QUALITIES UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SEEK IN A TEACHER

Shishu Zhang, University of the Incarnate Word
David Fike, University of the Incarnate Word
Gladys DeJesus, Chowan University

ABSTRACT

The unique contribution of the study is that it explores the perception of an ideal teacher from students of different backgrounds rather than evaluations of faculty performance. The paper finds that the two qualities that ranked highest at both schools were "knowledgeable" and "grades fairly." Another very interesting result is that faculty's use of technology was ranked to be the least important quality at both universities. Females rated five of the twenty-two faculty characteristics higher than did males. "At risk" students may need more support such as demonstrating a caring attitude, listening carefully to students, being sensitive to diversity, and engaging the students at their level.

INTRODUCTION

Wright (1997) documented that the most important factor that affects student learning is the teacher. Similarly, Kwan (1999) argued that more could be done to improve education by raising the effectiveness of teachers than by changing any other single factor.

Since faculty effectiveness is a concern, faculty and administrators are trying to upgrade faculty evaluation procedures to improve teachers' quality. Examining how to improve the effectiveness of the faculty evaluation process, Sporeen & Mortelmans (2006) and other scholars pointed out that apart from students' evaluation, other forms of evaluation should be used as complementary tools, such as (1) supervisor ratings, (2) self-ratings, and (3) peer ratings (Morgan, et al. 2003; Gursoy & Umbreit, 2005). Wright (2006) argues that current faculty evaluations are weak in providing teachers direction on how to improve their teaching or on why students respond as they do. Thus, the teaching evaluation should be improved so that it not only evaluates the faculty, but also provides directions as how to improve. In the same way, Steiner & Holley (2006) argued that teacher evaluation processes should not be an end-of-semester one-time evaluation, but instead should include, as a major component, a reliable and valid measure of a teacher's effects on student academic growth over time.

Thus, many researchers argue that we need to have diversified ways to obtain feedbacks from students about faculty effectiveness. This paper studies students' perceptions of the relative ranking of qualities of an ideal teacher in two different universities. It contributes to the debates about teacher qualities, teaching assessment and teacher effectiveness by providing the students' perception of an ideal teacher.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Evaluation for Different Groups

Teaching evaluations done by students are generally considered valid tools to measure faculty's performance and are widely used in universities.

One group of researchers has analyzed the relationship between the teacher evaluation ratings and the perception of the instructor as a strict or lenient grader. Crumbley (2001) claimed that students use teaching evaluations to punish instructors for being strict in grading, for giving a lot of quizzes and homework, and for asking questions that students cannot answer. Bacon and Novotny (2002) found that students who strive for achievement rank teachers who grade strictly higher than teachers who grade leniently. Marsh (2001) and Gursoy and Umbreit (2005) found that students appreciate learning and hence there would be a positive relation between good workload and teaching evaluation ratings.

Different student bodies or different disciplines can also affect the results of students' evaluations. Wright (1997) argued that homogeneity or heterogeneity of students' ability levels could affect teaching evaluation: teachers who teach classes that are more heterogeneous than homogeneous in ability levels are perceived to produce lesser effects on student learning and receive lower scores on teaching evaluations. Marsh & Dunkin (1992) found that faculty in science and natural science disciplines are frequently rated lower than are faculty in humanities. Similarly, Beran & Violato (2005) showed that courses in the social sciences receive higher ratings than courses in the natural sciences and that lab-type courses receive higher ratings than lectures or tutorials.

Other researchers have analyzed the relationship between instructors' personality and their student evaluations. Emery et al. (2003) argued that popularity and personality traits affected the results of teaching evaluations and turned teaching evaluations into a popularity contest. Others have found that students correlated teaching competence and ability with the instructor's personality and gave higher evaluations to instructors who were seen as "kind and caring" and who had a "very positive feeling towards the class and students" (Kim et al. 2000) and to instructors whom they perceived as supportive and enthusiastic about the class and subject matter (Bacon, & Novotny, 2002; Gursoy & Umbreit, 2005). Some authors have argued that student evaluations of faculty should not be used in decisions for tenure and promotion because charismatic and enthusiastic instructors were found to earn high ratings, even if they may have had low knowledge of the subject matter (Emery, et al, 2003).

Thus many studies have examined different influences on teaching evaluations. Research has shown that teaching evaluations are biased by various factors, such as the student body, type of courses, workload, grades, and instructor's personality (Morgan, et al. 2003; Simpson, & Siguaw, 2000; Sojka, et al. 2002, MacDermott, 2013).

Gender Effect on Students' Evaluation

Researchers have also found differences in faculty based on the gender of the instructor. Female instructors were perceived as warmer and more patient individuals but were expected to offer greater interpersonal support and were judged more strictly than male instructors in providing it (Sheila, 1982). Students reported that female professors gave them more time and personal attention than did male professors (Crawford & MacLeod, 1990). But Smith, Yoo, Farr, Salmon, & Miller (2007) reported evidence from a large study of more than 12,000 students that there was

no difference by faculty gender on student course evaluations. Similarly, Basow (2000) found that there was no gender difference in student perceptions of one's "best" professor. Smith (2007) found that for both male and female students, best professors exhibited both masculine traits and feminine traits (Smith, 2007) and further suggested that administrators should not assume one sex to provide better or worse instruction and that they should reward instructors on the basis of individual performance rather than according to the instructor's gender.

However, research suggests that although direct gender bias may not be observed in formal student evaluations of their instructors, female faculty members are nonetheless subject to culturally conditioned gender stereotypes (Feldman, 1993). As for the different responses from the female and male students, in a study comparing students from the United States, Jordan, and Chile, Alshare and Miller (2009) found that male and female American students differed in their perception of traits assessing teaching style and class management: female students prefers a more warm and care teaching style while male students prefers a sober, quiet learning environment.

Ideal Teacher

In contrast to teaching evaluation literature, there is very limited research on students' perception of an ideal university teacher. Initial research by Rubin (1981) on the "ideal professor," students identified five general categories of traits they rated highly. These five categories included items relevant to (a) knowledge, intellect, and ability, or expertise in the subject; (b) professionalism, or qualities that command respect; (c) ability to communicate; (d) openness (to students and their ideas); and (e) being nurturing and supportive.

More recently, Strage (2008) found that the most frequently-cited characteristics of an ideal professor include being knowledgeable, caring, concerned about students, and funny or entertaining. Helterbran (2008) used "ratemyprofessor.com" to study students' perceptions of the ideal professor. He presented these categories of characteristics as important: knowledge and presentation, and professional personal qualities (enthusiasm, approachability, caring).

Strage (2008) argued that students at Christian colleges or universities may hold different expectations of professors than their peers at public or private universities, given the centrality of the role of instructor in upholding and living out the mission of such institutions. He noted that despite the rapid growth of private Christian institutions, students and professors at religiously affiliated institutions have not conducted much research related to student expectations of the ideal professor.

Woods, Badzinski, Fritz & Yeates's (2012) research is one of the studies about students' perception of an ideal professor conducted in a Christian university. They administered a survey to 451 undergraduate students at a private liberal-arts Christian university, which revealed that their ideal professor places great emphasis on the integration of faith and learning, is flexible, maintains high academic standards, encourages students, and has an adaptive teaching style. Their findings also highlighted gender differences in student perception of the ideal professor. Female students ranked an adaptable teaching style, encouragement, and integration of faith and learning as more important than did male students.

STUDY PURPOSE

Similar to these studies, the purpose of this study is to determine the qualities of university faculty that economics students from two universities report as being important. The research questions are:

- *What are students' rankings (relative importance) of university faculty qualities from the two universities?*
- *Do students' ratings of faculty qualities differ by schools?*
- *Do students' ratings of faculty qualities differ based on students' GPA, gender, or parents' education?*

Students' expectations of faculty were compared among students at the two universities. The unique feature of this research is that it doesn't study teaching evaluations of specific courses; therefore, the results were unaffected by the possible biases such as students' expected grades, the course workloads, and the difficulty of the course. In addition, in order to get more robust results, the study compared the perceptions of ideal faculty in two different universities.

METHODS

Setting

This study was conducted at two universities in 2011-2013. The first university is located in the southwest US, which offers undergraduate and graduate degrees including the Ph.D. and professional degrees. This private, urban university is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with an enrollment of about 9000 students. The second institution is also a private university, but located in a small town in the southeast US. It awards the associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees in a variety of disciplines, and has an enrollment of 1200 students. Sixty-seven percent of the students are African American.

Study Design

This study entailed a cross-sectional survey of economics students each semester. The first university observed students for 4 semesters while the second university gathered the data for 2 semesters. An instrument (see Table 1) was developed by faculty at one university to determine the students' perspectives on the importance of faculty qualities. Students attending classroom economics courses (no online courses were included) were asked to rate each of the twenty-two faculty qualities listed on the instrument. The students completed the hardcopy instrument in class. The students ranked each quality on a Likert-type scale with 1 to 5 corresponding to "not important at all," "not very important," "neutral," "important," and "very important." Two institutions were included in the study to determine if the importance of faculty qualities were roughly consistent between economics students at the two institutions. Institutional Review Board approval at both universities was received before the study commenced.

Sample

The sample (see Table 2) was comprised of 458 economics students from the two institutions. Graduate students and upperclassmen comprised 55% of the sample. The majority of the students had parents who were not college graduates. Less than one-third of the students were from the second university, with 71% attending the first university. Males comprised 56% of the sample.

Instrument Reliability

Following development of the original instrument, it was peer-reviewed by faculty for content validity and pilot-tested with a group of students taking economics courses. Based upon the feedback, the instrument was revised. Table 1 lists the items in the revised instrument. Reliability of the revised instrument was assessed for the sample of 458 students. Cronbach's alpha for the 22-item instrument was 0.894, indicating appropriate internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003).

Table 1. Teacher Qualities
The teacher:
1. Is knowledgeable about the subject.
2. Conveys knowledge effectively.
3. Is punctual.
4. Demonstrates confidence when teaching.
5. Is patient with students.
6. Demonstrates a caring attitude for students.
7. Listens to students' concerns.
8. Is dedicated to excellence in teaching.
9. Is sensitive to diversity.
10. Offers adequate resources for students to complete tasks.
11. Is willing to help students achieve goals.
12. Encourages students to achieve.
13. Shows passion for life.
14. Makes the classroom fun.
15. Relates classroom work with life examples.
16. Uses new technology to teach.
17. Presents materials in an organized way.
18. Grades fairly.
19. Sets attainable expectations for the students.
20. Is dedicated to the Mission of the university.
21. Engages students in the classroom.
22. Is intellectually stimulating.

Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 21 (IBM, Armonk, NY). Descriptive statistics were produced, including N's, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Correlation coefficients were generated, including Pearson's for continuous data and Spearman's for ordinal data. To compare means between two groups, independent sample t-tests were produced. Standardized effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated. Unless noted otherwise, the *a priori* level of significance was .05.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics for 458 Students[a], N (%) or Mean ± SD	
Student GPA	3.27 ± 0.55
Freshman	75 (16)
Sophomore	130 (28)
Junior	85 (19)
Senior	44 (10)
Graduate	117 (26)
Female	202 (44)
Male	255 (56)
Parent Graduated College, Yes	211 (46)
Parent Graduated College, No	239 (52)
Students of the first university	324 (71)
Students of the second university	134 (29)
[a] There are missing data elements for < 2% of the student sample.	

RESULTS

Table 3 reports the ranking of teachers' qualities from both universities. The two highest-ranked qualities as rated by the students from the first university are "knowledge" and "grade fairly." The top two qualities of faculty rated by students from the second university are the same as the first university, but the order of the ranking is different. The top five qualities are the same except that the first school ranked "confidence" in the top five qualities while the second school ranked "encourages students" there instead. Besides this difference, the orders of the ranking of the top five qualities for the two schools are different. Some of the lowest rated faculty qualities include "dedicated to mission," "passion for life," "makes class fun," "uses new technology," and "sensitive to diversity." A very interesting result is that "using new technology" is ranked as the lowest quality for students in both universities, which is consistent with our previous findings using data from Economics and Education students only at the first university.

Table 3. Rating of Faculty Qualities, Rank Ordered by Means			
First University		Second University	
Quality	Mean ± SD	Quality	Mean ± SD
Q1. Knowledgeable	4.84 ± .408	Q18. Grades Fairly	4.80 ± .484
Q18. Grades Fairly	4.80 ± .443	Q1. Knowledgeable	4.72 ± .667
Q2. Conveys Knowledge	4.77 ± .467	Q11. Willing To Help	4.72 ± .597
Q11. Willing To Help	4.67 ± .556	Q12. Encourages Students	4.70 ± .696
Q4. Confident	4.60 ± .583	Q2. Conveys Knowledge	4.69 ± .652
Q12. Encourages Students	4.58 ± .669	Q7. Listens	4.67 ± .648
Q19. Sets Attainable Goals	4.56 ± .599	Q19. Sets Attainable Goals	4.67 ± .562
Q8. Dedicated To Excellence in Teaching	4.54 ± .688	Q8. Dedicated To Excellence in Teaching	4.66 ± .673
Q17. Organized	4.53 ± .620	Q17. Organized	4.60 ± .651
Q5. Patient	4.51 ± .670	Q4. Confident	4.59 ± .696
Q10. Offers Resources	4.51 ± .661	Q6. Caring	4.59 ± .628
Q7. Listens	4.48 ± .706	Q22. Intellectually Stimulating	4.56 ± .671
Q22. Intellectually Stimulating	4.44 ± .714	Q10. Offers Resources	4.47 ± .765

Table 3. Rating of Faculty Qualities, Rank Ordered by Means			
First University		Second University	
Quality	Mean ± SD	Quality	Mean ± SD
Q6. Caring	4.43 ± .737	Q21. Engaging	4.47 ± .661
Q15. Uses Real Life Examples	4.33 ± .854	Q5. Patient	4.46 ± .783
Q21. Engaging	4.27 ± .823	Q20. Dedicated To Mission	4.39 ± .860
Q14. Makes Class Fun	4.24 ± .853	Q15. Uses Real Life Examples	4.36 ± .860
Q3. Punctual	4.23 ± .784	Q3. Punctual	4.34 ± .824
Q9. Sensitive To Diversity	4.14 ± 1.01	Q9. Sensitive To Diversity	4.25 ± .987
Q13. Passion For Life	4.03 ± .976	Q13. Passion For Life	4.17± .955
Q20. Dedicated To Mission	4.01 ± .994	Q14. Makes Class Fun	4.02 ±1.055
Q16. Uses New Technology	3.73 ± 1.03	Q16. Uses New Technology	3.97±1.058

Table 4 reports the difference of ranking between the two universities for each item. We found that the two schools' rankings are significantly different for seven out of the twenty-two items. "Knowledgeable" is highly ranked characteristic for both schools; however, the first university's students ranked "knowledgeable" and "makes class fun" significantly higher than the second university, while the second group rated "caring," "listens," "uses new technology," "dedicated to mission," and "engaging" significantly higher.

Table 4. Rating of Faculty Qualities by School (Mean ± SD)				
Quality	First University	Second University	p-value	Cohen's d
Q1. Knowledgeable	4.84 ± .408	4.72 ± .667	.048*[u]	0.217
Q2. Conveys Knowledge	4.77 ± .467	4.69 ± .652	.195 [u]	0.141
Q3. Punctual	4.23 ± .784	4.34 ± .824	.150	-0.137
Q4. Confident	4.60 ± .583	4.59 ± .696	.862	0.016
Q5. Patient	4.51 ± .670	4.46 ± .783	.527 [u]	0.069
Q6. Caring	4.43 ± .737	4.59 ± .628	.015* [u]	-0.234
Q7. Listens	4.48 ± .706	4.67 ± .648	.007* [u]	-0.280
Q8. Dedicated To Excellence in Teaching	4.54 ± .688	4.66 ± .673	.094	-0.176
Q9. Sensitive To Diversity	4.14 ± 1.01	4.25 ± .987	.267	-0.110
Q10. Offers Resources	4.51 ± .661	4.47 ± .765	.603	0.056
Q11. Willing To Help	4.67 ± .556	4.72 ± .597	.367	-0.087
Q12. Encourages Students	4.58 ± .669	4.70 ± .696	.103[u]	-0.176
Q13. Passion For Life	4.03 ± .976	4.17 ± .955	.179	-0.145
Q14. Makes Class Fun	4.24 ± .853	4.02 ± 1.06	.035* [u]	0.229
Q15. Uses Real Life Examples	4.33 ± .854	4.36 ± .860	.699	-0.035
Q16. Uses New Technology	3.73 ± 1.03	3.79 ± 1.05	.026*	-0.058
Q17. Organized	4.53 ± .620	4.60 ± .651	.847	-0.110
Q18. Grades Fairly	4.80 ± .443	4.80 ± .484	.965	0
Q19. Sets Attainable Goals	4.56 ± .599	4.67 ± .562	.082	-0.189
Q20. Dedicated To Mission	4.01 ± .994	4.39 ± .860	<.001*	-0.409
Q21. Engaging	4.27 ± .823	4.47 ± .661	.007* [u]	-0.268
Q22. Intellectually Stimulating	4.44 ± .714	4.56 ± .671	.103	-0.173
* Statistically significant at 0.05 level. [U] T-test with unequal variances.				

Table 5 provides a comparison of ratings by students who have at least one parent with college degree with those whose parents do not have college degrees. For most of the faculty-quality ratings, the two groups of students do not differ. However, students who have a parent with college degree rated "dedicated to excellence in teaching" significantly lower than students whose parents do not have a college degree.

Table 5. Rating of Faculty Qualities by Students' Parents' Education (Mean ± SD)				
Quality	Not Col Grad	Col Grad	p-value	Cohen's d
Q1. Knowledgeable	4.79 ± .508	4.82 ± .497	.608	-0.060
Q2. Conveys Knowledge	4.71 ± .576	4.79 ± .475	.129 [u]	-0.15
Q3. Punctual	4.27 ± .801	4.27 ± .796	.975	0
Q4. Confident	4.57 ± .650	4.63 ± .575	.307	-0.098
Q5. Patient	4.46 ± .744	4.54 ± .657	.256	-0.114
Q6. Caring	4.49 ± .673	4.47 ± .740	.763	0.028
Q7. Listens	4.53 ± .697	4.55 ± .699	.783	-0.029
Q8. Dedicated To Excellence in Teaching	4.65 ± .676	4.50 ± .694	.027* [u]	0.219
Q9. Sensitive To Diversity	4.13 ± 1.039	4.22 ± .974	.378	-0.089
Q10. Offers Resources	4.50 ± .704	4.50 ± .680	.949	0
Q11. Willing To Help	4.70 ± .568	4.67 ± .564	.602	0.053
Q12. Encourages Students	4.63 ± .679	4.59 ± .686	.515	0.059
Q13. Passion For Life	4.09 ± .979	4.05 ± .970	.658	0.041
Q14. Makes Class Fun	4.16 ± .959	4.21 ± .881	.576	-0.054
Q15. Uses Real Life Examples	4.34 ± .830	4.34 ± .854	.961	0
Q16. Uses New Technology	3.82 ± 1.027	3.80 ± 1.046	.885	0.019
Q17. Organized	4.60 ± .634	4.58 ± .574	.811	0.033
Q18. Grades Fairly	4.78 ± .491	4.83 ± .413	.223 [u]	-0.110
Q19. Sets Attainable Goals	4.61 ± .569	4.59 ± .607	.696	0.034
Q20. Dedicated To Mission	4.11 ± 1.001	4.15 ± .942	.653	-0.041
Q21. Engaging	4.36 ± .740	4.29 ± .831	.360	0.089
Q22. Intellectually Stimulating	4.48 ± .694	4.48 ± .722	.992	0
* Statistically significant at 0.05 [U] T- test with unequal variances.				

Table 6 compares the teachers' quality ratings by student gender. Female and male student ratings are significantly different for five out of the twenty-two items. The female students rate these faculty qualities significantly higher than the male students: "conveys knowledge," "confident," "patient," "sensitive to diversity," and "organized."

Table 6. Rating of Faculty Qualities by Student Gender (Mean ± SD)				
Quality	Male	Female	p-value	Cohen's d
Q1. Knowledgeable	4.78 ± .491	4.83 ± .513	.369	-0.100
Q2. Conveys Knowledge	4.70 ± .545	4.81 ± .503	.026* [u]	-0.210
Q3. Punctual	4.20 ± .834	4.34 ± .738	.059	-0.178
Q4. Confident	4.54 ± .662	4.66 ± .551	.039* [u]	-0.197
Q5. Patient	4.43 ± .729	4.57 ± .667	.031* [u]	-0.200
Q6. Caring	4.43 ± .746	4.53 ± .655	.129 [u]	-0.142
Q7. Listens	4.49 ± .743	4.59 ± .627	.140 [u]	-0.145
Q8. Dedicated To Excellence in Teaching	4.56 ± .720	4.60 ± .641	.542	-0.059
Q9. Sensitive To Diversity	4.06 ± 1.074	4.31 ± .896	.007*[u]	-0.253

Table 6. Rating of Faculty Qualities by Student Gender (Mean ± SD)				
Quality	Male	Female	p-value	Cohen's d
Q10. Offers Resources	4.49 ± .664	4.51 ± .728	.762	-0.029
Q11. Willing To Help	4.65 ± .568	4.72 ± .567	.206	-0.123
Q12. Encourages Students	4.57 ± .740	4.68 ± .590	.075 [u]	-0.164
Q13. Passion For Life	4.02 ± 1.025	4.13 ± .900	.252	-0.114
Q14. Makes Class Fun	4.16 ± .919	4.21 ± .923	.562	-0.054
Q15. Uses Real Life Examples	4.34 ± .797	4.35 ± .891	.920	-0.012
Q16. Uses New Technology	3.81 ± 1.026	3.79 ± 1.054	.815	0.019
Q17. Organized	4.53 ± .620	4.67 ± .576	.015* [u]	-0.234
Q18. Grades Fairly	4.79 ± .464	4.82 ± .444	.421	-0.066
Q19. Sets Attainable Goals	4.60 ± .595	4.59 ± .585	.912	0.017
Q20. Dedicated To Mission	4.11 ± 1.007	4.13 ± .929	.834	-0.021
Q21. Engaging	4.37 ± .756	4.27 ± .818	.222	0.127
Q22. Intellectually Stimulating	4.49 ± .690	4.45 ± .720	.537	0.057
[U] T-test with unequal variances.				
* Statistically significant at 0.05 level.				

Table 7 summarizes the correlations between teacher-quality ratings and students' GPA. Students' GPA is significantly correlated with eleven of twenty-two faculty-quality ratings. The higher the students' GPA, the higher they rated faculty qualities of "knowledgeable" and "conveys knowledge." However, the higher the students' GPA, the lower the students rate the faculty qualities of "punctual," "caring," "listens," "sensitive to diversity," "passion for life," "makes class fun," "uses new technology," "dedicated to mission," and "engaging."

Table 7. Correlation (r) of Rating of Qualities with Students' GPA

Table 7. Correlation (r) of Rating of Qualities with Students' GPA	
Quality	GPA
Q1. Knowledgeable	.179*
Q2. Conveys Knowledge	.197*
Q3. Punctual	-.100*
Q4. Confident	.002
Q5. Patient	-.025
Q6. Caring	-.119*
Q7. Listens	-.146*
Q8. Dedicated To Excellence in Teaching	-.034
Q9. Sensitive To Diversity	-.113*
Q10. Offers Resources	-.054
Q11. Willing To Help	-.092
Q12. Encourages Students	-.125
Q13. Passion For Life	-.198*
Q14. Makes Class Fun	-.130*
Q15. Uses Real Life Examples	-.065
Q16. Uses New Technology	-.174*
Q17. Organized	-.038
Q18. Grades Fairly	.088
Q19. Sets Attainable Goals	-.074
Q20. Dedicated To Mission	-.208*
Q21. Engaging	-.110*
Q22. Intellectually Stimulating	.014
* Statistically significant at 0.05 level	

DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at two universities. As shown in Table 3, the two qualities that ranked highest at both schools were “knowledgeable” and “grades fairly.” This particular finding may provide a strong incentive for university professors to continually improve their knowledge of subject and to be conscious of being fair in grading their students.

It is always a challenge to treat students equally, assigning fair grades to each one. “Grades fairly” may be interpreted differently by different students: some may consider “grades fairly” as “grades easily” while others may equate “grades fairly” to “grading consistently.” This study analyzes students’ perceptions of “fair” grading without differentiating among each student’s interpretation of the term. Regardless of students’ interpretations, this quality is one of the top two faculty qualities students considered most important.

Another very interesting result is that using technology was ranked as the least important faculty quality for students in both universities. This result was consistent with previous research about teaching qualities (Zhang, Fike & Fike, 2013). The result may suggest that our attempts at using new technology are seen as ineffective and that we fail to address the core task of teaching, which is to help students obtain and apply knowledge. In addition, students in both schools placed low importance on “makes class fun.” This result may serve as evidence against treating students as customers by entertaining them. The students in both schools also placed low importance on faculty qualities of “punctual,” “sensitive to diversity,” and “passion for life.”

Table 4 compares the ratings of teachers’ qualities at these two universities. The first, predominantly Hispanic, rated the qualities “knowledgeable” and “makes class fun” significantly higher than the second school did, while that school, predominantly African American, rated “caring,” “listens,” “engaging,” “uses new technology,” and “dedicated to mission” significantly higher instead. This result might indicate that racially different student bodies have different expectations for teachers. An ‘excellent’ teacher at one school might only receive an average student evaluation in another school, not because his or her teaching is not as good as before, but rather because of different expectations from racially different student bodies. Professors may need and should be given time to adjust their teaching style in order to adjust to these differences.

Table 5 demonstrates that students with college-degreed parents rated "dedicated to excellence of teaching" lower than students whose parents are without college degrees. This result may indicate that first generation students actually put more emphasis on teaching excellence than second- or third-generation college students. As presented in Table 6, females rated five of the twenty-two questions higher than males, suggesting that faculty might want to choose to emphasize different qualities depending on the gender ratio of the student body. Table 7 shows that the higher the current GPA, the higher the students’ ratings of “knowledgeable” and “conveys knowledge,” and the lower the ratings on other qualities. This result demonstrates that lower GPA students regardless of the institution where enrolled may need more support such as “caring”, “listens”, “sensitive to diversity”, and “engaging”

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Students at both universities rated “knowledgeable,” and “grading fairly” as the top two qualities among the twenty-two faculty qualities. This result indicates that it is important for faculty to learn and generate new knowledge, and to use rigorous grading rubrics to ensure that

students can see that grading is fair. Consistent with the results of our former paper (Zhang, Fike & Fike, 2013), students at both universities rated "uses new technology" the lowest of the twenty-two qualities. From a practical perspective, this research suggests that the faculty who overemphasize the importance of using technology in the classroom might be better served by emphasizing other qualities. Future research could explore why the students rate using technology the lowest teacher quality.

The paper discovers that students' ratings of faculty qualities differ by universities. An implication for future practice is that if faculty members transfer from one university to another, they might obtain different teaching evaluations due to different students' expectations. Therefore, it is important to adjust their teaching styles and methods.

For faculty with students with higher GPAs, special attention should be paid to being knowledgeable and being able to effectively convey that knowledge; students with lower GPA may benefit if the faculty demonstrates other qualities such as "caring," "listens," "sensitive to diversity."

Female students have higher ratings for faculty in many categories than male students. This implies that for faculty with a larger percentage of female students, if they develop qualities such as "confident," "patient," "sensitive to diversity," and "organized," they might get better teaching evaluations. At the same time, the students may have a better learning experience/ outcome since they feel more comfortable in the classroom.

Students with college-degreed parents don't differ from other students in rating twenty-one of the twenty-two qualities. This suggests that the students' ratings of faculty qualities are not influenced by their parents' education level. An implication for practice is that the faculty may not need to treat students differently based on their parents' education level.

Additional research could be conducted to determine the reasons why students ranked certain faculty qualities high or low. For example, the students who ranked "uses new technology" low may think certain technology is not effective in improving learning outcomes. However, students may find some technology useful in improving teaching and learning. Future research could clarify which types of technology students consider beneficial.

This study compares students' ratings of faculty in two universities with a high percentage of students from traditional underserved populations. Future research could be conducted by comparing students' ratings of faculty from different disciplines across multiple universities, which could provide more generalizable findings.

LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted at two private universities that have a large percentage of students from traditionally-underserved populations. The sample for this study consisted solely of economics students. This cross-sectional, observational study did not employ a causal design.

Terms used in the instrument were not explicitly defined, so students' interpretations of the terms may vary. Though this was a potential limitation of the instrument, use of the instrument in this study achieved acceptable reliability as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha = 0.894.

Student characteristics other than the demographic variables included in this study may have a bearing on ratings of faculty qualities. Further studies identifying other student characteristics that are associated with ratings of faculty qualities are needed. Additionally, research is needed to explore the reasons why students rate some faculty qualities as more important than others.

CONCLUSION

This study of 458 students in Economics disciplines at two universities resulted in very interesting and significant findings. Students at both schools ranked "knowledgeable" and "grades fairly" as top two qualities for faculty. Meanwhile, students in both universities ranked "uses new technology" as the least valued of the twenty-two faculty qualities assessed, which reinforced the results of our previous research.

We also found that the students' rankings of certain faculty qualities at the two universities are different; this may suggest that faculty members at different universities need to develop certain qualities or tailor their teaching style based on their students' values. Furthermore, the instrument used in the study could be a complement to students' teaching evaluations to help faculty develop qualities that students value most. For example, according to the result of this study, faculty may need to shift their focus from using technology and making class fun to conveying knowledge and grading fairly. Faculty who teach students with higher GPA need to pay special attention to becoming knowledgeable and being able to convey their knowledge. Faculty of students with lower GPA need to develop other qualities such as being caring and flexible in addition to being knowledgeable and being able to convey their knowledge. Members of faculty teaching female students need to develop other qualities besides being knowledgeable since female students rated other qualities of faculty more highly than male students. Knowing the expectations of students is an advantage to faculty who are pursuing effective teaching.

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