



## Research Article

# Students' staff evaluation process, is it a true measure for teaching capacities? Pharmacy and medical students' view points: Taif university, KSA

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## ABSTRACT

Student staff evaluation (SSE) considered as one of the simplest measure for instruction effectiveness. It is a part of comprehensive attempt for teaching capacity upgrading. The prime aim of this study was to elicit the students' opinions on Taif University effectiveness of current staff evaluation procedure.

**Methods:** Cross sectional study was carried out among the pharmacy and medical students. Pretested survey was used to determine students' perception on students' staff rating.

**Results:** Response rate was 88%. Only (15.8%) of the interviewed students admitted that, staff used to accept the evaluation results. The majority of students mainly attributed rating process for improving teaching effectiveness. The single adopted measure was judged as quite sufficient measure by (49.8%) of the participants. The majority of students admitted that, staff are not seriously neither dealing with evaluation outcomes, nor using them for teaching upgrading. Astonishingly students (47.8%) denied positive interaction of authorized university departments toward the students' rating results.

**Recommendations:** Set of recommendations was proposed for utilization of the process outcomes as well as to encourage students for active contribution.

**Key words:** Student, Staff, Evaluation, Perception

## INTRODUCTION

Effective teachers as well as insurance of highly effective instruction being a decision making policy that was translated in an increased attention for teachers' evaluation.<sup>1</sup> Consistent evidence of students' staff evaluation effectiveness was not achieved through many past and recent studies.<sup>2</sup> Student's staff evaluation is the crucial part of quality assurance; it is an only one component of a comprehensive teacher's capacity development measure. Large number of universities urges the students to attend course evaluation as staff assessment measure. Students' evaluation of the staff members was started in 1920 in the University of Wisconsin as stated by Haskell for the disclosure of the students' needs.<sup>3</sup> Other universities adopted this instrument purposely as decision making tool regarding salary increase and tenure.<sup>4</sup> Currently, this type of evaluation is used in different universities regarding the increasing criticism as

reported by Knapper and Cranton.<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, the assessment was carried in one sided way that possibly did not provide an inclusive measure into teaching and learning processes. Tyler and Tyler reported that, advocates believe robust teacher evaluation could positively influence teacher performance.<sup>6</sup> Although current student staff evaluation is widely viewed as perfunctory do not meet the task level as released by Tagomori,<sup>7</sup> but the great concern for quality in teaching in higher education institutions dictates global implementation of this pattern of evaluation as a part of staff performance quality assurance, Chen & Leon.<sup>8</sup>

The used instruments for staff evaluation in different universities may be locally designed or adapted from other institutions. Tagomori reported that, staff may be subjected to flawed evaluation with such instruments that end up with unfair performance assessment.<sup>7</sup>

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Students' staff evaluation plays a potential role of many decisions made objectively to teaching effectiveness upgrading;<sup>9,10</sup> however very limited studies have tested students' perceptions or attitudes toward such type of evaluation. The current study was considered as a prime attempt in Saudi Arabia in measuring students' perceptions toward staff evaluation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study design, setting and sampling:

A cross-sectional study was conducted amongst health science students at Taif University, Saudi Arabia. The participants recruited randomly from two colleges (Medicine and Pharmacy) in the academic year 2015/2016. The study proposal was approved and funded by the Secretariat of Postgraduates and Scientific Research, Taif University, KSA. Verbal consent was obtained from each participant before his/her participation in the study. All students who were registered in these colleges at the time of this study were invited to participate.

### The study tool:

A structured questionnaire was designed to elicit the students' perception towards Staff Evaluation Form. The questionnaire was pretested to ensure validity. The results of pilot study were not included in the study results. The survey tool consisted of four sections that were composed of 31 questions. The first section (four questions) was about students' demographic characters including their college, gender, education levels and their cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The second section (11 questions) dealt with students' perceptions toward the evaluation and how the students deal with evaluation process. The third part consisted of 15 questions in 5 points-Likert scale form (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to measure the students' opinions on instructors' appraisal and the factors affecting the current evaluation process. The last section investigated whether the students were satisfied with this evaluation that followed by an open question on the reason of their dissatisfaction if any.

### Data analysis and statistical tests:

Collected data was computed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS, version 22, Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.). Mean, frequencies as percentages were used to describe variables. Chi-square analysis test was used to determine the association between the participants' demographic characteristics and the different variables. The significance of the differences was calculated at a 95% confidence interval (CI), and  $P < 0.05$  was considered as statistically significant.

## RESULTS

A total of 444 out of 500 students were completely filled the questionnaires, with response rate 88%, the majority of

respondents were males 319 (71.8%), while pharmacy students were dominant 297 (66.9%) Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the students (N=444)**

Characters		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	319	71.8%
	Female	125	28.2%
College	Medicine	147	33.1%
	Pharmacy	297	66.9%
Level of Education	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	130	29.3%
	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	138	31.1%
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	95	21.4%
	5 <sup>th</sup> Year	49	11.0%
GPA	6 <sup>th</sup> year	32	7.2%
	1 - 2	34	7.7%
	2.1 - 2.99	171	38.5%
	3 - 4	205	46.2%
	Don't know	34	7.7%

Study revealed that, most of the responded students 315 (70.9%) were usually attend to complete the staff evaluation process, only 178 (40.1%) believed in the seriousness of this adopted pattern of evaluation. Almost, all students 315 (93.2%) preferred to include all staff members for evaluation regardless their ranks or experiences. Only (15.8%) of the interviewed students admitted that, staff used to accept the evaluation results. Less than one third 130 (29.3%) of the students thought that staff members have seriously deal with its outcomes. Only 92 (20.7%) of them admitted that all instructors make use of reporting outcomes for career upgrading, while the majority 282 (63.5%) attributed the reason for evaluation process was to improve lecturers' performance. Overall 282 (90.5%) of students admitted that they filled the evaluation form alone, Table 2.

Half of the interviewed medical and pharmacy students in Taif University 221 (49.8%) had agreed on the fact that, the adopted system of students' staff evaluation is quietly sufficient measure for staff instruction capacity. More than one-third 157 (35.4%) of students disagreed or strongly disagreed on the use of evaluation process to improve the staff performance. Astonishingly students 212 (47.8%) denied a positive interaction of the university administration toward the evaluation outcomes. Regarding the factors affecting the evaluation of students to their teachers; the results revealed the following: 300 (67.6%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that students' discipline in the class enhances the staff performance and hence the evaluation rate. Also 241 (54.3%) of participated students believed that the type of the taught subject affecting the staff evaluation rate. The majority of the students 263 (59.2) admitted that staff seriousness and firm commitment attitudes enhance staff rating, this was confirmed by 174(39.2%) who rejected a common assumption that entertaining students will increase the staff rating.

**Table 2: Opinions on how students and instructors deal with the evaluation process**

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
Are you always responding to the evaluation form	Yes	365	82.2%
	No	79	17.8%

Do you think student dealing seriously with the evaluation process	Yes	178	40.1%
	No	87	19.6%
	Sometimes	179	40.3%
Do you normally complete the evaluation form	Yes	315	70.9%
	No	63	14.2%
	Sometimes	66	14.9%
Do you think all staff ranks should be evaluated	Yes	414	93.2%
	No	30	6.8%
Do you think lecturers accept the evaluation outcomes	Yes	70	15.8%
	No	157	35.4%
	Don't know	217	48.9%
Do you think lecturer review the outcomes of evaluation	Yes	130	29.3%
	No	134	30.2%
	Don't know	180	40.5%
Do you think lecturers use the evaluation outcomes to upgrade their performance	Yes	92	20.7%
	No	217	48.9%
	Don't know	135	30.4%
In your opinion what is the aim of student staff evaluation	Improve teachers' performance	282	63.5%
	upgrade & continuation	104	23.4%
	subjugation of teacher	58	13.1%
Do you fill the evaluation alone or with help of your colleagues?	With Colleagues	42	9.5%
	Alone	402	90.5%

Table 3: Selected Scaled opinions on evaluation process effectiveness

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Evaluation' questions give sufficient measurement for staff performance.	75 (16.9%)	146 (32.9%)	113 (25.5%)	79 (17.8%)	31 (7.0%)
Evaluation outcomes are to be used for improving the education process	61 (13.7%)	121 (27.3%)	105 (23.6%)	94 (21.2%)	63 (14.2%)
Lecturers always respond to evaluation outcomes	27 (6.1%)	67 (15.1%)	155 (34.9%)	129 (29.1%)	66 (14.9%)
University Administration positively interact with evaluation outcomes	29 (6.5%)	56 (12.6%)	147 (33.1%)	110 (24.8%)	102 (23%)
Students' discipline in the class affects on the staff performance & consequently the his evaluation	146 (32.9%)	154 (34.7%)	90 (20.3%)	32 (7.2%)	22 (5%)
Some students are not following a scientific process for staff evaluation	120 (27%)	145 (32.7%)	125 (28.2%)	40 (9%)	14 (3.2%)
Nature of the taught subject determines evaluation degree	104 (23.4%)	137 (30.9%)	92 (20.7%)	72 (16.2%)	39 (8.8%)
Serious & committed lecturer offered a low evaluation	33 (7.4%)	66 (14.9%)	82 (18.5%)	124 (27.9%)	139 (31.3%)
Lecturer gives high marks has a high evaluation	110 (24.8%)	112 (25.2%)	92 (20.7%)	69 (15.5%)	61 (13.7%)
Lecturer who deficiently reduces the volume of taught courses offered high evaluation rate.	68 (15.3%)	102 (23%)	120 (27%)	90 (20.3%)	64 (14.4%)
Lecturer who entertains students on the expense of the taught subject is highly rated	71 (16%)	79 (17.8%)	119 (26.8%)	108 (24.3%)	66 (14.9%)
Sometimes students agree on one opinion of the evaluation	72 (16.2%)	134 (30.2%)	116 (26.1%)	69 (15.5%)	53 (11.9%)
Easy exam leads to high staff rating	107 (24.1%)	150 (33.8%)	100 (22.5%)	46 (10.4%)	41 (9.2%)
Topic highlighting or lectures' deletion prior to exam raise evaluation rating	93 (20.9%)	119 (26.8%)	106 (23.9%)	71 (16%)	55 (12.4%)
Staff who revise taught topics prior to exam and determine questions raise rated	99 (22.3%)	128 (28.8%)	97 (21.8%)	62 (14%)	58 (13.1%)

Out of the participants; 222 (50%) and 257 (57.9%) were respectively agreed on the fact that high marking and easy exams have an influence on increasing the rate of evaluation. Prior exam volume reduction of the taught subject may increase the evaluation rate as revealed by 170 (38.2%) of the students. Dominant number of participants 195 (43.9%) had shown

disagreement on whether their instructors are catering for and adopting the outcomes of the evaluation process. Amazingly students sometimes joined a single positive or negative move on evaluating their staff member. Some of the students 206 (46.4%) collectively used to agree on one opinion toward evaluating their staff, Table 3.

**Table 4: Evaluation's process instructors' acceptance and authority adoption**

Questions	Responses	Gender		P-value	College		
		Male F (%)	Female F (%)		Medicine F (%)	Pharmacy F (%)	P-value
<b>Are you always responding to the evaluation form</b>	Yes	253 (79.3%)	112 (89.6%)	0.011	105 (71.4%)	260 (87.5%)	< 0.001
	No	66 (20.7%)	13 (10.4%)		42 (28.6%)	37 (12.5%)	
<b>Do you think student dealing seriously with the evaluation process</b>	Yes	116 (36.4%)	62 (49.6%)	0.001	43 (29.3%)	135 (45.5%)	< 0.001
	No	76 (23.8%)	11 (8.8%)		51 (34.7%)	36 (12.1%)	
	Sometimes	127 (39.8%)	52 (41.6%)		53 (36.1%)	126 (42.4%)	
<b>Do you normally complete the evaluation form</b>	Yes	216 (67.7%)	99 (79.2%)	0.050	91 (61.9%)	224 (75.4%)	0.003
	No	49 (15.4%)	14 (11.2%)		32 (21.8%)	31 (10.4%)	
	Sometimes	54 (16.9%)	12 (9.6%)		24 (15.3%)	42 (14.1%)	
<b>Do you think all staff ranks should be evaluated</b>	Yes	296 (92.8%)	118 (94.4%)	0.543	133 (90.5%)	281 (94.6%)	0.102
	No	23 (7.2%)	7 (5.6%)		14 (9.5%)	16 (5.4%)	
<b>Do you think lecturers accept the evaluation outcomes</b>	Yes	56 (17.6%)	14 (11.2%)	0.254	30 (20.4%)	40 (13.5%)	0.024
	No	110 (34.5%)	47 (37.6%)		58 (39.5%)	99 (33.3%)	
	Don't know	153 (48%)	64 (51.2%)		59 (40.1%)	158 (53.2%)	
<b>Do you think lecturer see the outcomes of evaluation</b>	Yes	75 (23.5%)	55 (44%)	< 0.001	32 (21.8%)	98 (33%)	< 0.001
	No	112 (35.1%)	22 (17.6%)		66 (44.9%)	68 (22.9%)	
	Don't know	132 (41.4%)	48 (38.4%)		49 (33.3%)	131 (44.1%)	
<b>Do you think lecturers use the evaluation outcomes to upgrade their performance</b>	Yes	69 (21.6%)	23 (18.4%)	0.677	28 (19%)	64 (21.5%)	0.350
	No	156 (48.9%)	61 (48.8%)		79 (53.7%)	138 (46.5%)	
	Don't know	94 (29.5%)	41 (32.8%)		40 (27.2%)	95 (32%)	
<b>Do you fill the evaluation alone or with help of your colleagues?</b>	With Colleagues	34 (10.7%)	8 (6.4%)	0.168	18 (12.2%)	24 (8.1%)	0.158
	Alone	285 (89.3%)	117 (93.6%)		129 (87.8%)	273 (91.9%)	

## BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Female students had shown a good responding rate 112 (89%), while male were 253 (79.3%). Pharmacy students dominated other medical ones in this pattern of participation, the difference was significant (P=0.001). Only 11 (8.8%) female students thought that, most of the students were not used to seriously deal with the students' staff evaluation measures. Almost 99 (79.2%) of the female students had admitted their willingness to complete the evaluation form, only 216 (67.7%) of the male were not, difference was significant (P=0.05). The study

revealed that, majority of the students not accepting the outcomes of the evaluation process. No significant difference was observed among gender (P=0.254) while the difference among different colleges was significant (P=0.0024). Only 130 (29.2%) of the investigated students thought that instructors never provided with the outcomes of students evaluation process, difference was significant among gender (P=0.001) and between different colleges (P=0.001).

Although the main intended objective of the students' staff evaluation process was to upgrade the education and learning

process; the majority of male students 156 (48.9%) and 61 (48.8%) of female ones were thought that instructors never responding to the evaluation's derived outcomes as a tool of a change. Differences were not significant neither among gender nor between different colleges, P values were (0.677 and 0.35) respectively (Table 4).

Table 5, partly demonstrates students opinions on evaluation's outcomes utilization. Students predominantly had negatively responded to the question whether the relevant university body interacts with the output of the students' evaluation process; 82 (25.7%) and 72 (22.6%) male students respectively disagreed

and strongly disagreed. Female students showed less pattern of disagreement while no significant difference was observed. (P=0.365). A significant difference was shown among gender whether students used to apply a scientific measure in their evaluation (P=0.034). Ninety eight (30.7%) of the males and 22 (17.6%) of females strongly agreed on the fact that, students never following a rational process in evaluating their staff. Sometimes students jointly establish agreed upon prior opinion on staff member to this was strongly admitted by 30 (15.7%) of the males and 22 (17.6%) of the females (P=0.06). No significant difference was also shown between students' opinions in different colleges, (P=0.111).

**Table 5: Students opinions on evaluation outcomes utilization**

Questions	Responses	Gender			College		
		Male F (%)	Female F (%)	P-value	Medicine	Pharmacy	P-value
Evaluation outcomes are to be used for improving the education process	Strongly agree	51 (16%)	10 (8%)	0.143	27 (18.4%)	34 (11.4%)	0.011
	Agree	89 (27.9%)	32 (25.6%)		129 (19.7%)	92 (31%)	
	Neutral	70 (21.9%)	35 (28%)		37 (25.2%)	68 (22.9%)	
	Disagree	63 (19.7%)	31 (24.8%)		26 (17.7%)	68 (22.9%)	
	Strongly disagree	46 (14.4%)	17 (13.6%)		28 (19%)	35 (11.8%)	
Lecturers always respond to the evaluation outcomes	Strongly agree	21 (6.6%)	6 (4.8%)	0.605	11 (7.5%)	16 (5.4%)	0.005
	Agree	49 (15.4%)	18 (14.4%)		29 (19.7%)	38 (12.8%)	
	Neutral	111 (34.8%)	44 (35.2%)		42 (28.6%)	113 (38%)	
	Disagree	87 (27.3%)	42 (33.6%)		34 (23.1%)	95 (32%)	
	Strongly disagree	51 (16%)	15 (12%)		31 (21.1%)	35 (11.8%)	
University Administration positively interact with the evaluation outcomes	Strongly agree	25 (7.8%)	4 (3.2%)	0.365	13 (8.8%)	16 (5.4%)	0.476
	Agree	38 (11.9%)	18 (14.4%)		21 (14.3%)	35 (11.8%)	
	Neutral	102 (32%)	45 (36%)		43 (29.3%)	104 (35%)	
	Disagree	82 (25.7%)	28 (22.4%)		38 (25.9%)	72 (24.2%)	
	Strongly disagree	72 (22.6%)	30 (24%)		32 (21.8%)	70 (23.6%)	
Some students are not following scientific process for staff evaluation	Strongly agree	98 (30.7%)	22 (17.6%)	0.043	42 (28.6%)	78 (26.3%)	0.590
	Agree	98 (30.7%)	47 (37.6%)		52 (35.4%)	93 (31.3%)	
	Neutral	89 (27.9%)	36 (28.8%)		40 (27.2%)	85 (28.6%)	
	Disagree	24 (7.5%)	16 (12.8%)		10 (6.8%)	30 (10.1%)	
	Strongly disagree	10 (3.1%)	4 (3.2%)		3 (2%)	11 (3.7%)	
Sometimes students agree on one opinion of the evaluation	Strongly agree	50 (15.7%)	22 (17.6%)	0.068	24 (16.3%)	48 (16.2%)	0.111
	Agree	95 (29.8%)	39 (31.2%)		48 (32.7%)	86 (29%)	
	Neutral	94 (29.5%)	22 (17.6%)		45 (30.6%)	71 (23.9%)	
	Disagree	48 (15%)	21 (16.8%)		20 (13.6%)	49 (16.5%)	
	Strongly disagree	32 (10%)	21 (16.8%)		10 (6.8%)	43 (14.5%)	

## DISCUSSION

This research was carried out among the medical and pharmacy students in Taif University to determine their perception on the adopted system of students' staff evaluation. Astonishingly the majority of the responded male students (59.9%) did not believe on the seriousness of this procedure of evaluation, while only (8.8%) of the female students doing the same. This clearly advocates female students' commitment.

The male students justified their low tendency in completing the evaluation process (30%) to misbelieves that associated on staff negligence of the evaluation process or not seriously dealing with its outcomes in upgrading their instruction' capacities. The study showed dominance of the male gender reflected the general increased intake of male compared to female students in medical and health colleges in Saudi Arabia and also attributed

to some logistic accessibility obstacles to obtaining data from females' medical section. Globally the number of female student is outnumbering that of male ones.<sup>11</sup> Boulis *et al*<sup>2</sup> and Bickel<sup>13</sup> reported that the increased proportion of females in medical colleges to be considered for giving equal educational and professional opportunities.

In the present study there was a parallel relation of the response rate and the students' current cumulative grade per annum (CGPA). This relation may be attributed either to the increased interest of the excelled students or to a grade inflation among pharmacy and medical students. Astonishingly that 34(7.7%) of the interviewed students had failed to recall back their cumulative grades.

The majority of the students (63.5%) attributed the reason for staff evaluation to improve instructors' teaching performance

this was negated by Macellan study which revealed that, students were less convinced by the fact that assessment was used to evaluate teaching.<sup>14</sup> Surratt and Desselle 2007 agreed on the usefulness of students evaluation in improving the staff quality of teaching and that deemed to be important.<sup>15</sup> Although a revision of many years of students evaluation studies revealed less correlation between evaluation and given grades (Aleamoni 1999).<sup>16</sup>

It is debatable whether the students' staff evaluation measure is assured tool for lecturers' performance quality. In a Jordanian pharmacy students' perception study on staff rating, Al Abbadi et al disclosed that the majority of the investigated students admitted that evaluation process is worthwhile but concluded that instructors who receiving high grades of evaluation is not a must judge for excellence.<sup>17</sup>

Also some studies questioned on the adopted attitudinal measure to qualify instructors' teaching activity.<sup>18</sup>

The single adopted system of evaluation was judged as quite sufficient measure by almost half of participants this was debatable by Black and William to include all activities that to be undertaken by students and instructors to be used diagnostically to altering teaching and is not an end procedure.<sup>19</sup>

Since the evaluation process was urged by the university academic affairs, thus an outcome utilized interactive corrections were to be expected by students. Unfortunately medical and pharmacy students in Taif denied the positive interaction of the university authorized body as was believed by (47.8%). Thus communication effort should be instituted to build up students' confidence on the evaluation process.

Some staff members adopting relaxed type of activities, such as giving high exam marks, providing easy questions, deleting parts of the subjects' contents and revising the essential parts of the subject prior to the tests. All these measures were said to be positively influence the staff rating pattern. Although these activities were not routinely adopted by a well dedicated staff, authors well acknowledged with their negative impact on the graduate quality. It was proofed by many published works that students used to offer high rates to those seriousness, firm and well committed staff members (Cashin, 1995, Marsh and Dunkin, 1992), Taif students were not an exception in this pattern as was revealed in the current study.

On other hand some studies had confirmed some correlations between expected exams' grades and students' rating outcomes (Kidd and Latif, 2004; Phipps et al 2006). Also some studies disclosed that some staff charismatic attitudinal practices may offer a non trained staff to get high rate of students' evaluation (Nalftlin 1973), that means sometimes instruction style and instructor's personal behavior may influence the student rating this goes even to the fact that non organized but well trained teacher may grant less rating. Some authors attributed difference in rating to some regional factors such as cultural, linguistic and some social differences (Issa and Suliman, 2007).

Sometimes, due to speculated reasons there is a move among students to establish either positive or negative opinion toward staff member evaluation that ends up with fake result. The

present study revealed that (46.4%) of the investigated students were believed this pattern was sometimes adopted among themselves.

The current system of evaluation in Taif University discloses the students' evaluation reports to the specified staff member for interactive corrections. The negligence of this fact by (29.2%) of the students in this study may give a negative feeling on the feasibility of the process itself. Then a clear feedback and discussing the evaluation outcomes by the teaching staff member with his students may help in correction of such negative attitude. Also gives assurance that, obtained information was normally used to improve lecturers' performance and to increase the students' willingness to positive and serious contribution, this simply because evaluation data is severely undermined unless students providing a quality input.<sup>8</sup>

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

Since the study was carried out in one university; study outcomes will not be generalized and to be of value as a pilot one.

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