

**The Impact of Students' Attitudes towards the Evaluation System on
Their Results in Some Academic Subjects**

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate and measure the influence of students' attitudes towards evaluation systems at the faculty of Arts at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan on their overall results in some academic subjects, namely; Curriculum and Teaching Methods.

A questionnaire has been designed, developed, and used to achieve such an aim. The questionnaire consisted of 25 paragraphs or questions, using Lickert's psychometric scale for measuring the students' responses to the questions asked. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire had been examined by using Chronbach's and Pearson's correlation methods. The results of the questionnaire were found to be coefficient and stable, reaching an appropriate value of (0.78) and (0.825) respectively.

The researcher in this study tried to answer the following questions:

- 1-What are the attitudes of the students towards the evaluation system at the faculty of Arts?
- 2-Do the attitudes of the students vary in terms of their gender?
- 3-How do the attitudes of the students affect their final results in both subjects (Curriculum and teaching methods)?
- 4-Do the results in those courses vary in terms of student's gender?

From the previous questions the researcher has formed four postulates, and many statistical equations have been used to examine the results. The results showed that the attitudes of students towards the evaluation system is generally positive, while in terms of gender the results showed that there is no significant statistical differences. This was because in both tests the T. Value was 1.93 which is not statistically significant in the level of 0. 41 and F.D. 35. This means that the tendencies of both Male and Female students towards the evaluation system are nearly equal. Accordingly, the researcher accepts the second zero assumption. By using Spearman- Brown's correlation coefficient equation(R) the results proved there are no significant statistical differences between students' attitudes towards the evaluation system and their results in the two suggested subjects. Moreover, by using KAI Square equation the study showed that there are significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the students' achievement in both subjects in terms of their gender in favour of Female students. The researcher has explained the results in the discussion section of the results.

KEY Words: Assessment, Attitude, Alternative, Curriculum, Evaluation, Perception Teaching Methods, Valuation,

Introduction:

The Concept of Evaluation has been associated with the traditional understanding of assessment methodology and rating of students' responses to certain questions relating to certain subjects, and the way in which students respond to those questions in an examination environment.

Examinations usually reflect the aims and objectives of a given subject at a certain stage of education (Petty. G.2009.P.54). In other words, it is a judgement of students' achievement and memorization of the imposed information given to the students through their text books and the teacher's explanations. (Jalalah, 1999, P.31).

In some cases, evaluation systems become part of the educational reconstruction of the curriculum and its teaching methods; it means that evaluation through exams should be the first step in proposing appropriate means in avoiding mistakes and short falls in both the curriculum and the teaching methods applied. (Aqel, 2001, P.41).

Some educators have defined the evaluation system as an educational process to collect and analyse the results of the students. This was to determine the level he or she has achieved, their aims and objectives and to discover the strengths and weaknesses of their performance and to make a decision based on these outcomes. (Stenhouse, L.1978, p.73).

The previous definitions reflected the purpose of evaluations throughout their exams in the light of students' achievements in gaining knowledge. But such variables represent part of the educational process and the outcomes of knowledge are part of a wide range of educational concepts. The scholars in the field of education have concentrated on students' activities, skills and practical performance rather than knowledge achievements and marks given as a result of educational function. (Edgar. S & Sydney. M, 1976, P.145).

Due to the different definitions in evaluation, the University of Al- Zaytoonah of Jordan tried to use different types of methods of examination in order to evaluate and assess the students' achievements, application of practical skills, performance and an overall picture of a student's personality insofar as the teaching staff can do in this respect. (Al-Zaytoonah yearly prospectus 2013). Methods of Evaluation at AL-Zaytoonah University of Jordan.

The Faculty of Arts at the university (The scope of the study) used to conduct written exams three times within each term, there are two official terms and the third one (Summer Term) is an Alternative for students the grades are divided as follows:

20 marks for the first exam

20 marks for the second exam

50 marks for the last exam

The lecturer usually devotes 10 marks to the student's activities and lecture tendency (attendance?) including doing research and presentation ...etc this means that 90% of scores goes to student's memorization and knowledge of the subject which they study while at the same time we are able to measure to what extend the teacher has achieved his/her goals and objectives of the subject taught during the term.

The questions are usually multiple choice, coupled with essays etc... The faculty use an online computer system to electronically assess students. However there is no alternative means or strategy for the evaluation process, for a student's practical "hands-on" performance rather than theoretical questions and answers. This is vital, especially for theoretical fields of study, where exams may not be representative of a student's ability to use the skills they have learned in practice, and where exams are limited as students have to display cognitive memory based reasoning under the pressure of time constraints.

And did not put forward a plan and an alternative strategy for evaluation process which for instance, depend on practical performance rather than theoretical questions and answers especially in theoretical fields. It means that most of exams are not useful as being forced to use reasoning skills under pressure rather than to use those in a practical life.

Some educators consider such traditional system as a consequence of residing and prompting philosophy, or express the idea of spoon feeding which still dominate our curriculum concept and construction, in the same time teaching methods in our schools and universities.

Problem of the Study:

The researcher has noticed that some students are not happy from the system used to evaluate their work and study efforts during the term. Because such system measures their mental ability to memorise and remember certain information in the time of exam, and to remember certain knowledge given during the course of study. Such system does not measure their ability to put theory in a real practice in their life (Abu-Dabat.Z.2009 P.301)

Some students complained that some circumstances prevent them from setting for exam others complains that they do not able to memorise information by heart and revise the accumulated information every week, for that and for many other reasons the tradition system does not measure students' educational level and cleverness , more over there is a dramatic increase in the number of faculty caught cheating

Accordingly, the mean time system does not reflect students' skills, real abilities and still traditional in its concept, practice and results. The use of critical thinking (Inference, deductive, inductive, evaluation, and analyses) is very rare, unless the whole system of educational process from school grade up to the university should be revised and developed (Dyrson, 2004).

Operational Terms Definitions:

Valuation:

Adding to the previous definitions of valuation, in general it is the act of estimating how much something is worth (oxford word power, 2003, p.818).It means that evaluation must be the last step in the valuation process, in order to give the right scores or the right opinion about how good, medium, and low the student's work is.

Assessment:

To assess is to make a judgment and form an opinion about the value of something .In this respect the teacher is the valour of student's level in the achievement of knowledge, or completing a certain project, or his cleverness ...etc that trough the process of evaluation in order to change what should be changed either in the educational system n general or in student's behaviour in particular. Assessment process does the same function of feeding back after certain activity.

Examination:

To examine, means to act of looking something carefully (oxford word power,2003,P.259).In educational field means the questions given to the students to be answered , either verbally or in writing, in order to measure his knowledge achievement, understanding, and abilities to use the accumulated information into practice.

Attitude:

There are so many different definitions for teacher's attitudes towards something, one of those definitions is" the total response towards profession positively or negativity". Such definition have been extrapolated from many definitions such as: the way that a person thinks, feels or behaves (oxford word power, 1999. P. 49). Others identify attitudes as psychological trends towards certain subjects with a certain degree, positively or negatively. (Eagle and Chicken , 1963. P.1).

In this respect, we can say that the attitudes towards evaluation are a hypothetical deductive concept which can be measured as a result of a certain conduct. (Burns, 1990, P.20). Generally speaking, attitudes towards evaluation based on two parallels, first of which Gee's theory which is based on deep beliefs in the importance of the provision which has been identified as socio-cognitive perspective (Gee 2004, P.P116-132). The second theory is based on social constructive behaviour; such a concept would be connected with social beliefs, customs and traditions (Zygotes, 1998, P.P 114-116)

In relation to this theory, Richardson believes that the attitudes towards things means accumulated experiences. She stated that individual attitudes are constructed through years of practicing, reading, writing, listening, organizing, handling and solving problems and working in different fields etc. (Richardson, R. 1994, P.P 90-108).

According to what has been mentioned, the attitudes of the teacher towards teaching can be considered as the determinate of his/her behaviour in the profession or towards something (Glutei. M.2006, P.187).For instance, the quality of the attitudes reflects teacher's occupational understanding of being a teacher (Can, 1987. P.160). Therefore studying the link between the terms of effectiveness and functional performance in teaching and learning for instance, is very important.

Generally speaking, the attitudes to a certain thing means, the tenderness push the person who is in charge to perform a particular conduct against the same thing (Lewis and Norwich, 2005, P.82).

Alternative Valuation:

There are alternative methods used for evaluation that fall under different categories which include, practical application of theoretical principles, the delivery of projects etc... Alternative evaluations related to the use of traditional strategy and modern concepts of evaluation concentrates on various aspects relating to the way in which a student acts. The activities they undertake, their understanding of their subjects and the way in which they interact with both students and staff in solving problems, as well as project development and of critical thinking skills are all alternative ways of evaluation. These have been classified as Inference, Deductive reasoning, Inductive, Evaluation, and Analyses.

Perception: There are many different meanings for such idiom, such as: knowledge Perception, auditory perception, kinaesthetic perception, depth perception....etc. But ultimately we mean a particular way of looking at or understanding something. (Oxford word wide,2003.P.549).

Previous Studies:

There has been extensive research conducted about students' existing evaluation systems from the point of view of the student. One of those was conducted by Stephanie ,H., who tried to put forward a new theory , and construct a new system to support students' ambitions and willingness in changing the traditional system which is based on knowledge of the classic , literacy and bureaucracy style of student evaluation. (See, Stephany, H. Learning forward.org) .

A comprehensive study done by Wikipedia about the exams system in China , (20013) showed that the government efforts have not been entirely satisfactory , leaking of exams questions and contents, bribery, and other abuses are still being constantly exposed.(Wikipedia.com).

Katrien Struyven (2002) has published a paper about students' perception relating to their respective assessment system within higher education. She found out that students' perceptions have a considerable influence on their approach to learning. And she goes on to explain that students approach the way in which evaluation systems are implemented. Furthermore, it was found that students hold strong views about different format and methods of assessment, for example, the favourable assessment system and method was the conventional then the multiple choice in comparison with essay type question. But when conventional and alternative assessments methods are compared, students perceive alternative as being fairer than the traditional methods.

Another article written by Changuls,S. stated that: "The estimation may not absolutely be correct , because the candidates performance which is being measured invariably ill-defend , or the marks may be a measure of the candidate's knowledge or intelligence or power of expression or a combination of these characteristics , therefore the marks assigned may vary from one examination to another. (Changule,S.S. 2009) .

A study operated by Al-Rasheedy aimed at measuring the perception of science teachers in the state of Kuwait relating to the effect of alternative evaluation methods on students' performance in the class room. He used his new strategies which were based on students' activities and alternative assessment In 27 subjects. The results showed that the group chosen to conduct the assessment alternative methods mentioned previously have achieved the best results as opposed to the other group which surrendered to the traditional assessment. (AL-Rasheedy,N. 2008).

Another study conducted by Massoud. S (2008) aimed at learning the effect of the use of a new evaluation strategy, to measure a students 'ability to understand scientific concepts and to use critical thinking in their responses to the questions posed to them as part of this new strategy. The study revealed a positive relation between those new variables and the students' understanding of the scientific concepts and the way in which they applied critical thinking to this end.

Mustafa,A(2004) Has operated a study aimed at knowing the effect of the use of an alternative evaluation system on the achievements of the students in the National Education Subject of their choosing, and a means to measure their attitudes towards the strategy after its application. The researcher constructed three Tests:

- 1-Achevement test
- 2-Alternatve test
- 3-Attitudes test

The study showed that the students' attitudes towards a new strategy were positive, and which resulted in the further development of this strategy, as it was found to adapt positively to the students' academic abilities and skills.

Limitation and the population of the study:

The study was limited to the faculty of arts students at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan to two subjects:

- 1- Curriculum, The concepts and foundations.
- 2- Teaching methods for the essential primary stage.

The number of the students enrolled in the year 2003- 2004 in for two terms was 380 students, 272 Female students and 108 Male students.

The classification has been constructed according to the following variables, gender and academic subjects which is presented in Table No. (1).

Table No (1)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	70	28%
Female	180	72%

Total of C. Students	250	100%
Male	38	29.3%
Female	92	70.7%
Total of T. Students	130	100%
Total	380	

C. Curriculum Concepts & Foundations

T. Teaching methods

Data Collection Instruments:

A questionnaire was developed and designed to measure students' attitudes towards The Evaluation system currently in place at the university, and in the faculty of arts in particular. The questionnaire consisted of 25 paragraphs or questions, which were chosen from various scales, and were carefully considered for this study. The scale was organized using the Luckert Quarter scale, with the main focus being on creating a more engaging assessment whereby student would be more willing to answer questions honestly and openly.

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Chronbach's and Parsons correlation to adjust the paragraphs of the scale. The results of the questionnaire were found to be co-efficiently and stability, reaching an appropriate value of (0.78) and (0.825) respectively. Moreover, the questionnaire been accepted in its final form and after a review by the educational experts in the department of education.

The results were evaluated according to Luckert quarter scale and according to the following bands:

- 4 scores to the first response (Good Degree)
- 3 scores to the second response (Medium Degree)
- 2 scores to the third response (Little Degree)
- 1 score to the fourth response (V. Little Degree)

The researcher used statistical equations especially the mean of the scores collected, and standard deviation for each mean, T. Test and F. value to know whether there are any significant differences between the variables: Attitudes towards the evaluation system, students' results in two academic subjects, and both female and male students.

Purpose of the study, Questions and Postulates:

With reference to the title, the following questions will be studied and examined:

1-What are the attitudes of the students towards the evaluation system at the faculty of Arts?

2-Do the attitudes of the students vary in terms of their gender?

3-How do the attitudes of the students affect their final results in both subjects (Curriculum and teaching methods)?

4-DO the results in those courses vary in terms of student's gender?

Postulates of the Study

From the previous questions the researcher has formed the following postulates:

- 1- The attitudes of the students towards the evaluation system are negative due to the many reasons mentioned previously according to students themselves.
- 2- There are no statistically significant differences between students' attitudes towards the evaluation system according to their gender.
- 3- There are no statistically significant differences between students' attitudes towards the evaluation system and their results in the both academic subjects.
- 4- There are no statistically significant differences between students' final results in the two academic subjects due to their gender.

The Results:

To answer the previous question and verify the validity of the assumptions, appropriate tests were used, and the results were demonstrated in the table below. To answer the first question A.M. Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the paragraphs have been extrapolated, and the table below shows the results according to their responses consecutively.

Table No.(2) shows the results of the students' Attitudes towards the evaluation system

No.	Paragraph	X	S.D
1.	Evaluation should be comprehensive and be both theoretical and practical.	3.82	1.133
2.	I would rather have multiple-choice questions over other methods to evaluate my knowledge & achievements.	3.74	1.219
3.	I would rather have a combination of assessments, which consist of essays, multiple-choice exams, and supplement the void ...etc.	3.72	1.182
4.	I believe that the evaluation system is not always objective.	3.70	1.210
5.	I believe that the evaluation system has been	3.67	1.158

	designed to measure students' reasoning abilities only.		
6.	I believe that the evaluation can be arbitrary and is not designed to measure all the qualities of a student.	3.56	1.15
7.	I believe that student interaction in the classroom and his/her activities should be part of the evaluation system.	3.43	1.19
8.	I would rather be continuously evaluated during the course instead of being evaluated with time constraints.	3.38	1.06
9.	I believe that an alternative evaluation method that measures a student's ability to retain information, overall knowledge, practical skills & capabilities are more beneficial than the traditional one.	3.37	1.67
10.	I believe that the current evaluation system is adequate for assessing me.	3.35	1.60
11.	I believe that an evaluation system should be beneficial for both students and teachers alike.	3.29	1.15
12.	I would rather have a varied system of evaluation, which encompasses all areas of a student's development rather than one that is more limited.	3.26	1.20
13.	I think that the evaluation system we have currently is adequate for the current curriculum.	3.22	1.101
14.	I prefer essays to other forms of evaluation	3.20	1.08
15.	I prefer oral exams to written exams.	3.18	1.09
16.	I would rather work individually rather than in a group.	3.14	1.201
17.	I prefer electronic (online) multiple choice exam rather than written.	3.13	1.290
18.	I feel distracted and restless when I sit exams online.	3.10	1.33
19.	I believe that (online) multiple choice exam results surrender to a sort of luck and may not be entirely representative of a student's real achievement.	3.30	1.202

20.	I believe that working in a group on certain projects will deepen the relationship between the teacher and student.	3.08	1.28
21.	I believe that the current evaluation system pushes students to use a scientific approach in their response to questions.	3.06	1.260
22.	I believe that the current evaluation system covers part of the academic subjects only.	2.98	1.200
23.	I believe that my teacher must draw my attention towards my mistakes to improve myself .	2.80	1.320
24.	I believe that the interaction between a student and their teacher should be part of the evaluation system.	2.75	1.26
25.	I believe that the evaluation system should be focused on projects and essays rather than one that is more traditional.	2.67	2.26

The results in table No.2 showed that the attitudes of students towards the current evaluation system are generally positive, with the Arithmetic Mean being 3 and over in more than 21 paragraphs out of 25. The Arithmetic Mean of all paragraphs was 3.46, and the results conclude that the student support the current system. Only 4 paragraphs received a result of less than 3. Despite such agreement in relation to the evaluation system, there are a number of students who want the evaluation system to be more comprehensive, theoretical and practical. Also most of the students would rather have multiple-choice questions rather than written exams.

The researcher believes that multiple-choice questions are easier for example than essay style questions. This can be explained due to the fact that multiple choice questions, list the answer which can trigger a students' memory, and requires a slightly different methodology. For that reason a large number of students responded to paragraphs 2 and 3. Using an electronic online method came at the edge of the scale, as students showed reluctance in sitting an assessment which seemed both regimented and monotonous.

Those paragraphs which resulted in an Arithmetic Mean of less than 3 relates to a students' interaction with their peers and their teacher, as well as group projects carried out in a classroom environment. According to the previous results, the researcher does not accept zero assumption.

To answer the second question relating to students' attitudes based on gender the researcher has noticed that there are some differences between Male student's responses and Female students' responses. For instance the male students prefer written multiple-choice questions (3.73) whilst the female students prefer essay style questions (3.24). Also male student trends point towards a preference for oral assessments in conjunction with written exams (3.14) whilst female students prefer electronic (Online) methods of assessment which was based on an Arithmetic Mean (3.08).

The researcher believes that Female students' ability to memorize educational knowledge and content is greater than that of male students' ability to achieve the same. Despite that, the responses of both sides did not affect the results especially the calculation of Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and T .test values which has been conducted to determine whether there are any significant statistical differences.

At the level (0.05) between Male and Female, students' response to the scales paragraphs are shown in Table No. (3)

Table No.(3) shows the differences between Female students and Male student responses relating to their attitudes towards the evaluation system.

Table No. (3) shows the results

Gender	Frequency	X	S.D	F.D	S. Error	T. Value	S.S	P.
Female	272	3.32	1,21					
				35	0.085	1.39	0.41	0.05
Male	108	3.27	1.18					
Total	380							

X. Arithmetic-Mean

S.D. Standard deviation

F.D. Freedom Degree

S. Error. Standard of Error

S.S. Statistical Significances < 0.05

From the previous scale the results showed that no S.S. in the two tests, because the T. Value was 1.39 which is not Statistically Significant in the level of 0. 41 and F.D. 35. This means that the tendencies of both Female and Male students towards the evaluation system are nearly equal. Accordingly, the researcher accepts the second zero assumption.

To answer the third question, how do the attitudes of students affect their final results in both subjects (Curriculum and Teaching Methods) , the researcher used the Spearman-Brown correlation coefficient equation(R) to extrapolate whether there are any statistical significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the students' attitudes towards evaluation system and their achievement in both subjects. The researcher used Brown's equation to deal with the whole sample of the study.(Al-Jadry ,A .and Abu Helo,Y.2009 .P67).Table No. (4) Shows the results.

Table No.(4) shows the results

Valuables	General average	Frequency	X.	Y	R. value	p.
Attitudes results	71.2	380	27850		0.81	0.05
Academic results	67.0	380		26486		

X. Grades sum of attitudes results

Y. Grades sum of Academic subjects results

R. Correlation Coefficient

From the above table, it can be said that the level of the attitudes is positive regarding students' attitudes calculation of R. value 0.81, which is higher than P.value 0.05. Therefore the researcher does accept zero assumption and the positive attitudes students displayed towards the evaluation system, which had a positive impact on the students' results.

Finally, to answer the fourth question, do the results in those courses vary in terms of student's gender?

The researcher used KAI. Square to extrapolate whether there are significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the students' achievement in both subjects in terms of gender. The researcher has used K² equation because the number of the two variables is not equal.

Table No.5 shows the results.

Table No.(5)

Gender	Frequency	A.M	S.D	K ²	P.
Male	108	61	14.2	0.042	0.05
Female	272	73	12.42		
Total	380	67.0	13.40		

A.M. Arithmetic Mean

S.D, Standard Deviation

K² (KAI Square)

From the above figure it can be said that the A.M's of students' degrees in both subjects and according to their gender are varied. There are obvious differences in the results for both male and female students in favour of female Students. The researcher believes that female students displayed a better overall ability to memorize the information and the contents of the subject over male students. The results of K² showed there are significant differences at the level 0.05 between male and female student's grades in both subjects in favour of female students. For that the researcher does not accept the fourth assumption.

Discussion of the results:

The results of the two variables (the attitudes and the results of the exams in both subjects) showed that the relation between them is fair and positive, but the attitudes towards the evaluation system did not affect the students' marks negatively. From table No.1 it is clear that the students wanted dramatic change in the system used in the assessment of their work at the end of the term. We can read that in their responses to paragraphs 4-16. the Arithmetic mean was relatively high, and the averages were between 3.70-3.13. The study also showed that there was no difference between male and female students' responses to the scale. This shows that all students irrespective of their gender wanted some change in the current system; although the Arithmetic mean and Standard Deviation showed that overall they accepted the system. According to the grades of the students in the two subjects, it was obvious that female student's grades were higher than their male peers.

The researcher concluded that female students excelled in their ability to learn and retain course material for the current curriculum, and also their ability to recite the information they have learnt to gain more marks.

One of the reasons that may explain the disparity between female and male's students' grades might be explained as most of the male students work in order to pay their tuition fees, whilst the number of female students working is much smaller. There may be cultural reasons for this. As a result female students tend to have a lot more time for learning and completing the work assigned to them by the University. Furthermore the way in which the traditional curriculum is set out, and the traditional teaching methods and strategies used in the university especially in the faculty of arts emphasises on recitation of subject material, rather than assignments and project work.

Recommendations:

The researcher recommends the following:

- 1- The university of Al-Zaytoonah of Jordan in general and the faculty of arts in particular should revise the evaluation system to meet both students and the requirements of the society.
- 2- There are many types of evaluation and assessment systems. Accordingly, the evaluation procedures should be varied and combined.
- 3- Students' opinions and suggestions should be considered and examined, and not be neglected.
- 4- Examination methods should evolve according to new elements within academic subjects and should include both theoretical and practical methods of evaluation.
- 5- The evaluation should be a mixture both oral and written.
- 6- Individual and group evaluations should be considered, where students work with their classmates in order to enhance their learning and learn to work as a team.

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