

Teaching quality in higher education: Evidence from University of Applied Science and Technology of South-Khorasan

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Abstract

Over the last few decades, major studies have conducted with regard to university quality enhancement. It seems necessary to make teaching efficient through regular and continuous evaluations of the professors by students. The present study seeks to assess the teaching quality of higher education institutes from the point of view of the students. The population is composed of the undergraduates of University of Applied Science and Technology of South-Khorasan. The sample is composed of 100 students selected by stratified random sampling. To collect the required information, the standard questionnaire of Siraj (2003) is used. This questionnaire is composed of four general characteristics of teaching quality including lesson plan, teaching method, teaching evaluation and interpersonal relations. General evaluations of the students revealed that there is a significant relationship between teaching quality and the selected elements (lesson plan, teaching method, teaching evaluation and interpersonal relations). Furthermore, it is concluded that these elements have predictive and descriptive ability in teaching quality. There is also a difference between teaching quality and its elements in different cities. The findings reveal that there is no significant difference between teaching quality in terms of evaluation elements and interpersonal relations in different fields of study. It is generally found that teaching quality of the University of Applied Sciences and Technology is confronted with serious weaknesses suggested to be revised.

Key words: Teaching quality, higher education, regular and continuous evaluations

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Introduction

Universities play essential roles in enhancing the quality of human resources and make them ready in creating and criticizing new knowledge and technology, growing critical thinking and providing strategies for social changes and confrontation with global evolutions (Maroufi et al, 2007:83; Mirkamali and Narenji, 2008). In doing so, large amounts of budgets of a country are allocated to the universities. Universities face contradictory pressures to change their practices of teaching and research: market pressures to meet industry and student demand, government pressures to be more accountable for their use of decreasing public funds, accreditation pressures to meet professional standards, technological pressures to use online learning and academic pressures to maintain international status in teaching and research (Broadfoot, 1998, quoted by Blackmore, 2009; 857).

As a result, higher education is a technological and international product and these pressures are concentrated on quality enhancement of education. In a broader sense, quality has become the marker of distinction for the performative university competing in international markets (Cowen, 1996, Power 1997 quoted by Blackmore, 2009: 858). In other words, major changes over the last 50 years indicate that there is an increasing demand for cognitive skills and non-routine interpersonal relations; however, there is lower demand for cognitive and industrial routine skills, physical jobs and repetitive physical tasks. The labor market has an uncertain, risky and complicated nature. By academic studies, the students become ready to enter the labor market and they accumulate the skills, knowledge and values required to find a job (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012). Consequently, many universities around the globe pay special attention to quality enhancement in response to the needs of governments and clients and joining international organizations such as labor market and European Quality Improvement System (Nicholls, 2007: 539-540). Quality is a complex, dynamic, multidimensional, relative and adaptive concept for which there is no specific definition (Harvey and Grrren, 1993; quoted by Gvaramadze, 2008). Quality is a function of social, economic, cultural and political situations and factors mostly used by stakeholders and users (students, university staffs, quality organizations and etc) in order to legitimize and explain the interests and perspectives. Quality deals with the perceptions and interpretations of the users (Mukhopadhyay, 1390: 20). On the other hand, the difficulty in education quality definition might be attributed to the fact that education is related to human, location and interests. Actually, human is not only a combination of knowledge and skills, but also many physical, mental and subjective dimensions which establish the values, attitudes and other specific characteristics. In addition, humans are in the course of evolution; the education provides the opportunity of growth and development and appearance of capacities and tendencies. Taking a closer look at the nature of human being, the definition of quality becomes more subjective and more difficult to measure; in contrary, when the human being is defined in terms of a product or a merchandise, the definition of quality becomes easier and measurable (Mukhopadhyay, 2011; Naveh Ebrahimi and Karimi, 2006). However, some scholars consider the dynamics of quality and believe that quantifying specific dimensions of higher education is possible and requires consistent standards and measures to be used in all education periods and institutes. This concept is mainly based on the fact that higher education institutes have very specific objectives

and try to follow the ideal standards (Martin and Stella, 2009: 33). According to the above mentioned points, the universities assess teaching quality in order to meet the quality standards. Based on Marsh et al (2009), teaching quality is defined as what is known by students and faculty members as effective teaching that includes general elements of teaching and learning. Fink (2002) believes that teaching quality is the result of combining six elements including student characteristics, professor characteristic, lesson plans, class behavior of the professors, amount learned and the effective environmental factors (Maroofi et al, 2007). Teaching quality is defined as using educational techniques for learning results by the learners. It is composed of several dimensions including designing effective course plans and curriculum, a variety of learning themes (independent directed examination, project-based learning, participative learning, training and etc), demanding feedback, effective evaluation of learning results, adaptive learning environments and students' supportive services (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012). Prior findings reveal that the growth of teaching quality is a multidimensional strive. In fact, support for quality teaching takes place at three levels: a) At the institution-wide level: this level includes projects such as designing policies and supporting organizations and systems of internal quality assurance, b) Programme level: this level comprises actions to measure and enhance the design, content and delivery of the programmes within a department or a school, c) Individual level: this level includes activities helping teachers achieve their mission, encouraging them to innovate and support improvement to student learning and adopt a learner-oriented focus. These three levels are essential and correlative (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012). Actually, there are constantly changes in education programs of more developed countries. Using various and active teaching methods in learning-teaching process is one of these changes. The necessity of this concept is mainly attributed to the explosion of knowledge, because the new environment is strictly tied to the concept of education quality which assures learning. How to teach the curriculum is more significant; accordingly, it is the capabilities and proficiencies of the professors that generally become sensitive (Fathi Azar, 2003; 98). However, in contrary to the significance of teaching method and its impact on the human capital, the universities do not pay enough attention to the creativity and teaching method in hiring the professors. Performance indicators in higher education are mostly concentrated on research outputs. Ramsden (1995) found that the relative significance of research-based teaching has declined over the last 50 years and the universities do not emphasize on teaching. As a result, most faculty members obtain essential grades for job promotion and salary increase. However, teaching quality of the professors deals with a profound perception and analysis related to the curriculum. Effective teaching encourages students to assess the topics and learn the teaching process in terms of ideas and contents that provide the chance to nurture the thinking skills (Pakmehr et al, 2012: 22). In doing so, Bobmoon et al (2002) noted that the ability, knowledge and perception for the complicated and multidimensional process is based on several skills. In addition to the nature and education method of the teachers, enhancing the standards' quality and education quality is essential. Nowadays, teachers require the primary knowledge and skills and they try to become familiar with the information technology and new literacy concepts and communications. They should be encouraged to provide programs and creative methods. Roa (2003) noted that learning is the most significant problem in education and that is why different institutes try to enhance the quality of teaching. Given the essential significance of education quality, evaluating educational performance of the faculty members is an instrument for measuring the improvement of higher education quality. Professional improvement and teaching quality are among the main university approaches (Sharif and Salak, 2008). The students' perspectives are considered as the significant factors of surveys and quality assessment of universities (Kebriyayi and Roudbari, 2005: 54). The purpose of the present study is to assess the teaching quality in higher educations (evidence from University of Applied Science and Technology) from the perspective of students. In the University of Applied Science and Technology, practical educations are prioritized. Given the newly established nature of University of Applied Science and Technology, there are scarce studies conducted in this university. Therefore, this study mentions the main determinants of teaching quality based on curriculum quality, teaching method, teaching evaluation and interpersonal relations between professor-student. Finally, this study seeks to evaluate teaching quality from the perspective of students of University of Applied Science and Technology of South Khorasan.

Literature Review

Blackmoore (2009) believes that it is necessary to assess and assure the university quality resulting from labor market pressures and the increasing significance of the private-department management principles in 1980s. The other bases of quality assurance include the quick development of exporting and importing higher education, growing pressures to select global models from international organizations such as OECD, UNESCO and World Bank. According to Van Oudheusden and Peperstrete (1999:17), the major studies about the general quality of the universities return back to 1990s. In 1992, the handbook of quality was introduced and the universities strived to implement the industrial standard in 1993. As a result, the universities asked for ISO 9001. Therefore, appropriate academic environment is considered as an element of ISO 9001. Three main fields of activities are selected including education, research and external services and 20 other norms of standards have been ignored as the framework of quality handbook. The main objective is to establish a system with the ability of solving the problems associated with uncertain goals and vague activities. In ISO 9001 certificate, a continuous evaluation system for educational programs is required. As a consequence, the quality of lessons and seminars and the teaching abilities of the professors and educational dimensions are evaluated by the students and graduates (Van Oudheusden and Peperstrete, 1999: 15-16). Accordingly, many universities around the globe strive to assess the quality of universities in order to be accountable to the needs of the government and joining international associations such as Association of Faculty Development and European Quality Improvement System. For example, England, New Zeland and Australia selected the Research Quality Frameworks (RQFs) as the main

mechanisms of allocating research budgets (Nicholls, 2007; 540). Evaluating a number of university factors in the education system of Iran has been popularized and many inspection boards are assigned to identify and remove the formal academic problems of different universities. By examining the documents and sources of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran, it is found that there were no regular institutional structure before the Islamic Revolution for evaluating university quality. During this period, there were only sporadic and incoherent strives to evaluate the quality in public sense. At the beginning of 1980s, assistance of sub education established and assessed the educational operations of the universities and overlooked the other applications of higher education and managerial processes. Although this institution has changed to the office of monitoring and evaluation, it handled the monitoring and assessing processes of educational, research and managerial activities of the universities and higher education institutes. It could not, however, respond to the challenges related to education quality. Given the concept of quality, Bazargan (1995) introduced the concept of "internal evaluation" as an instrument to improve the quality of higher educations in the scientific communications of Iran. In this year, internal evaluation was implemented in six educational groups of the University of Medical Sciences (Mohammadi Zadeh, 2006: 2). Thereafter, a program known as the evaluation and credit rating of universities and higher educational institutes was approved in the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in which the emphasis is put on accreditation in the higher education system of Iran. Finally, academic activities in fields of monitoring and evaluating in higher education institutes began at the late of 2006 (Mohammadi and Eslam Zadeh, 2006: 88). Different studies about the quality assessment of universities have been conducted. A summary of these studies are presented below. Pakarian (1990) examined the factors of educational quality enhancement of Isfahan University and provided suggestions for its improvement. The findings revealed that the selection methods of students and faculty members, provision of professional growth, satisfaction of faculty members and students, the type and the way of evaluating the performance of the members, teaching methods, managerial performance at different university levels, qualitative and quantitative contents of curriculum and the situations of the libraries impact the education quality and might result in increasing or decreasing its level. Ghaedi (1994) concluded that 43 percent of the faculty members engage students in teaching process at greater extent and 52.6 percent of the faculty members participate the students in teaching at lower degrees. According to his findings, 66 percent of the faculty members put great emphasis on improving teaching quality. In terms of teaching principles, 42 percent of the faculty members argue that they are very familiar with the teaching principles and methods; while 52.6 percent of them believe that they have a moderate familiarity with these principles. Shakour Niya et al (2002) suggested that 60 percent of the professors argue that the assessment scores given by the students might help in improving teaching quality. In a study by Zolfaghar and Mehr Mohammadi (2004) in Tehran University, it is found that there is a significant association between teaching quality of the faculty members and their education degree. However, teaching quality is found to have no significant relationship with age, gender, teaching duration and the location of university. In examining the effective educational factors of teaching quality from the perspective of faculty members and students of Lorestan University, Soleimani Motlagh (2006) found that the content of curriculum, methods of improvement assessment, teaching methods, familiarity with educational technology and education quality are significantly associated. According to Shabani Varki and Gholi Zadeh (2006), teaching quality is found to be significantly different between the existing and satisfactory levels. By comparing the determinants of teaching quality at the current and expected levels, it is documented that these determinants are significantly different. Generally, the findings clearly represent that it is necessary to change the situation from the current to the satisfactory level. Agha Molayi et al (2006) also revealed that there is a significant quality gap between different education services. Based on their findings, the expectations of the students are beyond their perception from the existing position. Amin Bidokhti (2007) also showed that the students believe Islamic Azad University could not help them achieve their academic levels and there is a significant association between the method of educational regulations and teaching quality. The findings of Yamani and Bahadori (2008) indicate that using practical measures in selecting faculty members and students, using a specific teaching method, organizing educational content and organizing educational environment impact teaching quality. There is also no significant relationship found between the opinions of students in terms of field of study and the faculty. However, female students emphasize on the effect of above factors on teaching quality. Nobakht and Roudbari (2011) assessed the teaching quality of professors in the University of Medical Sciences of Tehran by 103 students in year 2011. They concluded that official regulations, individual and social appearance and the interpersonal relations of professors-students achieved the greatest score. The obtained scores of teaching quality and teaching methods are ranked next.

Methodology

The present study seeks to examine teaching quality of higher education in the University of Applied Science and Technology of South-Khorasan. This is a descriptive survey and the population is composed of all graduates of the University of Applied Science and Technology. Using stratified random sampling, 100 students are selected as the sample. In details, 58 percent of the students are female and 42 percents of the students are male. In addition, 24%, 34%, 18%, 9%, 8%, 4% and 3% of the students are engaged in first, second, third, fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth semesters, respectively. Furthermore, 45%, 14%, 15%, 11% and 15% of the students are studying accounting, architecture, computer, management and law, respectively. To collect the required data, standard questionnaire of teaching quality of Siraj (2003) has been used. This questionnaire includes 20 questions ranked based on a five-point Likert scale. Four general characteristics of teaching quality (lesson plan, teaching method,

teaching evaluation and interpersonal relations) are measured. In fact, the first factor is lesson plan and the statements 3, 4 and 5 have the highest factor loading. Statements 1, 2, 7 and 8 have the highest factor loadings for the second factor (teaching method). For the third factor (teaching evaluation), statements 11, 14, 15, 18 and 19 have the highest factor loadings. Statements 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 20 have the highest factor loadings for the fourth factor (interpersonal relations). The general questions include gender, courses, field of study and semester. According to the coefficient of Chronbach's alpha (0.91), the reliability of the questionnaire is confirmed. The content validity of the questionnaire is also accepted. To analyze the data, inferential and descriptive statistics are used and the findings are shown in the next section.

Findings

As mentioned before, this study aims to examine teaching quality of higher education (University of Applied Science and Technology) from the perspective of students. Accordingly, the research hypotheses are developed in two forms. On one hand, the extent to which teaching elements impact the prediction of teaching quality is examined. On the other hand, the university with better teaching quality and elements is determined. The research hypotheses are developed based on the tables.

Table1. Average scores related to teaching quality and its elements

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	Minimum score	Maximum score
Teaching quality	3.22	0.60	1.40	4.55
Lesson plan	3.38	0.79	1.67	5
Teaching method	2.99	0.70	1.25	4.50
Teaching evaluation	3.15	0.71	1	4.80
Interpersonal relations	3.33	0.66	1.50	4.75

The normality of the research variables is tested by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results are summarized in table 2:

Table2. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Variable	statistic	Sig. level
Teaching quality	0/489	0/971

According to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the normality of the data is confirmed (for the whole variables, the significance level is greater than 0.05). As a result, parametric tests are used to examine the hypothesis.

H1: There is a significant relationship between teaching quality and lesson plan.

Table3. The relationship between teaching quality and lesson plan

Statement	lesson plan	
Teaching quality	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0.775
	Sig. level	0.000

Given the data collected from the questionnaire, the correlation coefficient between teaching quality and lesson plan is 0.775 which shows there is a strong positive relationship between these variables (sig. level of -0.000). Consequently, the null hypothesis of correlation test is rejected and the first hypothesis is confirmed. That is, there is a significant association between teaching quality and lesson plan.

H2: There is a significant relationship between teaching quality and teaching method.

Table4. The relationship between teaching quality and teaching method

Statement	teaching method	
Teaching quality	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.731
	Sig. level	0.000

According to the findings, the correlation coefficient between teaching quality and teaching method is equal to 0.731 that represents a strong positive relationship between these variables at the significance level of 0.05; as a result, the null hypothesis of the correlation test is rejected and the second hypothesis is confirmed.

H3: There is a significant relationship between teaching quality and teaching evaluation.

Table5. The relationship between teaching quality and teaching evaluation

Statement	teaching evaluation	
Teaching quality	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.905
	Sig. level	0.000

Based on the findings represented in table 5, the correlation coefficient between teaching quality and teaching evaluation is 0.905 and it shows that there is a strong positive association between teaching quality and teaching evaluation.

H4: There is a significant relationship between teaching quality and interpersonal relations.

Table6. The relationship between teaching quality and interpersonal relations

Statement	Interpersonal relations	
Teaching quality	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.933
	Sig. level	0.000

As shown in table above, the correlation coefficient between teaching quality and interpersonal relations is 0.933 that is an indicator of the strong positive relationship between these variables at the significance level of 0.05; the null hypothesis is rejected and the fourth hypothesis is confirmed. That is, there is a significant association between teaching quality and interpersonal relations.

Table7. Regression coefficient of lesson plan

Variable	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t value	Sig. level
	B	Std. error	β		
Constant	1.240	0.168		7.369	0.000
lesson plan	0.588	0.48	0.775	12.137	0.000

Table8. ANOVA of lesson plan

Source of changes		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig. level	Correlation coefficient	R ²
lesson plan	Regression	21.90	1	21.910	147.3	0.000	0.775	0.601
	Residual value	14.576	98	0.149				
	Total	36.487	99					

The findings reveal that the correlation coefficient is 0.775 and the squared R is 0.601; therefore, lesson plan explains 60.1 percent of the variances in teaching quality and this is significant at the significance level of 0.05 (F value= 147.3) Table 9 represents the standardized beta coefficient of lesson plan and teaching quality. Beta coefficients of lesson plan are significant at 0.05 level of significance. As a result, it is concluded that lesson plan predicts teaching quality (table 7).

Table9. Regression coefficients related to teaching method

Variable	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t value	Sig. level
	B	Std. error	β		
Constant	1.346	0.182		7.380	0.000
Teaching method	0.628	0.059	0.731	10.604	0.000

Table10. ANOVA of teaching method

Source of changes		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig. level	Correlation coefficient	R ²
Teaching method	Regression	19.495	1	19.495	112.436	0.000	0.731	0.534
	Residual value	16.992	98	0.173				
	Total	36.487	99					

According to the table above, it is found that the correlation coefficient is 0.731 and the squared R is 0.534. Therefore, teaching method explains 0.534 of the variances in teaching quality which is found to be significant at 0.05 level (table 10). Table below represents the standardized beta coefficients between teaching method and teaching quality. According to the significance of teaching method, it is concluded that this variable predicts teaching quality.

Table11. Regression coefficients related to teaching evaluation

Variable	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t value	Sig. level
	B	Std. error	β		
Constant	0.819	0.118		6.965	0.000
Teaching evaluation	0.763	0.036	0.905	21.000	0.000

Table12. ANOVA related to teaching evaluation

Source of changes		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig. level	Correlation coefficient	R ²
Teaching evaluation	Regression	29.853	1	29.853	441.00	0.000	0.905	0.818
	Residual value	6.634	98	0.068				
	Total	36.487	99					

The correlation coefficient is 0.905 and the squared R is 0.818; as a result, teaching evaluation explains 0.818 of the variations in teaching quality (F value=441.00). Table 13 shows the standardized beta coefficients of teaching evaluation and teaching quality. According to the significance level (0.05), it is concluded that teaching evaluation predicts teaching quality (table 11).

Table13. Regression coefficients related to interpersonal relations

Variable	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t value	Sig. level
	B	Std. error	β		
Constant	0.392	0.113		3.471	0.001
Interpersonal relations	0.851	0.033	0.933	25.59	0.000

Table14. ANOVA of interpersonal relations

Source of changes		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig. level	Correlation coefficient	R ²
Interpersonal relations	Regression	31.734	1	31.734	645.289	0.000	0.933	0.870
	Residual value	4.753	98	0.049				
	Total	36.487	99					

The findings on table 14 represent that the correlation coefficient is 0.933 and the squared correlation coefficient is 0.870; therefore, the interpersonal relations explains 0.780 of the teaching quality variance (F value=645.289). The above table represents the standardized regression coefficients between interpersonal relations and teaching quality. Accordingly, it is concluded that the interpersonal relations explains teaching quality (table 13).

H5: There is a significant relationship between teaching quality and its elements in different cities. To compare teaching quality and its element in different cities, ANOVA is used.

Table15. ANOVA of teaching quality and its elements in terms of cities

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	F	p-value
Teaching quality	3.23	0.61	111.853	0.000
Lesson plan	3.38	0.79	35.089	0.000
Teaching method	2.99	0.71	23.082	0.000
Teaching evaluation	3.16	0.72	56.277	0.000
Interpersonal relations	3.33	0.66	64.390	0.000

Based on the results of ANOVA shown on table 15, the significance level of teaching quality and its elements are lower than 0.05; as a result, teaching quality and its elements are different in various cities. The findings reveal that teaching quality, lesson plan, teaching method, teaching evaluation and the interpersonal relations have the minimum score in Birjand and the maximum score in Ghaen. In addition, lesson plan in Ferdows and Nehbandan, teaching method in Birjand and Nehbandan- Nehbandan and Ferdows, teaching evaluation in Nehbandan and Ferdows have similar scores. In other terms, the scores were not similar.

H6: There is a significant relationship between teaching quality and its elements in different fields of study. To compare teaching quality and its elements in different fields of study, ANOVA is used.

Table16. ANOVA of teaching quality in terms of fields of study

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	F	p-value
Teaching quality	3.23	0.61	0.755	0.557
Lesson plan	3.38	0.79	2.510	0.047
Teaching method	2.99	0.71	2.985	0.023
teaching evaluation	3.16	0.72	0.868	0.486
Interpersonal relations	3.33	0.66	1.019	0.401

As shown above, the significance levels of teaching quality, teaching evaluation and interpersonal relations are higher than 0.05; it can be concluded that there is no significant association between teaching quality, teaching evaluation and interpersonal relations in different fields of study. According to the significance levels of lesson plan and teaching method which are lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that lesson plan and teaching method are different between various fields of study.

The results also reveal that lesson plan in fields of management, architecture, computer and accounting-accounting and law are similar. Furthermore, teaching method in management and law- law, accounting and computer- computer and architecture are similar.

Discussion and Conclusion

Many prior studies such as Blackmore (2009), Van Oudheusden and Peperstrete (1999), Wei Tang and Wu (2010) emphasize that the quality of higher education should be the first priority and the main concern of higher education leadership; and it is expected that practical functions to improve this field are based on global and national knowledge and experiences. The better grades achieved by the students do not assure the quality of the university, because these grades do not convey any information about various facts of university. As a result, those indicators with qualitative information should be provided (about the factors which mostly help in creating an effective learning environment) such as: qualification of faculty members, essential commitment level of faculty members, efficiency level of the program in meeting education needs, provision of sufficient human and physical resources, effectiveness of teaching methods and students' assessments. Quality is the main factor helping students improve their thinking skills and education degree, because the fundamental basis of the university quality is the improved learning experience of the student. From this perspective, quality is defined as the intentional steps taken to achieve the continuous improvement in order to make learning experience effective (QAA for Higher Education, 2003). In doing so, teaching quality is the factor evaluated in order to make learning efficient. As mentioned before, teaching quality means using activities to judge about the prior efforts or helping in decision making about future developments of university or educational system. The present study seeks to examine teaching quality from the perspective of the students of the University of Applied Sciences and Technology of South Khorasan. As the first conclusion, there is a significant relationship between teaching quality and its elements. This is consistent with the findings of Shabani and Gholi Zadeh (2006), Agha Molayi et al (2006), Amin Bidokhti (2007) and Yamani and Bahadori (2008) who concluded that there is a significant difference between the current and expected levels of determinants of teaching quality. The data related to the first hypothesis reveal that teaching quality and lesson plan are significantly associated. Furthermore, lesson plan predicts teaching quality and it is concluded that lesson plan explains teaching quality. This is consistent with the findings of Pakarian (1990) who found that teaching quality and teaching evaluation impact educational quality and might lead to its increase or decrease. The reason of this relationship is attributed to the fact that lesson plan is the framework in which a conceptual plan of the lesson is established and the teachers interact with the students and experience their learnings in order to achieve the best desirable function. Lesson plan mentions the goals, learning-teaching activities, references and evaluations. When the teacher prepares lesson plan, he/she tries to find answers to these questions: teaching for what? Teaching for whom? What to teach? How to teach? What instrument to use for teaching? What things and how things should be assessed? By finding answers to these questions, the education chart is directed and a measure is selected for teaching, selecting and organizing contents and selecting and organizing learning experiences. Therefore, learning is considered more important than teaching. When a teacher is fully aware of the concepts and flow charts, the lesson will be better presented and this is because the teacher knows the beginning and ending of the teaching and will organize teaching. The results of the second hypothesis disclose that there is a significant association between teaching quality and teaching method. The findings also indicate that teaching method explains teaching quality. This is consistent

with the findings of Soleimani Motlagh (2006) who found a significant relationship between teaching methods, familiarity with training technology and academic education quality. Any of these factors might result in enhancing teaching quality. One of the effective factors in enhancing teaching quality is the method of teaching, because the teacher is the final person who motivates students to be passive or active in learning process; in addition, teaching method is the way the knowledge is transferred to the students. The teacher puts emphasis on the way the students actively learn the topics and bring them in mind. Therefore, some effective factors in enhancing teaching quality include simple description of lessons, providing lessons in a structured and regular form, actively engagement of students in learning and previous background of the students in enhancing teaching quality. Using audiovisual media and explaining lessons in an appropriate form and using various practical examples result in more learning. In doing so, teaching method enhances teaching quality. The data related to the third hypothesis represent that there is a significant association between teaching quality and teaching evaluation. Furthermore, teaching evaluation predicts teaching quality. This is consistent with the findings of Pakarian (1990) who found that teaching evaluation impacts teaching quality and might result in its increase or decrease. This is also consistent with the findings of Soleimani Motlagh (2006) who argued teaching evaluation and teaching quality are significantly associated and any of these factors might result in enhancement of education quality. This finding can be attributed to the fact that written exams only concentrate on the information of the students and ignore important dimensions such as curiosity, attitudes, skills, creative minds and mental inquiry; however, using teaching evaluation along with feedback provides a creative field for the students to use their talents. In other words, teaching evaluation and feedback reinforce the thinking abilities, measure the main concepts and provide the fields of familiarity with academic methods. Therefore, teaching quality is affected by the attitudes, skills, research activities, teamwork, observation and conferences, practical examples, stories and home works. These factors help in the success of class. Because the students are assessed based on their talents and different emotional and cognitive fields, they have more incentives to participate in learning. The results of the fourth hypothesis reveal that there is a significant association between teaching quality and interpersonal relations. The correlation results also indicate that interpersonal relations predicts and explains teaching quality. This is consistent with the findings of Nobakht and Roudbari (2012) who found that interactive relationship between the teacher and students has the greatest score in educational fields. This is because establishing an appropriate relationship plays an essential role in effective teaching. Through the direct communication of oral messages about the values of educational activities and expectations and through indirect messages including learning home works, the teachers impact the feelings of the students. Establishing an interpersonal relationship is effective in teaching quality and allows students to ask their questions without any concerns and express their opinions easily. In an appropriate interpersonal relationship, the teacher develops an intimate environment in the class and creates a balance between psychological security and freedom and provides a risky situation for the students. In fact, the type and quality of the relationship in the class motivates students to achieve the knowledge of the teacher. This finding indicates that a good teaching does not only depend on technical issues, but also on the active role of the teachers in the class. A good teaching mostly relies on the behavior of the teachers in the class. The teacher knows that a correct relationship is a security bridge and a psychological need which motivates students to participate in learning. In addition, having a correct relationship with the students requires familiarity with the main behavioral characteristics of the students and a proper interaction with the students. As a result, personal perception of the teachers from the characteristics of the students and learning objectives results in justifying, developing and improving the interpersonal relationship between the students and teachers. The data related to the fifth hypothesis represent that there is a significant difference between teaching quality and its elements in different cities. Teaching quality, lesson plan, teaching method and interpersonal relationship has the least score in Birjand and the greatest score in Ghaen. In addition, lesson plan in Ferdows and Nehbandan, teaching method in Birjand and Nehbandan- Nehbandan and Ferdows, teaching evaluation in Nehbandan and Ferdows have similar scores. In other terms, the scores were not similar. The result of the sixth hypothesis represent that there is no significant difference between teaching quality in teaching evaluation elements and interpersonal relationship in different fields of study. However, there is a significant difference between the scores based on the scores of lesson plan and teaching method in terms of different fields of study. The findings also reveal that lesson plan in fields of management, architecture, computer and accounting- accounting and law are similar. Furthermore, teaching method in management and law- law, accounting and computer- computer and architecture are similar. Developing the existing situation in the academic fields require continuous assessment of the quality of research and educational missions. Based on the findings, it is found that teaching quality in the University of Applied Science and Technology of South Khorasan is not at a satisfactory level and it is necessary to hire skillful professors for these universities. In employing these professors, the skills and scientific proficiencies of the professors should be assured.

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