

STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS

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ÖZET

Öğrenci ve Öğretmenlerin Eğitimin Etkinliğine İlişkin Algılamaları

Eğitim faaliyetlerinin etkinliğinin değerlendirilmesinde, özellikle öğrencilerin ve bazı durumlarda da öğretmenlerin algılamaları yaygın biçimde kullanılmaktadır. Öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin eğitim faaliyetlerine ilişkin algılarının benzerliği, algılara dayalı eğitim değerlemesinin etkinliğinin bir göstergesi olarak kabul edilebilir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, İstanbul'daki üç isenin öğretmenleri (n=58) ve öğrencilerinin (n=510) eğitim faaliyetlerine ilişkin düşüncelerini ve bu düşüncelerindeki benzerlik ve farklılıkları belirlemektir. Eğitim faaliyetleri ve öğretmenlerin etkinliği, ilgili yazın ve uzman/katılımcı görüşlerinden yararlanılarak oluşturulan ve beş kategori veya boyutu içeren bir ölçeğe göre değerlendirilmiştir. Değerleme boyutları; (1) Kurs(ders) içeriği ve öğrenme hedefleri (2) Kişilik özellikleri (3) Öğretmen liderlik tarzı (4) Kurs sonuçları ve değerlendirme (5) Profesyonellik, olarak belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, öğretmen ve öğrencilerin değerlendirmeleri tüm boyutlarda anlamlı bir farklılık göstermektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin değerlemeleri tüm boyutlarda görece olarak daha "olumlu" dur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretmen Algıları, Öğrenci Algıları, Eğitimin Etkinliği, Eğitim değerlemesi

ABSTRACT

Mostly, students' perception and in some cases, teachers' perception are commonly used in evaluating the efficiency of educational activities. The similarity between students and teachers' perception of educational activities can be regarded as an indicator for the efficiency of the perception based training evaluation. The aim of this research is to find out the similarities and differences between teachers (n=58) and students (n=510) ideas of educational activities in three high schools in Istanbul. Educational activities and teachers' efficiency were evaluated by a scale which consists five categories and was formed by the ideas of experts and related publications. Categories are; (1) Course Content and Learning Objectives (2) Personal Traits (3) Teachers' Style of Leadership (4) Course Outcomes and Assessment (5) Professionalism. The results show how different the teachers' and students' evaluations are in all categories mentioned above. Moreover, teachers' evaluations have been more positive than students'.

Key Words: Teachers' Perceptions, Students' Perceptions, Training Effectiveness, Training evaluation

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A number of researches about effectiveness and evaluation of educational activities have been appeared in literature. A number of researches have focused on the effect of matching and mismatching teaching and learning styles, with suggestions of different approaches to using knowledge about style and learner preference, for example: matching instructional methods, media and assessment to learner preferences and tendencies or mismatching styles in order that the learner may develop a broader approach to learning (Sadler-Smith & Riding, 1999); or providing the initial contact with material in the learner's preferred mode, then moving to broader exposure with subsequent material (Reinert, 1976); or teaching to all styles (Felder, 1993). Education programme designer rather prepares the programme in the light of education experts and teachers' opinions and suggestions. Thus, it is thought that teaching effectiveness will be provided by matching the learning and teaching styles. On the other hand, from the very beginning now, a number of empirical and conceptual researches, (Wehling, 1969; Baldwin and Ford, 1988) which include the opinions and the suggestions of mostly education leaders and teachers, and concerning students' evaluation of the education programme, (Hail, 1970; Fulcher & Anderson, 1974; Isaacson, et al 1963; Isaacson, 1964; Leinthal, et al 1971; Pohlman, 1975; Solomon, 1966; Deshpande, et al 1970;) have taken their

place in literature. It should not also be underestimated that the evaluations made by students may well be acceptable (Cashin, 1995, Marsh and Roche, 1997) or unreliable (d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1997; McKeachie, 1997). To put it a more reliable way, students' perception and what students perceive through the designed education programme are not mostly taken into consideration in a single pot. However, effectiveness also concerns the student as much as it does the teacher. In other words, student should be able to comprehend the perception of the teacher and vice versa. Moreover, numerous researches on assessment of educational activities in high school in worldwide have emphasized the importance of the role of teacher, the design of the program, the styles of learning/teaching, students' motivation, and similarities/dissimilarities between teachers and students (Lim and Wentling, 1998; Noe and Schmitt, 1986; Biggs, 1993; Ford and Weissbein, 1997). The number researches about the effectiveness of teaching and learning has been investigated in regard of educational pedagogy (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, and Salas, 1992; Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989; Hicks and Klimoski, 1987; Tziner, Haccoun, and Kadish, 1991).

On the other hand, the assessment of the effectiveness of the teaching carried out is foremost among the issues of concern for educational institutes. Yet, this assessment is done in an unplanned and informal manner in many high schools (Carey & Gregory, 2003). In institutions where assessments are administered systematically, only one sided, students assessing their teachers, assessment tools are utilized (Penny, 2003). In this sense, it is accepted that teaching effectiveness is a function of students' perceptions of their teachers (Anderson et al., 1977). Although using student ratings enables the education system to be designed according to the teachers' perceived behaviours and students' attitudes towards them (Greimel-Fuhrmann & Geyer, 2003), some researches find inappropriate to use those ratings for teaching effectiveness. Most researchers agree that there is a positive relationship between student ratings and course grades received by students (Greenwald, 1997; McKeachie, 1997), but they argue that this relationship becomes much higher when students get higher grades from that course (Blass, 1980; Greenwald, 1997; Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997; Worthington & Wong, 1979).

Since teaching is defined as an art (Fitzpatrick, 2004), it should be judged by more comprehensive measures for measuring its effectiveness. At this point, the collaboration of learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches becomes crucial to achieve teaching effectiveness (Woelfel, 2003). Assessments in which both the student and the teacher take part in are not

very common. Teachers and students are building a two-part item which gathers the perceptions of both sides. Both parts of this item should serve effectively. Thus, what should be done in high school institutions is not only to consider the students' opinions, but also those of the teachers'. Through this, the difference between the existing situation and the necessity can be assessed and enable alterations in educational structures.

It is known that students differ in their learning styles (Kolb, 1984; Marton & Saljo, 1984; Richardson, 1990). Also, it is thought that knowledge of learning style and use of educational resources relevant to those learning styles will lead to efficient learning (Wynd and Bozman, 1996) and an increase in the motivation to learn (Marshall, 1987). In addition, it is accepted that teachers are most helpful when they assist students in learning through their own style preference (Dunn and Dunn, 1991).

Teachers will also have their own approaches to learning, and may or may not design their teaching interactions mainly from the perspective of their own style. 'Teaching style' consists of a teacher's personal behaviors and the media used during interaction with learners (Kaplan and Kies, 1995). In other words, it is mostly related to how the teacher teaches or to instructional methods used (Felder and Silverman, 1988). Irrespective of the student's learning style, the teacher will be a significant influence in the student's learning experience.

In this research, there are helpful indicators by means of which the educational system and the teachers are reflected upon both by the teachers and the students themselves. They help in achieving a good focus on the entire high educational institutions on what must be done to create breakthrough teaching performance, and assess the teaching and educational structures.

As discussed thus far in this specific research, the perceptions of the teacher and the student have been analysed in terms of Context and Teaching Objectives, Personal Traits, Leadership, Outcomes and Assessments, Professionalism and an answer to the hypothesis of students perceive educational activities different than the teachers has been searched.

METHOD

Participants

The study was carried out in three high schools, selected according to convenience sampling, in Istanbul, involving 510 students and 58 teachers. The percentage of participation was 81% and 87% respectively for these

groups. 56% of the students and 73% of the teachers were female. The average age of the students was 16.1 (SD=.73) while that of the teachers was 32.2 (SD=7.7).

Measures

In this research, data was collected by a survey which consists of 64 direct statements related to teachers efficiency and education activities. This research items entails five categories based on 58 teachers' viewpoints for which the teachers and the learners are asked. A Five-Point-Likert-Scale was developed in order to conduct assessments regarding the aforementioned five categories and items. Items were developed by the researchers and in order to analyze the face validity of the items. They were also examined by specialists whether they were understandable and suitable for the content. The factor analysis have been completed for each of the (sub)scale in order to analyze the construct validity of the measures. The results showed that each measures consisted of only one category. The Cronbach Alpha values of the scales (ranges from .63 to .87) show that they are reliable. The Likert scale used in this research is, indeed, ordinal. However, using means and analyses based on them to analyze data collected via this kind of scales is a very common approach in Turkey and foreign countries. This approach depends on the claims which are also agreed by Lickert as well: the hypothesis in the related literature/field that the distances between scale degrees are equal and the ideas behind that hypothesis is the scale that it has interval scale, so mean and other parametric tests can applied to the data like this (Bakeman, 2006, p.46; O'leary,2004, p.189; Dunn-Panin, p.105; Ben Said, 2006; Rollins, 2006; Holmes, 2006, pp.59-61; Esnc, 2006, pp.6-80; Kumcu, 1981, pp.131-132, Kurtuluş, 2006, pp.435-485 Şencan, 2005, p.82.). That is why this approach is applied in this study. In statistical analyses, means of total values for each sub-scales (and the points in them, about 5 to 10 points), not for each point, are estimated. This proves that the scale is totalizing.

Dimensions considered in the assessment of educational activities and reliability analyses results for related sub-scales are as follows: Professionalism is a factor about how teacher behaviours and teaching styles are professional and reasonable. This factor, related with the facilities and equipments, is studied in the respect of teachers' teaching styles.

Basic categories which have been used to evaluate education activities and the results of reliability analysis related to sub-scales are as shown below.

Context and Teaching Objectives: Context and teaching objectives foster teaching effectiveness (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Both teachers and students should be happy with context and be agreed with the teaching goals. Accordingly, a scale including of 6 items referring to how up to date and functional the contents of the course are has been developed. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale has been calculated as .63 (Table 1).

Teacher's Personal Traits: As it is well-known, the teacher is the heart of training activities. The personality of the teachers plays an important role in the effectiveness of the teaching. It is important that the teachers have traits such as a good ability of communication, patience, tolerance and empathy. The effectiveness of a teacher can be seen by how effectively he or she communicates with his students (Fucher & Anderson, 1974). In this respect, a scale consist of 9 items aiming to investigate teachers' communication skills, empathy levels and tolerance has been developed. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale has been calculated as .83 (Table 2).

Leadership: In a high school system there ought to be sufficient number of teachers to accommodate adequate levels of student-teacher interaction. The teachers' leadership style is also an important category for improving the academic achievement and motivating the students (Sexton and Switzer, 1977). That is, students oriented style of leadership is of utmost importance in teacher-student relations and therefore in the effectiveness of the whole process is an indisputable fact. Accordingly, a scale comprising of 10 items regarding the teachers' ability to lead students in a student oriented style has been developed. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale has been calculated as .87 (Table 3).

Outcomes and Assessments: Each program should have an assessment process with documented results. Evidence should be given that the results are applied to the further development and improvement of the program. It is crucial that the students perceive the assessment process and the results to be fair and objective for the system to run smoothly. According to a scale consisting of 5 items which investigate the students' perceptions in relation to the testing and assessment activities conducted by the teacher has been developed. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale has been calculated as .65 (Table 4).

Professionalism: Professionalism is a factor that shows how appropriate and professional the teaching styles and the behaviours of the teachers are. This factor, which is also related to education opportunities and materials, was used to find out the teachers' teaching styles.

In this respect, the teachers coming to class well prepared for their lessons, ensuring student participation and teaching to the students effective learning methods are important criteria to be considered. Accordingly, a scale including 7 items aiming to reveal how professional the teachers' attitudes in their teaching has been developed. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale has been calculated as .79 (Table 5).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this research is to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of the ideas in regard of teaching activities among students and teachers in three high schools in Istanbul. The test results related to the differences of teachers' and sts' evaluation of education activities are as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Results of Independent z Tests

<i>Factors</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Personal Traits	<i>Learner</i>	51				
	<i>Teacher</i>	58	3.05	.76	15.68	.00*
Leadership	<i>Learner</i>	51				
	<i>Teacher</i>	58	3.35	.79	14.27	.00*
Outcome and Assessment	<i>Learner</i>	51				
	<i>Teacher</i>	58	3.20	.74	14.92	.00*
Professionalism	<i>Learner</i>	51				
	<i>Teacher</i>	58	3.46	.74	13.05	.00*
Content and Teaching Objectives	<i>Learner</i>	51				
	<i>Teacher</i>	58	2.85	.76	8.80	.00*

* $p < .01$

According to the results of the study conducted (Table 6), learners and teachers evaluate all categories differently (H_1 Accepted; $p < 0,05$). While the students found each aspect partly sufficient (mean values for personal traits

3.05; leaderships 3.35; outcomes and assessment 3.20; professionalism 3.46; content and teaching objectives 2.85), the teachers were of the opinion that every aspect (mean values for personal traits 4.10; leaderships 4.29; outcomes and assessment 4.18; professionalism 4.22) is sufficient except the content and teaching objectives which is seen as partly sufficient ($M=3.44$). Although a significant difference exists, assessment of the students and the teachers are relatively similar regarding the content and teaching objectives. The similarity between the ideas of content and objectives is striking. The reason of teachers' not being involved so much in this category might be about disregarding it as their responsibility.

The study has revealed that the teachers see themselves in a better light than do the students. In this regard, the teachers feel that they possess personal traits such as empathy, communication skills and tolerance, whereas the students are uncertain. Similarly, the teachers see themselves as exhibiting student oriented leadership behavior while the students are ambivalent. This is also true for the testing and assessment, and professionalism aspects.

The results reveal that students and teachers perceive the teaching process and environment differently. Therefore, the validity of one side tools which evaluate only the students' opinions is open to doubt. Furthermore, the data based on students' and teachers' perceptions may clarify the weak and strong points of the educational activities provided for the students and supply an opportunity to the administration to reflect on its education strategies.

In general, students' and teachers' viewpoints regarding teaching and learning activities can be determined by using any scales which are valid and reliable. The measurement of trainee perceptions will have to become an essential and integral part of all training and development programs.

It is possible to make use of several scales developed in general to point out the educational effectiveness successfully by depending on the visions and perceptions. Besides, in this research, the scales related to the educational effectiveness were brought into existence, especially by bringing the prevalences of the teachers and the students.

At the end of this research, it was fixed that generally the conceptions of the teachers and the students about the educational programs were different. In addition to the results obtained in this study are supporting the expectation that the developed scales are going to be able to be used as a different one in the assessment of educational programs.

As it is well-known, the prevalence (assessment or opinion) of teachers and learners is very important in case of training effectiveness. Not much is known about the similarities and dissimilarities between teachers' and students' ideas in regard of education.

The similarity between teachers' and students' perception and evaluation can be regarded as an indicator of the efficiency of educational evaluation. Therefore, the similarity and the consistency between teachers' and students' evaluation of the efficiency can be proclaimed to be a highly appreciated matter. Inconsistency among teachers' and students' ideas affect the development of educational programmes and evaluation of education in a negative way.

The study, based on students' and teachers' perceptions, provides useful information on which of the important aspects regarding teachers and teaching strategies that are deficient or need improvement. School head masters or education strategists can create learning strategies for students and teaching strategies for teachers according to the data provided by students and teachers. In the light of this, the data based on can be considered as a monitoring and assessment activity through which information can be gathered on whether the desired goals of the educational activities are attained, if they are, and to what extent.

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Table 1: Contents and Teaching Objectives Scale

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Lessons context were designed with new knowledge and interesting subjects which attract students the contents of the course were designed with enough new information to attract the students' attention.	.66
The subjects taught do not prepare students for the work they will be doing after graduation*	.66
The curriculum is boring and does not facilitate effective learning*	.64
The classes were planned to follow one another	.59
The materials taught are out of date; they need to be updated*	.58
There is a sufficient amount of printed material related to the courses such as books and notes	.41
Cronbach's α	.63

KMO=.74 Barlett's Test $p < .05$ Total Variance Explained=36%

* Reverse coded

Table 2: Personal Traits Scale

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Our teachers are perceptive about our feelings.	.75
Our teachers take into account our mood (and feelings) in their treatment of us.	.75
Our teachers can tell what is on our minds just by looking at the expression our faces.	.70
Our teachers are cheerful and light hearted.	.69
Our teachers can guess what we'd like to say even we do not say anything	.68
Teachers use body language effectively when they are teaching	.65
The teachers in our school are fluent speakers	.63
Our teachers do not get angry very easily	.56
Our teachers realise their strengths and weaknesses	.55
Cronbach's α	.83

KMO=.91 Barlett's Test $p < .05$ Total Variance Explained=44%

Table 3: Leadership Scale

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Our teachers are sympathetic towards students' problems and try to help with them.	.75
Our teachers create a comfortable and safe atmosphere in the classroom	.73
Teachers help students to take an active role in lessons	.73
Our teachers not only guide us in our studies, but also lend assistance with our personal issues.	.71
We can always reach our teachers when we need to	.70
Our teachers show us the right way to improve ourselves.	.70
Our teachers show us their appreciation when we are successful.	.64
Our teachers allow us to express our ideas during class	.63
Our teachers let us make decisions about issues related to class	.62
Our teachers consider our opinions in the planning of the lessons	.59
Cronbach's α	.87

KMO=.93 Bartlett's Test $p < .05$ Total Variance Explained=46%

Table 4: Outcome and Assessment Scate

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Teachers use outcomes and assessment as a tool to improve learners performance	.72
The grading and assessments are fair and objective	.69
Teachers assess learners performance by administering assigments,quizes,mid-term exams,term projects,final exams,presentations	.66
The assesment was made properly at the end of our training process	.61
Assesments reflect student performance perfectly	.56
Cronbach's α	.65

KMO=.76 Barlett's Test $p < .05$ Total Variance Explained=42%

Table 5: Professionalism Scale

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Teachers use different examples to explain during the lessons	.76
Teachers help their students learn how to learn	.73
Teachers encourage us to be creative	.72
Teachers keep student interest high during the lessons	.68
Teachers have an adequate level of knowledge in their subject	.64
The teaching methods used by teachers are sufficient and effective	.59
Teachers want us to come to our lessons prepared	.55
Cronbach's α	.79

KMO=.84 Barlett's Test $p < .05$ Total Variance Explained=44%