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# Uncovering Student Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Characteristics of Effective EFL Teacher Educators

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The present study attempts to investigate effective EFL teacher educators from the perspective of student teachers. For this purpose, a survey design was employed to examine student teachers' perceptions regarding the characteristics of effective teacher educators using four attributes, namely: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, organisation and communication skills, and socio-affective skills. The questionnaire was administered online to 334 student teachers at the English Education Department. The data was analysed descriptively and the findings revealed student teachers have different perceptions on each attribute of effective EFL teacher educators. Several attributes were found to be comparatively more important than other attributes. The results of the study may enhance teacher educators' awareness concerning what makes them effective from the perspective of student teachers and improve their teaching quality.

**Key words:** *Student teacher, teacher educator, attribute of effective teacher, perception.*

## Introduction

An English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher educator is one of the essential components in effective learning and teaching (Zamani&Ahangari, 2016:70; Al-Issa, 2017:1). To achieve an effective learning and teaching atmosphere, we need to maintain a workforce of effective EFL teacher educators who create positive learning spaces that are conducive to learning (Arikan, Taser, &Suzer, 2008:43). Effective teacher educators is a must due to their position as role models for student teachers (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013:334). According to Zamani and Ahangari (2016:70), it is beneficial if teacher educators are aware of the characteristics student

teachers view as important for effective EFL teacher educators. Without such an understanding, teacher educators may run the risk of misleading and even impeding their students' professional learning and long-term development (Yuan & Hu: 2018:2). Therefore, it is worth investigating how EFL student teachers perceive the characteristics of effective EFL teacher educators.

## Literature Review

In university settings, Chen (2012: 213) found that an EFL teacher educator is one of the main factors that can influence students' achievement. According to Alimorad and Tajgojari (2016:1), the discrepancy between student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions can lead to some unanticipated mismatches in the actual practice of language teaching and may cause student dissatisfaction with learning outcomes.

The literature review shows that there are multidimensional perspectives on the attributes of effective EFL teacher educators proposed by a number of experts. When it comes to the concept of effective teacher educators, it is natural for EFL teacher educators to possess certain attributes of an effective teacher educator (Dincer, Goksu, Takkac, & Yazici, 2013:2).

For instance, Clark and Walsh (2002) found the common features that describe the qualities of effective teacher educators to be: strong discipline, content knowledge, pedagogical skills, personal knowledge; strong relationships with the students, and intimate knowledge of the context in which they are teaching.

Another perspective of the attributes is proposed by Faranda and Clarke (2004). They list effective EFL teachers and lecturers under five categories: rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organisation and preparation. Thompson, Greer, and Greer (2004) propose twelve common characteristics, they are: displaying fairness, having a positive outlook, being prepared, using a personal touch, possessing a sense of humour, possessing creativity, admitting mistakes, being forgiving, respecting students, maintaining high expectations, showing compassion, and developing a sense of belonging for students.

Park and Lee (2006), and Wichadee (2010), have proposed their concepts of effective EFL teacher educators in four categories of attributes. The first is subject matter knowledge, which deals with what language teachers know about their field of subjects. The second is pedagogical knowledge, which deals with language teachers' knowledge of how to teach their students. The third is socio-affective knowledge, which deals with language teachers' ability to interact with their students in communicative and effective ways. The last one is organisation and communication skills, which deals with language teachers' skills in preparing their teaching jobs.

From those perspectives of the attributes of effective EFL teacher educators, I can see the similarities and differences between the concepts of each expert in terms of the name of the category of attributes and components. Several of them mention different terminologies to describe effective EFL teachers but essentially mean the same thing.

A number of studies were conducted to investigate the characteristics of effective EFL teacher educators. For instance, Bell (2005) conducted a study on the behaviours and attitudes of effective EFL teacher educators. The study was aimed at finding out the perceptions of non-English teachers regarding the qualities of effective second language acquisition (SLA) teachers. Park and Lee (2006) investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers as perceived by teachers and students in high school in Korea using a self-report questionnaire under three factors: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills.

Another study was conducted by Khojastehmehr and Takrimi (2009). They conducted a study to investigate what EFL teacher educators' view as important characteristics of effective EFL teacher educators and to identify EFL teacher educators' effectiveness factors. The findings show that EFL teacher educators tend to represent a multidimensional construct into four factors: communication (social) skills, instructional strategies, personal characteristics, and knowledge. Koc (2012) investigated the characteristics of good language teachers as perceived by students. The findings of the study showed that the effective characteristics include being patient with what the students do, inspiring the students, fulfilling the students' needs, maintaining a good relationship with them, and establishing contact with their parents.

Barnes and Lock (2013) conducted a study in a Korean university and asked the students to write the attributes of effective EFL lecturers. The findings showed that the students prefer lecturers that understand the real situation in the class and identify the level of error correction, as well as possess sensitivity to students' self-esteem. However, Barnes and Lock (2010) failed to administer a rating questionnaire to gain the data on effective EFL teacher educators. They only employed a free writing instrument which asked respondents to write what they have in their mind in their own language about the attributes of effective EFL teacher educators.

Meanwhile, Afshar and Doosti (2014) investigated the characteristics of effective Iranian junior secondary school EFL teachers from both students' and teachers' perspectives in terms of their professional qualities, classroom management-related qualities, and interpersonal behaviours. Future quantitative research is needed to focus on the statistical differences between students' and teachers' perspectives of effective EFL teacher using a Likert-scale questionnaire.

In an Indonesian context, a study was carried out by Virgiyanti et al., (2016). They conducted a study to investigate the characteristics of effective English teachers based on junior high school students' and teachers' perceptions. The results of the study show that students perceived teachers' personal skills as of more importance than their use of English, pedagogical skill, interpersonal skills, assignment and assessment. They recommended future researchers to conduct similar studies at the university level involving university students in order to have more details and specific responses.

A more recent study was also carried out by Yuan and Hu (2018). They conducted an exploratory study on student teachers' view on the qualities of effective EFL teacher educators from the perspective of language teachers at a university in China. The findings show that the participants depicted effective teacher educators as rich in knowledge of the English language, possessing a sense of vision, engaging in continuous learning in order to update their expertise, emotional connected with their students, and sensitive to individual differences and needs.

Although many studies conducted on the issue of effective EFL teacher educators, studies related to perceptions of student teachers about effective EFL teacher educators are still limited in numbers. The discrepancy that might be bridged by the present study is the fact that the previous studies mostly focused on the teacher educators' perceptions on the secondary level. Meanwhile, few studies focus on student teachers' perceptions in the tertiary level. Thus, a further quantitative study is needed to investigate the perceptions of effective EFL teacher educators from the perspectives of student teachers in the tertiary level. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the characteristics of effective EFL teacher educators in a university context from the perspectives of student teachers using four attributes of effective teacher educators, namely subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, organisation and communication skills, and socio-affective skills.

## **Method**

This research was conducted in the English Education Study Program (*PS-PBI*) at both state and private universities in Indonesia. A survey research design was applied to find out the student teachers' perceptions about effective EFL teacher educators using the online questionnaire via Google Form. For the purpose of the present study, I adapted the research instrument, which was developed by Park and Lee (2006), and Wichadee (2010). These concepts cover the four attributes categories of effective EFL teachers, namely subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, organisation and communication skills, and socio-affective skills.

Research instruments were generated through a research instrument blueprint and the blueprint was reviewed by a panel of experts using an expert validation sheet. They were asked to



examine, validate, and provide comments and ideas in order to improve the research instrument, so that the instrument can be used accordingly. 334 student teachers participated in the present study who study at English Education Study program in Indonesia. Some of the criteria for selecting the student teachers are included as samples. First, they must be EFL student teachers (teacher candidate), second, they must be student teachers in their third-year (at semester six), and last, they must be active/registered student teachers at the time of gathering the data.

The measurement of student teachers' questionnaires was arranged by a four-point Likert scale from 1 to 4. The score 1 is the lowest point, which corresponds to the lowest quality of the attributes, meanwhile, score 4 is the highest point, and corresponds to the highest quality of the attributes of characteristics of effective EFL teacher educators. All data gathered was analysed descriptively to include the measurement of central tendency, variability, and standard deviation.

## **Results**

### ***The Student Teachers' Perceptions on Subject Matter Knowledge***

Subject matter knowledge is the first attribute category of effective EFL teacher educators that was asked in the questionnaire to student teachers. In this study, they were asked for their own perceptions about what they should master pertaining to subject matter knowledge in the aspects of four language skills and language components, as well as cultural awareness of the target language. The questionnaire analysis results of descriptive analysis on the subject matter knowledge shows the minimum score of student teachers' perceptions is 1.29, and the maximum score is 4.00. The mean score is 3.399, which with standard deviation is 0.569. Furthermore, the mean score of each item and the overall mean score of the student teachers' perceptions on subject matter knowledge can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1:** The Student Teachers' Perceptions on the Subject matter Knowledge

No	Statements	Student Teacher	
		Mean	Overall mean score
<b>1.1. Teacher educators master the four language skills:</b>			
3	Be able to read English well	3.55	<b>3.47</b>
5	Be able to write English well	3.39	
9	Be able to speak English well	3.48	
<b>1.2. Teacher educators master the language components (e.g. Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar):</b>			
4	Have a high level of proficiency with English vocabulary	3.16	<b>3.29</b>
7	Have good knowledge of English grammar	3.24	
10	Be able to pronounce English words correctly	3.45	
<b>1.3. Teacher educators have cultural awareness to target language:</b>			
1	Have cultural awareness of target language	3.53	<b>3.53</b>

Table 1 shows the overall mean score of the student teachers' perceptions in the three indicators on the first category of attribute of effective EFL teacher educators. In indicator 1 (Teacher educators master the four language skills), the overall mean score is 3.47. If we look at the details of the mean score of each item, we found that, 'be able to read English well' (item3), has the highest mean score all of the items (3.55). This is followed by item 9, 'be able to speak English' (3.48), and item 5 'be able to write English well' (3.39).

Moreover, regarding indicator 2 (Teacher educators master the language components, e.g. Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar), the overall mean score of student teacher is 3.29, which is lower than the overall mean score in the indicator 1. It is clearly seen that item 10, 'be able to pronounce English words' (3.45), has the highest mean score all of the items in indicator 2. Furthermore, item 7 'have a good knowledge of English grammar' is second in priority (3.24). Item 4, 'has a high level of proficiency with English vocabulary' (3.16), is the last priority for effective EFL teacher educators. Meanwhile, regarding indicator 3 (Teacher educators have cultural awareness to target language), item 1, 'has cultural awareness of target language,' has a mean score of 3.53.

From the results of the computation in the three indicators of subject matter knowledge, we can conclude that student teachers perceived ‘have cultural awareness to target language’ (3.53) as the most important characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators. This is followed by ‘teacher educators master the four language skills’ (3.47). Third is, ‘teacher educators master the language components’: e.g. Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar (3.29).

### ***The Student Teachers’ Perceptions on Pedagogical Knowledge***

Pedagogical knowledge deals with EFL teacher educators’ knowledge on how to teach the learning materials, including the appropriate approach, and the methods to increase student teachers’ participation in the learning and teaching process. In this study, they were asked their own perceptions about what they should master pertaining to pedagogical knowledge in the aspects of instructional process, classroom management, and their ability to use ICT in teaching. The minimum mean score of student teachers is 1.33, and the maximum score is 4.00. The mean score is 3.311 with a standard deviation of 0.512. Table 2 shows the mean score of each item and the overall mean score of the student teachers’ perceptions on pedagogical knowledge.

**Table 2:** The Student Teachers’ Perceptions on the Pedagogical Knowledge

No	Statements	Student Teacher	
		Mean	Overall mean score
<b>2.1. Teacher educators master the instructional process (e.g. planning, teaching, and assessing)</b>			
14	Teach English tailored to students’ English proficiency levels	3.17	<b>3.21</b>
15	Teach English by using English as a medium of instruction	3.19	
16	Assess what students have learned rationally	3.25	
<b>2.2. Teacher educators possess the classroom management</b>			
17	Teach English incorporating students’ various learning styles (e.g. interactive learning style)	3.34	<b>3.43</b>
19	Provide interesting activities for students in learning English	3.53	
<b>2.3. Teacher educators have the ability to use ICT in teaching</b>			
20	Be able to use audio-visual aids when teaching	3.39	<b>3.39</b>

Table 2 shows the overall mean score of the student teachers' perceptions in the three indicators on the second category of attribute of effective EFL teacher educators. Regarding indicator 1 (Teacher educators master the instructional process, e.g. planning, teaching, and assessing), the overall mean score is 3.21. It is clearly seen from the mean score of each item that item 16, 'assess what students have learned rationally,' has the highest mean score (3.25), followed by item 15, 'teach English by using English as a medium of instruction (3.19), and then item 14 'teach English tailored to students' English proficiency levels,' which is 3.17.

Furthermore, regarding indicator 2 (Teacher educators possess the classroom management), the overall mean score is 3.43, which is higher than the overall mean score of indicator 1. Item 19, 'provide interesting activities for students in learning English' (3.53), is considered to be the highest mean score and is the priority for effective EFL teacher educators. Item 17, 'teach English incorporating students' various learning styles, e.g. interactive learning style' (3.34), follows. Meanwhile, regarding indicator 3 (Teacher educators have the ability to use ICT in teaching), item 20 'be able to use audio-visual aids when teaching (3.39), is also important.

The findings from the three indicators on the pedagogical knowledge revealed classroom management as the highest priority to become effective EFL teacher educators (3.43). Teacher educators have the ability to use ICT in teaching is the second characteristic of effective EFL teacher educator (3.39). This is followed by 'Teacher educators master the instructional process, e.g. planning, teaching, and assessing (3.21) as the third important characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators.

### ***The Student Teachers' Perceptions on Organisation and Communication Skills***

Organisation and communication skills refer to the knowledge of teacher educators regarding how they organise their instructions and communication. In this study, they were asked for their own perceptions about what they should master pertaining to organisation and communication skills in the aspects of their ability to organise the instruction effectively. The minimum score of student teachers' perceptions is 1.50, and the maximum score is 4.00. It shows that the mean score of student teachers is 3.497 with a standard deviation of 0.501. Table 3 shows the mean score of each item and the overall mean score of the student teachers' perceptions on organisation and communication skills.

**Table 3:** The Student Teachers' Perceptions on the Organisation and Communication Skills

No	Statements	Student Teacher	
		Mean	Overall mean score
<b>3.1. Teacher educators possess the ability to organise the instruction effectively</b>			<b>3.45</b>
21	Guide and train students towards independent learning	3.26	
23	Make courses interesting to attract students' attention	3.58	
24	Provide opportunities to use English through meaningful tasks and activities	3.45	
25	Emphasise the most important points of the materials	3.38	
27	Prepare appropriate materials	3.55	
<b>3.2. Teacher educators must be able to communicate effectively with student teachers</b>			<b>3.57</b>
22	Use easy language to help student understand the lesson	3.58	
28	Have good communication skills	3.57	
30	Maintain good classroom atmosphere	3.57	

Table 3 shows the overall mean score of the student teachers' perceptions regarding two indicators in the third category of attributes for effective EFL teacher educators. In indicator 1 (Teacher educators possess the ability to organise the instruction effectively), the overall mean score is 3.45. If we look at the details of the mean score of each item, we found that the item 23, 'make courses interesting to attract students' attention,' has the highest mean score (3.58), then item 27, 'prepare appropriate materials' (3.55), followed by item 24, 'provide opportunities to use English through meaningful tasks and activities,' which is at 3.17. Item 25, 'emphasise the most important points of the materials' (3.38), and item 21 'guide and train students towards independent learning' (3.26), came after.

Moreover, in indicator 2 (Teacher educators must be able to communicate effectively with student teachers) the overall mean score is higher (3.57) than the overall mean score of indicator 1. Moreover, in indicator 2, the mean score of the item 22, 'use easy language to help student understand the lesson' (3.58), is the highest mean score and is considered as the most important characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators. Meanwhile, both item 28, 'have good communication skills,' and the item 30 'maintain good classroom atmosphere' have the same mean score (3.57).

The findings from the two indicators on organisation and communication skills revealed that indicator 2, ‘teacher educators must be able to communicate effectively with student teachers,’ has the highest priority in becoming an effective EFL teacher educator (3.57). The second priority is indicator 1, ‘teacher educators possess the ability to organise the instruction effectively’ (3.45).

### ***The Student Teachers’ Perceptions on Socio-affective Skills***

Socio-affective skills concern EFL teacher educators’ interaction with their students in the class. In this study, they were asked their own perceptions about what they must perform, pertaining to the socio-affective skills regarding their ability to perform with a good attitude in interacting with student teachers, their ability to fully motivate, encourage, and reduce students’ anxiety. The minimum score of student teachers’ perceptions is 1.35, and the maximum score is 4.00. Meanwhile, the mean score of student teachers is 3.488 with a standard deviation of 0.530. Table 4 shows the mean score of each item and the overall mean score of the student teachers’ perceptions on socio-affective skills.

**Table 4:** The Student Teachers’ Perceptions on the Socio-affective Skills

No	Statements	Student Teacher	
		Mean	Overall mean score
<b>4.1. Teacher educators must be able to perform with a good attitude in interacting with student teachers</b>			<b>3.49</b>
35	Be friendly to students	3.64	
36	Have a good sense of humour	3.34	
<b>4.2. Teacher educators must be able to fully motivate, encourage, and reduce students’ anxiety</b>			<b>3.49</b>
39	Have interest in students (e.g. remembering students’ names) and students’ English learning	3.49	

Table 4 shows the overall mean score of the student teachers’ perceptions in the two indicators on the fourth attribute category of effective EFL teacher educators. Unlike the first, second, and the third category, the student teachers in the fourth category have the same mean score in indicator 1 (Teacher educators must be able to perform a good attitude in interacting with student teachers) (3.49) as indicator 2 (Teacher educators must be able to fully motivate, encourage, and reduce students’ anxiety) (3.49). However, they have a different mean score in each item within the indicators. It is clearly seen from the mean score of each item that item 35, ‘be friendly to students,’ has the highest mean score (3.64), which is followed by item 39,

‘have interest in students (e.g. remembering students’ names) and students’ English learning’ (3.49), and then item 36, ‘have a good sense of humour’ (3.34).

From the results of the analysis, we can conclude that student teachers saw item 35, ‘be friendly to students,’ as the most important characteristic. Meanwhile, ‘have interest in students (e.g. remembering students’ names) and students’ English learning’ (item 39) is the second important. ‘Have a good sense of humour’ (item 26) is the least important characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators.

## Discussion

### *The Perceptions about the Subject matter Knowledge*

The findings of the present study revealed that student teachers have positive perceptions about the attributes of effective EFL teacher educators. However, several attributes were found to be comparatively more important than others. For instance, in indicator 1 (teacher educators should master four language skills) of subject matter knowledge, the findings showed that student teachers perceived mastering reading skill (item 3) as the most important skill, rather than mastering speaking and writing skills. This finding may imply that student teachers attach great importance to the reading skill of EFL teacher educators.

The results of the present study supports the finding of the previous study performed by Celik, Arikan & Carner (2013), who found that the most important qualities of an effective language teacher are reading, speaking, and writing. Thus, it is very important for teacher educators to master subject matter knowledge, because they must be able to explain the subject or materials to be taught in the classroom clearly, so that students will understand their lesson comprehensively. However, the result of the present study does not support the previous finding of Yageioglu (2016), which was that students perceived an effective English language teacher as someone who is able to teach speaking as more important than being able to teach pronunciation, grammar, reading, and listening.

Unlike indicator 1, in indicator 2 (teacher educators should master the language components) of subject matter knowledge, student teachers perceived the most important attribute of effective EFL teacher educators as being able to pronounce English words correctly (item 10), which was followed by have good knowledge of English grammar (item 7), and have a high level of proficiency with English vocabulary (item 4). In indicator 3 (teacher educators should have cultural awareness to target language) of subject matter knowledge, the finding shows that student teachers perceived that effective EFL teacher educators should have cultural awareness of the target language. Although student teachers have different perceptions in each mean score in every item and indicator, they agree that teacher educators should have cultural

awareness of the target language before everything else. Master the four language skills was second. Master the language components was the third priority for becoming effective EFL teacher educators.

Since English is the subject matter of foreign language teaching, language proficiency and communicative ability in English is a necessary pre-requisite for a language teacher (Richards, 1997). Apart from the teachers' capability, mastery of subject matter knowledge has a close relationship to the teacher educators' professionalism (Amin, 2013: 72). Indeed, subject matter knowledge is closely related to a teachers' capacity. In relation to the description of teacher capacities, McDiarmid and Clevenger (2008) states that subject matter knowledge is one important element of teacher knowledge, in addition to pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum, learning theory, motivation, and assessment. With regard to teacher effectiveness, it has been shown that mastery of the subject matter positively affects students learning (Darling, 2000; Darling, et al., 2001; Stronge, 2007).

### ***The Perceptions about the Pedagogical Knowledge***

In indicator 1 (teacher educators should master instructional process, e.g. planning, teaching, and assessing) of pedagogical knowledge, the finding showed that 'assess what students have learned rationally' (item 16) is ranked by student teachers as a more important characteristic of effective teacher educators than 'teach English by using English as a medium of instruction' (item 15), and 'teach English tailored to students' English proficiency levels' (item 14).

Based on the finding in indicator 2 (teacher educators possess the classroom management) of pedagogical knowledge, it was revealed that student teachers perceived 'provide interesting activities for students in learning English' (item 19) as a more essential characteristic of effective teacher educators than 'teach English incorporating various learning styles, e.g. interactive learning style' (item 17).

Furthermore, in indicator 3 (teacher educators have the ability to use ICT in teaching), it was revealed that 'being able to use audio-visual aids when teaching' (item 20) is viewed as an important characteristic of an effective EFL teacher educator by student teachers. In fact, nowadays, students like to make use of technology platforms in their learning activities, such as YouTube, and videos because those platforms may enhance their learning abilities and outcomes. As was found in Kulaib's study (2016: 71), using technologies may arouse student's interest in learning and drive students' attention inside the classroom.

Student teachers perceived that teacher educators should possess classroom management skills as the most important attribute of effective EFL teacher educators, 'have the ability to use ICT



in teaching' as the second most important, and master the instructional process (e.g. planning and teaching) as the third.

### ***The Perceptions about the Organisation and Communication Skills***

In indicator 1 (teacher educators possess the ability to organise the instruction effectively) of organisation and communication skills, student teachers highlighted 'make courses interesting to attract students' attention' (item 23) as the most important attribute of effective EFL teacher educators. Moreover, 'prepare appropriate material' (item27) is the second priority, which was followed by provide opportunities to use English through meaningful tasks and activities in third, 'emphasise the most important points of the materials' (item25) in fourth, and 'guide and train students towards independent learning' (item 21) as the last priority of effective EFL teacher educators.

Similar findings were found in the study conducted by Kolo (2006: 114), in which questions were raised as to the suitability of material, their adaptability, and the need for supplementary resources. Learning materials should be interesting and not monotonous, not too short and not too long. The result of the present study and Kolo's study (2006) confirm that it is very necessary for teacher educators to select and develop appropriate learning materials according to content and skills, deliver it in interesting ways, and provide a variety of learning tasks or activities which allow students be involved and engaged in learning activities.

In indicator 2 (teacher educators must be able to communicate effectively with students) of organisation and communication skills, student teachers perceived 'use easy language to help student understand the lesson' (item 22) as the most important characteristic of effective teacher educators. Meanwhile, student teachers rated 'have good communication skills' (item28) and 'maintain good classroom atmosphere' (item30) at the same degree of importance of effective EFL teacher educators.

The findings showed that student teachers perceived that teacher educators must be able to communicate effectively with student teachers as the most important attribute of effective EFL teacher educators, and teacher educators must be able to communicate effectively with student teachers as the second priority to become effective EFL teacher educators.

### ***The Perceptions about the Socio-affective Skills***

In indicator 1 (teacher educators possess must be able to perform a good attitude in interacting with student teachers) of socio-affective skills, student teachers perceive being friendly to students as the most important attribute of effective EFL teacher educators. This is in line with

Berline's study (2000) that developing a friendly relationship with students increases a teacher's effectiveness.

A similar finding was found by Yageioglu (2016: 87), who stated that being friendly is an important quality of an effective English language teacher. With regard to the present finding, a number of studies revealed similar results and showed the importance of being friendly (Arikan, Taser & Suzer, 2008; Shishavan, & Sadegi, 2009; and Celik, Arkan & Caner, 2013). In addition to this characteristic, student teachers perceived a good sense of humour as the second most important characteristic to be possessed by EFL teacher educators.

Another similar finding can be observed in Puspita's study (2013: 73) that students want to have teachers who always smile and are fun to be with. When a teacher has the ability to break the ice in difficult situations in the classroom with humour, it can create an interesting atmosphere in the classroom. This finding is also line with McDermott and Rothenberg's statement (2000) that students enjoy teachers with a good sense of humour and found they made learning fun.

Meanwhile, in indicator 2 (teacher educators must be able to fully motivate, encourage, and reduce students' anxiety) of socio-affective skills, student teachers perceived having an interest in students (e.g. remembering students' names), and students' English learning as the most important attributes of effective EFL teacher educators. Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by Park and Lee (2006). They stated that the professional qualities and classroom behaviours that should be possessed by EFL teachers include reducing students' anxiety, and knowing students' names.

Unlike the three categories of attributes of effective EFL teacher educators (subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and organisation and communication skills), the result of quantitative data on socio-affective skills showed that student teachers shared the same perceptions on the average mean score in the two indicators (3.49) respectively.

The finding of the present study revealed being friendly to students, possessing a good sense of humour, and having an interest in students and their learning are considered important by student teachers. It is evidence that socio-affective skills are highly rated as an important characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings and discussion, several conclusions can be put forwarded pertaining to student teachers' perceptions about effective EFL teacher educators. The student teachers perceived that teacher educators should possess cultural awareness as the most important



characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators. Meanwhile, in regards to pedagogical knowledge, student teachers perceived that teacher educators should possess the classroom management as the most important characteristic of effective EFL teacher educators. Furthermore, in the attribute of organisation and communication skills, student teachers perceived being able to communicate effectively with student teachers as the most important characteristic of effective teacher educators. The data findings in the attribute of socio-affective skills showed that student teachers share the same perceptions on this category of attribute.

To EFL teacher educators, bearing in mind the importance of teacher educators' roles and responsibilities in the teaching and learning process, it is recommended that EFL teacher educators understand what student teachers expect from them in order to accommodate student teachers' learning needs and attain the goals of foreign language teaching. In fact, what teacher educators' think might be different from what their students' perceive as important. Therefore, it is highly recommended that teacher educators conduct some self-reflection about their own characteristics, which in turn will enhance their professional practice and the effectiveness of language teacher education.

To student teachers, since they are going to be EFL teachers in the future, it is highly recommended that they observe and comprehend the attributes of effective teachers because having a comprehensive knowledge of the characteristics of effective teachers will positively contribute to their perception as an effective teacher and may allow them to improve their teaching quality in the future.



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