-based significant differences between the perceptions of male and female Saudi university undergraduates regarding an ideal EFL teacher's qualities.

3.4 Instrumentation

Various studies related to professional and personal qualities of ideal EFL teachers have been consulted by the researcher and a Likert-scale agree-disagree questionnaire was adopted to generate data related to the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL university undergraduates. The Arabic version of the final questionnaire was administered to randomly selected 291 male and female English major students at the Department of Foreign Languages, Taif University.

3.5 Sample Size

The Arabic version of the 34-item final questionnaire was administered to randomly-selected 300 male and female Saudi EFL university undergraduates studying at Taif University. Out of the total number of collected questionnaires, 9 were rejected and the rest 291 questionnaires (male = 139 & female = 152 - n= 291) were considered for data analyses for this survey report. The data generated through the above-mentioned procedure have been synthesized to prepare final recommendations.

3.6 Statistical Analysis

Independent-samples t-test has been run to generate the descriptive statistics as well as to measure any significant differences in the perception of the male and female cohort of this study regarding the qualities of ideal English language teachers. The data have been coded and manually entered to be statistically analysed using the version 17 of SPSS. Independent-sample t-test was run and findings and recommendations have been forwarded based on the statistical analysis of the data of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

The data generated through 291 questionnaires has been scientifically analyzed and descriptive as well as comparative analyses have been calculated. The results for 13 personality and 16 professional qualities are given in tabulised form followed by explanations and discussion.

Table (1): Comparative analysis of personality and professional qualities of
ideal English language teachers

Participants	Total	Mean
Personality qualities (boys)	55.849 for 13 questionnaire items	4.296
Personality qualities (girls)	56.822 for 13 questionnaire items	4.371
Professional qualities (boys)	66.259 for 16 questionnaire items	4.141
Professional qualities (girls)	66.289 for 16 questionnaire items	4.143

Table 1 contains the overall picture with the help of descriptive analysis for the data related to personality and professional qualities of English language teachers by Saudi male and female EFL learners from a Saudi university. The data reveal that girls have shown slightly higher liking for personality qualities and assigned a higher mean of more than 4 to 12 out of the total 13 items of this category. The boys have assigned a value of more than 4 to 11 items. The overall mean values remained 4.371 for girls and 4.29 for boys. The questionnaire contained 16 items related to professional qualities and both groups have assigned lower values as compared to the personality qualities: 4.143 by girls and 4.141 by boys. It has also been found out that girls have given mean of more than 4 to 11 items whereas bys have assigned mean of more than 4 to 12 items. The girls' collective mean value has been more than boys' collective mean but the difference is very little. The data analyses have revealed that the female cohort of this survey study has assigned higher values to both personality and professional qualities. Detailed data analyses have been given in the tables given below.

Table 2: Independent Samples T-test results for personality qualities of ideal
English language teachers

	An ideal English language teacher	Group	n	M	SD	T	Df	p value	
3	stimulates interest in the course/subject.	boys	139	4.266	.915	-2.10	289	.036	p < 0.05
		girls	152	4.467	.707	-2.08	259.9	.038	
5	is available to help students.	Boys	139	4.640	.568	.607	289	.544	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.598	.609	.609	288.7	.543	
10	makes classes interesting.	boys	139	4.050	1.30	-4.28	289	.000	p < 0.05
		girls	152	4.578	.726	-4.18	209.2	.000	
11	is dedicated and committed.	boys	139	4.302	.876	-.146	289	.884	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.315	.714	-.145	266.1	.885	
15	makes an effort to get to know the students.	boys	139	3.964	1.14	-1.64	289	.101	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.153	.775	-1.61	240.6	.107	
16	encourages students to answer other students' questions.	boys	139	4.111	1.05	.836	289	.404	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.017	.932	.833	280.9	.406	
18	serves as a role model.	boys	139	4.355	.918	-2.96	289	.003	p < 0.05
		girls	152	4.620	.638	-2.91	243.9	.004	
19	is flexible in scheduling /rescheduling tests and deadlines.	boys	139	4.339	.942	-2.39	289	.017	p < 0.05
		girls	152	4.556	.615	-2.34	234.5	.020	
20	encourages student participation.	boys	139	4.383	.789	1.800	289	.073	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.211	.773	1.798	285.9	.073	
21	treats students as equal.	boys	139	4.413	1.12	-.681	289	.496	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.500	.895	-.673	256.3	.502	
25	willing to repeat explanations.	boys	139	4.518	.747	-2.13	289	.034	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.671	.526	-2.10	245.6	.037	
26	communicates with students in English.	boys	139	3.944	1.28	2.974	289	.003	p > 0.05
		Girls	152	3.535	1.02	2.955	274.4	.003	
29	welcome students' opinions /suggestions.	boys	139	4.575	.707	-.122	289	.903	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.585	.698	-.122	286.5	.903	

Table 2 details the data analyses generated by independent-samples t-test for 13 items related to the personality qualities of ideal English language teachers. Generally speaking a vast majority of the items have been assigned high mean values by both groups. Both groups seem to bear similarities in their perceptions as statistically significant differences are reported for only 5 items out of the total 13 items. For majority of the items, standard deviation remained less than 1 suggesting greater in-group similarity in their perceptions. The male participants ranked item 5, 'An ideal English language teacher is available to help students', 1st highest whereas girls assigned 3rd highest mean value to this item. The findings are in line with the results of Javid (2011) who investigated university undergraduates from the same academic context to find out their preferred learning styles and has reported that Saudi EFL learners like English teachers to provide immediate academic help to their students. Interestingly items 26 which is related to the quality of a teacher to communicate in the target language with the students has been ranked 1st highest by the female cohort and 3rd highest by male participants. The boys considered item 29 the 2nd highest with a mean of 4.57. The girls have given a bit higher value to this item but without any top ranking as far their most preferred items have been concerned. Item 18; an ideal English language teacher serves as a role model, has been ranked the 2nd highest by the female participants. This item is among those items which have significant differences in the perceptions of both the groups. The findings confirm the results of Crowl, Kaminisy, & Podell (1997) who have posited that ideal English language teachers are not limited to imparting information related to the subjects they are teaching but they need to serve as role models for their students to follow in their lives as well. Among the remaining items, both groups ranked the item related to treating students as equal quite high confirming the findings of previous research conducted to identify the qualities of ideal teachers (Peart & Campbell, 1999; Rubio, 2009) who have also stated that this is liked by EFL/ESL learners. This results is in consistent with the previous research conducted in the similar as well as somewhat different academic context that Saudi EFL learners like their teachers to treat them equally and involve them in the academic decisions by listening to their opinions and suggestions (Javid, 2010; Rammal,

2006; Desai, Damewood & Jones, 2001).

The participants of this study were quite similar in their perceptions related to the least preferred personality qualities of ideal English language teachers. Item 26 has been ranked the least preferred item in this category suggesting that Saudi EFL learners do not like their teachers to communicate with them in the target language. Higher standard deviation values seem to suggest high internal differences in the perceptions of the participants for this item. This result also contradicts the findings of Javid (2011) who has reported that Saudi EFL learners like those teachers who use English while interacting to their students. Personality quality of 'making an effort to get to know their students' has not been given preferences by either group and this item has been ranked the 2nd lowest by the male and 3rd lowest by female cohort of this survey. The girls have reported 2nd lowest liking to item 16 that seems to suggest that they do not like their teachers to involve them in mutual interaction among the students. The boys assigned 3rd lowest ranking to item 10 that states that 'an ideal English language teacher makes classes interesting'. This finding does not seem to confirm research that has been done in the Arab world as well as in the less similar context (Javid, 2011; Asmari & Javid, 2011; Saafin, 2005; Day, 2004: Raymond, 2008 & 2001; McBer, 2000 etc.).

Table 3: Independent Samples T-test results for professional qualities of ideal
English language teachers

	An ideal English language teacher	Group	n	M	SD	T	Df	p value	
1	is always well- prepared and organized.	boys	139	4.302	.813	-2.32	289	.021	p < 0.05
		girls	152	4.519	.780	-2.32	284.1	.021	
2	has expert, up-to-date knowledge of the subject.	boys	139	4.618	.516	.390	289	.697	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.592	.634	.394	285.2	.694	
4	explains using simple language.	boys	139	4.338	1.05	-3.54	289	.000	p < 0.05
		Girls	152	4.690	.600	-3.46	214.8	.001	
6	uses relevant course materials.	boys	139	3.863	1.00	4.582	289	.000	p < 0.05
		girls	152	3.309	1.05	4.590	288.2	.000	
7	provide frequent, prompt, and useful feedback.	boys	139	3.935	1.00	.746	289	.456	p > 0.05
		girls	152	3.855	.825	.740	268.0	.460	
8	uses appropriate teaching aids.	boys	139	4.266	.839	-1.27	289	.205	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.381	.708	-1.26	271.3	.208	
9	answers questions accurately.	boys	139	4.431	.948	.567	289	.571	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.375	.753	.561	263.0	.575	
12	gives clear instructions.	boys	139	4.431	.702	.047	289	.962	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.427	.742	.047	288.6	.962	
13	clearly defines evaluation methods.	boys	139	4.259	.764	-.943	289	.346	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.342	.737	-.942	284.5	.347	
14	provides many examples.	boys	139	4.316	.893	1.930	289	.055	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.125	.799	1.920	278.0	.056	
17	uses a variety of teaching techniques.	boys	139	4.309	.769	.497	289	.619	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.263	.811	.498	288.6	.619	
22	does group / pair work.	boys	139	4.079	1.01	.767	289	.444	p > 0.05
		girls	152	3.986	1.03	.767	287.6	.444	
23	gives lots of tests.	boys	139	3.510	1.22	-1.43	289	.154	p > 0.05
		girls	152	3.697	.990	-1.41	265.0	.158	
24	has lots of teaching experience.	boys	139	4.280	.876	.366	289	.715	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.243	.853	.366	285.13	.715	
27	lectures for the entire class period.	boys	139	3.000	1.37	-1.26	289	.206	p > 0.05
		girls	152	3.184	1.09	-1.25	263.1	.211	
28	guides students to become independent learners.	boys	139	4.316	.876	.208	289	.835	p > 0.05
		girls	152	4.296	.804	.207	280.3	.836	

Data analyses of independent-samples t-test for the items related to professional qualities have been presented in table 3. Both groups have allocated high values of more than 4 to a vast majority of the item of this category but the values have been comparatively lower as compared to the personality qualities. The female cohort allotted mean of higher than 4 to 11 items out of the total 16 whereas the males assigned this value to 12 items. The results of independent-samples t-test has exhibited statistically significant differences for only three items out of the total 16 in this category suggesting that both sample groups have seen eye to eye to each other as far the professional qualities of an ideal English language teachers are concerned. The male participants of this survey have assigned the highest value to the item which states that an ideal teacher has expert and up-to-date knowledge of his subject. The female participants have also showed high preference by ranking it 3rd most highest quality of an ideal teacher confirming the results of several studies conducted in the same EFL (Raymond, 2008 & 2001) as well as ESL contexts (Saafin, 2005) worldwide. This result partially confirms Raymond (2008) who has reported that Arab EFL preparatory year learners have exhibited medium high preference for expert teachers. This finding is also in line with the study of Javid (2011) who has also reported that Saudi undergraduates prefer expert teachers who immediately help them with all their academic problems. The female cohort has exhibited highest preference for those English teachers who explain using simple language: a quality that has been assigned the 3rd highest by the male participants. This highest preference by both groups clearly suggests that Saudi EFL learners represented by the participants of this study like their teachers to consider their academic level and use simple language so that they may understand the contents well. This finding confirms the results of Javid (2011) and partially contradicts the findings of Raymond (2008). The data analyses have revealed that boys have allocated 2nd highest preference to items 9 and 12: both these have been assigned equal mean of 4.43. This finding seems in line with the other most preference items of this study showing their liking for expert teachers. The female participants ranked the 1st questionnaire item the 3rd highest showing their liking for the teachers who are always well-prepared and organized revealing the psychological underpinning of Saudi EFL learners who always prefer expert teachers. This finding partially confirms Raymond (2008) who has reported medium preference for well-prepared and organized teachers by Arab preparatory year EFL learners.

Among the least preferred items, "an ideal English language teacher lectures for the entire class period" has been identified as the least preferred by both the groups who have allotted lowest value of around 3 to this item confirming the findings of Raymond (2008) who has reported that Arab EFL preparatory year students have also assigned an extremely low mean of only 2.22 to this quality. This finding is a healthy sign because it shows that Saudi EFL learners do not like their language teachers to deliver lecture but like those ones who ensure active learning by constantly engaging them in communicative activities that is highly recommended for effective and efficient language learning process. The same trend has been evident in the findings of Javid (2011) who has reported that Suadi EFL learners from the same academic context have preference for learning through engaging in discussion and by doing instead of just sitting and listening to the lectures of their teachers. The second least preferred item by the boys has been related to the teachers who give lots of test. The same has been disliked by the female cohort as well who ranked it the third least preferred quality of an ideal English language teacher. The finding is in line with much research that investigated Arab EFL learners' attitudes toward taking frequent quizzes and tests and has revealed that they do not like their teachers to give them many tests. According to the male participants, the 3rd least preferred teachers remained those who provide frequent, prompt and useful feedback whereas the teachers who use relevant course materials have been reported the 2nd least preferred by the female group of this study. The data analyses of the remaining items of this category have offered significant insights into the fact that Saudi EFL learners prefer professional qualities of English language teachers as evident by reasonably higher mean values assigned to them.

5 Findings and Recommendations
Data generated through the independent-samples t-test have revealed that Saudi EFL learners have reported quite higher liking for personality and professional characteristics of ideal English language teachers. In both these categories female participants have exhibited slightly higher values. The comparative analyses have also disclosed that there do not exist major statistically significant differences in the perceptions of male and female participants of this survey. Among the total 32 items of the questionnaire, significant differences exist for only 9 items: 6 in personality qualities and 3 in professional ones. The results of this survey partially accepts the hypothesis, "There will not be any gender-based significant differences between the perceptions of both groups regarding an ideal EFL teacher's qualities", set for this survey research. This clearly indicates that Saudi EFL learners have a high status of their teachers irrespective of their gender and it seems important for the teachers that they need to show professional qualities and exercise and exhibit high professional qualities while teaching and dealing with their Saudi EFL learners so that they are able to command proper respect from their students

and enable them to learn the target language effectively and efficiently.

It has also been found out that the following personality qualities of ideal English language teachers are highly appreciated by Saudi male and female EFL learners: An ideal English language teacher a) is willing to repeat explanation, b) is available to help students, c) welcomes students' opinion and suggestions, c) serves as a role model, and d) treats students as equal. As far the professional qualities are concerned, the results have reported that both male and female participants of this study appreciate those teachers the highest who a) have expert, up-to-date knowledge of their subjects, b) explain using simple language, c) answers questions correctly, d) give clear instructions, and e) are always well-prepared and organized. It has also been found out that Saudi EFL learners represented by the participants of this study do not like those EFL teachers who a) communicate with students in English, b) encourage students to answer other students' questions, c) make an effort to get to know the students, d) lectures for the entire class period, e) gives lots of tests, and f) provide frequent, prompt, and useful feedback.

It can be concluded that being an ideal teacher is not an easy job and it requires lots of deliberation, efforts, professional competence etc. to be liked by their students. There is no denying of the fact that it is a much sought after goal in pedagogy and all teachers should exert and exploit their best potential so that smooth learning of the target language may be realized properly. Ideal EFL teachers should have good personal and professional qualities. It is highly recommended that EFL faculty working in Saudi universities should try their level best to be available to help their students, be dedicated and committed, exhibit an exemplary attitudes, explain according to the level of their students, keep themselves abreast of the latest developments to ensure up-to-date knowledge of the subject, provide their students with clear instructions and accurate answers, exploit group/pair work effectively, use modern teaching aids and help their students to become independent learners. Finally, it may be said that those EFL English language teachers who have the ability to motivate and inspire their students through their personality and professional qualities to exploit their optimum potential to maximize their language learning possibilities.

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