Student Evaluation of Lecturer Performance Among Private University Students

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Abstract

The evaluation of lecturer performance at the end of the semester is widely practicedby learning institutions and universities. The results of the evaluations are beneficial in understanding the areas of possible improvement for the lecturer. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors and predictors of lecturer performance among undergraduates in a private university in Malaysia using the existing questionnaire. A total of 223 respondents were recruited using multistage sampling.The results of this study showed that lecturer and tutor characteristics ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.01$), subject characteristics ($r = 0.699$, $p < 0.01$), the studentship ($r = 0.472$, $p < 0.01$), and learning resources and facilities ($r = 0.650$, $p < 0.01$) were positively correlated with overall lecturer performance. Stepwise hierarchical regression was used to determine the predictors of overall lecturer performance among the students. The results of the final model showed that lecturer and tutor characteristics, subject characteristics, and learning resources and facilities explained 61.9% of the variance in overall lecturer performance among students ($F = 118.732$, $p < 0.01$). Knowing the predictors of overall lecturer performance would help the lecturer and university identify the specific areas for improving the performance of the lecturer.

Key words: Lecturer and tutor characteristics; Subject characteristics; Learning resources and facilities; Overall performance

INTRODUCTION

The issue of student evaluations in teaching is not a new issue as it was started in the 1920s (Wachtel, 1998, as cited in McKnight, Paugh, & Manzo, 2005). Nevertheless, many studies have attempted to explore the contributing factors to student evaluation on lecturer performance in both public and private higher education institutions. There is no specific instrument to gauge lecturer performance through student evaluation asstudent ratings are perceived as an unreliable and inaccurate method for teaching assessment by the majority (about 75%) of academics (Reckers, 1995). However student evaluation is included in the key performance index for lecturers in staff appraisal and teaching effectiveness (Griffin, 1999; Liaw & Goh, 2003).

Lecturer performance, which is one of the components in student evaluations, significantly contributes to student satisfaction which in turn affects the university image and student loyalty (Helgesen & Nesset, 2007). In addition, university image is frequently related to the selection of educational institutions among students. The literacy rate of Malaysians aged 15 years and above increased from 82.9% in 1991 to 92.5% in 2009. While the gross enrolment ratios in tertiary education increased from 23.0% in 1999 to 28.0% in 2009. The demand for tertiary education is increasing. In Malaysia, the number of private institutions with university status more than doubled from 11 in 2002 to 23 in 2011 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). This paper continues with a review of influencing factors in student evaluation towards lecturer performance including both local and international studies. The

remainder of this study presents the research methodology, results, discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies found that interpersonal communication was positively related to a student's cognitive learning and a positive student evaluation of their lecturer (McCroskey, Fayer, Richmond, Sallinen & Barraclough, 1996, as cited in Rocca & McCroskey, 1999). A more recent study found that personality characteristics (personal potency, pragmatism, amicability and intellectual competency) of the lecturer were positively related to student evaluation of lecturer performance among community college students (Magno & Sembrano, 2008). Lecturers that are dynamic, communicate well with students, friendly, helpful and rational tend to receive a higher performance rating by students. A recent study by Chireshe (2011) also found students viewed their lecturers as effective lecturers if they had a great personality that builds good rapport, engages students,are fair, knowledgeable and competent in the subject area.

Course characteristics are frequently related to the level of difficulty as perceived by students and negatively impact the student evaluation of the lecturer's performance (Chang, 2000; Mukherji & Rustagi, 2008). On the other hand, Marsh & Roche (1997) found that students gave higher evaluations to lecturers whose courses are tougher with heavier workloads. In Malaysia, a study conducted by Chan & Syuhaily (2011) found that course characteristics, tutorial characteristics and lecturer characteristics predicted about 60.0% of the lecturer performance among public university undergraduate students. On top of course characteristics, Chan & Syuhaily (2011) incorporated tutorial characteristics into their study based on the rationale that "… Subjects at university level involve tutorial classes and overall teaching performance… partially depend on the teaching behavior of their instructor/s… (Rindermann & Schofield, 2001)".

(1) Course characteristics (2) Tutorial characteristics (3) Lecturer characteristics	→	**Lecturer performance**
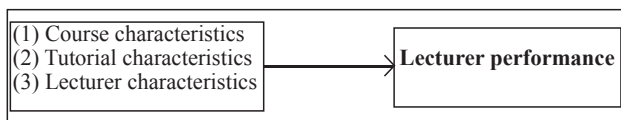
Figure 1
Model of Lecturer Performance Among Public Higher Education Institutions (Chan & Syuhaily, 2011)

Teaching facilities, teaching resources and lecture hall conditions were perceived to have an important influence on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness on university lecturers (Ngware & Ndirangu, 2005). Student participation and discussion also influenced the overall course evaluation(Rindermann& Schofield, 2001). In addition, cultural factors contributed to student learning and indirectly influenced the student evaluation (Holloway, 1988, as cited in Rindermann& Schofield,

2001). However, the impact of cultural factors and student evaluation toward lecturer performance remains unanswered. There are no previous studies that have been published that solely focus on private universities. This leads to considerable attention on the student evaluation of lecturer performance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors and predictors of lecturer performance among undergraduates in one private university located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, using a questionnaire adapted from the studied university. In addition, this study attempts to explore the influence of students' citizenship (local and foreign) towards lecturer performance among the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

Location, Sampling and Data Collection

Multistage sampling was employed in this study to recruit the respondents. In the first stage, a faculty was randomly chosen. In the second stage, the School of Management was randomly chosen out of two schools (i.e. School of Management and School of Information Technology).In the third stage, two subjects were randomly chosen from subjects in year 1 of the undergraduate program (three year program) in the School of Management. A similar selection was undertaken for two subjects from years 2 and 3. A total of six subjects from years 1 to 3 were chosen.

Prior to data collection, a pilot study of 30 respondents was carried out at the library of the selected private university to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The reliability results of the pilot test showed that the Cronbach alpha value ranged from 0.68 to 0.92. According to George and Mallery (2003), internal consistency is acceptable.

Permission was requested from the specific lecturer for data collection. All the students in the selected subjects that attend class were utilized as respondents. Due to confidentiality requirements, the names of the subjects were not published. A total of 223 completed cases was gathered through the self-administered questionnaire.

Measurement of Variables

There were two parts in the questionnaire that were intended to gather respondents' personal information and the lecturer performance evaluation. All of the statements were constructed using a five-point ordinal scale. The responses ranged from strongly disagree (one point) on one end to strongly agree (five points) on the other end. This study adapted the questionnaire from the student evaluation that was used by the university. A total of 32 items was used to gather the responses to measure lecturer and tutor characteristics (13 items), subject characteristics (6 items), the studentship (7 items) and learning resources and facilities (4 items).This study also added two questions to the existing questionnaire on overall performance (2 items). The results of the reliability test on

the 33 items showed that the Cronbach alpha score was 0.961 (variance = 371.331) indicating that the instrument has excellent internal consistency. Prior to data analysis, a summation score was calculated for all the selected variables. The higher the summation score, the higher the level of agreement of students towards the respective factor.

Lecturer and Tutor Characteristics

These statements were related to punctuality, class preparation, class organization, willingness to help, delivery by the lecturer and tutor, etc. Some sample responses were: "The lecturer was actually in class within 5 minutes of start time", "The lecturer came well prepared for each class session", and "The lecturer organized class sessions well". Lecturer and tutor scale ranged from 13 to 45 points.

Subject Characteristics

These statements related to learning outcomes, learning materials and knowledge gained from the subject. For example, "The learning outcomes were clearly stated in the syllabus" and "The assignments have helped me to understand the subject". Subject characteristics scale ranged from 6 to 30 points.

Studentship

These statements were related to class participation, punctuality, assignment completion, and preparation before class for the students. Statements related to studentship included "I was punctual to class", "I asked questions when I did not understand/needed further explanation", and "I completed all assignments". Studentship scale ranged from 7 to 35 points.

Learning Resources and Facilities

These statements were related to the efficiency and availability of the library resources, classroom and computer facilities that were provided by the university. A sample item is "Library resources supported my study in this subject". Learning resources and facilities scale ranged from 4 to 20 points.

Overall Performance

These statements relate to the overall opinion about the effectiveness and performance of the lecturer. Overall performance scale ranged from 2 to 10 points.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows (SPSS for Windows Version 13.0) was used to analyze the collected data. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were used to achieve the objectives. Descriptive statistics were used to present a profile of the respondents. The test of Pearson moment correlation, independent sample T-test and Chi square test of independence were also used to identify the differences and relationships between the selected variables and the overall lecturer performance. Multiple linear regressions and the stepwise method were used to identify the significant determinants of overall lecturer performance. This study used the level of significance at a probability level of 5%.

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1
Demographic Information of the Respondents

Characteristics	N	%	*M*	*SD*
Gender				
Male	172	42.6		
Female	232	57.4		
Age			20.99	1.91
Year of study				
1	147	36.4		
2	191	47.3		
3	66	16.3		
Citizenship of Student				
Local	237	58.7		
Foreign	167	41. 3		

Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the respondents. The results showed that more than half of the students were female (57.4%) and the rest were male (42.6%). The mean age of the students was 20.99 years (*SD* = 1.91). About 47.0% of the students were taking year 2 subjects followed by year 1 subjects (36.4%) and year 3 subjects (16.3%). In terms of citizenship of the students, there were slightly more local students (58.7%) thanforeign (non-citizen) students (41.3%).

Evaluation of Lecturer and Tutor Characteristics by Students

Generally, the students agreed that their lecturers and tutors fulfilled their job scope and were willing to provide guidance. Lecturers and tutors start the class within the first five minutes (75.3%); they were well prepared for each class session (81.2%); class sessions were well organized (74.0%); they spoke clearly (72.0%); they provided clear assessment requirements (73.6%) and they were willing to offer individual help (73.0%). However, lecturer and tutor characteristics were not statistically different in terms of gender [t (402) = 0.770, p > 0.05]. The results of the analyses indicated that foreign students (M = 48. 52, SD = 8.47) rated higher on lecturer performance compared to local students (M =52. 56, SD =8. 01) [t (402) = -4.827, p < 0.01]. There are significant differences between the year of study and the evaluation of lecturer performance [F (2, 401) = 3.481, p < 0.05]. An inspection of the mean scores based on post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferoni test indicated that the year 2 students (M = 49.12, SD = 8.13) gave significantly lower mean scores (M = 52.08, SD = 9.60) than year 3 students. However, there were no significant differences noted for the pairs of year 1 and year 2 or year 1 and year 3 students. These results reaffirmed the findings of Chan and Shuhaily (2011) that there were no significant differences in gender and year of study on the lecturer and tutor characteristics that were evaluated by university students.

Evaluation of Subject Characteristics by Students

Students agreed the most with the statements of "The subject helped to upgrade my knowledge in specific areas" (73.5%), "The learning outcomes were clearly stated in the syllabus" (69.0%) and "The assignments have helped me to understand the subject" (69.0%). On average, less than 5.0% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements in rating the subject characteristics. This study found that there was a significant difference [t (402) = -6.369, $p < 0.01$] between local and (M = 22.025, SD = 1.594) foreign students (M = 24.380, SD = 1.594). The foreign students rated higher in the subject characteristics that were the same as mentioned above. The results showed that there was no significant difference in gender [t (402) = 0.380, $p > 0.05$] and year of study [F (2, 401) = 1.564, $p > 0.05$] in subject characteristics.

Evaluation of Studentship, Learning Resources and Facilities by Students

This section discusses the students' self-evaluation in study matters. In general, students completed all assignments (84.9%), actively participated in class activities or group project (77.0%), were punctual to class (77.0%) and asked questions when they did not understand (64.9%). In contrast, only about 60.0% of the students prepared before class and reviewed notes after the lecture. In terms of studentship characteristics, this study found that there was a significant difference[t (402) = -3.109, $p < 0.05$] between local students and (M =26.97, SD = 4.28) foreign students (M = 28.27, SD = 3.96). Local students rated higher in the subject characteristics as mentioned in Section 3.2. The results showed that there was no significant difference in gender [t (402) = -0.380, p

> 0.05] and year of study [F (2, 401) = 0.321, $p > 0.05$] in studentship characteristics.The statement of "The material support on the E-advantage (the university's web based learning resources portal) contributed to my learning" was rated highest (70.0%) by students. This was followed by "Classroom/lecture hall offered a comfortable learning environment", "OHPs and LCD projectors worked well all the time", "Library resources supported their study" and "Computer facilitieswere adequate" (60.0% to 65.0%). Similar results were observed for learning resources and facilities. There was a significant difference [t (402) = -7.327, $p < 0.01$] between local students and (M = 16.52, SD = 3.74) foreign students (M = 19.26, SD = 3.67). Foreign students rated higher in the *learning resources and facility* characteristics.There was no significant difference in gender [t (402) = -0.138, $p > 0.05$] and year of study [F (2, 401) = 0.972, $p > 0.05$] in *learning resources and facility* characteristics.

Evaluation of Lecturer Performance by Students

The majority of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that the course was effectively provided by the lecturer (70.7%) and perceived that the lecturer is one of the best educators (69.1%). There were no statistically significant differences in lecturer performance between gender [t (402) = 0.293, $p > 0.05$] and year of study [F (2, 401) = 1.854, $p > 0.05$]. However, foreign students (M = 8.096, SD = 1.580) rated higher on lecturer performance compared to local students (M = 7.426, SD = 1.594) [t (402) = - 4.172, $p < 0.01$].

Correlations of Overall Lecturer Performance Evaluated by the Respondents and Selected Variables and Its Determinants

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Overall Performances of Lecturer with Selected Variables in This Study

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	α
Lecturer and tutor characteristics	50.19	8.51	0.788**	0.557**	0.520**	0.714**	0.942
Subject characteristics	22.10	3.82		0.603**	0.598**	0.674**	0.894
Studentship characteristics	27.51	4.19			0.461**	0.478**	0.854
Learning resources and facilities	17.65	3.94				0.585**	0.853
Overall performance	7.70	1.62					0.851

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3
Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses (Stepwise Method) for Overall Lecturer Performance

Model	Variable (N = 223)	B	SE B	Standardized β	t
1	(Constant)	0.888	0.341		2.602
	Lecturer and tutor	0.136	0.007	0.711	20.248**
2	(Constant)	0.227	0.330		0.689
	Lecturer and tutor	0.106	0.007	0.556	14.442**
	Learning resources and facilities	0.121	0.016	0.296	7.696**
3	(Constant)	-0.059	0.339		-0.175
	Lecturer and tutor	0.084	0.010	0.440	8.300**
	Learning resources and facilities	0.103	0.017	0.251	6.170**
	Subject	0.075	0.024	0.177	3.146**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Model 1: F (1, 400) = 409.963, $p < 0.01$, R^2 = 0.506, ΔR^2 = 0.505
Model 2: F (2, 399) = 264.441, $p < 0.01$, R^2 = 0.570, ΔR^2 = 0.568
Model 3: F (3, 398) = 183.525, $p < 0.01$, R^2 = 0.570, ΔR^2 = 0.577

Descriptive results indicated that the students provided high ratings for all the factors due to the fact that the ratings are higher than median possible score respectively (refer to Table 2). Correlation analysis was performed to test the relationship between the selected variables with overall lecturer performance. A significant relationship was found between lecturer characteristics ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.01$), subject characteristics ($r = 0.674$, $p < 0.01$), the studentship ($r = 0.478$, $p < 0.01$) and learning resources and facilities ($r = 0.585$, $p < 0.01$) with overall lecturer performance. In addition, the correlation matrix showed that there was a significant relationship between the variables. Given that all the selected variables were related to the overall lecturer performance, multiple linear regressions using the stepwise method were utilized to identify the determinants of overall lecturer performance. The final model (Model 3) was used to explain the determinants of overall lecturer performance. Results in Table 3 indicated that three significant predictors explained 57.7% of the variance of overall lecturer performance rated by the students [$F (3, 398) = 183.525$, $p < 0.01$]. The factor of studentship was excluded and the equation of overall lecturer performance is equal to -0.059 + .084 (lecturer and tutor) + 0.103 (learning resources and facilities) + 0.075 (subject) + error. The standardized beta coefficient value indicates that a one standard deviation increase in lecturer and tutor score brings about a 0.440 standard deviation increase in the dependent variable (overall lecturer performance). Lecturer and tutor characteristics contribute more than learning resources and facilities ($\beta = 0.251$) and subject ($\beta = 0.177$). As a result, better quality forthesethree factors would direct the students to rate the overall lecturer performance higher.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary concern of this study was to investigate the predictors of lecturer performance among private university students. The findings from this study were consistent with Chan &Syuhaily (2011) which indicated that lecturer and tutor characteristics remained the most important indicator explaining the variance of overall lecturer performance. In other words, the characteristics or qualities of the lecturers played an important role in determining lecturer performance. This will eventually lead to improved student satisfaction and the related university image, which affects student loyalty. In addition to lecturer and tutor characteristics, learning resources and learning facilities were ranked as the second most important factor influencing lecturer performance. This study also found that learning facilities (e.g. OHP and LCD projectors) and learning resources (e.g. E-learning webpage and library) influenced the students' evaluation of the overall lecturer performance. In terms of the appropriateness of the subject's contents, this study found that the respondents in this study were concerned about the subject's content especially regarding the difficulty level of learning outcomes and the subject's relevancy to the business environment. In order to achieve this, most universities will need to conduct program reviews, particularly on the subject's content. This study urges universities to conduct an opinion poll of stakeholders and lecturers. Additional selection criteria such as citizenship, different age groups, living arrangements and stratum might produce interesting input for the program review process.

The authors point out that even though lecturer or tutor characteristics are the main predictors of overall performance and lead to student satisfaction.The university management should also be aware of the sustainability of the human capital issues. For instance, the university has to deal with continuously providing training to existing and new lecturers in order to maintain and continuously improve teaching delivery standards as well as sharpening its competitive advantages compared to its competitors. As for experienced lecturers soon to retire, universities need to develop an interesting remuneration package to retain them. To maintain a lecturer's performance, it is always preferable for lecturers to stayin their area of expertise and not to be given too many new subjects too often. It is urged that the university allocates monetary resources to focus on human capital development and to build up more physical learning facilities and resources on the campus.

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