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1997

## The relationship between lecturers' attitudes toward teaching, their teaching qualifications and student perceptions of their teaching performance

Ahmad R. Nasr

*University of Wollongong*

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**The Relationship Between Lecturers' Attitudes Toward Teaching,  
their Teaching Qualifications and Student Perceptions of their  
Teaching Performance**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

from

**University of Wollongong**

by

**Ahmad R. Nasr, M.A. (Hons)**

**Graduate School of Education**

**1997**

## Certificate

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged.

Ahmad R. Nasr

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## Acknowledgments

I acknowledge with appreciation the assistance of the following people during the course of this project: Associate Professor Philip de Lacey, Dr. Ted Booth and Dr. Max Gillett, my supervisors, for their valuable advice, critical thinking, support and encouragement. Professor Gannicott also commented critically on the statistical analysis and discussion.

Academic staff at the University of Wollongong who gave their time to undertake interviews, to complete the research questionnaires and give permission to access their student rating records, and also to university students for their time to complete more than 20,000 student rating questionnaires of the lecturers' teaching performance.

Staff at the Centre for Staff Development and Planning and Marketing Office at the University of Wollongong for their support in data gathering and their information. Ms. Anna Miller for her assistance with the text. Also the general staff of the Graduate School of Education for their support.

Isfahan University, Iran, for a full scholarship for this study, and also the University of Wollongong for enabling me to undertake this study and providing financial support in order to present a part of this study at two international conferences. AARE for my selection as a postgraduate student to receive a fellowship award, enabling my attendance at its 1996 international conference.

Finally I wish to thank my parents who provided an environment of spirituality and commitment. I wish also to express heartfelt thanks to my wife, Ehteram, and children, Azimeh and Amin for their patience throughout the course of this project.

## Publications

Several academic papers were derived from the present study and submitted for publication. Three were presented at international conferences and a fourth was resubmitted to an American journal '*Research in Higher Education*' after responding to the comments received from the two referees on the first and the second drafts.

- 1) Nasr, A. R., Gillett, M., Booth, E. (1996a). The relationship between university lecturers' qualifications in teaching and student ratings of their teaching performance. *International Consortium for Educational Development in Higher Education*. Finland: The University of Vasa.
- 2) Nasr, A. R. , Booth, E., Gillett, M. (1996b). Relationship between lecturers' attitude toward effective teaching and their teaching performance. *Australian Association for Research in Education*. Singapore Polytechnic.
- 3) Nasr, A. R., Booth, E., Gillett, M. (1996c). Relationship between lecturers' language background and their teaching performance. *Australian Association for Research in Education*. Singapore: Singapore Polytechnic.
- 4) Nasr, A. R., de Lacey, P., Booth, E., Gillett, M. (1997). The relationship between lecturers' attributes and their teaching performance. Manuscript was resubmitted to *Research in Higher Education*.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations were used in this study. Some were determined by the researcher, others are of organisations or from the literature:

AARE	Australian Association for Research in Education
ADS	Academic-Development Services
CSD	Centre for Staff Development
ESB	English-Speaking Background
ET	Effective Teaching
ICED	International Consortium for Educational Development
ITT	Introduction to Tertiary Teaching
ITS	Information Technology Services
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
LDS	Learning-Development Service
NESB	Non-English-Speaking-Background
PLSD	Fisher's Protected Least Significant Difference
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association
TP	Teaching Performance
TQ	Teaching Qualifications

## ABSTRACT

The present study, based on the Dunkin and Biddle (1974) and Biggs (1988; 1989) models of teaching, was designed to investigate the relationships between eight attributes of lecturers and the quality of lecturers' teaching performance, expressed as a function of student evaluations of teaching. The eight attributes were teaching qualifications, attitudes toward effective teaching, language background, gender, academic rank, level of academic degree, tertiary teaching experience and academic discipline. Among these, teaching qualifications and attitudes toward teaching were of principal interest.

The target group for the study comprised three fourths ( $N = 294$ ) of the full-time academic staff of the University of Wollongong in 1994, of whom 176 (60%) participated in the first phase of the study. In this phase, two surveys completed by academic staff and extant data from more than 20,000 student ratings, covering 548 subjects, were used to examine the essential relationships. Subsequently, in the second phase of the study in early 1997, a semi-structured interview was undertaken with 25 lecturers who had participated in the first phase to provide more insights into the influence of the eight lecturers' attributes on teaching performance.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine whether the lecturers' teaching performance differed significantly on the eight attributes. Then Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was employed to examine the combined and separate effects of the lecturers' attributes on teaching performance.

The inferential analyses in the first phase of the study indicated a significant correlation between the eight attributes and lecturers' teaching performance, accounting for 34 per cent of the variance. Of the eight attributes, language background, attitudes toward teaching, being at the rank of associate professor and being a member of Faculties of Arts and Creative Arts were the significant predictors for lecturers' teaching performance. Teaching qualifications was just short of statistical significance, ( $p < .06$ ).

In the second phase of the study the interviewees indicated that the following four attributes were the most influential on the teaching performance: having a positive attitude toward teaching, teaching experience, holding teaching qualifications and academic degree.

This study demonstrated a significant relationship between lecturers' attitudes toward effective teaching and their teaching performance. Lecturers who rated higher on the attitude scale, tended to rate highly on student ratings of their teaching. Having a positive attitude toward teaching was also nominated as the most influential attribute by academic staff. These findings suggest that, if lecturers' attitudes toward teaching are stimulated, there might be an enhancement of their teaching performance.

Another significant finding was that, where the first languages of the lecturers and students are different, lecturers may be able to enhance their teaching performance by improving their language and communication abilities. Universities may need to facilitate these developments through special pre-service and in-service interventions, and also perhaps a reconsideration of their staff selection criteria.