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High School Student Ratings of Teaching: Differences between Rural and Urban Students in Vietnam

Sai Cong Hong

Deputy Director, Department of Quality Management, Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam

Tang Thi Thuy

Lecturer, Department of Measurement and Evaluation, VNU-University of Education, Vietnam

Abstract:

This study investigated the differences in understanding student, teaching method, classroom management, student assessment, and teacher-student relationship of the feedback from rural and urban students. A random sample of rural students (N=316) and urban students (N=253) were selected in this study. Linear regression analysis was used to examine the impact of the predictor variable (school location) on the dependent variable (student satisfaction). Results indicated that the feedback from two groups of students were significantly different on dimensions including Understanding student, Teaching method, Classroom management, Student assessment, and Teacher-Student relationships.

Keywords: student ratings teaching, student satisfaction, rural and urban students, Vietnamese education

1. Introduction

The quality of teaching depends upon influences at different levels in the educational system (student, class, school, context). Research in education provides mixed theories and evidence on skills and competencies required for effective classroom teaching (Bennett, 1988, Brophy, 1988). According to the proponents of effective classroom teaching, major teaching functions include instruction, classroom management, student socialization and disciplinary intervention (Brophy, 1988). Most people interested in improving teaching see the primary purpose of student ratings as providing feedback to teachers that will be helpful for improvement. Student ratings of teaching are often used as an indicator of the quality of an instructor's teaching and play an important role in tenure and promotion decisions (Abrami, d'Apollonia, & Rosenfield, 2007; Benton & Cashin, 2014). There is much debate as to the value of student ratings of teachers. Peterson, Wahlquist, and Bone (2000) noted that students are a good source of information because they know their own personal situations, have closely observed a number of different teachers, and know how their teachers think and feel. In addition, they benefit directly from good teaching, and by reviewing the numbers reported, student ratings foster high reliability and are relatively inexpensive.

In Vietnam, while student evaluations and student feedback are paid attention in higher education research and practice, ratings of students in second education are often neglected. Currently, the Vietnamese government has standardized framework of teaching to evaluate the capacity of teacher of general education. Therefore there has been a trend toward using multiple sources of evidence for formative and summative decisions about the teaching behaviors of teacher. Student feedback is a reference information for evaluation and help teacher improve teaching.

The study aims to explore student ratings teaching in secondary education in Vietnam in five dimensions of understanding student, teaching method, classroom management, student assessment, and teacher-student relationship by affecting of school location. The research question is that whether there is the difference between urban and rural student on rating teaching.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Student Ratings of Teaching

Though far from perfect, student ratings of teaching provide valuable feedback about an instructor's teaching effectiveness (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2011). They may be reliably interpreted as both a direct measure of student satisfaction with instruction and as an indirect measure of student learning (Marsh, 2007; Murray, 2007). They also play an important role in the selection of teaching award winners, institutional reviews of programs, and student course selection (Benton & Cashin, 2014). More importantly to the careers of educators, these ratings are "used by faculty committees and administrators to make decisions about merit increases, promotion, and tenure" (Davis, 2009, p.534). In particular, quantitative evaluations of instructors' overall teaching effectiveness are frequently emphasized in personnel decisions (Centra & Gaubatz, 2000). Given the widespread reliance on student ratings of teaching and their effect on career advancement, any potential bias in those ratings is a matter of great consequence.

Follman (1992, 1995) noted that secondary students were capable of providing ratings that were reliable and reported classroom events validly, including teacher interactions. The students were also able to judge whether a teacher was meritorious. This study showed that high school students could rate teaching behaviors as reliably and validly as college students. Worrell and Kuterbach (2001) noted that these student ratings are cost-efficient, time-efficient, and can be collected anonymously. Over time, the findings can also be used to track changes. High school students require minimal training when a well-designed rating instrument is employed. The student ratings of teacher include detailed items that measure different teacher behaviors that are suggested as important in maintaining the validity of the results obtained.

Peterson, Wahlquist, and Bone (2000) similarly found that student surveys are valid and reliable for teacher evaluation at elementary, middle, and high school levels. In a study of schools in Cyprus, Kyriakides (2005) found that student ratings of the student-teacher relationship and degree of cooperation were highly correlated with achievement gains.

Wilkerson, et al. (2000) conducted a study of nearly 2,000 K-12 students and found that student ratings were significantly more accurate in predicting student achievement than teacher's self-ratings, principal ratings, and principal summative ratings. This was true in both reading and mathematics

In a research synthesis of teacher evaluation methods, Goe, et al. (2008) ultimately concluded that previous studies "provide convincing evidence that student ratings of teaching are worth considering for inclusion in teacher evaluation systems." (p.40)

Joshua and Joshua (2004) who surveyed 480 secondary teachers from 20 schools and found "a significantly negative attitude to student evaluation of the teacher, irrespective of the use(s) to which the results of such evaluation will be put" (p. 12). And in subsequent discussion of the results they revealed this very attitude by stating, without any corroborating evidence that students "rating, given the ages, social backgrounds and the orientations of Nigerian students, can hardly be valid, reliable, interpretable and generalizable. The tendencies are high that students will rate many other things of the teachers in addition to, or opposed to, quality of instruction and teaching performance" (p.13).

2.2. Dimensions of Student Evaluations of Teaching

There has been considerable investigation of the dimensionality of teaching. Conclusions have been generally similar, identifying teaching (and its evaluation) as multidimensional (Cohen, 1981; Feldman, 1976; Marsh, 1987) and specifying the dimensions as similar. In 1990, Abrami and s'Apollonia identified twenty-four dimensions: (1) stimulation of interest, (2) enthusiasm, (3) knowledge of the subject, (4) intellecture expansiveness, (5) preparation and organization, (6) clarity and understandableness, (7) elocutionary skills, (8) class level and progress, (9) clarity of course objectives, (10) relevance and value of course material, (11) relevance and usefulness of supplementary materials, (12) workload, (13) perceived outcome, (14) fairness of evaluation, (15) classroom management, (16) personality characteristics, (17) feedback, (18) encouragement of discussion and diversity of opinion, (19) intellectual challenge and encouragement of independent thought, (20) concern and respect for students, (21) availability and helpfulness, (22) overall course, (23) overall instructor, and (24) miscellaneous items.

A distinction can be made between the pedagogical, methodological perspective of teaching which includes the selection and organization of teaching materials, methods of instruction and assessment as well as the interpersonal perspective which focuses on the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student (Wubbels & Levy, 1993; Tartwijk, Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1998).

Murray (1983, 1997) has shown that specific behavioral items are most likely to result in improvement. Renaud and Murray (1996) have shown that actual behaviours of teachers as coded by observers covary with student ratings of the same behaviors and fall into dimensions corresponding fairly well to those of Marsh (1984). Marsh's demonstration of the validity of these factors is impressive. Grouping items by factors can reduce the "mental dazzle" of a long computer printout of many items and can increase the likelihood of improvement.

Feldman (2007) reported the average correlations between a measure of student achievement and 24 specific instructional dimensions often measured by specific student rating items. In this study, Feldman also compared the correlations of various instructional dimensions with student achievement and students' overall evaluation of the teacher. The correlations with achievement and overall evaluations of teaching were not always of the same magnitude but they showed the positive contribution of various instructional dimensions to both outcomes.

Classroom management is a well-known concept in educational research (e.g., Kounin, 1970) that focusses on classroom rules and procedures, coping with disruptions, and smooth transitions. These classroom features can be seen as preconditions for time on task that is, in turn, crucial for students' learning gains (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). Meta-analyses consistently show substantial effects of classroom management on student achievement (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

According to Moos (1979) the relationship between students and teachers is an important dimension of classroom atmosphere: relationships within the classroom, personal development and goal orientation, and maintenance and changes with the system. Supportive climate covers specific aspects of the teacher student relationship such as positive and constructive teacher feedback, a positive approach to student errors and misconceptions and caring teacher behaviour (Brophy, 2000; Klieme et al., 2009).

In this study, we focus on five dimensions: understanding student, teaching method, classroom management, student assessment, and teacher-student relationship.

3. Research Method

This study was conducted in three provinces in the North of Vietnam (Ha Noi, Ha Nam and Hoa Binh). Two schools including junior and senior high school were selected in each province. The instruments utilized for the study was a questionnaires and one rating scale. The questionnaires tagged student feedback questionnaire to teacher was designed for students to evaluate the teaching

effectiveness in each school. The questionnaires sought information on the teachers' effectiveness in five dimensions of understanding student, classroom management, teaching method, student assessment, and teacher-student relationship. The questionnaires contained third -two structured items whose scores were graded in a four-point modified Likert's scale with 5 being very high and 1 being very low in the attribute in question.

By employing stratified sampling, the study selected 600 students from six junior and senior high schools in three north provinces. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents on the spot. A total of 569 usable questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 94.8%.

SPSS 22.0 software was used for analyzing data to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics measure both the central tendency and the dispersion of the data, including means and standard deviations. The mean and standard deviation for each of five dimensions was obtained to determine student' overall of student ratings of teaching. They were also analyzed based on gender, grade, subject and location through mean, t-Test analysis. Finally, linear regression analysis was used to examine the impact of the predictor variable (school location) on the dependent variable (student satisfaction).

4. Research Findings

Students' demographic profile demographic information collected for students included three variables: gender, grade, subject and location. Table 1 presents a demographic profile of student sample used in this study

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	172	30.2
	Female	397	69.8
Grade	Grade 6	34	6.0
	Grade 7	56	9.8
	Grade 8	54	9.5
	Grade 9	24	4.2
	Grade 10	136	23.9
	Grade 11	146	25.7
	Grade 12	119	20.9
Subject	Mathematics	216	38.0
	Literature	89	15.6
	English	19	3.3
	Chemistry	46	8.1
	Physical	34	6.0
	Geography	63	11.1
	Engineering	75	13.2
Location	Information Technology	27	4.7
	Urban	253	44.5
	Rural	316	55.5

Table 1: Demographic profile of students participating in the study (N=569)

As Table 1 shows, 69.8% of student were female, male students composed 30.2% of the sample. Table 1 also shows 70.5% of student in senior high school of student in junior high school (Grade 10, 11, and 12 was 23.9%, 25.7%, and 29.5%), 29.5% of junior high school student (Grade 6, 7, 8, 9 was 6.0%, 9.8%, 9.5% and 4.2%). The most number of sample of each subject is Mathematics (38%) and the least one is Information Technology (4.7%). There were 44.5% of urban student and 55.5% of rural student in the sample of this study.

The means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of student ratings of teaching scale scores were comparable (Table 2)

Dimension	M	SD
(1)Teacher-Student relationship	3.73	.86
(2)Teaching method	3.72	.78
(3)Classroom management	3.51	.75
(4)Student assessment	3.51	.77
(5)Understanding student	3.50	.75

Table 2: Descriptive results of subscales on student ratings of teaching (N=569)

Note. Items were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Table 2 shows that Teacher –Student relationship had the highest mean (3.73). There were follow by Teaching method (3.372), Classroom management (3.51), Student assessment (3.51), and Understanding student (3.5).

Descriptive statistic on student ratings of teaching based on the student demographics is shown in Table 3. It shows that female students rated their teacher lower than male students in the following all dimensions. The highest dimension female students evaluate

their teachers is Teaching method while male student is Teacher-Student relationship. Junior high school students are more satisfied with their teachers than senior high school students. The highest dimension that junior student rates teacher is Teacher-Student relationship but senior students is Teaching method. Students of social science subject's rates teaching are higher than student of natural science subject. Rural students rate teaching are more satisfied with their teacher than urban students. Rural students evaluated quite high in all five dimension of rating.

Dimension		1	2	3	4	5
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Gender	Male	3.94 (.75)	3.89 (.68)	3.63 (.72)	3.72 (.73)	3.69 (.71)
	Female	3.63 (.75)	3.65 (.81)	3.46 (.75)	3.24 (.77)	3.42 (.75)
School	Junior	4.17 (.62)	4.13 (.54)	4.00 (.62)	3.97 (.58)	3.93 (.59)
	Senior	3.54 (.88)	3.55 (.80)	3.31 (.70)	3.32 (.76)	3.33 (.73)
Subject	Natural Science	3.69 (.87)	3.69 (.80)	3.45 (.72)	3.54 (.74)	3.46 (.75)
	Social Science	3.82 (.83)	3.80 (.74)	3.67 (.78)	3.45 (.84)	3.60 (.73)
Location	Urban	3.31 (.938)	3.31 (.84)	3.13 (.72)	3.12 (.79)	3.16 (.77)
	Rural	3.78 (0.60)	4.05 (0.55)	3.82 (.62)	3.83 (.59)	3.78 (.60)

Table 3: Students ratings of teaching in five dimension based on demographic variables (N=569)

In this study, we focused to explore the factor of location affect student ratings of teaching on five dimensions. First, there is a significant difference between urban and rural students about rating teachers including (1)Teacher-Student relationship, (2)Teaching method, (3)Classroom management, (4)Student assessment, and (5)Understanding student by using t-Test (sig.<.05). The correlation of the all five dimensions and location (urban and rural) is significant (sig. <.05). Then, the liner regression was use to analyze the effect of location on the students' satisfaction with teachers. Location is an independent variable. The five dimensions are five dependent variables. The findings follow Table 4

Model		Coefficients ^{abde}				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.45	.09		26.48	.000
	Urban and Rural	.68	.05	.45	12.10	.000
2	(Constant)	2.41	.09		25.32	.000
	Urban and Rural	.71	.05	.45	12.18	.000
3	(Constant)	2.66	.10		26.54	.000
	Urban and Rural	.69	.06	.43	11.33	.000
4	(Constant)	2.36	.09		24.51	.000
	Urban and Rural	.83	.05	.51	14.15	.000
5	(Constant)	2.55	.09		26.93	.000
	Urban and Rural	.61	.05	.40	10.54	.000

Table 4: Simple linear regression model for location school and five dimensions of ratings of teaching

- Dependent Variable: Classroom management
- Dependent Variable: Student assessment
- Dependent Variable: Teacher-Student relationship
- Dependent Variable: Teaching method
- Dependent Variable: Understanding student

Coefficients table which gives the unstandardized and standardized coefficients (for building a regression equation) as well as a t test for each. We wanted to predict new raw scores on the five dimensions (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5), we would use the following equation:

$$(1) Y1 = 2.45 + .68 * X1$$

- (2) $Y_2 = 2.41 + .71 * X_2$
- (3) $Y_3 = 2.66 + .69 * X_3$
- (4) $Y_4 = 2.36 + .83 * X_4$
- (5) $Y_5 = 2.55 + .61 * X_5$

These results indicate that the location is statistically significantly different from the mean of dimensions of ratings of teaching. Students in rural location are likely more satisfied with their teacher than in urban location.

The effect of the factor on the rating of teaching from urban and rural students is due to this study selected sample from three provinces that have very different social-economy. Students are from Ha Noi – the capital, always get good conditions for study so they have more requirements for higher quality in teaching. Students were selected from Ha Nam and Hoa Binh, in the poor location. Hoa Binh province is the inhabitation of many ethnic minorities. There are 17 Ethnic Minority Boarding Schools for ethnic students. The conditions of study are very difficult. When they are in school, they feel happy and satisfied with their own that why they are more satisfied with their teachers. This is also a limitation of the study; however, we are on collecting data in other provinces for the further study.

5. Conclusions

Student rating of teaching is an issue need to be paid attention now because it is a way to evaluate teaching effectiveness of general education and secondary education. The finding of the study shows that there is the difference on ratings teaching between rural students and urban students. Students from rural school are more satisfied with their teacher than student from urban school. In this study, we collected data from a province where is in the Northwest, is the difficult location in the region. According to findings, we recommended that the government should provide policies to rural location to decrease the gap between rural and urban. For further study, we recommend to investigate student feedback/ student ratings teaching result affect teacher, or the five dimensions (understanding student, teaching method, classroom management, student assessment, and teacher-student relationship) affect student performance in rural and urban area.

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