

Student Evaluation of Faculty at College of Nursing

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Abstract. The greatest way to improve nursing education is to evaluate the efficiency of teaching in nursing education programs. **Objective:** We undertook this research to assess students' evaluation as one component in the evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness as well as to assess the reliability and validity of the evaluation instrument. **Methods:** The current study used a descriptive design with a convenient sample of 20 students from Stream I (graduate entry from high school, four years nursing program) and 32 students from Stream II (graduate entry from college of science, three years Nursing Accelerated Program) in the new Nursing College which was established at 2008/2009 to fill a faculty evaluation sheet adapted from Wong & Fitzsimmons [1]. Data was collected in the academic year of 2009/2010. The pilot study was done to assess the feasibility and the effectiveness of the instrument in different cultures and populations. **Results:** The study's results revealed that students evaluated the faculty effectiveness of teaching for 13 faculty members. Students rated faculty personal attributes, learner facilitation and quality of feedback (Mean of 4.34 ± 1 , 4.25 ± 1 , and 4.29 ± 1.05 respectively). Reliability statistics; Cronbach's Alpha; were (.93, .97, and .95) respectively for each category. Factor analysis indicated that each subscale items loaded in one factor with more than .70 exceeded the recommended criterion. Correlation analysis indicated that the three subscales are significantly correlated (correlation ranged from .86-.92, $p = .01$). **Conclusion:** Teaching and learning are contextual by nature, with different methods of teaching showing advantage for different outcomes and different students. Given the variety of student characteristics, student faculty evaluation objectives, teaching methods, and institutional contexts must be considered when developing the evaluation process.

Keywords: Students' Faculty Evaluation, Faculty Effectiveness of Teaching, Nursing Program

1. Introduction

Evaluation of faculty is widely used as a basis for administrative decisions and recently is recommended for faculty development in higher education. Students are the best indicator on numerous faculty behaviors associated with effective teaching and student learning. It is an important element in the evaluation of faculty to assess the instructional skills of the teaching faculty, and the academic quality of the course. The reliability and validity of student evaluations have yet to be conclusively proven, but remain an important part of our academic world. Student evaluations can be a valuable method to transform teaching strategies and course design in nursing education. Therefore, this study is aimed to assess student evaluation as one component in the evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness, as well as to assess the reliability of the student evaluation instrument.

2. Literature Review

Since the 1970's, there has been a consensus on the purpose of student's evaluations at colleges and universities. Rifkin [2] confirmed that the primary purpose is formative; that is, facilitating faculty growth,

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development, and self-improvement. Secondly, student evaluations are used for summative purposes and often play a vital part in tenure, promotion, reappointment, and salary decisions.

Students need to be active partners in the enhancement of teaching in higher education. Seeking students' responses to faculty evaluation are considered an honor and support the teaching-learning process. Student evaluations provide instructors with important feedback from their point-of-view. Also, student's evaluation can contribute to the teaching-learning process and teachers must be receptive to their ideas. Additionally, student evaluation is of value to administrators and department chairs in assessing perceived effectiveness of instruction.

Huitt [3]; and Stockham, and Amann, [4] presented the following principles: "1. Learning is an active process and student involvement is an integral part of that process; 2. Teachers view their teaching with regard to the paradigms of their students in order to facilitate change and build for their growth; 3. Teachers recognize that students can make important contributions to the teaching learning process; 4. The teaching-learning process is dynamic and should change over time and with context".

In the nursing field, Diekelmann [5] documented the effect of using novel teaching strategies on student evaluations of nursing instructors. Some nursing instructors may not establish new teaching techniques or try interactive learning strategies in the classroom for fear of unfavorable student evaluations. Diekelmann [5] recommended using the formative evaluations given by students as well as using summative evaluations, which give the instructor insight to acquire action on student suggestions during that course. If courses are evaluated only at the end of the semester, insights regarding changes are too late to implement. The instructor should work to interpret whether the students were unhappy with all or only part of a course. Based on few studies and the feedback from researches, the nursing students can provide constructive appraisal, valuable comments and feedback on the clinical settings, the course materials and the teaching strategies with the fact that the students' evaluation for the instructor could be changed in terms of teaching place[6]. Ballantyne, Borthwick, and Packer [7] found a relationship between nursing students rating their instructor in relation to course grade, the lower the rating, and the less faculty evaluation positive score. Additionally, Salsal [8] emphasizes that faculty evaluation has always been a major part of university based nursing programs, faculty evaluation must be advanced more systematically, objectively, and broadly to ensure that all nursing educators and the teaching-learning process is enhanced.

Few studies focused on constructive standardized tool of student evaluation instrument and testing the reliability in the nursing field. Therefore, the present study aims to assess the reliability and used standardized instrument that were developed by Wong & Fitzsimmons [1] in MBA online program based on the constructivist model of learning which is premised on the notion that learners actively construct their own knowledge from their experiences and involvement [9]. Nowadays, nursing education is moving toward active learning and student involvement in the learning process.

3. Methods

3.1. Study Design and Sample

We used a descriptive design with a convenient sample of 20 students from Stream I (graduate entry from high school, four years nursing program) and 32 students from Stream II (graduate entry from college of science, three years of Nursing Accelerated Program) in the new College of Nursing which was established at 2008/2009 to fill a faculty evaluation sheet adapted from Wong & Fitzsimmons [1].

3.2. Data Collection and Pilot Study

We have done a pilot study to assess the feasibility and the effectiveness of the instrument in different cultures and population. The survey consists of 19 items across three broad categories: Personal Attributes (5 items) Learner Facilitation (9 items), and Quality of Feedback (5 items) using a five-point Likert Scale. Data was collected in the academic year of 2008/2009, and 2009/2010 spring semester. All available students (15 students) were recruited for the pilot study from the 1st year of the Graduate Entry Nursing Accelerated Program. Approval from the College Council was obtained to collect the data from the students. The Student faculty evaluation form was distributed at the end of the classes for each subject by a student representative and all the evaluation forms were collected in an anonymous sealed envelope. Data was entered by a non-

faculty member and data was not exposed to any of the faculty members. To assure confidentiality, a code number was assigned for each faculty before entering the data to the SPSS program.

The pilot study results revealed that students evaluated the faculty effectiveness of teaching for 6 faculty members (Personal Attributes (Mean ranged from 4.7 to 4.9), Learner Facilitation (Mean ranged from 4.1 to 4.8), and Quality of Feedback (Mean ranged from 4.4 to 4.9), which represent the effectiveness of the instrument as a tool of student faculty evaluation. To establish reliability of the measurements, Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated. Cronbach's Alpha was (.66, .84, .80) respectively for each subscale, which indicates high consistency for each item in each subscale except personal attributes. Though, personal attributes are considered subjective indicator which might affect student evaluation and inconsistency in their opinions.

3.3. Results

The study evaluated 13 faculty members who were teaching two different streams and different subjects. Some faculty members were teaching both streams and/or the same stream but 2 different subjects (numbers indicated in Table 1 and 2). The results of the study revealed that student's evaluated faculty members on a scale from (1) poor to (5) excellent; personal attributes; (Mean = 4.35 and *SD* = 1.00), learner facilitation (Mean = 4.25 and *SD* = 1.00), and quality of feedback (Mean = 4.29 and *SD* = 1.05). Student faculty evaluations by streams are listed in table 1. Table 2 indicated the mean score for each faculty individually.

Table 1: *Evaluation of Faculty Members by Stream*

	Stream	N	Mean	SD
Personal Attributes	Stream I	94	4.39	.89
	Stream II	234	4.32	.98
Learner Facilitation	Stream I	94	4.44	.82
	Stream II	234	4.17	1.05
Quality Of Feedback	Stream I	94	4.50	.82
	Stream II	234	4.20	1.12

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics of Evaluation of each Faculty (N=328)*

Subscale	Personal Attributes		Learner Facilitation		Quality of Feedback		N.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Faculty1	4.60	.52	4.55	.60	4.56	.66	46
Faculty2	4.99	.03	4.98	.06	4.99	.49	17
Faculty3	4.60	.54	4.63	.47	4.64	.57	29
Faculty4	4.04	.84	3.50	1.04	3.42	1.24	13
Faculty5	4.59	.40	4.44	.46	4.58	.46	22
Faculty6	4.93	.22	4.70	.47	4.64	.70	14
Faculty7	4.96	.08	4.89	.16	4.91	.30	11
Faculty8	4.54	.50	4.49	.50	4.45	.59	21
Faculty9	4.59	.80	4.78	.62	4.68	.68	15
Faculty10	4.85	.35	4.76	.39	4.81	.29	54
Faculty11	4.00	.60	3.61	.83	4.04	.79	16
Faculty12	3.26	1.36	3.18	1.35	3.22	1.51	56
Faculty13	3.25	1.15	3.24	1.16	3.23	1.23	14
Total	4.35	1.00	4.25	1.00	4.29	1.05	328

3.4. Reliability and Item Analysis

Internal consistency was assessed by means of the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Table 3 indicated the high internal consistency of the instrument in which all values were above the suggested 0.70 level for scale robustness [10]. Cronbach's Alpha was .93, .97, and .95 respectively for each subscale.

Table 3: *Reliability Statistics of Evaluation of Faculty Instrument (N=328)*

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	N
Personal Attributes (PA)	.93	5	300
Learner Facilitation (LF)	.97	9	293
Quality Of Feedback (QF)	.95	5	303

A summary of the item analysis of the instrument was done to ensure the high consistency of the instrument items for each subscale. Item analysis revealed that the scale average was 21.74, 38.29 and 21.45 for personal attributes, learner facilitation, and quality of feedback respectively. The scale variance was 23.01, 80.83 and 27.75 for subscales respectively. The item analysis indicated high corrected item to total scale correlations. The corrected item to total scale correlations was high (.61+). Alphas if item deleted were less than the alpha of all the items for all the subscales.

3.5. Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis utilized to ensure validity of the instrument. Principle components method of extraction and varimax rotation was performed for each evaluation subscale. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (.88, .95, and .90 respectively to each subscale) confirmed that the data and sample size were appropriate for factor analysis procedures. The Bartlett Test of Sphericity were significant for all the subscales factor analysis, $p < .001$, which indicated that the data were appropriate for factor analysis. Eigen value for one factor was greater than 1.00, explaining 74.39, 75.24, and 80.48 % of the variance in each subscale respectively. Factor Loading on one factor exceeded the recommended criterion of .32 [11].

3.6. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis indicated that the three subscales are significantly correlated (Table 4). The correlations provide evidence that the items all converge on the same construct that evaluate the faculty.

Table 4: *Study Variables Correlation Matrix (N= 87)*

Subscale	1	2	3
1. Personal Attributes	1.00		
2. Learner Facilitation	.89**	1.00	
3. Quality Of Feedback	.86**	.92**	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

4. Discussion

The present study used an instrument developed by Wong & Fitzsimmons [1]. This instrument proved its effectiveness to assess students' evaluation as one component in the evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness as well as to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument. The study findings reinforced the previous studies conducted by Kim, Liu and Bonk [12] and Kelly et al. [13]; they found similar results when they measured the faculty teaching effectiveness rated by students. As noted by several researchers (e.g., [14]; [15]), educational institutions must always determine the reliability, validity, and utility of the evaluative instrument at the local institution at which it is used for the purpose of establishing the usefulness of student ratings for instructional improvement.

The results also indicated that the three attributes subscales are reliable which is congruent with Wong & Fitzsimmons [1] results; their results reported high reliability in the three attributers (Cronbach's Alpha .92, .93, .94 for personal attributes, learner facilitation and quality of feedback respectively). Obenchain, Abernathy, and Wiest [16] and Waters, Kemp, and Pucci [17] mentioned that student evaluations of faculty have to be reliable measures of quality of teaching. They concluded that faculty who have enthusiastic characteristics or have positive personal attribute usually, they are rated better on student evaluations. Therefore, in terms of achieving better reliability score of personal attributes, the faculty member should be enthusiastic, helpful, fair, unbiased, and well organized.

5. Recommendations and Implications

Student evaluations can be a productive part of improving teaching strategies, course content, and student learning in nursing programs. This pilot study will help to determine the instrument's adaptability to other settings. It is recommended to use a unified system of evaluation in the University by continually testing this instrument and refining consequently. Student faculty evaluation recommended that it should be made more dynamic by introducing it more than once a semester at appropriate intervals e.g. one quarter into the semester, after mid-term exam, two weeks before the final exam. In addition, the researchers will add 2 questions at the end of the instrument to evaluate the overall rating of faculty and satisfaction of the course. Additionally, student opinion continues to be a main factor in the evaluation of teacher effectiveness at institutions of higher education. Regardless of the weight of such evaluations, or the form they take. The entire evaluation system, including any rating forms, should be designed to meet a specific set of particular goals and needs of the organization place and should have a clear connection to the learning process. Faculty should be concerned in the development of the entire process as they are more likely to utilize data if they assist in the development process.

6. Conclusion

More research in the area of nursing student evaluations of instructors would begin to resolve the anonymity of the evaluation process. Student evaluations can be a productive part of improving teaching strategies, course content, and student learning in nursing programs. Student evaluation of faculty is just one component of an important process in education. Most higher education faculty consider that the teaching-learning process is an active process, ever-changing interaction between the student, teacher, and environment (input and process within context) that should be focused on a particular outcome. It is therefore reasonable to expect students to make important contributions to this system and it is imperative that teachers be receptive to student feedback. However, there is no one correct method of teaching, given that Peer evaluation and frequent revision of evaluation tools should be in use. In summary, teaching and learning are contextual by nature, with different methods of teaching showing advantage for different outcomes and different students. This variety of student characteristics, Student Faculty Evaluation objectives, teaching methods, and institutional contexts must be considered when developing the evaluation process.

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