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Relationship between Social and Academic Integration of Students with Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad, Iran in 2016

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Abstract

Background & Objectives: Teacher evaluation by students is one of the best assessment methods, since students are directly educated by professors. Several factors are involved in the evaluation of teacher performance. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between Social and Academic Integration of Students with Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad, Iran in 2016.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional research was conducted on 307 BSc students in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences selected via stratified random sampling. Data were collected using demographic characteristics questionnaire and reliable and valid scales of institutional coherence and quality of teachers' performance. Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 20 using descriptive statistics, independent t-test, ANOVA, Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression at the significance level of below 0.05.

Results: Among the dimensions of social integration, the highest score was related to peer group interaction (29.08±4.59). Regarding the dimensions of academic integration, the highest score was related to academic and thinking progress (26.34±4.32). According to the Pearson's correlation coefficient, a direct and significant relationship was found between the total score of social and academic integration with the total score of student evaluation of teacher performance (r=0.53 and r=0.11, P<0.001 and P<0.04, respectively). Moreover, results of linear regression test demonstrated that there was 0.11 and 0.53 increase in the teacher evaluation score per each increase in the scores of social and academic integrations, respectively.

Conclusion: According to the results of the study, there might be an association between academic and social interactions and experiences of students with classmates and other academic staff with student evaluation of teacher performance, reflecting their satisfaction with the performance quality of faculty members in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences.

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Introduction

The nature and quality of a higher education institution depend, above all, on the ability and quality of its teachers in the provision of high-quality education (1, 2). Since the teaching activities of professors pursue different goals, there is a diverse rate of educational success criteria. In this regard, nine dimensions have been regarded for quality of teacher performance, including professional role, course presentation management, teaching and guidance, cultural competence, supervision and guidance, quality assurance of feedback function, homework and class management (3).

Evaluating the quality of teacher performance, determining their level of success in achieving educational goals and improving their quality are recognized as teacher evaluation, which can be useful in improving the teaching methods and their effectiveness. In addition, this process can help managers of educational institutes to design programs in line with the improvement of education quality and promotion of teachers (4). There is a wide range of teacher evaluation techniques and models, including evaluation by education authorities, peer-group evaluation, student evaluation, self-assessment by professors, student learning assessment, and evaluation of educational contents (5).

Recognized as the most common tangible information source in universities around the world, student evaluation of teacher performance is the most efficient type of evaluation since students are directly educated by professors (6-8). Various researchers have confirmed that student assessment must be used as one of the several information resources about educational performance (9, 10). In addition, evaluation of 2000 research articles in a review study showed that student evaluation is an efficient tool for measuring the effectiveness of education (11).

Researchers believe that students' understanding of teacher evaluation is affected by various factors, including personality traits, environmental factors, popularity of teachers, attitude of teachers to students, expected score of students, as well as time of class and evaluation implementation. In this regard, the mentioned factors can undermine the credibility of these assessments (11-13). Research findings have indicated that students who expect higher scores have a greater tendency to teacher evaluation, compared to those who expect lower scores (14, 15).

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Current studies have confirmed the association between teacher scores and rankings by students (16-21). Review of more than 400 research articles demonstrated no significant relationship between students' grades and teacher evaluation by students (19). In another research, a positive and significant association was found between teacher evaluation by students and academic status and individual and social properties of students. Nonetheless, this relationship was weak (20).

One of the factors affecting student evaluation of teacher performance is social and academic integration. However, studies have shown the importance of performing complementary research in this area (22). Integration creation in students includes two academic and social integration dimensions. While academic integration refers to academic performance and mental growth of students, social integration is related to the proper relationship between the functioning of the individual and his social environment, meaning extracurricular activities, and interactions between classmates, academic staff and professors (23, 24).

Surinzo Wolf believes that academic experiences can affect the sustainability, continuation and finishing the education course indirectly and through social and educational integration. Therefore, educational and academic integration can affect the performance of students and their graduation since creating the sense of integration in students contributes to the enhancement of their cooperation in scientific and social activities in universities (25). According to the Tinto's theory, not only students need to survive in university until graduation (i.e., academic integration), but they also require cooperation in cultural issues, whether inside or outside the learning environment (i.e., social integration) (26). According to this model, the experiences of students in the social and scientific systems of universities affect the integration level of students, which consequently exert impacts on the learning and decision of students about continuing education in universities (27). Various studies have shown that academic and social integration can be correlated with the quality of university environments (25).

Results of the studies conducted on the effect of social and academic integration on the success and growth of students have indicated the positive impact of the mentioned variable in this regard. In addition, some studies have demonstrated the positive effect of social integration of students on feeling more

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positive effectiveness and interactions with faculty members, university staff and other students (28-31). Conflicting results have been obtained regarding the correlation between social and academic features of students and student evaluation of teacher performance in various studies, showing the need for more in-depth research in this area.

Given the lack of research on factors related to student evaluation of teacher performance in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, such as academic and social factors, this study aimed to determine the relationship between academic and social integration of students and student evaluation of teacher performance in the mentioned university in 2016.

Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional research was conducted on MSc students in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences at the end of the first semester in the academic year of 2016-2017 (December 2016). Research population included 307 students studying in the fields of nursing, midwifery, anesthesiology, operating room, general health, environmental health, occupational health, and laboratory sciences. It is notable that the subjects were selected via stratified random sampling based on their field of study. Sample size was estimated at 322 based on a similar research (22) and by considering 95% confidence interval (d=0.05, P=0.3) and 5% sample size. In the end, 307 completed questionnaires were returned. Inclusion criteria involved the willingness to participate in the research and being BSc students in schools of nursing-midwifery, health, and paraclinical (currently studying in the second-eighth semesters). On the other hand, the exclusion criterion was lack of willingness to cooperate with the research.

Research tools included a demographic characteristics questionnaire (age, gender, discipline, academic semester, marital status, place of residence, economic condition, membership in scientific associations, membership in the library and total GPA), academic and social integration standard tool, and questionnaire of faculty performance quality. In this research, the face and content validity were used to determine the validity of the demographic characteristics questionnaire. In this regard, the questionnaire was created after the review of relevant resources on the topic of the research. After that, the questionnaire was provided to 10 faculty members of Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, opinions of whom were exploited to modify and correct the items regarding the proposed variables and fluency and choices of items.

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In this research, the institutional integration scale (Pascarella and Terenzini) was used to assess academic and social integration. This 29-item questionnaire is scored on a five-point Likert scale from completely disagree (score: 1) to completely disagree (score: 5).

Items are provided in five dimensions of peer-group interactions (seven items), interactions with faculty (four items), faculty concern for student development and teaching (five items), intellectual development (seven items), and institutional and goal commitment (six items). Content validity of the scale was performed in a research by Mohammadi et al. on 30 students from various schools of University of Medical Sciences using item analysis method (correlation coefficient of items of scales with the total score of the scales) (22). The coefficients of 0.47, 0.77, 0.52, 0.67, and 0.58 were acceptable for scales of peer-group interactions, interactions with faculty, faculty concern for student development and teaching, intellectual development, and institutional and goal commitment, respectively (22). In the mentioned article, the reliability of the tool was estimated at the Cronbach's alphas of 0.60, 0.92, 0.73, 0.61, and 0.75 for peer-group interactions, interactions with faculty, faculty concern for student development and teaching, intellectual development, and institutional and goal commitment, respectively (22).

The quality of the faculty performance was assessed using the questionnaire of faculty performance quality scored on a five-point Likert scale from completely agree (score: 1) to completely disagree (score: 5). This questionnaire has nine subscales of professional role, communications, management of course presentation, teaching and guidance, cultural competence, monitoring of teaching quality, feedback quality, homework and class management. The score range of this questionnaire is 41-205, where higher scores are indicative of the greater quality of the educational performance of faculty. Content validity and reliability of the questionnaire of faculty performance quality were performed in a research by Mohammadi et al. via item analysis technique. According to the results, the coefficients of 0.85, 0.83, 0.82, 0.80, 0.83, 0.80, 0.81, 0.54, and 0.74 were reported for the subscales of professional role, communications, course content management, teaching and guidance, cultural competence, monitoring of teaching quality, feedback quality, homework and class management, respectively. These results confirmed the

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acceptable validity of the scale (22).

Reliability of this questionnaire was estimated at the Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, 0.89, 0.86, 0.77, 0.79, 0.77, 0.79, 0.77, and 0.75 for subscales of professional role, communications, management of course contents, teaching and guidance, cultural competence, monitoring of teaching quality, feedback quality, homework, and class management, respectively (22). First, the necessary coordination was made with the authorities of the university and the essential permissions and the ethical code (IR.GMU.REC.1395.136) were obtained from the regional ethics committee of Gonabad University of Medical Sciences. After confirming the eligibility of the participants, the researcher visited the subjects in classes and dormitories to distribute the questionnaires after explaining the objectives of the study to these individuals and receiving an informed consent. It is notable that the subjects were ensured of the confidentiality terms regarding their personal information. In the end, the questionnaires were filled through self-reporting and returned.

After that, the data were encoded and entered into a computer. After controlling the accuracy of the data entrance, data analysis was performed in SPSS version 20 using descriptive (frequency, percentage, cumulative percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics. In addition, independent t-test and ANOVA were applied to compare the mean scores of academic and social integration and score of student evaluation of teacher performance based on gender and marital status of the subjects and according to their discipline, academic semester, and economic condition, respectively. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression were used to assess the correlation between the scores of academic and social integration and student evaluation of teacher performance. Moreover, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was exploited to evaluate the normal distribution of quantitative variables at the significance level of less than 0.05.

Results

Demographic characteristics of the research units are shown in Table 1, and Table 2 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of scores of academic and social integration of students and student evaluation of teacher performance based on the evaluated areas. According to the mentioned tables, the highest score in social integration was related to the subscale of peer-group interactions

(29.08±4.59), whereas the highest score in academic integration was related to the intellectual and academic development (26.34±4.32). Moreover, the highest score in student evaluation of teacher performance was related to the subscale of class management (27.63±4.85).

Table 1: Demographic variables of participants

Variable		Mean ± Standard Deviation
Age, Year		21.04±2.69
Total average, Score		16.40±1.48
		N (%)
Sex	Male	123 (40.1)
	Female	184 (59.9)
Marital status	Single	248 (80.8)
	Married	59 (19.2)
Income status	Weak	24 (7.8)
	Medium	174 (56.7)
	Good	109 (35.5)
Habitation	Dorm	211 (68.7)
	Non dorm	96 (31.3)
Academic semester	2	22 (7.2)
	3	99 (32.2)
	4	14 (4.6)
	5	86 (28)
	6	15 (4.9)
	7	57 (18.6)
	8	14 (4.6)
Academic field	Operating room	57 (18.6)
	Midwifery	37 (12.2)
	Nursing	113 (36.8)
	Professional health	8 (2.6)
	Anesthesiology	37 (12.1)
	Laboratory sciences	18 (5.9)
	Radiology	17 (5.5)
	Environmental Health	20 (6.5)

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Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of social and academic integration and evaluation of teachers' performance quality in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences in 2017

Variable	Dimensions	Mean ± Standard Deviation
Social integration	Peer group interactions	**29.08±4.59**
	Interaction with teachers	**14.61±2.97**
	Teachers' concern in the field of student progress and teaching him	**14.50±3.33**
	Total Score	**61.20±41.31**
Academic integration	Educational and intellectual progress	**26.34±4.22**
	Institutional and Purposeful Commitments	**18.34±3.36**
	Total Score	**44.69±5.75**
Evaluation of teachers' performance quality	Professional role	**18.97±3.98**
	Communications	**11.25±2.22**
	Lessons management	**21.93±3.91**
	Teaching and guidance	**15.14±2.81**
	Cultural competence	**11.06±2.38**
	Supervision and guidance and quality assurance of performance	**14.19±2.90**
	Feedback quality	**14.78±3.31**
	Home works	**13.86±2.77**
	Class management	**27.63±4.85**
	Total Score	**147.56±22.90**

According to the Pearson's correlation coefficient, the correlation between academic and social integration with student evaluation of teacher performance is presented in Table 3. According to the results of the test, a significant and direct relationship was observed between the total score of academic and social integration and the total score of student evaluation of teacher performance (social integration: r=0.11 and P=0.04; academic integration: r=0.53 and P<0.001). Role of academic and social integration in student evaluation of teacher assessment is shown in Table 4 based on linear regression. In this regard, while each one score increase in the academic integration increased the

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student evaluation of teacher performance by 0.11, each one score increase in the academic integration increased the student evaluation of teacher performance by 0.53 (the formula derived from linear regression: student evaluation of teacher performance= 0.11 + 48.97 * social integration + 0.53 * academic integration).

Table 3: The relationship between students' social and academic integration with evaluation of teachers' performance quality in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences in 2017

Social and academic integration	Evaluation of teachers' performance quality	
	R	P
Social integration	0.11	0.04
Academic integration	0.53	<0.001

Table 4: The role of students' social and academic integration in teachers' evaluation in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences in 2017

Teachers' evaluation Variable	B	β	SE	P
Social integration	0.06	0.11	0.02	**0.02**
Academic integration	2.12	0.53	0.19	**<0.001**

According to the Pearson's correlation coefficient, no significant relationship was found between the total score of academic and social integration and the age and total GPA of the participants (P>0.05). Moreover, results of the independent t-test revealed no significant association between the total score of academic and social integration with variables of gender and marital status (P>0.05). According to ANOVA results, no significant difference was observed between the subjects in terms of economic condition, discipline and academic semester in social integration and academic semester in academic integration (P>0.05). According to the results of one-way ANOVA, a significant difference was found in the academic integration score of the participants regarding economic condition and discipline (P<0.001). The Tukey's test demonstrated a significant

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difference between good economic condition and academic integration score in the field of radiology, compared to other economic conditions and disciplines (P<0.05).

Discussion

The present study was conducted to determine the relationship between the academic and social integration of students and the student evaluation of teacher performance in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences in 2016. According to the results, the area of peer-group interactions, interactions with faculty and faculty concern for student development and teaching received the highest scores in the dimension of social integration, respectively. Meanwhile, Mohammadi et al. reported that the highest score of social integration was related to the area of interactions with faculty (22). This lack of consistency between the results might be due to different research population in the mentioned study.

According to the results of the present study, the highest score of students' academic integration was related to the intellectual and academic development of these individuals. In this regard, our findings are in line with the results obtained by other researchers (22, 25). According to the results of the current research, among faculty assessment areas, class management received the highest score, followed by course content management, professional role and teaching and guidance. In this respect, our findings are consistent with the results obtained in some previous studies (32, 33). Nonetheless, in another research conducted to evaluate the teaching experiences of professors from the perspective of graduate students, it was reported that factors such as creativity, effective planning and academic proficiency played the most role in the evaluation of professors (34). In a previous study, management of the personal knowledge of professors predicted the positive and significant student evaluation of the quality of their educational performance (35). This inconsistency between the results might be due to the use of different tools and studies, including graduate students.

According to the results of the present study, a significant and direct association was found between the total score of academic and social integration and total score of student evaluation of teacher performance. However, from these two components, the academic integration of students played a more significant role in student evaluation of teacher performance, compared to the social

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integration of these individuals. Generally, the academic integration of students determines their objectives and levels of organizational commitment. When there is a higher academic integration in students, there will be a greater organizational commitment and a higher sense of responsibility toward the events occurring in the surrounding academic environment.

One of these phenomena is teacher evaluation in educational processes of universities. Results of other studies have shown that the opinions and personal viewpoints of students are more affected by gaining a good grade (i.e., academic achievement) (25). However, conflicting results were obtained by Mohammadi et al., who reported that social integration could be a more important factor for teacher evaluation. These scholars believed that the interactions between students with other students, faculty, and staff in the academic environment increased their satisfaction and interest and affected student evaluation of teacher performance. It was found that establishing friendly relationships with peers in the academic environment eventually affected the personal growth and viewpoints of students (22). In this regard, our findings are inconsistent with the mentioned results, which might be due to different personal opinions of the evaluated individuals in the present study.

One of the major drawbacks of the present study was the personal perspective or previous experiences of students about their discipline or professors. In addition, academic and social problems of students might have affected the completion of the questionnaires, which could not be controlled by the researcher. Moreover, the research tool might not be able to provide deep understanding of people's attitudes and beliefs. Other limitations of the present research were the cross-sectional nature of the study and completion of tools in a self-reporting manner.

Therefore, it is suggested that combined qualitative and quantitative research designs and face-to-face interviews be used to accurately evaluate the aspects of social and academic integration and student evaluation of teacher performance in a longer period. Moreover, it is recommended that future studies be conducted on MSc students and medical school as well. According to the results of the present study and considering the significant role of academic integration in student evaluation of teacher performance, it seems that the academic institutes, especially professors, must emphasize the effective

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factors for academic achievement of students. In addition, it is recommended that measures, such as educational workshops (special for students) and other interventions and courses (special for professors), be taken to strengthen the academic integration and academic condition of students and meet the needs of this field to some extent, respectively. Given the significant and positive role of social integration in evaluation of teacher performance, collective and group activities of students with their peers, holding and strengthening scientific-student associations, creating student discussion spaces, and optimal presence of students in social programs could be regarded as effective steps toward the strengthening of social integration of students.

Conclusion

According to the results of the current research, peer-group interactions and academic achievement of students played a significant role in student evaluation of teacher performance. Therefore, developing and improving the academic and social integration of students through planning and focusing on the strengthening of components affecting social and academic integration in extra-curricular educational programs can improve the assessment of faculty performance in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences.

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