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Lecturers' Commitment and Students' Academic Achievement: Viewed from Teaching Evaluation Result

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to measure the relevance of the Teaching Evaluation Result (TER) as a tool in evaluating the commitment of the lecturers in delivering the course taught. The TER questionnaires should be evaluated from time to time to ensure the quality, reliability and the applicability of each questions represented the commitment of lecturer. The respondents are foundation students (N=433) together with a total of 4 lecturers teaching the surveyed 7 courses. Students' academic achievement evaluated from their final exam grades and the students are comprised of 85% Indian, 10% Malay and 5% Chinese. Surprisingly, the finding stated that there are more than 30% of the students who have obtained a grade of A- and better, the TER was < 80%. At the same token 10% of the students who have secured a grade of A- and better, the TER was $\leq 80\%$. This indicates that a high TER score does not guarantee that the students will perform well academically even though their lecturers give a full commitment. The mean scores of at least two groups of courses are significantly different at $\alpha = 0.05$ level and the mean score of the grades of at least two groups of lecturers are significantly different at $\alpha = 0.05$ level. Thus, the method of Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to obtain the existence of normality. The results indicated that all of the variables are generally not normally distributed even at a significant level of $\alpha = 0.01$. Therefore, it was found that 13 out of 17 of TER questionnaires to be significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ and 3 out of 17 TER questionnaires to be significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. However, 1 out of 17 of the questionnaires is not significant. Conclusion, the finding helps the management of the university on the relevance of TER used to measure the lecturer's commitment. However, due to the limitation and the unavailability of matching each student TER towards each lecturers, therefore, the results presented herein is weakly conclusive. It is recommended that future research to incorporate the matching of students TER be made with the lecturers to obtain reliable and conclusive result.

Keywords: *Commitment, teaching evaluation results (TER), questionnaires, correlation*

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Introduction

The rapid changes in education system are generally carving the roles and scopes of works for lecturers in the academic environment. Lecturers need to be creative and innovative in order to develop the commitment towards any given tasks and to enhance the students' academic achievement. According to O'Malley (2000) at the organizational level, committed employees normally put on a greater effort at their workplace. Further, Meyer (2002) stated that in the classroom, the shift from hierarchy to networks is witnessed by a shifting emphasis from 'teaching' to 'learning', thus, leading to greater attention to the social and collective dimensions of peer learning. Under current scenario and constraint, lecturers must be ready at all times, to be committed through the changing on the method of conveying knowledge especially with the globalization and advent of information communication technology (ICT). Abu Bakar (2005) found out that educators are responsible for ensuring that all the graduates generally receive a quality education. Therefore, TER is considered as one of management tool to look whether lecturers are committed or not on delivering their task.

Furthermore, the commitment of lecturers towards the academic achievement of students needs additional effort. This includes sacrifices to spend extra time to make an extra class and to guide students who are involved and attached with long time personal problems. Lecturers must master the knowledge to prepare the lesson plan every semester before they commence interacting with the students and also searching for other academic materials. Lecturers are not only subject matter expert (SME) but expected to be good communicators. The above statement agreed by Nias (1981) where to be a professional, necessity for teachers to be emotionally committed to their work, for without these emotional connection teachers faces the constant danger of burn-out in an increasingly intensified work environment.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the correlation between the commitments of the lecturer and the student's academic achievement viewed from TER. Crosswell and Elliott (2001) revealed that the level of teachers' commitment is considered to be as a key factor in the success of current educational reform agenda as it heavily influences teachers' willingness to engage in cooperative, reflective and critical practice. Students are required to fill up the TER for each subject before they are allowed to enter their final examination at the end of each semester. This is to measure the relevance of the specific discipline being taught based on the students' perception. The TER is designed basically to be used as a tool by the faculty in evaluating the effectiveness of the lecturers in delivering the subject matter and the steps need to take to overcome any shortcomings arising during the tenure of the coursework.

Research Objective

The primary objective of this study is outline as follows:

- (a) To identify the commitment factors which derived from the lecturer's TER correlates with the student's academic achievement.
- (b) To determine whether the TER attributes can be considered as part of the commitment factors which have an impact to the students' academic achievement.
- (c) To clarify the problems or barriers that lecturers faces to impart their commitment perceived in TER.

Research Question

The following are the research questions.

- (a) What are the commitment factors which may be derived from the lecturer's TER correlates with the student's academic achievement?
- (b) Can TER attributes be considered as part of the commitment factors which have an impact to the students' academic achievement?
- (c) Are there problems or barriers that a lecturer faces to impart their commitments perceived in TER?

Research Limitation

Even though the study seems to be interesting to researcher, just like any other study, the following are the limitations.

- (a) The study is only concentrated on only one particular private university, and one particular TER used as a case and cannot be generalized to other private university in Malaysia.
- (b) This study is limited to the students who took the foundation programme only and it involved selected lecturers who are responsible to teach the foundation courses, future research can be expanded to all faculties and all programmes offered by university.
- (c) Lack of previous study specifically on the TER to be measured as lecturers' commitment and correlates with students' academic achievement.

Literature Review

Literature review indicates that TER is an excellent approach by university to create and implement professional development plans for lecturers. The implementation of TER is always an issue that related to the lecturers' commitment. As agreed by Huberman (1999) that the needs to be an ongoing, ever-evolving process rather than a singular event with a beginning, middle and most importantly, and end. Lecturers must be willing to experience steep learning curves. They should invested their personal time and energy to translate the on-going reforms successfully into effective practice. They too should understand that their commitment will be evaluated by the students. They must change and professional commitment appears to be highly influential for not only a teacher's success during times of change but also for systems in seeking to bring about change Crosswell and Elliott (2001). Thus, Huberman (1999) stated that, teacher commitment has been identified as one of the most critical factors for the future success of education and schools. Furthermore, understood that lecturer's commitment is closely connected to lecturer's work performance and their ability to innovate and to integrate new ideas. Students rated lecturers' enthusiasm, interest, and charisma most highly, along with clear handouts and good presentation skills. In other studies, students have commonly criticised lecturers for: inaudibility, incoherence, pitching material at the wrong level, not emphasizing the key points, and poor chalkboard/whiteboard/overheads.

Research Method

The data collection comprised with quantitative data. The information related to the lecturers' commitment hinges upon the Teaching Evaluation Result (TER). The final scores from the TER are used to benchmark and to interpret the lecturers' commitments based on different courses taught. The students come from varied demographic background such as sex, race, ethnic origin, and socio-economy. A total of 433 students have responded and evaluated these lecturers via the TER. These foundation students have completed Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and/or Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM). By race, eighty five percent (85%) are Indians, ten percent (10%) are Malay and five percent (5%) are Chinese. There are seven courses used in this study. These courses are coded namely SEC0014, SHC0044, SKC0004, SMC0014, SSB1004, SSC0004 and UGC0012. This research categorized the TER percentage from more than 85% and less than 75%.

Results and Discussion

The research measured the lecturer's commitment by utilizing all the 17 questions from the TER. The final scores from the TER are used to benchmark and to interpret the lecturers' commitments. Thus, the student's academic achievement was taken from their final examination results.

Table 1 shows that there are 2 sections for SEC0014 courses, lectured by same lecturer, however the scored of the TER for both sections were different as one was <75% and another one is scored between 75% and <80%. Same goes to UGC0012 course where there is also 2 sections lecture by same lecturer and both sections TER are scored between 80% and <80%.

The graph presented in Figure 1 concluded that the TER <75% shows that most of the students seem are good in their academic achievement however, surprisingly for the TER >85% or 80% – 84.99% the student's academic achievement are lower. So that, it is understand that the impact of lecturers commitment is not guarantee that students perform in their study.

Table 1. TER and Courses Taught

TER	Courses							Total
	SEC	SHC	SKC	SMC	SSB	SSC	UGC	
	0014	0044	0004	0014	1004	0004	0012	
T < 75.00	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
E 75.00 - 79.99	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	4
R 80.00 - 84.99	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
85.00+	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	12

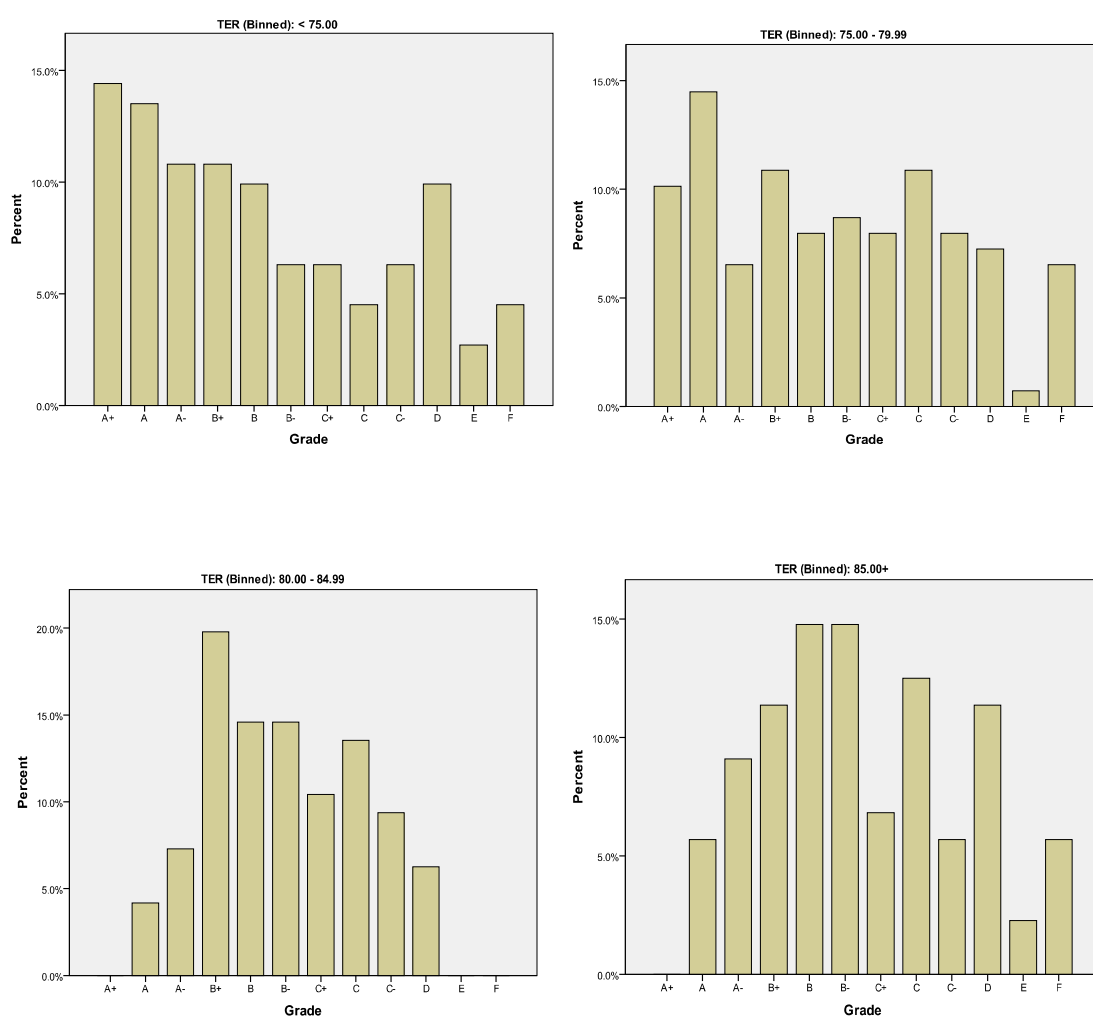


Figure 1. The graph of TER

Table 2. Total Numbers of Respondents by the Courses

Courses	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
SEC0014	57.63	69	20.54
SHC0044	69.34	70	20.07
SKC0004	57.10	60	16.66
SMC0014	65.89	78	19.03
SSB1004	58.53	28	13.46
SSC0004	63.62	66	11.28
UGC0012	60.54	62	11.17
Total	62.33	433	17.34

The mean scores and standard deviation of the courses are tabulated in Table 2, and it can be seen that the highest mean score is SHC0044 is 69.34 and the lowest mean score is SKC0004 is 57.10. The variation between the highest mean score and the lowest mean score is approximately 12 marks. Since the standard deviations of the scores for the courses are generally large, an F-test is made to test if the mean scores of at least two groups of courses are different. Furthermore, lectures requires a considerable amount of thoughtful planning, not just about the content but it is all about ways of engaging students, thus reflect the TER. For example, stimulating lectures are usually the product of imaginative and a desire to challenge. As far as students are concerned, they rated lectures' enthusiasm, interest, and charisma and also clear handouts and good presentation skills.

Table 3. Mean for each Lecturers

Lecturer ID	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
A	64.38	217	20.35
B	62.11	94	12.13
C	57.10	60	16.67
D	60.55	62	11.17
Total	62.33	433	17.34

The mean of the distribution related to the grades with respect to the lecturers is shown in Table 3. The highest mean score is lecturer A is 64.38 and the lowest mean score is lecturer C is 57.10 with a range of approximately 7 marks whereas the standard deviation ranges from approximately 11 to 20. The distribution of the mean is subject to further test to check if there is any difference between the means at an α level of 0.05.

Table 4. Anova Test of the Mean of Grades with respect to the Lecturers

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	2756.83	3	918.94	3.10	.027
Within Groups	127140.94	429	296.37		
Total	129897.77	432			

Test of Normality

The variables related to the analysis ranging from the grades and to the TER are subject to normality check using the method of Kolmogorov-Smirnov. The results of the test indicated that all of the variables are significant at α level of 0.01. These indicate that the variables are generally not normally distributed.

Non-Parametric Study – Spearman Correlation

Table 5 is the test statistics is testing on the relationship between total marks and TER, and on each of the questions.

Table 5. Spearman's rho correlation of the variables

Variable	Spearman Correlation
Classes are well organized and well run	-0.165*
Classes start and finish as scheduled	-0.157*
Lecturers and tutorials are presented and well understood by students	-0.116*
Courses notes are sufficient in coverage of the subject	-0.125*
I have found the subject interesting	-0.81*
I have found the classes stimulating	-0.098*
The subject contents are relevant to my personal development and future career	-0.155*
During lecture/tutorial periods there are opportunities to ask questions and discuss ideas	-0.158*
There is a good amount of interactions in the classes for this subject	-0.111*
I have trouble keeping up with the pace in this subject	-0.035*
The teaching method has helped students to maximize their learning	-0.128*
The assessment for this subject is explained to students and is considered appropriate	-0.173
The assessment has been fair and reasonable	-0.212
There has been sufficient feedback from the assessment	-0.180*
Sufficient help has been provided for individual problems	-0.125*
It has been easy to obtain assistance when necessary	-0.129*
The lecturer is accessible outside the classroom	-0.195*

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

In the Table 5, it was noted that all of the variables are not normally distributed. All the questions have negative relationship with the total marks. However, the strongest correlation valued of -0.212 which 'the assessment has been fair and reasonable'. Students valued the lecturer and perceived that lecturers commitment through assessment. The responses by the students to the questionnaires have a strong tendency towards agreeing to the attributes set-forth in the questionnaires related to the commitment of the lecturers. Thus, there are no differences in the perception on commitments due to gender of the students as a whole. Although the average age of the students is established to be around 20 years of age from the analysis, however there is no significant evidence to support any variances shown by the age group to the questionnaires. The majority of all the questionnaires posted in TER to the lecturers are positive in nature. Thus, any answer agreeing to the questions would indicate a favourable response. According to Park (2003) stated that the commitment to teaching is represented by changes in teaching practices in terms of how variously teacher are introducing teaching methods. However, to incorporate other additional commitment measures will enhance the correlation factor of the performance of the students and the commitment of the lecturers. At best, there exist a weak correlation between the commitments of the lecturers and the performance of the students. Generally, the quality of the students might be one of the factors to their academic achievement such as attitude, discipline. As agreed by Ostroff (1992) high performance of the students are generally related to the quality of the students although this is not exclusive in nature.

Conclusion

Due to the limitation and the unavailability of matching each student to their evaluation towards the lecturers, the results presented above is not conclusive. Therefore, it is recommended that future research in similar areas to incorporate the matching of students be made with the lecturers to obtain reliable and conclusive result. This finding can lead the university's management renew the TER, if necessary, through the student's responses of their lecturers' commitment towards relative subjects.

The results from this study support and recognized the need of TER as one of the tools to measure lecturer's commitment and its impact to the student's academic achievement. Some of the questionnaires may be modified to reflect the findings made in this report presented herein. The significance of the questionnaires alone is sufficient to justify the need to continue with the TER.

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