

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF AUTHENTICITY AND ACCEPTABILITY OF STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

*Professor Dr. Gheyasuddin Siddiqui**,

Dr. Muhammad Sarwar[†]

Ashfaq Ahmad Shah[‡]

Dr. Shafqat Hussain[§]

Abstract

Development and prosperity in any society is based on time to time evaluation and accountability of the various service providing institutions. Recognizing the situation Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has established a mechanism to evaluate the university teachers. The question of authenticity and acceptability of students' evaluations as a valid criterion for teachers' performance has become a debate in Pakistan. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has set students' evaluation of their teachers' teaching as a valid criterion for the performance evaluation of the university teachers. The present study intends to explore the authenticity and acceptability of students' evaluation of teaching at university level in Pakistan. Population of this study was all the students and the faculty members at University of Sargodha. The sample of this study was 191 students and 15 teachers selected from two departments – the Department of Education and the Department of Psychology. A questionnaire consisting of twenty eight questions was developed and used after validation for data collected from the students. The teachers were interviewed to get in-depth understanding of the matter. The results show that the students perceive students evaluation of teaching as authentic and

* Department of Social Work, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan,
Tel: +92-333-7857191 E-mail: gheyasdsidd@gmail.com

† Department of Education, University of Sargodha, 40100 Sargodha, Pakistan,
Tel: +92-321-8600055 E-mail: drsarwar@ymail.com

‡ Department of Education, University of Sargodha, 40100 Sargodha, Pakistan,
Tel: +92-333-6027999 E-mail: multanxa@gmail.com

§ Centre for Economics of Education, Department of Education, University of Sargodha, 40100 Sargodha, Pakistan, Tel: +92-300-7711441 E-mail: drhssn@yahoo.com

acceptable for improvements in teaching. Apart from the teaching ability of a teacher, it is generally based on personal likeness and dis likeness. The teachers consider students' evaluations of teaching as authentic and acceptable in social aspects and unauthentic and unacceptable in technical aspects. There are no inter-group differences in the perception of students in this regards.

Keywords: *Authenticity, Acceptability, Performance, Higher Education, Evaluation, University Teachers, University students.*

Introduction

The demand for a systematic and proper training at higher education offers a plea for the evaluation of university teachers. One of the implied purposes of teacher evaluation is the individual staff development (Wise et al, 1984) which is indeed one of the most indispensable factors. There are many modes of teachers' teaching evaluation ranging from self-assessment to students' evaluation; and they all do have their own beauties and shortcomings. Jacob and Lefgren (2008) determined that the heads are unable to evaluate the teachers properly and there is inability of principals to distinguish between teacher qualities because there may be favoritism toward particular teachers etc. Although peer evaluation of teaching has become prevalent (Perlman & McCann, 1998) yet students' evaluation of teaching, being frequently used in faculty performance reviews (Dee, 2007), is getting more popularity. Boice (2007) has outlined some clear advantages of students' evaluation.

Worthington (2002) indicated various variables significantly influencing students' evaluation. Strong (2006) criticizes students' evaluation for implicit grade inflation and lowering of academic standards. University teachers may possibly be reluctant in giving students low grades for the fear of their low ratings by the students in response. This may lead to grade inflation and some compromise over the academic standards. But he concludes that so far this has

not been supported by some sufficient research evidence. Zabaleta (2007) established that since the relationship between students' evaluations and the actual merits of teaching performance has not been clearly identified, numerical values of those evaluations should not be used in critical personnel decisions such as retention, tenure and promotion of faculty, unless they are properly interpreted within a sound theory of teaching effectiveness.

Logical question comes to the minds of higher education stakeholders regarding authenticity and acceptability of students' evaluation. To what extent is the students' evaluation authentic as well as acceptable for the stakeholders? Spencer and Schmelkin (2002) revealed a strong emphasis on the issue of the respect university teachers possess for students' evaluation. They further elaborated that students are generally willing to do evaluations and to provide feedback, and have no particular fear of repercussions. However, they have little confidence that faculty or administrators pay attention to the results, and do not even consult the ratings themselves. Abdul Raheem and coworkers (2010) maintained that although lecturers generally do not accept students' evaluation of their teaching, they perceived that the students' evaluation of teaching would bring about positive changes in their instructional practices. If unbiased, students' evaluation being the most direct means may have lent greater authenticity and acceptability in the eyes of the stakeholders. Henceforth, including Boice (2007) conviction of meritorious students' evaluation, this study is to explore the authenticity as well as the acceptability of the teaching evaluation of university students.

Main objectives of the study are as followed:

1. To analyze teachers perception of authenticity of students' teaching-evaluations at University of Sargodha
2. To explore the acceptability of students' teaching-evaluations at University of Sargodha

Methods and Procedures

This survey includes conveniently sampled 191 students and 15 teachers from the Department of Education and the Department of Psychology. The equal number of students from the two departments constituted the sample. A questionnaire developed and validated (reliability coefficient was 0.88) by the researchers used to collect data from students. It was a five-point Likert scale having twenty eight items. All computations were made through SPSS-15 software package. Subsequently qualitative analysis of teachers' interviews is being presented.

A. Quantitative Analysis

Table 1: Authenticity of Evaluation of Teaching

No.	Statement	Mean	SD	t
1.	Authenticity of Evaluation of Teaching	3.97	.512	24.02
2.	Students can judge the teaching effectiveness of their teachers.	3.74	.72	14.14
3.	Students are honest in filling out teaching evaluation forms.	4.15	.756	21.06
4.	Teachers present the evaluation forms in a well-organized manner.	3.84	.971	11.99
5.	Teachers have communicated effectively regarding teaching evaluations in the class.	4.08	.829	18.06
6.	Teachers answer students' questions and comments regarding teaching evaluations	4.05	.780	18.66
7.	Teachers have encouraged students to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings.	4.01	.949	14.64
8.	Teachers encourage students to participate actively in the Teaching evaluations.	3.97	.981	13.72
9.	Teachers provide clear explanations of important issues in the evaluations.	3.96	.934	14.18
10.	Teachers have made an effort to enhance quality of teaching.	3.96	.905	14.63

Test value=3, df=190, P=0.000

Table 1 shows that the mean of Authenticity of Teaching Evaluations of teaching is more than 3 (test value). The difference is significant ($t=24.02$, $P=.000$) at .01 level. High statistically significant

difference evidenced authenticity of teaching evaluation by the students. University students are the direct source of information to evaluate the effectiveness of their teachers' teaching and they do this job seriously and honestly with full interest. On the other hand teachers are also contributing to such training of their students. They prepare themselves during the classes, communicate them effectively the importance of the process. They not only encourage them to criticize but also try to respond their questions and comments giving clear explanations. Teachers' sincere efforts have lent students' evaluation greater authenticity.

Table 2: Acceptance of Teaching-Evaluations

No	Statement	Mean	SD	t
1.	Acceptance of Teaching-Evaluations	3.98	.44	21.48
2.	Student evaluations should be given more importance.	4.13	.83	18.77
3.	Student evaluations should be the primary source of feedback to faculty on their teaching.	3.96	.85	15.58
4.	You take the completion of teaching evaluation forms seriously.	4.11	.83	18.49
5.	Teachers give importance to students' evaluation.	3.87	.89	13.35
6.	Teachers have been confident in teaching Evaluations.	4.19	.820	20.11
7.	Teachers have encouraged students to take responsibility for teaching evaluations	3.96	.845	15.67
8.	Teachers have been supportive during evaluation process	3.93	.957	13.45
9.	Teachers have made an effort to stimulate student's interest in the evaluations	3.65	.972	9.23

Test value=3, df=190, P=0.000

Table 2 shows that the mean of students' attitude towards teaching-evaluation is more than 3 (neutral value). The difference is significant ($t=21.48$, $P=.000$) at .01 level. Acceptability of teaching evaluation by the students is observable through the analysis in the Table 2. University students think that they are the most direct source of information and they should be given more importance in

the evaluation. Students endorsed that their teachers give importance to their evaluation; they encourage, motivate and help them evaluate. Acceptability of students' evaluation can be increased if teachers work hard to make their students confidently trained for the evaluation of their teachers teaching.

B. Qualitative Analysis

The teachers are of the view that the students are very good evaluators of the teachers and the teachings with certain limitations. The students can evaluate teachers' behavior in terms of their own understanding. Large majority of the teachers believe that the students rightly evaluate their teachers' social skills as well as the behavior. To them, students feel more comfortable with those teachers who are communicative and let the students be communicative in the interactive sessions with their teachers. Very few teachers contradicted this. But their evaluation about the teachers' academic competence could be reliable to a modest level as overtly they are novice in what they are being trained in. This logical and apparent opinion was hardly challenged by the teachers interviewed in this study.

The teachers inclined to agree with the students' evaluation of their social and behavioral aspects but are very much reluctant to accept students' academic evaluation about the teaching learning process. Hence their acceptability to get feedback from their students about their teaching is also of dual aspect. This is in conformity with what have been found out regarding the previous objective mentioned above. The acceptability includes the connotation that the teachers do willingly accommodate their students' evaluation and are inclined to get their behavior modified accordingly.

Conclusion

The students perceive that the teaching evaluations are not only acceptable but also authentic. Whereas, the teachers believe that the students rightly evaluate their teachers in social skills as well as behavior in academic settings. However, their evaluation of teachers' academic competence is reliable to a modest level because they are not sufficiently qualified for this.

Recommendation

To make the evaluation more authentic to seek the confidence of the students an orientation should be given to them. Awards and cash prizes should be given to the teachers whose performance is good. They will be role model and will inspire the other teacher to give their best to the students. The result of the evaluation should be publicly announced in the national newspapers and HEC and University Newsletters. Best teacher award should be given on the basis of evaluation to every teacher of every programs of study. Ticket concession should be given in air, railway, and road transportation and on place of interest.

References

- Abdul Raheem, Y., Abdul Rahman, A. U., Ayorinde, A. S., & Olubode, O. C., (2010). University Teachers' Perception of the Effects of Students Evaluation of Teaching on Lecturers Instructional Practices in Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.musero.org.ng/publications/University-Teachers-Perception-of-the-Effects-of-Students-Evaluation-of-Teaching-on-Lecturers-Instructional-Practices-in-Nigeria.pdf> at May 3, 2011.
- Boice, R. (2007). Countering Common Misbeliefs about Student Evaluation of Teaching. *State University of New York at Stony Brook* published by The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education. <http://www.asa.mnscu.edu/facultydevelopment/resources/pod/Packet7/counteringcommon.html> at May 5, 2011.

- Dee, K. C. (2007). Student Perceptions of High Course Workloads are Not Associated with Poor Student Evaluations of Instructor Performance. *Journal of Engineering Education*. 69-78. Retrieved from <http://www.jee.org/2007/january/6.pdf> at May 4, 2011.
- Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2008). Can principals identify effective teachers? Evidence on subjective performance evaluation in education. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 26(1), 101– 136. In Center for Educator Compensation Reform. (2011). D. Measurement How well do evaluations of teachers predict student achievement outcomes? Research Synthesis—1. Retrieved from http://cecr.ed.gov/guides/researchSyntheses/Research%20Synthesis_Q%20D20.pdf at July 18, 2011.
- Perlman, B., & McCann, L. I. (1998). Peer review of teaching: An overview. Office of teaching resources in psychology (OTRP). Retrieved from http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/perlman/peerreview.pdf at July 20, 2011.
- Spencer, K. J. and Schmelkin, L. P. (2002). "Student Perspectives on Teaching and its Evaluation". *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 27: 5, 397 — 409. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0260293022000009285> at June 10, 2011.
- Strong, J. H. (2006). *Evaluating Teaching* (2 ed). New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Worthington, A. (2002). The Impact of Student Perceptions and Characteristics on Teaching Evaluations: A Case Study in Finance Education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 27(1). 49-64. Retrieved from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/2567/1/2567.pdf> at May 3, 2011.
- Wise, A. E., Darlind-Hammond, L., McLoughlin, M. W., & Bernstein, H. T. (1984). *Teacher Evaluation: A Study of Effective Practices*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Zabaleta, F. (2007). 'The use and misuse of student evaluations of teaching', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12: 1, 55 — 76. Retrieved from <http://ocs.aishe.org/index.php/international/2010/paper/viewDownloadInterstitial/187/97> at May 6, 2011.