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A new method for university instructor assessment

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A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T
	One of the most important issues in improving educational system is to have skilled university professors and any constructive feedbacks could help instructors improve their skills. Many people argue that traditional university professors' assessments are not good ways for evaluating university professors since they ask all students to express their opinions and they are not solely good representatives for such assessment. The present study presents a survey to understand whether it is possible to improve teachers' assessment by asking a wider groups of people to express their opinions including regular and top students, other instructors, managers, etc. The proposed study of this paper distributed a questionnaire consists of four types of questions including teaching methods, instructors' teaching capabilities, teachers' capabilities on managing classes and teachers' interests on teaching in classes. The results of our survey indicate that on average, 29.6% of the survey people believed that all students are the best people to ask about teachers' characteristics. Top students are important people whose feedback must be taken into account for teachers' assessment. In our survey, self assessment is one of important components of teachers' assessment while managers of educational groups did not play an important role for teachers' evaluation. Finally, nearly 10 percents of the participants believed other professors could give their insight about teachers' capabilities.

1. Introduction

One of the primary concerns in educational systems is to have an efficient method for instructors' assessment. This could help improve teaching capabilities by providing constructive feedbacks on teachers' shortcoming helping them build better future for themselves. Student evaluations of teaching (SET) have been commonly implemented to evaluate classroom instruction, but their validity in assessing teaching effectiveness is not firmly established. There are other studies arguing about instructors' assessment solely based on students' insights. These studies believe it is easier to receive a good evaluation from a course with easy materials compared with more sophisticated courses where it is not easy to teach all course materials.

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Marsh et al. (1985) investigated items from two American techniques designed to measure students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness. They examined the methods translated into Spanish and administered to a sample of Spanish university students. Their findings illustrated the feasibility of evaluating efficient teaching in a Spanish university and the appropriateness of the two American instruments.

Bailey et al. (2000) studied on the consistency in which students utilize information in evaluating various instructors and courses. More specifically, the study investigated students' relative weightings of six factors in their judgment models for instructor effectiveness. They concluded that one might need to be aware of contingencies that could influence students' judgment models. Some of the differences in models were normatively appropriate, but personality or other extraneous environmental variables could inappropriately impact students' judgment models of instructor effectiveness.

Bailey and Card (2009) argued that many institutions focused on providing faculty with technological training to enhance their online teaching, but many online instructors would like to learn more good pedagogical practices. This phenomenological study determined what experienced, award-winning South Dakota e-learning instructors perceive to be effective pedagogical practices. They studied effective pedagogical practices for online teaching, which were reflective of theories and practices associated with the college teaching literature.

Köğce et al. (2011) performed an investigation to determine freshman mathematics student teachers' expectations from their teachers and classmates in terms of contribute to their career development. They reported that freshman mathematics student teachers expected from their instructors about learning environment, exam question, assessment and evaluation and social relations between instructor and students.

Lanning et al. (2011) explored the correlation of student and faculty assessments of, second-year dental students' (D2s) communicative skills during simulated patient interviews and concluded that student assessments were different from faculty by mean score and correlation index. However, they suggested that more studies would be needed to determine the nature of the differences found between student and faculty assessments.

Çakmak (2011) explained that in higher education, lecturers implemented different teaching methods to transfer knowledge to students and lecturers have been used various teaching styles. Çakmak (2011) proposed to determine prospective teachers' opinions on their instructors' teaching styles. The results disclosed quite interesting and considerable viewpoints of students' opinions.

Başaran et al. (2011) explained that one of the most active research areas in education field, which could generates verbal data is student evaluation of teaching (SET) questionnaires which are associated with total quality management applications in most of the competitive universities in the world. Başaran et al. (2011) proposed a novel hybrid method, which combines traditional content analysis (CCA) method and FRB systems and this new hybrid method is more suitable for the verbal data obtained from SET questionnaires.

2. The proposed study

The proposed model of this paper uses six criteria to make an assessment on university instructors including self-assessment, student evaluation, list of teaching activates, other instructors' assessment, experts' evaluation and top students' evaluation. There are four main questions associated with the proposed study of this paper.

1. What would be the limitations of the new assessment?
2. What would the other resources, which could be used in addition to students' assessments.
3. Is there any correlation between regular and top students and other instructors with college managers?
4. Is it better to consider only top students and managers' feedback to evaluate instructors' teaching abilities?

Based on the above four questions we propose four hypotheses as follows,

1. The present method of university professor assessment has some limitations.
2. It is possible to use other resources to make university professor assessment.
3. There is some a correlation between regular and top students and other instructors with college managers.
4. It is better to consider only top students and managers' feedback to evaluate instructors' teaching abilities.

The proposed study was performed in one of Iranian universities called Razi for two consecutive terms over the period of 2009-2010. Statistical observation includes 266 university professors, 32 managers, 15 top managers, 318 top students and 11000 regular students. The proposed study of this paper uses three types of questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks about 40 university professors with extensive teaching experiences to specify about the present teaching advantages and disadvantages. The second and the third questionnaires were designed such that all participants could be requested based on five groups of resources. There were four bases for the questions including teaching method, knowledge background, class management and instructor's interest. Cronbach alpha was calculated as 0.97 for the second questionnaire, which implies that the questionnaire maintained high reliability.

3. The results

In this study, 618 people were randomly selected based on Morgan table including 140 university professors (22.7%), 29 managers of different educational groups (18.6%), 15 top university managers (51.6%), 115 top university students (4.7%) and 319 regular students (2.4%).

3.1 The results of survey on teaching method

The first question of the survey was associated with teaching styles and Table 1 shows details of our findings.

Table 1
The results of survey according to teaching methods

		University Educational deputy	Educational manager	Chair of department	Faculty educational manager	Group manager	Professors	Self assessment	Top students	All students	Total
Professors	#	0	1	1	15	43	17	32	90	79	278
	%	0	0.4	0.4	5.4	15.5	6.1	11.5	34.4	28.4	100
Top Students	#	4	7	9	8	42	33	35	47	65	250
	%	1.6	2.8	3.6	3.2	16.8	13.2	14.0	18.8	26.0	100
Regular Students	#	13	8	21	29	64	54	112	55	135	491
	%	2.6	1.6	4.3	5.9	13.0	11.0	22.8	11.2	27.5	100
Group manager	#	2	0	1	7	14	6	5	23	17	75
	%	2.7	0	1.3	9.3	18.7	8	6.7	30.7	22.7	100
University managers	#	0	0	0	1	4	4	12	27	38	86
	%	0	0	0	1.2	4.7	4.7	14.0	31.4	44.2	100
Sum	#	19	16	32	60	167	114	196	242	334	1180
	%	1.6	1.4	2.7	5.1	14.2	14.2	16.6	20.5	28.3	100

In our survey, 28.7% of the participants preferred to ask all students to find out whether instructors use appropriate method for teaching or not, 21.4% of them preferred to consider only top students' assessment for such evaluation. In addition, 17.5% believed self-assessment as the best way for such evaluation and only 15.6% believed that managers of educational group should do this kind of assessments.

3.2 Instructors' capabilities on teaching course materials

The second question of the survey investigates were associated with instructors' capabilities on teaching course materials and Table 2 shows details of our findings.

Table 2
The results of survey according to instructors' teaching capabilities

		University Educational deputy	Educational manager	Chair of department	Faculty educational manager	Group manager	Professors	Self assessment	Top students	All students	Total
Professors	#	0	0	2	15	50	35	36	92	73	303
	%	0	0	0.7	5.0	16.5	11.6	11.9	30.4	24.1	100
Top Students	#	4	5	9	16	46	45	38	57	48	268
	%	1.5	1.9	3.4	6.0	17.2	16.8	14.2	21.3	17.9	100
Regular Students	#	10	13	27	25	78	88	98	66	101	506
	%	2.0	2.6	5.3	4.9	15.4	17.4	19.4	13.0	20.0	100
Group manager	#	1	0	1	6	17	8	4	24	17	78
	%	1.3	0	1.3	7.7	21.8	10.3	5.1	30.8	22.8	100
University managers	#	0	0	1	0	3	3	3	14	16	40
	%	0	0	2.5	0	7.5	7.5	7.5	35.0	40.0	100
	#	15	18	40	62	194	179	179	253	255	1195
Sum	%	1.3	1.5	3.3	5.2	16.2	15.0	15.0	21.2	21.3	100

In our survey, 28.9% of the participants preferred to ask all students to make assessment on instructors' teaching capabilities, 15.07% of them preferred to consider only group managers' assessment for such evaluation. In addition, 14.33% believed top students were the people for evaluation, 12.9% thought faculty deputy manager could make the best judgment and only 6.34% believed that managers of educational group were the best people for faculty assessment.

3.3 Class management on management on classes

The third question of the survey was associated with how teachers manage the classes and Table 3 shows details of our findings.

Table 3
The results of survey according to teachers' capabilities on managing classes

		University Educational deputy	Educational manager	Chair of department	Faculty educational manager	Group manager	Professors	Self assessment	Top students	All students	Total
Professors	#	1	2	6	41	69	15	28	66	94	322
	%	0.3	0.6	1.9	12.7	21.4	4.7	8.7	20.5	29.2	100
Top Students	#	3	10	18	25	47	16	35	35	72	261
	%	1.1	3.8	6.9	9.6	18	6.1	13.4	13.4	27.6	100
Regular Students	#	23	16	45	59	104	30	98	27	113	511
	%	4.5	3.1	8.8	11.5	20.4	5.9	18.4	5.3	22.1	100
Group manager	#	1	1	1	12	19	3	6	21	23	87
	%	1.1	1.1	1.1	13.8	21.8	3.4	6.9	24.1	26.4	100
University managers	#	1	0	0	3	8	3	3	8	30	56
	%	1.8	0	0	5.4	14.3	5.4	5.4	14.3	53.6	100
	#	29	29	70	140	247	67	166	157	332	1237
Sum	%	2.3	2.3	5.7	11.3	20.0	5.4	13.4	12.7	26.8	100

As we can observe from the results of Table 3, 30.4% of the participants preferred to ask all students to make assessment for instructors' capabilities, 17.62% of them preferred to consider only group managers' assessment for such judgment. In addition, 14.83% believed top students were the people

for this kind of evaluation, 13.84% think self-assessment could the best way for finding instructors' capabilities, 8.97% believed faculty members could make the best judgment and only 5.85% believed that faculty chair was the best person to determine whether a particular instructor could manage his/her class properly or not.

3.4 Instructors' interests

The last question of the survey was associated on how much teachers were interested in teaching the course materials and Table 4 shows details of our findings.

Table 4
The results of survey according to teachers' interests on teaching in classes

		University Educational deputy	Educational manager	Chair of department	Faculty educational manager	Group manager	Professors	Self assessment	Top students	All students	Total
Professors	#	2	0	17	26	68	44	31	71	95	354
	%	0.6	0	4.8	7.3	19.2	12.4	8.8	20.1	26.8	100
Top Students	#	7	7	12	14	47	25	39	44	75	270
	%	2.6	2.6	4.4	5.2	17.4	9.3	14.4	16.3	27.8	100
Regular Students	#	18	14	38	41	73	30	101	37	160	512
	%	3.5	2.7	7.4	8.0	14.3	5.9	19.7	7.2	31.2	100
Group manager	#	0	1	4	9	21	6	4	20	25	90
	%	0	1.1	4.4	10.0	23.3	6.7	4.4	22.2	27.8	100
University managers	#	0	1	1	2	7	5	4	12	37	69
	%	0.0	1.4	1.4	2.9	10.1	7.2	5.8	17.4	53.6	100
Sum	#	27	23	72	92	216	110	179	184	392	1295
	%	2.1	1.8	5.6	7.1	16.7	8.5	13.8	14.2	30.3	100

As we can observe from the results of Table 4, 30.4% of the participants believed all students must be entitled to give their opinions on instructors' interest in teaching course materials, while 17.62% believed group manager must give his/her opinion on instructors' interest in teaching any particular course materials. In addition, 8.97% of the participants were for all university professors while 5.85% believed that the chair of faculty is the best person to make such judgment.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented a survey to understand whether it is possible to improve teachers' assessment by not just asking all students to express their opinions. The proposed study of this paper distributed a questionnaire consists of four types of questions including teaching methods, instructors' teaching capabilities, teachers' capabilities on managing classes and teachers' interests on teaching in classes. The results of our survey indicate that on average, 29.6% of the survey people believed that all students are the best people to ask about teachers' characteristics. Top students were important people whose feedback must be taken into account for teachers' assessment. In some developed countries, officials listen very carefully to what top students think about new hired teachers. In our survey, self assessment was one of important components of teachers' assessment while managers of educational groups did not play an important role for teachers' evaluation. Finally, nearly 10 percents of the participants believed other professors could give their insight about teachers' capabilities.

Acknowledgment

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