


Chapter 1

Online Postgraduate Education Students' Perception of Teaching Performance: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an evaluation of teaching performance in an online postgraduate programme at the Technical University of Manabí, emphasising the importance of adopting effective mechanisms to ensure teaching quality. A quantitative, cross-sectional, exploratory, and descriptive-inferential ex post facto study was conducted on a sample of 180 students from two cohorts of the Master's in Education programme. An adapted version of the Teaching Performance Evaluation Scale was applied. The evaluations were highly positive, although areas for improvement were identified in aspects such as organisational skills, content mastery, and the use and evaluation of resources, particularly in technological subjects.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Evaluating teaching performance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is necessary for the continuous assurance of teaching quality (Froment et al., 2021; Gómez & Valdés, 2019) and the improvement of the professional performance of teaching staff (Jardilino et al., 2021). This constitutes an expeditious way to respond to the current challenge of improving the learning achievements and comprehensive training of undergraduate and postgraduate university students (Cuzcano-Huarcaya et al., 2023).

In order to respond to the need expressed above, it is considered that the evaluation mechanisms should focus on the quality of teaching activity, understood as “the set of actions carried out inside and outside the classroom, aimed at promoting student learning in relation to the objectives and competences defined in a curriculum in a given institutional context” (ANECA, 2021, p. 16). The results of these mechanisms, in the particular case of postgraduate education in Ecuador, allow decisions to be made for the continuous improvement of teacher performance and program quality (CACES, 2023).

The literature consulted shows a diversity of criteria in terms of the methodological aspects, techniques and instruments for the collection of perceptions and data (questionnaires, interviews, scales measuring attitudes or behaviors, focus groups, classroom observation), as well as in terms of the participants (students, teachers, managers, external experts, graduates). Such tools and methods can provide reliable, valid and objective information for evaluating the quality of teaching activity (Froment, et al., 2021; Gerônimo et al., 2023; Gómez & Valdés, 2019; Henklain et al., 2020; Henríquez et al., 2022; Henríquez et al., 2023; Jardilino et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2022). However, given that students are the main beneficiaries of teaching activity, since it is they who receive the training (Aravena-Gaete & Gairín, 2021), the most widely used methods and instruments for evaluating faculty teaching performance in higher education are questionnaires and scales designed to collect students’ perceptions (Froment et al., 2021; Gómez & Valdés, 2019). Despite the extensive use of these mechanisms of hetero-evaluation in higher education, various authors suggest there may be logical-structural problems in their conception, due to the inclusion of a wide variety of criteria, limiting the correct measurement of the effectiveness of the training received. This, in turn, would lead to biased responses and subjective judgments by students (Henríquez et al., 2023; Stroebe, 2020), as well as student demotivation when they perceive their opinions fail to be considered when changes are made in teacher performance (Aravena-Gaete & Gairín, 2021; García et al., 2023).

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