



Student Evaluation of Teaching: A Tool for the Assessment of Teaching Learning Practices in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) is a way to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of teachers, and teaching-learning practices based on students' feedback. It is an evaluation of the teachers by students. SET is considered a tool to assess teaching effectiveness mostly in higher education institutions. Globally, universities use SET, especially in taking the decision of tenure and promotion of professors. This article attempts to gather students' responses regarding the teaching performance of their teachers from one of the campuses in Kailali district, Nepal. A survey research design was adopted to collect students' responses. A random sampling method was employed to select undergraduate students from the selected campus. Students were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of the statements managed on a 5-point Likert scale. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was used to manage and visualize the data, and the descriptive parameters were calculated for analysis. The results show that the teaching performance of the teachers was quite good in two categories, viz., management and motivation aspects, whereas the teaching performance in the instruction aspect was only satisfactory. This study shows that teachers need to improve their instructional strategies for the betterment of teaching and learning. The study will motivate other scholars and institutions to initiate the practice of SET for the enhancement of teaching and learning in their respective institutions.

Keywords: Teachers ranking, authentic learning, meaningful teaching, management

Introduction

Students and teachers are at the centre of any education system. They are the key components for the success of any education system. Of course, there are many other factors responsible for establishing effective teaching and learning, but

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the role of students and teachers is very important. For the enhancement of teaching and learning practice, evaluation and assessment are very mandatory. We are all quite familiar with the assessment of students done by teachers, which is common in every school throughout the globe. Students are assessed to certify their grade and qualification, to evaluate their learning achievement, and to improve their learning qualification (Poudel, 2016). However, the practice of teachers' evaluation is not as common as the evaluation of students.

In evaluating the students in the classroom, we used to have certain standards or rubrics. Likewise, to evaluate teachers, there is a need of a certain standard or framework on the basis of which they can be evaluated. Teacher competency can be evaluated in different areas like verbal and communication skills, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management skills, collaboration skills, and so on (Looney, 2011). For maintaining the quality of education, the evaluation and assessment of teachers are very important. Especially in a higher education context, SET is a way to evaluate teachers teaching performance based on the students' ratings. In this type of evaluation, students used to provide questionnaires on a Likert scale to rate their respective teachers (Constantinou & Wijnen-Meijer, 2022).

The practice of SET is not so common in Nepalese higher education institutions. We have observed that teachers' evaluation in higher education institutes used to be done just for the official purpose rather than to provide feedback to the teacher for further improvement. Students are not given the opportunity to provide their feedback, comments, and suggestions to their respective teachers regarding their teaching performance. However, in the global scenario of higher education, SET is a very common practice where teachers' teaching performance used to be evaluated by their students. The practice of teacher's evaluation by university-level students is widespread in the USA and in other developed countries (Byrne, 1992). In foreign universities, student ratings of instruction are taken as one of the major components in the faculty evaluation process. In SET, students used to rate the faculty on a numerical scale (Whitely & Doyle, 1976).

Like the evaluation of students, teachers' evaluation is also an integral component of meaningful teaching and learning. In renowned universities, the common source of input for teachers' evaluation is students' feedback. A rating or score given by students to a teacher can be a necessary source for evaluating the teacher's effectiveness (Husain & Khan, 2016). The feedback received by students may help teachers analyze their own teaching practices. On the basis of students' feedback, teachers can modify their teaching methods. Students' feedback represents the prime tool that is useful in the process of a teacher's evaluation. If the students are allowed to give their feedback in a stress-free environment with appropriate

instruction, feedback can be very effective. Again, if the feedback was collected at regular intervals of time, teaching and learning would be enhanced (Lata et al., 2008).

For effective teaching and learning practices, feedback from the students is a very important requirement. The feedback from the students allows teachers to refine their pedagogical practices. There are various methods to collect students' feedback regarding the teacher's teaching performance. Among the various methods, questionnaires are the dominant method (Huxham et al. 2018). Feedback from students helps teachers plan various teaching activities. Feedback from the students is an important resource for assessing the quality of teaching and learning as well as for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although student feedback is useful and informative, many teachers and institutions do not take it seriously (Richardson, 2005).

This study tries to explore the teaching effectiveness on campus A of Kailali district, Nepal. Student ratings were used to evaluate the teaching performance of the teachers. This study shows the current status of the teaching and learning practices on the selected campus A, along with some recommendations for further improvement. This study deals with a basic research question: What is the current status of the teaching performance of teachers on Campus A on the basis of students' ratings?

Literature Review

Theoretical Consideration

This study is based on the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) approach. This approach is a mechanism to receive feedback from the students regarding the teaching performance of their teachers or faculty. Primarily, SET accepts closed-ended questions managed on a Likert scale (Madichie, 2011). To evaluate faculty performance and their competence, SET is popular worldwide (Tsou, 2020). Apart from just evaluating teaching effectiveness, it is sometimes used for decision-making about hiring, firing, promotion, merit pay, and teaching awards. SET will also help to change faculty's pedagogical practices as per students' demands and needs (Uttl, 2023). The most common use of SET is for the improvement of courses, teaching, and personnel decisions (Oermann et al., 2018). As SET is a kind of feedback provided by students to faculty, it also helps teachers make self-assessments of their teaching practices.

Apart from the positive sides of SET, there is debate about its validity. It must be necessary that students rate the faculty without any bias. So, it is also necessary to do the pilot testing of SET tools to confirm the reliability and validity of SET

(Oermann et al., 2018). To get more reliable responses from students, it is necessary to motivate them and convince them that their ratings will play an important role in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

Empirical Review

There have been a significant number of research studies in the area of SET's effectiveness. Arubayi (1987) conducted a study to assess the reliability and validity of student ratings. Several variables, like the gender of raters, class size, mood of students, and rank of the instructor, affect the students rating. He mentioned that student ratings can be used for the purpose of improving instruction. Chen and Hoshower (2003) discussed that student rating of instruction is common practice to evaluate teacher effectiveness in most universities and colleges. They mention that SETs are commonly used to provide feedback to teachers for the purpose of improving their pedagogy. SETs are also used for promotion and other administrative decisions.

Regarding teacher evaluation, Aliasgharpour et al. (2010) conducted a study to compare teachers and students perspectives to analyze teacher evaluation by students. Their sample consists of 95 teachers and 379 students. Two separate questionnaires were used to collect the viewpoints of teachers and students. They concluded that evaluation by students is important for the teacher's performance.

Likewise, Miller and Seldin (2014) conducted a comparative study to assess modern evaluation methodologies in the United States. They compared the data from 2000 and 2010. They discovered that the practice of students rating the professors increased significantly in 2010, and the SET is used in more than 90 percent of the colleges examined. Moreover, SET is taken as a primary source of classroom instructional information. According to their findings, nearly all deans agreed that classroom instruction was an inseparable component of evaluating university professors.

As far as the feedback from students concerns, LaFee (2014) mentioned that as students spend more time with teachers, they are in a better position to judge the teachers. Students actually know what works well for them and what does not, and as students are the heart of the education system, feedback has to be taken from the students for the betterment of learning. Also, Chan et al. (2014) found that many universities in Hong Kong mainly rely on SET to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of teachers, and teachers pay rise and tenure are decided on the basis of performance in SET. Their findings suggest that students, teachers, and stakeholders all need to understand the purpose and use of SET. Likewise, Husain and Khan (2016) conducted a study to explore ways to improve the quality of teaching based

on students' feedback in a medical college. They found that students' feedback is an effective tool for the teacher's evaluation.

Stroebe (2020) recommended that SETs are not sufficient indicators of teaching effectiveness, so it should not be utilized by university heads to evaluate teachers' efficiency. Instead of utilizing SET, administrators can ask the teachers to create teaching portfolios in which they describe the courses, textbooks, and assessment procedures in depth. Aside from that, SET information should be given to teachers so that they do not feel pressure to achieve a high SET score. SETs attempt to provide information to the institution regarding how students take the teaching, allowing them to improve the institution. If teachers are evaluated on the basis of SET, teachers will try to get a high SET score, which may result in students dominating over teachers. Similarly, Sanchez et al. (2020) conducted a study to find a relationship between SET and academic achievement in higher education. They found a small to medium correlation between SET and students achievement. They claimed that the use of SET to evaluate teachers' effectiveness for the purpose of administrative decisions remains controversial.

Moreover, the study by Kreitzer and Sweet-Cushman (2021) recommended contextualizing students' evaluation of teachers as a student's perception rather than measuring teachers' actual teaching. They also suggested being aware of the validity of SET, and the administration should try to enhance the response rate from the students. They recommended that to evaluate teachers' performance, administrators should not solely rely on students ratings. Until a reliable, feasible, and authentic method for evaluating teachers is established, more caution should be taken when using the SET report for teachers' evaluation.

The literature discussed above implies that SET plays an important role in understanding the general overview of teaching and learning practices in any institution. It also gives a way out for the betterment of teaching and learning practices in the institution. However, in the context of Nepal, the practice of SET is very rare. This study attempts to provide a SET report for one of the campuses in Kailali district along with recommendations.

Methods and Procedures

This study followed a quantitative survey research design. Undergraduate-level students from a selected campus were taken as the population of the study. A random sampling method was employed to choose students. 279 students were selected from a total of 1000 students studying at the undergraduate level by taking reference to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To ensure the participation of all students, it was attempted to cover students from all streams. To collect the students' feedback,

they were asked to fill out a questionnaire. A questionnaire consists of a total of sixteen statements, which were grouped into three categories: the management aspect, the instruction aspect, and the motivation aspect. The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale. The Likert scale chosen for this study was 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neutral, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree.

It was tried to collect the overall effectiveness of teachers and the effectiveness of the teaching process. Mainly, it was intended to collect students' responses about various abilities of teachers, like content knowledge, content delivery, pedagogical practice, communication skills, and assessment techniques. After collecting all the responses from students, the data were uploaded to the IBM SPSS Statistics 20 version. For the analysis, we used descriptive statistics, and for the visuals and graphics, we plotted bar diagrams.

Results

In this section, the major findings of the research are presented.

Management Aspect

This part discusses the managerial aspect of the teachers on the basis of student feedback. The management aspect basically covers a teacher's management ability, like completing a course in the prescribed time, organizing the classroom, being prepared by teachers before entering the classroom, etc. All the statements about the management aspect are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Students Evaluation on the Managerial Ability of Teachers

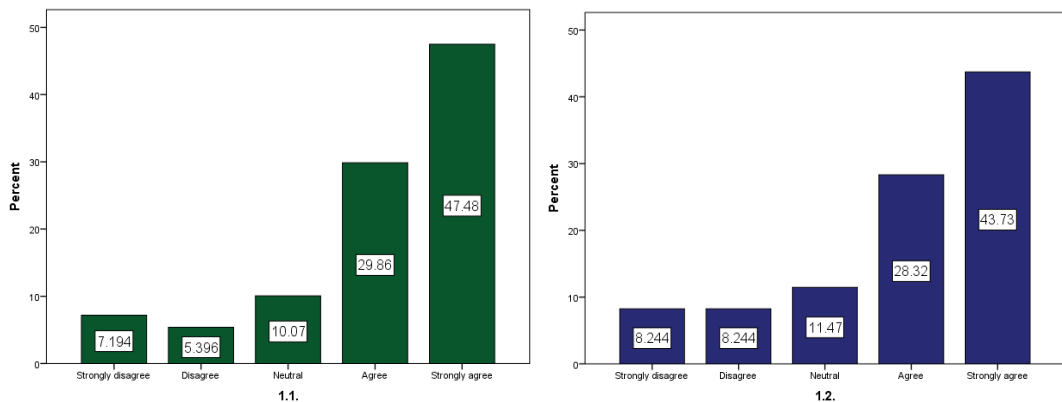
Statements	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.1. The teacher completes the entire syllabus in time	278	4.05	1.201
1.2. The teacher is well organized, systematic and have good command on the subject matter.	279	3.91	1.273
1.3. The teacher communicates clearly, keeps the classroom disciplined and creates an environment for learning.	274	3.85	1.289

1.4. The teacher is punctual, well prepared and particular about his routine.	278	3.87	1.260
1.5. The teacher uses classroom efficiently and utilizes dedicated hours in a productive manner	272	3.95	1.151

Table 1 shows students responses to the statements about the management aspect of the teachers. The mean score for statement (1.1.) is 4.05, which falls within the level of agreement. This shows teachers used to complete the syllabus in the prescribed time. The responses for the statements (1.2.), (1.3.), (1.4.), and (1.5.) are almost similar to the responses in (1.1.). From the means scores of the respective statements, it seems the teacher’s management ability is good because the mean score for all statements is close to 4. So, the teachers of Campus A are well organized, systematic, efficient, punctual, and have a good command over the subject matter.

Figure 1

Visual Representation of Student’s Responses for Statements (1.1.) and (1.2.)



From Figure 1 (1.1.), it is seen that 47.48% of students strongly agree and 29.86% agree with this statement. This implies that the majority of the students responded that teachers used to complete the entire syllabus on time.

Figure 1 (1.2.) shows that 43.73% of students strongly agree and 28.32% of students agree with the statement. This shows that the majority of the students agreed that their teachers are systematic in their teaching and have good command over the subject matter.

Figure 2

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statements (1.3.) and (1.4.)

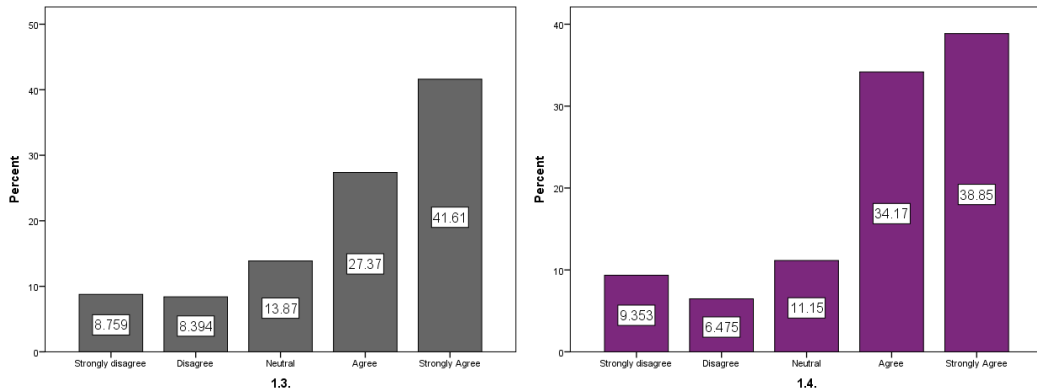


Figure 2 (1.3.) shows that 41.61% of students strongly agree and 27.37% of students agree with the statement (1.3.). This implies the teacher's communication skills and maintenance of discipline in the classroom are very good.

Likewise, in response statement (1.4.), 38.85% strongly agree and 34.17% agree. This indicates that teachers are punctual and well prepared in the classroom. For both statements (1.3.) and (1.4.), the majority of the students show their agreement.

Figure 3

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (1.5.)

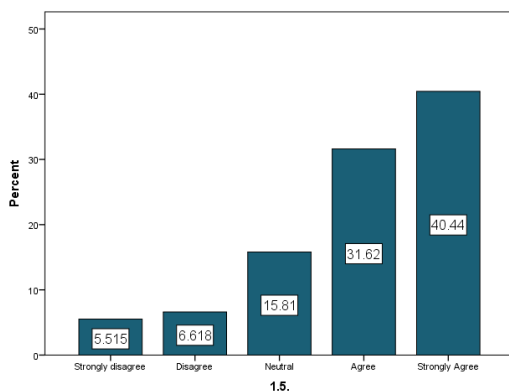


Figure 3 (1.5.) shows that 40.44% strongly agree and 31.62% agree with the statement (1.5.). This suggests that the majority of the students' support is that their teacher used the classroom efficiently and utilized dedicated hours in an effective

manner.

In summary, for the management category, the majority of the students show their agreement with the statement. This indicates the teacher's management skills are good. A small percentage of students disagreed with the statements, so some strategies have to be implemented to make teaching and learning more effective.

Instruction Aspect

In this category, teachers' pedagogical skills are mostly assessed on the basis of student responses. This category consists of six statements that try to capture various pedagogical techniques employed by the teachers in the classroom from the perspectives of students.

Table 2

Students Evaluation on the Instruction Aspect of Teachers

Statements	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
2.1. The teacher gives lecture, allows students to make presentation, engages them in discussion and group work and synthesized the concepts to clarify subject matter and makes the use of different activities to teach.	276	3.56	1.212
2.2. The teacher gives the tests and assignments as fixed in the work plan and corrects the assignments in time and returns to me with grade to help me understand my position in the class.	278	3.29	1.329
2.3. The teacher uses work plan, teaching aids, hands out, gives suitable references, makes presentations and conducts seminars/tutorials etc.	276	3.32	1.285
2.4. The teacher gives quizzes, group and individual works, writing tasks, tests and assignments to evaluate my performance.	271	3.28	1.288

2.5. The teacher explains the material clearly in ways that are easy to understand offers alternative explanations or additional examples and clears up confusion.	275	3.80	1.333
2.6. The evaluation process by teacher is reasonable, fair and credible.	271	3.60	1.209

Table 2 shows that the mean scores for all statements range from 3.28 to 3.80. This falls into the category of average. As few responses have scores greater than 3.50, we can say the responses are more than average. This category shows a satisfactory level of students' responses.

Figure 4

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statements (2.1.) and (2.2.)

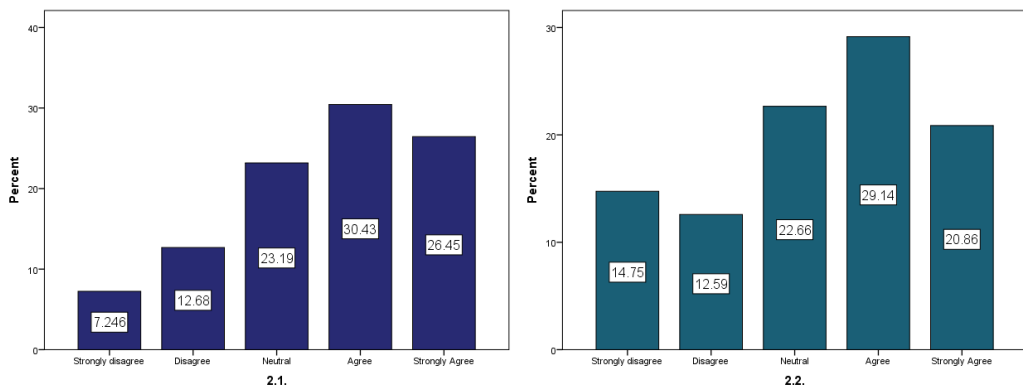


Figure 4 (2.1.) shows that 26.45% strongly agree and 30.43% agree with the statement (2.1.). This shows how teachers used to engage students in various teaching and learning activities. Teachers used to ask students to make presentations, engage them in group work, and try to clarify the concepts.

Likewise Figure 4 (2.2.) shows that 20.86% of students strongly agree and 29.14% of students agree with the statement (2.2.). This represents how teachers used to take the test and assignment at the time, as mentioned in the work plan. The responses to statement (2.2.) fall at a satisfactory level but are not good.

Figure 5

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (2.3.) and (2.4.)

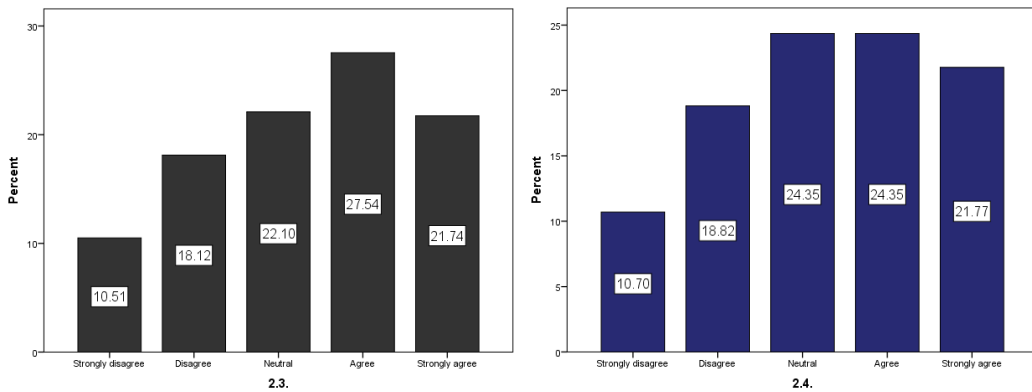


Figure 5 shows the students responses to statements (2.3.) and (2.4.). From Figure 5 (2.3.), it is seen that 21.74% of students strongly agree, 27.54% agree, and 22.10% of students remain neutral with the statement (2.3.). The responses are not very streamlined in this case, so it is difficult to judge. However, the majority of students expressed their agreement with the statement. We can take it as satisfactory, but as the disagreement percentage is high, teachers need to be aware of that. As a mixed type of response came, it can be predicted that there are some issues regarding the work plan, teaching aids, and handouts prepared by teachers. It shows that teachers should be updated with work plans and other teaching materials.

The responses to the statement (2.4.) are shown in Figure 5. Like statement (2.3.), in this case also responses are mixed in nature. The responses are distributed across all the categories. In the statement (2.4.), 21.77% of students strongly agree and 24.35% agree with the statement. If we combine strongly agree and agree responses together, nearly 50% of the responses are in agreement. This also shows a satisfactory level of response from the students.

Figure 6

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (2.5.) and (2.6.)

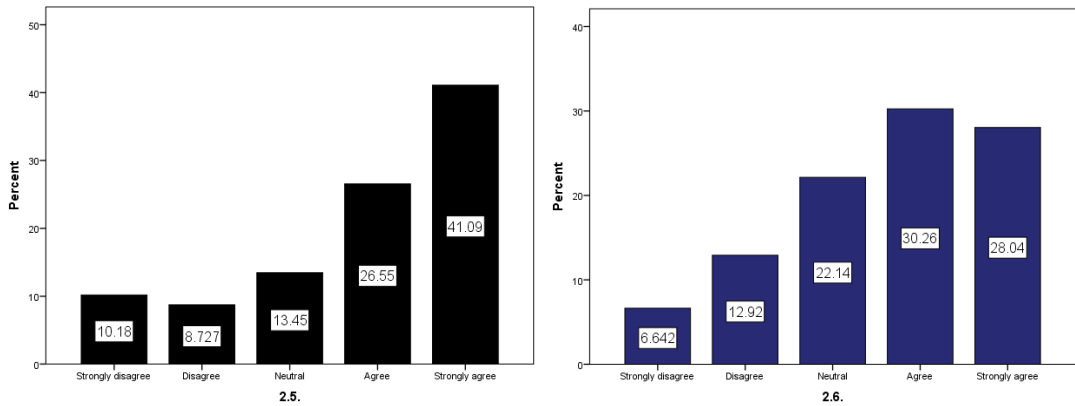


Figure 6 (2.5.) shows the student's responses to the statement (2.5.). According to this statement, 41.09% of students strongly agree, and 26.55% agree. This is a very good sign. This indicates that the majority of the students agree that the teacher explains the materials clearly and in an understandable manner and tries to clear up their confusion.

Figure 6 (2.6.) shows the student's responses to the statement (2.6.). For this statement, 28.04% strongly agree, and 30.26% of students agree. This shows that the evaluation done by teachers was reasonable, fair, and credible. However, as few students disagree with the statements, some efforts are needed for a more realistic evaluation process.

Motivation Aspect

This aspect tries to cover teachers' motivation levels towards teaching and their students. This aspect tries to evaluate the teacher's motivational ability.

Table 3

Students Evaluation on the Motivation Aspect of Teachers

Statements	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
3.1. The teacher challenges my abilities as a student, impels me to set aside additional study time for preparation.	278	3.59	1.139

3.2. The teacher encourages me to ask questions, to participate in discussions and other class activities.	279	3.57	1.224
3.3. The teacher encourages me and provides constructive criticism without looking down on me.	278	3.55	1.241
3.4. The teacher gives me the time outside the class time, responds to my questions and helps me in academic matters.	278	3.65	1.253
3.5. The teacher is approachable and ready to support the students.	274	4.03	1.273

Table 3 reflects the teacher’s motivational aspect toward their profession on the basis of the students’ responses. The mean rating for this category is more than 3.50. This falls above a satisfactory level. This shows teachers’ ability to motivate their students is more than average.

Figure 7

Visual Representation of Student’s Responses for Statement (3.1.) and (3.2.)

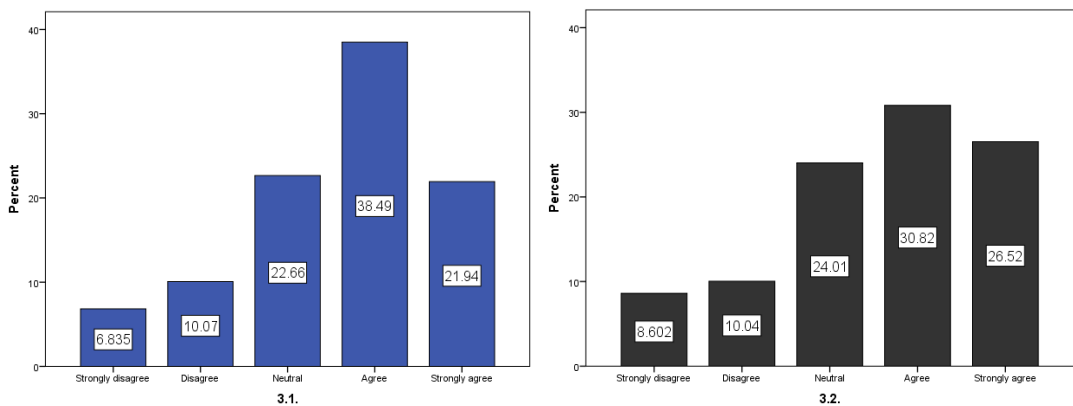


Figure 7 (3.1.) shows students responses to the statement (3.1.). From the figure, it is seen that 21.94% strongly agree and 38.49% agree with the statement (3.1.). This shows that the majority of students accept that their teachers try to challenge their abilities. A teacher tries to motivate students so that they can think outside the box and start to become critical.

Likewise, Figure 7 (3.2.) shows students responses to the statement (3.2.). For this statement, 26.52% strongly agree and 30.82% agree with the statement. This also shows that the majority of the students are convinced that the teacher is approachable and ready to support them. This shows that the majority of teachers used to show their readiness to support their students.

Figure 8

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (3.3.) and (3.4.)

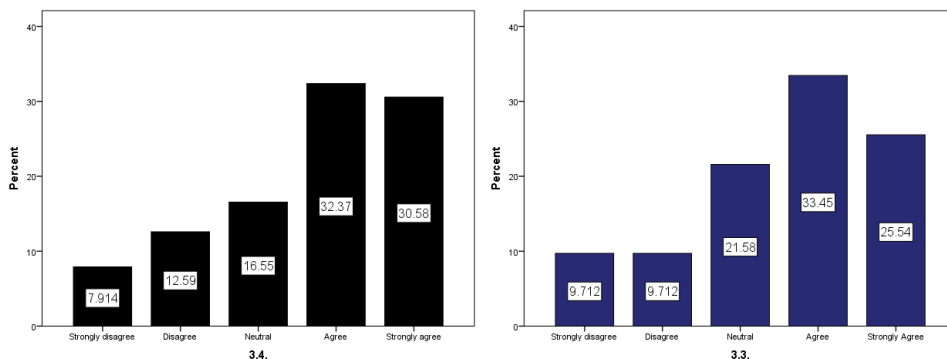


Figure 8 (3.3.) shows the student's responses to the statement (3.3.). To this statement, 25.54% strongly agree and 33.45% agree. This also shows that the majority of students believe that teachers encourage their students and use constructivist criticism.

Figure 8 (3.4) shows the student's responses to the statement (3.4.). According to this statement, 30.58% strongly agree and 32.37% agree. It is seen from the figure that the majority of students agreed that their teacher used to give extra time for the needed support. This also shows teachers' willingness to support their students for effective learning.

Figure 9

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (3.5.)

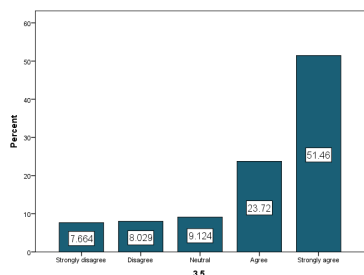


Figure 9 (3.5) is the graphical representation for the statement (3.5.). This shows that 51.46% of students strongly agree and 23.72% of students agree with the statement. This shows a large number of teachers are easily approachable for their students, and teachers are ready to support their students.

Discussion

SET is an important approach to collecting students' views regarding their teacher's performance. It is a highly popular practice in US universities and in other renowned universities around the world (Chen & Hoshower, 2003). In this study, we found that on Campus A, the teaching performance of teachers is satisfactory. The mean scores for the management and motivation aspects are close to 4.00, so we can say that the teacher's management and motivation abilities are good. However, the instruction aspect has a mean score of around 3.50, which is less than the previous two categories. This indicates some efforts have to be made to enhance instruction abilities. As per student responses, we found that teachers are lacking in maintaining work plans, managing tests and assignments, and providing learning materials. Teachers need to work on these areas for the improvement of teaching and learning.

In this study, we are making decisions just on the basis of student responses. However, SET has considerable controversy and criticism from the perspective of reliability and validity (Chan et al., 2014). This indicates that instead of solely depending on SET information, we also need to cross-check the data from other means. Several variables affect ratings by students during the teacher's evaluation, so we need to be cautious about the SETs information. In this study too, students were highly motivated to fill questionnaire without bias. For Campus A, this study provides teachers effectiveness to some extent. As per Chan et al. (2014), we also should not have to completely rely on the SETs ratings of this study. In some of the statements, a significant percentage of students marked neutral. Why students rate 3 (neutral/average) to statements? This is a little bit of confusion.

We need to take SET scores as a means to improve teaching and learning activities. It can be good to implement the practice of SET in higher education institutions in Nepal. From SET information, at least we may be able to compile students' opinions, their views, their likes, their dislikes, and their interests. The SETs score can be utilized by teachers, university chairpersons, curriculum developers, and other stakeholders. The frequent collection of students' feedback can be helpful in designing curriculum and assessment policies.

Conclusion

In this work, we have presented SET findings from one of the campuses of

the Kailali district. Looking at the overall responses to the survey, we conclude that the teaching effectiveness on campus A is satisfactory. The mean ratings given by students to the teaching performance are above 3.50 up to 4.00, which indicates the teaching-learning practice is good on campus. However, in the statement regarding the instruction aspect, the ratings by students were a little low in comparison to the rest of the other statements. This study suggests that faculties on campus A need to put some extra effort into the instruction aspect. More specifically, we would like to recommend that teachers be more serious and punctual in providing work plans, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, and other study materials to their students for more effective learning among students. In this study, we brought up only general practices of teaching and learning based on students' ratings. This type of study can be extended by analyzing individual teachers' performance, and some comparative studies can also be performed.

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