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STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF LECTURERS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR IN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to ascertain, using students' views, the extent of and the mean ranking of teaching effectiveness of lecturers, faculty-by-faculty, in University of Calabar, Nigeria. One two-fold research question was formulated to guide the study. The study adopted the ex-post facto research design using stratified random sampling technique in selecting 380 academic staff and 3800 undergraduate students for the study. The instruments used for collecting data were a 7-item Academic Staff Questionnaire (ASQ) and a 43-item University Students' Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire (USETEQ). Descriptive statistic (mean scores) was used in the analysis of the data. Academic staff in University of Calabar were generally evaluated to be effective in teaching by their students, and lecturers in Faculties of Law and Education were assessed to be most effective while those in Faculties of Agriculture and Management Sciences were assessed to be least in teaching effectiveness. It was concluded that if quality/standard of learning among students/graduates of Nigerian universities is low, something other than effective teaching might be responsible. It was recommended that academic staff should explore the use of student evaluation of instruction to foster their professional growth.

KEYWORDS: Teaching effectiveness, student evaluation, Academic staff; University of Calabar.

INTRODUCTION/PROBLEM

These days in Nigeria, serious concern has been expressed about the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities. Graduates from Nigerian universities have been variously described by employers of labour, parents and the entire society as half-baked, ill-equipped, of poor quality and of poor standard (Obanya, 2012). It is expected that higher education provided by universities should develop in the graduates a certain number of specific skills to a level that will ensure the continued creative productivity of the individual. Such skills according to (Obanya, 2012) include: analytical power skill, communication skill, problem-solving skill, team spirit skill, creativity skill, versatility skill, life-long learning skill, and information technology skill. It is doubtful whether the teaching of courses in Nigerian universities has been effective enough to produce the skills so identified above in Nigerian graduates these

days. It is also the view of Bogoro (2015) that our education standard has embarrassingly fallen; that one cannot compare graduates of 20 or 25 years ago. Many critics have indicted lecturers for the prevalent poor academic performance of students. It is widely believed that despite improved educational qualification of lecturers, they are mostly not as conscientious to their duties as it is expected of them.

Two primary responsibilities of lecturers are teaching and research. These two roles are meant to complement each other for the staff professional growth, the students and the entire system at large. However, "publish or perish" syndrome has made most lecturers in universities to pay more attention to research at the expense of teaching. Consequently, teaching has become less attractive and less important to many lecturers in Nigerian universities, moreso, as the promotion in academic career depends almost entirely on scholarly research and

publication efforts. The most disturbing is the fact that nobody, including university administrators, seem to be concerned about taking necessary steps to assess or evaluate what the lecturer does in the classroom, and therefore anything goes. Here may lie the cause of poor quality of our graduates, hence, this study.

Certain kinds of monitoring are therefore necessary if universities are to play their expected roles in the society. Lecturers like other professionals should be sincere enough to accept the setting up of the machinery for monitoring their performance in order to foster their professional growth, check misconduct and to realize the set goals of the society, and the school, and the specific objectives of school programmes. Therefore the evaluation of the school, its component parts and processes is inevitable if higher education in Nigeria is to be brought back to its former glory.

Among the many personnel in the school is the teacher, the instructor, the lecturer, the faculty or academic staff (these would be used interchangeably in this study). The system of formal education places the teacher at the hub of the teaching-learning process, and gives him/her a lot of power over the direction and intensity of the child's growth and development. According to Withal and Lewis (1993), the teacher is the primary ingredient in the learning process, and the characteristics of effective teachers should be identified in order to provide more effective teachers and fewer ineffective ones. Therefore, for this study, the characteristics or components of an effective teacher have been identified as follows:

- (a) Knowledge of subject matter/area
- (b) Classroom communication skill
- (c) Effective teaching methods/strategies
- (d) Classroom management
- (e) Ability to motivate students
- (f) Relationship with students
- (g) Evaluation of students learning activities.

Teachers generally are chary about evaluation, especially about student-based evaluation for merit awards, personnel decisions and promotion. This does not mean we should shy away from evaluation, if we think carefully of the help, which a teacher needs. He needs feedback on how his students perceive his/her teaching and how it affects their learning. The teacher also needs to indulge in a certain amount of self-examination to assess whether, over his teaching years, he/she has come up to acceptable standard of imparting knowledge to students.

Since students are the direct beneficiaries of institution and given that they spend a great deal of time with their teachers, students can offer useful inputs in identifying flaws during instruction or curriculum implementation, and ways of remediation. Students' evaluation of teaching should be kept firmly in its place: as a feedback instrument to the teacher, to assist him view the effectiveness of

teaching. Thus, the problem of this study is to provide answers to this two-fold question: what is the extent of; and the mean ranking, faculty-by-faculty, of lecturers' teaching effectiveness, as evaluated by their students, in Nigerian universities with University of Calabar, Nigeria in perspective?

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is generally known that for a teacher to convincingly earn the respect of his colleagues and students alike he/she must demonstrate sound and/or high degree of knowledge of his/her discipline. This view presupposes that such teacher has got a sound academic training in the subject, has undergone a professional course in teaching and maintained a continuous academic growth. Adeyemo (2004) opines that teachers understanding of the subject matter are basic to effective teaching. Teacher education curriculum should contain high percentage of knowledge of subject matter which the teacher is supposed to teach.

According to Agbi (2004) in the classroom, the basic elements in communication include the communicator (the teacher), encoding (the language), message (the medium), decoding (interpretation), receiver (the student), feedback and noise (distraction). In simple terms, the teacher (communicator) has an idea (or message of instruction) to transmit to the receiver (student). To transmit the idea, the teacher must translate the idea into a meaningful form (encoding) and send the message by verbal or non-verbal means (medium). The message is received through the sense of the student (receiver) and translated into a meaningful form (decoding). With a nod of the head, a facial expression, or some action, the student acknowledges whether understanding has been achieved (feedback).

From the above illustration, it is obvious that communication is a two-way process. It involves the act of sending and that of receiving. Thus, the teaching-learning process being a human relations process demands a ready flow of information between the parties involved. It is no exaggeration because of the lack of proper understanding of the communication process, many a good lecture may not have travelled beyond the mind of the lecturer/teacher. What the situation is with lecturers in the University of Calabar, Nigeria, is the concern of this study.

Uma (2009) opines that it is one thing to master the subject matter, yet quite another to have the required competence to organize and impart it effectively and appetizingly to the learner. Inadequate presentation strategies can be a serious limiting factor for both the teacher and the students. It stands to reason that the more expertly he//she uses those strategies, the higher learning outcomes obtained, hence, the more effective a teacher he/she is.

Norton (2006) considers teaching effectiveness as a direct function of effective

classroom management. This, he says, is borne out of the effective practitioner who is caring, committed, highly creative, a proficient reflective thinker with a strong internal locus of control. Olivia and Pawless (2012) opine that the teacher has a critical role to play in establishing rules and procedure that govern all student participation and routines in the classroom. Teachers should demonstrate effective classroom management always and constantly monitor the behaviour of their students and redirect inappropriate behaviour.

Motivation is the act of regulating those factors that energize behaviour and give direction or the regulation of need-satisfying and goal-seeking behaviour (Ntino, 2004). Thus, a motivated person will engage in an activity more vigorously and more efficiently than one who is not motivated. It is often assumed that the learner will be motivated if the lesson is interesting and the classroom environment is conducive.

Developing a good student-teacher relationship is a great asset for effective teaching. Studies have shown that when teachers build a bridge in communication and interaction with students, they get their cooperation, interest and willingness to learn what the teacher is saying (Domike, 2002). What these studies show is that there is need for student-teacher interaction both within and outside the classroom.

In the context of teaching effectiveness, Xu and Simclair (2012) opine that student evaluation is a means of teacher accountability. The overall implication of this contention is to the effect that, the rate of student performance in an evaluation exercise is to a great extent, a reflection of the teachers input or teaching effectiveness, other things being equal. This input variable includes the teachers' knowledge of subject matter, teaching methodology, classroom management and other inputs required for effective teaching.

Osibodu (2006) in a study of undergraduate students' perception of university teachers' knowledge of subject matter revealed that as large as 29% of the students felt their teachers were limited in knowledge of the subject matter. Six percent (6%) felt that they were seriously deficient. Another 41% say their instructors only occasionally welcome differences in opinion while 15% say their teacher never accept divergent views. That gives a whopping 56% of instructors who are resistant to alternative ideas and perhaps, change. What the situation is with lecturers in Nigerian universities with focus on the University of Calabar, Nigeria, is the concern of this study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of and the mean ranking, faculty-by-faculty, of teaching effectiveness of lecturers in University of Calabar, Nigeria, as evaluated by their students, with respect to:

- (a) knowledge of subject matter/area

- (b) classroom communication skill
- (c) effective teaching methods/strategies
- (d) classroom management skills
- (e) ability to motivate students
- (f) evaluation of students learning activities
- (g) relationship with students
- (h) overall teaching effectiveness.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the extent of, and the mean ranking, faculty-by-faculty of the teaching effectiveness of lecturers in University of Calabar-Nigeria, as evaluated by their students, with respect to:

- (a) knowledge of subject matter/area
- (b) classroom communication skill
- (c) effective teaching methods/strategies
- (d) classroom management skills
- (e) ability to motivate students
- (f) evaluation of students learning activities
- (g) relationship with students
- (h) overall teaching effectiveness?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The lecturers who are the implementers of the curriculum will gain much from the findings and conclusion of this study. This will manifest in enhancing effective teaching of courses in our universities.

The students in the university system also stand to gain from the findings of the study, lecturers evaluation results are used, among other things, to improve instruction; and students are the direct beneficiaries of such improvement.

The University administrators and education planners will benefit immensely from the findings of this study. They will be able to mount comprehensive supervising role on lecturers during and after giving instructions so as to ensure appropriateness and effectiveness of their teaching.

The teaching profession itself will gain from the findings of this study, in that the findings will show how important student evaluation of instructors/instruction for improving teaching profession, and why lecturers should embrace this phenomenon.

Parents and society at large have a stake in the findings of this study. Accountability is one of the theoretical bases underlying the concept of teacher evaluation. It posits among other things, that teachers should be held responsible and therefore accountable for outcomes of education evident particularly in the behaviour and performance of students.

The educational research community in Nigeria will also benefit from the finding of this study. The Nigerian researchers have done very little in this strategic research area. The findings of this study will add to the knowledge bank in this area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the ex-post facto research design, using stratified random sampling technique in selecting 380 lecturers and 3800 undergraduate students from 10 Faculties in the

University for the study. The population of this study comprised all the 646 lecturers in the 10 Faculties and about 10,000 undergraduate students of 10 Faculties in the University.

The instruments used for collecting data were a 7-item Academic Staff Questionnaire (ASQ) and a 42-item University Students' Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire (USETEQ). The ASQ elicited responses on the personal/demographic characteristics of the lecturers, while USETEQ elicited responses on the students' evaluation of teaching effectiveness of their lecturers. It had six parts, each with six questionnaires items on one of the seven identified components of teaching effectiveness, thus: knowledge of subject matter/area; classroom communication skills, effective teaching methods/strategies; classroom communication skills, effective teaching methods/strategies; classroom management skills; ability to motivate students; relationship with students; evaluation of students learning activities. All the 42 items were of Likert type on a six-point scale. The six points for positive items were: very strongly agree (6 points); strongly agree (5 points); agree (4 points); disagree (3 points); strongly disagree (2 points); and very strongly disagree (1 point). The points were reversed for negative items.

Two kinds of validity were established for the instruments for this study. There were "face validity" and "content validity." To establish the reliability of the instruments, the instruments were trial-tested using 10 lecturers drawn from two Institutes in the University (Institute of Education (IOE) and Institute of Policy and Administration (IPPA) that were not used in the main study. A total of 100 undergraduate students were used to evaluate the 10 lecturers. The split-half reliability coefficients were computed for each of the seven parts of the second instrument and for the entire instrument (USETEQ). Spearman Brown prophecy formula was used to correct for the split. The reliability estimates ranged from .83 to .91, which were

considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument for the study.

All the 380 copies of the questionnaire for the lecturers and 3800 copies of the questionnaire for the students were administered personally by the researcher, with the help of some research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire given out were retrieved. The data collected were collated and analysed using descriptive statistic (mean scores) in determining the extent of and mean ranking of teaching effectiveness of lecturers, faculty-by-faculty.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The intent of the only one two-fold research question of this study is to determine the extent and the mean ranking, faculty-by-faculty, of the lecturers' teaching effectiveness, as evaluated by their students. The teaching effectiveness in this study had seven components and the overall teaching effectiveness, indicated earlier in this write-up. Each of these components of teaching effectiveness had six items on the questionnaire which elicited responses on the students' ratings of teaching effectiveness of their lecturers. For a lecturer to be considered effective in his/her teaching, the students' mean score on each of the components of the teaching effectiveness should be higher than 21.00 (which is the average or mid-point between "agree" and "disagree" which is $1+2+3+4+5+6 = 21/6 = 3.50$ multiplied by 6 which is the number of items for each component of the teaching effectiveness. The reference mean score for each component therefore, is 21.00. Any lecturer with mean score higher than 21.00 was considered effective in each component of the teaching effectiveness. For the overall teaching effectiveness, the reference mean score is 147 (calculated as 3.50 multiplied by 42, which is the total number of items on the questionnaire measuring the overall teaching effectiveness of the lecturers.

TABLE I

Number of items, means, and standard deviations of the components and overall teaching effectiveness of lecturers in University of Calabar, as evaluated by their students (N=380).

S/n	Components of teaching effectiveness	No of items	Max score	Mean	SD
1.	Knowledge of subject matter	6	36	25.59	2.70
2.	Communication skills	6	36	24.20	2.20
3.	Effective teaching methods/strategies	6	36	24.29	2.21
4.	Classroom management skills	6	36	21.71	2.49
5.	Ability to motivate students	6	36	23.92	2.06
6.	Evaluation of students learning activities	6	36	23.78	2.09
7.	Relationship with students	6	36	22.93	2.37
8.	Overall teaching effectiveness	42	252	166.06	12.07

Reference mean score for each component = 21.00

Reference mean score for overall teaching effectiveness = 147.00

Table 1 shows the mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) for each of the component and the overall teaching effectiveness variable. The number of items on the research instrument used to measure each of the sub-variables is also indicated on Table 1. N = 380 in all cases.

From Table 1, it is observed that the mean scores for knowledge of subject matter (25.59), communication skills (24.20), effective teaching methods/strategies (24.29), classroom management skills (21.71), ability to motivate students (23.92), evaluation of students learning activities (23.78), and relationship with students (22.93) are all higher than the hypothesized with students (22.93) are all higher than the hypothesized reference mean value of 21.00. Also, the mean score of the overall teaching effectiveness (166.06) is higher than the hypothesized total mean score of 147.00. This implies that the lecturers in all the faculties in the University of Calabar, Nigeria were assessed by the students to be effective in their teaching.

It is natural, therefore, to attempt, faculty-by-faculty, ranking of the lecturers' teaching effectiveness, as evaluated by their students. To do this therefore, the mean scores from student evaluation of their lecturers' teaching effectiveness, faculty-by-faculty, were computed for each of the seven components and for the overall teaching effectiveness of lecturers in University of Calabar, Nigeria. All the 10 faculties in the University, arranged in alphabetical order, were used in the study. The results are shown on Table 2. The ranking emerged, component-by-component, and on overall teaching effectiveness of lecturers (Table 2).

The results in Table 2 revealed that lecturers in Faculty of Education (mean score = 27.17) evaluated by their students to be most effective with respect to knowledge of subject, while lecturers in Management Sciences (mean score = 22.07) were rated to be least. On communication skills component of teaching effectiveness, lecturers in Law (mean score = 26.07) were most effective while lecturers in Management Sciences (mean score = 21.59) least effective. On effective teaching methods/strategies, lecturers in Faculty of Education (mean score = 26.36) were most effective while those in Management Sciences (mean score = 21.68) were rated least effective.

On classroom management skills, lecturers in Faculty of Law (means score = 24.42) were ranked most effective while lecturers in Management Sciences (mean score = 19.49) were ranked least effective. On ability to motivate students, lecturers in Social Sciences (mean score = 25.50) were ranked most effective by their students while those in Management Sciences (mean score = 21.28) were ranked least effective. On Evaluation of students learning activities, lecturers in Social Sciences were (mean score = 25.72) ranked most effective while those in Management Sciences were (mean score = 21.51) ranked least effective. On relationship with students, lecturers in Faculty of Law (mean score = 25.45) were ranked most effective, while those in Faculty of Science were (mean score = 19.78) ranked least effective. On the evaluation of overall teaching effectiveness by students, the following ranking emerged: with lecturers in Law and Education rated first and second respectively, while lecturers in agriculture and Management Sciences were rated ninth and tenth respectively (see Table 3).

TABLE 2

Mean ranking, faculty-by-faculty, of the academic staff's teaching effectiveness, as evaluated by their students in University of Calabar, Nigeria,

(reference mean score for each component = 21.00)				(reference mean score for overall/teaching effectiveness =147.00)			
Teaching effectiveness	Faculty	Mean score	Ranking	Teaching effectiveness	Faculty	Mean score	Ranking
knowledge of subject matter	Agriculture	23.00	9 th	Ability to motivate Students	Agriculture	22.14	9 th
	Arts	25.24	8 th		Arts	23.68	8 th
	Basic Medical Sciences	26.05	7 th		Basic Medical Sciences	23.32	7 th
	Clinical Sciences	26.48	4 th		Clinical Sciences	24.16	6 th
	Education	27.17	1 st		Education	24.31	5 th
	Laboratory & Allied Sciences	26.46	5 th		Laboratory & Allied Sciences	24.97	4 th
	Law	26.65	3 rd		Law	25.06	3 rd
	Management Science	22.07	10 th		Management Science	21.28	10 th
	Science	26.39	6 th		Science	25.37	2 nd
Social Sciences	26.94	2 nd	Social Sciences	25.50	1 st		
Communication skills	Agriculture	22.51	9 th	Evaluation of students Learning activities	Agriculture	22.17	9 th
	Arts	23.87	7 th		Arts	23.53	7 th
	Basic Medical Sciences	22.81	8 th		Basic Medical Sciences	22.78	8 th
	Clinical Sciences	24.50	6 th		Clinical Sciences	24.03	6 th
	Education	25.11	5 th		Education	24.40	4 th
	Laboratory & Allied Sciences	25.12	4 th		Laboratory & Allied Sciences	24.23	5 th
	Law	26.07	1 st		Law	24.91	3 rd
	Management Science	21.59	10 th		Management Science	21.51	10 th
	Science	25.68	2 nd		Science	25.10	2 nd
Social Sciences	25.67	3 rd	Social Sciences	25.72	1 st		
Effective teaching methods/strategies	Agriculture	22.48	9 th	Relationship with students	Agriculture	22.59	7 th
	Arts	23.72	7 th		Arts	23.39	5 th
	Basic Medical Sciences	23.39	8 th		Basic Medical Sciences	23.25	6 th
	Clinical Sciences	24.69	6 th		Clinical Sciences	24.03	4 th
	Education	26.36	1 st		Education	24.49	3 rd
	Laboratory & Allied Sciences	24.17	5 th		Laboratory & Allied Sciences	24.70	2 nd
	Law	25.24	4 th		Law	25.45	1 st
	Management Science	21.68	10 th		Management Science	21.36	9 th
	Science	25.49	3 rd		Science	19.78	10 th
Social Sciences	25.66	2 nd	Social Sciences	21.46	8 th		
Classroom management skills	Agriculture	22.50	4 th	Overall teaching effectiveness	Agriculture	157.24	8 th
	Arts	23.07	2 nd		Arts	166.51	7 th
	Basic Medical Sciences	21.53	7 th		Basic Medical Sciences	161.97	9 th
	Clinical Sciences	22.81	3 rd		Clinical Sciences	170.74	4 th
	Education	22.01	5 th		Education	173.82	2 nd
	Laboratory & Allied Sciences	21.77	6 th		Laboratory & Allied Sciences	170.83	3 rd
	Law	24.42	1 st		Law	177.99	1 st
	Management Science	19.49	10 th		Management Science	149.36	10 th
	Science	20.73	8 th		Science	167.77	6 th
Social Sciences	20.04	9 th	Social Sciences	170.28	5 th		

TABLE 3
Ranking of overall teaching effectiveness of lecturers, faculty by faculty

Faculty	Means score	Ranking
Law	177.99	1 st
Education	173.82	2 nd
Laboratory & Allied Science	170.83	3 rd
Clinical sciences	170.74	4 th
Social Sciences	170.28	5 th
Science	167.77	6 th
Arts	166.51	7 th
Basic Medical Science	161.97	8 th
Agriculture	157.24	9 th
Management Sciences	149.36	10 th

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion on the results was done mainly on the overall teaching effectiveness of academics in University of Calabar-Nigeria. Some results were expected, a lot more were most surprising.

In the overall teaching effectiveness, academics in the faculties of Law and Education were rated very high to merit first and second position respectively. This was not surprising because in all facets of effective teaching, as evaluated by their students, they were seen to do well. They were rated high in possession of knowledge of subject matter, classroom management skills, effective teaching methods/strategies, relationship with students, and in overall teaching effectiveness.

Academics in the faculties of Laboratory and Allied Health Sciences, Clinical Sciences, and social Sciences had almost the same overall ratings to merit third, fourth, and fifth positions respectively. Academics in the faculties of Science and Arts emerged sixth and seventh respectively. It was surprising that academics in the Faculty of Science were rated higher than those in the Faculty of Arts by students. This is not consistent with Feldman (2008) who revealed that compared to other instructors, those teaching humanities, fine arts, and languages tend to receive somewhat higher ratings. Yet some research show that students see demanding lecturers as being better (more effective) than easy-going academics (Jacobs, 2004). It could be that academics in the Faculty of Science are more demanding, in view of the students, than their counterparts in the Faculty of Arts to merit this high rating.

It was most surprising or even disappointing that academics in the Faculties of Agriculture and Management Sciences were almost always rated least by their students in each of the components and in overall teaching effectiveness. Those two Faculties are not twin bedfellows, except in these ratings. It was difficult to discern why this should be so. Is it because of class size (teacher-student) ratio? No doubt, student

population in those Faculties, especially Management Sciences is too large. Or could it be correctly speculated that academics in these Faculties go for something else from the students/system other than effective teaching? The findings of this study seem instructive.

It should, however, be noted that though academics in the Faculties of Agriculture and Management Sciences, as evaluated by their students, trailed the ranking in most components of teaching effectiveness and on the overall teaching effectiveness, they were rated above average (reference mean score for overall teaching effectiveness =147.00). Agriculture (mean = 157.24). Management Science (mean = 149.36). That is, on the whole, and specific components, they were rated effective by their students. In spite of this, however, there are rooms for improvement, not only for academics in the two Faculties (Agriculture and Management Sciences), but in all Faculties in the University, and indeed Nigerian Universities.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of these findings, it was concluded that lecturers in University of Calabar-Nigeria, generally, are effective in their teaching, with respect to all the components of teaching effectiveness. Academics in Faculty of Law were rated as the most effective in their teaching. They were closely followed by academics in the Faculty of Education. Academics in Faculties of Laboratory and Allied Health Sciences, Clinical Sciences, and social sciences ranked third, fourth, and fifth respectively. Faculties of Science, Arts, Basic Medical Sciences, Agriculture, and Management Sciences, took the last five rankings in that order (see Table 3).

In the view of the researcher, the students’ evaluation of their lecturers in the University of Calabar, Nigeria, is favourable. With this favourable assessment of the lecturers’ teaching effectiveness by their students, if the quality/standard of learning among students/graduates of the University and indeed

Nigerian Universities is rated low, then something other than effective teaching may be responsible for such low learning/education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students' evaluation of faculty members' teaching effectiveness should be regularly used, and feedbacks used to improve the school system.
2. As a way of saving our educational system at tertiary level, schools should be encouraged to officially introduce mandatory evaluation of their lecturers. And lecturers should be ready to submit themselves to such evaluations.

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