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Students' Perception on Good Lecturer Based on Lecturer Performance Assessment

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Abstract

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia has a standard instrument for gathering data from students about their response to teaching and learning. Besides rating, written comments provide further explanation such as on standards, quality, teacher preparation and personality. This paper reports on the comments made by student to the 5 % top rated and 5 % bottom rated lecturers in Semester 2, Session 2010/2011 regarding their teaching performance. This study concluded with two important findings; first, the students comments did correlate with their overall assessment on lecturer's performance and secondly to be an excellent lecturer (or otherwise), ability to deliver lecture effectively play significant role compared to other performance criteria.

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1. Introduction

Students' evaluation on teacher's teaching performance continues to be the most frequently the most assessment used in higher education to guess on how well courses are taught, despite questions regarding their validity. Centra (2003), claimed in his paper that there were well over 2000 studies on the student evaluations topic referenced in the ERIC system, in which much of the research and debate was centered on the validity of these student ratings. The result of the study indicated that majority of these studies tend to conclude that these evaluations are reliable and valid when compared to other measures of effective teaching.

At Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), the teaching evaluation process is known as Lecturer Performance Assessment (ePPP) which is carried out every semester for all the courses and sections within courses offered for

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both undergraduate and postgraduate (by taught course) programmes. The Lecturer Performance Assessment is available online via <http://aimsweb.utm.my/eppp>.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide information and feedback to academic staff on their teaching performance which in turn should enable them to do some self-reflection and eventually take some necessary actions to enhance their teaching performance in the future.

Every semester, students in UTM are given several weeks towards the end of the semester to evaluate the delivery of the courses taken by them. Data collected from the responses given by the students were analysed, tabulated and then presented to the university's top management including the Dean of faculties. Based on the findings, remedial actions and future plans are strategized to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Lecturer can also log into the system to see their own result and comments by the students at the end of the semester which can also be used for self reflection and improvement.

The online assessment, with no intervention from the lecturer, is normally carried out at the last few weeks of the semester. This will ensure the reliability of the assessment since the student's final grade of the course is generally not known; hence the evaluation has no grade bias. To further enhance the reliability of the assessment, students were also encouraged to write (at the bottom of the evaluation form) their comments on their perception or feelings toward their lecturer.

2. Objective

The study that is discussed in this paper is focusing on the comments made by the students to the 5 % top and 5 % bottom rated lecturers. The aims are of two folds; firstly is to identify the true strength (for the 5 % top rated) and weakness (5 % bottom rated) in order to strategically plan the necessary improvement measures to be taken by the university authority in the near future. Secondly is to investigate whether there is any correlation between students overall performance to the comments made by them, hence determining the relevant of the questionnaires used in the ePPP process.

3. Instrument

The ePPP comprises four sections: (a) planning and preparation, (b) Delivery Techniques, (c) Assessment, and, (d) Students-Lecturer Relation. Each section has five questions that made the total of 20 items. Each items is assessed using 5 point likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Medium Agreement, 4 = Agree, 5= Strongly Agree) choices. Apart from the rating of the above 20 items, open ended written comments are also taken into account on which it provide further explanation such as standards, quality, teacher preparation or even personality.

Table 1 to 4 shows sample of items in the Lecturer Performance Assesment (ePPP) instrument.

Table 1. Some of the items in part (A) on Lecturer Planning and Preparation

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Question</i>
A2	The course content is suitable for postgraduate level
A3	Course requirements learning outcomes and expectations of students' performance are clearly explained

Table 2. Some of the items in Part (B) on Delivery Technique

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Question</i>
B1	The content is given in the context of real world applications
B2	The lecturer engages students to participate in the learning process

Table 3. Some of the items in Part (C) on Assessment

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Question</i>
C3	Assessments are related to the course syllabus
C4	Methods used for evaluating students' work are fair and appropriate

Table 4. Some of the items in Part (D) on Students-Lecturer Relationship

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Question</i>
D4	The lecturer treats students in a professional manner
D5	The lecturer is open to different viewpoints from students

4. Findings

The result of the ePPP assessment in Semester I and II Session 2010/2011 shows that the performance of each faculty, school or unit, based on overall mean scored by lecturers ranged from 4.23 to 4.70 (out of 5). This has lead to the overall university mean of 4.34 for undergraduate level and 4.40 for the postgraduate level in Semester I and 4.40 and 4.42 respectively in Semester II. These figures suggests that in general students express satisfaction in the teaching and learning performance delivered by the academic staff in UTM as it falls within the range of very good and excellent performance.

Result of analysis on the 5 % top and bottom rated shown in Table 5 shows that the top rated lecturers has almost similar strength in all sections with lecturer-students relation score the highest. For the bottom rated lecturers, the delivery is the highest weakness, suggesting that the way lecturers conduct teaching and learning in class plays an important role. It is worth mentioning that the cut off value for the 5 % highest achievers is 4.87 whilst for the lowest 5 % achievers, is 3.8. Hence, although categorized as lower achievers based on the data obtained, these academic staffs are still considered good performers as this score falls within the range of good and very good performers.

Table 5 : Analysis of the 5 % top and bottom raters lecturers

	A : PLANNING & PREPARATION	B : DELIVERY	C : ASSESSMENT	D: RELATIONSHIP	TOTAL
SEM I 2010/11					
No of lecturer 5% top rated score highest mark in each section. The number in bracket () represent the number of lecturers score the lowest mark for the 5 % bottom	42 (14)	22 (52)	14 (19)	47 (16)	125 (101)
PERCENTAGES	33.6 (13.9)	17.6 (51.5)	11.2 (18.8)	37.6 (15.8)	100
SEM II 2010/11					
No of lecturer 5% top rated score highest mark in each sections . The number in bracket() represent the number of lecturers score the lowest mark for the 5 % bottom	35 (18)	29 (47)	18 (16)	44 (13)	126 (94)
PERCENTAGES	27.8 (19.1)	23 (50.0)	14.3 (17.0)	34.9 (13.8)	100
MEAN PERCENTAGE FOR 5 % TOP AND (5 % BOTTOM) RATED	30.7 (16.5)	20.3 (50.8)	12.8 (17.9)	36.3 (14.8)	100.0

The analysis on top and bottom rated lecturers were carried out in which the students' comments (over 1300 comments) were collected. All comments from students were divided four categories (A, B, C and D), similar to the categories used in each evaluation sections. Three additional categories were made, i.e. M: Motivation U: General comment and X: Contrary comments, in order to accommodate comments that were not fit well with the first four categories.

Example of comments and their categories are shown in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6. Example of comments top 5% achievers

<i>Example of Comments</i>	<i>Category</i>
mastery over content knowledge, strive to ensure every information pass to all student.	A
<i>seorang pensyarah yang sangat baik..selalu menceritakan isu2 semasa yang membuatkan kami faham tentang subjek yang dipelajari</i> (a very good lecturer .. always include current issues that makes us understand the subjects being studied)	A
<i>pelajar di dedahkan dengan pengalaman luar seperti melawat tapak dapat melihat reality sebenar tentang architecture</i> (expose students to the outside experience such as visiting the site to see the actual reality of the architecture)	B
the good lecturer which always giving chances to present and let me learning especially for my communication skill.	B
Wrap up after end of each class.. Enhance understanding after long hour of lecture. Learned a lot from mini project applying the concept	B
<i>lect yg plg mnpati masa.sgt mmhmi ksilapn pelajar dlm mbuat numerical..bijak membuat soaln..nota ckup</i>	C
<i>lgkap..A+++++lecturer</i> (most on time lecturer. really understand students' errors in numerical. very good in creating questions..notes are complete.. A+++++lecturer)	C
<i>pensyarah sangat mengambil berat tentang pelajar. pelajar akan rasa lebih rapat dengannya dan senang untuk berkongsi segala masalah</i> (lecturer is very concerned about students. students will feel closer to him/her and happy to share all the problems)	D
<i>Pensyarah yang sentiasa sedia berkongsi ilmu dan pengalaman yang ada. Bersikap terbuka, mesra, mengambil berat kemajuan pelajar</i> (Lecturer who is always willing to share knowledge and experience. Open, friendly, concern about student progress)	D
<i>sentiasa memberi idea dan motivasi yang bernas serta mudah diterima</i> (always give wonderful as well as acceptable ideas and motivation)	D
<i>pensyarah yg baik dan membuatkan subjek yg susah menjadi mudah. menurut falsafah jepun, guru yg baik akan melahirkan pelajar yg baik</i> (good lecturer and make difficult subjects look easy. according to Japanese philosophy, a good teacher will produce a good student)	M
im enjoying in your class	U
THANK YOU, DR.	U
<i>segalanya ok</i> (everything is ok)	U
Success always	U
easy-going lecturer...help when needed	X
a very responsible and hardworking lecturer	X

Table 7. Example of comments among bottom 5% achievers

<i>Student Comments</i>	<i>Category</i>
<i>Skop pengajaran yang diajar terlalu besar. Tidak mengikut silibus pengajaran (The scope of the lesson being taught is too wide. Not according to the syllabus)</i>	A
<i>saya belajar untuk dapat ilmu,bukan untuk drop subjek (I learned to get knowledge, not to drop the subject)</i>	A
a subject = huge project.too high demand.lead to lack of time spent on other subjects.3 credits subject,BUT we spent more than 3 hours per week in it.	A
<i>cara penyampaian dan pengajaran yang sangat membosankan.pelajar langsung tidak memahami dan tidak tahu apa yang diajar.kami terumbang-ambing (the presentation and teaching is really boring. students cannot understand at all and do not know what is being taught. we are distress)</i>	B
<i>tidak pernah faham apa yang diajar oleh encik XXX didalam kelas..selama berbulan-bulan kelas tidak faham apa-apa lansung.kami terumbang-ambing (never understood what is taught by mr. XXX in class..for months didn't understand anything. we are distress)</i>	B
<i>slide show mengarut, ajar seperti pelajar master..pelajar tidak sempat ambil nota kerana terlampau laju dan banyak (slide show nonsense, teach like master student..students did not have time to take notes because too fast and too much)</i>	B
Problem-solving and Critical Thinking Skills (Thinking critically, logically and creatively) we have a lot cause we got to THINK EVERYTHING BY OURSELVE	B
<i>memberi asignment di akhir semester dah mengganggu study week pelajar (give assignment at the end of semester so interfere with students study week)</i>	C
<i>pensyarah tidak banyak membantu pelajar.pensyarah perlulah adil kepada semua pelajar tanpa memilih kasih..(lecturer did not help student much. lecturer must be fair to all students without prejudice..)</i>	C
Weird lecturer,new chapter can teach on noon and then out in test in same day. All students get bad result in test because no time to prepare it.	C
I still feel Racist although u say u treat everyone equal..	D
<i>jangan berlagak sangat dengan jawatan pensyarah betolak ansur sikit dengan pelajar.. salah sikit pon nak berkira (don't be too snobbish with the post as a lecturer be flexible with students.. small mistakes too taken into account)</i>	D
need more improvement	U
talk too fast. student sometimes cannot catch what u mean	X
quite difficult to get to find a time to contact lecturer (besides in class) directly to ask problems and questions (in office, not in class)	X

Comments for each category were then summed to obtain the percentage of distribution. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 8 and 9.

Table 8. Example of comments among top 5% achievers

Comments Category	A	B	C	D	M	U	X	Total
Number of all Comments	12	225	3	48	29	376	41	734
Percentage	1.6	30.7	0.4	6.5	4.0	51.2	5.6	100
Number of related Comments (excluding General, U and contrary, X comments)	12	225	3	48	29			317
Percentage	3.8	71.0	0.9	15.1	9.1			100

Table 9. Example of comments among bottom 5% achievers

Comments Category	A	B	C	D	X	U	Total
Number of all Comments	44	298	15	56	60	153	626
Percentage	7.0	47.6	2.4	8.9	9.6	24.4	100
Number of related Comments (excluding General, U and contrary, X comments)	44	298	15	56			413
Percentage	10.7	72.2	3.6	13.6			100

Several interesting findings can be summarized as follows: more than 70 percent of good comments on the lectures and vice versa is related to the mode of Teaching and Learning delivery, followed by a good relationship with students. This means that to be a good and effective lecturer and respected by students, one must master the right kind of teaching methods, and have a good relationship (friendly, tolerant, understanding the problem) with students. Weaknesses in both of these aspects can also lead to a lecturer, labeled as weak and less effective by their students. This finding fits quite well with some of the finding shown in Table 5.

5. Conclusion

Detailed analysis of the highest and lowest achievers based on the lecturer performance assessment had been carried out with the aim of identifying the strength and weaknesses of these groups. The findings concluded that to be an excellent lecturer, one should master the delivery techniques and should establish good relation with the students. The reverse is also true, poor teaching delivery is regarded by students as the main factor that contributes to poor performance.

This shows that all the myth such as *Student ratings are not a valid assessment of teaching quality is not true*. In fact, many research shows that student ratings had positive correlation with many other measure of teaching evaluation (Cashin, 1990; Ory, 2001); & McKeachie, 1997). The result may varies across individual studies, but it shows an agreement that if students consistently say someone's teaching is good or bad, they're almost certainly right (Felder & Brent, 2008).

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