

Effects of Perceived Teacher Personality on Student Class Evaluations

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Since the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (henceforth MEXT) started emphasizing a need for university reform in Japan back in the 1990's (MEXT, 1998), student evaluations have been administered at Japanese universities. Currently, 80 percent of Japanese universities conduct student evaluations (MEXT, 2010). It appears that the evaluations have taken root in Japanese universities as a measure of faculty development, and seemingly have often been seen as “the most influential measure of instructional effectiveness” (d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997).

Along with their history, student evaluations of instruction have always gained much attention among researchers in terms of their reliability, validity and usability. Researchers have also considered which aspects of student evaluations should be utilized as an appropriate measure of teaching effectiveness. Marsh (1983), for instance, developed the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) in an attempt to obtain student feedback on teaching quality and effectiveness and to measure distinct instructional factors. Marsh identified nine instructional dimensions; Amount Learned, Enthusiasm, Organization, Group Interaction, Individual Rapport, Breadth of Coverage, Examination Fairness, Assignments, and Course Difficulty. Marsh and Hocevar (1991) demonstrated that the factor structure of the SEEQ was invariant across different groups of students, academic disciplines, instructor levels, and course levels, claiming that this provides evidence for the construct validity of distinct instructional dimensions. d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997), however, reanalyzed the factor structure of the SEEQ and questioned the interpretation of the factor analysis results as evidence of the construct validity of student ratings to measure distinct instructional factors. d'Apollonia and Abrami claimed that student ratings measure not specific aspects of instruction but global components of teaching which they describe as General Instruction Skill; delivering instruction, facilitating interactions, and evaluating student learning. As shown above, there is still room for discussion about what aspects/factors of teaching student evaluations can shed light upon.

Some researchers have proposed that student evaluations are biased by factors that may be unrelated to effective teaching. Greenwald and Gillmore (1997) found that students' evaluative ratings of instruction correlate positively with expected course grades, that is, higher ratings would be expected in the more leniently graded courses. They criticized that the grades-ratings correlation is due to the unwanted influence of instructors' grading leniency on ratings, and indicated a rather negative attitude toward the uncritical use of student evaluations. They then suggested that student ratings should be statistically controlled for grading leniency. Cashin (1995) similarly argued that many variables, including student motivation, class size and such, may bias student evaluations and they should be controlled for by using appropriate comparative data. In response to these concerns about the validity of student evaluations, Harrison, Ryan, and Moore (1996) asserted that students have self-insight, a form of metacognition, into how they make decisions concerning teacher effectiveness since they have an implicit awareness of the relative importance of the factors they are considering. d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997) also claimed that student ratings are not affected by biasing variables since General Instruction Skill, as previously described, is substantially correlated with student learning.

Several researchers have discussed the relationship between teachers' personality traits and student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Radmacher and Martin (2001) investigated which of the following factors could be predictors of student evaluations; (a) teachers' age and extraversion traits, and (b) students' course grades, gender, enrollment status, academic abilities and age. The result of their study suggested that extraversion was the only significant predictor of student evaluations even after controlling for other factors. In a further study, Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen (1990) also reported a positive correlation between extraversion and student evaluations. However, Kneipp, Kelly, Biscoe, and Richard (2010) found extraversion not to be significantly predictive of student's perception of instructional quality.

It seems clear from the literature cited above that identifying and assessing the importance of predictors affecting student evaluations is a complicated and much debated issue. Radmacher and Martin (2001) considered part of the problem may be overlapping variables. They claimed that (a) the positive relationship between student grades and student evaluations of faculty may be a matter of reciprocity, but it may also be that effective teaching results in higher grades, (b) instructors' personalities are a confounding variable in the relationship between grades and student evaluations, (c) extroverted

instructors may be more socially skilled and therefore more effective teachers.

Motivation for the Present Study

Mori and Tanabe (2011a, 2011b) investigated the class evaluation questionnaires conducted in the same format in three different types of classes: required English classes, the start-up seminar for first year students and law-related core classes. One of the objectives of the research was to explore what factors contributed to the overall rating of the class. The results indicated that students' perception of how appropriately the teacher dealt with students can predict their overall evaluation of the class and teacher the most, followed by how clearly the teacher explained. This pattern was also found with the start-up seminar and law-related core classes. The authors concluded that, regardless of class size and subject, teacher's appropriate attitudes toward the students seem to be the most influential factor in determining the overall evaluation of the class. The result then brought up the further question: whether or not the effects of perceived teacher personality have more impacts on student evaluations of the class than instructional skills which teachers are supposed to develop in order to offer students better learning experiences and outcomes.

In sum, based on the findings of the previous research, it can be hypothesized that students' perceptions of teacher personality may predict their overall impression of the class better than their instructional ratings. In order to confirm this hypothesis, the following research questions were formulated for this study:

Research Questions

1. Is there any correlation between students' perceived teacher personality and class evaluations?
2. What teacher personality traits and instructional ratings contribute to the overall impression of the class?

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were 280 first and second year law students. They were in 12 different intact English classes involving 12 different instructors. The number of the students in these classes varied from 14 to 26 with the mean being 23. Half of the

classes were English 1 for first year students where the focus was on reading and listening whereas the other half were English 2 for second year students which is a continuation of English 1. The instructors were all Japanese native speakers. First year students were placed in their classes based on their performance on the TOEIC Bridge administered at the beginning of the first semester while second year students were placed in their classes based on their scores on the TOEIC administered at the end of the first year. Their proficiency varies greatly from a low score of 80 to high score of 160 on the TOEIC Bridge, and a low score of 130 to a high score of 920 on the TOEIC.

Measures

The participants in this study completed two sections of a rating instrument, the instructional rating and teacher personality rating sections. The instructional rating section is comprised of 24 items including one item concerning the overall evaluation of the class. These items were created based on the Instructional Rating Form (Tomasco, 1980), and European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (Newby et al., 2007) (See the Appendix for details). The teacher personality rating section consists of 28 items. All of the items were derived from Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen (1990). Although Murray's measures of personality included 29 items, one item concerned with aesthetical sensitivity was omitted as it was not relevant to the context (See the Appendix for details). Except for the item asking about students' overall evaluation of the class on a 10 point Likert scale, all the items were on a six point Likert scale with one being strongly disagree and six being strongly agree.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered by either of the two researchers in Japanese at the end of the first semester. Prior to administration, the participants were told that the questionnaire was anonymous and the results would never be exposed to the instructors or used for any other purposes but for research. Since two of the 12 classes were taught by the researchers, in those classes the questionnaire was given by the researcher who was not the instructor of that particular class. The questionnaire was completed within approximately 15 minutes.

Results

Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

After eliminating missing data, 274 sets of responses were analysed. The internal consistency estimates of reliability for the instructional rating section and teacher personality section were calculated. Cronbach's Alpha was .97 and .85, respectively, which indicate that both sections of the questionnaire were highly reliable. Tables 1 and 2 show means, standard deviations, skewnesses and kurtosises of both sections of the questionnaire.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Instructional Rating Section (n=274)

| | Mean | S. D | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-------------------------------|------|------|----------|----------|
| 1. Arouses interest | 4.61 | 1.12 | -0.94 | 1.12 |
| 2. Expands viewpoints | 4.35 | 1.20 | -0.63 | 0.27 |
| 3. Informative lectures | 4.77 | 1.07 | -0.87 | 1.09 |
| 4. Interprets clearly | 4.86 | 1.07 | -1.09 | 1.49 |
| 5. Useful examples | 4.70 | 1.10 | -0.74 | 0.44 |
| 6. Inspire confidence | 3.79 | 1.25 | -0.28 | -0.20 |
| 7. Encourage initiative | 3.92 | 1.26 | -0.31 | -0.28 |
| 8. Provides new tools | 3.97 | 1.33 | -0.25 | -0.51 |
| 9. Stimulates thinking | 4.13 | 1.23 | -0.27 | -0.51 |
| 10. Organized presentation | 4.86 | 1.01 | -0.96 | 1.12 |
| 11. Uses time effectively | 4.86 | 1.11 | -0.98 | 0.55 |
| 12. Respects opinions | 4.53 | 1.12 | -0.72 | 0.54 |
| 13. Sensitivity | 4.65 | 1.12 | -0.87 | 0.77 |
| 14. Fair examinations | 5.10 | 0.92 | -1.22 | 2.49 |
| 15. Progress report | 4.84 | 0.99 | -0.88 | 1.11 |
| 16. Class preparation | 5.09 | 0.91 | -1.13 | 2.25 |
| 17. Challenges students | 4.41 | 1.24 | -0.73 | 0.31 |
| 18. Motivates students | 4.13 | 1.32 | -0.46 | -0.25 |
| 19. Good atmosphere | 4.81 | 1.12 | -1.22 | 1.83 |
| 20. Clear rules | 4.92 | 1.05 | -1.19 | 1.96 |
| 21. Effective materials | 5.01 | 1.02 | -1.28 | 2.30 |
| 22. Clear evaluation | 4.91 | 1.11 | -1.24 | 1.74 |
| 23. Challengeable assignments | 4.37 | 1.35 | -0.65 | -0.17 |
| OVERALL | 8.28 | 1.70 | -1.75 | 4.05 |

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Teacher Personality Section (n=274)

| | Mean | S. D | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|----------------------------|------|------|----------|----------|
| 1. Meek | 3.86 | 1.39 | -0.25 | -0.70 |
| 2. Ambitious | 4.65 | 1.01 | -0.85 | 1.20 |
| 3. Sociable | 5.00 | 1.20 | -1.32 | 1.32 |
| 4. Aggressive | 2.13 | 1.20 | 1.14 | 1.15 |
| 5. Independent | 3.50 | 1.36 | 0.00 | -0.73 |
| 6. Changeable | 4.45 | 1.18 | -0.63 | 0.28 |
| 7. Seeks definiteness | 3.45 | 1.28 | 0.19 | -0.54 |
| 8. Defensive | 2.32 | 1.19 | 0.79 | 0.26 |
| 9. Dominant | 2.27 | 1.23 | 0.92 | 0.52 |
| 10. Enduring | 4.06 | 1.09 | -0.30 | 0.51 |
| 11. Attention-seeking | 2.48 | 1.22 | 0.73 | 0.34 |
| 12. Harm-avoiding | 3.00 | 1.18 | 0.18 | -0.20 |
| 13. Impulsive | 2.30 | 1.12 | 0.88 | 0.73 |
| 14. Supporting | 4.64 | 1.14 | -0.96 | 1.01 |
| 15. Orderly | 4.72 | 1.08 | -0.85 | 0.88 |
| 16. Fun-loving | 4.68 | 1.23 | -0.92 | 0.66 |
| 17. Approval-seeking | 3.72 | 1.28 | -0.06 | -0.32 |
| 18. Seeks help and advice | 2.88 | 1.17 | 0.31 | -0.11 |
| 19. Intellectually curious | 4.37 | 1.15 | -0.66 | 0.73 |
| 20. Anxious | 2.12 | 1.14 | 1.15 | 1.44 |
| 21. Intelligent | 4.32 | 1.20 | -0.71 | 0.39 |
| 22. Liberal | 4.34 | 1.12 | -0.52 | 0.56 |
| 23. Shows leadership | 4.34 | 1.23 | -0.54 | -0.03 |
| 24. Objective | 4.90 | 1.15 | -1.30 | 1.92 |
| 25. Compulsive | 3.12 | 1.35 | 0.31 | -0.44 |
| 26. Authoritarian | 2.34 | 1.29 | 0.83 | 0.19 |
| 27. Extraverted | 4.20 | 1.30 | -0.51 | -0.13 |
| 28. Neurotic | 1.85 | 1.04 | 1.56 | 3.16 |

Research Question One: Correlations between Teacher Personality and Class Evaluations

First of all, in order to reduce the teacher personality items, principal components analysis was performed. Four criteria were used to determine the number of factors to rotate: a minimum eigenvalues of 1.0, the scree test, a minimum loading of .45, and the interpretability of the factor solution. Based on these criteria, four factors were rotated using a Varimax rotation procedure. The result found four interpretable factors, which accounted for 59.39% variance (See Table 3).

Table 3

Principal Components Analysis Summary for the Personality Rating Section: Eigenvalues and Percent of Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 8.47 | 30.25 | 30.25 |
| 2 | 5.02 | 17.93 | 48.18 |
| 3 | 1.86 | 6.64 | 54.82 |
| 4 | 1.28 | 4.57 | 59.39 |

Table 4

Principal Components Results

| Personality trait | Factor | | | | h^2 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|
| | I Negative affect | II Extraversion | III Achievement | IV Meekness | |
| 4. Aggressive | 0.77 | -0.10 | -0.04 | -0.10 | 0.61 |
| 8. Defensive | 0.73 | -0.05 | -0.07 | 0.28 | 0.61 |
| 9. Dominant | 0.85 | 0.03 | -0.19 | -0.03 | 0.76 |
| 11. Attention-seeking | 0.60 | 0.50 | -0.17 | 0.04 | 0.63 |
| 13. Impulsive | 0.70 | 0.19 | -0.19 | 0.22 | 0.62 |
| 20. Anxious | 0.72 | -0.16 | -0.08 | 0.25 | 0.62 |
| 25. Compulsive | 0.62 | -0.15 | 0.30 | -0.18 | 0.52 |
| 26. Authoritarian | 0.76 | -0.21 | 0.00 | 0.09 | 0.63 |
| 28. Neurotic | 0.68 | -0.16 | -0.17 | 0.21 | 0.56 |
| 3. Sociable | -0.30 | 0.71 | 0.35 | 0.09 | 0.72 |
| 5. Independent | 0.17 | 0.44 | 0.11 | 0.20 | 0.27 |
| 6. Changeable | -0.26 | 0.64 | 0.46 | 0.10 | 0.69 |
| 16. Fun-loving | -0.21 | 0.77 | 0.33 | 0.11 | 0.75 |
| 19. Intellectually curious | -0.02 | 0.57 | 0.56 | -0.08 | 0.63 |
| 22. Liberal | -0.13 | 0.64 | 0.52 | 0.07 | 0.70 |
| 23. Shows leadership | 0.08 | 0.57 | 0.55 | -0.11 | 0.65 |
| 27. Extraverted | -0.15 | 0.74 | 0.05 | 0.15 | 0.60 |
| 2. Ambitious | -0.09 | 0.42 | 0.67 | 0.00 | 0.63 |
| 7. Seeks definiteness | 0.45 | -0.10 | 0.49 | -0.03 | 0.46 |
| 10. Enduring | 0.01 | 0.22 | 0.60 | 0.19 | 0.44 |
| 14. Supporting | -0.36 | 0.45 | 0.51 | 0.18 | 0.62 |
| 15. Orderly | -0.08 | 0.06 | 0.81 | 0.10 | 0.67 |
| 21. Intelligent | -0.10 | 0.24 | 0.65 | 0.06 | 0.49 |
| 24. Objective | -0.37 | 0.24 | 0.61 | 0.14 | 0.59 |
| 1. Meek | -0.34 | 0.30 | 0.29 | 0.40 | 0.45 |
| 12. Harm-avoiding | 0.34 | -0.08 | 0.10 | 0.59 | 0.48 |
| 17. Approval-seeking | 0.05 | 0.45 | 0.18 | 0.58 | 0.58 |
| 18. Seeks help and advice | 0.21 | 0.24 | 0.05 | 0.73 | 0.64 |

As Tables 3 and 4 show, Factor 1, which accounted for 30.25% of variance, was interpreted as Negative Affect as high scorers on this factor were perceived by their students as dominant, aggressive, authoritarian, and defensive. Factor 2, Extraversion, was defined by traits such as fun-loving, sociable and extraverted, and accounted for 17.93% of variance. Factor 3, Achievement, was defined as high loadings on the factors of orderly, ambitious and intelligent, and accounted for 6.64% of variance. Factor 4, Meekness, was so termed as the items that loaded on this factor included help-seeking and harm-avoiding, and accounted for 4.57% of variance.

In order to investigate whether there is any correlation between the personality traits and class evaluations, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated with the factor scores for the four personality factors described above and the 24 items of the instructional rating section. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5

Correlations between Teacher Personality Traits and Class Evaluations

| | Negative affect | Extraversion | Achievement | Meekness |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| 1. Arouses interest | -0.23** | 0.42** | 0.53** | 0.05 |
| 2. Expands viewpoints | -0.12 | 0.31** | 0.52** | 0.00 |
| 3. Informative lectures | -0.19** | 0.30** | 0.53** | 0.03 |
| 4. Interprets clearly | -0.21** | 0.37** | 0.50** | -0.01 |
| 5. Useful examples | -0.16** | 0.42** | 0.48** | 0.00 |
| 6. Inspire confidence | -0.11 | 0.23** | 0.48** | 0.03 |
| 7. Encourage initiative | -0.19** | 0.26** | 0.51** | 0.05 |
| 8. Provides new tools | -0.19** | 0.34** | 0.42** | 0.12 |
| 9. Stimulates thinking | -0.16** | 0.45** | 0.48** | 0.04 |
| 10. Organized presentation | -0.14 | 0.32** | 0.53** | 0.08 |
| 11. Uses time effectively | -0.16** | 0.23** | 0.58** | 0.02 |
| 12. Respects opinions | -0.34** | 0.44** | 0.43** | 0.14 |
| 13. Sensitivity | -0.29** | 0.41** | 0.48** | 0.18 |
| 14. Fair examinations | -0.18** | 0.09 | 0.49** | 0.04 |
| 15. Progress report | -0.11 | 0.32** | 0.55** | 0.04 |
| 16. Class preparation | -0.17** | 0.22** | 0.55** | 0.03 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------------|---------------|------|
| 17. Challenges students | -0.12 | 0.34** | 0.60** | 0.04 |
| 18. Motivates students | -0.16** | 0.31** | 0.56** | 0.07 |
| 19. Good atmosphere | -0.20** | 0.30** | 0.49** | 0.02 |
| 20. Clear rules | -0.05 | 0.18** | 0.56** | 0.04 |
| 21. Effective materials | -0.24** | 0.31** | 0.52** | 0.06 |
| 22. Clear evaluation | -0.16** | 0.42** | 0.53** | 0.00 |
| 23. Challengeable assignments | -0.11 | 0.43** | 0.56** | 0.05 |
| OVERALL | -0.28** | 0.41** | 0.57** | 0.03 |

The correlations with an r in the .35 to .80s range are in bold.

** $p < .00$

As Table 5 shows, the majority of the Negative Affect items were negatively and highly correlated with class evaluations. The items that were found not correlated are “expands viewpoints,” “inspire confidence,” “organized presentation,” “progress report,” “challenges students,” “clear rules” and “challengeable assignments,” which seem to be mainly concerned with students’ perception of how inspiring and organized the class was. While all but one of the Extraversion items, namely “fair examination,” and all Achievement items were correlated highly with class evaluations, none of the Meek items were significantly correlated. However, when looking at the strength of the relationship, most of the moderately high correlations with an r in the .35 to .80s range (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991) are from the Achievement related items.

Research Question Two: Significant Predictors of the Overall Rating

To determine which instructional and personality items contributed to the overall evaluation of the class, a multiple regression analysis was performed between the overall rating (item 24 of the instructional rating section) as a dependent variable, and 23 instructional ratings and factor scores of the four teacher personality traits as independent variables. The linear combination of strength measures was significantly related to the overall rating, $F(27, 242)=25.95, p < .00$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .86, indicating that approximately 74% of the variance of the overall rating in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of personality and instructional measures.

Table 6 shows indices to indicate the relative strength of the individual predictors. Notice that the correlation coefficients only for two personality traits, Negative Affect and Extraversion, and one instructional rating, interprets clearly, are significant at $p < .01$. The result suggests that students' perception of the teacher as dominant, aggressive and authoritarian, and fun-loving, sociable and extroverted can predict their overall evaluation of the class the most, together with how clear the class was. It is interesting to note that there was no significant correlation between the rest of the instructional ratings and their overall impression of the class. Therefore, despite the fact that the Achievement related teacher personality trait was most significantly correlated with the instructional ratings, it cannot be a predictor of the overall evaluation of the class.

Table 6

The Bivariate and Partial Correlations of the Predictors with the Overall Rating

| Predictors | Correlation between each predictor and the overall rating | Correlation between each predictor and the overall rating controlling for all other predictors |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Negative affect | -0.34** | -0.28** |
| Extraversion | 0.43** | 0.17** |
| Achievement | 0.54* | 0.13* |
| Meekness | 0.02 | -0.04 |
| 1. Arouses interest | 0.70 | -0.01 |
| 2. Expands viewpoints | 0.56 | -0.11 |
| 3. Informative lectures | 0.59 | -0.05 |
| 4. Interprets clearly | 0.71** | 0.16** |
| 5. Useful examples | 0.69* | 0.12* |
| 6. Inspire confidence | 0.60 | 0.13 |
| 7. Encourage initiative | 0.61 | -0.10 |
| 8. Provides new tools | 0.55 | 0.03 |
| 9. Stimulates thinking | 0.64 | 0.00 |
| 10. Organized presentation | 0.59 | 0.04 |
| 11. Uses time effectively | 0.61 | 0.06 |
| 12. Respects opinions | 0.63 | -0.05 |
| 13. Sensitivity | 0.67 | 0.12 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|
| 14. Fair examinations | 0.42 | -0.04 |
| 15. Progress report | 0.62 | 0.02 |
| 16. Class preparation | 0.56 | -0.01 |
| 17. Challenges students | 0.73 | 0.14 |
| 18. Motivates students | 0.71 | 0.16 |
| 19. Good atmosphere | 0.62 | 0.05 |
| 20. Clear rules | 0.54 | 0.04 |
| 21. Effective materials | 0.59 | 0.00 |
| 22. Clear evaluation | 0.63 | 0.02 |
| 23. Challengeable assignments | 0.67 | 0.11 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this research suggest some major conclusions concerning perceived teacher personality in relation to student evaluations. First, with regards to correlations between teacher personality and class evaluations (Research Question One), all teacher personality factors except Meekness have been found to have a considerable degree of influence on class evaluations. Especially, Achievement indicative of such personality traits as orderly, ambitious and intelligent was most strongly correlated with all of the instructional ratings, and Extraversion indicative of such personality traits as sociable and fun-loving also showed strong correlations with the majority of instructional ratings. It could be assumed from this result that students somewhat share common ideas of what a teacher should be like; that is, one who is orderly, ambitious, intelligent and fun-loving, and either consciously or subconsciously looked at the Achievement and Extraversion characteristics of the teacher when they evaluated each instructional item relating to him/her.

Although the correlations were moderate, Negative Affect was negatively correlated with some of the instructional ratings including “arouses interest,” “respects opinions” and “sensitivity.” Taking this finding into consideration, a teacher could expect these instructional ratings to improve if he/she tries hard not to bring out dominant, aggressive or authoritarian disposition in class. Interestingly enough, however, Negative Affect left uncorrelated with seven instructional aspects such as “expands

viewpoints,” “inspire confidence,” and “organized presentation.” A possible interpretation here is that when students are asked to evaluate how inspiring and organized a given class is, the Negative Affect traits of the teacher may not appear in their cognitive processing.

Those findings that indicate possible relationships between teachers’ personality traits and student evaluations raise a question regarding validity of student class evaluations; whether or not the evaluations can really be valid measures of teaching effectiveness. If personality traits can be strong predictors of student evaluations, then a criticism like “such evaluations are no more than mere personality contests” (Tomasco, 1980, p.79) even sounds reasonable. In response to such arguments, Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen (1990) interpreted the correlation between teacher personality traits and instructional effectiveness as follows: “personality traits of the instructor (e.g., orderliness) are translated into specific classroom teaching behaviors (e.g., putting an outline on blackboard), which in turn are validly reflected in student ratings” (p.259). If this is the case, student evaluations may be considered as valid measures of teaching effectiveness. Further investigation, however, is needed to examine the adequateness of this interpretation of Murray et al.

With regards to Research Question Two, the multiple regression analysis has found that two personality factors, Extraversion and Negative Affect, and one instructional rating, “interprets clearly,” significantly contributed to the overall evaluation of the class. The authors focus attention on two points in the result. First, as previously discussed, students presumably have a standard image of a teacher in their mind and compare the image with their instructor when they fill in the evaluation forms. The results of Research Questions One and Two combined together possibly indicate that students reflect different standards when they evaluate each instructional item of the teacher and when they rate the overall evaluation. One could assume that Achievement personality traits of each learner’s standard teacher image are most focused upon evaluating each instructional item of the teacher whereas Extraversion and Negative Affect are the key elements in determining the overall evaluation. The characteristics of the Achievement and Extraversion factors being compared, the latter seems more likely to be relevant to students’ emotional perceptions rather than their objective perspectives. It could be reasoned, thus, that students’ emotions are more focused on overall evaluations than their objectivity is. Therefore, ratings on each

instructional item and overall evaluation should be regarded and treated differently.

Regarding the second point, if, as discussed above, students are not likely to give their overall impression of the class based on their inclusive observations of the teacher's instructional ratings, then what does the overall rating really mean? Based on the finding that the instructional rating "interprets clearly" was the only predictor of the overall evaluation of the class, it may not be too much to say that what overall ratings can imply is nothing but how clear the class is, which is only one single aspect of a number of instructional skills stated in teacher training guidelines such as EPOSTL (Newby et al., 2007). If the instructional effectiveness of a given teacher is to be evaluated, one should note that the overall rating of his/her class evaluation, which is frequently weighed most heavily, cannot necessarily give the whole picture of his/her teaching performance. In relation to this, it could also be said that this finding may have clarified the difference(s) between what pedagogy requires of teaching professionals and students' general expectations on their teachers.

The limitations of this study must be mentioned. The size of the classes, which ranged from 14 to 26 students, may not represent typical class setting at universities where larger classes are generally given. Another limitation that should be taken into consideration is that this research has been done in a single department. As Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen (1990) suggested, perceived teaching effectiveness varies substantially across different types of courses for the same instructor. In addition, as the mean score of 8.28 on the overall rating is considered quite high, the results of this study may not be applicable to general educational environments where teachers with various teaching qualities, from excellent to poor, are presumably found in a faculty. Therefore, the lack of randomization remains undeniable.

Finally, in addition to the validity of student evaluations, a more debatable issue may be the use of the evaluations as a measure of teaching effectiveness in administrative decisions on faculty retention, tenure, promotion, and salary. Although Gross and Small (1979), who surveyed faculty opinions about student evaluations, gave warning against uncritical acceptance of such use and indicated possible risks of demoralizing instructors, some researchers have conditionally agreed upon including the results of student evaluations in the aforementioned decisions. Marsh (1983) asserted, for instance, that the results should be dealt with as one of several measures of teaching effectiveness. Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen (1990) argued that data should be made

available from as many types of courses as possible since they found perceived teaching effectiveness varies across different types of courses for the same instructor. The authors of the present study are still in doubt about whether such administrative uses of student evaluations are pertinent when much consideration and further investigation is needed in this field of research, and the best explanation for the associations between perceived personality characteristics of teachers and their student-rated effectiveness seem far from clear.

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Appendix

Translation of Instructional Rating and Teacher Personality Sections of the Questionnaire

In this questionnaire, you are asked about this class and your impression on the instructor. When answering the questions, please keep in mind the following two points:

*The results of the questionnaire will never be exposed to the instructor. Your personal information will not be provided to the instructor.

*Although the results will be statistically analyzed and reported at a conference and/or in a journal, the responses to individual items will not be disclosed.

Read each statement and circle the number to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

1 Strongly disagree

2 Somewhat agree

3 Disagree

4 Agree

5 Somewhat disagree

6 Strongly agree

A. About this class

1. This class aroused my interest.
2. This class expanded my viewpoints.
3. This class provided me with useful knowledge.
4. This class was clear and easy to understand.
5. This class offered useful examples.
6. This class inspired my confidence.
7. This class encouraged me to take an initiative in learning.
8. This class provided me with new learning tools.
9. The content of this class stimulated my intellectual curiosity.
10. This class was clearly organized.
11. Time was effectively used in this class.
12. The instructor respected students' opinions.
13. The instructor tried to meet students' needs.
14. The examinations were fair.
15. The objects of the class were clear and reasonable/

16. The teacher was well prepared for the class.
 17. The content of this class was challenging.
 18. This class motivated me to study English.
 19. The class atmosphere was appropriate.
 20. This class was disciplined.
 21. Materials and instruments used for this class were effective.
 22. Evaluation criteria for presentations and assignments were clearly explained.
 23. Presentation tasks and assignments were challenging.
 24. Give your overall evaluation to this class on a scale from 1 to 10.
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B. About the instructor

1. unassertive and conformable
2. ambitious
3. friendly and sociable
4. argumentative and gets angry easily
5. avoids restraints and enjoys being free
6. flexible, and likes new and different ideas
7. does not like ambiguity
8. suspicious and takes offense easily
9. forceful and attempts to control environment
10. patient and enduring
11. attention-seeking
12. careful and avoids risks
13. impulsive and reckless
14. supporting and gives sympathy
15. neat and organized
16. fun-loving
17. works for approval of others
18. desires support and sympathy from others
19. intellectually curious and insightful
20. nervous and unstable
21. bright and intelligent
22. liberal

23. shows leadership
 24. fair and free of bias
 25. meticulous and perfectionistic
 26. authoritarian and opinionated
 27. extraverted and optimistic
 28. moody and constantly worried things will go wrong
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