

## Perceptions of Effective TEFL Instructors' Qualities: A Survey of Cambodian University TEFL Instructors

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 2023-07-02

Revised 2023-07-06

Accepted 2023-07-07

#### Keywords:

TEFL

Qualifications

Content Knowledge

Pedagogical Knowledge

Personal Characteristics

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### ABSTRACT

In Cambodia, English is adopted as a medium of instruction and a major subject at universities, but teaching English can be a challenge in Cambodia as most learners are not proficient. Some English classes are taught by fresh graduates with less teaching experience while, even seriously, some instructors teach subjects beyond their field, leading to poor learning. As instructors' qualities are generally key to effective teaching and learning, this study surveyed 30 TEFL instructors at three universities in Phnom Penh. The study used a Google form to collect instructors' perceptions of five main domains: instructors' qualifications, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and personal and interpersonal characteristics. The findings reveal higher mean scores for almost all items and overall mean scores for each domain. The results indicate that the instructors positively perceived these qualities of effective TEFL instructors. The findings can be employed as criteria for TEFL instructors and can inform universities to develop human resources with these aspects or elements when selecting English instructors. Therefore, such criteria can ensure the recruitment of TEFL instructors while TEFL instructors must improve themselves to have these qualities and other attributes for their practical teaching.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

English as a medium of instruction has grown in popularity, especially at higher education institutions that accept foreign faculty members, researchers, and students from diverse linguistic backgrounds [1]. English language teaching has received much attention in many countries. It is no exception in Cambodia, where English has gained its privileged status since the early 1990s [2], [3]. Furthermore, English is now a popular medium of instruction and a core subject in most Cambodian higher education institutions (HEIs) due to the ever-increasing demand for English language proficiency in the labor market [1], [3].

Although English has been adopted broadly across Cambodian school and university curricula, many Cambodian students have significant challenges in English learning and teaching [4]. According to the study conducted by Em [2], the main problems in English learning in Cambodia may include instructors' qualities, study programs, learning and teaching materials, classroom activities, class size, and students' self-learning attitudes. Another similar qualitative study with 24 stakeholders in Cambodia [5] found several challenges faced by instructors and students at university. These comprise a lack of appropriate English for Specific Purpose (ESP) training for teachers, teacher motivation, students' limited English proficiency, and challenges in materials development [5]. These daunting challenges prevent instructors and students from successfully teaching and learning.

Instructors' qualities and characteristics can be seen as crucial to effective teaching and learning as the role of instructors in teaching and learning is of great importance to influence learners' learning achievements [6]–[8]. Generally, regardless of the field of study, instructors are central to a classroom's teaching and learning process [8], and they must have special qualities, personal characteristics, and responsibilities regarding their educational role [5]. For example, instructors' subject-matter expertise correlates with students' learning outcomes [9], suggesting that instructors must have expertise with an appropriate education qualification or degree in a particular subject of study. Moreover, they must have pedagogical knowledge and skills through proper pedagogical training or teacher education [10]. Another quality of instructors is their characteristics correlated with job satisfaction and students' academic achievements [11], [12].

Teaching English effectively requires English instructors to have certain qualities. For instance, English instructors must be multilingual and multicultural, knowledgeable about the history and development of the language, attentive to the local context, and aware of students' specific English communicative needs and goals [3]. Otherwise, this may make it hard to achieve ultimate learning goals. Therefore, instructors' qualities are essential to teaching effectiveness and contribute to students' learning success [8].

In Cambodia, many studies have been conducted on the quality of education and teachers [5], problems and challenges in English teaching and learning in Cambodian education [3] and [4], and other English-related issues [5], [13], [14]. Following the previous literature in and out of the Cambodian context while aiming to contribute to further understanding of teaching English as a foreign language, this paper looks at five domains of TEFL instructors' qualities using a small survey with 30 Cambodian university instructors in Phnom Penh. These qualities include instructors' qualifications [12], [15], content knowledge [16], pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical skills [17], and personalities and characteristics. Additionally, employing the survey of TEFL instructors' perceptions of their essential qualities and characteristics, the paper provides insight into better recruitment and development of effective TEFL instructors for university teaching and learning in Cambodia. Sey and Em [18] addressed that teachers and students were not yet ready for modern learning and teaching tools.

Instructors must have certain qualities or characteristics for their practical teaching. These qualities include qualifications, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge,

pedagogical skills, and personal and interpersonal characteristics. Without such qualities, teaching and learning may be meaningless or unsuccessful.

### **Teaching qualifications**

A teaching qualification here means a certain level of education and training an instructor obtains from post-secondary education institutions. Simply put, it is a degree in a specific field of study, including a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree, with the latter being regarded as advanced degrees that an instructor holds for a teaching profession. A common practice is that instructors must at least possess a Bachelor's degree in a particular field of study to be qualified for a teaching profession at a university. Holding a higher academic degree means instructors receive profound knowledge and skills throughout advanced learning degrees. In other words, the higher degree of education and training an instructor has can also mean the higher or better students will achieve in their learning [15]. However, according to Aina and Olanipekun's [19] review of teachers' qualifications and students' academic achievement in Nigerian schools, teachers' formal education is imperative but inconclusive in determining or explaining students' learning success.

### **Content knowledge**

To teach English or other subjects effectively, instructors must have a clear understanding or good knowledge of their subject, called subject content knowledge. Content knowledge encompasses what [16] called the structure of knowledge—theories, principles, and concepts of a particular discipline. More importantly, content knowledge deals with the teaching process, including the most valuable forms of representing and communicating content and how students best learn a subject's specific concepts and topics. Instructors who know their study subjects are believed to teach them better [20]. Some online platforms are also difficult for teachers and students [21]. Instructors need to be trained and well-used these online resources to help students.

English instructors also need more than content knowledge, as suggested by Lee [17]. They need to have pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which is “the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” [17]. In other words, PCK is referred to how teachers interpret and transform their subject-matter knowledge for dealing with or facilitating student learning [22].

### **Pedagogical knowledge**

Instructors must integrate pedagogical knowledge with subject matter knowledge to effectively teach a subject [23]. Good pedagogical knowledge allows instructors to choose suitable instructional tactics and strategies to teach English or other subjects successfully. Bell [24] claims that teaching a foreign language like English is a difficult, multifaceted process that requires teachers to be clear and enthusiastic in their instruction so that they can give their students the grammatical, lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge and interactive practice they need to communicate effectively in the target

language. Thus, pedagogical knowledge, including principles and strategies of classroom management and organization, knowledge of teaching methods, knowledge of classroom assessment, knowledge of learning processes, and knowledge of individual student characteristics, is a must, and instructors need to go through proper pedagogical training or teacher education to gain good pedagogical knowledge and skills [14]. Regarding teaching methods, for example, Sajjad [25] study revealed that most of the students rated a lecture method as the best teaching method but rather suitable for large class sizes. Reasons could be that instructors provide all knowledge related to topics, which is a time-saving method, and students listen to lectures attentively and take notes. The group discussion was rated as the second-best method of teaching that induces more participation of students, makes learning more effective, reduces dependency on teacher roles, and develops creativity among students.

### **Pedagogical skills**

Teaching requires instructors to have various skills to accomplish teaching objectives, which demands deep pedagogical knowledge and skills. According to Benson [26], pedagogical skills comprise all teaching techniques and strategies that make classroom teaching or lessons effective. They are practical tools that make the transformation and understanding of subject matter easier while teaching possible. Consequently, pedagogical skills help students learn about a subject with interest, engage in active learning, enhance their abilities, stay on target, and participate in classroom interactions [26]. The instructors' pedagogical skills help them create various ways to transform and interpret the subject matter for the learners. Interestingly, another case study by Sey [27] indicated that most instructors and students found a lot of challenges in teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instructors should have been well-prepared for their pedagogical skills.

### **Personal and interpersonal characteristics**

Another quality of instructors is their characteristics correlated with job satisfaction and students' academic achievements [11], [12]. Instructors' interpersonal characteristics or personalities are critical to successful teaching and learning. Students ranked TEFL instructors' personal qualities, such as enthusiasm, creativity, and fairness in their decisions, as more critical than pedagogical skills, including error correction techniques, use of technology, ability to teach language skills, and classroom management. Thus, teachers must ensure a comfortable learning environment for positive student-instructor interaction [28]. Students opted for an instructor's upbeat personality, although instructors must have mastery of the target language, accurate pedagogical knowledge, and the ability to use specified techniques and methods was important for instructors [29].

### **Theoretical framework**

Figure 1 below shows a theoretical framework of the study. This framework consists of 5 critical elements of effective TEFL instructors – instructors' qualifications, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and personal and interpersonal characteristics.

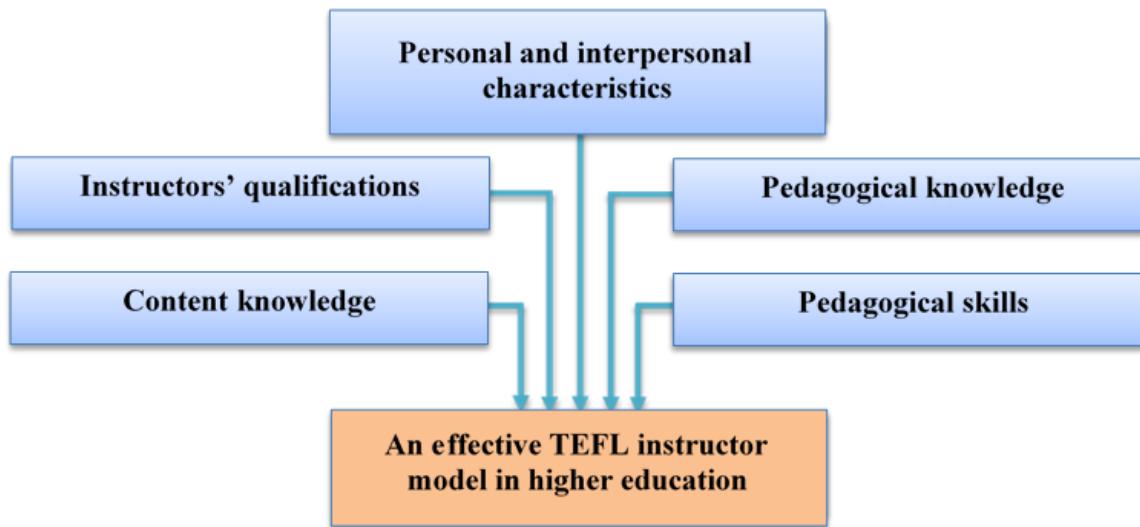


Figure 1: Theoretical framework of the study

Source: Author's framework based on previous studies

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a survey design to investigate Cambodian university instructors' perceptions of effective TEFL instructors in Phnom Penh. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the community, physical data collection was impossible. Thus, the researcher developed his questionnaire using a Google Form platform to collect the quantitative data. The Google Form link was sent to TEFL program administrators so they could send it to the English instructors via chat groups.

The study surveyed 30 TEFL instructors from three universities located in Phnom Penh. The researcher selected these universities based on the following criteria: (1) participating in the mock institutional accreditation from the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) in 2017, (2) having operated for at least ten years, and (3) currently having year-four students majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

In this study, the structured questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale survey based on the literature review of effective instructors' qualities and characteristics. The scale ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). It contains 49 items separated into five sections, including instructors' qualifications (4 items), content knowledge (8 items), pedagogical knowledge (10 items), pedagogical skills (14 items), and personal and interpersonal characteristics (13 items). It took about 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After the data collection was finished, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha test to test the items in the questionnaire. Noted that 30 instructors participated in this study; however, there were only 29 respondents in some sections because respondents did not submit the questionnaire on time. The test result was  $\alpha=0.90$ , suggesting the internal reliability of the questionnaire items, which means the questionnaire is acceptable.

Stata 14.0 was used as statistical software for data analysis. This study used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of the sample (number of observations) to present the research findings based on instructors' perceptions of effective TEFL instructors in five tables. The tables include the results of Obs (observations), Mean (average), SD (standard deviation), Min (minimum), and Max (maximum).

### 3. RESULTS

The following section presents key findings of instructors' perceptions of adequate English language instructors using the following criteria: instructors' qualifications, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and personal and interpersonal characteristics.

#### 3.1. Perceptions of Instructors' Qualifications

Table 1 presents the results of the respondents' perceptions of instructors' qualifications. According to this table, the instructors reported one low mean score on Item 1 with (mean=2.55, SD=1.35), while the other items were reported from a moderate (Item 3 with the mean=3.66 and SD=1.01) to the highest score (Item 2 with the mean=4.41 and SD=0.63). The results mean that the instructors perceived that English instructors should have a higher degree or qualification to teach English. Thus, instructors with a Bachelor's degree qualification should not teach a Bachelor's program. With the overall mean score of 3.66 and SD=1.07, the instructors had a positive perception of instructors' qualifications, reflecting that the higher qualifications they have, the better they can teach English in the classroom.

Table 1. Respondents' perceptions of instructors' qualifications

Item	Criterion 1: Instructors' Qualifications	Description				
		Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>An effective English language instructor should:</b>						
1	Graduate with a Bachelor's degree in English-related major to teach Bachelor's degree.	29	2.55	1.35	1	5
2	Graduate with a Master's degree in English-related major to teach Bachelor's degree.	29	4.41	0.63	3	5
3	Graduate with a Master's degree in English-related major to teach Bachelor's and Master's degrees.	29	3.66	1.01	2	5
4	Graduate with a Doctoral degree to teach Bachelor's and Master's degrees.	29	4.00	1.31	1	5
<b>Overall</b>			<b>3.66</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>5</b>

*Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest, Min = Minimum and Max = Maximum*

*Note: One respondent is missing.*

#### 3.2. Perceptions of Instructors' content knowledge

Table 2 shows the results of the instructors' perceptions of their content knowledge. As shown in the table below, the mean score of each item was at least between 4.00 and 4.40. Item 1 had the highest mean score of 4.39 among all items, followed by Item 1 with a mean of 4.24 and Item 3 with a mean of 4.21. Items 1, 2, and 3 were rated with the highest mean score between 4.21 and 5.00. These highest mean scores strongly suggested that the instructors should have sound knowledge of English grammar, a broad vocabulary of the English language, and familiarity with language learning theories for their practical teaching. For other items, the mean of Item 7 was 4.00, the lowest mean score in the table.

Items 4, 5, and 8 had a mean of 4.07, 4.11, and 4.11, respectively. Item 6's mean score was 4.17 higher than those of Items 4, 5, 7, and 8, noticeably indicating that such fluency in English is crucial for instructors to teach English. The overall mean score was 4.16, with a standard deviation of 0.74 in the high mean score range. According to the results with the overall high score as shown in the table, the instructors need to hold highly comprehensive content knowledge of any subjects they teach as the eight items of qualities in the table below were perceived highly positively.

Table 2. Respondents' perceptions of instructors' content knowledge

Item	Criterion 2: Content Knowledge	Description				
		Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>An effective English language instructor should:</b>						
1	Have sound knowledge of English grammar.	29	4.24	0.83	2	5
2	Have a broad vocabulary of the English language.	28	4.39	0.69	2	5
3	Be familiar with language learning theories.	29	4.21	0.77	1	5
4	Have good knowledge of all English features.	28	4.07	0.72	2	5
5	Be qualified in four macro-skills.	28	4.11	0.69	2	5
6	Be fluent in the English language.	29	4.17	0.80	2	5
7	Be able to answer students' questions.	29	4.00	0.76	2	5
8	Be able to identify the student's learning styles.	28	4.11	0.69	2	5
		<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>5</b>

*Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest, Min = Minimum and Max = Maximum*

*Note: One or two respondents are missing.*

### 3.3. Perceptions of Instructors' pedagogical knowledge

Table 3 below indicates the results of the instructors' perceptions of their pedagogical knowledge for their English teaching. The table contains ten items of the instructors' pedagogical knowledge. The overall mean score was 3.99 with a standard deviation of 0.71, which was relatively high in rank. Items 1 and 8 were rated moderately, with a means of 3.21 and 3.31, respectively. The items with the highest mean scores were Item 3 (mean=4.39 and SD=0.57) and Item 2 (mean=4.36 and SD=0.68), followed by Item 9 (mean=4.24 and SD=0.83) and Item 7 (mean=4.21 and SD=0.49). These top-4 rated items stress the essential elements of the instructors' pedagogical knowledge in English teaching, as described in the table below. The four high-rated items included Items 4, 5, 6, and 10, reflecting the importance of having such qualities that the instructors should have for their English teaching career. According to the results shown in the table, all items except Items 1 and 8 were scored between the high and highest score ranges. As the results illustrated here, the instructors must have the following qualities or elements of pedagogical knowledge for their English teaching. Otherwise, the quality of their English teaching may not be achieved, and students may complain about their instructors' teaching in and out of the classroom.

Table 3. Respondents' perceptions of instructors' pedagogical knowledge

Item	Criterion 3: Pedagogical knowledge	Description				
		Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>An effective English language instructor should:</b>						
1	Be knowledgeable about modern technology in instruction.	29	3.21	0.90	2	5
2	Be knowledgeable about the subject matter.	28	4.36	0.68	2	5
3	Be very flexible and easily adapts lesson as needed.	28	4.39	0.57	3	5
4	Be aware of classroom rules and apply those rules.	29	4.03	0.42	3	5
5	Be able to describe the fundamental principles of the effective lesson plan.	29	4.00	0.71	2	5
6	Be able to explain what a deductive/inductive teaching approach is.	29	4.07	0.59	3	5
7	Be knowledgeable about strategies for evaluating students' understanding.	29	4.21	0.49	3	5
8	Be knowledgeable about the nature of the target audience.	29	3.31	1.14	1	4
9	Be knowledgeable about teaching and learning techniques or methods used in the classroom.	29	4.24	0.83	1	5
10	Make content relevant to students.	29	4.10	0.72	2	5
		<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest, Min = Minimum and Max = Maximum

Note: One or two respondents are missing.

### 3.4. Perceptions of Instructors' pedagogical skills

Table 4. Respondents' perceptions of instructors' pedagogical skills

Item	Criterion 4: Pedagogical skills	Description				
		Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>An effective English language instructor should:</b>						
1	Provide clear course orientation at the beginning of the course.	30	4.33	0.84	1	5
2	Prepare course syllabuses and assignment topics for the academic courses s/he teaches.	30	4.20	0.89	1	5
3	Arrange the chairs in different styles according to the task provided.	30	3.97	0.67	2	5
4	Use a deductive teaching approach (forms to meanings) in the teaching process.	30	3.43	1.14	2	5
5	Use an inductive teaching approach (meanings to forms) in the teaching process.	29	3.86	0.83	2	5
6	Use modern technology in instruction.	30	4.17	0.53	3	5
7	Use a student-centered approach to teaching English	29	4.21	0.77	2	5
8	Make eye contact while talking to the students.	30	4.27	0.94	1	5
9	Use English as a medium of instruction.	30	4.13	0.68	2	5
10	Use explicit correction when students make mistakes.	30	3.10	1.30	1	5
11	Use a recast correction when students make mistakes.	30	3.53	0.90	2	5
12	Give clear instructions for practice activities.	30	4.40	0.56	3	5
13	Manage the class time well.	30	4.43	0.50	4	5
14	Create enjoyable learning environments.	30	4.50	0.57	3	5
		<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>5</b>

*Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest, Min = Minimum and Max = Maximum*

*Note: All 30 participants responded.*

Table 4 above shows the results of the respondents' perceptions of instructors' pedagogical skills. This table consists of 14 items. Based on the results, six items (1, 7, 8, 12, 13, and 14) were rated with the highest mean scores, ranging from 4.21 to 4.50. For example, Item 14 had a mean of 4.5 with a standard deviation of 0.57, followed by Item 13 (mean=4.43 and SD=0.50), Item 13 (mean=4.40 and SD=0.56 and Item 1 (mean=4.33 and SD=0.84). These six items illustrate the must-have qualities of effective TEFL instructors at university. There were other seven highly-scored items including Item 2 (mean=4.20 and SD=0.89), Item 6 (mean=4.17 and SD=0.53), Item 9 (mean=4.13 and SD=0.68), Item 3 (mean=3.97 and SD=0.67), Item 5 (mean=3.86 and SD=0.83), Item 11 (mean=3.53 and SD=0.90), and Item 4 (mean=3.43 and SD=1.14). These items were also perceived highly positively that instructors should have for their teaching career. The item with the average mean score in the table was Item 10, with a mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.30.

The overall average score of all items was 4.04, with a standard deviation of 0.80. The results indicate that the instructors rated the items highly, except for Item 10. With these high mean scores for almost all items, instructors should develop or have such critical pedagogical skills as shown in the table.

### 3.5. Perceptions of Instructors' Personal and interpersonal characteristics

Table 5. Respondents' Perceptions of Instructors' Personal and interpersonal characteristics

Item	Criterion 5: Personal and interpersonal characteristics	Description				
		Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>An effective English language instructor should:</b>						
1	Be punctual.	30	4.73	0.45	4	5
2	Be patient.	30	4.57	0.57	3	5
3	Be open-minded.	30	4.63	0.49	4	5
4	Be fair.	30	4.67	0.48	4	5
5	Be approachable to students.	30	4.50	0.57	3	5
6	Be interested in his/her career.	30	4.60	0.56	3	5
7	Be humorous.	30	4.03	0.81	2	5
8	Be motivating.	30	4.63	0.56	3	5
9	Be friendly.	30	4.40	0.50	4	5
10	Be responsible for effective teaching and learning.	30	4.67	0.48	4	5
11	Be hard-working.	30	4.53	0.57	3	5
12	Be well-dressed.	30	4.37	0.56	3	5
13	Be experienced.	30	4.60	0.50	4	5
		<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>5</b>

*Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest, Min = Minimum and Maximum*

*Note: No missing respondents.*

Table 5 presents the results of 13 items of instructors' personal and interpersonal characteristics based on the instructors' responses. Based on the results, all items except

Item 7 were scored with the highest mean score range between 4.35 and 4.75. The top-6 rated items included Item 1 (mean=4.73 and SD=0.45), Items 4 and 10 (the same mean=4.67 and SD=0.48), Item 3 (mean=4.63 and SD=0.49), Item 6 (mean=4.60 and SD=0.56), and Item 13 (mean=4.60 and SD=0.50). These highest mean scores characterize good personalities and characteristics of effective TEFL instructors. Item 7 was perceived with a high mean score but the lowest among all items, while the mean score of Item 1 was the highest, as in the table. As all items were perceived highly positively, the overall mean score of the items was 4.53 higher than other overall mean scores of other groups of items. Therefore, the results strongly suggest that instructors must have such essential characteristics. The instructors with such characteristics would make their teaching more engaging, interactive, and fruitful while students could enjoy their learning in the best classroom environments.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Effective TEFL instructors play an essential role in the teaching and learning process as they directly and closely interact with students. Thus, their qualities and characteristics influence learners' learning outcomes or success. The results of this study reveal that the instructors have positive perceptions of the qualities and characteristics of effective TEFL instructors at university. Overall, the instructors rated most items highly positively based on the results.

The findings of the study support those of previous studies. For example, the study is consistent with the studies of Javier [12], Jaime [15], and Phelps [20], that instructors with advanced degrees or studies have students with better learning outcomes, suggesting that instructors should have higher qualifications for their teaching career. Regarding instructors' content knowledge, the study's results confirm those of previous studies. The previous studies illustrated the importance of instructors' content knowledge. The findings of the seminal study by Lee [17] stressed instructors' knowledge of the subject matter that instructors must have. Stephen [20] believed that instructors who know their subjects of study better teach them while the mastery of subject matter plays a crucial role in instructors' effective teaching.

This study's results also corroborate previous studies by Farah et al. [10] and Lee et al. [23] concerning instructors' pedagogical knowledge. For example, instructors with good pedagogical knowledge can successfully choose suitable instructional tactics and strategies to teach English or other subjects [30]. The study indicated that instructors' pedagogical skills can help instructors create various ways to transform and interpret the subject matter for the learners. Similarly, Nalan's [28] study found that instructors with good pedagogical skills can encourage their students to learn about a subject with interest, engage in active learning, enhance their abilities, stay on target, and participate in classroom interactions.

As shown in the results, given that instructors' qualities and characteristics are crucial in teaching-learning environments, instructors have important roles in influencing students' learning achievements. Therefore, instructors are essential to effective teaching and must have good personal characteristics and responsibilities regarding their

educational role. The researcher strongly believes this study can alert all instructors to be ready and well-educated before becoming lecturers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study's findings reveal higher mean scores for almost all questionnaire items. The overall average scores of instructors' qualifications, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and personal and interpersonal characteristics were 3.66, 4.16, 3.99, 4.04, and 4.53, respectively. Based on such results, the instructors rated the questionnaire items highly and positively perceived the qualities and characteristics of effective TEFL instructors at the university. Therefore, while valuing all the items highly, all TEFL instructors should have all those qualities and characteristics if they want to teach English programs at universities.

According to the study's findings, these qualities and characteristics can be set as criteria for TEFL instructors at the higher education level. The results also strongly suggest that universities must create proper criteria for recruiting qualified instructors for teaching. The study's findings can help inform institutions to develop human resources in line with these quality aspects or elements in selecting or training effective English language instructors. Therefore, higher education institutions can adopt such essential criteria for effective TEFL instructors based on the results of this study. In contrast, TEFL instructors must develop or improve themselves to have these qualities and other attributes regarding effective teaching and learning in Cambodian higher education.

The study also has some limitations regarding the small sample size of the participating universities and respondents, while the questionnaire tool has not been able to include many other aspects of effective TEFL instructors in one study. Therefore, future studies may include or identify other essential aspects of effective instructors in general and at the secondary education level or below, allowing in-depth analysis of the qualities and characteristics of effective teaching.

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