The objectivity of student ratings of instructors among Taiwanese students

Shu-Hui Tsai
The University of Montana

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THE OBJECTIVITY OF STUDENT RATINGS OF INSTRUCTORS AMONG TAIWANESE STUDENTS

By

Shu-Hui Tsai

B. A. Soochow University, Taiwan, 1985

Master, Soochow University, Taiwan, 1987

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

The University of Montana

May, 2005

Approved by:

Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date 5-20-05

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The Objectivity of Student Ratings of Instructors among Taiwanese Students

Chairperson: Dr. Merle J. Farrier

The review of literature for the United States and Taiwan, the Republic of China found that teacher evaluation and student ratings of instructors were essentially synonymous. Generally, students were expected to evaluate teachers in order to enhance the quality of the teachers' instruction, which in turn will improve education and help meet the goals of Taiwanese education reform. However, due to traditional Chinese culture respecting the role of teachers, the objectivity, and therefore validity, of student ratings was questioned by many educators.

The research question was: to what degree were the responses of student ratings of their instructors in technical institutes and universities based upon objective criteria? The response rate for this research was 99%, based upon a net sample size of 626. This research found that 87% of respondents were characterized as either highly objective or objective, 4% were found to be subjective and 0% were highly subjective. Descriptive predictor variables were found to have no experimental relevance in predicting student objectivity.

This research analyzed the success of student ratings of instructors by looking at the objectivity by which students record their evaluations. This research found a strong tendency on the part of students to objectively evaluate their teachers. An important finding was that while respectful of their Chinese culture, students are able to respect that culture while at the same time objectively evaluate their teachers. In addition, most students indicated a desire to improve the evaluation process in order to improve their educations.

It is important to note that demographic variables were not predictive of objectivity. This finding allows for the conclusion that objectivity and/or subjectivity are not the product of a particular sex, a particular age, class, or other demographic variables gathered herein. Consequently, the strong degree of objectivity found in this research is representative of the entire population sampled rather than any particular subgroup. College and university students as a whole, as well as within particular subgroups, have found that objectively evaluating their teachers does not compromise their respect for traditional Chinese culture.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to acknowledge my gratitude to my dearest and most respectable chairperson Dr. Merle Farrier. Dr. Farrier is energetic, humorous, kind, caring, and patient. Without his inspiration, this long journey of writing and revision could not have been completed. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of my committee, Dr. Alexander, Dr. Robson, Dr. Stolle, and Dr. Whitehead. With their consideration, deliberation, and critique, my dissertation moved from proposal to a scholarly work. In the same way, this dissertation and I have benefited greatly from Dr O’Reilly’s help. My appreciation also goes to all faculties who taught and encouraged me during the years I have studied here.

My friends, Jo Silta, Jim Biondich, and Ted and Carol Fickinger helped teach me the language of this dissertation; Jim Biondich, Bob Atkinson and Laura Egeland supplied me with accommodation, food, and other things money cannot buy. My friends in church and the Chinese Bible study have provided me with spiritual guidance. My Taiwanese colleagues at the TungNan Institute of Technology, and all my students whose confidence in me was a great support. My father, mother, sisters, brother, brother in law, nephew, and nieces, all granted their sponsorship and consistent love no matter where I am.

Appreciation is also due to the schools that facilitated the survey process and provided the data for this research. Therefore, I want to say thanks to 盛文斌, 蘇華, and 明香. Also Dr. 古, Dr. 胡, and Dr. 彭 who reviewed the translation and content integrity of the questionnaire.

I am grateful for having Holly Father lead my life and fortunate having this opportunity come to the University of Montana, studying profound knowledge from many professionals, and enjoying the friendship and peaceful environment.

蔡淑慧 於教育學院 民國九十四年五月十八日

(Sophia Tsai in EDLD, Missoula. May 18, 2005)
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CHAPTER ONE
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Introduction

*Educational Reform and Evaluation in the United States*

The educational reform movement has grown and gathered strength over the last few decades in the United States (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Perry, 1990; McKeachie, 1990). Schools were making efforts to reform teaching and schooling through teacher professionalism and school restructuring, thereby focusing more directly on the students' needs (Ceroni & Garman, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Grimmett & Neufeld, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994). One model of school restructuring emphasized the school as a professional community with a shared vision and decision-making bodies comprised of teachers and administrators (Hargreaves, 1994; Siskin, 1994). Professional teacher development has taken place due to a changing society where students bring cultural perspectives, family values, and personal characteristics to the classroom (Blackman, 1989; McLaughlin, 1994; Smith, Polloway, Patton, James, Dowdy, 2004).

Beerens (2000) indicated that professional teacher development is important to improving students' achievements. Holly (1989) analyzed teachers' perceptions and the circumstances of professional development, and found that, "teachers in [the] United States must engage in academic professional coursework at the university level to move from initial or provisional certification to permanent certification and tenure" (p. 184). Holly (1989) also noted, "teachers are encouraged to continue formal schooling through salary increments for additional credit hours earned, and some school systems provide teachers with partial or full reimbursement for university credit fees" (p. 185).
Professional teacher development requires schools to be a culture of support, including discourse on teachers' efficacy, the building of norms of personal interaction, and shared leadership between teachers and administrators (Lieberman, 1994; McLaughlin, 1994).

In the 1980s there was a shift toward understanding that teacher evaluations fulfilled two purposes: (a) improving teachers' performances, and (b) employment accountability. The model of evaluation involved making a performance judgment about the effectiveness and quality of teaching (Beresh, 1987). Darling-Hammond (1990) indicated that teacher evaluations might assist in a teacher's professional development. She asserted, "at least 46 states have adopted [K-12] teacher-competency tests" (p.18). Teacher evaluation included evaluating the teachers' personal traits, competency, behavior, and students' performance. In higher education institutions, the methods of teacher evaluation included systematic ratings of instruction (from different raters), course (syllabi) evaluation, classroom visitation (in-class videotapes), teacher portfolios and so forth (Centra, 1979). Teacher evaluations were done by means of student ratings, principal or peer evaluations, parent evaluations, and teacher self-evaluations (P-J. Chang, 2002; S-M. Chen, 1998). Seldin's study found 86% of universities conducted student ratings of instruction for the year 1993. Arreola (1995) and Wagenaar (1995) indicated that student ratings of instruction is an important type of rating in American universities' evaluation system, and that over 90% of schools use student ratings to assess teaching.

*Educational Reform and Evaluation in Taiwan*

In Taiwan, nationwide educational reform began in the 1990s. A document from the Department of Higher Education Council of Academic Reviewal [sic] and Evaluation, reported: "On January 5, 1994, the MOE [Ministry of Education] announced new
regulations offering universities more academic and administrative independence... financial independence and recruiting independence. Universities and colleges now have the right to determine their own personnel and administrators” (MOE, 2002a). The MOE report emphasized three major points in these educational reforms: (a) schools have self-determination rights for arranging, organizing, and hiring personnel; (b) schools have an obligation to increase the quality of education and catch up with the changing requirements of the system; and (c) students have alternatives for entering universities. Therefore, presidents, deans, and department chairpersons were now elected or appointed according to a variety of new methods in each university, as opposed to past practice when the MOE had sole authority to appoint these positions. Universities now have more authority in determining the rank and qualifications of teachers than in the past, and universities are gradually being authorized to examine the quality of teachers. Teacher evaluation has become a common and important administrative practice in Taiwan universities and colleges.

TamKang College started teacher effectiveness evaluation in 1966. Among current evaluation methods of instruction in Taiwan, the most often employed was student ratings of instruction. According to T-S. Chang (2002), there were 115 universities and colleges in 2000. Approximately seventy-six percent of public universities, and 84.7% of private universities implemented student ratings of instruction (T-S. Chang, 2002).

The Purpose of Student Ratings of Instructors

The number of universities and technical colleges has increased by nearly four-fold in the last 15 years; there are now 69 universities and 100 colleges in Taiwan (Lin,
2004; Mao, 2000; Yang, 2003). The Ministry of Education mandates that universities and colleges must manage the quality of education because the quality of teachers and instruction was directly related to student academic achievement, and would affect the quality of education.

Lin and Liu (1995) and Marsh (1991) pointed out that the use of student ratings can provide feedback to a teacher’s performance, be used as a factor for personnel decisions, offer information for a student’s course selection, be an indicator of curriculum quality, or be used as descriptors for on-going research into the teaching process. Generally, schools expected students to evaluate a teacher according to school policy for three reasons: (a) to rate a teacher in order to promote an effective teacher, and give an ineffective teacher the chance to improve, or be dismissed, (b) to address the students’ needs, so that a teacher can satisfy students and build good relationships with them, and (c) to enhance the quality of the teachers’ instruction and the structure of the school, which in turn will support education reform.

Problem Statement

The goal of educational reform was to improve the national education system. A key component in educational improvement was to provide higher quality teachers. As such, monitoring the quality of teachers, and by extension, assessing the status of the school was paramount to that goal. Yet due to traditional Chinese culture, the objectivity and/or responses of student ratings was a questionable and untested requirement of educational reform according to most researchers (Chang & Wang, 2002; P-S. Chen, 2000; Mao, 2000; Tzeng, 2001). The validity of any assessment must be demonstrated in order for the assessment to serve as a means of improvement. Consequently, educational
reform that depends upon assessments with questionable validity may well be of negligible or negative value in reaching its intended goal of educational excellence through development of more effective teaching.

**Teachers’ Role in Chinese Traditional Culture**

Teachers’ social position in the Chinese culture has been clear and well-defined for millennia, coming out of the mists of time thousands of years ago. There are five words which have been inscribed on the doors of homes for many generations, and they relate an equal status for heaven, earth, the emperor, parents and teachers. Teachers, therefore, have been accorded an elevated and virtually untouchable status, which now needs to be “touched” by evaluations.

Han Yu, the Tang dynasty scholar, defined teachers’ tasks as: to teach the way of life, to transmit knowledge from books, and to allay a students’ perplexity of life. In the Chinese culture, expectations of teachers are very different from typical western expectations. In Taiwan the role of “teacher” has a very strong societal component in that they are the transmitters of not only knowledge, but also are considered to be influential in who a person becomes which is much broader than what a person knows.

In addition, society has strict and elevated standards for teachers, which then endow the teachers with increased power and authority, which are then incorporated into the teachers’ self-image

Immeasurably, the roles of teachers have been changed from that of a mentor stimulating, inspiring, and instilling values, to that of a peddler of knowledge (Mao, 2000). In Taiwan, however, the program of student ratings of instructors was considered by some instructors to be a loss of the teachers’ authority in the students’ eyes (Chen &
Huang, 2002). Some teachers did not agree with the students’ ratings because they believe students were incompetent, immature, and used biased judgment (Huang, 2002). Traditionally, in Taiwanese culture teachers evaluated students. However, when the practice of student rating of teachers was introduced, it was seen by some as a sign of disrespect toward teachers (Chen & Huang, 2002).

The Student Ratings of Instructors

Student ratings have impacted the teachers’ self-achievement and attitude toward evaluations (Chen & Huang, 2002). Researchers argued that teacher evaluations will reduce faculty morale and job satisfaction, thereby prompting faculty to reduce the standards and workloads of their students and to make examinations easier (T-S. Chang, 2000, 2002a). In the last 15 years the number of universities and colleges has increased four times. Concurrently the law of universities and the evaluation system now required university faculty to perform these four functions: teaching, research, service and student counseling (Liu, 2000). Teachers’ time spent toward teaching, research, or executive service was very important to support the teachers’ philosophies of education. Frymier (2000) suggested that Taiwanese teachers were spending most of their time doing research and less in preparation for classes, which might cause them to overlook students’ needs and individual shortcomings (Frymier, 2000). One rationale for encouraging student evaluation of their teachers’ abilities to teach was that student ratings may contribute to teacher self-improvement (D-R. Chang, 1993).

Accordingly, teachers in the research who strived for excellence would be committed to the improvement of teaching performance (Smyth, 1989), and were likely to listen to feedback about their work (Chang & Jiu, 2003; Juang, 2002). While T-S.

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Chang's research (2000) suggested a different perception: students felt more confident than teachers about accepting the student ratings and publishing the results. Many teachers rejected student ratings as a summative measure in personnel decisions and accepted it to be a reference of self-improvement (Huang, 2002; Chen & Huang, 2002; Juang, 2002). T-S. Chang (2000) also concluded that students may be afraid to give negative comments and may not offer a critique of their experience as a student in the class. This evidence also showed that instructor presence in the classroom during evaluations may impact the rating and T-S. Chang advised that a classroom chairman should monitor the process instead. T-S. Chang's research (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b) focused on students and faculties in teachers' colleges. He recommended replicating the study in different higher educational institutions, because teachers' colleges fostered teachers, who were regarded as more conservative than other teaching professionals.

**Summary of Problem Statement**

Student ratings of instructors could only be successful if there was mutual responsibility and respect between teachers and students (Mao, 1999; P-S. Chen, 2000; Tzeng, 2001). Therefore this undertaking must be based on concerns for both the quality of the teaching and the learning process (Tzeng, 2001). Teachers and students form the process of education as the purveyors and receivers of knowledge; for that reason effective teaching depended in part on effective feedback from students to teachers. In Taiwan an official report showed that because of the inefficiency of educational systems and the poor quality of teachers and curricula, the nation was threatened in terms of global competitiveness (MOE, 2003). Thus, teachers were encouraged to continually
develop their knowledge, skill, and self-understanding, and incorporate changes to
improve the students’ learning process. Student ratings have become one instrument to
aid this development in Taiwan’s colleges and universities. Nevertheless, due to
traditional Chinese culture, as previously mentioned the validity of student ratings was
questionable (Chang & Wang, 2002; P-S. Chen, 2000; Mao, 2000; Tzeng, 2001).

Research Question

To what degree were the responses of student ratings of their instructors in
technical institutes and universities based upon objective criteria?

Terms of Definition

Objective Criteria. Objective criteria, as used in this research, refer to those
responses based upon (a) rational processes rather than emotional or cultural, and (b) an
absence from fear of instructor, peer pressure or institutional retribution.

Rational processes presumed the exclusion of responses based upon popularity, or
lack thereof, the reputation of the teacher, whether positive or negative, and other
personal factors inherent in the instructor. In addition, a rational process was possible
only in the absence of fear of instructor, peer pressure, or institutional retribution and any
other forms indicated in the review of literature that may compromise the objectivity of
the responses. These personal factors may or may not contribute to the quality of the
classroom experience for students but in themselves were not the basis for judgment.

Response Validity. Response validity and the degree thereof, as used in this
research, refer to the level by which the presence of objective criteria exists within the
evaluation process.
Student Ratings of Instructors. Student ratings of instructors refer to the students' evaluation of their teachers' performance with an instrument designed by the school or outside experts and developed by anonymous responses on a paper-and-pencil or online form (Chang & Jiu, 2003; Tzeng, 2001). A student rating is also a measure of student psychological phenomena, that is, a tool to measure students' opinion, awareness and perception of teaching, and/or teachers' behavior (Arreola, 1995; P-S. Chen, 2000).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the response validity of student ratings of instructors in technical institutes and universities in light of traditional Chinese culture. In the traditional culture, students regarded their teachers as father, or an even higher position; in order to show respect, they said nothing and were being polite rather than speaking the truth, to avoid offending teachers. The practice of students' evaluating instructors has been transmitted from Western society to Taiwan and was now universally practiced in higher education in both countries. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to discover whether or not students were able to objectively evaluate teachers without their evaluations being distorted by their cultural beliefs or norms.

Importance of the Research

This study would contribute to the knowledge base of educational leadership in several ways. First, information regarding the validity, or lack thereof, of the instructor evaluation process was developed and was made available to the Ministry of Education regarding the utility of these evaluations for instructor improvement. Second, T-S. Chang (2000, 2002a, 2002b) found that teachers and students did not believe good teaching was necessarily indicated or reflected in the ratings. However, research documenting the
degree to which response validity was positive may contribute towards better acceptance of the evaluations and therefore better insight into teacher improvement. As a result, objective validity would also serve as a foundation for future research of student ratings of instructors.

*Educational Leadership*

This research was not designed to reflect upon the objective content and construct validity of the Taiwanese teacher evaluation process. Rather, this research would serve to determine the degree of objectiveness to which Taiwanese students were able to evaluate their teachers as a classroom leader rather than as a person holding an important position within the Taiwanese culture. To this end, educational leaders would find the results of this research important for appropriate decision making process.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEWS

The United States and the Republic of China

Copper (1990) explored whether Taiwan is a nation, state or province. He posited that Western society has influenced Taiwan since the 1950s and 1960s through symbolism, existentialism, Freudianism, modernism, and even some movements in art and literature, as well as, many Western words and concepts (Copper, 1990). Copper (1990) pointed out the importance of the relationship between the United States and the Republic of China (R.O.C.), known as Taiwan, and indicated this relationship cannot be overstated. From being intimate allies in World War II, to the present time, the United States has been Taiwan’s principal trading partner and source of investment capital.

Hayhoe (1987) analyzed China’s higher curricular reform from 1912 to 1949 [The Republic of China had governed in the mainland China], and in this early republican period there were two very different models available for exploring the structure and organization of knowledge. The first, European inspired, was closest to traditional Chinese scholarship. The other, American inspired, provided for a more open and flexible approach to knowledge, which was more adaptable for economic and political modernization. Both were initiated from within Taiwan, not imposed from outside.

Lu (1998) said that Taiwan, retains certain relations with the United States in politics, education, culture, and so forth, for almost half a century, therefore the educational evaluation are tending to follow the American system.

The Ministry of Education for Taiwan in 1975 enacted and promulgated a ruling to the education community requiring evaluation of that system. During the enactment
phase a great majority of Taiwanese scholars who had graduated from the United States universities and colleges were involved in and central to this process. It was logical then that the process tended to reflect the American model of evaluation for schools. Lu (1998) commented on the concept of educational evaluation, which was implemented in many places from the 1970s to 1980s. During these years, the Evaluation-of-Education Era, the educational evaluation was introduced in the United States and began spreading throughout the world. According to the research, educational reform and the concept and implementation of evaluation in Taiwanese universities for improving student learning and educational quality, obviously followed the path of education reform and evaluation in the United States (Gau, Chang, Lin, & Wang, 2000; P-J. Chang, 2002).

Reform in education was a continuous process of improvement to meet the needs of a dynamic society. Leadership in this new “era of change” required the ability to envision an improved school and the spark to energize and lead staff to bring it about (Edelfelt, 1989; Jackson, 1992). Improvement required perseverance, cultivation, and problem solving. Leaders must be entrepreneurial in the sense that they empower employees to meet new challenges (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003). The administrative leadership was also another core consideration. Leaders must show the way by sharing their power with teachers, and empower teachers through the decision-making process and collaborative action (Hargreaves, 1992; Thiessen, 1992), and then, in turn, influence students through knowledge “caught rather than taught.”

The education reform movement bloomed in the 1990s, and there were some policies, such as America 2000, and Taiwan Academic Renewal and Evaluation 1994, implemented to improve educational outcomes. Calls for school reform were embedded
in “standards” and “accountability,” or came in the name of “democracy in the classroom” or “educational equality.” Based on this philosophy, American or Taiwanese educational reforms will only make a difference to the degree these reforms influence what happens within the classroom (Fairbrother, 2000).

The teacher evaluation could be one possible contributor to educational reform, enabling teachers to reflect upon their work and learn from other educators and other professionals (Holly & Walley, 1989). What teacher evaluations provide was systematic feedback on performance (Duke, & Stiggins, 1990; Elliott, 1989). Students with encouragement from a teacher who foster developing their abilities will in turn help to socialize new teachers, help shape the curriculum and classroom environments, and be involved in community-oriented projects (Lieberman, 1994; Thiessen, 1992).

Educational Reform in Taiwan

Education reform in the United States has evolved from a somewhat authoritarian model, through three waves, arriving at a model in the present which includes the addition of spirituality to the educational concept (Dantley, 2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992), as well as a tendency to integrate all educational levels (administrators, teachers, and students) into the reform process. Education reform in Taiwan has been developed from this American model (Lu, 1998). Just as teacher quality was a fundamental component of American reform, so was in Taiwan teacher quality of major importance.

The educational reform movement in Taiwan was related to economic growth, for industry brought the dramatic economic transformation from the 1950s to the early 1960s, and the economic transformation had very visible effects on the society of Taiwan between 1971 and 1996 (Rubinstein, 1999). Nation-wide competency testing
standardized the process and products of teaching as a collective of measurable competencies, which often defined one’s occupation and career path (Apple & Jungck, 1992; Rubinstein, 1999). As Rubinstein (1999) described, “by the mid-1970s about 30 % of those who took these exams passed them” (p.378); and “the usual procedure was to apply for entrance to a university and a department and then hope that one scored well enough to attend the school of one’s choice” (p.379).

It was a turning point in 1994 by disclosure of the University Law for educational reform utterly changing the academic role, management system, and communication of university and society. The major transitions of education from 1949 to 1999 were: (a) popularity of education, the higher education shifting from the elite to popular education. The population of university students, for example, rose from 5,379 in 1950, to 537,263 in 1999, (b) self-management and academic independence for deans and department chairpersons to chose members of the faculty, (c) awareness of an increased level of needs for life skills, where the university established different departments according to the marketing function in order to provide students with techniques for getting better jobs, and now there are new departments addressing ‘quality of life’ content, (d) multiple standards, as the change in society is from a single standard to diverse values, the university developed multiple standards and alternative tracks in order to meet different students’ needs, and (e) life-long learning as the university provides a learning environment for everyone who needs knowledge in a rapid information changing society, and helps individuals adapt to changes more easily (Liu, 2000).

Current education reform objectives in Taiwan were to establish a modern education system in order to produce an excellent modern nation and citizens while
maintaining a balance between spiritual culture and material civilization, and increasing the competitiveness of globalization. The main promotional work was being undertaken to: (a) establish a diversified, autonomous, flexible education system; (b) improve the quality of teaching through curricula, materials and effective teacher training; (c) reduce learning pressure in order to structure happier and healthier students; (d) balance regular and vocational secondary and higher education, and (e) cultivate a lifelong learning society (MOE, 2002).

The Technical and Vocational Education System in Flux

Former Education Minister Wu Ching proposed an educational policy in 1996, based on two-track education: the first track referred to regular universities, and the second to technical universities and colleges, in order to remove obstacles to educational advancement faced by vocational students (C-F. Chang, 2003). The technical and vocational education infrastructure has undergone major changes within the last few years, while upgrading to universities, thus giving the perception of being on the verge of collapse (C-F. Chang, 2003). At the same time, regular universities have established their own technical and vocational departments as a way of providing for individual career development. As mentioned above, the over-concentration on upgrading stemmed from the Chinese cultural tradition which highly values education. Eighty percent of vocational high school students have chosen to continue in education, postponing immediate employment in the job market.

Educational Evaluation System

The higher educational system in Taiwan (Figure 1) included universities and colleges, and different types of institutes (technical and commercial colleges). In these
programs, there were five-year junior colleges, two-year junior colleges, two-year technical colleges, and four-year technical colleges. The graduate schools that have master and doctoral degree programs are included in the university or four-year normal and technical colleges.

The Taiwanese basic administrative system in education is comprised of three levels: the Ministry of Education at the central government level, the Departments of Education at the provincial and municipal government levels, and the Bureau of Education at the various city and county government levels. The Ministry of Education is charged with governing the quality of higher education, formulating education policy, and overseeing all national schools and colleges, national social education organizations, and private universities and colleges (MOE, 2002b). The Ministry of Education in Taiwan represents the central government’s control of higher education, therefore playing an important role in educational leadership and school improvement. It also takes the most responsibility for the student rating of instruction and/or instructors.

Universities and colleges have been encouraged to advocate the evaluation system for teachers since 1997 (T-S. Chang, 2000), and to promote teaching/instruction and administrative service evaluation within the school. The MOE delegates institutes/universities to carry out this evaluation in 20-30% by evaluation of instruction. Each institute/university must constitute the rules and procedure of evaluation, and forward reports to the MOE (MOE, 2001). The Academics Administrative Office in each school is in charge of these ratings, and some schools cooperate with computer centers, or by establishing an evaluation center for the student ratings (T-S. Chang, 2002c).
Figure 1. The Current School System in Taiwan

THE CURRENT SCHOOL SYSTEM

Teacher Quality

Kent (2004) in his research commented that: teacher quality should be placed at the center of educational reforms in order to achieve the goals of the education system, and professional development for teachers is the catalyst to reach the goal of providing every student with competent, caring, and qualified teaching. Kent cautioned that teacher commitment was related to teacher quality and their eagerness to participate in professional development thus it was important to understand this relationship. He suggested that teachers must take greater control of what they do, including accountability for themselves and others as professionals, and take time to engage in high-quality professional development to assure the learners' needs are satisfied.

In July 1994, the Seventh National Education Conference in Taiwan pointed out the need for pluralized cultural development and improved education, “Among the highlighted issues are the distribution of educational resources, revising the structure and flexibility of the curriculum, improving teacher quality, enhancing lifelong education, beefing up physical education courses, and promoting cross-strait academic exchanges” (MOE, 1999, p.307).

*Expectation of Teachers, and Teacher Quality Criteria*

Research has demonstrated that the way a teacher perceives a student determines the expectations of a student’s performance and can predict that performance. The Pygmalion effects, which state that teachers act on their expectations and treat children differently in the classroom setting, are based on those expectations (Wiles, 1999).

Teachers are the most important determinant of student achievement in school, and people view teaching as highly complex work, requiring professionals with formal,
specialized preparation, and a routine work that most reasonably intelligent people could do (Berry, Hoke, & Hirsch, 2004). Berry, Hoke, and Hirsch (2004) reported:

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)'s reform framework emphasizes teacher education, state licensing, professional accountability, and compensation as the primary means to strengthen teacher quality. These positions are based on evidence that good teachers must have a host of subject-matter and technical knowledge, including the knowledge and skills needed to help every member of an increasingly diverse student population each much higher academic standards. (p.684)

The National Commission in Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF), which created a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellence in all of America’s schools, recommended that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)’s standards have become the cornerstone for teacher evaluation. The NBPTS’s assessments are based on the following propositions: (a) teachers are committed to students and their learning; (b) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; (c) teachers are responsible for managing and mentoring student learning; (d) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and (e) teachers are members of learning communities (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999; Harman, 2001). The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) in 1992 also created a set of core standards for all beginning teachers (Weiss, & Weiss, 1998). These two sets of criteria are important for evaluating teacher quality and also help with the development of a teacher evaluation system (Tzou, 2002).
Reform of a teacher evaluation system from a conventional teacher-directed model to multiple dimensional sources is already supporting broader school reform efforts, and the new evaluation system will further integrate teacher accountability with professional growth (Weiss, & Weiss, 1998). Teachers are the crucial agents in the achievement of educational goals. Without showing trust and respect to teachers, the issues of educational reform will be less likely to actualize. Thus, to advance professional development for teachers, the establishment of an effective teacher evaluation system and the creation of mechanisms for removing incompetent teachers are all essential elements to assuring teacher quality (MOE, 2002).

*Summary of Teacher Quality*

The foundation and cornerstone of educational reform is teacher quality. Teacher quality can be defined as the ability of a teacher to produce optimal educational results in students, and includes not only standards of teaching ability, but also subjective expectations of teachers by their students. However, teachers need an effective teacher evaluation system to reassure their valued contribution and a mechanism in place to receive feedback regarding their teaching competencies.

Taiwan Culture and Education

Taiwan culture is rooted in the 5,000 years of history in Chinese culture. Chinese culture in the recurrent dynastic change persisted for more than three thousand years until 1911. The most famous Chinese social and political philosophers of the warring states period were Confucius, Mencius, Hsun Tzu and Han Fei Tzu. “An abiding characteristic of premodern China was that the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia were very nearly identical” (Mair, 1994). The Confucian philosophy, a philosophy of Chinese thought that
has lasted practically and realistically in Taiwan, gave the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia higher respective authority. This following Chinese saying also reflected a strong belief in the ability of adults to change, “Chinese strive to become better and, when better, to become perfect.” As Alder (1997) articulated:

Diversity exists both within and among cultures; however, within a single culture certain behaviors are favored and others repressed... [Alder also emphasized] norms for a society [are] the most common and generally most acceptable patterns of values, attitudes, and behaviors. (p.17)

Central and essential to Chinese traditional culture was the Confucian conception of the structure and organization of knowledge. Disciplines within the Confucian conception were not specifically delineated, however, boundaries did exist between “pure” knowledge which was included in the imperial examinations, and other fields of scholarship including medicine, mathematics, and engineering (Hayhoe, 1987). Western Society may visibly observe that China’s rigorous adherence to the principle of meritocracy for both the ancient and modern academic systems, which are expressed in Chinese slang, “Nothing but being a scholar is in the highest status of society”.

Culture is the construct of livelihood and also represents human living practices. People develop their living style and life philosophy under the influences of this culture, such as food, dress, living habits, customs, artifact, ceremonies, law, literary thought, knowledge, morals and so on (Adler, 1997; Cheng, 1998; Mair, 1994). Socialization occurs within the culture and behind the influence of culture. It has been said that cultural background is an essential aspect of personal identity that interacts with the education one receives in a certain society. Taiwan has a Chinese traditional culture which is made
up of group-oriented societies, and emphasizes group harmony, unity, and glory. Because of this, personnel directors, while emphasizing “qualified” employees, at the same time consider seeking trustworthiness, loyalty, and compatibility with co-workers as equally important. It is essential to realize that this often means hiring “familiar faces” including friends and relatives of existing employees (Adler, 1997).

The more unique aspects of Chinese Traditional values was developed by Yau (1994) and included: (a) its hierarchical nature, (b) the importance of face and guanxi, which means “group-oriented”, (c) clan based structure, and (d) long term orientation. As cited in Pecotich and Yang (2001), there are five variables that are closely linked to Chinese traditional values: those are Individualism and Collectivism, Chinese Traditional Values (like Yau’s design), and Altruism and Personal Ideology. Collectivism/Altruism is expected to be high and Individualism/Personal Ideology low in the Chinese society.

To many Chinese the value of education is related to the well being of the society and personal advancement and not about increased financial status, even though they also believe that a good education will help an individual receive a good income (Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey, 1998). As shown in Zhang, Ollila, and Harvey’s research (1998), parents in Canada from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People Republic of China have high expectation about their child’s education. They want to see their child attend university and become a productive person in the society, which is consonant with the Chinese cultural tradition and how they traditionally have valued education. Although, the numbers of universities and technical colleges in Taiwan are increasing from 42 in 1989 to 169 in 2004, at a growth rate of four times in 15 years (Lin, 2004; Mao, 2000;
Yang, 2003), higher education can not assume there is a higher quality of education. The Ministry of Education in Taiwan therefore proposed a system for managing the quality of teaching and the project for the excellence of university development (Mao, 2000).

Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) argued “People live culture in a mutually constitutive manner in which it is not fruitful to tote up their characteristics as if they occur independently of culture, and of culture as if it occurs independently of people” (p.4). For example, people present intergenerational concepts, ways of talking, and belief systems that are often identified in terms of ethnicity and race. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) also revealed that students who have participated in varying cultural traditions would differ in “discussions with authority figures, answering known-answer questions, analyzing word problems, seeking or avoiding being singled out for praise, spontaneously helping classmates, observing ongoing events without adult management, responding quickly or pondering ideas before volunteering their contributions” (p.7).

*The Role of Teacher and Student: Societal Changes*

Pure knowledge was characterized by the notion of mental labor, and the constitutions of this pure knowledge in China were practical principles concerning the government and administration of society, interlinked with maxims of personal and family morality. Their source was a canon of texts, *the Four Books and Five Classics*, abstracted from the Chinese traditional experience by Confucius and put into final form by the neo-Confucian scholar, Zhu-Xi. The Confucian scholar normally spent more than ten years mastering the classical texts and demonstrating his knowledge through participation in a series of centrally organized examinations at local, provincial, and imperial levels (Hayhoe, 1987). With the highest achievement, the scholar qualified to
become a scholar-official within the imperial bureaucracy: "he devoted himself to maintaining the hierarchical power structure, which was described in the classical texts" (Hayhoe, 1987, p.200-201).

There is a Chinese saying that indicated that everyone's potential is useful in some way. In other words, every student has positive and negative aspects, as well as different learning needs. A teacher must learn how to discover these characteristics and use them to the students' learning advantage. This challenge is the goal of educational reform (Wu, 2004). Teachers have high authority and heavy responsibility to help students' learn in a culture that reflects Chinese tradition.

Improvement of classroom learning can only happen by attending directly to the interdependent development of teachers and students. Teachers and students alike are learners whose mutual development depends on the intersection of their experiences. Teachers and students have the most direct influence on and the most at stake in what happens in the classroom. Consequently, they should be involved in making decisions to improve learning; teachers also should be able to work alongside their students as co-learners (Thiessen, 1992).

The traditional concept of respect for teachers and their teaching competencies in Taiwan has often been used to blame students' poor performance on students being lazy, and therefore only focused on how to improve students' learning and ignored teacher effectiveness as an element that may effect student learning (Tang, 1996). Although traditionally students would not question a teacher, the culture has evolved but students are still in the fear of authority in the education system. However the philosophy of "student-as-consumer" driven education was becoming a major part of the education
system in Taiwan (Mao, 2000).

Today teachers are encouraged to make efforts to ensure that students are happy. To make sure this occurred they often graded more easily when they graded students and did not uphold the previous grading standards in order to keep their jobs (Bauer, 1997; T-S. Chang, 2000, 2002a, 2002b).

Student Ratings of Instructors

Harrison, Ryan and Moore (1996) said student ratings include three assumptions: (a) students have competency to rate their teachers justly, (b) students understand the importance of clarifying teaching effectiveness, and (c) students give a consistent rating toward the same teacher. These assumptions were supported by considerable research which showed that student ratings were consistent with other indicators of teacher competences, such as colleague ratings, alumni ratings, expert judges’ ratings and student learning (Arreola, 2000; Centra, 1979; Miller, 1974; Sorcinelli, 1999).

Teacher Evaluation and Student Ratings of Instructors

Teacher evaluation in Taiwan is an ongoing, but not yet standardized, process of rating teachers’ performance. It is a useful tool in the process of improving educational quality, but the decision of whether to implement evaluation either from administration, from one’s peers, or from students’ needs to be carefully considered. Since a teacher’s future can be significantly affected by their evaluation, evaluation by students must be thoroughly understood in order to utilize their input in a manner that is helpful and just for the teacher being evaluated.

In general, Teacher evaluation is making judgments about teachers' abilities to affect learning outcomes through collecting data in accordance with different standards of
teacher performance in different universities and colleges (Ou-yiang & Chang, 1993; D-R. Chang, 1993).

Much of the evaluation activity that occurs within a school involves attempts by principals and other educators to influence the performance of individual teachers in their current assignment (Natriello, 1990). Teacher evaluation, which is one measure of who is an effective teacher, needs a variety of extraneous evidences; multiple measures therefore must be used as a basis for indicating the quality of a teacher (Mehrens, 1990). One multiple measure of teacher quality are evaluations from multiple resources including administrators, peers, and students. Additional data gathering methods consisting of interviews, portfolio ratings, competency testing, classroom observation, evaluation forms and so forth should also be used in teacher evaluations (Peterson, 2000; Feng, 2002).

Beresh’s research reported that 96% of 333 teachers sampled in Alberta Canada were self-assessed or supervisory assessed. Only five respondents were assessed by their peers, three were by students, and four were via other methods (Beresh, 1987). According to Holly’s research (1977), 100 teachers were asked “From whom would you like your teaching performance rated?” There were 43 % of teachers who answered “other teachers”, 15 % “students”, 14 % “myself”, and 10 % “the principal” (Cited in Holly & Walley, 1989, p.292).

Since the evaluation process was so important to teachers’ classroom efficiency and job security, the responsibility of who will do evaluations was of prime consideration. Although less likely to be politically motivated, all groups may lack the capacity or ability to put cultural traditions of consideration and politeness aside in their evaluating.
There were different terms to describe the same evaluations, embracing "student rating (or evaluation) of instruction/ teaching/ instructor/ (their) teacher". These terms in research focused on teacher evaluation through students' perception, including rating their teachers' personality, behavior, effectiveness, and classroom management. These elements when included usually make a reliable and consistent teacher evaluation (Feng, 2002). In this study the researcher integrated these terms to "student ratings of instructors."

Student ratings of instructor, or student reports, were "systematic collections of information about pupil perspectives on teachers" and "important, useful, and reliable data about teacher performance" (Peterson, 2000, p. 103). In the year 2000, among 115 universities and colleges in Taiwan, the percentage of schools using student ratings (Figure 2) were the private regular universities at 95.2%, which turned out to be the institutions with highest usage of student ratings among all universities. The second group was the military universities and colleges, 87.5%, and the lowest group was at the normal universities and colleges, 66.7%. Student ratings of instructors were almost synonymous with teacher evaluation, for it was a pervasive and important evaluation of teacher behavior and performance (T-S. Chang, 2002b, 2002c).
Figure 2. The Percentage of Student Ratings in Taiwan Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military University and College</th>
<th>Normal University and College</th>
<th>Private Technical and Vocational University</th>
<th>Public Technical and Vocational University</th>
<th>Private Regular University</th>
<th>Public Regular University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The figure is according to D-S. Chang's table (2002c) drawing in his book, Student Ratings of Instruction: Theory, Practice, and Attitude.

History of Student Ratings of Instructors

Riley, Ryan, and Lifshitz (1950) believed, "informal student ratings of teachers are probably as old as the teacher-student relationship itself...even the formal student evaluation of faculty is not a new phenomenon in higher education" (p.23).

The beginning of research on student ratings goes back to the 1920s (Arreola, 1995; McKeachie, 1990). Riley, et al. (1950) recorded, "As early as 1922, the school of Education of Oklahoma A & M, in an effort to obtain some supervision of college teaching, distributed questionnaires among the student body" (p.23). Riley, et al. said the first such step as a part of top-level policy ever taken by an American university, attempting to use student evaluation as administrative aids, was an experiment at the University of Michigan. They also noted that Purdue University sponsored what is perhaps the foremost study with respect to student evaluations of college professors.
This was conducted by H.H. Remmers, and reflects Purdue's desire to improve teacher performances through feedback from students.

After 80 years, student ratings of their instructors have been accepted by faculty in general and have become a method of encouraging teacher development and enhancing teaching performance. Research in the field of student ratings started with developing instruments for examining factors related to evaluations, as well as possible misconceptions. The question representing the field of student ratings has gone from "shall we do it" to "how could we do it better" (T-S. Chang, 2002c).

*Student Ratings in Taiwan*

TamKang College was considered as the first school to start teacher effectiveness evaluation in 1966 in Taiwan. There were a few schools engaged in teacher evaluation before the 1980s, 21 schools in 1990, and then 93 schools after 1991, which is over 80.9% of universities/colleges (T-S. Chang, 2002c). According to Chang's analysis, there are several reasons: (a) the blossoming of democracy for autonomy and free speaking on campus, (b) the numbers of higher education environments increased rapidly, (c) education reform has been supported by the community, (d) tuition is getting higher and higher, and the "student as consumer" has become a popular theory, and (e) the MOE required teacher promotion not only through research but also teaching performance and effective service to students.

*Purposes: Formative versus Summative Evaluations*

According to the book: *Supervision and Instructional Leadership* (Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, 2001), formative and summative evaluations are two broad categories of teacher evaluation. This book described, "Summative teacher evaluation is
an administrative function intended to meet the organizational need for teacher accountability" (p.299). They further emphasized that these evaluations can be used to make decisions about remediation and, if necessary, termination for inadequate teaching performance. Sometimes summative evaluation also determines the eligibility for rewards for outstanding performance.

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001) stated: “formative teacher evaluation is a supervisory function intended to assist and support teachers in professional growth and improvement in teaching” (p.300). Formative evaluation is focused on the needs of teachers, and only on teaching and learning. Formative evaluation is concerned with building trust and rapport, developing a collegial relationship between evaluator and teacher, and addressing teacher needs and concerns. Students, peers and parents feedback is more likely to be accepted if done as part of formative evaluation, because it is purely for the purpose of helping the teacher to improve his or her instruction. Glickman, et al. (2001) also pointed out that both types of evaluation are necessary.

Which strategy for separating summative and formative evaluation is [that which is] best for a district or school will depend on the level of administrative and supervisory expertise, the size of the staff, teacher preference, and available resources. The important thing is that [both types of evaluation] be kept separate. Doing so will mean that both summative and formative evaluations are carried out more effectively. (p.304)

As teacher evaluation systems have expanded to include provisions for formative as well as summative evaluation and as opportunities for release time have increased, the prevalence of peer involvement in professional development has begun to grow. These

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observations imply that the success of growth-oriented teacher evaluation may be a function, in part, of systematic factors (Duke & Stiggins, 1990). Evaluation of professional development has been increased to assist the teacher in continuing to grow. Because new research causes bodies of knowledge to change over time, it is expected that members of a profession—including that of teaching—will remain abreast of new developments. Failure to do so could place students at substantial risk (Duke, & Stiggins, 1990).

Iwanicki (1990) purported that, teacher evaluation can serve four essential purposes: accountability, professional growth, selection of qualified teachers, and school improvement. He also indicated that most educators emphasized accountability and professional growth. Concern over accountability has tended to dominate the thoughts and actions of school officials charged with the responsibility for teacher evaluation to determine acceptable levels of competence, and prescribed areas or performance standards. Iwanicki (1990) argued that the issue is not whether the teacher-evaluation processes are being used by a school is an accountability, professional-growth, or school-improvement model, but that a teacher-evaluation process should be hypothetically flexible enough to have room for each of these purposes. For example, if a teacher has been given a reasonable period of time to enhance his/her performance in the classroom, but is still carrying on unsatisfactorily, appropriate action must be taken. The center of attention must turn from professional growth to intensive assistance and documentation for possible dismissal. While such decisions may not be easy to make, they are necessary as administrators fulfill one of their basic ethical responsibilities—make all decisions and actions for the welfare of students (Iwanicki, 1990). Therefore he suggested that a
Teacher-Evaluation Cycle - a process, accommodating multiple purposes, and having flexibility and sufficient resources, should be implemented to classroom-observation and evaluation conferences in the school system to address school improvement (Iwanicki, 1990).

Natriello (1990) referred to teacher evaluation as a school controlled system, and classified three major purposes of teacher-evaluation: (a) to influence the performance of individual teachers, (b) to control decisions about the movement of positions; for example: determining eligibility for teacher certification, and (c) to convey a sense of justice and equity in the schools' organization and its attempts at control. Darling-Hammond (1990) also recognized that "teacher evaluation can be a routine, pro forma activity with utility for shaping what goes on in schools, or it can be an important vehicle for communicating organizational and professional norms and for stimulating improvement" (p. 19). Teacher evaluations should then reflect more on how, rather than whether they affect teaching performance (Darling-Hammond, 1990).

The Effects of Teacher Evaluation

According to Natriello (1990), there are a variety of effects neither intended for nor apparent to the planning and operating of evaluation systems, which have three effects, classified by the level at which the impacts fall. They are individual, organizational, and environmental level effects and are explained as following:

1. Individual level effects. Evaluation pointing out problems in teaching to a teacher, would lead teachers to improve themselves, or conversely produce little improvement by themselves in the absence of professional development opportunities. Teachers can improve their teaching, reach their goals and gain
support and resources to meet school expectations or be motivated by their students, colleagues, and supervisors throughout the evaluation. While some teachers may be positively challenged by evaluations, others may experience extreme stress and anxiety that is never transformed into improved performance. (Natriello, 1990, p39)

2. Organizational level effects. The impact of evaluations may involve one teacher or the entire school if the evaluation process is carefully executed and soundly based. A teacher who is not evaluated negatively will avoid unexpected teaching performance, and may also better understand the value and norms of their school and their own roles in the school organization, school district, and community. Such evaluation practices might also lead to the diagnoses of organizational problems if information collected for the evaluation of an individual teacher is aggregated and examined as evidence of school-wide phenomena. A new teacher will be able to devote greater efforts and bring new competitive forces to their school and teaching when he or she experiences the evaluation system. (Natriello, 1990, p.41)

3. Environmental level effects. Those outside the immediate school organization are yet another audience for the operation of evaluation systems. For example, hiring, retention, and dismissal are highly public acts justified through the evaluation process. While improvement activities are typically kept between teachers and other immediate professional staff, other people in the district and outside the district often review status decisions. (Natriello, 1990, p. 43)
The Specific Purposes of Student Ratings

Riley, Ryan, and Lifshitz (1950) supposed, student ratings “have developed in response to two different yet both highly practical objectives: first, as an administrative guide to such questions as promotion and dismissal of faculty members, and second, as an instrument for improving the quality of instruction” (p.23).

T-S. Chang (2002c) theorized that some of the reasons for student ratings are as follows:

1. Raters from the student body have closely and recently observed a number of teachers.
2. Students’ frank reactions can be a beneficial aid to the faculty member in refining his/her course structure and teaching styles.
3. Student ratings are seen to be more objective than other approaches such as administrator evaluations, peer evaluation, self-rating, and classroom visitation evaluation.
4. Student ratings are unique in their capacity to indicate how students think and feel; and
5. Students are a convenient source of rating. (p.19)

T-S. Chang also said that student ratings are commonly used to be both formative feedback and a summary measure of teaching effectiveness, and also information for students in the selection of courses and teachers.

In conclusion, Student ratings have been used for four purposes: (a) to provide formative feedback of a teacher’s performance, bringing out about improvement, (b) as a summative measure of teaching effectiveness in personnel decisions, (c) as a source of
information for a student’s course selection, and (d) as an indicator or a descriptor for ongoing research into the teaching process (Lin & Liu, 1995; Marsh, 1991; Nasser & Fresko, 2002).

Importance and Controversy of Student Ratings of Instructors

Detchen (1940) proposed questions to open debate as to whether students should be unskilled in critical analysis of teaching. She said, “the negative side is found more frequently in the literature” (p. 148), and such side includes: the validity of student-rating devices cannot be established by the opinion of experts or the use of standardized tests at the college level, wide divergences in the experience and temperament of students, the unstable state of the curriculums, and that the conflicting aims of education prevent the use of such doubtful instruments as would be available as criteria. However, Detchen (1940) concluded “we must look directly to students’ response to answer the question authentically” (p. 146), and believed teachers often want to know what their students think of them but usually find out from their colleagues or supervisors, therefore the professor should have expressive interactions with students.

Sheehan (1975) made a statement that the information on personnel decisions must have proven validity; and if student ratings are to be a source of this information, they must be able to reflect effective instruction. The most frequently used method of collecting data on teaching effectiveness has been through student questionnaires. These student rating instruments, dealing with teaching behaviors and course content and organization, are paper-and-pencil, fixed-response. Yet the validity of student ratings is undoubtedly the weakest area for administration. Not only has the validity of student ratings not been substantiated, but also recent findings have shown that in some cases...
they can be invalid and can convey misinformation (Sheehan, 1975).

There are positive benefits and differing concerns since student ratings of instructors have been used. Opponents argue that students are not competent or qualified to make reliable and valid judgments and cannot know what the courses should cover. They argue that student ratings are usually based on teacher popularity and are affected by course, instructor, and student characteristics, and also threaten academic freedom, job satisfaction and motivation. In contrast, there are also supporters who believe in students’ ability to make valuable judgments (Nasser & Fresko, 2002).

Mao (2000) analyzed and articulated seven controversies of student ratings which are: (a) the aptness of student ratings, (b) the purpose of student ratings, (c) the criteria and instrument of student ratings, (d) the procedure of student ratings, (e) the outcome and treatment of student ratings, (f) the impact factors of student ratings, and (g) the influence of student ratings. These issues for researchers to take into account have been developed and will be discussed as below.

Research of Student Ratings of Instructors

Arreola (1995) lists common misconceptions and beliefs to illustrate ideas about student ratings from students, teachers, and even researchers. They are: (a) students’ immaturity, lack of experience, and unreliability; (b) teachers are qualified by their publication record and expertise; (c) students rating schemes are a popularity contest; (d) students make accurate judgments until away from courses, or universities; (e) student rating forms are both unreliable and invalid; (f) the size of the class affects student ratings; (g) gender of teacher and student affects student ratings; (h) time of course offered affects student ratings; (i) whether a required or elective course affects student ratings; (j)
students' major or non-major affects student ratings; (k) level of course affects student ratings; (l) rank of the instructor affects student ratings; (m) grades or marks a student received in the course affect student ratings; (n) single general items are an accurate measure of instructional effectiveness; and (o) student ratings cannot be meaningfully used to improve instruction. These 15 items have been examined by researchers and received applicable outcomes.

Researchers are concerned that overuse and frequency of student ratings may influence students' frank reactions (cited as T-S. Chang, 2000), and that the quality of teaching is not improved and neither is educational reform. Are student ratings such as in Apple and Jungck's statement (1992): "quality is sacrificed for quantity, and getting done is substituted for work well done" (p.25)? Only when teacher evaluation is based on constructive criticism, and positive and helpful information, will student ratings become a source of personnel policy making and effective instruction. If the evaluation cannot distinguish between a good and a bad teacher, it is unfair, unjust, and invalid. If the evaluation causes good teachers to quit growing, and bad teachers to be rewarded, it will not help students improve their learning.

In general, teaching is not a matter of determining how students learn but enabling them to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop learning that encourages analysis, integration and assessment. Students in the classroom are those most able to directly observe their teacher's ability to teach. They have the need and the right to be satisfied with the quality of teaching. It is of practical importance that students are able to evaluate their teachers' ability to teach. Despite some teachers who fear inappropriate evaluation due to students' biases, evaluations are very helpful and informative. Actually,
dedicated and motivated teachers seek additional knowledge and skills in teaching in order to make growth and visible progress. Students learn from what is "caught" rather than what was taught.

Research concerning student ratings in Taiwan includes three approaches: their relationship to other variables, including possible biasing factors (P-J. Chang, 2002; Mao, 2000); the development of the instruments, including psychometric quality, reliability and validity of student ratings of instructors (P-S. Chen, 2000; Tzeng, 2001); and the comparison of teacher perception with student perception of student ratings (T-S. Chang, 2002a).

The Impact Factors on Student Ratings of Instructors

There is no doubt that student judgment exists, and the professor is sheltered from its influence, but the students are all too often deemed incapable of competent evaluation (Riley, et. al, 1950). Some may argue that saying "nothing" but teaching charmingly is appropriate or is the indicator for personnel decisions and/ or the quality of instruction (Sheehan, 1975; Bauer, 1997). Factors which Sheehan stated may cause variation in student ratings included: (a) student gender, (b) student class, (c) student age, (d) student grade point average, (e) subject matter areas, (f) class size, (g) elective or required course, (h) gender of instructor and gender of student, and (i) academic rank of instructor (Sheehan, 1975). However, P-S. Chen (2000) conducted an empirical study of student ratings at Chang-Geng University but found no difference between student ratings and any independent variable such as gender, year in university, discipline, grade, or course taken.
T-S. Chang’s research, from 1999 to 2002, examined background factors with a construct regression model which predicted that student enthusiasm, participation, expected grade, grading standards and teacher age, accounted for 80.2% of the variance in the final regression equation (2001). Student enthusiasm meant the level of student interest in the subject or course. Frequency of student attendance in the class for the semester was determined to be participation. Expected grade meant the final grade students expected the instructor would give to them. Grading standards was defined to mean the discrepancy between students anticipated grade and the grade their teacher would give to them. Thus, the higher the discrepancy was, the stricter the grading standard was. But, there was no significant difference in schools with required and optional policies regarding student ratings regardless of the perceptions were from student or teacher (2002a, 2002b). T-S. Chang (1999) also found that results overall supported a prediction that instructor gender would influence on student ratings of professors in teachers colleges. He further asserted that both male and female faculty were perceived and evaluated differently, depending on types of courses they teach (1999).

Huang (2002) studied the faculties’ concept of student ratings at 11 universities of technology and found that the factors influencing student ratings were: (a) course difficulty, (b) teacher’s sense of humor and lecture talent, (c) grading standards, (d) the extent of students’ respect, (e) school or teacher’s response to the ratings, (f) teacher’s outlook, and (g) the teacher’s rank of academics.

Mao (2000) indicated that the factors that influence reliability of student ratings of instruction were: poor evaluation instruments, students dishonestly in evaluating their
teachers, lack of students' respect for evaluations, teachers' dislike of student ratings, and so on. Students tended to ignore the importance of ratings and thus were not highly motivated when responding, especially when they did not know the purpose and usage of this measure, or when they did not feel the impact of improved teaching quality. Through Mao's analysis from the open-ended questions and interviews, there were 116 teachers and students in the 1,286 sample showing that students had the right to evaluate their teachers but lacked objectivity and the qualifications to give teachers feedback about their teaching effectiveness.

Tzeng (2001) conducted an empirical study of student ratings at The School of Management of National Chen-Kung University, and found a relationship between class size and student ratings. Small classes and large classes both gave teachers better ratings than middle-sized classes. There was a relationship between rate of attendance and student ratings, but the difference existed only in two groups: 80-94% attendees and 95% and over attendees. The relationship between the feeling of fairness and student ratings was strong. The better the feelings about teachers being fair, the better the student ratings that are given to those teachers.

Research regarding the aptness, purpose, procedure, outcome and treatment of student ratings found that most of teachers and students accept student ratings to be an apt feedback for teachers' improvement and development (Chen & Huang, 2002; Huang, 2002; Juang, 2002; Mao, 2000). The best time to have student ratings of instructors is the end of each semester; the place to conduct these evaluations is the classroom, and the student in charge of the classroom should be the one to oversee these evaluations (Abbott, Wulff, Nyquist, Ropp, & Hess, 1990). Juang (2002), Chen and Huang (2002) suggested
in their research that student ratings should be a way to encourage teachers and not to control them, workshops and peer coaching opportunities were suggestions they made that could be the result of the evaluation data.

**Student Attitudes/Perception**

T-S. Chang’s research (2000) asserted that students are more confident than teachers in accepting the student ratings and publishing the results. T-S. Chang’s research also concluded that students fear giving negative comments and may not reveal their true feelings about a class (2000). Notwithstanding, 51% of faculty participants in teachers colleges agree that students should rate teachers, and 70% of faculty participants in teachers colleges agree that instructors should accept student rating. T-S. Chang (2000, 2002a, 2002b) concluded that teachers and students do not believe that good teaching is reflected in the ratings.

Chen and Huang (2002) conducted a focus group to interview nine physical education teachers, and found that there are five aspects about how teachers judge objectiveness of student ratings. First, teachers compare the student ratings to their knowledge about teaching performance and effectiveness, thus, some teachers who performed well in their own eyes and get higher ratings, will believe the ratings. Second, teachers will accord the extent of students’ free speaking on campus to judge the degree of their objectiveness. That is, they will agree with the ratings if students are open-minded and the school setting allows less restraint. Third, if students perceive an overuse of ratings they may not take them seriously. Fourth, they will see the aptness of reactions if the highest and lowest ratings are going to a few specific teachers. Fifth, they will listen to students’ reasons for course selection, because some high student ratings may be given
to the courses students like, and some of the courses may also be courses where teachers give high grades.

Mao (2000) conducted an empirical study of student ratings at National Taipei Teachers College and found that 81% of faculties and 89% of students did not believe that student ratings of instruction was against the traditional culture of the concept of how to respect teachers. Even though 55% of faculties believed college students were capable of rating the instruction or teacher performance, 43% of faculties did not believe students objectively complete the student ratings of instruction form. Fifty-one percent of students thought ratings had a small measure of reliability. There were 85% of students who consider themselves competent to rate instruction, and 58% of students were serious about doing the ratings. In addition, 73% of students did not greatly respect student ratings of instruction, and 11% did not respect those ratings at all. Mao also did the qualitative analysis in the same study and found that 32% of 186 participating students who answered the open-ended questions did not complete teacher evaluations honestly because they were afraid of (a) retribution from their instructors, (b) hurting their instructors by telling them the truth, and (c) having a bad grade from their evaluations of their instructors.

A number of studies (T-S. Chang, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Chen & Huang, 2002; Juang, 2002) concurred that instructor presence in the classroom during evaluations may impact the ratings and advised that a classroom chairman should monitor the process instead of the instructors. Some researchers (Chen & Huang, 2002; Juang, 2002) also concluded that student ratings could be conducted on-line, because students are comfortable with on-line privacy and its efficiency.


Scales of Student Ratings of Instructors in Taiwan

Tzeng (2001) and Wu (2002) used the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to design a questionnaire and have it weighted by three teachers’ answers. P-J. Chang (2002), Gau, et al. (2000), Jung (2002), Lin and Liu (1995), and Tsai (1989) used Likert scales to design the questionnaires, factor analysis to examine the construct validity, experts’ review to determine content validity; and Cronbach’s α to examine reliability.

Su, Yiau, and Lin (2001) used the Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) model to analyze components of the student ratings form. Su, et al found that interaction (between teacher and student), and instruction (such as teaching skill, teaching effects and materials preparation) would be mutually influenced, and are influenced by cultural difference, the validity of the instrument, and the way of implementation of student ratings. The indicators of student ratings were also explored (T-S. Chang, 1999, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; P-S. Chen, 2000; Huang, 2002; Juang, 2002; Su, et al., 2001; Tzeng, 2001) and the finding specified that the most frequent indicator is instruction design, which includes teachers’ attitude and professionalism, teaching material and preparation, teaching skill and method, grading standard of instructors and student self-evaluation.

C-D. Chen (2000) used satisfaction as a factor to develop a model of statistical analysis for examining educational performance, and introduced an element of teaching quality causation process. This process pointed out that teaching, student counseling, classroom management, and the use of other tools might promote quality of teaching. C-D. Chen (2000) suggested that using Yes/No choices in the evaluation form, or four choices (strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree) at most, could reduce complexity while producing optimum results.
Summary of Literature Reviews

Western Society, especially the United States, has influenced educational reform in Taiwan. The most important goal of educational reform is to enhance students' learning through the improvement of teacher quality. In order to improve teacher quality, the MOE demands that universities and institutes evaluate instructors based on a 20-30% weight for instruction quality, and 70-80% for research/publishing. Therefore, universities and institutes established the rule of evaluation, and utilized student ratings universally to be a measure of teaching effectiveness. In Taiwanese culture, teachers evaluated students from a higher position, but the use of student ratings threatens their authority and dignity. Thus, research has examined the validity of student ratings. Little research in literature reviews was found that studied response validity, however, this study will investigate the objective perception from students to clarify teachers' questions, and provide results for the decision making process within educational leadership.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The problem motivating this study was rooted in Taiwanese traditional culture. Teachers are perceived as both conservative and highly respected authority figures, so while the importance of student feedback is widely accepted, it is not yet clear whether that feedback was influenced by cultural norms or other variables identified in the review of literature. This research investigated the question of whether students have adjusted sufficiently to the concepts underlying the evaluation process to be able to objectively respond to teacher evaluation criteria in ways that would provide useful data for instructor development. In addition, other factors within the organizational structure were analyzed to see what relationship, if any, these factors may have on the objectivity of student evaluations.

The research question was to what degree were the responses of student ratings of instructors in technical universities and institutes based upon objective criteria? According to the research question, this research explored the objectivity of student ratings of their instructors regarding cultural consciousness and other intervening factors. Data were collected based upon a questionnaire developed by the researcher that reflects the findings of the review of literature.
Research Design

Population and Sample

Population

The population for this research was all students at the four-year colleges in the technical universities and institutes in Northern Taiwan, including Keelung, Taipei, and Taoyuan. All two and five-year junior colleges were being eliminated from technical universities and institutes, and this research focused on four-year programs in institutes and universities. There were 71 technical universities and institutes in Taiwan having four-year schools, of which 21 are located at Keelung, Taipei, and Taoyuan. From these 21 schools, 10 schools that had been functioning long enough to have students in all four years of study served as the population. The number of students in the population was approximately 24,000 in northern Taiwan.

The map on the next page (Figure 3) shows the country of Taiwan and the area in which this research was conducted is enlarged. From these administrative areas, the four-year colleges in the technical universities and institutes were selected based upon specific criteria discussed in this section.
Figure 3. Location of Research Population in North Taiwan, R.O.C.

LOCATION OF RESEARCH POPULATION IN NORTH TAIWAN - REPUBLIC OF CHINA

KWIT - Kungwu Institute of Technology
NTUT - National Taipei University of Technology
NTUST - National Taiwan University of Science and Technology
CHIHLEE - Chihlee Institute of Technology
CHIT - China Institute of Technology
TNIT - Tungnan Institute of Technology
SITC - Sihl Institute of Technology and Commercial
SJSMIT - St. Johns Institute of Technology
OIT - Oriental Institute of Technology
LHU - Lonhwa University

North Taiwan ROC
Taiwan ROC

Prepared by Jenea Bookish - November 2004
Sample

The schools serving as the population for this research were broken down into four categories, that is, universities of technology, institutes of technology, institute of commercial, and institute of technology and commercial combined (Table 1). A single school was randomly selected from each of the four categories in which there is more than one school.

Table 1

Research Samples of Universities and Institutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Technology</th>
<th>Institute Technology</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Combined</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NTUST</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTUT</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHU</td>
<td>CHIT</td>
<td>CHIHLEE</td>
<td>OIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KWIT</td>
<td></td>
<td>SITC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SJSMIT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* NTUST-National Taiwan University of Science and Technology. NTUT-National Taipei University of Technology. LHU-Lonhwa University. CHIT-China Institute of Technology. CHIHLEE-Chihlee Institute of Technology. OIT-Oriental Institute of Technology. KWIT-Kungwu Institute of Technology. SITC-Sihi Institute of Technology and Commercial. TNIT-Tungnan Institute of Technology. SJSMIT-St Johns Institute of Technology.

Once these schools were determined, four classes representing freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes were randomly selected from each school. The anticipated sample size was a minimum of 30 students in attendance in each class.
providing a total sample size of at least 120 students per school or a total minimum research sample size of 480 students.

Procedure

Consent Letter and Permission

Permission was obtained from the appropriate authority before the formal survey was conducted. A letter of explanation (Appendix A) was mailed to the persons who were in charge of the classes in the Academics Affair Office or appropriate unit. The researcher contacted the school officials, i.e., the Academic Affair officer, two days after sending the letter, in order to make an appointment to discuss the research.

Random Sampling

Once permission was obtained, freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes were randomly selected within each of the four schools selected for this research. Each class in the sample had a minimum of 30 students in attendance in order to qualify for participation. It was anticipated that most classes were larger than 30 students and participants were expected to range in age from 18 to 65 years with gender expected to be evenly divided, within some variation, between male and female.

Anonymity and Privacy

The researcher and Academics Affair officer went to the classes and obtained the consent of the teachers to survey their students. At the earliest convenient time to conduct the survey, students were given instructions and some information regarding the research. Students were informed that privacy was provided to individuals by anonymously collecting the questionnaire in a box. There was no identifying information on the questionnaires, thus providing anonymity for all participants. In addition, students were
told that participation was voluntary and participation or lack thereof would not affect their grades or have any other consequences.

Teachers and the researcher left the classroom until all students who choose to participate had an opportunity to complete the questionnaire. All data obtained were stored in a secure environment. The researcher explained, in depth, the questionnaire to the participants, including: (a) the purpose of the research, (b) autonomy and the confidentiality afforded the participants, that is, the statements drawn by the researcher based upon the data that go beyond an individual case, and (c) who to contact with questions during or after the study. They were also informed that they had the opportunity to withdraw at any time without penalty if they wish to stop participating in the research. Students were told to expect to take about 20 minutes in order to complete the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire (Appendix B) for this research was used to generate data that provide a determination of the degree to which objective student ratings of instructors were existent in higher education. Based upon the review of literature, six domains were identified regarding threats to objective instructor evaluation. These domains were identified here as (a) cultural beliefs, (b) school climate, (c) classroom climate, (d) student personal beliefs, (e) student attitude, and (f) student behavior (Appendix C). Data was gathered from these domains that provided for the identification of objective evaluations and the degree to which evaluations were submitted based upon objective criteria. Data were also gathered for other purposes described below.
Content validity

In order to determine content validity, a pilot study was conducted in which Taiwanese university administrators and professors reviewed the questionnaire for appropriateness relative to response validity. The final questionnaire has reflected changes logically derived from the pilot study. Three professors, one of whom was a language professor, all fluent in English and Chinese, reviewed the questionnaire for translation integrity.

Reliability

There was a set of questions within the questionnaire that served as a test for internal reliability. A Cronbach’s alpha was computed and reported for these questions.

Objective Validity

The questionnaire was composed of 11 questions all of which were essential to determining if objective teacher evaluations were being conducted. Respondents were sorted into those who had perfect scores on those questions and those respondents who did not. This disaggregating of respondents constituted the fundamental division of data into nominal, dichotomous categories of objective and subjective evaluators and served as the criterion variable.

Objective and Subjective Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics of the objective and subjective evaluators were determined from the remaining questions and analyzed by frequency and predictability of the dichotomous categorization of objective and subjective evaluators. Predictor variables would consist of the demographic and/or descriptive variables that are not essential to objective validity were used to describe characteristics common to and different from the criterion variable.
Treatment of Data

The first level of analysis was to determine the level at which respondents, i.e., college students, were objective in their evaluations of their instructors. This was accomplished by calculating the overall percent of respondents who reported a consistent pattern of objective evaluation.

The second level of analysis was to determine if any interval/ratio level data served as experimentally important and consistent predictor variables of objective/subjective evaluators. This analysis was conducted using discriminate function analysis.

The third level of analysis was to examine from a within perspective the differing degrees of subjective evaluation and characteristics that may be consistent with varying degrees of subjectivity reported by student evaluators.

Null Hypothesis

The above proposed analysis required the following null hypothesis: there were no experimentally important or consistent predictability of objective evaluations based upon demographic/descriptive variables reported by respondents.

A Priori Definitions

Experimental importance was defined to be a 70% correct level of predictability.

Experimental consistency was defined at \( \alpha = .05 \) level.

Objectivity was defined to exist when data reported was reasonably consistent with what any other unbiased person would report for the same observation.
Threats to Validity

**External Validity**

External validity was addressed by a random selection of schools and classes within those schools. Further, school officials randomly assigned members of those classes.

**Internal Validity**

The primary threat to internal validity, in the absence of a pretest posttest design, was instrumentation. The translation from English to Chinese reflecting grammatical and cultural differences, while evaluated for integrity of translations, cannot be completely controlled.

Limitations

This research was limited by the willingness of school officials to permit this research to take place within their schools. It is possible that those officials so willing to allowed the research would have a more positive attitude toward objective teacher evaluations, which in turn, may provide for a more positive school climate and culture in those schools relative to other schools in which officials did not permit the research.

Delimitations

This research was delimited to northern Taiwan thus limiting the degree to which these findings may be generalized to all of Taiwan.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The problem statement of this research provided the direction for these findings. The quality of teachers and instruction is directly related to student academic achievement, therefore, colleges and universities in Taiwan have used student ratings to provide feedback on teachers' performance for personnel decisions. Yet due to traditional Chinese culture, the validity of student ratings was questionable according to most researchers (Chang & Wang, 2002; P-S Chen, 2000; Mao, 2000; Tzeng, 2001). Accordingly, the research question was, "To what degree were the responses of student ratings of their instructors in technical institutes and universities based upon objective criteria?"

Pilot Study

A pilot study, which determined content validity was conducted in which three Taiwanese university administrators and professors reviewed the questionnaire for appropriateness relative to response validity. The final questionnaire (Appendix D) reflected changes logically derived from the pilot study. Three professors who are fluent in English and Chinese reviewed the questionnaire for translation and content integrity.

Results

Response Rate

The survey was conducted in the spring semester of 2005, from February 21st to March 24th. Research took place in four different institutions. The sample size was anticipated to have at least 480 participants, and the actual sample size was 633
respondents from 15 classes. There were seven incomplete questionnaires returned with numerous blanks; thus, the response rate was 99%, and the net sample size was 626.

Interpretability of the Data

Consideration was give to detection of a possible response set from the data gathered in this research. Several indicators suggested that the data gathered was interpretable. A Cronbach’s alpha was conducted and found responses to be moderately consistent at a .64 level. This suggests that respondents’ answers had sufficient variability to indicate they did not respond in the same way throughout and yet sufficient consistency to suggest that thought was given to each response thus providing commonality on some issues and differences on others.

Demographic Data

Respondents’ Gender, Age and Years in Higher Education

In this survey, 278 (44.4%) participants were female, and 348 (55.6%) were male, therefore gender was nearly evenly divided. The population for this research was students in technical institutes and universities. As a result, the participants for this survey showed a range of age from 16 to 33, with the majority between 19 and 23 years old. The average age of participants was 21 years. See Figure 4.
Figure 4. Distribution of Participants’ Age, $N = 626$.

As shown in Figure 5, 133 students responded from three senior classes (21.3%), 164 students responded from four junior classes (25.9%), 159 students responded from four sophomore classes (25.1%), and 167 students responded from four freshman classes (26.9%). There were three participants unclassified which accounted for 0.5%.

Figure 5. Distribution of Participants’ Year(s) in School ($N = 626$).

Respondents’ Majors, Average Scores and Credits

The respondents from the four schools included eight different majors (Figure 6), which were made up of one class of students majoring in Electronic Engineering (EE), three classes of Mechanical Engineering (ME) students, four classes of Chemical
Engineering (CE) students, one class of Electrical Engineering (EL) students, two classes of Business Administration (BA) students, one class of International Trade (IT) students, one class of Finance (FE) students, and two classes of Medical Management (MM) students. The average number of persons in a classroom was 42 students. The eight majors included technical (e.g., EE, ME, CE, and EL) and commercial (e.g., BA, IT, and FE) subject matters. There was, in addition, one mixed subject matter (MM).

*Figure 6.* Distribution of Participants’ Majors ($N = 626$).

In Taiwan, teachers grade students on a scale from zero to 100 points, and it means a student failed to pass if they receive a score below 60. The minimum average score for all class participants reported in higher education was 21, and the median average score was 72. The majority of students (86%) scored 60 or more on their higher education performance assessment. This result showed that 86% of the students performed successfully and did not fail to achieve academic expectations. However, 13% of the participants did not report their score (Figure 7).
Figure 7. Distribution of Participants’ Average Score, for all classes (N = 626).

Five hundred and thirty two participants reported that they had taken two to 47 credits after completing their first year in higher education, 19 to 117 credits after two years, 20 to 137 credits after three years, and 98 to 145 credits after four years. Among the 626 respondents, 15% (94) failed to report their credits.

Respondents’ Parents’ Education, Occupation and Monthly Income

Participants’ fathers’ education level and mothers’ education level are shown in Figure 8. Of the responses, 20.6% (129) of participants’ fathers graduated from elementary schools, 56.8% (356) graduated from secondary schools (junior high and senior high), and 16.5% (103) graduated from institutes of higher learning (junior college, university and graduate school, and military school). Two participants reported their father’s death with no reported education level, and 29 participants left this question blank. Mothers’ highest education levels were reported as elementary level 29.7% (186) of participants, secondary school level 57.4% (359), and higher education level 8.3% (52).
Figure 8. Comparison of Participants’ Father’s and Mother’s Education Levels

**Note.** Elem-Elementary School, JrH-Junior High, SrH-Senior High, JrC-Junior College, U-University, G-Graduate School, and Other included military school, death, and blank.

Information on occupation included employment status (employer, employee, self-employed, or not working) and a description of the occupation, especially whether the occupation involved a supervisory role and expertise of postsecondary levels. If the father was not working, then the family class position referred to the mother’s class position (Cheung, Rudowicz, & Lang, 2001). Li and Huang (2004) combined the same information into five categories and five scales. The first category, and scale five, was “manager and professional;” second, scale four was “lower level administration and technician;” third, scale three was “business employee;” fourth, scale two was “salesman and laborer;” and finally, scale one was “farmer and non-technical worker.” According to this coding method, the average scale of participants’ fathers’ occupation was 2.5, and the average scale of participants’ mothers’ occupation was 1.5. The majority of mothers (40.4%) stayed at home, and were defined as “housekeepers” in Taiwan. See Table 2.
Table 2

*Distribution of Parents' Occupation Level (N = 626)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale 5</th>
<th>Scale 4</th>
<th>Scale 3</th>
<th>Scale 2</th>
<th>Scale 1</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's (M=1.46)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Occupation Level: Manager and professional (Scale 5), lower level administration and technician (Scale 4), business employee (Scale 3), salesman and laborer (Scale 2), farmer & non-technical worker (Scale 1), and Other (out of employee, work at home, death and blanks). M=Mean.

Of the participants, four hundred and forty nine (72%) reported their family's average monthly income (Figure 9). Among these respondents, the minimum average income for a family per month was zero, because their parents were not employed. The average family income per month was 50,000 New Taiwan dollars (about 2,000 American dollars).
**Figure 9.** Distribution of Average Family Income per Month \((N = 449)\)

![Figure 9](image)

**Note.** Figure in NTD-New Taiwan dollars (USD-American dollars).

**Locations where Respondents Graduated from Secondary Schools**

This research focused on northern Taiwanese technical institutes and universities. The four sample schools were located in Taipei City, Taipei County, and Taoyuan County. Consequently, most of the students in this survey stayed in northern Taiwan when they studied in these secondary schools. There were 567 respondents who graduated from secondary schools in northern Taiwan, representing 90.6% of samples. In addition, 26 respondents studied in the mid regions of Taiwan, 17 studied in southern Taiwan, and nine studied in eastern Taiwan. There were seven questionnaires with no answer to this question (Figure 10.)
Figure 10. Locations where Students Graduated from Secondary Schools (N = 626)

Frequency of Student Ratings of Instructors

Participants were asked how many times they had evaluated their teachers beginning with their first semester in higher education. Thirty-four participants had never done student ratings (Figure 11). With the exception of zero (no ratings performed) and 64 blank entries, 84% (528) of participants experienced rating their instructors.

Figure 11. Frequency of Student Ratings of Instructors (N = 626)

Cultural Beliefs

This domain included 10 questions, from Q10 to Q19 in the questionnaire. It was noted that 79% of participants believed that to maintain traditional respect for their
teachers is very important (Q10). Sixty-six percent of participants have shown the same respect to teachers as to their parents (Q11). Fifty-two percent of participants believed “group harmony or showing loyalty to teachers is more important than an evaluation that might be negative toward teachers (Q14).” Ninety-two percent of participants believed “it is proper for me to give personal opinions regarding my teachers’ teaching performance (Q16).” Twenty-two percent of participants believed that the teachers’ position of authority as a teacher made the evaluation difficult for them (Q12), and 24% of participants would not give a true evaluation if they believed that it would hurt their teachers in any way (Q13). Nineteen percent of participants believed that the Chinese traditional concept holds the teachers’ position to be above student evaluations (Q15). Twenty-two percent of participants believed they should keep their opinion to themselves when they disagree with the way their teachers teach (Q17). Forty-seven percent of participants believed that they strongly respect and practice the traditional Chinese culture (Q18). Finally, 36% of participants believed that a teacher, as a scholar, holds the highest status in society (Q19). The distribution of cultural beliefs is shown in Table 3.
Table 3

Distribution of Cultural Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Question</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10) Maintain traditional respect for teachers is important.</td>
<td>493 79%</td>
<td>130 21%</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Show the same respect to teachers as to parents.</td>
<td>409 66%</td>
<td>213 34%</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Teacher authority position makes evaluation difficult.</td>
<td>139 22%</td>
<td>487 78%</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Would not give true evaluation if it hurts my teachers.</td>
<td>149 24%</td>
<td>477 76%</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Group harmony or loyalty to teachers is important.</td>
<td>322 52%</td>
<td>300 48%</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Believe in teachers’ position upholding above SRI*.</td>
<td>119 19%</td>
<td>507 81%</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Personal opinion for teachers’ performance is proper.</td>
<td>578 92%</td>
<td>48 8%</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Don’t verbally disagree with the way teachers teach.</td>
<td>135 22%</td>
<td>490 78%</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Strongly respect/practice traditional Chinese culture.</td>
<td>294 47%</td>
<td>327 53%</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) A teacher is in the highest status of society.</td>
<td>228 36%</td>
<td>398 64%</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *SRI means Student Ratings of Instructors.

School Climate

This domain included six questions, from Q20 to Q25 in the questionnaire. The results illustrated that 63\% of participants evaluated their teachers without fear of violating school trust or tradition, regardless of their personal beliefs about teacher evaluation (Q20), and 84\% of participants believed that the school committee who designed the evaluation form expected them to evaluate their teachers according to how they believe teachers’ actually perform (Q21). More than half (58\%) of participants believed that they are encouraged to speak freely in their school (Q22), and 56\% believed that they have good quality teachers and teaching efficiency (Q25), but 54\% did not believe that school officials expect and respect their evaluation regardless of their beliefs.
about teacher evaluations (Q23). It was discovered that 75% of participants answered, "true" to, "students in my school are told by school officials that they are free to evaluate teachers in a way that accurately describes how teachers taught the class (Q24)." Table 4 enumerated the responses to the School Climate domain questions in the survey.

Table 4

*Distribution of School Climate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Question</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20) Evaluate teachers without fear of violating trust/tradition.</td>
<td>395 63%</td>
<td>228 37%</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) School expects me to do the evaluation form objectively.</td>
<td>522 84%</td>
<td>103 16%</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) I am encouraged to speak freely in my school.</td>
<td>357 58%</td>
<td>262 42%</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23) School officials expect and respect my evaluation.</td>
<td>281 46%</td>
<td>329 54%</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) Students are told: free to evaluate teachers accurately.</td>
<td>467 75%</td>
<td>152 25%</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) My school has high quality, effective teachers.</td>
<td>336 56%</td>
<td>270 44%</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Classroom Climate*

This domain included six questions, from Q26 to Q31 in the questionnaire. The results of this domain are shown in Table 5. It was revealed that 48% of participants believed that they would be affected by knowing how their peers were going to evaluate a teacher (Q26). Nearly one-third of participants believed that they are hindered from completing the evaluation honestly because of conflict or an uncomfortable experience with a teacher (Q27, 29%). Twenty-one percent (Q28) indicated that they worry someone will find out how they evaluated a teacher, and they worry about getting in trouble for giving a teacher a poor evaluation (Q29, 29%). Regarding whether a teacher, advisor, or
monitor was staying in the classroom while they completed the evaluation form (Q30), 32% of participants answered, “true”, while 9% of participants believed that a classroom chairman monitored the evaluation process (Q31).

Table 5

**Distribution of Classroom Climate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Question</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) My evaluation would be affected by my peers’ opinion.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27) Conflict/comfort influence honest evaluation.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) Worry that someone will find out my evaluation.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29) Will have trouble if I give a teacher a poor evaluation.</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30) Teacher/advisor/monitor in classroom for evaluation.</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31) A classroom chairman monitors evaluation process.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students’ Personal Beliefs**

This domain included five questions, from Q32 to Q35, and Q45 in the questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 6. More than 72% of participants tended to answer these four questions “true.” That meant participants believed that they evaluate their teachers exactly as they perceive the teachers’ performance even if the teacher would get mad or upset (Q32, 86%), or it might affect their job security (Q33, 80%). They also believed that the school would improve if they gave an honest evaluation (Q34, 72%), and honest evaluations, even if negative, would help teachers improve their teaching (Q35, 82%). With Q45, the participants completed whether they have ever given an evaluation of a teacher that was different from what they really believed to be accurate,
and the result showed 24% of participants did give a different evaluation than their teachers deserved, while 76% of participants did not. The number of participants responding that they gave an evaluation of a teacher different from what the respondent believed to be an appropriate evaluation was 148. Of these responses, 55 failed to identify whether they gave a higher or lower evaluation, of the 93 remaining responses, 38 participants provided both higher and lower evaluations for their teachers, 52 provided only higher responses, and three provided only lower responses as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Distribution of Higher or Lower Teacher Evaluation; \( N = 93 \).

![Figure 12](image)

Table 6

**Distribution of Students' Personal Beliefs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Question</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32) Evaluate teacher independent of their possible reaction.</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33) Evaluate teacher accurately even if their job affected.</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34) School will improve if I give an honest evaluation.</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35) Honest evaluations, even if negative, will help teachers.</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45) Whether I gave a higher or lower evaluation.</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Students' Attitudes

This domain included five questions, from Q36 to Q40, in the questionnaire. See Table 7 for the results. In reality, 94% of participants believed they have a right and an obligation to evaluate teachers accurately (Q36). They believed the most important quality of teachers which they evaluated was how well they treat students (Q37, 77%), and also their ability to teach the subject of the class (Q38, 85%). There were 65% of participants who reported that they understood the expectation for, or purpose of, student ratings of instructors (Q40), and 44.4% of participants reported that they believed that they had sufficient knowledge to evaluate their teachers (Q39).

Table 7

Distribution of Students' Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Question</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36) I have right/obligation to evaluate teachers accurately.</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37) Most important quality: how teachers treat students.</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38) Most important quality of teachers: ability to teach.</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39) Have sufficient knowledge to evaluate my teachers.</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40) Understand school’s expectations or purpose of SRI.</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students' Behavior

This domain included four questions from Q41 to Q44 in the questionnaire. See Table 8 for the results. The participants had a tendency to believe that they had not tried to improve their grades by giving a teacher a good evaluation (Q41, 96%). The respondents also did not avoid teacher evaluations because of a fear of authority (Q42,
96%), and not give the same evaluation to all teachers (Q44, 86%). Sixty-four percent responded that they had set aside emotional bias during the teacher evaluation (Q43).

Table 8

*Distribution of Students' Behavior*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Question</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41) Tried to improve my grade by giving good evaluation.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42) Avoid teacher evaluations because of fear of authority.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43) Set aside my emotional bias when I evaluate a teacher.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44) Give the same evaluation to good and bad teachers.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Open-ended Question responses*

Two questions, Q46 and Q47, were open-ended in order to collect more spontaneous information. For purposes of analyses, these responses were sorted into several broad categories, however it was difficult at times to choose exact categories for the responses since it was possible for some responses to fit into more than one category. Since Q46 and Q47 were open-ended questions and the respondents were not available for further clarification, there were instances where the actual meaning had to be inferred, rather than overtly understood. In addition, some ideas and concepts in the Taiwanese culture do not have exact counterparts in the American culture.

*Criteria of Student Ratings of Instructors*

Q46 asked students to list the five most important qualities (criteria) that they used to evaluate their teachers. By far, 560 (89%) respondents provided 2,234 short comments shown as Table 9.
Classroom management. The most important criterion according to respondents was classroom management, which was embodied in areas such as curriculum design, teaching methodology, teaching preparation, teaching style, and discipline for students' behavior. For example, when explaining this concept participants wrote, "students would not feel bored but excited to learn in the classroom," and "the teacher taught sincerely and explained tacit knowledge in a clear, humorous, and interesting manner;" other comments students made were, "the subject was useful," "the material was abundant," and "the teachers had a clear grading rule to follow." Some responses also took into account teachers' writing on blackboards, speaking loudly enough, and/or how they explain ideas in the classroom.

Teacher characteristics. The second important criterion was teacher characteristics, which were embodied in teachers' attitude, teachers' emotion (manage teachers' own emotion), teachers' punctuality, teachers' personality and charisma, and teachers' attitude toward students. In this category, participants specified the qualities of how "teachers care about and respect students," and also "teachers taught students with all their heart." Students also included in this area that "teachers came to class on time when they asked students to do so."

Interaction with students. The third criterion was teachers' interactions with students. Interactions included: teachers were willing to communicate with students, to understand how much students have learned, or absorbed, to accept students' opinions, and to resolve students' problems after class. In this area of the questionnaire students also mentioned that teachers would act like a teacher, and like a friend; did not put down students' feelings and thoughts, never threatened students with grades, and made students
comfortable and free in class. Especially important was, "teacher would treat each student evenly," that is, "they would be fair and score every single student equally." Several participants expressed teachers must have their own emotions under control.

**Teacher qualification.** The fourth important criterion was teacher qualifications, which included areas such as teachers' intelligence, teachers' educational degrees, teachers' ability to teach, teachers' knowledge and teachers' professionalism. Participants reported that "an excellent scholar with abundant research and publishing experience is not necessary a professional teacher." Participants also reported that "teachers should be able to acquire teaching skills to improve teaching ability."

**Teachers' personal appearance.** The fifth criterion was the teacher's personal appearance, for example, "what do they look like, or how is their hair styled, and are they young?"

**Students' benefits.** Participants responded also from their perception of benefits gained, the sixth criterion, such as "how much I enjoy this teacher," and "to what extent did I learn from this teacher." The responses other than those six criteria went into a miscellaneous category, which included answers which had nothing to do with student ratings of instructors, but consisted of complaints about school business and school settings.
Table 9

*Distribution of Important Criteria of Student Ratings of Instructors (N = 2,234)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Categories of Important Criteria</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher Characteristics</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interactions with Students</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher Qualification</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Personal Appearance</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student Benefits</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Recommendations to School Administration (Officials)*

Q47 asked students to list (recommend) actions that school officials could implement to help make teacher evaluations more accurate (if they believe it is necessary to do so). Fifty-four percent (340) respondents provided their opinions on how a teacher’s evaluation could be more accurate (Table 10).

*Students’ feelings.* The majority of respondents (106) presented their feelings about the ratings in either positive suggestions or negative complaints.

Those suggestions included:

(a) The school has to do something important and respond in constructive ways to student ratings.

(b) Don’t let us down.
(c) Teachers should keep learning and studying at school or other places to improve their teaching.

(d) It is meaningful to do the student ratings to help teachers change.

(e) The school should indeed inform teachers concerning the results of student ratings about their effectiveness or weaknesses.

(f) The school should listen to students and investigate the causes of student ratings in order to enhance interactions between teachers and students.

(g) Student ratings should be an action to discern between good teachers and bad ones, and improve both teaching and learning, and

(h) School and students should respect the ratings.

The negative complaints were comprised of:

(a) It’s useless, hopeless.

(b) Our efforts were in vain, because school did not respect the evaluation.

(c) School or teacher did not change anything to reflect the ratings, so it just wastes our time.

(d) I feel so disappointed in the school, because several teachers’ teaching style and knowledge were so poor without any improvement after the student ratings.

(e) They even got an excellent teacher evaluation reward, and

(f) I don’t believe the school cares about our opinion, besides there is no privacy and teachers know who gave him/her a good or bad evaluation and would give the evaluation back.

Other than just feelings, the respondents also reported many recommendations for the ratings, which were about the teacher evaluation questionnaire, the process of student
ratings of instructors, and different ways to do the teacher evaluation.

_Evaluation form._ According to those recommendations, the teacher evaluation questionnaire should be confidential (39 respondents);

(a) It should be an evaluation form without name or personal information identified.

(b) It is good for us to do the evaluation through the Internet but not necessary to log on by student ID, and/or

(c) Do not identify students to the teachers, for I worry about repercussions if I answer the evaluation honestly.

One student said that "a teacher of mine told us he/she will fail students if the teacher receives less than 80 points on the evaluation, that is why they need privacy." Of these respondents, two students recommended doing the ratings at home. Some respondents recommended that school should not have teachers in charge of the process of ratings.

The teacher evaluation questionnaire should also have more options, or an open ended "other" option that could be completed by the students. The additional places should allow students to say: (a) the way you think that teachers need to improve, (b) the recommendation that you will give to your teacher, (c) the positives and negatives of the teacher's teaching and how to improve. Student rating forms do not allow the students to react emotionally because at this time they only have the options of checking agree or disagree, or yes or no. Seventeen respondents recommended that they would prefer writing down their personal opinion in depth, instead of completing the evaluation form that the school designed.
Thirteen respondents said “just do it, the school has already done a good job,” but 16 respondents reported, “some student ratings are not reliable” not only for “students’ personal reason (two respondents)” but also because of items the design of the evaluation form. The respondents identified there were “too many teachers to evaluate at the same time and the evaluation forms are not useful for evaluating all teachers in different subjects.”

Some of the respondents were also concerned about the process of doing student ratings. They recommended that (a) school administrators should explain the purpose and importance to students before the ratings, and (b) listen to students’ opinions or do research about what students think, and then (c) design a questionnaire more reliable and valid.

Dealing with results. Participants recommended that schools should reward teachers with good evaluations, and dismiss teachers with bad evaluations. One participant suggested that with good evaluations honoring teachers in public and when communicating their weakness with them that should be done in the private. The way participants suggest teachers with good evaluations could be rewarded was to tell teachers about the virtues that students considered them to have, raise their salary, give presents, and/or promotions. Authentic actions for teachers with bad evaluations might be that the school could reduce their salary or keep a bad record in teachers’ files, and so on. Some participants recommended, “follow up the evaluation to observe if teachers improve their teaching.”

Another possibility to deal with the results is to publish them, announcing the results of student ratings to all teachers and students in a public setting. They gave these
reasons: (a) to protect students from a teacher seeking revenge on them, and (b) to provide information for students to use when selecting their classes.

Coping with privacy, participants also recommended a way to inform teachers, to help them understand students' needs and characteristics, such as "a meeting to communicate with students," or "a seminar to discuss how to improve teaching effectively or interdisciplinary teaching to observe other teachers' teaching."

Alternative. Participants in this research suggested these alternatives. Other than the evaluation form to do the student ratings, schools could have an alternative for evaluating teachers, (a) to build a website or provide an e-mail account or a particular phone line for communication and interaction between teachers and students, or administrators and students. Schools should respond instantly, or at least let students know the process or the situation; even if they could not resolve the problems right away; (b) participation in the classroom by administrators (three respondents) without notifying teachers--just show up, randomly choose students to investigate teachers' teaching, or through video and/or audio tapes (six respondents); (c) a competition between departments, or students vote in the department to decide who is a good teacher and who is not.

Six participants recommended that schools should set clear and severe criteria for selecting a good teacher from the beginning, that is, to interview and provide work for a teacher carefully, and than evaluate them after they teach. "Schools should also provide pre-training and/or in-service training for teachers." Only one participant recommended evaluating teachers' research and/or the students' achievement to be considered in the teacher's performance.
Table 10

*Distribution of Recommendations (N = 340)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students' feeling</td>
<td>Suggestions</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complaints</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation form</td>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing instead of checking</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More options</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good job</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unreliable ratings</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The items designed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal reason</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with results</td>
<td>Reward/Dismissal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publish to the public</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting for teachers and students</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informing teachers carefully</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Communication channel</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in classes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-training and/or In-service training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research and/or students achievements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>More like an answer to Q46 or other issues</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Objective Evaluation*

Objective evaluations were identified as a set of 11 questions, that is, Q13, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q26, Q27, Q32, Q33, Q41, Q44, and Q45. Among these questions, seven
questions, Q13, Q15, Q17, Q26, Q27, Q41, and Q44, identified an objective evaluation with a false response. A “no” response to Q45 was also considered as an objective evaluation. On the other hand, Q16, Q32 and Q33 identified an objective evaluation with a true answer. Those questions were broken down into four domains: (a) Students’ Behavior (Q41 and Q44), (b) Cultural Beliefs (Q13, Q15, Q16, and Q17), (c) Students’ Personal Beliefs (Q32, Q33, and Q45), and (d) Classroom Climate (Q26 and Q27).

The strongest degree of objective evaluation was found in the domain of Students’ Behavior. Students had an overall objective response rate of 91% in this domain. The survey items for objective evaluation are: (a) I have tried to improve my grade by giving my teacher a good evaluation (Q41), and (b) I give the same evaluation to all teachers whether they are good teachers or bad (Q44).

The Cultural Beliefs domain had the next highest degree of objectivity with an 82% of response rate. The survey items for objective evaluation are: (a) I do not give a true evaluation if doing so will hurt my teachers in any way (Q13), (b) I believe in the Chinese traditional concept of teachers’ position upholding him/her as above student evaluation (Q15), (c) I believe that it is proper for me to give personal opinions regarding my teachers’ teaching performance (Q16), and (d) I should keep it to myself when I disagree with the way my teacher teaches (Q17).

The Students’ Personal Beliefs domain was very close to the Cultural Beliefs domain with an 81% of response rate. The survey items for objective evaluation are: (a) I evaluate my teacher exactly as I perceive my teacher’s performance even if I think the teacher would get mad or upset (Q32), (b) I evaluate my teacher accurately even if I think
my evaluation might affect their job security (Q33), and (c) Have you ever given an evaluation of a teacher that was different than you really believed accurate (Q45)?

The last domain of objective evaluation, Classroom Climate, had a 62% response rate. The survey items are: (a) If I knew how my peers were going to evaluate a teacher, knowing so would affect my evaluation (Q26), and (b) Conflict or an uncomfortable experience with a teacher hinders me from completing the evaluation honestly (Q27).

Finally, the overall degree of objective evaluation for four domains was 79%. The degree of objective evaluation in each domain and the overall degree of objective evaluation for four domains are shown in Table 11.
Table 11

*Distribution of Degree of Objective Evaluation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q41</th>
<th>Q44</th>
<th>Total (N = 1,252)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Behaviors</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q13</th>
<th>Q15</th>
<th>Q16</th>
<th>Q17</th>
<th>Total (N = 2,503)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Beliefs</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q32</th>
<th>Q33</th>
<th>Q45</th>
<th>Total (N = 1,867)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Beliefs</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q26</th>
<th>Q27</th>
<th>Total (N = 1,251)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Climates</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 11, it can be observed that Q26 illustrated the strongest subjective evaluation percentage 48%, next Q27, 29%, followed by both Q13 and Q45 at 24%. This means participants presented more subjective evaluations in these questions: (a) My evaluation would be affected by my peers, (b) Conflict/comfort influences honest evaluation, (c) I do not give a true evaluation if it hurts my teachers, and (d) whether I...
gave a higher or lower evaluation? Nevertheless, Q41 and Q16 illustrated the weakest and second weakest subjective evaluation with 4% and 8%. That is, participants presented a less subjective evaluation in (a) I tried to improve my grade by giving good evaluation, and (b) personal opinion for teachers’ performance is proper.

Response Consistency

A Cronbach’s alpha was computed on these 11 objective questions and resulted in an α-value of .64. This suggests a moderate degree of respondent consistency across the objective questions.

Predictor Variables of Objective and/or Subjective Evaluators

Discriminate Function Analysis (DFA)

Discriminate Function Analysis (DFA) is a statistical procedure originally developed “to classify subjects into one of two clearly defined groups” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 281). More recently, DFA has been utilized as a kind of post hoc procedure for MANOVA analyses. This research will employ DFA in its original use whereby interval/ratio level variables are utilized as predictor variables analogous to multiple regression with the distinction that the criterion variable in DFA is nominal and dichotomous rather than interval/ratio as in multiple regression. By using a dichotomous variable, a nominal variable may be considered equal interval as a result of the identity property in which a single interval between the two levels of that variable is equal to itself (Sarle, 1996).

Discriminate function analysis was used to determine if any interval/ratio level descriptive data served as experimentally important and consistent predictor variables of objective and/or subjective evaluators. The general form of the predictor equation for
DFA is: Dichotomous criterion variable = computed coefficient x predictor variable. In practice, the procedure determines a cutoff score in which the computed value is compared to a calculated cutoff score and group membership is determined relative to the cutoff score. In addition, the procedure computes a p-value and a percentage of correct predictability for each group. If both groups are equally weighted, guessing would result in a rate of 50% correct predictability; therefore, a level of 70% correct predictability was set *a priori* as a level of experimental importance.

**Predictability**

Table 12, Table 13, Table 14 and Table 15 record results of the DFA analysis that were conducted to determine if there were any experimentally important or consistent predictability of respondents’ objectivity or subjectivity based upon various demographic variables.

Table 12

**Fisher’s Linear DFA Classification Results for Participants’ Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluators</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>Cutoff Score</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>.7635</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>Cutoff **</td>
<td>.7619</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>.7603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scores above this value place the respondent in the objective group, scores below place the respondent in the subjective group.
Table 13
Fisher’s Linear DFA Classification Results for Participants’ Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluators</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>Cutoff Score</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>-.1957</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Cutoff **</td>
<td>-.1999</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>-.2042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Scores above this value place the respondent in the objective group, scores below place the respondent in the subjective group.

Table 14
Fisher’s Linear DFA Classification Results for Participants’ Credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluators</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>Cutoff Score</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>.0409</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Cutoff **</td>
<td>.0409</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>.0409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Scores above this value place the respondent in the objective group, scores below place the respondent in the subjective group.

Table 15
Fisher’s Linear DFA Classification Results for Participating frequency of student ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluators</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>Cutoff Score</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>-.1285</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>Cutoff **</td>
<td>-.1362</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>-.1439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Scores above this value place the respondent in the objective group, scores below place the respondent in the subjective group.

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Characterizations of Degrees of Objectivity

In order to characterize the degree of objectivity for students’ evaluations, the respondents were sorted into those who have perfect objective scores \(N = 117\) or perfect subjective scores \(N = 0\).

Next, varying degree of objectivity were defined, for the purpose of this research, as Highly Objective if they endorsed to 10 or all 11 survey items from the objective perception (44%); Objective if they endorsed to nine, eight, or seven survey items from the objective perception (43%); Indeterminate if they endorsed to six or five survey items from the objective perception (9%); Subjective if they endorsed to four, three, or two items from the objective perception (4%); and Highly Subjective if they endorsed to one or zero of all 11 of the objective survey items from the objective perception (0%). Based upon these findings and definitions, 87% of respondents in this research were characterized as either Highly Objective or Objective. The results are shown as Figure 13 and Table 16.

Figure 13. Degree of Objectivity \((N = 626)\)
Table 16

Degree of Objectivity Distribution (N = 626)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Objective (44%)</th>
<th>Objective (43%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 10 9 8 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>117 158 124 82 61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>19% 25% 20% 13% 10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative N</td>
<td>117 275 399 481 542</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
<td>19% 44% 64% 77% 87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indeterminate (9%)</th>
<th>Subjective (4%)</th>
<th>Highly Subjective (0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>31 26 15 8 3 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>5% 4% 2% 1% 0% 0% 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative N</td>
<td>573 599 614 622 625 626 626</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
<td>92% 96% 98% 99% 100% 100% 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics were analyzed using bivariate crosstabs. Without exception, the participants' objectivity was distributed across demographic variables in the same proportion as their representation in the sample, plus or minus 2%. The p-values, calculated by the Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test, were found to be high, tending to be around .5. For example, when objectivity was analyzed by gender, recorded in Table 16 below, 44% of the objective evaluators were female and 56% were males, the same percentages in which males and females are represented in the sample as a whole. The p-value for this comparison was $p = .52$. 

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Table 17

Contingency Table of Participants’ Gender and Objective Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participates</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(44%)</td>
<td>(56%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(48%)</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 is representative of the distribution of objectivity and subjectivity across other variables recorded by frequency. That is, the variation in objectivity and subjectivity between respondents when analyzed by descriptive characteristics is explained by the inherent variation of those variables as found in the sample.

Summary of Findings

The response rate for this research was 99%, based upon a net sample size of 626. Demographic data, such as participants’ gender, age, majors, and year(s) in school was nearly evenly divided. While 100% of respondents were studying higher education in northern Taiwan, 91% had studied at secondary schools there. Eighty-four percent of participants had been involved in student ratings of their instructors.

The majority of participants had grades between 60 and 80. The average highest education level for their parents was high school, the average employment for their parents’ occupation was scale two (salesman and laborers), and the average family

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income per month was 50,000 New Taiwan dollars (about 2,000 American dollars).

This research found that 87% of respondents were characterized as either Highly Objective or Objective, 4% were found to be Subjective and 0% of them Highly Subjective. Descriptive predictor variables were found to have no experimental relevance in predicting student objectivity.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the objectivity of student ratings of instructors in technical institutes and universities in light of traditional Chinese culture. Student ratings have become an important component of professional development of teachers in Taiwan's colleges and universities. Nevertheless, due to traditional Chinese culture and the higher esteem in which teachers are held, the response validity of student ratings was questionable (Chang & Wang, 2002; P-S Chen, 2000; Mao, 2000; Tzeng, 2001). For this reason, this research was guided by the research question: to what degree were the responses of student ratings of their instructors in technical institutes and universities based upon objective criteria?

Research Question

The Students' Behavior domain was found to have the strongest degree of objective evaluation, with more than nine out of 10 respondents reporting that they have neither tried to improve grades by giving teachers a good evaluation, nor given the same evaluation to all teachers whether they are good or bad teachers.

The degree of objective evaluation in the Cultural Beliefs domain was answered with more than eight out of 10 respondents providing an objective evaluation and indicating they would do so even if it would hurt teachers in some way. These respondents also believed that it is proper to give their personal opinions regarding their teachers' teaching performance, and provided objective evaluation not withstanding the traditional high esteem that teachers are though to have in the Taiwanese culture.
The degree of objective evaluation in the Students’ Personal Beliefs domain also
found that more than eight out of 10 respondents evaluated their teachers based upon
their perception of a teachers’ performance even if their objective evaluation would result,
among other things, in affecting teachers’ job security. Furthermore, these respondents
indicated that they had never given an evaluation of a teacher that was different than they
believed accurate.

The weakest degree of objective evaluation was in the Classroom Climate domain
where six out of 10 respondents would evaluate teachers honestly regardless of their
peers’ opinions, and not be affected by a conflict or an uncomfortable experience with a
teacher.

To answer the research question, this research found that 87% of respondents were
characterized as either Highly Objective or Objective. Of these, there were 44% of
participants who were considered Highly Objective, 43% of participants Objective, while
9% of participants were Indeterminate, 4% Subjective, and 0% Highly Subjective.

Null Hypothesis

This research established a priori experimental importance at a level of 70% correct
predictability and experimental consistency at an alpha level of .05. The highest level of
predictability was in participants’ major at 58% with a p-value of .55. Overall, there was
no experimentally important or consistent predictability of objective evaluations based
upon demographic and/or descriptive variables reported by respondents. Therefore, there
was a failure to reject the null hypothesis.
Other Findings

**Objective and Subjective Responses**

Other findings showed that the response validity of student ratings of instructors in light of traditional Chinese culture was revealed in Q10 (in the Cultural Beliefs domain), where 79% of respondents believed that “to maintain traditional respect for their teachers is very important.” This finding suggests maintaining traditional respect for teachers was not a barrier to objective evaluation.

The greatest challenge to objective evaluations of teachers was found in the tendency of students to evaluate teachers based upon how their peers viewed the teachers. Nearly half of the students reported they were influenced by their peers though it was not possible to determine to what extent this tendency may actually have influenced their final evaluations.

**Open-ended Responses**

The majority (89%) of participants identified the importance of teacher quality when they referred to teacher evaluations. The important criteria for teacher quality listed by students included: (a) classroom management, (b) teachers’ characteristics, (c) interactions with students, (d) teachers’ qualification, and (e) teachers’ personal appearance. More than 50% of the participants also provided some valuable recommendations for the student ratings, including how they felt about the ratings, how to process the evaluation form, how to deal with the results of ratings, and other options that could be used to evaluate teachers.
How Participants Feel about the Ratings

Students provided positive suggestions to school leaders to implement student ratings that are both formative and summative evaluations of teachers as Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001) described. The participants suggested school officials could (a) improve teacher quality by appropriate decision making process about teachers’ remediation or determination, and (b) develop a trust and rapport relationship between administrators, teachers and students. The negative feelings from other respondents reflected their feelings that they do not believe student evaluations are respected by school officials, or teachers. The responses to this open-ended question is consistent with the finding reported in the School Climate domain where more than half of students were told and encouraged to evaluate teachers freely, but more than half of them did not believe school officials expect and respect their ratings.

How School Administrators Process the Evaluation Form

Some of respondents stated that school administrators are doing a good job. While some of them provided suggestions for the student ratings of instructors. Those recommendations included: (a) design an evaluation form based upon the research about teacher quality, (b) conduct a orientation explaining the purpose and importance of student ratings of instructors, (c) provide autonomy and confidentiality to all students regarding their grades to protect against any possible negative repercussions, and (d) give students’ opportunities to write down their own opinions instead of checking “agree or disagree.”
How School Administrators Deal with the Results of Ratings

Students were concerned with administrative follow through with cutting teachers’ pay, and/or discharging teachers who are considered as not performing well. Students also recommended making student ratings of instructors public so other students could use the information when selecting classes. These student recommendations are consistent with findings from other researchers, such as Lin and Liu (1995), and Marsh (1991).

How School Administrators Evaluate Teachers Alternatively

This research found that Taiwanese students were able to evaluate their teachers as classroom leaders without a great deal of inner conflict. Teacher authority comes from their professional knowledge and not from their “position” of being a teacher. Students recommended more communications and interactions between teachers and students by holding seminars, or exchange through the Internet. Students want to distinguish between those who are good teachers and those who are not. The student respondents also recommended that student ratings of instructors should be only one of the ways which teachers are evaluated.

Recommendations

This research offers the following recommendations for the Ministry of Education, deans, teachers, and students based upon these findings and the participants’ recommendations.

Recommendation for the Ministry of Education

Essential to educational reform in Taiwan is the implementation and success of student evaluations of teachers in higher education. In order for student evaluations to
Contribute to teacher improvement and professional development, these evaluations must be objective so as to reflect the actual strengths and weaknesses of the teachers as perceived by students. The findings and conclusions in this research support and validate to a strong degree that student evaluations are objective.

Recommendation for Deans

The deans who implement teacher improvement measures will find useful the information that student evaluations have a strong degree of objectivity to them. These evaluations will provide data for analysis that will contribute toward the improvement of professional development format and allow for more precise areas with which to focus professional development.

Deans may also use these findings to target areas in which greater degrees of subjectivity were found such as nearly half of the students are affected by their classmates' perception or opinions regarding teachers. Providing cautions to the students in the instructions for completing these evaluations may reduce subjectivity and provide better objectivity and reliability of student ratings of instructors.

Deans should note more than half of the students in this research indicated that they were disappointed because they perceived a lack of respect for their evaluations of instructors. It is important to communicate to students that their evaluations are important to the university and that these evaluations are taken seriously and will be used as one indicator of teachers' competences in the classroom.

Deans will also have opportunities to share these findings with their teachers so that teachers gain a greater confidence in how students evaluate them. Deans should impress upon teachers that a strong majority of their student evaluations will be based
upon actual performance and as quality of their performance increases, so will their evaluations.

In addition, students were very interested in offering suggestions on how to improve the validity of their evaluations and these suggestions may be very helpful to school officials. In particular, to ensure the students' evaluations are private, and cannot be traced to the students.

Deans, as educational leaders, may find these results important for appropriate decision making process and used to build an efficient communication between leaders and educators, and/or teachers and students. These proposed changes may also help to reduce subjective student ratings.

**Recommendation for Teachers**

Teachers should consider the specific findings of this research, particularly the responses to the open-ended questions as area where they might wish to improve. Students who take the time to share their thoughts on instructional improvement tend to be more objective than those who do not. Eighty-seven percent of the responses to the open-ended question were answered by objective respondents. Their objectivity serves as a means of providing fresh input that often will not be available elsewhere.

Teachers may also want to utilize the results of these findings as a means of reducing subjectivity. This may be done by addressing the most subjective areas of response; if students were reassured that their grades were not dependent on or influenced by their evaluations, it is possible that students would be even more objective.

In addition, students were very interested in offering suggestions on how to improve the validity of their evaluations and these suggestions may be very helpful to
teachers. In particular, the students’ recommendations of teachers’ abilities to manage classrooms, to interact with students, and regarding teachers’ personal appearance should be considered.

**Recommendation for Students**

Appreciation should be expressed to the students for their willingness to help improve education by means of student ratings of instructors. Their objective cooperation will make important contributions to continuing to improve higher education.

With respect to Chinese traditional roles of teachers, students are overcoming concerns about culture conflicts. Students objectively support teacher evaluations as a means to improve teaching methods which will help them to learn and to succeed in their studies.

**Conclusion**

A very large, national effort has been made to improve education in Taiwan. In order for this investment to reach its greatest potential, all individual components must work together successfully. A major component of educational reform is professional development. There are many different factors advanced by educational reform and designed to contribute toward improving teacher quality. These factors included: additional education and degrees, research, and many other improvements including student ratings of instructors. This research analyzed the success of student ratings of instructors by looking at the objectivity by which students record their evaluations.

Much of the literature indicated that Chinese culture might impede objective evaluations and thereby minimize the validity and therefore purpose of student evaluations. This research concludes the opposite. This research found a strong tendency
on the part of students to objectively evaluate their teachers. This research also found that students, while respectful of their Chinese culture, are able to objectively respect that culture while at the same time objectively evaluating their teachers. In addition, most students indicated a desire to improve the evaluation process.

It is important to note that demographic variables were not predictive of objectivity. This finding allows for the conclusion that objectivity and/or subjectivity are not the product of a particular gender, particular age, class, or other demographic variables gathered herein. Consequently, the strong degree of objectivity found in this research is representative of the entire population sampled rather than any particular subgroup. College and university students as a whole, as well as within particular circumstances are equally receptive to objectively evaluating teachers.

Implication for Further Research

A large sample from the entire nation would provide additional findings to compare with this research. In future years researchers should duplicate this study at other higher education instructions for a comparison with this research.

The criteria of teacher quality reported by respondents in the open ended questions were important information. This information may serve as a valuable aid in developing future instruments for researching teaching effectiveness. In addition, this information may also be used to help develop a more consistent and more useful evaluation forms for future use in the student ratings of instructors.
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Appendix A

Consent Letter
Dear Sir/Madam:

Student ratings of instructors have become a common form of evaluation for teachers’ professional development and promotion in technical universities and institutes. It is important to know whether students are objective on the ratings of their instructors. This research will determine response validity of student ratings of instructors regarding traditional culture.

I am doing the doctoral dissertation in the University of Montana, the United States. This research proposal is approved by my committee. Your school has been selected to help provide data for this research and, therefore, I request permission to survey students in your school using a questionnaire. It may take 20 to 30 minutes. The anticipated samples will be four classes, representing a freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior class, randomly selected for this research in your school. The anticipated sample size will be a minimum of 30 students in attendance in each class. Teachers will be requested to leave classroom while the questionnaire is given. I will contact you on the phone to set an appointment to visit you in a day or two. It will take about 15 minutes to discuss the research and select the classes.

Strict anonymity will be observed regarding your school’s name, your teachers, and the identity of your students. All data will be submitted anonymously and analyzed without identification of school, teachers, or students.

I sincerely appreciate your patience and help with this research and look forward to discussing the research with you soon!

If you have additional questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact Shu-Hui Tsai at shu-hui.tsai@umontana.edu or shtsai@mail.tnit.edu.tw. Or call (02) 86625914 ex. 539.

Yours truly,

Sophia
Doctoral student, Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling, School of Education, The University of Montana
Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire
December 2004

Dear Students,

This is a research questionnaire to determine how you view student ratings of instructors. This research will contribute to educational reform by knowing the perception of how teacher quality is reflected in student evaluation of teachers. There is no right or wrong answer. Nonetheless, your **honest response** is very important to the validity of this research. The information will be treated collectively for analysis and there is no personal identification of your school, your teacher, or yourself; your response is completely anonymous. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose not to participate if you wish. There will be no consequences from the school in any way regarding your participation.

Neither your teacher nor I will enter the classroom while you are completing the questionnaire. As soon as the last participating person has completed the survey, please send a student out of the room to inform me so that I can pick up the box of questionnaires. It will take each of you about **20 minutes** to complete this questionnaire. When you are finished, please place it in the box in the front of classroom.

I am doing the doctoral dissertation in the University of Montana, the United States. With your participation, this research will provide useful data for the instructors of technical universities and institutes in north Taiwan as well as the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. If you have additional questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact Shu-Hui Tsai at shu-hui.tsai@umontana.edu or shtsai@mail.tnit.edu.tw Or call (02) 86625914 ex. 539.

I sincerely appreciate your patience and help with this research!

Shu-Hui (Sophia) Tsai
Doctoral student, Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling School of Education, The University of Montana
The Questionnaire of Objectivity of Student Ratings of Instructors

Please check the appropriate □, or write an answer on the ______

1) I am □ male, □ female.

2) I was born in 19_____.

3) (a) My major is ____.

(b) My average score for all of my classes in higher education is ____.

(c) I have ____ credits.

4) I am a □ freshman, □ sophomore, □ junior, □ senior student.

5) My family’s average monthly income is_____.

6) My father’s highest education and occupation: _____. _____.

7) My mother’s highest education and occupation: _____, _____.

8) I graduated from secondary school in (city) ______.

9) How many times have you evaluated your teachers beginning with your first semester in higher education? _____.

Please answer the following items in a way that best reflects your belief system toward teacher evaluation.
Cultural Beliefs

10) Maintaining traditional respect for my teachers is very important to me. □ True, □ False

11) I show the same respect to my teachers as I do my parents. □ True, □ False

12) My teachers' position of authority as a teacher makes evaluation of them difficult for me. □ True, □ False

13) I do not give a true evaluation if doing so will hurt my teachers in any way. □ True, □ False

14) Group harmony or showing loyalty to teachers is more important to me than an evaluation that might be negative toward my teachers. □ True, □ False

15) I believe in the Chinese traditional concept of teachers' position upholding him/her as above student evaluation. □ True, □ False

16) I believe that it is proper for me to give personal opinions regarding my teachers' teaching performance. □ True, □ False

17) I should keep it to myself when I disagree with the way my teacher teaches. □ True, □ False

18) I have a strong respect for and practice traditional Chinese culture. □ True, □ False

19) I believe a teacher, being a scholar, is in the highest status of society regarding traditional belief. □ True, □ False
School Climate

20) Regardless of my personal beliefs about teacher evaluation, I evaluate my teachers without fear of violating school trust or tradition. □ True, □ False

21) The school committee who designed the evaluation form expects me to evaluate my teachers according to how I believe they actually perform as teachers. □ True, □ False

22) I am encouraged to speak freely in my school, such as through Bulletin Board System (BBS). □ True, □ False

23) School officials expect and respect my evaluation regardless of my beliefs about teacher evaluation. □ True, □ False

24) Students in my school are told by school officials that they are free to evaluate teachers in a way that accurately describes how teachers taught the class. □ True, □ False

25) My school has a good reputation of high quality teachers and teaching effectiveness. □ True, □ False

Classroom Climate

26) If I knew how my peers were going to evaluate a teacher, so knowing would affect my evaluation. □ True, □ False

27) Conflict or an uncomfortable experience with a teacher hinders me from completing the evaluation honestly. □ True, □ False
28) I worry that someone will find out what my evaluation of a teacher is. □ True, □ False

29) I worry that I will have trouble if I give a teacher a poor evaluation. □ True, □ False

30) My teacher, advisor, or monitor stays in classroom when I complete the evaluation form. □ True, □ False

31) A classroom chairman monitors the evaluation process when evaluations are being completed. □ True, □ False

Students’ Personal Beliefs

32) I evaluate my teacher exactly as I perceive my teacher’s performance even if I think the teacher would get mad or upset. □ True, □ False

33) I evaluate my teacher accurately even if I think my evaluation might affect their job security. □ True, □ False

34) I believe that the school will improve if I give an honest evaluation. □ True, □ False

35) I believe that honest evaluations, even if negative, will help teachers improve their teaching. □ True, □ False

Students’ Attitudes

36) I have the right and obligation to evaluate my teachers accurately. □ True, □ False

37) The most important quality I think of when I evaluate classroom teachers is how well they treat students. □ True, □ False
38) The most important quality of classroom teachers is their ability to teach the subject of the class. □ True, □ False

39) I have sufficient knowledge to evaluate my teachers. □ True, □ False

40) I understand the school’s expectations for, or purpose of, student evaluations of the instructors. □ True, □ False

Students’ Behavior

41) I have tried to improve my grade by giving my teacher a good evaluation. □ True, □ False

42) I avoid teacher evaluations because of fear of authority. □ True, □ False

43) I set aside my emotional bias when I evaluate a teacher. □ True, □ False

44) I give the same evaluation to all teachers whether they are good teachers or bad. □ True, □ False

45) Have you ever given an evaluation of a teacher that was different than you really believed accurate? □ Yes, □ No.

If so, how many of your evaluations in the past year have been given this way?:

□ How many evaluations have been higher than they deserved? ___

□ How many evaluations have been lower than they deserved? ___
Open-ended Questions

46) List the five most important qualities you use when evaluating your teachers. Please list them in order of importance beginning with the most important.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

47) List actions that you think school officials could do to help make teacher evaluations more accurate, if you believe it is necessary to do so.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Six Domains of Questionnaire
Six Domains of the Questionnaire

First, Cultural Domains:

1. Cultural Beliefs. Students’ value of instructor and instruction from traditional cultural bias, such as valuing teachers’ position or authority higher than the reality, reluctant to hurt teachers’ feeling and future for group harmony or showing loyalty to teachers.

2. School Climate. Democracy or free speaking, such as public discussion (e.g. Bulletin Board System), vs. controlling, such as school administration demanding, and a person who is in charge of doing evaluation in the classroom.

3. Classroom Climate. Collective behavior or small group and peer pressure exists in the classroom, interaction between teacher and student (students have conflict with teacher, or positive experience with teacher).

Second, Student Domains:

4. Students’ Personal Beliefs. Logical thinking (objectiveness; Autonomous observations and participation in the classroom without fear) vs. emotional reaction (tell upset experience with teacher to persons other than teachers); they believe that they are comfortable and delight in honestly making judgment of teachers or everything in school.

5. Students’ Attitudes. Their motivation is from their biases, such as interest in course, and the outlook or first impression of teachers, popularity of teachers; they understand the importance of ratings, and hope to give valuable feedback to improve teaching.

6. Students’ Behavior. Withdrawal of attendance (physical excuses, or mental disgusts) because of fear of authority; trade evaluation for grade or course easy; they are getting together or by alone with peers, and/ or teachers; they do evaluation convincingly.
Appendix D

Final Questionnaire (in Chinese)
親愛的同學

這是一份研究問卷，內容有關「學生評鑑教師教學」，你的參與作答，有助於台灣的教育界(包括教育部及技專院校的教師)思考相關問題。研究者是美國蒙大拿州立大學的博士班學生，期望藉由收集學生的意見，對教育改革與教師教學品質有關的評量有進一步的了解！

這不是考試試卷，所以沒有絕對的對錯；最重要的是請你誠實作答！本問卷匿名作答，且結果將作整體性的分析，不會涉及你個人的隱私，也不會有你的學校、班級、老師和你個人資料顯露在任何的說明、與報告之中，所以請你放心作答！

在你作答時，我本人會尊重你的隱私，讓你們自由作答。問卷只有一張(共 4 頁)，填答的時間約 10~15 分鐘，請確定回答所有的問題之後，將問卷放入教室前方的盒子裡！請盡量回答完整，不要漏答！如果你覺得填答過程使你為難，你可以加以註明，或「放棄作答」。

如果你對本研究有任何意見，歡迎透過 email 或電話與本人聯絡、討論：
Email: shu-hui.tsai@umontana.edu 或 致電 (02) 86625914 ex. 539.
如果你願意，也可以將你的 email 或聯絡電話，留在 47 項後的空白處。

謝謝！

蔡淑慧 (Sophia Tsai)

美國蒙大拿州立大學教育研究所博士班研究生

民國九十四年二月
學生評鑑教師教學回應效果量表

請你選適當的 □, 並請將意見寫在 ______

1) 我是 □ 男學生  □ 女學生

2) 我出生於西元 19 ______ 年

3) (a) 我的科系___________ , (b) 學業總平均分數______, (c) 共修了______ 學分

4) 我現在是 □ 一年級 , □ 二年級 , □ 三年級 , □ 四年級

5) 我們全家一個月平均收入 (約略估計) : __________

6) 我父親的教育程度：_________ , 與職業__________

7) 我母親的教育程度：_________ , 與職業__________

8) 我高中(職)畢業於(城市名稱) : __________

9) 從我進入科技大學或技術學院之後，總共填寫過教師評量表幾次 ______

請閱讀下列句子；

比較符合你的信念(想法)的敘述，請勾選 □ T，否則請勾選 □ F。

Cultural Beliefs

10) 對我而言，維持中國人傳統的尊師重道非常重要---------------------- □ T, □ F

11) 我敬重老師，如同我敬重父母--------------------------------------- □ T, □ F
12) 老師的身分地位很權威，使我在評量時感到很為難  □ T, □ F

13) 假如誠實填寫評量表會對老師造成任何形式的傷害，我不會說真話  □ T, □ F

14) 我認為學校整體和諧或尊敬老師比填寫教師評量表重要，尤其當教師評量可能會不利於老師時  □ T, □ F

15) 我遵循中國傳統觀念，老師的地位，是學生無法評量的  □ T, □ F

16) 我認為：在教學評鑑上根據老師的表現，發表我個人的意見或評論是合宜的  □ T, □ F

17) 我認為：當我不認同老師的作為時，該放在心裡不表達出來  □ T, □ F

18) 我非常尊重且努力實踐中國的傳統文化  □ T, □ F

19) 我相信傳統信念：「老師為學者，擁有崇高的社會地位」 □ T, □ F

School Climate

20) 無論我對教師的評量如何，我都不會違逆學校倫理或是破壞中國傳統 □ T, □ F

21) 學校設計的教學評量表，期望我表達我對老師的教學的真實想法 □ T, □ F

22) 學校鼓勵我們自由發言，例如在 BBS 自由討論 □ T, □ F

23) 學校會重視我對教師評量的任何意見 □ T, □ F

24) 學校希望我們自由地反應老師在教室裡確實的教學情形 □ T, □ F
25) 我們學校擁有優秀的老師，且老師的教學效能良好 -------------- □ T, □ F

Classroom Climate

26) 我會受到同學們對老師的評價的影響 ---------------------- □ T, □ F

27) 當我與老師產生衝突與不愉快時，我會不敢誠實作答 ---------- □ T, □ F

28) 我擔心我填寫老師評量表的內容會被人發現 ------------------ □ T, □ F

29) 我擔心給老師很差的評量會惹麻煩 -------------------------- □ T, □ F

30) 在我填寫評量表的時候，任課老師 (或導師) 仍待在教室 ------- □ T, □ F

31) 班長監督我們填寫評量表的過程 ----------------------------- □ T, □ F

Students' Personal Beliefs

32) 即使老師會生氣或難過，我也會確實按照我的觀點來評量老師 ---- □ T, □ F

33) 即使會危及老師的工作保障，我也會確實的填寫教師評量表 ------ □ T, □ F

34) 我相信：「因為我誠實的回答教師評量表，學校會進步」 ---------- □ T, □ F

35) 我相信：「只要誠實的評量，即使是負面的，也有助於老師改進教學」 ----

--------------------------------------------------------------------- □ T, □ F

Student Attitudes

36) 我有權力與義務確實的評量老師教學 ------------------------- □ T, □ F

37) 我填寫教師評量表時，最主要的考量是老師如何對待學生 -------- □ T, □ F
38) 任課老師最重要的特質是他(她)能展現學科教學的實力 ------------ □ T, □ F

39) 我具備足夠的知識，能夠評量我所有的老師 ------------------------------- □ T, □ F

40) 我了解學校實施「學生評量老師教學」的期待與目的 ----------------------- □ T, □ F

Students’ Behavior

41) 我嘗試過給老師高分來提高我的分數(成績) ---------------------------------- □ T, □ F

42) 我畏懼權威，所以不參與教師評量 ------------------------------------------------ □ T, □ F

43) 填寫教師評量表時，我會避免對老師有情緒化的偏見 ------------------------ □ T, □ F

44) 無論好壞，我給每一位老師一樣的評量分數 --------------------------------- □ T, □ F

45) 我曾填寫過教師評量表，但是表達的並非我真正的想法：□ 是, □ 否；

是的話，給過幾位老師__________；在這幾位之中：

□ 有幾次高過老師所應得？__________，□ 有幾次低於老師所應得？__________。

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Open-ended Questions

46) 請列舉五個你用來評量老師的重要準則；最重要到最不重要依序為：

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

47) 請列舉一些可以提供給學校做參考的行動策略，使「老師教學評量表」更正確有效：

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________