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IMPACT OF STUDENTS FEEDBACK ON THE TEACHERS TEACHING PERFORMANCE – A CASE STUDY

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Abstract:-The purpose of collecting students' feedback through structured questionnaire is to gather information on their perceptions on learning as well as their responses to the course and the teacher. The institutions seriously interested to enhance their teachers' performance, collect feedback effectively and use it wisely. In this study the feedback was obtained from the students on the characteristics of the teachers and the courses in the engineering college in the middle of the semester to serve as useful Performance Appraisal tool for the teachers. This paper aims to measure the impact of students' feedback on the teacher performance. Further the study is extended to identify the critical attributes of the teacher and the course to help the teachers to take strategic measures to enhance their performance during the next semester of their teaching and the course.

In the present study, three years data on students' feedback was considered and pair wise comparison was made between the ratings of successive years for the teacher who has handled the same subject for successive years. The result analysis is described separately for theory and practical subjects considering teacher and course variables such as, gender wise, experience wise semester wise and branch wise. The result shows that there is a positive impact of students' evaluation on the performance of the teachers however the teacher and course variables have no significant impact on the performance of the teachers. Few suggestive measures are proposed for further improvements in the performance of the teacher and the course.

Keywords:Students Feedback, Student Centered Teaching Strategy, Continuous Improvement, Teaching Effectiveness, Teachers Performance

INTRODUCTION

Students' evaluation of teachers and courses in higher educational institutions is a common practice in India. Much work has been done on reliable and valid rating scales of students' evaluation. However a lesser work is done on the topic: how much and in what way do teachers improve after students' feedback was carried out. Do they improve at all? Or has it made a difference in their performance? is a question of concern here. An overview of some recent research findings are given here with a case study of an engineering college where three years of data on students' feedback are analysed to support that there is a difference in the teachers performance in the successive years due to the students evaluation. The study is extended to understand which statements in the questionnaire have largely reduced the ratings of the teacher and the course so that the teacher can take care of these points for further improvement in his / her performance in the next year / semester.

William van Os (2010) mentions "students are important stakeholders of learning organization. It is not because they have such an impressive understanding of education, but because they have to report on how the role of the teacher, or the teaching in a broader sense, has influenced their own learning process".

Marsh (1984) makes a distinction between the following aims of teaching evaluation:

1. Diagnostic feedback for teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching performance;
2. An instrument for measuring teaching performance for the benefit of decision-making in the HRM process (appointments and promotion);
3. Information for students to help them choose the courses they want to take;
4. To develop instruments for research into learning and teaching.

The first aim has become more important as the responsibility and also the obligation of the higher authority of the college is to give highest satisfaction to their students about the teaching and training. Further National Board of Accreditation (NBA) in their guidelines and operating practices for accreditation visit and evaluation for UG engineering programmes (Jan. 2013) emphasizes maximum points on programme outcomes – 150 points and faculty contribution – 175 points out of 1000 points. Therefore enhancing the performance of teachers and courses has become more important in the present context of the study.

“All institutions collect feedback from their students in different forms, and use it to improve the quality of education they provide. Thus it is increasingly important for institutions to ensure that feedback is collected effectively and used wisely” said by Williams, Ruth and Brennan, John. (2003). “It is generally agreed that reviewing the teaching and evaluation methods at regular intervals and modifications of methodologies is a must for improvement in undergraduate teaching. Course assessment instruments such as feedback help the faculty to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and evaluation methods” commented by Ruth, N. (2000). Hence in improving teaching quality, it is important for the teachers to obtain students' feedback that allows them to modify their methods and techniques to meet the needs of their students enabling them to improve their performance.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

With regard to the impact of students' evaluation on the performance of teachers, Rotem & Glasman (1979) finish their review with the following conclusion: “feedback from student ratings does not seem to be effective for the purpose of improving performance of university teachers”. In explanation, they refer to the source of the feedback (students, who some teachers do not take seriously), the content of the feedback (often not informative or specific enough, not focusing on behavior that can be changed), and to characteristics of the recipient of the feedback (obstinacy, conceit, and the like). While in a meta-analysis of Cohen (1980), his conclusion is more positive than those in the previous reviews: “student ratings are a valuable source for improving instruction at the college level”, a conclusion that is underlined by Levinson-Rose & Menges (1981).

Willem van Os (1999) concluded that 437 teachers who were rated twice (the second time by other students, usually one year later) scored higher on the overall questions about quality of teaching, course content and quality of exams, and on expected examination result. Kember et al. (2002) found over a period of 3 to 4 years no evidence that the use of their questionnaire was making any contribution to improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. In a much smaller-scale study carried out by Lang & Kersting (2007) involving 12 teachers monitored for four semesters some improvement was noted in the second semester. Unlike in the Marsh research (2007), this was followed by lower scores in the third and fourth semesters. He monitored a cohort of 195 teachers over a period of 13 years, in his conclusion mentions that their ratings are largely stable, which confirms their reliability, does not give much hope in terms of improving the performance of teachers. Marsh stresses the importance of keeping a record of the evaluation results of teachers. He also refers to the importance of external consultation for Students' Evaluations of Teaching effectiveness.

Murray (2005) discusses three areas where student evaluation has made a difference: faculty personnel decisions, improvement of quality of teaching, and academic standards and concludes “I believe that it has had an impact, it has made a difference, and with some reservations, I believe the impact has been positive or beneficial. In particular, I believe that university and college teaching has improved over the past 30-40 years, and this improvement is partly due to student evaluation of teaching. I believe it is also partly due to the faculty development movement, which as stated earlier, I see as working synergistically with student evaluation of teaching. Second, I don't believe there is clear evidence that student evaluation of teaching has had a negative impact on academic standards by causing grade inflation.” He continues and says..... “Students can only evaluate what they can observe, and what they observe is mainly what occurs inside the classroom. But as stated previously, there are other very important components of teaching, such as course quality, instructor knowledge, quality of assignments, and curriculum development that cannot be measured by student ratings, and need to be assessed in some other way.” He suggests few possible alternative methods of evaluating teaching that provide a necessary supplement to those instruments. Finally he comments ... “in my view, is that we should keep student evaluation of teaching, but supplement it with one or more of the above four alternatives, preferably colleague evaluation, or with something better if it comes along. Research indicates that student evaluation of teaching is more than adequate in terms of reliability and validity, and has led to improvement of teaching. Student evaluation of teaching has value and is worth keeping, but it is a mistake to assume that student evaluation provides a complete assessment of all important aspects of college or university teaching. Student evaluation of classroom teaching in combination with colleague evaluation of substantive and non-classroom aspects of teaching comes much closer to telling the whole story.”

There is considerable doubt as to whether student feedback contributes to improved instruction in the classroom (Andrews, 2004), although this raises the question of whether teachers are using feedback effectively, rather than whether it can be a useful source of data. Richardson (2005) states that the routine collection of students' evaluations does not in itself lead to any improvement in the quality of teaching. It is indeed self-evident that carrying out surveys with students is pointless unless the teachers use the data received to inform their own practice, as a mirror in which to look for previously unknown weaknesses and misconceptions. Scott and Dixon (2009) take this theme one step further and argue that, before they even start surveying students, teachers need to come to an understanding that the processes of carrying out and reflecting on student feedback may well be useful and advantageous, both for themselves as professionals and by direct implication for the students

they teach and the organisation they work for.

In another tertiary level study, Kember, Leung and Kwan (2002) found no measurable improvement in student feedback ratings over a 6-year longitudinal study. Although formal inference could not be drawn as there are too many variables affecting this data, they concluded that “a teaching evaluation system that does not appear to demonstrate any overall improvement in teaching quality cannot be considered satisfactory”.

Kelso Michael (2010), in his thesis describes, “Both teachers who have participated in appraisal systems involving student feedback as a source of data, and managers who have implemented such systems are strongly positive regarding its usefulness and relevance. Teachers and managers also believe the implementation of student feedback has led to benefits in the teaching and learning processes within their schools. Few teachers report being significantly affected by negative or critical feedback from students”. The thesis concludes that student feedback as an appraisal tool has a positive impact on secondary teachers when thoughtfully implemented.

Ravanavar G. M. and Charantimath P. M. (2012) in their study found that out of 101 theory subjects taught by the teachers, the teachings of 77 subjects were graded excellent and 24 subjects graded as good by the students showing that the students were satisfied with quality of teaching of most of the teachers and that the students feedback has served as a useful Quality tool for the teachers to improve their teaching methods and techniques. They suggested quantifying the preferences for each question (a set of 14 questions were asked in the questionnaire) as given by the students will help the teachers to work more on higher preferential questions assuring maximum satisfaction of the students.

Cashin (1988) provides a useful overview of the research exploring the validity of student evaluations of teaching and concludes that students' evaluations tend to correlate highly with lecturers' self-ratings, with the ratings of lecturers' colleagues and with students' actual grades. Research has shown that certain teacher variables (such as gender, age, teaching experience, personality, research productivity), student variables (including gender, age, level, grade average, personality), course variables (class size, time of day of class) and administrative variables (time of module during the term) generally do not impact upon the evaluations given by students on teaching quality (Cashin, 1988).

Students feedback and its impact on the performance of teachers teaching has been identified in this literature review clarifies that the student feedback alone will not have much impact on the performance of the teacher but it definitely make an impact on the teacher and the course if collected and used it wisely. We can conclude that the Students' feedback has been shown to be a useful but highly controversial method of obtaining data as a part of the appraisal process of the teachers and the course.

3. METHODOLOGY:

Harvey L. (2001) stated that the method by which student feedback is obtained and the use of this feedback in the evaluation of their teaching is a very emotive issue to many teachers. Correct Evaluation of Students Feedback is a challenging and a very difficult task. He raises few questions in the mind of an evaluator and suggests collecting students' feedback with proper method depending on the objectives of collecting the feedback. In order to investigate the impact of students' feedback on the teachers teaching performance as the main objective of this study, following methodology has been adopted.

Collecting Students' feedback about teaching is a common practice in the college followed since 2005-06. However since 2010-11, the college is using two sets of structured questionnaire tools, one for theory subjects consisting 15 statements and another for practical subjects consisting 10 statements. The questionnaires were developed after discussions with the students and the members of staff of the college and also on the experience of the previous system in the college. The questionnaire preserved anonymity so that students can give their feedback frankly without fear. The students were offered five answer choices to these statements on a five point Likert scale range of one (1) – five (5) in which response “1” implied a response of “I Strongly Disagree” and response “5” indicated “I Strongly Agree”. Students are also allowed to write their own suggestions / remarks at the end of the questionnaire against the open ended statement. The feedback is being obtained from the students just after completing their first Internal Assessment (IA) Tests. (That is before mid of the semester so that the teachers can get a chance to improve/modify their approach / style of teaching if required for the remaining period of the semester for the benefit students and also for their own benefit.) Students were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire form. They were not allowed to discuss amongst themselves while filling the questionnaire.

The data collected was tabulated and analysed by the individual teacher. Each statement was evaluated for maximum of 5 marks. The list was prepared for the frequency of comments for each statement of the questionnaire. The total ratings for each statement and the aggregate in percentage for each subject of teaching were then calculated. The results of the questionnaires of the different teachers were then consolidated and put in the tabular form. Certain suggestions / comments made by students on the characteristics of teaching and evaluation methods were also listed separately.

4. DATAANALYSIS

As the study is referred to investigate the impact of students' feedback on the teachers teaching performance, the three years students' ratings data (2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13) about the teacher and the course were used for analysis here. As there were two different sets of questionnaire (one for theory and another for practical subjects), the analysis was also made separately for theory and practical subjects. The ratings given by the students were summarised into a tabular form for all the

teachers, subject wise, branch wise and class wise using excel for Windows. To check whether there was an improvement in the performance of a teacher who has taught the same subject for consecutive years, the data were placed side by side and pair wise analysis was carried out. The results for practical subjects are shown in the Table 1. for one particular period. Similarly other years rating data were calculated for both theory and practical subjects and tabulated. Initially, responses were statistically compiled to show means and standard deviations, providing useful generalisations about how teachers experienced. Subsequently, Pair wise single tail “t-student” test was used to find out whether there is an improvement in the performance of the teachers after one year in the same subject of his / her teaching at 5% level of significance. The results are tabulated as shown in the Table 2.

Table 1. Students Ratings of the Teachers for Practical Subjects for the year 2011-12 and 2012-13

									2012-13	2011-12	
Dept.	M/F	Age	Exp	Sem	T/P	Subject Code	Name of the teacher	Rating in %	Rating in %	Diff.	
BS	M	33	11	I	P	10PHYL27		89	87	2	
BS	F	43	21	I	P	10CHEL27		94	95	-1	
BS	F	43	21	I	P	10CHEL27		86	86	0	
IS	M	30	9	III	P	10CSL38		92	84	8	
EC	M	30	8	III	P	10ECL37		90	74	16	
EC	F	24	3	III	P	10ECL38		94	76	18	
IS	M	30	9	III	P	10CSL38		89	84	5	
ME	M	26	3	III	P	10MEL38A		83	95	-12	
CS	F	25	2	V	P	10CSL58		88	86	2	
BS	M	30	9	V	P	10ECL57		98	91	7	
EC	F	30	6	V	P	10EC158		84	79	5	
CS	F	25	2	V	P	10CSL58		90	83	7	
ME	M	26	3	V	P	10MEL57		77	87	-10	
ME	M	26	4	V	P	10MEL58		88	88	0	
EC	F	46	23	VII	P	06ECL77		90	84	6	
EC	F	23	2	VII	P	06ECL78		83	70	13	
Total								1415	1349		
Avg								88.438	84.313		
sd								5.099	6.916		
p-value								0.029			
dof								15			
t-value calculated								2.406			
t-value table								2.131			

Table2. Consolidate Students Ratings for Three Years

	Odd semester				Even Semester				Odd Semester				Odd Sem.	
	Theory Sub.		Practical Sub.		Theory Sub.		Practical Sub.		Theory Sub.		Practical Sub.		Both Sub.	
	2013-14	2012-13	2013-14	2012-13	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13	2011-12	2011-12	2010-11
Number of faculty	55	55	30	30	31	31	9	9	49	49	16	16	11	11
Avg. ratings	90.82	89.27	89.80	86.57	90.36	87.00	90.00	88.11	89.67	86.70	88.44	84.31	88.36	83.19
sd	4.65	5.82	5.35	6.16	4.36	5.05	4.42	3.44	5.26	5.83	5.10	6.92	9.99	9.99
p-value	0.02		0.01		0.0004		0.22		0.0001		0.03		0.02	
dof	54		29		30		8		48		15		10	
t-value calculated	2.41		2.81		3.99		1.34		4.31		2.41		2.85	
t-value table	1.67		1.70		1.70		1.86		1.68		1.75		1.81	
null hypothesis	reject		reject		reject		accept		reject		reject		reject	

5. FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND ACTIONS SUGGESTED

A summary of the findings of the Likert Scale statements in the survey, with brief analysis and comments on the relevance of these findings is described below. The null hypothesis to be tested was stated as “H0: There is no significant difference in the faculty performance after students' feedback”. The results of students' ratings for three years shown in the Table 2 proves that there is a significant difference in the ratings given by the students to the teachers and the course in all three years except for the term 2012-13 even semester in the practical subjects where it shows that there is no significant difference in the students ratings. However if the value of the average ratings given by the students for that particular term of 2012-13 even semester is observed, there is still a small increase in the average value is found from 88.11% to 90.00% in the practical subjects. This indicates that though there is no statistical significant difference in the ratings for the practical subjects for 2012-13 even semester term, but there is improvement in the rating value to the teacher and the course.

The results are also calculated separately for certain teacher variables such as gender, age, teaching experience and course variables such as class size, branch and semester. These calculated results are shown in the Table 3 support the statement made by Cashin, (1988) that the teacher variables and course variables generally do not impact upon the evaluations given by students on their teaching.

Table 3. T-test for Paired Comparison

Teacher and Course Variables	2013-14 Rating	2012-13 Rating	dof	t-cal	t-table	s/ns
Male	91.27	89.46	32	2.18	1.70	s
Female	90.17	88.87	22	1.63	1.72	ns
0-2years experience	92.43	85.43	6	2.69	1.94	s
2-5 years experience	89.26	88.00	18	1.43	1.73	ns
5-10 years experience	91.31	90.92	12	1.05	1.78	ns
above 10 years experience	91.53	90.82	16	1.22	1.75	ns
I semester	91.81	88.88	15	2.13	1.75	s
III semester	91.06	89.63	15	1.56	1.75	ns

V semester	90.64	90.29	13	1.01	1.77	ns
VII semester	88.89	87.78	8	1.08	1.86	ns
BS&AE Dept.	91.75	88.88	15	2.10	1.75	s
CS&E Dept.	88.14	88.29	6	0.84	1.94	ns
Civil Dept.	89.43	90.29	6	1.03	1.94	ns
E&CE Dept.	91.73	90.73	10	1.12	1.81	ns
IS&E Dept.	91.00	90.43	6	1.07	1.94	ns
Mech. Dept.	91.13	86.71	7	3.08	1.90	s

s – significant; ns – not significant

The study was further extended to understand which statements in the questionnaire have affected more for reduction in the ratings of the teacher and the course as given by the students. The top five among the fourteen statements in the theory subjects and top three among nine statements in the practical subjects were identified which have affected largely on the ratings of the teachers and the courses. Table 4 shows for theory subjects. Similarly ranges of percentage effect on rating for practical subjects were calculated for analysis.

Table 4. Effect of an Individual Statement in the Questionnaire on the Ratings of the Teachers for Theory Subjects

Statement number	Number of Subjects	Maximum Rating	Minimum Rating	Range of % effect on Rating
1	49	99	59	0.15 - 8.47
3	37	99	73	0.31 - 8.47
4	21	99	43	0.29 - 6.70
6	20	99	67	0.61 - 8.47
2	18	96	73	0.62 - 5.19
7	14	96	59	0.15 - 4.41
8	12	98	76	0.34 - 3.82
9	9	97	79	0.78 - 3.75
11	8	98	83	0.30 - 2.84
5	8	92	78	0.62 - 3.37
13	6	95	79	0.64 - 1.30
14	4	97	83	0.50 - 2.56
12	4	97	87	0.60 - 2.00
10	1	95	92	1.05

Based upon the students' ratings for theory and practical subjects a student Centered Teaching Strategy is developed. The following suggestions are given for further improvements in the performance of the teacher and the course which promotes a student centered teaching strategy to make learning more effective.

i. Teaching Effectiveness: The objectives of the study of a subject have to be made clear in the first few classes by the teacher. Teacher should not spend more in dictation of notes in the classes. Rather he / she may provide useful study materials, handouts, different tools and techniques to the students. Teacher needs to have loud and clear voice while taking classes. The hand writing on the board should be legible.

ii. Teaching Methodology: Teacher should make the class interesting by using various methods such as: Lecture method; role play; group discussion; individual presentation; assignment; seminars; workshops; brain storming; case studies, quizzes, cooperative learning; game based learning; simulation, active learning, examples of practical applications, showing and developing models, using audio visuals etc. Students should be taken to industry visit to show them real life examples.

iii. Continuous Learning: Teacher should keep himself with up to date and thorough knowledge about the subject he / she are teaching.

iv: Continuous Improvement: The college should review the performance of the teacher on a continuous basis and give feedback to take corrective and preventive action.

v. Infrastructural Facility: The College has to provide good library, sufficient numbers of quality tools and equipments in the practical classes. Sufficient and clear instructions should be given by the staff in charge in the practical classes. Instructors need to provide necessary assistance and supports to carry out practicals.

6. CONCLUSION

Feedback from students is an integral part of the educational process. All teachers use it because it is mandatory as per college / university regulations or certain teachers / colleges are serious about improving their quality of teaching and the course. The purpose of collecting students' feedback may be for varied reasons like the one which is discussed in this paper about enhancing the performance of the teachers. Moreover feedback from students about adopted teaching and evaluation methodology is considered to be the best method to bridge the communication gap between teachers and students (Coffey, M., & Gibbs, G. (2001)). It is a valuable tool to improve the quality of teaching. It is also important to feedback to the students after carrying out feedback from students. The students should be told the results of feedback and the actions taken in response to it. If actions cannot be taken then the reasons should be conveyed to the students. And if possible obtain further reactions from the students.

The collection of students' feedback is not the only way or the best way but rather one of way to evaluate the teacher and the course. It is one of several forms of evaluation used in the college to enhance quality of teachers' teaching. However, peer review, self-evaluation, teaching portfolios and students achievement should also be used (Centra (1993), Seldin (1999)). Frequent collection of students' feedback may help the teachers to modify and improve upon their teaching. If the suggestions given in this study are implemented during the next semester it may lead to quality assurance of the teaching and the course. Further there will be enhancement of the performance of the teachers.

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