

Students' perception of the teaching-learning practice at a University in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The study examined students' perception of the teaching-learning practice at Debre Markos University, Ethiopia. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed, and 343 students (from first to final year) who were selected using a simple random sampling technique participated in the study. A questionnaire, focus group discussion, and document review were used to collect data for the study. Data were analyzed using quantitative (frequency, percentage, mean, and one-sample t-test) and qualitative methods (narration). Investigators found variations observed between and within colleges in the university in executing essential elements of instruction. Students perceived that teachers use their instructional time effectively, apply continuous assessment, and provide timely feedback and advisory services but still lack proper implementation of these essential elements. The study advocates that communicating with students regarding the teaching-learning process and receiving comments will improve the observed gaps. Therefore, teachers should play their role (i.e., use appropriate teaching and assessment methods, provide timely feedback and advisory services). Finally, it is recommended that students should give due attention to what is expected of them in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: advisory service, assessment, feedback, perception, teaching-learning

Introduction

The concern for improving the quality of teaching in higher education to produce skilful and competent graduates is given due attention in the world in general and Ethiopia in particular due to globalization. The instructional and assessment process, feedback delivery, and other components of teaching have their roles in ensuring quality when appropriately implemented. Effective instruction requires the use of different methodologies and strategies to meet the demands of the learners (Agegnehu, 2017), and it impacts students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioural well-being. Hence, meaningful learning occurs when students actively participate and have the chance to take part in their education. According to cognitive constructivist theory, learning occurs when students actively construct their knowledge and understanding. Students are active agents in the teaching-learning process; they are not passive listeners that simply observe what the teacher says in the classroom (Olusegun, 2015). Today, there is an increasing demand for competitive, skilful, and knowledgeable graduates at the global level. Students who graduate from higher education institutions should have the skills and

knowledge to resolve the problems of their community, country and the international community in order to ensure a better quality of life for all. Thus, the teaching methods should emphasize understanding and problem-solving skills rather than memorizing facts and concepts (Bidabadi et al., 2016).

Therefore, students need to construct their knowledge in the teaching-learning process to fit real-life work demands. This happens when the students are taught using different methods, assessed using multiple methods, receive appropriate and timely feedback, and get proper academic advice.

Across the world, universities implement different strategies in the teaching-learning process to improve students' learning. They develop quality assurance policies, performance evaluation checklists, and assessment guidelines. Thus, conducting a study on the teaching-learning process at the university level is vital to examine the effectiveness of these different strategies, and would help in identifying the gaps and issues that need immediate attention. If gaps are identified, it is easier to implement various methods in the future. From the researchers' personal experiences and supervisions held in the

university, the practices involved in the teaching-learning process are not consistent across colleges, not even across departments. Therefore, in this study, students' perceptions regarding the teaching-learning practices and related issues, specifically the use, of course, outline/syllabus, teaching and assessment methods used, provision of feedback, and advisory services were considered. Hence, the purpose of the study was to examine the students' perceptions of the teaching-learning process practices at Debre Markos University. Based on this, the following research questions were formulated.

- What type of teaching methods do teachers mostly use in their instruction?
- What type of assessment strategies do teachers use in their instruction?
- To what extent, if at all, do teachers provide constructive feedback to their students?
- To what extent, if at all, do teachers provide advisory and support services for students?
- How do students perceive teachers' competency and preparedness in the classroom?

This study attempts to add to the existing body of knowledge regarding the

teaching and learning in higher institutions as observed by students, and how the teaching-learning process makes them skilful in their study area in particular and in the real world of work in general.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

This study was guided by the theoretical framework of constructivism.

Constructivism has become one of the most prominent learning theories (Williams & Burden, 1997), perhaps because it places the learners at the centre of the learning process. According to constructivists, learners should be allowed to construct knowledge rather than given ability through instruction (Anderson, 2008). Constructivism believes that learners generate knowledge through experience-based activities rather than directed by instructors (Roblyer, 2006).

Teaching-learning, assessment, and feedback

Teaching-learning, assessment, and feedback are interrelated activities. According to constructivists, the teaching-learning process should focus on deep understanding, provide opportunities for in-depth and

conceptual development, and enhance student abilities to recognize and use meaningful patterns of information (Dessie & Sewagegn, 2019). These new perspectives of learning have paved the way for a rethinking of the nature of assessment in the teaching-learning process.

Teaching methods

Studies indicate that teachers have to use different teaching methods during the instructional process because it is difficult to teach any concrete issue using only one way. Currently, in higher education institutions and other education levels (i.e., primary and secondary schools), active learning methodology is recommended to make the learners creative and proficient. Active learning engages students through activities and discussion in class instead of passively listening to a lecturer. It is believed that active learning increases learners' higher-order thinking (Freeman et al., 2014). Chan et al. (2016) also add that students do more than listen for learning to be active; they have to read, write, discuss, or be engaged in problem-solving activities. Therefore, before delivering the instruction, the teacher must prepare and distribute a syllabus or course outline. As to O'Brien et al. (2008),

a syllabus is an essential point of interaction between the teacher and students. It also establishes an early point of contact and connection between them and contains detailed information regarding the course.

Assessment Practice

According to the constructivist viewpoint, the teacher should integrate the assessment with the teaching and learning process to improve students' learning. In the teaching-learning process, the assessment practice should enable the students to demonstrate a deep understanding of concepts rather than surface knowledge and recall of facts. In today's educational arena, the assessment method practised in higher education should keep its quality. According to Iqbal et al. (2009, p. 50), quality assessment is "an ongoing, student-participatory activity and necessitates using a variety of assessment techniques, implementing assessment techniques effectively, providing good feedback to the student and using assessment data to improve instruction." Teachers in higher learning institutions are encouraged to use different assessment methods to make the students creative and proficient in their study area. Assessment should reveal the

quality of students' understanding and thinking as well as specific content or processes. According to Norton, Norton, and Sadler (2012), higher education teachers are pressured to improve their assessment, marking, and feedback practices. Cheng et al. (2008) also state that university teachers' classroom assessments play a central role in and inevitably influence their teaching and learning.

Feedback

It is clear that in the teaching-learning activity, there is assessment, and thus feedback. Brookhart and Nitko (2008) state that teachers must integrate feedback into the instructional process to improve learning because it has the power to significantly affect students' learning achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2017). Feedback is effective when it is timely and constructive. As Sogunro notes, convenient feedback is viewed as part of the learning process, and "the more immediate and precise the feedback is, the stronger the effect on learning" (Boud & Falchikov, 2007 as cited in Sogunro, 2015, p. 30).

Academic Advisory

In the teaching-learning process, students need access to advisory services.

According to constructivism, the learner is the centre of the learning process, with the instructor playing advising and facilitating roles (Roblyer, 2006). Furthermore, Drake (2011) notes that academic advising is critical to the success of higher education students. Therefore, academic advisors play an essential role in students' academic success by mentoring students throughout their academic careers and providing them with expert advice and resources to enhance student learning and development (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). Although the literature indicates that academic advising supports student success (Young-Jones et al., 2013), it is not practised very well as the researchers' observation in the selected setting reveals. Ani, Orabueze and Okoye (2021) stated that, due to lack of professional teaching, supervision and non-availability of the supervisors for supervision, the relationship between the teachers and the students are problematic.

Teachers' Competency

Different studies indicate that students are the most qualified sources to report on the extent to which the learning experience is productive, informative, satisfying, or worthwhile. Additionally,

students are in the best position to speak the teaching-learning process. According to Dawit, Getachew and Ashenafi (2017), while student opinions on these matters may not be regarded as the sole factors in measuring teacher or course effectiveness, they are legitimate indicators of student satisfaction.

on the competency of their teachers in Similarly, the students' perception can also serve as a source of information regarding how an institution implements the teaching-learning process. In general, the following figure shows the framework of the study.

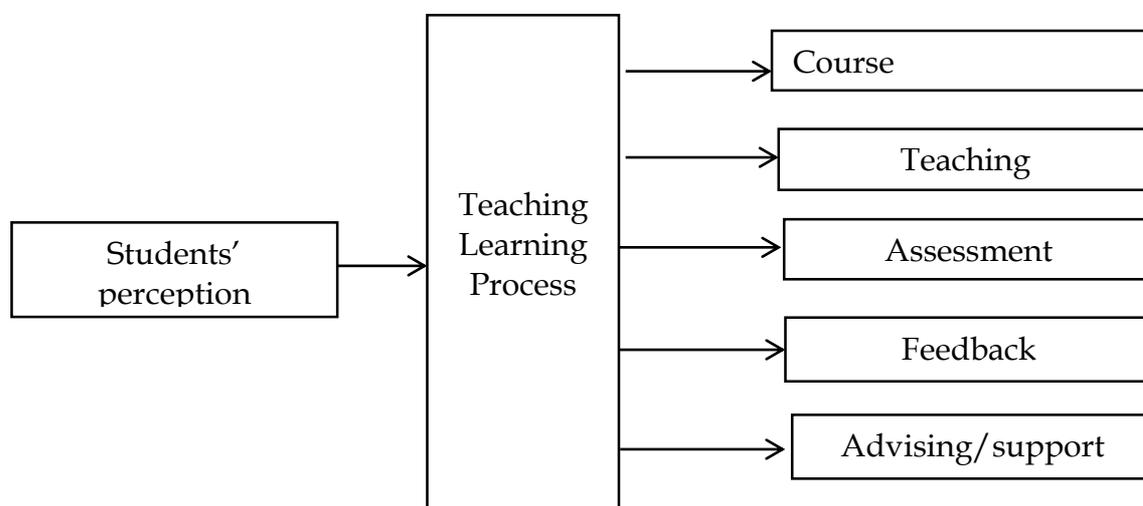


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Methodology

Study design

The primary purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of the teaching-learning process practices at Debre Markos University, Ethiopia. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative

methods were employed to triangulate, cross-validate, and verify the results. According to Creswell (2009), mixed-method research design, specifically convergent parallel, is vital to obtain nuanced data to address the problem under investigation.

Participants

All regular programme undergraduate students (8788) were the study's target population (in 2017). To take representative samples from each college in the university, five students from each department and each batch (year), in

total 670, were assigned to be the study samples. And the questionnaires were sent through college vice-deans to be completed by students. However, only 343 students appropriately filled in and returned the questionnaire. The detail is presented in Table 1 below.

Colleges/Institutes/Schools in the university	Distributed		Returned	
	f	%	f	%
Agriculture and Natural Resources	75	11.2	74	21.6
Business and Economics	60	9	31	9.0
Institute of Education and Behavioral Science	25	3.7	17	5.0
Health Science	100	15	35	10.2
Institute of Land Administration	5	0.75	4	1.2
Law School	25	3.7	25	7.3
Natural and Computational Science	105	15.67	52	15.2
Social Science and Humanities	90	13.43	60	17.5
Institute of Technology	175	26.12	45	13.1
School of Medicine	10	1.49	0	0
Total	670	100	343	100.0

Table 1: Sample participants (those who completed and returned the questionnaire)

Note: f = frequency, % = percentage

Instruments

A closed-ended self-developed questionnaire was used. The questionnaire contained items focused on the course outline/syllabus use, teaching methods, mode of assessment, feedback provision, timely course coverage, advisory services, and teachers' competency. For the

quantitative part, the investigators used a questionnaire with three levels (i.e., low, moderate, and high). The researchers used a focus group discussion with students' representatives from different departments for the qualitative part. Moreover, the study applied document review (i.e., course outline/syllabus and

exam papers) from selected departments and courses. The researchers selected one department randomly from each college of the University for Document Review. Finally, the researchers randomly chose one subject from each department to evaluate the course outline, the continuous assessment techniques, the final exam format, and the values/weight given for each item. The departments and the courses randomly selected were presented as follows: Banking and Finance (Financial Institutions and Markets), Statistics (Statistical Methods), Plant Science (Agricultural Microbiology), Sociology (Gender and Society), Special Needs (Education of Persons with Visual Impairment), Law (African Union and Human Rights Law), Mechanical Engineering (Engineering Thermodynamics II), Public Health (Environmental Health), and Land Administration and Surveying (Global Navigation Satellite Systems).

Instrument validity and reliability

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, two assistant professors

who have pedagogy backgrounds commented on the appropriateness of the items. Based on the relevant comments and suggestions obtained from them, a number of improvements were made to the instrument. Finally, concerning the content validity of the instrument, the pilot study's result suggested the following:

- The investigators thoroughly inspected the items for relevance and clarity.
- The content validity of the instruments, vague items, and terms were revised and made to measure what they were supposed to measure.

After the refinement of the questionnaire, the reliability was checked using Cronbach Alpha. For the pilot test, 30 students from two different departments (which were not part of the main study) were taken as the pilot study sample. The reliability of the questionnaire sub-scales for the pilot and main data is shown below in Table 2 and is acceptable based on George and Mallery's (2003) standard.

Sub-scales of the questionnaire	Number of items	Pilot data	Main data
Course outline/syllabus use	4	0.71	0.79
Teaching method/Active learning	3	0.69	0.75
Proper use of instructional time	4	0.76	0.78
Assessment procedure	7	0.81	0.85
Provision of feedback	7	0.78	0.86
Advisory services	4	0.70	0.75
Teachers competency	6	0.72	0.72

Table 2: The reliabilities of the pilot and main data

Method of Data Analysis

Frequency, percentage, mean, and one-sample t-test were used to analyze the quantitative data, whereas the qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. The results of both data were integrated into the discussion section to understand the problem under investigation better.

Results and Discussion

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the perception of students on the practices of teaching-learning. Thus, in this section, results obtained using the

questionnaire, focus group discussion, and document review are presented and discussed.

The use of course outline/syllabus

When teachers begin to teach a course, they have to inform the students using a course outline/syllabus on the first day of instruction or class. According to O'Brien et al. (2008), a course outline/syllabus is the students' introduction to the course, the subject matter, and the teacher. With this essence, the result of students' perception regarding the use of course outlines by teachers is presented in the following table.

No	The extent to which teachers:	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		high		
		f	%	f	%	F	%	
1	Distribute course guide to all students	37	13.7	41	12	237	69.1	3.98
2	Inform students about the course outline before the lesson	52	15.2	49	14.3	222	64.7	3.85
3	Discuss the learning objectives with students before the actual lesson begins	126	36.7	79	23	121	35.3	2.98
4	Include easily accessible reference materials on the course outline	141	41.1	82	23.9	91	26.6	2.77

Table 3: Students' perception of the proper use of course outline/syllabus

Note. f = frequency; % = Percent

As specified in Table 3, more than half of the respondents replied that teachers distribute the course outline (mean =3.98) to students and inform them about the contents of the course outline before the lesson begins (mean =3.85). However, most teachers are less likely to discuss the learning objectives that a student needs to achieve at the end of the course. In the teaching-learning process, objectives describe what students expect to perform at the end of the lesson (Oermann & Gaberson, 2014).

Similarly, 41.1% of the students noted that most of the reference materials listed in the course outline are not accessible in the library. The result from the focus group discussion also supports this information. For instance, students in the panel noted that "when we go to the library to look for books based on the reference list, we found only one or two books," and they suggested that teachers "properly list books found in the library and which are not in the course outline."

Implementation of active learning

No.	To what extent do teachers:	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		High		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Implement active learning method	76	22.1	90	26.2	15	46.1	3.34
2	Provide practically oriented teaching	110	32.1	85	24.8	13	38.8	3.2
3	Give exercises/projects to students	119	34.7	76	22.2	13	39.9	3.08

Table 4: Students' perception of the implementation of active learning

Note. f = frequency; % = Percent

As indicated in Table 4, 46.1% of the students agreed that teachers highly implement active learning methods. Similarly, 38.8% and 39.9% indicated that their teachers provide practically oriented teaching and different tasks. Active learning methods include a wide range of activities that share the common element of involving students in doing things and thinking about them (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). On the other hand, in the focus group discussion, many students explained that the teaching-learning process is dominated by lecture methods and theory-based learning, even for practically oriented courses.

Students indicated that the copy-and-paste hand-outs/teachers notes decrease their deep understanding, motivation to learn, study habits, and culture of using different reference materials in the library during the focus group discussion. Moreover, it ensures students only focus on marks because most teachers prepare exam items only from the hand-outs.

The following figure demonstrates the students' views on implementing different teaching methods that teachers use in the university.

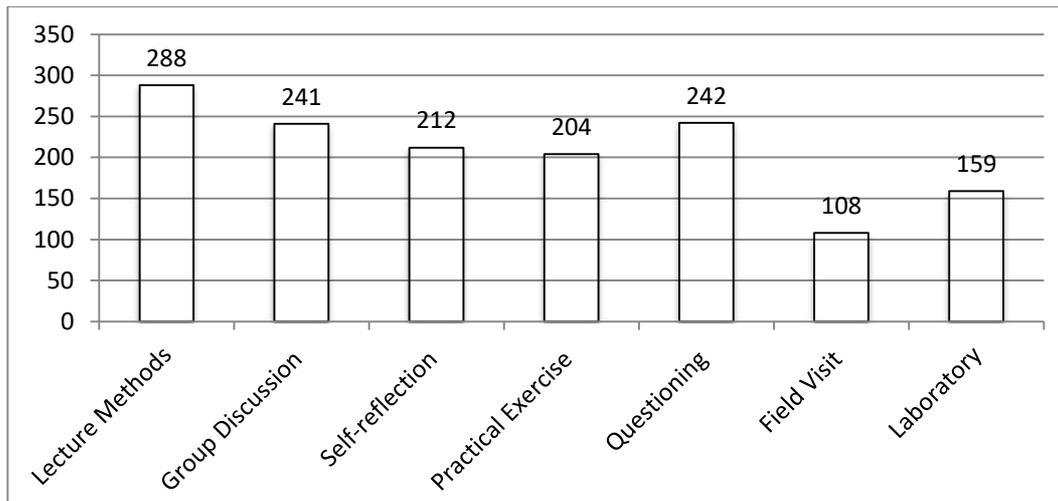


Figure 2. List of teaching methods used by teachers

As shown in Figure 2, from the students' viewpoint, most teachers dominantly use the lecture method (n = 288), questioning (n = 242), group discussion (n = 241), self-reflection (n = 212), and practical exercises (n = 204). However, laboratory work and field visit approaches are less likely to be implemented. During focus

group discussion, students reflected that teachers dominantly explain everything on their own. Results from the document review also supported this. As can be seen from documents (i.e., course outlines), active learning methods, questions, sample practical exercises, and discussion topics are not pre-planned.

No.	To what extent do teachers:	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		High		
		f	%	f	%	F	%	
1	Complete their lesson appropriately as to the schedule	56	16.3	58	16.9	200	58.3	3.7
2	Begin their lesson on time	38	11.1	74	21.6	224	65.3	3.84
3	Use their lesson time properly	41	12	73	21.3	217	63.3	3.95
4	Accomplish the course on time	62	18.1	61	17.8	205	59.8	3.67

Table 5: Students' perception of teachers' proper use of instructional time

Note. f = frequency; % = Percentage

As indicated in Table 5, most students have positive perceptions regarding teachers' proper utilization of time in teaching. This result was also verified through focus group discussion, except for the technology college students. Most students appreciated their teachers' efforts to complete the course on time. Teachers compensate for missed classes (as a result of holidays and meetings) using makeup classes.

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment and feedback are integral components of the teaching and learning process. According to Marzano (2006), the systematic use of classroom assessment (weekly or even more frequently) can have a robust and positive effect on student achievement. Therefore, investigating students' perceptions in this regard is vital for the future improvement of these practices.

No.	The extent to which:	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		high		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Teachers describe assessment techniques to their students	50	14.6	66	19.2	189	55.1	3.71
2	Total continuous assessment accounts for 50% and above	40	11.7	47	13.7	246	71.7	4.04
3	Each continuous assessment tool accounts for 10% and below	46	13.4	60	17.5	225	65.6	4.13
4	Individual and group assignments account for 10% and below	48	14	53	15.5	234	68.2	3.98
5	Final exam accounts for 50% and below	57	16.9	49	14.3	227	66.2	3.9
6	Teachers use different assessment techniques	113	32.9	66	19.2	150	43.7	3.17
7	Assessment items measure students ability	101	29.1	72	21	153	44.6	3.40

Table 6: Students' perception of assessment procedures

Note. f = frequency; % = Percentage

As indicated in Table 6, students revealed that most teachers inform them about their assessment techniques in the course they are teaching. Moreover, 71.7% and 65.6% of students perceived that continuous assessment accounts for 50%

and above, and each assessment technique also has a value of 10% and below respectively. A reasonable number of students doubted the nature of exam items and the variety of assessment tools implemented. This result was confirmed

through document analysis. The assessment results documented in the selected departments showed that continuous assessment accounts for 50% and above.

Moreover, the value of final exams does not exceed 50%. Marzano (2006) asserts that the frequency of assessment is related to student academic achievement

and the increase in learning that one might expect when different formative assessments are used. In addition to the formative/continuous assessment, final exams are used in various departments. Table 7 shows the information obtained from selected exam papers (i.e., documents) with their corresponding weight/value.

Departments	Final exam item formats with their values					
	True/false	Matching	Short answer/completion	Multiple choice	Essay	Total value
Banking and Finance	✓	X	X	✓	✓	40 %
Special Needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	40%
Sociology	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	50%
Law School	X	X	X	X	5*10	50%
Land Admin	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	50%
Public Health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	50%
Mechanical Engineering	X	X	X	X	4*15	60%
Statistics	X	X	X	✓	✓	50%
Plant Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	50%

Table 7: Final exam item formats and their value in selected sample courses

Note. 5*10 = five essay questions each account for 10%

As indicated in Table 7, the most commonly used item formats were true-false, matching, multiple-choice, and essay; however, Law School and Mechanical Engineering included only five essay questions that accounted for 50% and above.

The item formats in the final exam sheets were not appropriately arranged from simple to complex based on the learning outcomes they measured. Mostly, item formats were set as follows from simple to complex: true-false, matching, short

answer/completion, multiple-choice, interpretive exercise/context-dependent item, and essay items. Such arrangement helps students keep their motivation

throughout the exam and helps them avoid anxiety (Oermann & Gaberson, 2014).

Department s	Continuous assessment tools									
	Test	Quiz	Assign 1	Assign 2	Present-ation	Group Quiz	Project	Cases	Atten-dance	Total
Banking & Finance	3*10	-	-	1*20	1*10	-	-	-	-	60%
Special Needs	-	3*11	-	1*15	-	1*7	-	-	6%	60%
Sociology	-	3*10	-	1*10	-	-	-	-	10%	50%
Law School	1*10	-	-	1*10	1*10	-	-	1*15	5%	50%
Land Admin	2*10	2*5	1*10	1*10	1*5	-	-	-	-	50%
Public Health	-	2*10	-	1*20	-	-	-	-	10%	50%
Mechanical Engineering	-	2*15(10)	-	-	-	-	2*15(20)	-	-	60%
Statistics	2*10	1*5	-	2*10	1*5	-	-	-	-	50%
Plant Science	3*10	-	-	2*10	-	-	-	-	-	50%

Table 8: Assessment technique used and their corresponding weight across departments

Note. 3*10 = three consecutive tests with a value of 10%; Assign 1 = individual assignment; Assign 2 = group assignment

As is indicated in Table 8, the variety of continuous assessment tools implemented in the randomly selected departments and courses were limited. Teachers mostly used consecutive tests, quizzes, assignments, presentations, and

attendance. Even if there is a difference between the purpose of quizzes and tests, teachers mostly implemented them in similar ways. Quizzes are unexpected assessment techniques that can be used during the lesson, whereas tests are scheduled and are applied to assess the

students' mastery of specific objectives. During the focus group discussion students also corroborated this. Moreover, the weight/percent of assignments and quizzes in some of the

selected courses account for more than 10%. The results from the focus group discussion indicated that group assignments were completed mainly by one individual or the group leader.

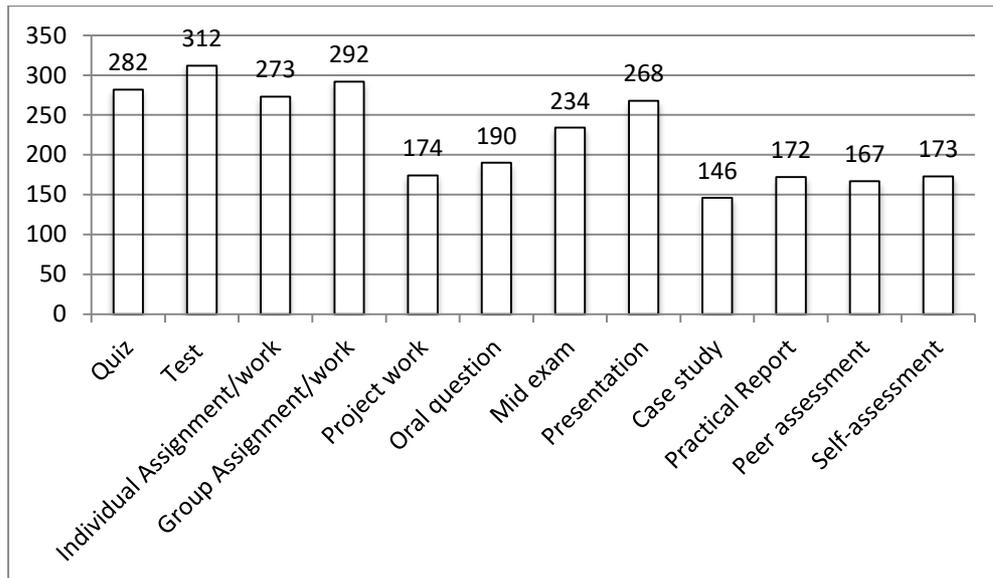


Figure 3. List of continuous assessment techniques used

To examine the assessment methods employed by teachers, 12 commonly used assessment techniques were listed for students in the questionnaire. Thus, as shown from Figure 3 above, tests, group assignments, quizzes, individual assignments, presentations, and mid-term exams are the most commonly used assessment techniques in the university.

assessment, and case studies are less likely to be used as assessment methods. The results from the focus group discussion also supported this. Studies indicate that no single assessment can thoroughly cover students' learning progress (Chan, 2007), and multiple evaluations give students many opportunities to show what they know (Brookhart & Nitko, 2008).

Whereas oral questions, project work, self-assessment, practical reports, peer

Results from document analysis indicated

that the pre-planned mode of assessment and its value/percent in the entire randomly selected course outline did not match the actual practices. On the whole, peer assessment and self-assessment were not considered, and teachers' commonly used tests, assignments, quizzes, some presentations, attendance, and participation. However, implementing

continuous tests, quizzes, and projects does not align with the primary purpose of continuous assessment for learning strategies. Teachers collect continuous marks for the sake of grading, not for deepening students' understanding.

No	To what extent do teachers:	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		High		
		f	%	F	%	f	%	
1	Provide feedback on time for different assessment tools used	92	26.8	79	23	144	42	3.26
2	Provide constructive comments via indicating missed concepts	85	24.8	81	23.6	167	48.7	3.38
3	Feedback did not focus only on marks/grades	72	21	81	23.6	180	52.5	3.47
4	Feedback focuses on tasks/activities rather than the self	67	19.6	70	20.4	190	55.7	3.57
5	Feedback fills learning gaps and brings improvements	78	22.7	79	23	177	51.6	3.45
6	Have competence to respond to forwarded questions	65	19	79	23	187	54.5	3.56
7	Give attention to students question	87	25.4	63	18.4	177	51.6	3.40

Table 9: Students' perception of the provision and nature of feedback

Note. f = frequency; % = Percent

As indicated in Table 9, most students confirmed that their teachers provide feedback, suggesting that they have a positive perception of feedback. The feedback provided is constructive, fills their learning gaps, brings improvements,

focuses on tasks, and is timely. Moreover, most students stated that teachers are keen and competent to respond to the questions they raise. Literature also shows that feedback on classroom assessments encourages students to improve (Marzano, 2006). But, in the focus group

discussion, students from the college of technology mentioned a serious problem relating to the provision of feedback. As is indicated in Ozcan's (2013) study, 43.3% of students stated that their lecturers do not give feedback and spend less time on their projects. From the results, one can understand that providing feedback is a problem in higher institutions, negatively impacting the students' proficiency in their study area. Some studies indicate that teachers do not always employ feedback effectively (e.g., Fonseca et al., 2015).

Advisory and support services

Academic advisory and support can make an enormous difference in the lives of university students. It is one element of a student's academic journey that can be further developed as a tool to help students achieve educational and career goals while assisting the institutions in accomplishing stated educational goals (Young-Jones et al., 2013). However, students may have variable perceptions regarding the services that are provided to them.

No.	To what extent do teachers:	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		high		
		F	%	f	%	F	%	
1	Provide advisory services to students	131	38.2	72	21	121	35.3	2.9
2	Provide support for needy students	125	36.4	75	21.9	133	38.2	3.02
3	Encourage female students to actively participate in the class	114	32.9	64	18.7	155	44.2	3.16
4	Give tutorials to support students	103	30	82	23.9	146	42.5	3.17

Table 10: Students' perception of the nature of advisory and support services provided

Note. f = frequency; % = Percent

As shown from Table 10, 38.2% of the respondents indicated that the advisory services given to students are low, whereas 35.3% agreed that teachers give high academic advisory services to them.

As indicated in the same table, most teachers in the university provide moderate

support and tutorials for needy students. Moreover, 44.2% of students perceived that their teachers highly encourage female students' active participation in the teaching-learning process.

On the other hand, during the focus group discussion, most students responded that the teachers assigned as class advisors are

non-functioning. Even if teachers were designated as class advisors at the beginning of the semester, they did not join the students to share their difficulties and problems. Teachers assigned as academic advisors are vital in promoting students' intellectual development. As Gordon et al. (2008) note, influential academic advisors are available to students and responsive to their educational needs and career interests.

Teachers' competency

It is possible to see the competency of teachers from different dimensions. The above-discussed issues (i.e., proper preparation of course outline, use of multiple teaching and assessment methods, provision of timely feedback, and academic advising) can measure the competency of teachers in the educational setting. Specifically, the perception of students regarding the competency of teachers is highlighted in Table 11.

N o.	Items	Responses						Mean
		Low		Moderate		high		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Teachers' preparation before the lesson	65	18.9	59	17.2	189	55.1	3.63
2	Teachers' ability to provide sufficient explanation during the lesson	52	15.2	79	23	201	58.6	3.66
3	Teachers' competency via students' view	72	21	88	25.7	169	49.3	3.48
4	Teachers' efforts to support their students	91	26.6	89	25.9	153	44.6	3.30
5	Teachers' ability to treat all students equally	66	19.3	67	19.5	195	56.9	3.69
6	Teachers' ability to relate their lessons to real-world work	80	23.3	62	18.1	174	50.7	3.44

Table 11: Students' perception of the competency of teachers

Note. f = frequency; % = percentage

Most of the students viewed their teachers as well prepared, having the ability to provide sufficient explanation about the subject, as competent, treating all students equally, and teaching them through relating classroom lessons with

reality. Although 26.6% and 21% of students viewed their teachers as making minimal efforts to support them, nearly half of the students agreed that their teachers are highly competent and put great effort into helping them. For example, in the focus group discussion, a

student from one department noted that some advanced courses are taught by teachers who have first-degree holders (graduate assistants) and are inexperienced in the subject area. The

students also confirmed that the teachers have no detailed knowledge of the courses (advance courses) they are assigned to teach, a view shared by other college students.

No	Variables	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig.
1	Course guide	12.96	4.05	58.74	337	.000
2	Teaching methods	9.3	4.25	34.19	337	.000
3	Time management	14.15	4.75	54.77	337	.000
4	Assessment strategies	25.83	6.89	68.97	337	.000
5	Feedback provision	23.43	7.44	57.88	337	.000
6	Advisory and support provision	12.17	4.49	49.80	337	.000
7	Teachers' competency	23.50	6.95	62.14	337	.000

Table 12: One-sample t-test across the variables

Conclusion

Effective teaching and learning produce competent and efficient graduates who meet the demands of the labour market. In the present study, the students' positively rated the overall teaching-learning process implemented in the university. However, variations were observed in the preparation and content/elements of course outlines/syllabi, proper use of instructional time given for the courses, and different teaching methods between and within colleges.

Students also had a positive perception of the execution of the assessment procedures that their teachers use, even

if they focused more on traditional assessment methods (i.e., tests, quizzes, and exams). The exam or test preparation is not based on test construction principles. For instance, exam item formats, arrangement of item formats, and varieties of item formats are some of the violated elements of the test construction principles. In addition, students perceived that the provision of feedback in the university is timely and constructive, although students of some colleges disagreed in this regard.

Generally, students moderately perceived the advisory and support services provided at the university. However, those teachers assigned as advisors are

not playing their expected role satisfactorily. Students' motivation to learn and to get advisory services from their teachers is also low. The majority of teachers in the university are well prepared and competent. Advanced courses should be given by teachers who have better teaching experience and specialize in the subject area. Overall, to experience a better teaching-learning process, teachers and students have to play their expected roles.

Recommendations

- The teaching-learning and assessment practices implemented in higher education institutions should be in line with the real world of work; that is, they should

consider real-life situations and be practical, with appropriate feedback being given for every assessment.

- Training on assessment and active learning methods should be given to existing academic staff since there are gaps in implementation.
- Departments should assign experienced and qualified teachers for advanced courses.
- The results suggest that a need for future research that further develops the practice of different teaching and assessment methods, feedback provision, teacher's competency, academic advising, and supports services is necessary

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