

An Investigation into the Criteria for Selecting Teachers in English Language Institutes in Iran

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Abstract

Teacher qualification plays a key role in selecting and recruiting English teachers. Since there was no straightforward framework for the quality of teachers, there was a lack of theoretical adequacy for conducting research in this field. Besides, there were few research studies especially about the teacher selection process in private English institutes. This study was an attempt to investigate the most important criteria in teacher selection for the managers of private English institutes. To fulfill the purpose of this study, over 100 private English institutes were selected randomly in four academic cities in Mazandaran Province, North of Iran. The managers of 100 institutes were asked to fill in a questionnaire containing 24 proposed criteria and an open question for any manager who had other criteria in his mind. After grouping the 24 criteria into groups with homogenous criteria, it was also revealed that in view of the managers of the private English institutes 'English skills', 'discipline', 'interaction', 'degree', 'appearance', and 'teaching' were the most important factors, respectively, whereas 'living abroad', 'distance', and 'personal attributes' factors were less influential in decision making process for teacher selection.

Keywords: teacher selection; language institutes; EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

Today the world is known as the global village because of access to many communicative means such as the Internet, telephone, and other social networks. Such communicative tool shortens the distance and fades many traditional obstacles in relationship. The language of today communication among people from all across the world is English. English is the communication language in all aspects of international

interactions such as academic, political, and economic activities. Learning English as the global language has long been a must for those people who want to stay up to date in every field of individual and social life including academic, economic, political, social, and cultural fields. English is an obligatory subject in the curriculum of most schools in the world and most people across the world have passed many hours a week learning English at schools and universities. Besides, many people attend public or private English institutes for further success or enhancing their skills in English language.

Many people seek better learning of English as a foreign language or second language today. They may need to improve their English for many reasons including immigration, further studies, or simply enhancing the four skills of English including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, or their general knowledge of the language. When a person enrolls in a private English institute, it is expected that there would be a good outcome; but in reality it does not take place for some reasons.

Some teachers do help English learners in improving their English language, but researchers have not been successful to draw a framework for the specific teacher qualifications and characteristics for better achievement of the learners. In this research, the reasons of failures for the question why those going to private English institutes do not get what they have sought for or expected is not addressed, but it is an attempt to discover or draw a framework concerning what the most important criteria are in selecting English teachers by English institute managers.

Although teacher's experience and their regular licensure all have positive effects on student achievement (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007), an important aspect to note is the lack of any strong consistent and acceptable qualifications. This is also supported by the frequent clarifying or modifying comments made in association with these answers as the British Council Survey of Policy and Practice in Primary English Language Teaching Worldwide notified (Rixon, 2013).

Teacher quality plays a key role in successful English language teaching. Cross-national analyses revealed that countries with better teacher quality produced higher achievement (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2012). Since research studies have not drawn a specific framework on teacher qualifications and characteristics, this study tries to present a popular academic framework in this regards by examining what the main criteria in teacher selection are for the managers of the private English institutes and also how much the private English language institutes, where many people register in to learn English language better and more each year, consider the criteria of teacher quality such as experience, proficiency, licensure, and characteristics.

Researchers have carried out a few studies in the fields of teacher qualification and teacher selection in public education systems, but few studies have been done in this field for private English language institutes, especially in Iran. Previous studies show that teaching experience and academic degree are important for teacher selection, but there are probably other important criteria in teacher selection for the private English institutes in Iran. The current study tries to discover the other more important criteria

in teacher selection. Discipline and punctuality, personal attributes and appearance are less focused in previous studies while the current research takes them into account.

The heads of private English institutes need to precisely select qualified teachers for better and more efficient English teaching, especially in countries such as Iran where English is not spoken publicly or in daily life. The English language students, who generally pay a lot of tuition each term at private English language institutes and spend enormous hours a week as well, have the right to access the teachers with appropriate and adequate qualifications both in terms of knowledge and characteristic. Families and students have also the right to be aware of the necessary qualification considered more important in view of the managers of the private English institutes where they enroll for making desired progress in English language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Goe (2007), carried out for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, focuses on four categories or lenses of teacher quality, namely the qualification, characteristics, practices, and effectiveness of the teachers. Teacher qualification includes official documents, knowledge, and experiences of a teacher. In Goe's study, the teacher qualification consists of coursework, grades, subject-matter education, degrees, test scores, experience, certification, and evidence of participation such as placements, instruction, additional training, and specialized development. Goe notes that two key teacher qualification variables produce strong and positive effects on student learning. These two variables are teachers' knowledge of the subject and teachers' level of experience. About the advanced degree of teachers, he notes that not only is there no substantial benefit for students of teachers with advanced degrees, but most studies indicate that teachers with higher degrees may pose negative influence on the achievement of students. He also mentions many researchers find that experience is positively related to the student achievement, especially in elementary and middle schools. About the effect of content-based pedagogical knowledge on teacher quality, he refers to the findings of a research by Schacter and Thum (2004) showing that it is positively associated with student achievement in reading and language. Goe's (2007) framework also considers teacher characteristics such as race and gender related to the teacher quality as he believes they are brought into the classroom by teachers and because they exist independently of the actual teaching act. Inclusion of some factors in teacher quality such as characteristics and gender guided the present researchers to put them into the criteria of teacher selection. However, some factors such as race are not so important in Iran, so it is not included in the questionnaire of teacher selection criteria in the current study. Goe's framework for determining teacher quality was very good; his work also represented a useful review of related researchers in the field of teacher quality which guided me in preparing the research questionnaire.

Stanley and Murray (2013) hold that a teacher is qualified when he has both the knowledge about the language and knows what he needs to be able to do. Their work is based on the Bourdieu's (1986) model of capital. They draw a framework of teaching capital dividing English language teaching skills and knowledge into three domains:

language capital, methodological capital, and intercultural capital. Each of them is subdivided into the declarative and procedural. A similar subdivision exists within methodological and intercultural capital, too. Stanley and Murray (2013) illustrates the methodological capital by TESOL Certificate toolkit model of teaching. They mention that some institutes see the master degrees in TESOL as the gold standards and advise them to investigate the particular degree program for selecting and assessing the candidate teachers for teaching English. They refer to Bourdieu's (1986) model of capital which theorizes the cultural capital as knowledge, skills, education, attitudes, character, and other attributes that increases the successfulness of a candidate in educational system. However, they do not pay attention to the personal dimensions of a teacher such as mind-set, appearance, and talents in their research. But the personal characteristics criterion is present in this research.

Whitehurst (2002) stipulates in his study that the teacher quality is affected by: a) General knowledge and ability, b) Certification and licensure, c) Experience, d) Subject matter knowledge, e) Intensive and focused in-service training, f) Alignment between teacher training and standards-based reforms. Under the title "Characteristics of effective teacher", he underlines that the effect of teacher verbal and cognitive ability is very effective on student achievement. He adds that certification and licensure is also important as state institutes require some form of certification or licensure to employ a teacher. This factor embeds the master degrees as well which is required for many institutes as pre-requisite for employment of a teacher. Whitehurst refers to Rowan et al. (2002) and emphasizes that experience has a positive effect on the quality of a teacher, especially in teaching reading. He also notes that subject matter knowledge adds to the efficiency of a teacher especially when he is going to teach advance courses and levels. He further underscores the need for intensive and focused in-service training of teachers for improving and sustaining the quality of teachers. He concludes that the general cognitive ability, experience, and content knowledge are more influential on determining the quality of teachers and that certification and licensure have little effect in this regard. The findings of the research, which is naturally a review of studies done by other researchers, are documented; however, there is a gap in the research. The research does not pay attention to the characteristics and attributes of teachers as their quality. Neither does he mention gender or physical appearance in his research.

Hobson et al. (2010) note that testing of teachers play a key role in employing them. He refers to Barber and Mourshed's (2007) study of world's best-performing school systems and mentions that the top performing systems recruit their teachers from the top third of each cohort graduating from their school system. They once again refer to the Barber and Mourshed's study and state that a person is a qualified teacher if he possesses a certain set of literacy and numeracy, robust communicational skills, learning interest, and teaching motivation. Their study seems to be very useful and overwhelming; however, they do not mention some variables such as gender of teachers as effective factors influencing the quality of a teacher.

According to the research by Akbari and Yazdanmehr (2012), English language institutes in Iran follow basic stages almost in the same way. Teacher selection which they label as teacher entry consists of the elements recurrent in the process of teacher selection in private language institutes of Iran which includes application, interview, written test, training lessons, and placement. The figure 1 shows the trend in teacher recruitment in Iran.

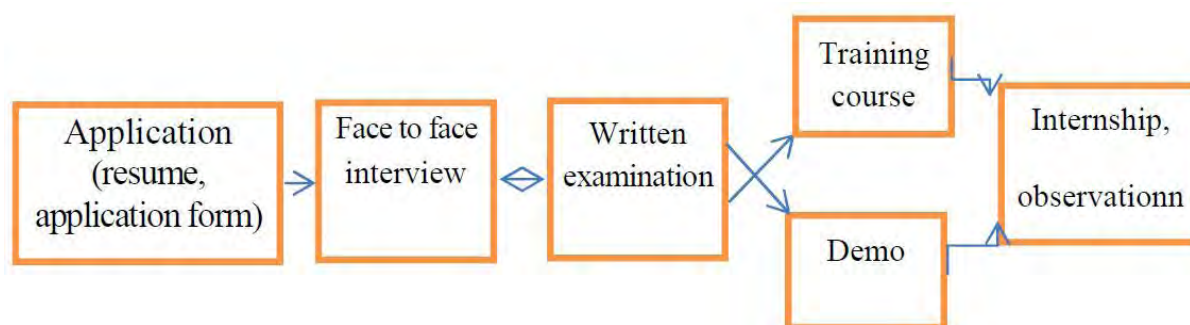


Figure 1. Process of Teacher Entry

There may be details involved in any of these stages. On the whole, they include application which is found to be the initial stage of teacher admission process in all the institutes. It is expected to be performed either by filling out a pre-designed application form or submitting a handwritten resume. The main sorts of information sought for in this stage are the forms and the interviews. Interviews are also present in teacher admission process in all the institutes. However, it might either follow or precede the written examination. Interviews are ordinarily carried out in a face to face meeting of an expert and an applicant in a conversation. The focus is discussion, and communication skills and personality factors of the people are examined carefully but tacitly during such an interview.

Training course is ordinarily an intensive course carried out within a week instructed by an expert or the supervisor. During this course, teacher trainees are acquainted with the dominant approach or methodology adopted by the institute, the course materials, class arrangement, management, short-term and long-term goals, teaching methods and other related issues. When there is a training course, there is necessarily a demo session at last to see the extent to which trainees have internalized the issues emphasized in the course and learned to apply them. In this step, trainees are needed to teach part of a lesson in the target textbook while some trainers, supervisors, or other teachers and other trainees are present.

Internship stage is obligatory in some institutes. The requirement is to attend experienced teachers' classes for a couple of sessions (the number is decided by the supervisor), observe the more experienced teachers' class management and instruction closely and to make notes. There is a debriefing meeting with the supervisor once the internship is over and the trainee is perceived to be prepared to begin his job.

It seems that there were some shortcomings in their research in term of generalization because they assessed only five main English language institutes whereas there are

hundreds of private English institutes whose managers may have different attitudes in selection of English teachers. Another criticism goes to the data collection procedure which relies on the personal experience of the researchers; it can interfere with the data organization and conclusion of the research. Besides, the mentioned 5 institutes do not have branches in many small cities, or they cannot enroll all interested students because of their limited capacity. The strength of their research is that they considered most items in their selection criteria. And, because the researchers enjoy the experience of teaching at the mentioned institutes, they may present better data collection design and procedure, analysis, and consequent conclusion.

This study was an attempt to identify the most influential factors in teacher selection and recruitment for the managers of the private English language institutes in Mazandaran Province, North of Iran. By presenting a more straightforward framework in this regards, based on the ideas and preferences of the managers of private English institutes, both the managers and applicants of the private English institutes as well as the learners can have a brighter prospective of the teacher selection criteria in private English institutes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To which extent are the academic qualifications considered important in selection criteria of the recruitment of English teachers in view of the managers of the private English language institutes?
2. To which extent are the teaching qualifications considered important in selection criteria of the recruitment of English teachers in view of the managers of the private English language institutes?
3. To which extent are the general English skills qualifications considered important in selection criteria of the recruitment of English teachers in view of the managers of the private English language institutes?
4. To which extent the characteristic qualifications are considered important in selection criteria of the recruitment of English teachers in view of the managers of the private English language institutes?

METHOD

Participants

Participants of this research were the managers or owners of the private English language institutes in some academic cities of Sari, Ghaemshahr, Babol, and Amol in Mazandaran Province, next to the Caspian Sea, North of Iran. They were at the position of decision making for the recruitment of English teachers at their affiliated institutes. Over one hundred private English language institutes were selected randomly from the cities among which 100 institutes participated in the research. The respondents were the managers of the institutes and decision-makers in teacher selection in their affiliated institutes. They were both males and females aged from 25 to over 60 years old. Most of the participants, managers of the institutes, were male. And, the majority of

the participants possessed related degrees or licensures in English language fields, from BA to PhD. Among the participant, managers of the private English institutes, 40 participants had BA in English including literature, translation, and teaching majors while 26 participants had MA in English including literature, translation, and teaching majors. Four participants had PhD in TEFL.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire on teacher recruitment criteria were designed with 24 items based on the review of the literature and expectations about those criteria which were supposedly important to the private English language institutes in Iran. The questionnaire (attached in the Appendix) was assessed by two social researchers and five TEFL university instructors. The experts agreed that the questionnaire was valid enough for the assessment of the current research; thus, the face validity was observed. The consistency of the criteria was evaluated by the computer software SPSS V.20, and the amount of Cronbach's α for the reliability of the criteria was also calculated. The questionnaire was shown to be reliable enough after it was calculated by computer software SPSS V.20 as well.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire consisted of 24 items regarded important in decision making progress for managers of private English institutes was calculated by computer software SPSS V.20.

Table 1. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	100	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	100	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			
Cronbach's Alpha		Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	
.698		.750	
		N of Items	
		24	

Material

After reviewing the related literature, a more detailed questionnaire was developed based on the purpose of the study. At first, five criteria were taken into account in this research. Then, four more criteria were added, which were supposed to be important as well. Then, the final questionnaire included 24 items. The questionnaire was revised, edited, and established in four sections according to the goal of the research. The first section explained the title and aim of the research. The second section, which was considered to be a closed questionnaire itself, included the teacher selection criteria. Twenty four criteria were presented in this section based on the review of the literature and the expectations about those criteria which were supposed to be important to the private English language institutes for recruiting English teachers in Iran. The

participants, the managers of the private English institutes, were asked to put a score from 1 to 5 for each criterion according to the extent of its importance to them. The third section posed an open question and participants were asked to write down other criteria than the ones presented in the questionnaire, and score it again from 1 to 5. The fourth section included some general information about the participants including age, gender, and academic degree as well as the years of activity of his affiliated private English institute. The sections three and four were established mostly for discovering any meaningful relation between these items with the 24 criteria of the questionnaire, and also for shedding light for further research and reference. The questionnaire was assessed by a social researcher and five university English instructors, and it was considered to be valid enough. The consistency of the criteria was assessed by the computer software SPSS V.20 and the amount of Cronbach's α for the reliability of the criteria was also calculated. The questionnaire was shown to be reliable enough as well after calculation by SPSS V.20 computer software.

Procedure

After designing the questionnaire, two interviewers, a man who was a social researcher and a woman who was an English teacher, were trained how to collect data from each institute. Then, each one went to the private English language institutes in the cities of Sari, Ghaemshahr, Babol, and Amol. The four sections and the items of the questionnaire were explained one by one for the participants. The managers of the institutes were assured of their names and the names of the institutes would be kept confidential. Since ethics were observed, the managers of the institutes filled the questionnaire openly and freely. The participants, the managers of the private English institutes, were asked to put a score from 1 to 5 for each criterion according to the extent of its importance to them. They were given hints and clues when needed. Filling in each questionnaire lasted about 20 minutes, so it was not boring or exhausting for respondents. The process of sending and gathering of the questionnaires in the above mentioned cities lasted two weeks and the data were collected and analyzed thereafter.

Data Analysis

Since the survey was assessed based on Lickert scale, it was required to identify the importance of each item through its frequency. Then, descriptive statistics was used to calculate the frequency and rating of the items of the questionnaire by computer software SPSS 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The answers of the participants to the questionnaire shed light on what the most criteria are in view of the managers of private English institutes in recruitment of teachers. Table 2 shows the ranking of the importance of each criterion.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Selection Criteria

Ranking	Criterion	N	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation (S^2)
1	Interaction with Students (VAR13)	100	4.93	.256
2	Lesson Presentation (VAR12)	100	4.93	.293
3	Punctuality (VAR16)	100	4.91	.288
4	Conversation Fluency (VAR05)	100	4.86	.349
5	Pronunciation & Intonation (VAR06)	100	4.78	.416
6	General English Skills (VAR04)	100	4.73	.446
7	Syllabus Covering (VAR17)	100	4.65	.500
8	Teaching Licensure (VAR03)	100	4.63	.787
9	Academic Degree (VAR01)	100	4.53	.521
10	Interaction with Parents (VAR15)	100	4.50	.577
11	Appearance (VAR19)	100	4.48	.643
12	Interaction with Colleagues (VAR14)	100	4.41	.653
13	Teaching Experience (VAR08)	100	4.34	.755
14	Physical Health (VAR20)	100	4.27	.617
15	Authentic Certificate (VAR02)	100	4.17	.853
16	Innovation & Creativity (VAR07)	100	4.13	.562
17	Good Teaching Background (VAR09)	100	3.79	.868
18	Teaching VAR10)	100	3.55	.821
19	Living Abroad (VAR11)	100	3.21	1.282
20	Age (VAR21)	100	2.64	1.168
21	Distance to Institute (VAR18)	100	1.99	1.020
22	Gender (VAR22)	100	1.88	1.174
23	Religion (VAR23)	100	1.38	.982
24	Race (VAR24)	100	1.18	.626
	Valid N (listwise)	100		

Factor Analysis

After analysis of all the 24 criteria, they were grouped into seven groups and two distinctive items in terms of the qualification of the candidates for recruitment of teachers by the managers of private English institutes. The alphabetical list of the factor analysis and the consequent grouping is shown in the following section.

Appearance Factor

The two criteria of Appearance (Variable19) and Physical Health (Variable20) were grouped under the title of Appearance factor. It stands fifth in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of each criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Appearance Factor

	Appearance (Var19)	Physical Health (Var20)
Rarely	0	0
Somehow	0	1
Average	8	6
Important	36	58
Very Important	56	35
Mean (\bar{x})	4.48	4.27
Total Mean	4.375	

Attributes Factor

The four criteria of Age (Variable21), Gender (Variable22), Religion (Variable23), and Race (Variable24) were grouped under the title of Attribute factor. It stands ninth (the last) in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of each criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Attributes Factor

	Age (Var21)	Gender (Var22)	Religion (Var23)	Race (Var24)
Rarely	27	60	85	91
Somehow	8	3	1	2
Average	42	30	9	6
Important	20	3	1	0
Very Important	3	4	4	1
Mean (\bar{X})	2.64	1.88	1.38	1.18
Total Mean	1.77			

Degree Factor

The four criteria of Academic Degree (Variable01), Authentic Certificate (Variable02), and Teaching Licensure (Variable03) were grouped under the title of Degree factor. It stands fourth in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of each criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Degree Factor

	Academic Degree (Var01)	Authentic Certificate (Var02)	Teaching Licensure (Var03)
Rarely	0	2	1
Somehow	0	2	2
Average	1	11	7
Important	45	47	13
Very Important	54	38	77
Mean (\bar{X})	4.53	4.17	4.63
Total Mean	4.443		

Discipline Factor

The two criteria of Punctuality (Variable16) and Syllabus Covering (Variable17) were grouped under the title of Discipline factor. It stands second in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of each criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 6.

Table 6. Discipline Factor

	Punctuality (Var16)	Syllabus Covering (Var17)
Rarely	0	0
Somehow	0	0
Average	0	1
Important	9	33
Very Important	91	66
Mean (\bar{x})	4.91	4.65
Total Mean	4.78	

Distance Factor

The Distance to Institute (Variable18) criterion stands eighth in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of this criterion and its mean are shown in table 7.

Table 7. Distance Factor

	Distance (Var18)
Rarely	45
Somehow	17
Average	33
Important	4
Very Important	1
Mean (\bar{x})	1.99

English Skills Factor

The three criteria of General English Skills (Variable04), Conversation Fluency (Variable05), and Pronunciation and Intonation (Variable06) were grouped under the title of English Skills factor. It stands first in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of the criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 8.

Table 8. English Skills Factor

	General English Skills (Var04)	Conversation Fluency (Var05)	Pronunciation & Intonation (Var06)
Rarely	0	0	0
Somehow	0	0	0
Average	0	0	0
Important	27	14	22
Very Important	73	86	78
Mean (\bar{x})	4.73	4.84	4.78
Total Mean	4.783		

Interaction Factor

The three criteria of Interaction with Students (Variable13), Interaction with Colleagues (Variable14), and Interaction with Parents (Variable15) were grouped under the title of

Interaction factor. It stands third in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of each criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 9.

Table 9. Interaction Factor

	Interaction with Students (Var13)	Interaction with Colleagues (Var14)	Interaction with Parents (Var15)
Rarely	0	0	0
Somehow	0	1	0
Average	0	6	4
Important	7	44	42
Very Important	93	49	54
Mean	4.93	4.41	4.50
Total Mean	4.613		

Living Abroad Factor

The criterion of Living Abroad (Variable11) stands seventh in term of importance to the managers of the private English institutes in the decision-making process for teacher recruitment. The frequency and the mean of the criterion are shown in table 10.

Table 10. Living Abroad Factor

	Living Abroad (Var18)
Rarely	14
Somehow	9
Average	41
Important	14
Very Important	22
Mean	3.21

Teaching Factor

The five criteria of Innovation and Creativity (Variable07), Teacher Experience (Variable08), Good Teaching Background (Variable09), Teaching at Famous Institute (Variable10), and Lesson Presentation (Variable12) were grouped under the title of Teaching factor. It stands sixth in term of importance in decision making process to the managers of private English institutes in this study. The frequency and the mean of each criterion as well as the total mean of the group are shown in table 11.

Table 11. Teaching Factor

	Innovation & Creativity (Var07)	Teacher Experience (Var08)	Good Teaching Background (Var09)	Teaching at Famous Institute (Var10)	Lesson Presentation (Var12)
Rarely	0	0	1	2	0
Somehow	0	2	4	4	0
Average	10	11	32	42	1
Important	67	38	41	41	5
Very Important	23	49	22	11	94
Mean	4.13	4.34	3.79	3.55	4.93
Total Mean	4.148				

Figure 2 demonstrates the whole factor analysis as follows:

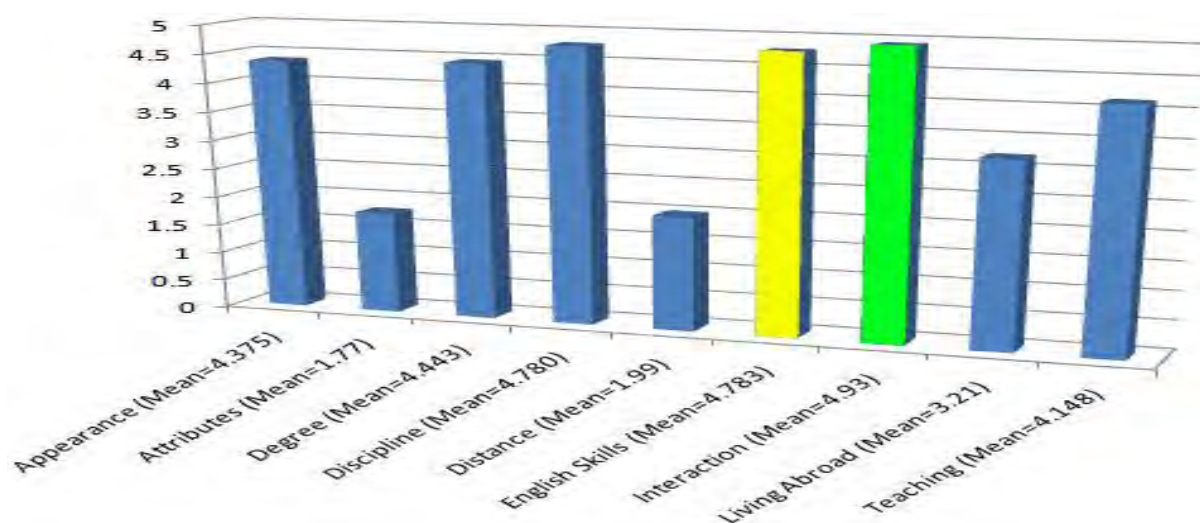


Figure 2. Factor Analysis

With regard to the first research question, the results show that the criterion of 'Academic Degree' with the mean of 4.53 out of 5 is influential on decision making for the managers of private English institutes to select and recruit teachers.

With regard to the second research question, the result show that the criterion of 'Teaching Experience' with the mean of 4.34 out of 5 proves influential in decision making for the managers of private English institutes to select and recruit teachers.

With regard to the third research question, the result show that the criterion of 'Conversation Fluency' with the mean of 4.86 out of 5 proves influential in decision making for the managers of private English institutes to select and recruit teachers.

With regard to the forth research question, the result show that the criterion of 'Interaction with Students' with the mean of 4.93 out of 5 proves influential in decision making for the managers of private English institutes to select and recruit teachers.

With regard to the fifth research question, the result show that the criterion of 'Appearance' with the mean of 4.48 out of 5 proves influential in decision making for the managers of private English institutes to select and recruit teachers.

With regard to the sixth research question, the result show that the criterion of 'Personal Attributes' is not influential in decision making for the managers of private English institutes to select and recruit teachers.

The collected data from the questionnaire revealed the ranking of each criterion among the 24 questioned criteria. After factor analysis, the 24 criteria were grouped into seven groups and two distinctive factors. The statistics revealed that among the seven groups of factors and the two distinctive factors 'Distance to Institute' and 'Living Abroad', 'English Skills of Candidates' are the most important factors in teacher selection process.

for the managers of private English institutes in the present study. The second important factor is 'Discipline'. 'Interaction' is the third important factor in teacher selection process. 'Degree', either academic degree or course certificate, stands fourth in terms of importance in teacher selection process. 'Appearance' of candidates is the fifth important factor in teacher selection and recruitment in private institutes. 'Teaching' is the sixth important factor for the managers of private English institutes. The seventh factor which is considered of marginal effect on decision making of the managers of private English institutes is 'Living Abroad' experience of the applicants. This is while applicants' 'Distance to Institutes' and 'Personal Attributes' including age, gender, religion, and race do not influence the managers of the private English institutes on their decision making in selection and recruitment of teachers.

Teacher quality plays a key role in successful English language teaching. Cross-national analyses revealed that the countries with better teacher quality produced higher achievement. The current study is a research on the teacher selection criteria in Iran. There are a lot of private English institutes in Iran, and many interested people or those who need to improve their English skills, for any academic, professional, or personal needs enroll there.

Few studies have been done in this field for private English institutes; most research studies have been carried out for public education sector. Therefore, there was a lack of theoretical adequacy for this research, especially when it comes to the teacher selection issue in Iran. Because of lack of time and monetary resources, this research was carried out in four academic cities in Mazandaran Province, next to the Caspian Sea, North of Iran.

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the current survey on the teacher selection criteria revealed that many factors are important in the recruitment of a teaching applicant for the managers of private English institutes. The results of this study show that interaction with students, good lesson presentation of delivery, punctuality, and fluency in speaking English are the four most important criteria for most of the private English institutes in terms of qualification for teacher selection. Then, true pronunciation and intonation of English, general English skills, and full syllabus covering are important to the private English institutes. Academic degrees and licensures of teaching come afterwards in term of importance for the managers of the private English institutes when they make decision for teacher selection and recruitment.

After grouping the 24 proposed teacher selection criteria into 7 groups and two distinctive factors and calculating their frequencies and means by computer software SPSS V.20, the finding of the current research indicate that in the decision making process of the managers of the private English institutes for selection and recruitment of an English teaching applicant, 'English Skills' including general English skills, fluency in speaking English, and true pronunciation and intonation stands first in terms of teacher qualification with the mean of 4.783 out of 5, 'Discipline' including punctuality

and syllabus covering stands second with the mean of 4.780 out of 5, 'Interaction' including interaction with students, parents, and colleagues stands third with the mean of 4.613 out of 5, 'Degree' including academic degree, authentic certificate such as TOEFL, and teaching licensure stands fourth with the mean of 4.443 out of 5, 'Appearance' including appearance, i.e. being stylish and physical health stands fifth with the mean of 4.375 out of 5, 'Teaching' including innovation and creativity, teaching experience, good teaching background, teaching at famous institute, and lesson presentation or delivery stands sixth with the mean of 4.148; this is while it was expected the teaching factor to possess the top title. The distinctive factor of 'Living Abroad' possesses the seventh place in term of importance to the private English institutes, with the average mean of 3.21. This is while the 'Personal Attributes' including age, gender, religion, and race is not important to the majority of private English institutes, with the mean of 1.77 out of 5. The factor of the 'Distance to Institute' of an applicant is not important for the managers of the private English institutes either, with the mean of 1.99 out of 5.

The outcome of this study is beneficial for teaching applicants, learners, and heads of the English language institutes. First, teaching applicants can have better understanding and preparation for job application and qualification at private English institutes. Second, learners and parents of young learners can have a brighter imagination of what the teacher selection criteria in private English language institutes are in order to choose better institutes to enroll in, especially in Iran. Third, the heads of the private English language institutes can have a proposed framework including the selective criteria which are necessary for a specific private institute so as to select and recruit teaching applicants. The heads of the private English institutes can be aware of what is more usual in selecting English teachers in most private institutes in Iran.

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