

EMPATHY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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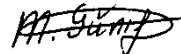
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### **Abstract**

This research study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of faculty members on empathy. The study focused on two main research questions to identify definitions of empathy and faculty experiences in building relationships in higher education in Azerbaijan. To gather comprehensive data, a qualitative approach and convenience sampling strategy was used. The sample size consists of nine faculty members from three public universities in Azerbaijan. The main selection criteria of participants involved having at least five years of experience in various academic departments in higher education. To get accurate analysis, semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and video-recorded. During the data analysis, member check and peer review were used to ensure that the participants' perspectives and the correctness of the translations were accurately represented.

The findings of the research reveal the perceptions and experiences on empathy from both male and female perspectives. The data mostly focuses on how empathy affects teaching strategies, relationship with students and colleagues in higher education. Besides, the research indicates that the definition of empathy varies differently among faculty members from humanitarian and technical fields. On the other hand, there had some limitations including limited sample size, gender biases, language barriers and time constraints.

As a final recommendation, we came up with a booklet, which indicates different ways to foster empathy and highlight empathetic teaching strategies in higher education.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The first conceptualization of teacher empathy was stated by Psychologist Carl Rogers in *Freedom to Learn* (1969) claiming that a high degree of empathy is the crucial factor in enhancing change and student learning. Meyers et al. (2019) define empathy as a phenomenon of feeling or experiencing another's feelings. The author discusses that teachers with the ability to understand students' inner state and realize how the process of education and learning is interpreted by students are more likely to enhance student learning. Altavilla et al. (2021) state that an instructor's empathy toward students can enhance teaching-learning experiences and relationships between them, which facilitates creating an effective learning environment.

According to Lunn et al. (2022), empathy facilitates building strong relationships with students, which allows faculty to learn more about students' needs and obstacles. Even though empathy is fundamental in human interaction (Wieseke et al., 2012), the role of empathy has not been defined sufficiently in higher education institutions. Researchers have defined empathy from diverse disciplines including philosophy (Stueber, 2006), psychology (Batson, 2009), social work (Segal, 2011), health care (Hojat et al, 2001), and social neuroscience (Decety & Jackson, 2006). However, it is important to highlight that the perception of empathy among teachers varies differently which causes inconsistencies in its application in a higher education context (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). Håkansson and Summer (2021) also state that there is vagueness in the ways that researchers define empathy, and the proportion of focus on its components, such as cognitive, emotional, and compassionate empathy, is debatable. Emotional empathy is experiencing other individuals' feelings (Bouton 2016), while cognitive empathy involves understanding various perspectives and seeing of the world through the eyes of other people (Bouton, 2016; Jeffery, 2019). Besides, compassionate empathy is a mixture of emotional and cognitive empathy, which combines understanding and feeling people's emotions for taking an action (Cherry, 2023).

### **1.1 Problem statement**

According to the research conducted in Russian higher education institutions, although empathy was generally accepted as a part of cultural competence, there is confusion about its definition (Fedotova et al, 2018). The authors claim that empathy is a multi-dimensional construct and is used in different fields, therefore, it has different understandings from various aspects. The National Academy recognizes the importance of defining empathy in the classroom setting and its implementation in higher education institutions (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Berg (2018) developed a program in Azerbaijan to identify the role of civic education on a student's academic achievements and supported the idea that developing empathy was one of the crucial factors to consider. Moreover, Abdullayeva (2022), a secondary school teacher for fourteen years, claimed that a teacher's emotional state affected their teaching style and added her experience during her secondary school times, which highlighted that a teacher without empathy prevented them from creating an effective learning environment. Educators who exhibit empathy are better equipped to create meaningful relationships with students and adjust their teaching methods to respond to the diverse needs and backgrounds of the students.

In higher education, studies have demonstrated that teacher empathy can pave the way to better student learning achievements, diverse, and inclusive learning environments (Sundaram et al., 2021). Since the current literature provides insights into how instructors define and understand empathy, there is a research gap that can be addressed to realize the perception of empathy in the higher education context. Considering the diverse students' backgrounds in higher educational institutions, analyzing the perception of educators about empathy makes this research necessary. Besides, there is no evident research about the perceptions and experiences of teachers' empathy in Azerbaijani higher education institutions. Therefore, this study aims to explore perceptions of faculty members on empathy and investigate educators' experiences of empathy in the higher

education context. Azerbaijan currently has 51 state universities with a total of 14,282 faculty members, so this study aims to explore faculty members' perceptions and experiences of empathy within their higher education context in Azerbaijan (State Statistics Committee, 2024).

### **1.2 The Purpose of The Study**

In this study, we will explore how empathy is defined by instructors in higher education settings. The secondary goal is to identify how instructors have experienced empathy.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. How do faculty members define empathy in a higher education context?
2. What are faculty members' experiences in building relationships in a higher education context?

### **1.4 The Significance of The Study**

There is a gap in the literature regarding research on faculty empathy in higher education contexts across the world as well as in Azerbaijan. The existing research on faculty empathy has never been conducted in higher education settings in Azerbaijan. Moreover, the existing literature on teachers' empathy levels is mostly based on student feedback on their instructors' empathy. The research contributes to raising awareness of instructors' understanding and experiences of empathy.

Instructors showing empathy in the courses establish a supportive and inclusive learning atmosphere, which encourages students' active participation and collaboration (Owen, 2015). This research will address the higher education environment and fill the gaps existing in research on this topic. It aims to bridge a controversy in the literature, focusing on finding various perspectives and viewpoints regarding empathy and to present the experiences of faculty members (Cooper, 2004). The significant value of this research is to provide data on the cruciality of empathy in

higher educational settings. The knowledge produced from this project will contribute to existing frameworks, theories, and applied methodologies (Noddings, 2013).

### **1.5 Definitions of Terms**

Empathy – is the ability to understand others’ inner reactions (Zaki & Ochsner, 2012).

Student learning - is the process of acquiring new skills, knowledge, values, and experiences in educational settings (Harel & Koichu, 2010).

Cognitive empathy – is the process of understanding others’ emotions and perspectives without sharing the same feelings (Meyers et al, 2019).

Emotional empathy – is understanding and sharing the emotions of others’ feelings (Meyers et al, 2019).

Compassionate empathy – is the combination of cognitive and emotional empathy and aims to heal others suffering (Håkansson & Summer, 2021).

Inclusive Learning- refers to recognizing and respecting the various needs of students. The main purpose of inclusivity in education is to provide equal opportunity for education to all children (Imperial College London, 2023).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This section presents the literature review to gain a deeper understanding of existing research on the perceptions of instructors and their experiences of empathy in the higher education context. Empathy involves the connection between students and teachers on an emotional level, and this connection helps educators create a more positive and effective educational environment within the institutions (Rogers, 1951). Research also highlights that positive relationships pave the way to students boosted academic engagement and outcomes (Cooper, 2011; Richardson et al., 2013).

### **2.1 Definitions of Empathy**

According to Zhou (2022), five different themes align with the definitions of empathy in the educational context. The author claims that empathy is defined as a knowledge of a student's mental states, feelings, and emotions. Moreover, it is also a phenomenon of feeling or experiencing another's feelings and someone's ability to be in another's shoes (Meyers et al., 2019). Batson (2009) defines empathy as care, concern, and compassion toward students. However, Zhou (2022) says that there are several controversial ideas related to this definition since some researchers support that these two themes have different understandings. Moreover, some researchers, such as Peterson (2017), Margolin (2013), and Jeffery (2019) define empathy as the capacity and ability to understand others. Coming to the difference between "empathy" and "compassion", there is a difference in the object of the two frameworks; Halifax (2012) indicates that the object of compassion is a person feeling suffering, while the object of empathy is understanding and feeling others regardless any situation.

Aldrup, Carstensen, and Klusmann (2021) define empathy as a significant component of teachers' emotional competence. They conducted a systematic review of existing literature to find out the importance of empathy and its potential impact on education. Therefore, they highlighted

the cruciality of emotional support to the students and its positive consequences. Moreover, the researchers agreed on the importance of teachers' empathetic skills and its impact on students' academic performance.

## **2.2 Teachers' experiences of empathy**

According to Meyers et al (2019), empathy is a crucial factor in higher education to promote student learning and success. The authors also claim that when the teachers understand a student's inner emotional state, they are more likely to remove barriers, which leads to having deep knowledge of how learning can be increased among students. Franzese (2016) demonstrates that empathic educators support students to see the "world outside" and allow them to create their future professional identity.

Aldrup et al. (2021) claim that empathy is a vital component of effective teaching, boosting support and teacher-student interactions. His studies prove that faculty members who have sufficient empathetic skills can support their students more, and it paves the way to a more successful and positive educational environment.

Empathy plays a crucial role in creating stronger relationships between teachers and students. Therefore, teachers who have strong empathetic skills can identify and implement adequate educational approaches, which is necessary for their competence (Altavilla et al., 2021). According to the research done by Lunn et al. (2022), empathy was one of the key factors helping the faculty members build effective relationships with their students and create an inclusive classroom environment. Similarly, the interviews conducted by Merrill et al. (2024) demonstrate that teachers' empathetic skills were useful in identifying the reasons for students' absence from classes and solving that issue. Moreover, they highlighted the connection between teachers' empathy and students' motivation and academic engagement as well. Likewise, as Zhang (2022)

mentioned, empathy was necessary for teacher-student engagement. On the other hand, Deci and Ryan (2000) underlined its positive impact on students' overall well-being.

According to the research, students feel a greater sense of belonging and competence when educators demonstrate empathy towards them (Weinberger, 2017). Furthermore, the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds can create a barrier for expressing and perceiving empathy that can lead to misunderstandings and disputes (Weinberger & Bakshy, 2015).

Ross et al. (2023) conducted research on instructor and student perceptions of teacher empathy in higher education. The main purpose of the study was to evaluate teacher self-reported empathy and student views of instructor empathy. According to Ross et al. (2022), empathy in higher education contexts is considered as the ability to understand and share students' feelings, responding to their learning needs with adequate support and care. While conducting research, they used the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) and a newly developed Instructor Empathy Practices questionnaire (IEP7) to assess empathy and its impact on students' overall well-being. They used a mixed method, including a cross-sectional survey of students and teachers. The qualitative analysis of students' responses indicates that they see empathy as "more than compassion". The authors also added that when teachers asked students to explain what empathy meant, students often noted it as building connections, understanding others, and being flexible. Teachers understood the moments when students experienced stress or anxiety and supported them, which improved students' resilience and motivation towards the classes. Additionally, they highlighted empathy as a key point to instructional and emotional support and building trust within the classrooms. When students trust their teachers, they share their problems or challenges to get some assistance and support. This emotional support also leads to the creation of a safe learning environment, where students do not hesitate to express their ideas and take academic risks as well.

Students' overall well-being is connected to the teachers' empathetic skills (Aldrup et al., 2021). Respecting one another, being kind, open-minded, and flexible are vital factors among educators for creating an empathetic culture within educational settings and boosting an effective learning environment (Martinsone & Žydžiūnaite, 2023).

According to Toranzo (1996), the concept of empathy is crucial in many different fields for working with people. He conducted research to understand and improve classroom behaviours by teaching empathy. The study was conducted with students who had hearing impairment, he explored how students' empathy skills were developed in the classroom. Toranzo (1996) investigated students' perceptions and interpretations of information in specific contexts that primarily focused on communication concerns. He emphasized that empathy was a complex skill integral to humans, as well as how empathy promotes prosocial behaviors. Toranzo (1996) concluded that empathy, classroom activities, and projects helped students build empathetic abilities by understanding others' emotions. There was an alignment between Toranzo's findings (1996) and Daniel Goleman's book called "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" (1995). Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence through key components, including self-awareness, emotion management, self-motivation, empathy, and managing relationships. The author emphasized that empathy was an extension of self-awareness, and understanding our own emotions improved our ability to read and comprehend others' feelings.

Wang (2022) also mentioned that students faced relationship problems with their peers. Teachers can solve these problems through emotional intelligence (EI) skills, especially empathetic ones. Understanding students' emotional needs is very helpful for teachers to solve their problems and enhance their academic skills (Wang, 2022). Moreover, students are more willing to respond positively when they feel supported by their teachers (Hossain, 2024).

According to Yilmaz (2007), historical empathy was very crucial in the school environment. He explored how students understood empathy and the need to be empathetic, while mentioning that it was important to understand someone's situation, through their perspectives, and to build connections with them. Yilmaz's (2007) findings indicated that understanding empathy could create a positive attitude and feeling toward individuals or situations. He reviewed and found that there was no universal agreement about the definition of empathy in literature.

Altavilla et al. (2021) discussed that there was a close interrelation between the teacher-student relationship and their learning experiences. Each person's development went through cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, and it highlighted the importance of empathy in an educational context. Success, school failure, and anxiety problems of students depend on their learning experiences, and these should be considered by teachers. While negative emotions created a deficit in students' attention, critical and analytical thinking, positive emotions had beneficial effects on the learning process, creative thinking, and attention (Seligman, 2007). According to D'Isanto (2019), the fundamental task of teachers was creating an effective learning environment to achieve several pedagogical objectives, which again highlighted the importance of the teacher-student relationship. The research conducted by Altavilla et al. (2021) showed that empathic teachers easily understood the diverse needs and learning experiences of students, and it facilitated the building of effective educational relationships.

Lunn et al. (2022) indicated the research on empathy in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Even though the authors believed that empathy enhanced students' communication skills and their learning experiences, the study conducted between engineering faculty members claimed that empathy was valuable, however, it was not necessary for succeeding in the engineering field. Moreover, the researcher indicated that there

was miscommunication between care and empathy. They concluded that care involved acting, but empathy did not. Caring was a phenomenon of cognitive empathy and involved empathic and motivational concerns, and compassion.

Howcroft and Mercer (2022) conducted a quantitative study to collect data about instructors' perceptions of empathy. The target group was instructors from various engineering disciplines who had more than 10 years of experience. The instructors responded to survey questions that explored their perceptions of empathy as a professional skill and its role in teaching within engineering education. The findings of the survey were that most respondents' rate perceived empathy as a professional skill. Overall, instructors valued empathy as professional skill, however, its application in education was inconsistent.

Hossain et al. (2024) used a qualitative research approach to investigate the role and expression of empathy in higher education. The purpose of the study was to explore how educators and students perceived, expressed, and integrated empathy into educational practices. Findings highlighted that empathy was crucial for shaping an inclusive and supportive learning environment. The authors stated that educators who demonstrated empathy could build positive interactions with students, which might affect students' active participation and collaboration. In addition, teachers could adopt student-centered teaching methods while demonstrating empathy in teaching. Moreover, according to McAllister and Irvine (2002), integrating empathy into teaching methods led to enhanced positive engagements, caring classroom settings, and student-centered practices.

In conclusion, empathy is perceived as the ability to understand, feel, and experience other people's feelings. However, in the educational context, the definition becomes more controversial. Yilmaz (2007) states that there is no universal agreement on the definition of empathy in the

literature; therefore, it adds further complication to the topic. Teachers' experiences with empathy show its crucial role in the formulation of teaching practices, teacher-student relationships, and overall learning experiences.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Study Design**

The purpose of this study was to explore how empathy was defined by faculty in higher education settings and to investigate faculty's experiences of empathy. The study planned to answer the following research questions:

1. How do faculty members define empathy in a higher education context?
2. What are faculty members' experiences in building relationships in a higher education context?

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

This study applied a qualitative exploratory research methodology approach that aimed to investigate a study that had not previously been studied. Qualitative research allowed us to enhance understanding of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; 2014). The flexibility of qualitative research design was an appropriate type because it helped us explore faculty members' perceptions of empathy in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). We used convenience sampling, which was a group of non-probability sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This sampling approach let us select participants based on their professional backgrounds in higher education that we needed in our study. Data was collected through qualitative one-on-one interviews on which the interviewer asked open-ended questions (Creswell, 2012; Kvale, 2007). One-on-one interviews were useful for asking sensitive questions.

#### **3.2 Research Site and Population**

This study was conducted at three public higher education institutions of Azerbaijan. These institutions were selected because of their diverse academic offerings and their relevance to the study of teaching practices in higher education. The target population was the entire group that was intended to be studied and to which the findings of the study were generalized (Creswell,

2014). In this study, the target population consisted of faculty members who taught at these three universities, particularly those who possessed teaching experience up to five years in higher education. The focus of the study was on exploring the diverse perceptions of empathy among educators in higher education institutions; therefore, faculty members from several academic disciplines were included.

### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Strategy**

For this study, nine educators were selected for semi-structured interviews. This sample size was chosen to ensure that the obtained data would be detailed enough to explore the participants' experiences and perceptions. Creswell (2012) emphasized that qualitative research often incorporated smaller sample sizes than quantitative research. Since the research was qualitative and aimed to acquire a deep understanding of individual perspectives, such a relatively small sample size was convenient.

A convenience sampling strategy allowed us to comprehend the diverse backgrounds of participants from different universities. This method was suitable as the nature of the research was exploratory. Participants should be selected based on their ability to provide rich information addressing the research questions (Creswell, 2014).

The first one was experience, which meant that educators should have at least 5 years of teaching experience in higher education. The next factor was diversity, which involved educators from different academic departments being selected to ensure a wide range of perspectives on how empathy was defined and applied in the teaching contexts.

Faculty members were recruited via email invitations, which provided details of the study's purpose, outlined the criteria for participation, and explained the overall process of informed

consent. Educators who met the criteria and expressed willingness to participate were contacted to plan an interview.

### **3.4 Data Collection Process**

This research study covered the primary data collection process to get comprehensive information about the topic. Primary data were collected through qualitative research to effectively fulfil the research objectives of the study. The core tool was conducting semi-structured interviews with the instructors in three higher education institutions in Azerbaijan (Kvale, 2007). Nine instructors from three universities were interviewed to comprehend participants' perceptions of empathy from diverse perspectives. Each interview took 35 minutes and was conducted via Zoom and Microsoft Teams applications. Additionally, the face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded, whereas online ones were video-recorded for transcription and further analysis. These interviews mainly focused on the instructors' perceptions of empathy and their experiences on it.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Process**

This research involved gathering data through qualitative research to delve into the viewpoints of instructors regarding empathy and its effects on their teaching and social well-being. Conducting semi-structured interviews with instructors, data were collected to analyze the different experiences of participants about the phenomenon. Thematic analysis was implemented to analyze qualitative data effectively. According to Terry et al. (2017), thematic analysis was one of the useful tools while analyzing data since it includes defining, monitoring, and interpreting gathered data. After gathering the data, we transcribed and coded it as well (Saldaña, 2013).

Google Docs was used to collect all gathered information in one document to facilitate the process of interpreting the data. After creating a written form of interview outcomes, the research

continued by transcribing and coding data to easily categorize participants' views based on their diverse experiences.

### **Trustworthiness**

Credibility means the confidence in the correctness of the materials. We used member checks to clarify that the participants' perspectives were represented accurately (Cresswell, 2012).

Dependability refers to the stability of the data over time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Therefore, we used peer review to ensure the rightness of the translation of the interviews conducted in Azerbaijani.

Transferability is the application of the findings of a study to other contexts as well (Cresswell, 2012). The provision of sufficient descriptions of the research was of readers' great assistance.

Conformability provides the objectivity of the data. It ensured that there was no potential bias or subjectivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Lack of transparency during the research brings about the loss of neutrality within the study.

### **Study Limitations**

Considering the sample size of the research, there could be possible limitations in obtaining comprehensive information about the topic. Secondly, instructors could be biased regarding their experiences and gender, which could decrease the credibility of the findings. The next limitation was the lack of male participants' willingness, which created a gender imbalance. Additionally, there was a time limit, especially for conducting interviews and analyzing data, which might influence the depth of the research. According to Creswell (2012), it might negatively impact the exploration of the topic and the quality of the study. Also, one of the limitations was the language

barrier; therefore, the interviews were not conducted in English, which would lead to misinterpretation in translation.

### **Ethical issues**

In this research, we ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants during the analysis process as well. Therefore, some pseudonyms were used instead of their names. Additionally, the participants were provided with the data consent form, which made them aware of the purpose, importance, duration of the study, and the point that the interviews were audio-recorded or video-recorded (Cresswell, 2012). Their participation was completely voluntary, and they were free to answer the questions that they wanted. Also, they were aware that their voices would be recorded to ensure the transferability of the data. They also had the right to withdraw from the research whenever they wished. By signing the data consent forms, they ensured that they agreed with the points mentioned there (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

### Chapter 4. Findings

The primary aim of this qualitative study is to explore how empathy is defined by faculty in higher education settings and to investigate faculty's experiences of empathy. The study plans to answer the following research questions:

1. How do faculty members define empathy in a higher education context?
2. What are faculty members' experiences in building relationships in a higher education context?

This chapter provides findings based on the interviews conducted among male and female faculty members from both technical and humanitarian departments in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan. The study participants were categorized based on their university affiliations, gender identities, and designated identification numbers to ensure organized data collection and facilitate subsequent analysis presented in the table below (*see* Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Study Participants' Demographic Information*

Universities	Participants	Gender	Age range	Job titles	Codes	Subjects taught
U 1	P 1	F	40-45	Instructor	U1P1F	Curriculum and Assessment; Foundations of Effective Teaching and Learning; Developing Effective Teaching Methods and Micro-Teaching.
U 1	P 2	M	35-40	Instructor	U1P1M	Mathematics and Statistics
U 2	P 3	F	35-40	Instructor	U2P1F	Information and Communication Technologies in English language teaching; Study skills; Curriculum
U 2	P 4	F	40-45	Instructor, PhD candidate	U2P2F	English through Arts; General English
U 2	P 5	F	30-35	Instructor	U2P3F	English language lexicology and stylistics
U 2	P 6	F	30-35	Instructor	U2P4F	English language linguistics
U 3	P 7	M	60-65	Professor	U3P1M	General Physics Course; Electricity and Magnetism; Physical Electronics; Applied Physics

U 3	P 8	F	45-50	Associate Professor	U3P1F	Advanced Mathematics; Mathematical Analysis; Additional Chapters of Mathematical Analysis; Theory of Functions of a Complex Variable; Integral Equations
U 3	P 9	F	60-65	Instructor, PhD candidate	U3P2F	English language

In this chapter, data are systematically organized into two parts according to the research questions. The first part provides detailed information about the perceptions of faculty members on empathy in the higher education context. Despite the differences in the perception of empathy among participants, several of them shared some key concepts, such as understanding feelings and different perspectives, and adequate support. Overall, the findings show that participants mostly connect empathy with being sensitive, respectful, and considerate in their interactions with others. The second part presents participants' experiences on empathy organized around three overarching themes: teaching strategies, relationship with students, and relationship with colleagues. These themes reflect how faculty members experience and implement empathy in the context of higher education.

#### 4.1 Definition of Empathy

Several participants highlighted that empathy is the ability to understand the emotions and perspectives of others. U2P1F described empathy as “the ability to understand people, to understand their feelings.” Likewise, U2P2F defined it as “understanding and sharing the feelings of others while providing appropriate support” emphasizing the significance of recognizing each student's individual difficulties and adapting teaching methods to foster an inclusive educational atmosphere. U2P3F noted that empathy is:

... bir insanın qarşısındakının duyğularını, düşüncələrini və baxış bucağını anlamaq, onun vəziyyətini hiss etmək və ona uyğun şəkildə reaksiya vermək bacarığıdır.

[... the ability to understand another person's feelings, thoughts, and point of view, to sense their situation, and respond accordingly.]

Similarly, U2P4F further interpreted empathy as:

...digər insanın hisslərini və perspektivini başa düşmək və bu anlayışla onlarla münasibət qurmaqdır.

[...understanding another person's feelings and perspective and establishing communication based on this understanding.]

Besides understanding feelings, some participants underlined the active role of empathy in decision-making processes. U3P1M described empathy as "... kiminsə yerinə mən olsam, nə cür düşünərəm..." [thinking about how I would feel if I were in someone else's place.] U1P1F shared a similar perspective:

... empathy is more active... You take an active part in the decision-making process, or at least in the commentaries, making certain valid contributions to the process" claiming that empathy involves making contributions instead of being passive.

Other participants associated empathy with respect and sensitivity. U1P2M stressed that "empathy is about understanding and caring about the needs, desires, and wishes of other persons" adding that "it is a part of respect; students feel that teachers are respectful toward them."

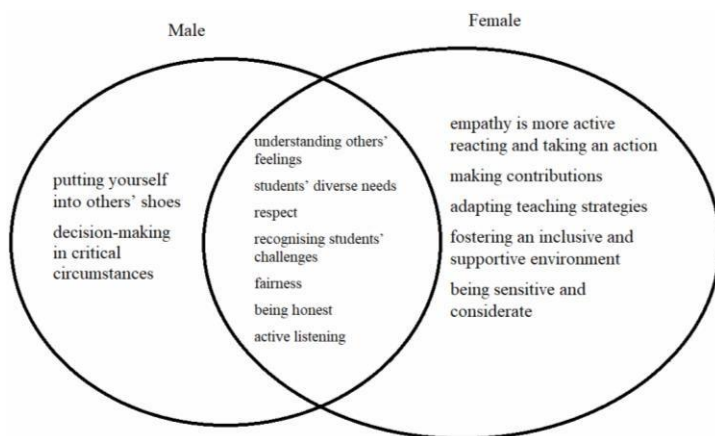
The study participants also aligned empathy with respecting students' points of view during teaching. As U3P1F mentioned, "Məncə tələbələrin fikrini önəm vermək, tədris eləyəndə tələbələrin fikrinə yaxşı yanaşmaq." [I think giving importance to students' opinions and valuing them during teaching is a form of empathy.]

U3P2F further highlighted that “...digər insanları düzgün başa düşmək, çox həssas olmalıyıq və daha çox anlayışlı olmalıyıq.” [We should correctly understand others; we should be more sensitive and understanding.]

Overall, the study participants view empathy as going beyond emotional understanding and including an active, respectful, and sensitive approach in higher education context, essential for creating a pleasant learning environment (*see* Figure 1).

### Figure 1

#### *Definition of Empathy from Male and Female Perspectives*



As Figure 1 shows male participants define empathy as putting themselves in others' shoes which emphasizes understanding different perspectives of diverse people. Besides, males tend to make decisions in critical situations, and for them, empathy is associated with rational action rather than emotional responsiveness.

On the other hand, the female participants indicate an action-oriented view of empathy. They define empathy as being more active, reacting, taking an action, and making contributions. Moreover, adapting teaching strategies, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment are other important perspectives which reflect on pedagogical perspectives. In addition, being sensitive and considerate highlights the emotional aspect of empathy.

However, both male and female participants share common views about the perception of empathy. First and foremost, both sides put emphasis on understanding others' feelings and diverse student needs. Additionally, respecting others, recognizing students' challenges, being honest, fair toward others, and active listening are other shared points.

## **4.2. Faculty Members' Experiences of Empathy in Building Relationships**

### **4.2.1 Teaching Strategies**

Faculty members have highlighted that empathy is a key to effective teaching and learning. Empathetic teaching strategies were expressed through active listening, individualized approaches, and adaptability to students' needs and concerns. Both male and female teachers stressed the significance of listening to students' concerns, particularly outside the classroom, and offering personalized guidance based on students' academic and personal needs.

U2P4F from a humanitarian department explained:

Empatiya, müəllimin tələbələrin zəif tərəflərini dərk etməsinə və buna uyğun tədris üsulları inkişaf etdirməsinə imkan tanıyır.

[Empathy allows the teacher to understand students' weaknesses and develop appropriate teaching methods accordingly.]

The study participants also emphasized the role of empathy in supporting students' motivation and professional development. For instance, U3P1M stated:

Əslinə qalsa, empatiya daha çox seçim qarşısında o kritik momentlərdir...bəzən tələbə gəlirki bir neçə yerdən iş təklif olunub. İndi mən özümü qoyuram ki, onun yerinə yerinə ki, hansını seçsin, yaxud hansısa bir xarici ölkədə də karyeramı inkişaf etdirə bilər. İndi hansını?! onun yerinə olsa mən hansını seçərəm, belə bir şəraitdə...

[Actually, empathy is more like those critical moments when there is a need to make a choice...sometimes a student comes and has been offered a job from several places. Now I put myself in his shoes, which one should he or she choose, or can he or she develop his career in some foreign country? Now which one?! Which one would I choose if I were him in such a situation?]

Additionally, the study participants mentioned that different teaching strategies, including flipped classroom and collaborative activities, were incorporated to foster student engagement, specifically for those from diverse backgrounds.

#### **4.2.2. Empathetic Relationships with Students**

Another important theme taken from the data was the pattern of faculty–student relationships affected by empathy. The study participants stressed the essence of trust, emotional sensitivity, respect, and support in their day-to-day interactions with students. The female instructors frequently used expressions like “love and support,” “being considerate,” and “no judgment” to characterize their approach. U2P2F said:

Empathy involves recognizing students' challenges and providing appropriate support to help them meet their academic aims and goals.

Regarding the instructor-student relationships, U1P1F described them as honest, fair, and proactive, with emphasis on professionalism combined with availability:

I think I am a strict teacher, and I am hopefully fair... But apart from that, which I think shows fairness to all the students, because there are requirements. There's a rubric, there are requirements, and all students are supposed to be fairly treated.

U1P1M supported his female colleague's insight and stated the following opinion:

Instructors must be fair, there could be unexpected things happening to students- a loss of closed ones, deadline exceptions, using empathy, and postponing the deadline.

The balance between being emotionally supportive and remaining professional was a common theme shared by the study participants demonstrating how empathy played out in a mindful way when the faculty were building empathetic relationships with the students. Overall, the findings showed that building a positive learning environment requires empathetic engagement to support students' academic and personal development.

### **4.3. Empathetic Collaboration Among Colleagues**

In addition, the faculty members argued that empathy played a vital role in their relationship with colleagues. A solid sense of collective teacher efficacy, emotional support, and shared burdens were stressed by both male and female participants. U1P1M stated:

They should feel that you care about their opinion, I would describe my relationship very positively. I feel happy to work with them, and I am sharing an office with 3 more colleagues. We support each other, in different ways, for exam proctoring, consulting about certain things, students' requests and etc, on how we should handle unseen requests.

Likewise, U2P4F from a humanitarian field highlighted:

Onlara dəstək olmaq və bərabər məsuliyyəti paylaşmaq daha səmərəli və harmonik nəticələr verə bilər. Həmkarla empatik münasibət qurmaq, stress və gərginlikdən uzaq, işbirliyinə açıq bir mühit yaradır.

[Supporting them and sharing equal responsibility can lead to more effective and harmonious outcomes. Establishing an empathetic relationship with a colleague creates an environment that is free from stress and tension and open to collaboration.]

To conclude, the findings demonstrated that empathetic collaboration among colleagues not only elevated the quality of their work but also boosted a respectful, productive, and supportive educational atmosphere (*see* Table 2).

*Faculty’s Experiences of Empathy in Building Relationships*

Research Question 2 What are faculty members’ experiences of empathy in higher education settings?	<b>Humanitarian Subjects</b>		<b>Technical Subjects</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Teaching strategies</b>	Flexible Teaching Strategies, Active Listening, Open Communication, Constructive feedback, Individual approach, Building trust, Maintaining Professional Boundaries, Setting Clear Expectations, Promoting Collaboration, Diverse Teaching Methods, Academic and Professional Development, Resolving Challenges, Enhancing Students' motivation, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and needs	-	Enhancing Students' motivation, Maintaining Professional Boundaries, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and needs, Building trust, Confidentiality	Constructive feedback, Interdisciplinary Approach, Promoting Student Decision-Making, Active Listening, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and needs, Academic and Professional Development, Flexible Teaching Strategies
<b>Relationship with students</b>	Friendly relationship, Respect, Being Sensible and Considerate, Fair and Equal Treatment,	-	Friendly relationship, Respect	Fair and Equal Treatment, Being Honest, Friendly relationship
<b>Relationship with colleagues</b>	Sharing Burden and Experiences, supporting each other, Positive Environment, Peer Culture, Separating Professional and Personal Relationships, Mutual Understanding, having Common Goals	-	Sharing Burden and Experiences, Positive Environment	Sharing Burden and Experiences, Positive Environment, supporting each other, Separating Professional and Personal Relationships

## Chapter 5. Discussion

This chapter discusses the connection between the study findings and existing literature on empathy in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan. The study demonstrated that faculty members across genders and different disciplines, such as technical and humanitarian, find empathy as a crucial component in education.

According to the study participants, empathy means understanding others' feelings. Researchers highlight that empathy is the ability to put oneself into others' shoes and experience their emotions (Zhou, 2022). Most female participants have mentioned that empathy is approaching every student individually and making meaningful contributions to their learning process. When faculty understand students' emotional situations, they can easily remove the obstacles which prevent them from achieving academic success (Meyers et al., 2019). Besides, the male participants from the technical field have also supported the importance of empathy, often defining it as being active, helpful and honest, demonstrating a more structured approach while also remaining supportive. Moreover, they have mentioned that empathy involves decision-making in critical situations and solving students' problems. As Wang (2022) emphasized, understanding students' diverse emotional needs would have a positive impact on solving students' problems and boosting their academic knowledge and skills. The researcher stated that supportive educators were able to create an effective learning environment which resulted in better student engagement in the class (Hossain, 2024).

Most study participants experienced cognitive empathy, which involved understanding other people's feelings and perspectives without sharing the same emotions. However, there are several disparities between male and female participants' perceptions of emotional empathy; while female participants are more likely to interfere with emotions, for male participants, cognitive

empathy is enough. According to the gathered data, feeling the same emotions with the person can create a burden for them. Therefore, most participants support the idea of showing cognitive empathy.

The faculty members' experiences in higher education mainly focus on three themes: teaching strategies, relationship with students and relationship with colleagues. They use a wide range of teaching strategies in the implementation of empathy within their classrooms. Instructors claim that considering the diverse student body in higher education including international students, they are trying to be more student-centric in their teaching strategies. Moreover, they listen and understand diverse students' needs to create a better learning environment. For instance, participants use active listening, adopt flipped teaching (allowing students to do homework in class to foster engagement and understanding), provide constructive feedback, and individual approach. So, empathy plays a crucial role in effective teaching that boosts support and leads to a more positive educational atmosphere (Aldrup et al., 2021).

The next theme covers the faculty members' relationship with their students. The study participants mostly emphasized having friendly, respectful and fair relationships within the higher education institutions. Empathy is an important factor that helps educators build a successful and productive environment (Lunn et al., 2022). Although both male and female participants are open to share experiences, their burden and support each other, they prefer to separate professional and personal relationships.

Furthermore, communication between the teachers is based on mutual support. This support involves sharing their experiences and methodologies, solving problems, preparing lessons and having common goals. The creation of this culture requires respecting one another, being kind,

open-minded and flexible, which leads to a more professional and successful work environment (Martinsone & Žydžiūnaite, 2023).

## Appendices

### Appendix A - Interview Protocol

General interview procedure: First, the researcher(s) will greet the participant, introduce themselves, and provide information about themselves, including their educational background and program. The nature, purpose, and brief description of the study will then be explained to the participant. The researchers will inform the participant about the language in which the interview procedure will be conducted, the duration of the interview, the possibility of audio recording for transcription and analysis, and that all responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms. Before the interview begins, the participant will be provided with a consent form to review and sign. After signing the consent form, the researchers will begin the conversation.

Interview questions:

1. Could you please introduce yourself by giving information about your educational background for example, your teaching experience and the courses you currently teach?

Sub-question

How long have you been teaching in higher education?

2. What does empathy mean to you?
3. Why is empathy important in higher education? Be specific and provide at least three reasons.
4. When is it most important to use empathy? Why?
5. What is the role of empathy in building relationship with your students? Sub question How would you describe your relationship with your students?

6. What strategies do you use to show empathy in building relationships with diverse body of students? Be specific and provide at least three strategies.
7. Could you please describe a case your empathy contributed to communicating with a student to address his/her problem?
8. What is the role of empathy in your teaching?

Sub-question

How does empathy shape your teaching strategies regarding diverse students' needs and learning experiences?

9. How do you balance empathy with academic discipline in your classes?
10. Have you ever experienced burnout from being an empathetic teacher? If yes, how do you know that? Elaborate on it, please?
11. How do you balance empathy with maintaining professional boundaries in the higher education settings?
12. What type of support does your university provide faculty to develop empathy?
13. What role do the institutional policies play in shaping empathy practices at your university?
14. In what ways can empathy among faculty members affect the overall academic environment of the institution? Be specific and provide some examples.
15. What is the role of empathy in building relationship with your colleagues?

Sub question

How would you describe your relationship with your colleagues?

16. What advice would you give to your novice colleagues regarding empathy practices in their teaching?

17. Is there anything else you would like to share about the role of empathy in higher education?

### **Müsahibə Protokolu**

Müsahibənin ümumi proseduru: Əvvəlcə tədqiqatçı(lar) iştirakçını salamlayacaq, özlərini təqdim edəcək və özləri haqqında, yəni təhsil dərəcəsi və proqramı haqqında məlumat verəcəklər. Daha sonra tədqiqatın mahiyyəti, məqsədi və qısa təsviri iştirakçıya izah ediləcək. Tədqiqatçılar müsahibə prosedurunun keçiriləcəyi dili, müsahibə müddətini, transkripsiya və təhlil üçün səs yazısı barədə, bütün cavablar təxəllüslərdən istifadə etməklə məxfi saxlanılacağı haqqında məlumat verəcəklər. Müsahibəyə başlamazdan əvvəl iştirakçıya yenidən nəzərdən keçirmək və imzalamaq üçün razılıq forması iştirakçıya təqdim olunacaq. Razılıq formasını imzaladıqdan sonra tədqiqatçılar söhbətə başlayacaqlar.

### **Müsahibə Sualları**

1. Zəhmət olmasa, təhsil keçmişiniz, məsələn, müəllimlik təcrübəniz və hazırda tədris etdiyiniz kurslar haqqında məlumat verərək özünüzü təqdim edə bilərsinizmi?

Alt sual

Neçə vaxtdır ali məktəbdə tədris edirsiniz?

2. Empatiya sizin üçün nə deməkdir?

3. Ali təhsildə empatiya nə üçün vacibdir? Konkret olun və ən azı üç səbəb göstərin.

4. Empatiyadan nə vaxt istifadə etmək daha vacibdir? Niyə?
5. Tələbələrinizlə münasibət qurmaqda empatiyanın rolu nədir?

Alt sual

Tələbələrinizlə münasibətinizi necə təsvir edərdiniz?

6. Tələbələriniz ilə əlaqələr qurmaqda empatiya göstərmək üçün hansı strategiyalardan istifadə edirsiniz? Konkret olun və ən azı üç strategiya təmin edin.
7. Tələbənin problemini həll etmək üçün onunla ünsiyyət qurmağınza empatiyanızın təsir etdiyi bir hadisəni təsvir edə bilərsinizmi?
8. Tədrisində empatiyanın rolu nədir?

Alt sual

Empatiya müxtəlif tələbələrin ehtiyacları və öyrənmə təcrübələri ilə bağlı tədris strategiyalarınızı necə formalaşdırır?

9. Dərslərinizdə empatiya ilə akademik intizamı necə balanslaşdırırsınız?
10. Heç empatik müəllim olmaqdan tükənməlik hiss yaşamırsınız? Əgər belədirsə, bunu necə bilirsiniz? Bu barədə ətraflı məlumat verin, zəhmət olmasa?
11. Siz ali təhsil müəssisələrində peşəkar sərhədləri qorumaqla empatiyanı necə balanslaşdırırsınız? 12. Universitetiniz empatiyanın inkişafı üçün müəllim heyətinə hansı dəstəyi göstərir?

13. Universitetinizin təhsil siyasəti empatiya təcrübələrinizin formalaşmasında hansı rol oynayır?

14. Müəllimlər arasında empatiya universitetin ümumi akademik mühitinə hansı şəkildə təsir edə bilər? Konkret olun və bəzi nümunələr verin.

15. Həmkarlarınızla münasibət qurmaqda empatiyanın rolu nədir?

Alt sual

Həmkarlarınızla münasibətinizi necə təsvir edərdiniz?

16. Tədris zamanı empatiya ilə bağlı gənc(yeni) həmkarlarınıza nə məsləhət görərdiniz?

17. Ali təhsildə empatiyanın rolu haqqında bölüşmək istədiyiniz başqa nəşə varmı?

### **Appendix B - Consent Form**

Project Title: Perception of Faculty Members on Empathy in Higher Education in Azerbaijan

Researcher(s): Gunel Mammadova, Madina Gudrat, Nazrin Mammadova, Nigar Ibrahimova  
(MAEM 2025)

Institution: ADA

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring how faculty in higher education in Azerbaijan perceive and experience empathy in their professional lives. The study aims to explore how empathy is defined by faculty in higher education settings and investigate faculty's experiences of empathy and factors contributing to it.

**Procedures**

If you agree to participate, you will take part in an individual interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be conducted in person or online at a mutually convenient time. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and video-taped for accuracy in data analysis. After process, you may request to review the transcript of your interview.

All information shared during the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymized, and no personally identifiable information will be included in any reports or publications. The data will be securely stored and only accessible to the capstone project team.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without providing any reason. Also, any data collected after that point will be deleted upon your request. Moreover, you have the right not to answer any question feel uncomfortable with. Your participation in this study does not involve any risk. Thus, you may not receive direct benefits. Your insights will contribute to a deeper understanding of empathy in higher education. As well, it may help improve teaching strategies and student engagement in higher education settings.

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided. You agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined above.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact the us [gammadova19381@ada.edu.az](mailto:gammadova19381@ada.edu.az), [nibrahimova7827@ada.edu.az](mailto:nibrahimova7827@ada.edu.az), [mgudrat18892@ada.edu.az](mailto:mgudrat18892@ada.edu.az), [nmammadova7900@ada.edu.az](mailto:nmammadova7900@ada.edu.az).

### **Razılıq Forması**

Layihənin adı: Azərbaycanda Ali Təhsildə Müəllim-Professor heyətinin Empatiya haqqında təsəvvürləri

Tədqiqatçı(lar): Günel Məmmədova, Mədinə Qüdrət, Nəzrin Məmmədova, Nigar İbrahimova (MAEM 2025)

Təşkilat: ADA

Hörmətli iştirakçı,

Siz Azərbaycanda ali təhsil fakültəsinin professor-müəllim heyətinin öz peşəkar həyatlarında empatiya hissini necə qəbul etdiyini və təcrübələrini araşdıran tədqiqat işində iştirak etməyə dəvət olunursunuz. Tədqiqatın məqsədi empatiyanın ali təhsil müəssisələrində fakültə üzvləri tərəfindən necə müəyyən edildiyini araşdırmaq və onların empatiya təcrübəsini və buna töhfə verən amilləri araşdırmaqdır.

### **Prosedurlar**

İştirak etməyə razılaşsanız, təxminən 45-60 dəqiqə davam edən fərdi müsahibədə iştirak edəcəksiniz. Müsahibə üzbəüz və ya hər iki tərəf üçün əlverişli vaxtda onlayn keçiriləcək. İcazənizlə, məlumatların təhlilində dəqiqlik üçün müsahibə zamanı müsahibənin keçirilmə

formasından asılır olaraq səs yazısı və ya video lentə alınacaq. Prosesdən sonra siz müsahibənin transkriptini nəzərdən keçirməyi tələb edə bilərsiniz.

Müsahibə zamanı paylaşılan bütün məlumatlar ciddi şəkildə məxfi saxlanılacaq. Cavablarınız anonimləşdiriləcək və hər hansı bir hesabat və ya nəşrə şəxsiyyəti müəyyən edən heç bir məlumat daxil edilməyəcək. Məlumat təhlükəsiz şəkildə saxlanılacaq və yalnız layihə komandası üçün əlçatan olacaq.

Bu tədqiqatda iştirakınız tamamilə könüllüdür. Heç bir səbəb göstərmədən istənilən vaxt geri çəkilmək hüququnuz var. Həmçinin, həmin nöqtədən sonra toplanmış hər hansı məlumat sorğunuz əsasında silinəcək. Üstəlik, narahat olduğunuz heç bir suala cavab verməmək hüququnuz var. Bu tədqiqatda iştirakınız heç bir risk daşımır. Sizin fikirləriniz ali təhsildə empatiyanın daha dərinə dərk edilməsinə kömək edəcək. Həmçinin, bu, tədris strategiyalarını və ali təhsil müəssisələrində tələbə cəlbini təkmilləşdirməyə kömək edə bilər.

Bu formanı imzalamaqla siz təqdim olunan məlumatları oxuduğunuzu və başa düşdüyünüzü təsdiq edirsiniz. Siz yuxarıda qeyd olunan şərtlərlə bu tədqiqatda iştirak etməyə razılırsınız.

İştirakçının adı: \_\_\_\_\_

İmza: \_\_\_\_\_

Tarix: \_\_\_\_\_

Tədqiqatçının adı: \_\_\_\_\_

İmza: \_\_\_\_\_

Tarix: \_\_\_\_\_

Tədqiqatla bağlı hər hansı sualınız və ya narahatlığınız varsa, bizimlə əlaqə saxlayın.

[gmammadova19381@ada.edu.az](mailto:gmammadova19381@ada.edu.az), [nibrahimova7827@ada.edu.az](mailto:nibrahimova7827@ada.edu.az), [mgudrat18892@ada.edu.az](mailto:mgudrat18892@ada.edu.az),

[nmammadova7900@ada.edu.az](mailto:nmammadova7900@ada.edu.az).

### List of Tables

**Table 1**

*Study Participants' Demographic Information*

Universities	Participants	Gender	Age range	Job titles	Codes	Subjects taught
U 1	P 1	F	40-45	Instructor	U1P1F	Curriculum and Assessment; Foundations of Effective Teaching and Learning; Developing Effective Teaching Methods and Micro-Teaching.
U 1	P 2	M	35-40	Instructor	U1P1M	Mathematics and Statistics
U 2	P 3	F	35-40	Instructor	U2P1F	Information and Communication Technologies in English language teaching; Study skills; Curriculum
U 2	P 4	F	40-45	Instructor, PhD candidate	U2P2F	English through Arts; General English
U 2	P 5	F	30-35	Instructor	U2P3F	English language lexicology and stylistics
U 2	P 6	F	30-35	Instructor	U2P4F	English language linguistics
U 3	P 7	M	60-65	Professor	U3P1M	General Physics Course; Electricity and Magnetism; Physical Electronics; Applied Physics
U 3	P 8	F	45-50	Associate Professor	U3P1F	Advanced Mathematics; Mathematical Analysis; Additional Chapters of Mathematical Analysis; Theory of Functions of a Complex Variable; Integral Equations
U 3	P 9	F	60-65	Instructor, PhD candidate	U3P2F	English language

**Table 2**

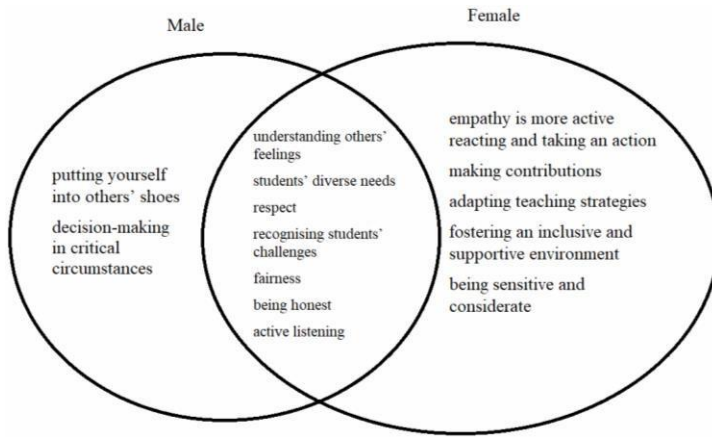
*Faculty’s Experiences of Empathy in Building Relationships*

Research Question 2 What are faculty members’ experiences of empathy in higher education settings?	<b>Humanitarian Subjects</b>		<b>Technical Subjects</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Teaching strategies</b>	Flexible Teaching Strategies, Active Listening, Open Communication, Constructive feedback, Individual approach, Building trust, Maintaining Professional Boundaries, Setting Clear Expectations, Promoting Collaboration, Diverse Teaching Methods, Academic and Professional Development, Resolving Challenges, Enhancing Students' motivation, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and needs	-	Enhancing Students' motivation, Maintaining Professional Boundaries, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and needs, Building trust, Confidentiality	Constructive feedback, Interdisciplinary Approach, Promoting Student Decision-Making, Active Listening, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and needs, Academic and Professional Development, Flexible Teaching Strategies
<b>Relationship with students</b>	Friendly relationship, Respect, Being Sensible and Considerate, Fair and Equal Treatment,	-	Friendly relationship, Respect	Fair and Equal Treatment, Being Honest, Friendly relationship
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### List of Figures

**Figure 1**

*Definition of Empathy from Male and Female Perspectives*



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**Final Product**

**Empathy is the bridge that connects hearts and minds.**

**-Daniel Goleman**

**Empathy in Higher Education**

Nazrin Mammadova, Madina Gudrat, Nigar Ibrahimova, Gunel Mammadova



### How to Foster Empathy in Higher Education?

- 1 Workshops on Professional Development**  
Focusing on emotional intelligence, inclusivity and students' diversity
- 2 Integrating policies**  
Integrating empathy as a key factor in performance evaluations and using emotionally intelligent policies
- 3 Collaborations and Partnerships**  
Encouraging projects which combine STEM and humanities and fostering innovations
- 4 Organising roundtables and discussions**  
Establishing gatherings and sharing challenges and experiences with colleagues
- 5 Mentoring programmes**  
Mentoring programmes for novices by experienced faculty members

**Empathy represents the foundation skills for all the social competencies important for work**

**-Daniel Goleman**

### Empathetic Teaching Strategies

- 1 Active Listening**  
A communication skill that involves fully engaging with a speaker by focusing, understanding, and responding thoughtfully to ensure meaningful interaction
- 2 Flexible Teaching**  
An instructional approach that adapts to students' diverse learning needs, allowing for personalized learning experiences and varied teaching methods
- 3 Constructive Feedback**  
A communication approach that provides specific, actionable insights to help individuals improve their performance while maintaining a supportive and respectful tone
- 4 Flipped Classrooms & Collaboration**  
Involve students engaging with learning materials before class, allowing in-class time for interactive, collaborative learning
- 5 Student Decision Support**  
Systems and strategies that help students make informed academic and career choices by providing guidance, resources, and analytical tools

- 1 Empathy in Relationships with Students**
  - Equal Treatment
  - Respect
  - Trust
  - Support
- 2 Empathy in Relationships with Colleagues**
  - Sharing Responsibilities
  - Motivating One Another
  - Peer Relationship
  - Giving Feedback to One Another

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