



Evaluating the performance of teaching staff members, a step towards teaching performance development of higher education in Sebha University

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to show the importance of evaluating the teaching performance level of the University teaching members. It also aims to provide the suggested mechanisms for evaluating the teaching performance of the teaching staff members of Sebha University. This study was based mainly on documents and analytic description to collect information about the importance and ways of evaluating teachers with reference to some of the international experiences on teaching performance development. This study concluded that the absence of an experienced entity that would develop the teaching performance of faculty members is one of the main reasons for the weak teaching performance at Sebha University. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that there should be a planned system based on measured standards and criteria for evaluating staff members to improve the quality of teaching in the higher education domain.

تقويم أداء أعضاء هيئة التدريس: خطوة نحو تطوير الأداء التدريسي للتعليم العالي في جامعة سبها

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الكلمات المفتاحية:

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى توضيح أهمية تقويم مستوى الأداء التدريسي لأعضاء هيئة التدريس بالجامعة. كما يهدف إلى توفير الآليات المقترحة لتقويم الأداء التدريسي لأعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة سبها. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة بشكل أساسي على الوثائق والوصف التحليلي من أجل جمع المعلومات حول أهمية وطرق تقويم أعضاء هيئة التدريس بالرجوع إلى التجارب الدولية في تطوير الأداء التدريسي. خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى إن غياب الثقافة التنظيمية التي من شأنها تطوير الأداء التدريسي لأعضاء هيئة التدريس هي أحد الأسباب الرئيسية في ضعف الاداء التدريسي في جامعة سبها. بناءً على نتائج الدراسة فإنه يوصى بضرورة وجود نظام مخطط قائم على مقاييس ومعايير مدروسة لتقويم أعضاء هيئة التدريس لتحسين جودة التدريس في مجال التعليم العالي.

1- Introduction

Higher education is the basic of the recent teaching development and it has a great role in developing countries. University role in higher education gives more growth to the process of progress and personal reorganization of the country rather than school role in education. Thus, universities around the world try hard to reach more development in their educational system to develop their countries.

In the last 40 years, higher education organizations have experienced insightful changes, particularly in the field of evaluating the performance and effectiveness of their teachers to raise their quality and improve their practice (Silva et al 2017). Many studies have found that the process of evaluating teachers can lead to better teaching and

thus improving the University educational role in the society. Evaluation can also help teachers to improve the teacher's design and delivery of instruction, managing time, classroom management, using new tools and technologies and support for student learning. Still, there is not a generally agreed-upon strategy or a method for evaluating the performance of teachers because there is still a debate about what an effective teacher is. Cruickshank and Haeefe (1990) similarly agree that there is a problem related to the teacher evaluation which is the lack of agreement about what decides the teacher to be good or effective. It is not easy to measure what the teacher should do to be considered as an effective teacher. The effectiveness in education

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means good quality of education. For the importance of the university teacher, this study will include some of the major roles that must be achieved by the teacher to be measured as an effective one.

However, many studies have suggested many methods that can be used to measure the effectiveness of a university teacher. These methods include; student evaluation, classroom observation, self-evaluation and many others. This research will describe the various methods and criteria in which higher education teachers to be evaluated to maintain better teaching performance. This study will refer to some of the important experiences of universities around the world regarding the studies conducted about the success use of the different methods of evaluation whether in Arab or international Universities.

Research problem

Universities have an important role in supporting the political, economic and social life to develop the country. To assure this development, many universities around the world try to make a routine evaluation of its teaching members. The evaluation of the performance of teachers in higher education has seen massive attention during the history of teaching. Unfortunately, the teachers' institutions and the people who are responsible in Sebha University do not take the evaluation as a serious and needed process. Ignoring the role of evaluation leads the university to be less effective and not interacting with global needs. The lack of continues evaluation of teachers in the University can also lead to getting many teachers who are not qualified and this causes poor teaching. Albeshr (2019) declares this in her study when she finds that lots of Arab and Islamic universities are still weak in terms of the teaching development and do not meet the universal changes to develop its countries because of the lack of planned evaluation system. Evaluating the teachers will not only help to solve the problems that are faced by students but also the challenges that face the teachers themselves while teaching. Based on the above, it is assumed that if the teachers are evaluated, then they will do all their responsibilities in a better way.

The purpose

It is hoped that this study contributes generally to attract the attention of those who are responsible for higher education to pay more attention to evaluating the teaching performance of University teachers. This surely contributes at enhancing and strengthening the internal and external competencies that universities seek to achieve. More specifically, this study helps to improve the level of teaching performance of faculty members in Sebha University. Raising the quality of lecturers at Sebha University will reflect positively on the enhancement of students' academic achievement. The current study also aims to suggest the method/s of evaluating the teachers' performance at Sebha University based on the recommendations of some conferences, papers and seminars interested in this issue. The study strives to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- What is the importance of evaluating the higher education teacher?
- 2- What are the proposed mechanisms to improve the teaching performance of faculty members at Sebha University?

1- Literature review

The role of Higher education teacher

Higher education teaching is considered to be one of the greatest and best professions to grow societies. Albeshr (2019) argues that the University teaching staff member can be a weak or strong point to developing the university. The strength of the teaching services gained from the teachers in the University cannot only be measured by their' academic qualification, but also by their support to various things like the academic research, office work and serving the society. The higher education teacher has various responsibilities in order to serve the educational system in higher education. According to Silva et al (2017), the higher education teacher has many essential roles and responsibilities to serve the teaching process. The university teacher must decide the steps and procedures while preparing the plan of study, manage the classroom and support students to get access to the useful learning resources. Many researchers as (Cole and Chan, 1986;

Javid, 2014; Geo et al 2008 and Hammond, 2010) have defined the effective teacher in many ways. One good definition is provided by (Geo et al, 2008). They for example, describe the effective teacher in a five-point definition as follows;

- (1) The effective teacher the one who have additional innovative expectations for the students to support their learning.
- (2) The effective teacher participates in helpful educational, attitudinal and social results for the students by supporting the cooperative behaviors, regular attendance, better behavior, on-time graduation and self-efficiency.
- (3) The effective teacher uses variety of recent resources that can serve the teacher's plan while teaching.
- (4) The effective teacher is a helper to control and develop a positive atmosphere of learning inside the classroom.
- (5) The effective teacher collaborates with teachers, administrators and education professionals to ensure student progress and success.

However, this definition is considered to be sufficient and tries to summarize what an effective teacher should be like but there are still more wide definitions for the university teacher. Cole and Chan (1986) give a wide and brief definition of the effective teacher as "the one who can maximize the achievements of students in accordance with an explicit set of principles that have order, coherence and relevance in the particular instructional context (p. 64)". Additionally, Javid (2014) defines the effective teacher and describes the values that decide the teacher to be good. His study reports that the good teachers are those who are expert in their field, well-prepared, clarify lessons based on the learners' levels, give clear instructions, response to the questions of their learners correctly, explain the way of tests and exams, give adequate examples, encourage the students to become life-like learners, use any required teaching aids and use many teaching activities and methods. However, it is important to mention that teaching in the university is a challenging profession because the students need more expert ways of teaching to enhance their strengths and encourage their critical thinking. According to many studies, the university teachers have many problems which include the students' behaviors, lack of motivation from the department, lack of support from the university, etc. Ashraf et al (2015) carry a wide study about the challenges that face the university teachers and they find that the teachers do not only face problems because of the students but also because of other factors. They mention two factors; internal and external factors. Internal factors include the lack of resources, students' attitudes, and bad relationship with the boss. External factors include work-life conflict, lack of motivation, and little career advancement opportunities and many more. The program of the routine evaluation of teachers will help to shed light on the teachers' problems and challenges that they face in their career. Solving the problems that face the university teachers will certainly encourage them to do their job in a good way and provide better output willingly.

Importance of evaluation

For the significance of this matter, many researchers conducted several studies about evaluating staff members in higher education. Many of these studies try to focus on the evaluation's importance, strategies and their impact on the improvement of teaching. Taylor & Tyler (2011) for instance, point that evaluating the performance of teachers has become a fundamental matter in the teaching improvement efforts. The evaluation system is highly needed by teachers to gain information from the evaluation and subsequently develop new skills, increase long-run effort, or both. Formal scoring and feedback routines of an evaluation program can help teachers to extract much useful information. Evaluation also can be encouraging as teachers can be generally more self-reflective. Besides, the process of evaluation can help teachers to create more opportunities for conversations with other people from the university as the administrators about effective practices (Kimball 2002).

The biggest problem is that the teachers may misunderstand the value of evaluation and may not consider this process as a judgmental process but rather as a punitive one. This way of thinking may lead teachers not to cooperate with the evaluation program as a needed process and thus give imprecise results. Armstrong (2000) in his study assures that the teacher's view of evaluation posits can threaten the developmental aspects of evaluation. The teacher being incentivized

by rewards-and-punishment-related evaluation leads to view the process as judgmental and punitive. As a result, teachers should understand that although the evaluation is linked to rewards and punishments, it can help them in their career to improve their academic and teaching skills.

Methods of evaluation

The literature suggests various methods for evaluating the individual teacher performance. These methods can be promising sources of information for human resource decisions. Wellein et al (2009) argue that a variety of data sources, experiences and tools are required for evaluation to attain a broad view of how exactly University teaches. There are many methods of evaluation and here are the most widely used in Universities:

- Test score

The evaluation by students "tests score" or "value-added" is one of the most widely used methods for evaluating the teachers. This method is based on evaluating teachers according to the improvement in the scores of the students. This method can give direct and objective results in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the teacher. The results of this method provide a useful source of information about the quality of teaching and assess the learning experience. Rockoff and Speroni (2010) make a study to measure the objectivity of student test score based on ratings of teachers. In their study, the values of assessments are systematically modified in order to align the objective knowledge more closely. Subsequently, in the study, treatment schools reported higher turnover of teachers with poor performance and made modest increases in overall achievement compared to control schools. Glazerman et al. (2010) advise that the measures which are based on spontaneous student test scores are not always objective so it must be based on a more detailed study. As a result, many researchers as (Jacob and Lefgren 2008; Rockoff and Speroni 2010) argue that evaluation must be based on more evaluation approaches beyond test scores that would help to predict precisely the teacher's ability to promote student achievement.

- Student survey

Another system of evaluation is "student survey" or "the student rating". "Student survey" is different from "student test score" in that the first is based on the results from the surveys given to students at the end of the course while the second depends on the students' overall achievement and scores during or at the end of the course. Student rating means evaluating the teachers depending on the scores from the survey that students complete during or after each academic semester or year. Kane and Cantrell (2010) believe that "the student rating" is an effective and precise way of evaluating the teachers' performance level. Ory & Ryan (2001) finds that the data from the student survey can surely provide one essential factor in the evaluation of the effectiveness of University teachers. Chen and Hoshower (2003) assert this and claim that the student evaluations can be advantageous and can provide clear and useful feedback if students believe and see that their response is being valued and appreciated. It is suggested and recommended in Chen and Hoshower's study that students must be educated on how to give accurate and meaningful feedback as well as knowing the purposes for which the ratings will be used by the university. This surely will help to promote a well-structured evaluation process. Ory & Ryan (2001) believe that student ratings should be combined with further data gathered from other methods of evaluation as classroom observations or teaching portfolios. The student rating is one, but not the only way to evaluate instruction and based on this, this study also asserts that other methods of evaluation must be combined with student rating to have a better image of the students' performance in the university.

- Classroom observation

This method depends mainly on structured classroom observation. Hora & Ferrare (2013) define the "classroom observation" as a method of directly observing teaching practice while teaching lessons, with the observer taking notes about the behaviors in the classroom or from videoed lessons. Classroom observations can help to capture a clear background and collect useful and real information about the teaching

practices of the teacher in the classroom. The principle must write a report at the end of the year about the teachers' behaviours and techniques of teaching. The evaluation of teaching can be conducted by evaluators from or outside the academic department. There are many benefits for teachers in the higher education domain when the university invites an external reviewer to evaluate their teachers. Researchers as Goldhaber & Anthony (2007) and Cantrell et al. (2008) support the idea of bringing external observers from outside the university like the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. They believe that this can be a good approach for evaluating teachers as teachers and reviewers can share new knowledge about best practices. The manager and the outside evaluator, together with the teacher, can review whether the objectives of the course are clearly stated and achievable and can also discuss the internal (educational) or the external problems (social) of the teacher that may affect the teacher's job.

Conversely, other researchers as Cashin, 1989; Brent & Felder, 2004, prefer the peer observations (observers from the same department) rather than bringing in an outside evaluator. Their argument is based on the idea that only colleagues are in a position to judge the teachers' performance and know what is appropriate for their students.

It is important to mention that the classroom observation is not preferred by some teachers and it is criticized by some researchers. A study by Al Bustami, (2014), reveals that this tool of evaluation cannot always be valid or trusted. The participants of this study mention many reasons that can lead to wrong judgment of their behavior in the class as the evaluator's bad mood, the bad relationship between the teacher and the evaluator, the personality of the evaluator, and the lack of training the evaluator or being new into the field of evaluation. Thus, it is assured that the evaluation by "classroom observation" must be planned carefully and wisely by principals and other educators who are experienced and familiar with the regular work of teachers.

- Teaching portfolio

The teaching portfolio is another way of evaluation and it is called as "self-evaluation". In the teaching portfolios, the teacher clarifies the design of the course, the purpose for the course, the suitability of the content, the sources of information (references), and ways of assessment. In the portfolio, the teacher also clarifies the activities, the tools, the ways of supporting learners, and the good and bad things he goes through during his teaching (Gómez & Valdés, 2019). Seldin (1993) dispute that "teaching portfolios" must be developed in a cooperative way to encourage the spirit of support among other colleagues in order to improve their teaching independently and enhance their personal decisions. Lyde et al, (2016) add that the teaching portfolio list must be prepared by faculty to help teachers to describe the quality of their teaching precisely. These include their opinion about students, ideas for teaching development and their plan of teaching.

Criteria of evaluation

Different studies have proposed various measures/criteria for how to evaluate the performance of teaching. These criteria may vary according to proposes of the Universities. Yin-Fah & Osman (2011) argue that the evaluation must cover three main criteria: the characteristics of the lecturer, the content of the course and the tutorial. They believe that students' achievement and stimulation become better if their lecturers have good characteristics that make them effective teachers. Lecturers who have good characteristics are those who know what they are talking about, are warm and friendly, have a fun personality, and are concerned about their students.

The course content is another criterion which must be taken into consideration when evaluating the teacher. According to Chang (2000), the complicated and difficult content of the course is directly related to poor student's achievement during the course. On the other hand, the students who understand the course content feel more capable of learning and are more favorable to their course teachers. Likewise, tutorial is an important criterion in relation to evaluation as tutoring is involved normally in most of the subjects of the university. The teaching behavior or style of the lecturer while tutoring has a direct impact on the level of the subjects and can affect the quality of the teaching performance. Rindermann & Schofield (2001) argue that

tutoring is a social process including encouraging participation, discussions and interaction among students.

Hammond (2012) provides different measures that must be taken into consideration while evaluating the University teacher and they are;

- Teaching quality
- Course plan
- Course aims
- Student assessment
- Students' support
- Colleagues and peers collaboration
- Projects and supervision
- Self-study
- Advising and Mentoring
- Professional development.

However, the system of the teacher performance evaluation must be based on clear measures to gain better quality of education. The effective system of evaluating the teacher's performance must be based also on a clear framework and explicit purpose. Similarly, Scriven (1974) argues that the evaluation system must have clear criteria to assess the teaching more accurately.

International experiences

Many innovative ideas of thinking and experiences about evaluation are needed to assure the teaching development. Thus, many countries around the world start to make programs and studies about the evaluation of University teachers which aim mainly to improve the qualities and skills of their teacher. Some universities in Britain start the idea of using the evaluation at the 60th as a process of assessing the performance of their teachers. Most of the Britain universities as (Oxford University) started to conduct courses to train and evaluate their teachers in terms of time management, managing problems, teaching practice, supervision, teamwork, etc (Albeshr, 2019). The idea of evaluating teachers started also to gain wider attention in most of the American universities at the beginning of 80th. Campbell (2005) in his study says that North American higher education institutions use the "student rating" as the main way of evaluation which depends mainly on the scores from the surveys that students complete during each academic semester. However, the student survey system of evaluation starts to be used by many universities. In the 1960s, the Mexican universities as (Ibero-American University), for example, started to depend on the student opinion surveys to measure the effectiveness of their teachers. In the 1970s, the National Autonomous University of Mexico – UNAM) also used the student survey while (Metropolitan Autonomous University - UAM) used this type later in the 1980s (Gómez & Valdés, 2019). According to Rueda (2011), 80% of Mexican public universities prefer to use this system of evaluation with routine modifications in its design and application. Many studies around the world as (Tirado et al 2007; Rueda, 2010; Montoya et al, 2014; and Stroebe, 2016) show that there are other methods which can predict the teachers' effectiveness more comprehensively but student survey is still the most used method to evaluate teachers.

In terms of using peer review system of evaluation, Brent & Felder (2004) support the use of peer review and they argue that this system has been implemented at North Carolina State University. They argue that this system was modified several times and then used successfully in the last years.

However, MME is another widely used method and it was implemented by Midwestern University in (2010). The MME is not a separate method but it is comprised of three types of evaluation; student evaluations, Peer review and teaching portfolio. Wellein et al (2009) advise the use of more than one way of evaluation as; self-evaluation by the teacher; evaluation by specialists; and evaluation by students and colleagues because they can give more accurate data from different viewpoints about the teacher performance. Lyde et al (2016) believe that a holistic system of evaluating university teaching is necessary and needed to evaluate the teaching performance precisely. The evaluation of teachers also gains attention by some Universities in Arab countries as Jordon and the united states of Emirate. At the beginning of 90th, the United of Emirate, for example, supports the specialists in its Universities to conduct many workshops and courses that aim mainly to increase the performance of the higher education teacher (Cloria, 1998). The Jordon kingdom also established a

specialized department for improving the effectiveness of the University teachers. These centers present obligatory in-service training courses and workshops which aim to increase and assess the teaching performance of teachers. To encourage the teachers to attend regularly, the university made the attendance of these programs and workshops a requirement for their promotion (Murray, 1997). However, many universities around the world seek always to develop their systems of evaluation to reach a better place in society.

2- Methodology

Based on the study problem, its objectives and questions; the appropriate approach for the current study is the descriptive one. This study follows the analytical and documentary style, through the careful collection of data related to the subject of the study. Later, the data are analyzed comprehensively to reach the results. Hopefully, the data could provide valuable practical recommendations about the best and appropriate methods for evaluating the performance of teachers in Sebha University.

3- Results and discussion

As mentioned earlier, this study aims to find the answer to the following questions. The first question is "What is the importance of evaluating the higher education teacher?". Many studies have been included to answer this question. After the analysis of these studies, it is found that the evaluation process of university teachers is crucial because it can give valuable information not only for principals but also for the teachers themselves. Teachers will get more knowledge about the formal scoring and the feedback routines from the evaluation program. Taylor & Tyler (2011) prove that teachers can get useful information from evaluation and consequently improve new skills, increase long-run effort, or both. They also find that teachers become even more productive and creative in the years after evaluation. Kane et al. (2011) also support the use of evaluation system and their study find that the achievement of students improved noticeably as a result of improving the effectiveness of teachers who are going through a year-long evaluation process. From the analysis of the previous studies, it is found also that the evaluation program can give chances to teachers and administrators in Sebha University to talk about the effective practice. The Conversations with administrators will help teachers to express the reality of their problems while teaching or any complains about the university and that will certainly encourage them to teach in a more creative way.

The second question is "What are the proposed mechanisms to improve the teaching performance of faculty members at Sebha University?". Before answering this question, it is important to remember that the effective system of evaluating needs innovative and recent ways of thinking about what best methods of evaluation that may suit the policy and aims of Sebha University. The appropriate chosen method/s of evaluation must depend on the department and the recourses available in the university. Thus, the evaluation process should be directly tied to both the individual goals of teachers and the university's objectives.

This study does not advocate using one method of evaluation alone when making decisions about measuring the effectiveness of Sebha University teachers, but rather using a mix of methods. Using more than one method in the evaluation process will help to predict accurately the level and performance of the higher education teacher. Wellein et al (2009) in his study also stress the use of many methods to strengthen the evaluation process.

A combination of student's questionnaire, teaching portfolio and classroom observation is recommended in this study. The use of these systems of evaluation will guarantee wider look of the teachers' performance. Using these systems of evaluation will help to include all participants in decisions about evaluation process. The information which is obtained from evaluation must be analysed and then used wisely to improve the performance of teachers which leads gradually to more growth on the students' achievement. Many studies as Albeshr (2019) have found a clear connection between observed teacher practices and student achievement growth. She adds that teachers will raise their efforts and level during evaluation as a response to the encouragement and advice given from the administrators in the University.

More importantly, it is recommended in this study that the evaluation program must focus on improvement, instead of just finding the shortcomings or weaknesses. This study recommends the design of a teacher evaluation program that is direct and clear. According to Taylor & Tyler (2011), "well-designed teacher evaluation programs could have a direct and lasting effect on individual teacher performance". A well-built evaluation system will definitely help teachers to identify their strengths and their weaknesses. The chosen method/s must assess precisely the teachers' qualifications and competences. After all, the quality of education at the University affects the improvement and achievement of the students directly. The lack of professional programs that concern developing the performance of the university teachers is then proved to be one of the reasons for lower teaching at Sebha University.

4- Conclusion

The professional development through the evaluation of higher education teachers is an important issue that must be investigated seriously. Unfortunately, the researches and practice on this issue are still very limited. Thus, this study argues that further research is needed to design a planned system of evaluation that would definitely help to determine the performance of each and every faculty member at Sebha University. There is still a need for more in-depth studies to examine the various methods of evaluation to decide which one is more appropriate to serve the desired propose. Better performance of higher education teacher is expected if similar studies are carried out in Sebha University. The suggested performance evaluation system needs clear and carefully designed mechanisms to achieve a noticeable enhancement in performance of the higher education at the University.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

UNAM The National Autonomous University of Mexico

UAM Metropolitan Autonomous University

MME The combination of three types of evaluation; student evaluations, Peer review and teaching portfolio

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