



# Teachers' (Dis)Respect for English Language Learners: Developing a Cross-Cultural Model

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## Abstract

Batelaan (2001) posits that a teacher-student respectful inter-relationship is conducive to a safe learning context. This study presents a multi-faceted scale that cross-culturally measures teachers' (dis)respect for learners as a crucial dimension of teacher-student relationships. The teachers' respect for learners questionnaire (TRLQ) is premised upon literature review, focus groups and online interviews. We examined the dimensionality of the TRLQ via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to seek confirmation for our hypothesized six-factor model among native and non-native English language teachers and learners (N = 472). The six-factor structure was obtained through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the TRLQ, which was developed based upon three overarching categories consisting of 14 minor themes gained from focus groups and online interviews. Hinged upon these analyses, the six-factor structure strongly indicated the best fit. These dimensions include a) teachers' interpersonal characteristics, b) teachers' insightfulness, and c) teachers' occupational attributes. Reliability coefficients revealed that the internal consistency of the six factors was excellent. Further, we tested the convergent, divergent, and predictive validity of the TRLQ. Teachers' (dis)respect for learners appeared to predict learners' academic achievement, particularly their GPA and self-assessed success in learning English. The results lend support to the six dimensions derived from EFA and focus groups and online interviews and offer concrete proof of the psychometric properties of our scale. This scale can be used by educators and policy makers to oversee teacher-student respectful relationships.

**Keywords:** teachers' (dis)respect for learners, cross-cultural study, English language teachers, English language learners, confirmatory factor analysis

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## Introduction

People feel a basic psychological and social need to connect to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The desire for connectedness may be a strong motive in educational contexts for behaving in a way favoring close social bonds (Walton et al., 2012). When students' needs for relatedness are fulfilled, they will be properly equipped to deal with the affective and cognitive learning demands (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Roorda et al., 2011). According to Wubbels et al. (2016), teachers' positive relationships with students have substantial impacts on educational outcomes.

As Goodman (2009) defines respect, it is "a cardinal virtue in schools and foundational to our common ethical beliefs, yet its meaning is muddled" (p. 3). Moule and Wallace (2017) proposed three elements for disrespect: "(1) an interaction or lack thereof (2) between two or more parties, (3) and violations of conduct norms, experienced or observed directly or vicariously" (p. 135). Therefore, disrespect indicates perceived violations of the expectations of interpersonal behavior or challenges to one's social standing (Collins, 2008).

According to Hill (2000), "History echoes with passionate pleas for justice and charity, but in our times, increasingly, what we hear are demands for respect" (p. 59). Defining *disrespect*, Honneth (1996) reiterates that, "the moral categories that play a dominant role are those - such as 'insult' or 'humiliation' - that refer to forms of disrespect" (p. 131). Respect, fairness, and equality of treatment are the desired elements of our daily life (Tyler, 2006), and infringing on these norms of behaviour may arouse perceptions of disrespect (Miller, 2001). Additionally, Batelaan (2001) believes that teacher-student respectful interaction is at the heart of an efficient learning context. Nevertheless, the meaning of (dis)respect is still controversial (Sennett, 2004).

Shwalb and Shwalb (2006) assert that (dis)respect is a neglected issue; further, it is a key topic "for both cross-cultural and mainstream developmental studies" (p. 1). For English language learners, acquiring a new language heightens the requirement for a classroom environment fostering respect. Therefore, what is required is an understanding of how teachers and learners conceptualise (dis)respect, which is the purpose of the current study as an initial attempt to broaden the scope of (dis)respect research. The following research questions motivated the study:

**RQ1.** What are native and non-native English language teachers' and learners' perceptions of teachers' (dis)respect for learners?

**RQ2.** What structural model best represents the dimensions of teachers' (dis)respect for learners?

## Literature Review

Extant literature indicates that healthy interpersonal relationships have significant impacts on human's personality development, thereby students' educational success (Adler, 1973; Fromm, 1955; Maslow, 1987; Rogers, 1983). As Henry and Thorsen (2018, p. 2) maintain, "Given the importance of positive relationships with teachers for students' learning outcomes, classroom-based research into teacher-student relationships is surprisingly rare." Whereas there exists a considerable body of literature on the teacher-student relationship (e.g., Charalampous & Kokkinos, 2013; Docan-

Morgan, 2011), the research into teachers' (dis)respect for learners remains limited.

As Telli and Den Brok (2012) put it, "the literature provides support for the premise that high-quality teacher–student relationships are an important factor in effective teaching" (p. 187). Lightfoot (2000, p. 180) asserted, "Piaget returns repeatedly to the importance of the social relationship to the formation of mutual respect." Further, correlations are found between caring teacher–student relationships and academic achievement (e.g., Gest et al., 2005; Valiente et al., 2008). Moreover, students are more motivated to learn in long-lasting teacher–student relationships (Wentzel, 2009); they are also more engaged during the class (Claessens et al., 2016; Martin & Collie, 2018).

Indeed, the underlying assumptions of this study are that, in human relationships, (dis)respect is of utmost importance and (dis)respect within the teacher–student relationships is crucial for students' success. Therefore, as teacher–student interpersonal relationships are "two-way streets; teachers and students construct these relationships together" (Brinkworth et al., 2018), we aimed at investigating both teachers' and learners' perceptions.

Huo et al. (2010) presented the *dual pathway* model of respect, which is "one of the best available theoretically articulated models of respect" (Blincoe & Harris, 2011, p. 509). The researchers examined their prediction that being treated fairly by one's group members will shape his/her perceptions towards both the group and self through two pathways, namely *status* and *inclusion*. Status was construed by Huo et al. (2010) as "the individual's perceptions of his or her standing or worth as a group member (i.e., perceived status) and inclusion as 'individuals' perceptions of the degree to which the group feels warmly toward them (i.e., perceived liking)" (p. 201).

In 1997, Ellis measured high school students' perceptions of teacher respect and its relation with success in school. He defined student success as "having few absences, a low incidence of discipline referrals, and a high grade point average" (p. iii). In this survey study, Ellis (1997) found that (a) students valued respect from their teachers, (b) students' perceived teachers' respect could be measured reliably by the Perception of Teacher Respect Survey (PTRS), and (c) there was a positive correlation between students' perceptions of respect and their academic achievement and a negative correlation with their absenteeism and discipline problems.

Likewise, Fernandes (2005) investigated the relationship between high school students' perceptions towards teachers' respect for learners and their academic success, discipline referrals, and attendance. Perception of Teacher Respect Survey (PTRS) was employed. Self-report evaluations and students' academic records including grade point average, absences, and discipline problems were used to analyse the outcome variables. Like Ellis (1997), Fernandes (2005) found that there was a positive correlation between students' perceptions of respect and their academic achievement and a negative correlation with their absenteeism and discipline problems.

The current study concentrates on (dis)respect in the educational context of classroom, i.e., teachers' (dis)respect for learners. Hinton (2016, p. 146), expounding on the relation between "culture and everyday understanding" suggests, "We are born, are brought up and live in a culture.

Much of what we know, and indeed who we are, comes from being immersed in culture. Within a culture, customs, traditions, and beliefs have developed." Apparently, people's cultural background has a great impact on the way they approach the concept of (dis)respect. Exploring the factors affecting this relationship positively when teachers try to create a *classroom social environment* allowing for students to develop both intellectually and emotionally is valuable for any stakeholder in education (Joe et al., 2017; Patrick et al., 2007). For those educators who live in the "outer" or "expanding" circles of world Englishes (Kachru, 1985), it seems important to understand the cultural perspectives of people who live in the core English-speaking countries, namely the "inner circle" (Kachru, 1985). This study could be a step towards blending culture with language instruction. Consequently, we opted to conduct this study cross-culturally to enrich our understanding of the under-explored concept of (dis)respect by considering both natives' and non-natives' perceptions.

## Method

### *Questionnaire Development*

The teachers' respect for learners questionnaire (TRLQ) was developed through three phases: item generation, preliminary piloting, and psychometric evaluation. Item generation began with semi-structured focus groups and online interviews. This phase was designed qualitatively based on grounded theory (GT), in which data is collected qualitatively and inductively. In GT, recurrent themes can be extracted and categorised into different groups (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the researchers consulted the literature for identifying pertinent themes. Such an item-generation process lends construct validity to a newly-developed questionnaire (e.g., Dörnyei, 2010).

In the first phase, namely semi-structured focus groups and online interviews, our participants were 114 native and non-native English language teachers and learners who were selected based on convenience sampling (Table 1). Native participants were the native English speakers from the UK ( $N = 12$ ), Australia ( $N = 12$ ), the U. S. A ( $N = 11$ ), Canada ( $N = 10$ ), Ireland ( $N = 5$ ), and New Zealand ( $N = 4$ ); they were from the educational contexts of college/university or high school. Non-natives were teachers and learners from Iran ( $N = 16$ ), Russia ( $N = 11$ ), China ( $N = 11$ ), South Korea ( $N = 6$ ), Afghanistan ( $N = 6$ ), Pakistan (5) and Saudi Arabia ( $N = 5$ ); they were from the educational contexts of college/university or private language institutes. Participant learners were either at high-intermediate or advanced levels in language institutes or at BA or MA levels of college/university. Participants' mean age was 44.50 years for teachers ( $SD = 10.06$  years) and 23.43 for learners ( $SD = 9.32$  years). Moreover, teachers' mean years of teaching experience was 15.23 ( $SD = 11.63$ ) and learners' mean years of learning experience was 10.31 ( $SD = 7.23$ ).

**Table 1***Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Qualitative Phase*

		f	%
	Teachers	62	54.3
	Learners	52	45.6
	Native	54	47.3
	Non-native	60	52.6
Gender	Male	64	56.16
	Female	50	43.8
Educational	University/College	62	54.3
Context	High School/Language Institute	52	45.6

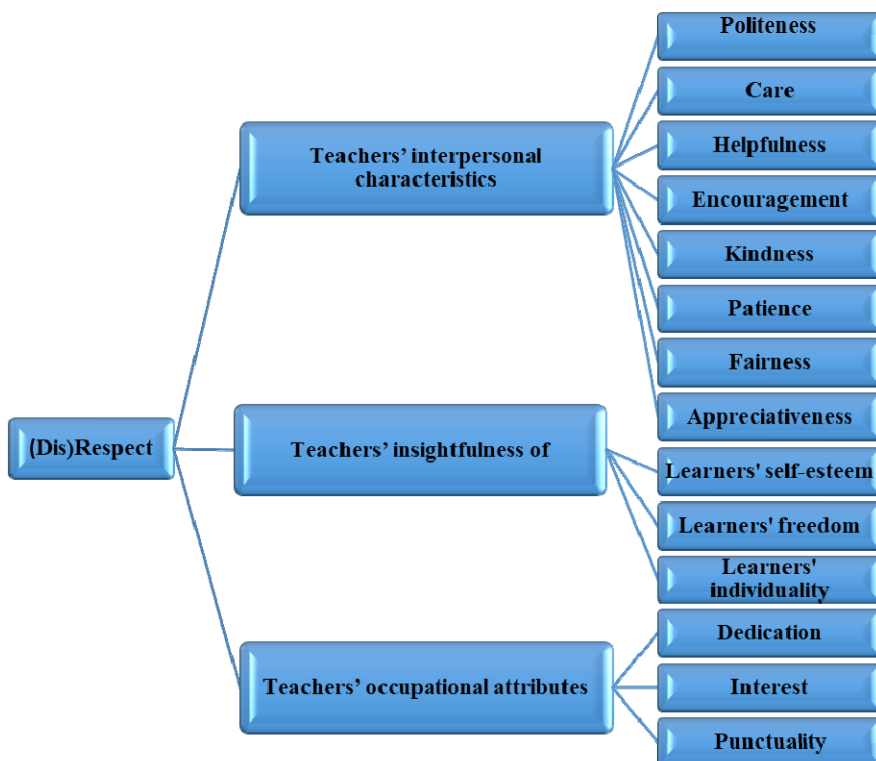
We held face-to-face focus group discussions with Iranian participants and online interviews with other natives and non-natives. We conducted two four-member focus groups with both Iranian teachers and learners in Iran in three stages, premised upon the guidelines suggested by Dörnyei (2007): a) the introductory phase, b) the actual discussion, and c) the concluding phase. All focus group interviews were held in English (each approximately one hour long). Regarding online interviews, the researchers contacted 335 participants via email and social networks, e.g. LinkedIn, Google +, WhatsApp, etc., only 98 of whom responded, i.e., the response rate of 29.25 %.

Ethical considerations were adopted in collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data. For instance, participants were fully informed about the goals of the study and the fact that the outcomes of this study would be used for research purposes only. All participants consented to be interviewed online or to attend focus groups and all non-natives were aware that the sessions were audio-recorded. Moreover, they were reassured that all the data would be kept confidential.

We transcribed audio-recordings of focus groups, and analysed them along with online interview responses utilising MAXQDA 2018. We analysed the data using the coding pattern proposed by Strauss and Corbin (2008) comprising three coding stages: open, axial, and selective. In the open coding stage, we perused the data to pinpoint participants' preliminary codes. Hence, we set codes and categories, occasionally employing in vivo codes participants' exact words. In axial coding stage, we considered the relations between specific categories, identifying and classifying codes according to a proper fit. By further analysing the data, we managed to modify and reinforce the codes and categories through constant comparative method (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Finally, in the selective coding stage, we related major categories to other pertinent subcategories, and referred to core categories as themes. We coded participants' statements independently by employing joint-probability of agreement. Then we met to compare the codes, and aligned the coding patterns in an iterative procedure.

Content analysis of 442 coded statements from focus groups and online interviews revealed three overarching categories: (1) teachers' interpersonal characteristics, (2) teachers' insightfulness, and (3) teachers' occupational attributes. Overall, we could detect 14 minor themes. As a result, we proposed a cross-cultural model of teachers' (dis)respect for learners (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
*A Cross-Cultural Model of Teachers' (Dis)Respect for Learners*



**Participants and Procedure**

As depicted in Table 2, 472 teachers and learners participated in the quantitative phase. We used non-probability sampling procedures, i.e., *convenience* or *opportunity sampling*, in which “Members of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, or easy accessibility” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 61). Participants’ age was between 24 and 67 years for teachers ( $M = 45.83$  years;  $SD = 9.61$  years) and between 16 and 30 for learners ( $M = 25.08$  years;  $SD = 10.64$  years). Three types of questionnaire administration were employed. Firstly, *one-to-one administration* was used when the researchers delivered TRLQ by hand to some colleagues at work and asked them to give back the completed form by a specific deadline. Secondly, *group administration* was utilized when the researchers delivered TRLQ by hand to a group of learners in a class. Finally, TRLQ was administered *Online* using Google Forms. To this end, the researchers had to “contact various Internet discussion groups, bulletin boards, chatrooms, and lists, and/or initiate some sort of snowball sampling by emailing potential participants” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 71). Particularly, they had to use social media such as Google +, Telegram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, etc.

**Table 2***Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Quantitative Phase*

		f	%
	Teachers	198	41.9
	Learners	274	58.1
	Native	123	26.1
	Non-native	349	73.9
Gender	Male	272	57.6
	Female	200	42.4
Years of Teaching/Learning Experience	0-2	40	8.5
	2-5	152	32.2
	5-10	206	43.6
	10+	74	15.7
Educational Context	University/College	279	59.1
	High School/Language Institute	193	40.9

**Data Analysis*****Exploratory Factor Analysis***

In this study, as we developed a new questionnaire, TRLQ (Appendix), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed to pinpoint the items that had sufficient factor loadings and to reduce the questions into a few factors. In factor analysis, the main goal is to investigate whether a few more general factors can be identified, which constitute the underlying structure of the responses to the items of a questionnaire. We ran EFA utilising SPSS Version 26 to decrease the number of items (indexes) of TRLQ and to specify the underlying factors encompassing those items (Byrne, 2016).

***Confirmatory Factor Analysis***

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used both to construct and validate TRLQ and to test the putative factor structure of the construct of teachers' (dis)respect for learners. In other words, CFA indicated whether the designed questions for each construct (extracted factor through EFA) actually measured what they purported to measure, and whether each question or index had adequate validity.

***Face Validity***

To examine whether TRLQ items were well formulated and understandable, interviews were carried out with two experienced university professors in the field of applied linguistics (both men, average age 55.4 years), four Iranian teachers at a language institute (two men, two women, average age 34 years) and four Iranian learners at a language institute (two men, two women, average age 18 years). These interviews were led by two questions: (1) Do all the items appear to measure teachers' (dis)respect for learners? (2) Are all items understandable, clear, and well-formulated? All interviewees found that all the items were clear, appropriate, and well-formulated because they only made minor remarks about item generation, which were then built into the questionnaire. For instance, the item "It would be better for teachers to be patient" was changed to "It would be better for teachers to be patient with

learners”, to stress the teacher-student interpersonal relationship.

### ***Measures of Construct Validity***

Three measures were used to assess the construct validity of TRLQ including convergent, divergent, and predictive validity. Convergent validity is demonstrated when a newly-developed scale is positively and highly correlated with a measurement instrument that is intended to investigate theoretically similar constructs (Price, 2016). The theoretically similar construct we used is *teacher-student relationships (TSRs)* measured through the scale developed by Brinkworth et al. (2018), which measures both positive and negative dimensions of the overall TSR from the perspective of teachers and learners. The scale consists of 14 items, scored on five-point rating scales ranging from 1 to 5, for instance, not at all/slightly/somewhat/quite a bit/a tremendous amount. An example student item is: “How motivating are the activities that your teacher plans for class?” Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.88.

Divergent validity is established when weak associations are found with a concept that is conceptually unrelated or at least weakly related (Price, 2016). In this study, we used *Computer attitudes scale (CAS)* as a construct that is supposed to be weakly related to teachers’ (dis)respect for learners. CAS was measured through the scale developed by Liaw (2002), which measures subjects’ perceptions toward “computer self-efficacy, liking, usefulness, and intention to use and learn computers” (p. 24). The scale consists of 16 items on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. An example item is: “I believe that knowing how to use computers is worthwhile.” Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.91.

Predictive validity of TRLQ was tested by relating it to learners’ *academic achievement* as measured by learners’ grade point average (GPA) on a scale ranging from 0 to 20 as well as learners’ language learning self-assessment checklist designed by the current researchers. In this checklist, learners were required to rate themselves concerning their success in learning English skills/sub-skills on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = very poor to 5 = excellent. Research backs the idea that teachers’ (dis)respect for learners is a necessary condition for learners’ academic achievement (Ellis, 1997; Fernandes, 2005).

## **Results**

### ***EFA of Respect Items of TRLQ***

Out of the 40 items of TRLQ, 20 items (odd-number ones, i.e., 1, 3, 5 ...) were intended to measure the construct of teachers’ respect for learners. EFA was conducted using principal component analysis (PCA). To measure sampling adequacy for the model, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test was used. This statistic that measures the suitability of the data for factor analysis ranges from 0 and 1. If KMO values are greater than 0.7, the existing correlations are suited for factor analysis (de Vaus, 2014). Further, Bartlett’s test, according to Field (2013), “tells us whether our correlation matrix is significantly different from an identity matrix. Therefore, if it is significant then it means that the correlations between variables are (overall) significantly different from zero” (p. 806).

For *respect* items, the KMO value is .925 (Table 3), which is acceptable,



meaning that about 93% of the variances of these 20 items may be caused by the latent construct of teachers' respect for learners. Bartlett's test is also significant as its value is less than .05 ( $P < .05$ ). Overall, the results of these two statistics indicated that it was appropriate to run factor analysis on these 20 items.

**Table 3**

*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of Respect Items*

KMO	Bartlett's Test		
	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
.925	4815.389	190	.000

Table 4 shows the number of extracted factors based upon respect items of TRLQ. De Vaus (2014) believes that factors with eigenvalues over 1 are the best ones. Results indicated that three factors had eigenvalues greater than 1. This finding shows that, out of the 20 items of TRLQ, three underlying factors or dimensions have been identified. Overall, these three factors explain 57% of the total variance of the 20 items, which is an appropriate amount of total variance; hence, the selection of these three factors as the final extracted factors has been acceptable indicating that they are conceptually related.

**Table 4**

*Statistics of the Extracted Factors Based on Respect Items*

Factors	Eigenvalue	% Extracted Variance	% Extracted Cumulative Variance
1	6.187	30.935	30.935
2	2.871	14.355	45.290
3	2.392	11.961	57.251

Table 5 shows the three final extracted factors based on respect items. The orthogonal rotation performed was varimax. The explained variance indicates what percentage of the variance of each item is explained by the extracted factors.

**Table 5**  
*Final Extracted Factors Based on Respect Items*

Factors	Items	Factor loadings	Explained Variance
Factor 1: Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics	Q1	0.608	.508
	Q3	0.751	.567
	Q9	0.693	.615
	Q13	0.68	.634
	Q15	0.506	.517
	Q19	0.746	.649
	Q21	0.605	.575
	Q23	0.769	.627
	Q25	0.581	.506
	Q33	0.634	.532
	Q35	0.732	.691
Factor 2: Teachers' Insightfulness	Q37	0.679	.553
	Q39	0.542	.458
	Q5	0.559	.541
	Q7	0.783	.634
Factor 3: Teachers' Occupational Attributes	Q11	0.466	.425
	Q17	0.643	.543
	Q27	0.668	.584
Factor 3: Teachers' Occupational Attributes	Q29	0.815	.687
	Q31	0.72	.605

According to Kline (2011), deciding which factor loadings are appropriate is partially optional. He believes that "it is usual to regard factor loadings as high if they are greater than 0.6 (the positive or negative sign is irrelevant) and moderately high if they are above 0.3. Other loadings can be ignored" (p. 6). In this study, all items with factor loadings of greater than 0.4 were retained in the analysis. The results indicate that all respect items of TRLQ had factor loadings of higher than 0.4. Therefore, no item was deleted.

#### ***EFA of Disrespect Items of TRLQ***

Out of the 40 items of TRLQ, 20 items (even-number ones, i.e., 2, 4, 6 ...) were intended to measure the construct of teachers' disrespect for learners. For

*disrespect* items, the KMO value is .897 (Table 6), which is acceptable meaning that about 90% of the variances of these 20 items may be caused by the latent construct of teachers' disrespect for learners. Bartlett's test is also significant as its value is less than .05 ( $P < .05$ ). Overall, the results of these two statistics indicate that it is appropriate to run factor analysis on these 20 items.

**Table 6**

*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of Disrespect Items*

KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
.897	3994.234	190	.000

Table 7 shows the number of extracted factors based on disrespect items. Results indicated that three factors had eigenvalues greater than 1 showing that three underlying factors or dimensions have been identified. Overall, these three factors explain 52% of the total variance of the 20 items, which is an appropriate amount of total variance; hence, the selection of these three factors as the final extracted factors has been acceptable indicating that they are conceptually related.

**Table 7**

*Statistics of the Extracted Factors Based on Disrespect Items*

Factors	Eigenvalue	% Extracted Variance	% Extracted Cumulative Variance
1	۴.۲۵۳	۲۱.۲۶۶	21.266
2	3.536	17.681	38.947
3	2.660	13.300	52.247

Table 8 shows the three final extracted factors based on disrespect items, all of which had factor loadings of higher than 0.4. Therefore, no item was deleted.

**Table 8**  
*Final Extracted Factors Based on Disrespect Items*

Factors	Items	Factor loadings	Explained Variance
Factor 1: Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics	Q2	0.61	.377
	Q4	0.542	.422
	Q6	0.505	.395
	Q8	0.634	.548
	Q10	0.632	.587
	Q14	0.669	.555
	Q20	0.73	.645
	Q24	0.71	.584
	Q32	0.704	.570
Factor 2: Teachers' Insightfulness	Q18	0.402	.311
	Q22	0.784	.635
	Q26	0.571	.527
	Q30	0.536	.488
	Q34	0.674	.549
	Q36	0.54	.438
	Q12	0.68	.604
Factor 3: Teachers' Occupational Attributes	Q16	0.606	.463
	Q28	0.592	.443
	Q38	0.789	.652
	Q40	0.576	.656

In this study, skewness and kurtosis were used as two indexes to determine the normal distribution (Table 9). If the values of skewness (the "symmetry" of the distribution) and kurtosis (the "peakedness" of the distribution) are between +2 and -2, the data are normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

**Table 9***Descriptive Statistics of the Six Dimensions of TRLQ*

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	SD	M	N
Respect					
Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics	-1.305	1.469	0.48	4.61	472
Teachers' Insightfulness	-1.102	1.169	0.55	4.45	472
Teachers' Occupational Attributes	-0.288	-0.245	0.71	3.94	472
Disrespect					
Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics	-1.809	1.245	0.54	4.58	472
Teachers' Insightfulness	-1.856	1.870	0.50	4.50	472
Teachers' Occupational Attributes	0.862	1.305	0.62	4.25	472

Because skewness and kurtosis values of all variables are between +2 and -2, we concluded that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as a subset of structural equation modelling (SEM), which is a covariance-based approach, was conducted using AMOS Version 26 (Arbuckle, 2019).

#### **Standard Coefficients for Respect Items**

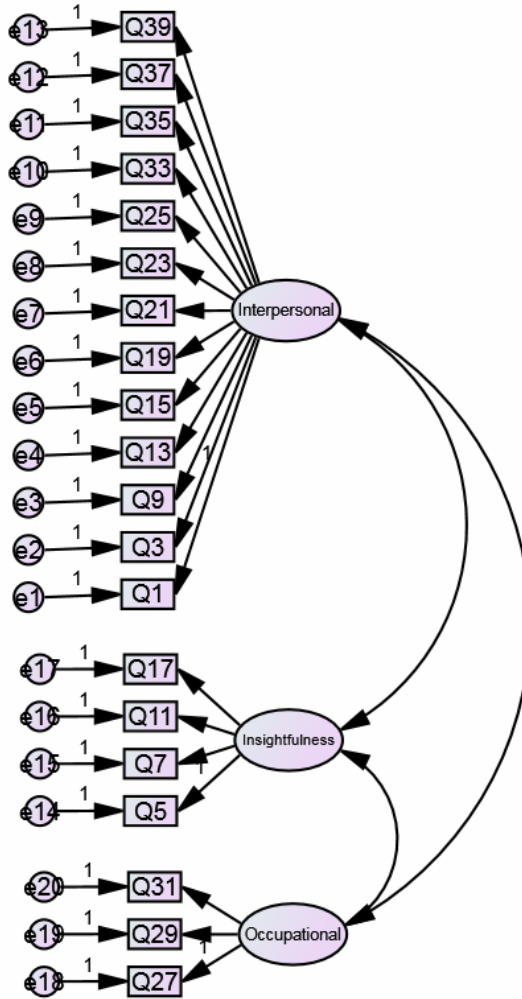
To assess the construct validity of TRLQ, CFA was used through SEM. Because there is no prevailing consensus among SEM statisticians as to which fit indicators provides the researchers with the best measurement of the model, it is recommended that a combination of such fit indicators be reported.

These fit indicators represent *path coefficients* or factor loadings for the items and the correlated variables (factors), that is, the correlation between latent and observable variables. The extent of correlation between latent variables and the pertinent item(s) can be inferred from *standard coefficients measurement model*. In this model, the extent of the relationships between structures and dimensions as well as dimensions and indexes is explained. Provided that the correlation coefficient is higher than 0.3, it can be claimed that the items have enough power of explanation. As Figure 2 reveals, all fit indicators for all variables and their pertinent respect items have factor loadings of higher than 0.3.

#### **Standard Coefficients Significance**

Standard estimates provide us with *binary correlation coefficients* that enable us to compare indexes and dimensions. However, regarding the significance of these coefficients, we cannot decide based upon their high or low values. Instead, we should use *T-value* to determine the significance of these path coefficients. The *significant numbers model* or *T-value* is used to specify whether the relationships between structures and dimensions as well as dimensions and indexes are significant or not. The T-values, depicted in Table 10, represent the significance of each parameter, which is significant if the value is greater than absolute value of 1.96. As can be seen, all significant numbers of respect items have values over 1.96. Therefore, all factor loadings and path coefficients of our model are significant.

**Figure 2**  
*CFA of Respect Items of TRLQ*



**Table 10***The Significance of Factor Loadings for Respect Items of TRLQ*

Paths	P Value	T Value	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients	Non-Standardized Coefficients
Q1 → F1	< 0.001	9.903	0.071	0.69	1
Q3 → F1	< 0.001	12.91	0.06	0.63	0.777
Q9 → F1	< 0.001	15.424	0.054	0.76	0.833
Q13 → F1	< 0.001	15.42	0.068	0.76	1.054
Q15 → F1	< 0.001	13.376	0.071	0.654	0.945
Q19 → F1	< 0.001	15.253	0.07	0.751	1.071
Q21 → F1	< 0.001	14.676	0.075	0.721	1.106
Q23 → F1	< 0.001	14.299	0.074	0.701	1.059
Q25 → F1	< 0.001	13.708	0.075	0.671	1.031
Q33 → F1	< 0.001	13.819	0.059	0.676	0.817
Q35 → F1	< 0.001	15.537	0.071	0.766	1.1
Q37 → F1	< 0.001	14.694	0.058	0.722	0.853
Q39 → F1	< 0.001	13.111	0.077	0.64	1.012
Q5 → F2	< 0.001	9.903	0.071	0.68	1
Q7 → F2	< 0.001	10.138	0.098	0.528	0.992
Q11 → F2	< 0.001	11.16	0.082	0.587	0.918
Q17 → F2	< 0.001	11.385	0.09	0.6	1.022
Q27 → F3	< 0.001	9.903	0.071	0.688	1
Q29 → F3	< 0.001	10.943	0.107	0.727	1.169
Q31 → F3	< 0.001	9.903	0.094	0.589	0.93

Notes: F1 = Factor 1, F2 = Factor 2, F3 = Factor 3

### **Model Fit Indices of the Measurement Model of TRLQ for Respect Items**

The model fit indices used to validate TRLQ and the obtained values are listed in Table 11. The obtained values show that the model is appropriate for measurement. The results of the second CFA using *maximum likelihood* or *likelihood estimation method* revealed that the measurement model is appropriate and all the values and parameters of the model are significant.

**Table 11**  
*Fit Indices and Their Obtained Values for Respect Items of TRLQ*

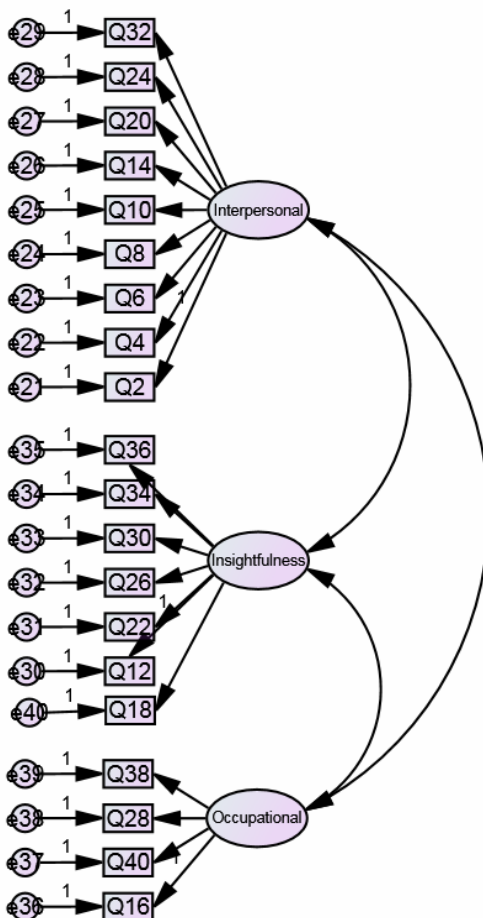
Fit Index	Limit	Obtained Values
$\frac{\chi^2}{df}$	$1 \leq \text{Index} \leq 5$ (Between 1 and 5)	5.02
RMSEA	< 0/1	0.095
CFI	> 0/90	0.901
GFI	> 0/90	0.903
NFI	> 0/90	0.905
IFI	> 0/90	0.901

**Standard Coefficients for Disrespect Items**

As Figure 3 reveals, all fit indicators for all variables and their pertinent disrespect items have factor loadings of higher than 0.3.

**Figure 3**

*CFA of Disrespect Items of TRLQ*





**Standard Coefficients Significance**

The T-values, depicted in Table 12, represent the significance of each parameter. As can be seen, all significant numbers of disrespect items have values over 1.96. Therefore, all factor loadings and path coefficients of our model are significant.

**Table 12**  
*The Significance of Factor Loadings for Disrespect Items of TRLQ*

Paths	P Value	T Value	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients	Non-Standardized Coefficients
Q2 → F1	< 0.001	8.875	0.109	0.478	1
Q4 → F1	< 0.001	9.061	0.104	0.608	0.942
Q6 → F1	< 0.001	8.875	0.109	0.585	0.969
Q8 → F1	< 0.001	9.376	0.106	0.65	0.993
Q10 → F1	< 0.001	10.014	0.101	0.752	1.008
Q14 → F1	< 0.001	9.101	0.104	0.613	0.945
Q20 → F1	< 0.001	10.085	0.103	0.765	1.038
Q24 → F1	< 0.001	9.896	0.095	0.731	0.944
Q32 → F1	< 0.001	9.723	0.085	0.702	0.823
Q12 → F2	< 0.001	13.202	0.071	0.661	1
Q22 → F2	< 0.001	11.375	0.061	0.598	0.69
Q18 → F2	< 0.001	9.588	0.092	0.494	0.879
Q26 → F2	< 0.001	13.202	0.071	0.713	0.941
Q30 → F2	< 0.001	12.122	0.07	0.644	0.846
Q34 → F2	< 0.001	11.74	0.071	0.62	0.828
Q36 → F2	< 0.001	11.719	0.085	0.619	0.994
Q16 → F3	< 0.001	12.149	0.071	0.578	1
Q40 → F3	< 0.001	12.149	0.094	0.837	1.14
Q28 → F3	< 0.001	9.57	0.102	0.557	0.979
Q38 → F3	< 0.001	9.311	0.11	0.537	1.02

Notes: F1 = Factor 1, F2 = Factor 2, F3 = Factor 3

**Model Fit indices of the Measurement Model of TRLQ for Disrespect Items**

The model fit indices used to validate the disrespect items and the obtained values are listed in Table 13. The obtained values show that model is appropriate for measurement. The results of the second CFA using *maximum likelihood* or *likelihood estimation method* revealed that the measurement model is appropriate and all the values and parameters of the model are significant.

**Table 13***Fit Indices and Their Obtained Values for Disrespect Items of TRLQ*

Fit Index	Limit	Obtained Values
$\chi^2$	$1 \leq \text{Index} \leq 5$	
df	Between 1 and (5)	4.658
RMSEA	< 0/1	0.088
CFI	> 0/90	0.911
GFI	> 0/90	0.909
NFI	> 0/90	0.910
IFI	> 0/90	0.901

**Construct Validity**

To test the construct validity, convergent, divergent, and predictive validities were measured.

**Convergent Validity.** The relationship between teachers' (dis)respect for learners and *teacher-student relationships* (TSRs) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables,  $r = .55$ ,  $n = 472$ ,  $p < .05$ , with high levels of teachers' (dis)respect for learners associated with higher levels of TSRs.

**Divergent Validity.** The relationship between teachers' (dis)respect for learners and *Computer attitudes scale* (CAS) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a weak, positive correlation between the two variables,  $r = .12$ ,  $n = 472$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Predictive Validity.** A simple linear regression was calculated to predict learners' GPA based on teachers' (dis)respect for learners. A significant regression equation was found,  $F(1,470) = 419.31$ ,  $p < .000$ , with an  $R^2$  of .47, indicating that about 47% of the variance in learners' GPA can be explained by teachers' (dis)respect for learners. Moreover, another simple linear regression was calculated to predict learners' self-assessed success in learning English skills/sub-skills based on teachers' (dis)respect for learners. A significant regression equation was found,  $F(1,470) = 605.08$ ,  $p < .000$ , with an  $R^2$  of .56, indicating that about 56% of the variance in learners' self-assessed success

could be predicted by teachers' (dis)respect for learners.

### **Reliability of TRLQ**

To calculate the reliability of the six dimensions as well as the total reliability of TRLQ, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed, which is one of the most commonly utilised indicators of internal consistency and is considered as the expected correlation of two tests measuring the same construct. Hence, it is implicitly presumed that the average correlation of a group of items is a precise estimate of the average correlation of all items relating to a specific construct. Ideally, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale should be above .70 (DeVellis, 2017).

After the final distribution of TRLQ, the total reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha (Table 14). As can be seen, all six dimensions have reliability coefficients of higher than .70, which is satisfactory. Therefore, the six factors as well as the whole TRLQ have satisfactory reliability coefficients.

**Table 14**  
*Reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients) for TRLQ*

Factors	Number of Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Respect		
Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics	13	0.92
Teachers' Insightfulness	4	0.70
Teachers' Occupational Attributes	3	0.70
Disrespect		
Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics	9	0.85
Teachers' Insightfulness	7	0.80
Teachers' Occupational Attributes	4	0.71
Total	40	0.95

### **Discussion**

The ultimate goal of this study was to theoretically construct and validate a sophisticated multidimensional instrument, TRLQ, which can be applied in diverse educational and cultural settings to measure teachers' (dis)respect for learners. The 40 items of the questionnaire were measured employing a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To our knowledge, this study may be considered as an initial attempt to grasp teachers' (dis)respect for learners and to develop a cross-culturally sound instrument that enables measuring this important dimension of teacher-student interpersonal relationships. TRLQ is a robust self-report instrument premised upon a thorough literature review, semi-structured focus groups and online interviews, a large sample, as well as sophisticated statistical

analyses. In addition, TRLQ captures three major dimensions of teachers' (dis)respect for learners, which were derived from semi-structured focus group discussions and online interviews. These dimensions include a) teachers' interpersonal characteristics, b) teachers' insightfulness, and c) teachers' occupational attributes. In general, the findings support the utility of TRLQ as a measure of teachers' (dis)respect for learners with satisfactory psychometric properties. In the following section, the findings regarding the validity of TRLQ are discussed.

### ***Factorial Validity and Reliabilities***

We examined the dimensionality of TRLQ via CFA to seek confirmation for our hypothesised six-factor structural model. Indeed, the six-factor structure (three factors for *respect* and three factors for *disrespect*) were obtained through EFA of TRLQ, which was developed based upon the three overarching categories consisting of 14 minor themes that were gained from focus group discussions and online interviews. Hinged upon these analyses, the six-factor structure strongly indicated the best fit. Therefore, the results of the CFA lent support to the dimensions derived from both EFA and focus group discussions and online interviews. Reliability coefficients revealed that the internal consistency of each of the six factors was acceptable.

### ***Construct Validity: Convergent and Divergent Validity***

To test the convergent validity of TRLQ, we used *teacher-student relationships (TSRs)* (Brinkworth et al., 2018), which is a theoretically similar construct. The relationship between teachers' (dis)respect for learners and TSRs was strong and positive with high levels of teachers' (dis)respect for learners associated with higher levels of TSRs. To test the divergent validity of TRLQ, we used *Computer attitudes scale (CAS)*, developed by Liaw (2002), as a construct that is supposed to be weakly related to teachers' (dis)respect for learners. We found that the relationship between teachers' (dis)respect for learners and CAS was weak indicating that they measure theoretically different concepts.

### ***Predictive Validity***

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict learners' GPA based on their perceptions towards teachers' (dis)respect for learners. A significant regression equation was found indicating that about 47% of the variance in learners' GPA can be explained by teachers' (dis)respect for learners. Moreover, another simple linear regression was calculated to predict learners' self-assessed success in learning English skills/sub-skills based upon their perceptions towards teachers' (dis)respect for learners. A significant regression equation was also found indicating that about 51% of the variance in learners' self-assessed success could be predicted by teachers' (dis)respect for learners. This result ties well with previous studies wherein teachers' (dis)respect for learners, hence positive teacher-student relationships, is proved to be a necessary condition for learners' academic achievement (Gest et al., 2005; Valiente et al., 2008).

## Conclusion and Implications

Research on effective teaching and its satisfactory learning outcomes underscores the importance of positive student-teacher relationships for learning. Batelaan (2001) posits that teachers-students and students-students respectful inter-relationship is conducive to a safe learning context. This article has reported the validation of a self-report questionnaire, TRLQ, to evaluate teachers' (dis)respect for learners cross-culturally. First, we examined native and non-native teachers' and learners' perceptions towards teachers' (dis)respect for learners via focus groups and online interviews. We then developed and validated TRLQ based upon the themes derived in the first phase.

Three overarching categories, namely (1) teachers' interpersonal characteristics, (2) teachers' insightfulness, and (3) teachers' occupational attributes were revealed through focus group discussions and online interviews. In this preliminary phase, overall, we could detect 14 minor themes. An important result was that *politeness*, *care*, and *learners' self-esteem* were the most frequent themes, respectively, raised by all four groups of participants, that is, non-native teachers (NNTs), non-native learners (NNLs), native teachers (NTs) and native learners (NLs). Furthermore, *politeness*, *care*, *learners' self-esteem*, *dedication*, *interest*, and *punctuality* are the six culture-general aspects of teachers' (dis)respect for learners for they were pointed out by both natives and non-natives. On the other hand, other themes might be regarded as culture-specific dimensions of teachers' (dis)respect because they were brought up by either natives (*fairness*, *encouragement*, *appreciativeness*, *kindness*, and *learners' freedom*) or non-natives (*helpfulness*, *patience*, and *learners' individuality*). This divergence of perceptions may be attributed to the diverse sociocultural milieus wherein natives and non-natives were educated (Hinton, 2016). Moreover, the three above-mentioned overarching categories were common to all four groups of NNTs, NNLs, NTs, and NLs. As a result, given this *diversity within universality*, we have proposed a cross-cultural model of teachers' (dis)respect for learners, based upon which the 40 items of TRLQ were generated.

A significant pedagogical implication is that educators utilise culture-specific characteristics of a (dis)respectful teacher to boost teachers' consciousness of learners' expectations about teachers' (dis)respect. Teachers residing in English speaking world (ESW) countries as well as non-native teachers may undergo training to become acquainted with elements of teachers' (dis)respect for learners raised by natives and non-natives, respectively. Furthermore, in cross-cultural educational contexts, teachers' awareness might be heightened regarding the way other native and non-native teachers perceive (dis)respectful teachers by means of culture-general components of teachers' (dis)respect for learners. Consequently, a substantial amount of uniformity could be ensured among teachers concerning the way they treat their native and non-native learners. Practically, the newly constructed questionnaire (TRLQ) may be applied as an evaluation tool by educators and policy makers to oversee teacher-student respectful relationship and to appraise the convergence and divergence of their perceptions of teachers' (dis)respect for learners.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The limitations of qualitative and quantitative research are applicable to this study. First, the qualitative phase of this study was restricted to semi-structured focus group discussions and online interviews. It is recommended that other kinds of qualitative techniques such as diaries, observation notes, and ethnographies be used in future studies. Second, this study was limited to 472 participant teachers and learners. Larger samples would help reach more rigorous results. Third, results might be slightly biased owing to self-reports of participants. To mitigate this, anonymity must be guaranteed when employing this instrument, as we did in this study. A fourth limitation is that TRLQ is constructed and validated within English language classrooms. Future research is recommended in other disciplines to further ensure the reliability and validity of this scale.

In conclusion, in this paper we designed an instrument to measure teachers' (dis)respect for learners as an important dimension of teacher-student relationship, which has proved to be valid; therefore, we believe it is useful in future quantitative as well as qualitative studies.

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## Appendix Teachers' Respect for Learners Questionnaire (TRLQ)

**Dear respondent,**

This questionnaire aims at measuring your perceptions of teachers' (dis)respect for learners.

Your careful completion of the questionnaire will definitely contribute to real data and is greatly appreciated.

**Directions:** For each statement below, please mark the response that best describes your perception of this issue. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible. The information will be kept confidential and will be used just for research purposes.

---

### Background Information:

#### a) Teachers

1. **Gender:**     Male  
                   Female

2. **A Native speaker of English:**            Yes         No

3. **Years of teaching English experience:**

a. (0–2)    b. (2–5)    c. (5–10)    d. (10+)

4. **Teaching Context**             University/College  
   High School/Language Institute

5. **Age:** .....

---

#### b) Students

1. **Gender:**     Male  
                   Female

2. **A Native speaker of English**            Yes         No

3. **Years of Learning English Experience:**

a. (0–2)    b. (2–5)    c. (5–10)    d. (10+)

4. **Learning Context**             University/College  
   High School/Language Institute

5. **Age:** .....

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Teachers should show they care how learners do in class.					
2. Teachers should not insult learners.					
3. Teachers should treat learners fairly.					
4. Teachers are supposed to treat learners unkindly.					
5. It would be better for teachers to take learners' questions seriously.					
6. Teachers are supposed not to shout at learners.					
7. Teachers are supposed to give learners freedom and autonomy.					
8. Teachers should not make sarcastic remarks.					
9. Teachers are supposed to compliment learners on their accomplishments.					
10. It would be better for teachers not to embarrass learners in front of their peers.					
11. Teachers should talk to learners like intelligent people.					
12. Teachers should not ignore your answers, though they are not correct.					
13. It would be better for teachers to be patient with learners.					
14. Teachers are supposed not to tell learners to shut up.					
15. Teachers should help learners when they have difficulty with their assignments.					
16. Teachers should not forget to give students rewards for good work and behavior.					
17. It would be better for teachers to appreciate learners' individual differences.					
18. Teachers should not make learners do identical homework at home.					
19. Teachers should behave politely towards learners.					
20. Teachers should not discourage learners, although they are not doing well in class.					
21. Teachers are supposed to try to know learners by name.					
22. Teachers should not blame learners even if they have done something wrong.					
23. Teachers should appreciate the effort learners put into their work.					

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24. Teachers should not get upset with learners when they do not understand.					
25. It would be better for teachers to support learners.					
26. It would be better for teachers not to laugh at learners' mistakes.					
27. Teachers should look interested in what learners are speaking about.					
28. Teachers should not skip their classes.					
29. Teachers should take time to show learners what is right and what is wrong.					
30. Teachers should not consider their learners as ignorant individuals.					
31. Teachers should always come to class on time.					
32. It is better that teachers do not interrupt learners when they are speaking.					
33. It would be better for teachers to give learners their full attention when they are talking.					
34. Teachers are supposed not to treat learners like a prisoner.					
35. Teachers should honor learners' feelings.					
36. Teachers are supposed not to make a fool of learners in front of the class.					
37. It would be better for teachers to treat learners respectfully.					
38. Teachers are supposed not to teach reluctantly.					
39. Teachers should turn their heads or walk away if learners have a problem.					
40. Teachers are supposed not to resist change and innovation in their teaching techniques.					

*Thanks for your participation*