

## *Brief Report*

# The Relationship Between Teachers' Performance Ratings and the Achievement of their Students

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*The purpose of this study was to compare a subjective measure of performance, supervisor ratings of teacher performance, with an objective measure, the achievement scores of their students. Data from 100 teachers in Iran indicated that the two measures correlated .00. The performance scores of men were similar to those of women ( $d = .07$ ), but the achievement scores of students taught by men were higher than those taught by women ( $d = .35$ ).*

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Many academics and practicing managers regard performance appraisal as one of the most valuable human resource tools. Most organizations have a formal performance appraisal system in which employee job performance is rated on a regular basis, usually once a year. A good performance appraisal system can greatly benefit an organization by helping direct employee behavior toward organizational goals, letting employees know what is expected of them, and yielding information for making such employment decisions as pay raises, promotions, and discharges.

In the Iranian education system, the performance of all employees including principals, assistants, teachers and other members is evaluated each year. A standard form is used that contains specific guidelines for the rating process. The results of an applied investigation in one of the provinces of Iran demonstrated that school employees are relatively satisfied with this system. For example, 92% of participants believe that an effective performance appraisal can enhance positive perception of raters and ratees from each other; 69% reported that they were satisfied with their performance scores in the last three years, and 74% believed that the performance appraisal scores accurately reflected their performance (Shiri, 1996).

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the performance appraisal ratings for teachers in Zanjan (a city in northwest Iran) correlated with the achievement scores of their students.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants in the study were 100 teachers from guidance schools in the city of Zanjan, Iran. Men comprised 47% of the sample and women 53%. These percentages are similar to the 237 teachers in the school system of which 51.1% are men and 48.9% are women.

## **Performance Ratings**

Teachers were evaluated on 16 items comprising three factors: performance criteria (8 items), behavioral criteria (7 items), and moral criteria (1 item). In the performance criteria section, the eight items are rated on a five-point scale with a rating of 0.5 representing unacceptable performance and a rating of 2.5 representing outstanding performance. In the behavioral criteria section, the seven items are rated on a four-point scale with a rating of 0.25 representing unacceptable performance and a rating of 1 representing outstanding performance (.25. .50. .75. 1.0). In the moral criteria section, there is just one item is rated on a three-point scale with a rating of 3 indicating that her/his virtues are excellent and a rating of one indicating that the person is normal in this area. The performance rating used in this study was an average across the 16 items. The lowest possible score was 6.75 and the highest 30. The mean performance appraisal score was 29.35 with a standard deviation of 0.59, indicating tremendous leniency and range restriction. The ratings were made by principals or their assistants.

## **Student Achievement Scores**

In recent years, substantial research has indicated that teaching success is the strongest school-based predictor of student achievement. One concern about the use of student learning assessments in the teacher evaluation process is the way in which learning is assessed. The traditional use of grades or standardized achievement scores is certainly suspect for a variety of reasons, including the accuracy of grading procedures, alignment of achievement tests with the curriculum, diagnostic value of either approach for instructional improvement, and single-point-in-time nature of these indicators.

In the absence of meaningful pre-test data, grades or achievement test scores at the end of the year are hardly valid measures of a teacher's influence during a given year; indeed, they reflect the cumulative effects of what students have learned at home and school over preceding years. A much more accurate measure of what a student has learned would be reflected by an assessment that is curriculum-aligned and administered both at the beginning and end of the year. When such learning gains are averaged over a whole class of students, we have a general indication of the magnitude of learning that took place with that group of children.

In the Iranian education system, each curriculum year consists of two semesters. All students must take examinations in both semesters, covering approximately 13 subjects. Scores on these exams range from 0 to 20. To be promoted to the next grade level, students must score at least 10 in each subject. For the most part, these exams are constructed and administered by the teachers. In this sample, the mean achievement score across the 13 subjects in the second semester was 16.37 with a standard deviation of 1.82.

**Table 1**  
**Sex differences in performance appraisal and student achievement scores**

	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Performance Appraisal Scores	100	29.35	0.59	27	30
Men	47	29.37	0.56	28	30
Women	53	29.33	0.61	27	30
Student Achievement Scores	100	16.37	1.82	12.34	19.90
Men	47	16.70	1.63	12.34	19.90
Women	53	16.07	1.93	12.34	19.90

### Results and Conclusions

The primary question addressed in this study is the extent to which teachers' performance appraisal ratings are related to the achievement scores of their students. Performance appraisal scores correlated  $- .005$  with student achievement, indicating that there is no relationship between the supervisor performance ratings of teachers and the achievement of the teachers' students. Why such a low correlation? One explanation could be the leniency of the performance ratings did not accurately differentiate levels of teaching effectiveness. A second, less likely, explanation is that teaching quality is not related to student achievement. A final explanation is that, because the ratings were made by principals or their assistants, they performance ratings reflected "personal" characteristics rather than actual classroom performance.

We also looked at sex differences in performance appraisal ratings and student achievement scores. As shown in Table 1, men and women received similar performance appraisal ratings ( $d = .07$ ). The students of male teachers, however, had higher achievement scores than did the students of female teachers ( $d = .35$ ).

### References

- Shiri, A. (1996). *An investigation of the effects of performance appraisal on the effectiveness of principals' and teachers' professional relations*. Ilam Province: Ilam Educational Research Center

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