

Moving Towards Electronic Lecturer Evaluation System (E-LEva) in UiTM Pahang: A Study Across Lecturers

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ABSTRACT

The Electronic Lecturer Evaluation System (e-LEva) is an online system to evaluate the performance of UiTM Pahang lecturers at the end of every semester. The main users of e-LEva are students, the Academic Affairs (HEA) Department of UiTM Pahang and the lecturers. The main purpose of e-LEva is to let the students have a better platform to evaluate their lecturers. The HEA can immediately retrieve the statistics of the evaluation and lecturers can identify the level of the students' satisfaction regarding the teaching and learning process. This information is also important to inform the lecturers of the quality of their teaching styles implemented in the classroom. The previous traditional process was very complicated and tedious; the process of data compilation itself took more than three months. Thus, the implementation of e-LEva helps the management especially the HEA of UiTM Pahang in reducing time, resources and cost. e-LEva was developed based on the specific requirements identified by the HEA. To fulfill the requirements of the university, academics and students, a lot of improvements have been done on e-LEva within the two years of its implementation. The objective of this paper is to study the feedback of the lecturers

in order to investigate the level of acceptance of e-LEva. Data were collected via an online survey questionnaire.

Keywords: *e-LEva, education, evaluation in education, lecturer evaluation, teaching evaluation*

Introduction

e-LEva has been developed and implemented since 2006. The improvement of e-LEva is made based on responses from the users. It is essential in utilising teacher's evaluation as a vehicle to improve teaching and learning. An argument is made that an effective teacher evaluation system, combined with strong leadership, facilitates the type of learning organization. Today, learning organisation exists in rapidly changing and increasingly complex society, so university must be able to rapidly react, respond and adapt (Davis, Ellett and Annunziata, 2002). By having e-LEva as the platform to evaluate teaching, UiTM Pahang will be more efficient in improving the constructive method or system. Within two years, the users' feedback on the performance, reliability and accuracy of e-LEva had been identified. There is a need to make sure that e-LEva will continuously improve. This will create a good impact to UiTM Pahang as a whole.

Evaluation is an important part in the process of learning. It has to do with finding out from our students about the quality of their learning and obtaining information about the effectiveness of our teaching (The Evaluation of Learning and Teaching, 2002). In education, teaching evaluation has been discussed seriously in other countries in order to identify proper methods, tools and frameworks to do the evaluation. Teaching evaluation involves more than one evaluator. Using multiple data sources can provide more accurate measures of the teaching performance, thus, enhancing the quality of teacher evaluation. The types of evaluation in teaching are self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and student evaluation of teachers (Liu and Teddlie, 2005). The teaching evaluation discussed in this paper concerns the evaluation of the lecturers assessed by their students. This evaluation is part of the total evaluation on the lecturers. The evaluation process cannot solely depend on the students because students might not understand their purpose of evaluating the lecturers; their role and the importance of the evaluation. Also, some students might perceive the evaluation as an opportunity to take revenge

on a lecturer for a variety of reasons (Liu & Teddlie, 2005). If these instruments are used in isolation, as they frequently are, and without alternative and collaborative measures, then students become the primary determinant of the lecturer's success or failure in his or her academic career (Charles, Tracy and Robert, 2003).

Students' evaluation of teaching performance is a key component in getting feedback for continuous improvement of educational programmes (Andersen, 2006). Evaluation is important in order to bring about improvements in areas such as student achievements, use of public funds or educational materials and programs. Different evaluation approaches exist depending on who requires the information and the purpose for which the information is needed (Moses Waithanji & Mwangi, 2005). Evaluation has multiple functions deriving from the purposes of the evaluation activity. The three main functions of educational evaluation are accountability, certification and learning. These functions are also embedded in the evaluation of teaching but they need to be expanded and more clearly defined (Smith, 2005). Most universities solicit feedback from students at the end of a semester in order to assess students' perceptions on the conduct of the subject (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Traditionally, questionnaires have been given to students to be completed on paper. For lecturer evaluation, this can mean a major logistical exercise and a considerable expense for the university. Printing the questionnaires can be a complex exercise and some of the items on the questionnaire can be chosen by lecturers. Administering questionnaires in class takes a lot of time and organisational effort. Collecting feedbacks from students has become a costly and time consuming process for most universities. Converting to data collection through the Internet, rather than completion on paper, can result in a cheaper and more efficient process (Leung and Kember, 2005). An important concern in the research was determining the reliability of the tools used in evaluating teaching effectiveness. Reliability refers to the extent to which a measuring tool is consistent and stable in measuring what it is supposed to measure. This is important if the results of the measuring tools are to be taken as an unbiased representation of the characteristics being measured (Moses Waithanji and Mwangi, 2005). In the case of e-LEva, high reliability would indicate that students can objectively evaluate their lecturers; hence, the results can be confidently used in decision-making.

e-LEva Framework

UiTM Pahang uses e-LEva as a vital part of the total assessment of a lecturer's performance and is documented every semester in the Teaching Portfolio. Previously the lecturer evaluation was done manually which involved eleven steps in total and took at least three months to complete (Khairul Nizam Abd Halim and Razulaimi Razali, 2008). Figure 1 show all the steps involved in the manual process. After years of manually processing lecturers' performance evaluation in the context of learning and teaching in UiTM Pahang, problems surfaced in relation to time, resources and cost. The problems identified in the manual process were:

1. The manual process took about three months to produce the result.
2. The process of gathering the data, analysing the data and producing the results needed the involvement of many parties.
3. The management (HEA) needed to bear costs on the overtime, stationery and papers.
4. The accuracy of the data being used for the analysis and results.

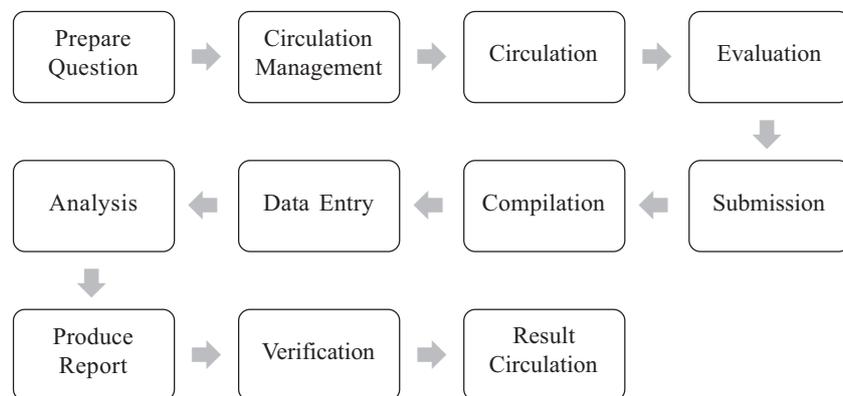


Figure 1: Manual Process for Teaching and Learning Evaluation (Khairul Nizam Abd Halim, 2006)

The problem becomes more serious every semester. A solution was identified to overcome the problems. A new framework of the evaluation process was designed to ensure a more productive and effective evaluation system. Together with the framework a new platform was also designed to support the framework and the 'Electronic Lecturer

Evaluation System' or better known as e-LEva. This application is a web-based application accessible from anywhere that has internet access.

As the owner of this system, the HEA is authorised to control the access of the screen for students and lecturers. Based on the e-LEva framework, the HEA needs to set the questions for the evaluation. The next process, data for students, lecturers and subjects for a particular semester are channeled into the e-LEva database from the existing UiTM system ISIS (student information system) and ICRESS (Lecturer and subject information system). Once the extraction process is completed, the HEA needs to verify the data. Then, the HEA allows the screen to be accessed for students to do the evaluation while monitoring the evaluation percentage. The monitoring is important to make sure that the majority of students evaluate their lecturers. This exercise is continued based on the time duration identified by the HEA. The lecturers can gain access to the system once the evaluation process is completed within the time duration given. At this moment the HEA and lecturers can retrieve the results from e-LEva. The framework and the process flow of e-LEva are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

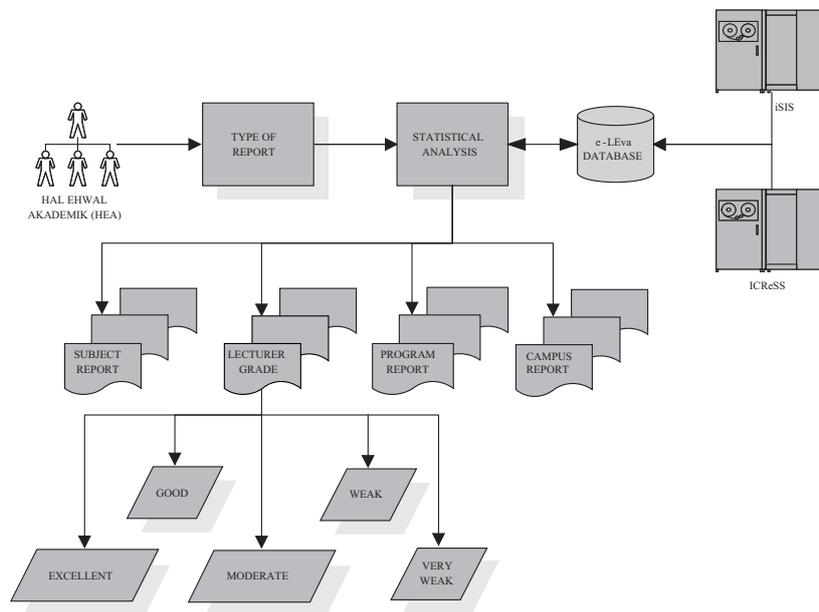


Figure 2: e-LEva Framework (Khairul Nizam Abd Halim, Razulaimi Razali, & Roslan Jamaludin, 2006)

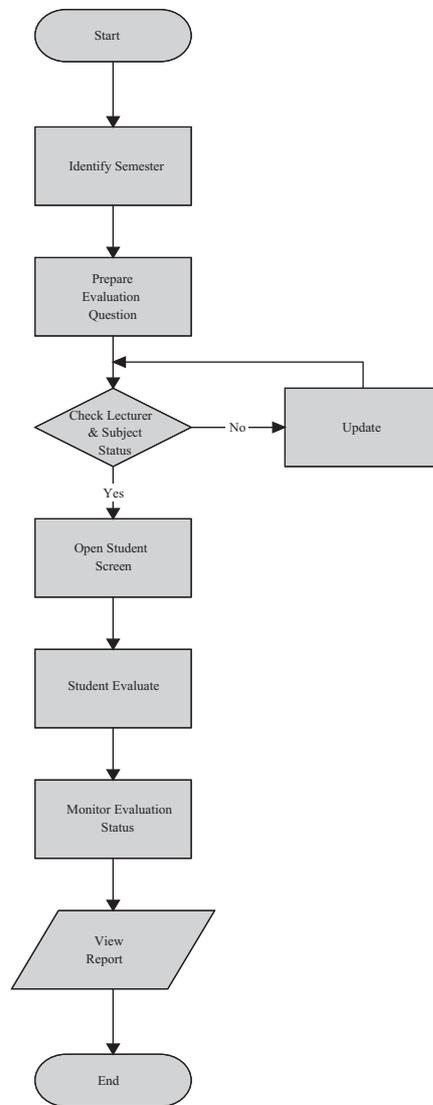


Figure 3: The Process Flow of e-LEva (Khairul Nizam Abd Halim & Razulaimi Razali, 2008)

Method of Study

In fulfilling the purpose of this paper, a questionnaire was administered to a total sample of 104 lecturers from UiTM Pahang. The questionnaire

was prepared in a web-based form where all the lecturers can access it through the Internet to participate in the survey. The information regarding the survey and the instructions for the lecturers to participate in the survey were communicated through e-mail. Reminders on the survey were also sent through e-mail every week for three weeks of the survey to make sure that at least 50% of the lecturers participate in the survey. From the survey the writers expected to get responses from the lecturers as users of e-LEva. The questionnaire had eighteen questions including five questions on the demographic information of the respondents.

All data that were retrieved from the survey were imported to SPSS version 16 for the analysis process. Two types of analysis were done: i) descriptive analysis, and ii) frequency analysis. The main purpose of the descriptive analysis is to identify the mean for the thirteen questions in the questionnaire. From the results, the researchers will know whether e-LEva is suitable and acceptable for teaching evaluation in UiTM Pahang. The frequencies analysis is to identify the percentage of the respondents in the first five questions in the questionnaire.

Results

Table 1 shows that 20.2% of the respondents were from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and they represented the highest percentage compared to other respondents. This is followed by the Faculty of IT and Quantitative Sciences (17.3%), Language (13.5%), Faculty of Accountancy and

Table 1: Respondents and Department

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Islamic Thought	7	6.7	6.7	6.7
Language	14	13.5	13.5	20.2
Applied Science	21	20.2	20.2	40.4
Accountancy	12	11.5	11.5	51.9
Business Management	12	11.5	11.5	63.5
Civil Engineering	9	8.7	8.7	72.1
Office Management and Technology	11	10.6	10.6	82.7
IT and Quantitative Sciences	18	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Faculty of Business Management (both 11.5%), Faculty of Office Management and Technology (10.6%), Faculty of Civil Engineering (8.7%) and Islamic Thought (6.7%).

Table 2: Respondents and Years of Service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	9	8.7	8.7	8.7
	1-2 years	23	22.1	22.1	30.8
	2-5 years	11	10.6	10.6	41.3
	5-10 years	32	30.8	30.8	72.1
	More than 10 years	29	27.9	27.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents based on the years of service at the university. A majority of the respondents (30.8%) has 5 – 10 years working experience. This is followed by 27.9% with more than 10 years, 22.1% with 1 – 2 years working experience, 10.6% with 2 – 5 years and 8.7% of the respondents with less than 1 year working experience.

Table 3 shows the percentage of respondents based on their academic positions. Lecturers formed the largest percentage (65.4%), followed by Young Lecturers (22.1%), Senior Lecturers (8.7%), Associate Professors (2.9%) and Professor (1%). This conforms that the population of lecturers in UiTM Pahang are currently dominated by the new lecturers who have worked less than ten years. Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents based on the status of job where the majority of the respondents are permanent lecturers (86.5%).

Table 3: Respondent Percentage Based on Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Young Lecturer	23	22.1	22.1	22.1
	Lecturer	68	65.4	65.4	87.5
	Senior Lecturer	9	8.7	8.7	96.2
	Associate Professor	3	2.9	2.9	99.0
	Professor	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Respondents and Status of Job Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Permanent	90	86.5	86.5	86.5
	Contract	7	6.7	6.7	93.3
	Full Time	5	4.8	4.8	98.1
	Part Time	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the descriptive summary of the thirteen criteria of e-LEva. The statistics shows the impact of e-LEva on the lecturers especially on the level of their acceptance towards the implementation of e-LEva. Thirteen criteria were evaluated to identify the results. The criteria were:

- a. Ease at use of e-LEva
- b. Clarity and effectiveness of the flow
- c. Simple to use e-LEva
- d. Comfortable to use e-LEva
- e. User friendliness of using e-LEva
- f. Productivity issues relating to e-LEva
- g. Reliability
- h. Consistency of e-LEva in meeting academicians' expectation
- i. Immediacy of producing results
- j. Performance of e-LEva
- k. Level of satisfaction on e-LEva

With reference to Table 5, the mean value for all the scales surveyed is above 4.0. The result shows that e-LEva is generally accepted by the academics. Even though the results show positive feedback from the respondents, certain areas of e-LEva still need improvement to make sure they really work for all users in UiTM Pahang. The lowest mean value is the reliability of e-LEva with the value of 4.03. Further studies need to be done to study the reliability of the system. The reliability of e-LEva needs to be identified to make sure that it can be improved. The reliability of the system is very important because the system is being used as a platform for teaching evaluation as mentioned before. Table 5 also shows that e-LEva is user friendly and well accepted by the users.

Table 5: Descriptive Summary of the 13 Scales of e-LEva

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
easy to use	104	1	5	4.44	.680
flow	104	1	5	4.38	.780
simple	104	2	5	4.52	.653
comfortable	104	1	5	4.38	.827
easy to learn	104	3	5	4.63	.561
productive	104	1	5	4.19	.915
reliable	104	1	5	4.03	1.065
consistency	104	1	5	4.12	.889
immediate result	104	2	5	4.36	.762
performance	104	1	5	4.37	.791
satisfied	104	1	5	4.26	.903
use	104	1	5	4.36	.799
recommend	104	1	5	4.31	.825
Valid N (listwise)	104				

The following conclusions reflect academics' acceptance towards the use of e-LEva:

- a. Implementation of e-LEva is being accepted by the academicians.
- b. e-LEva is user friendly.
- c. The reliability of e-LEva still needs further study.
- d. Ongoing studies and improvements on e-LEva need to be done to make sure that the system always comply with UiTM Pahang's objectives.

Conclusion

Evaluation is not something new in education. In other countries, universities, schools, colleges and other education bodies, research and studies are being done to find the best method on teaching evaluation. Besides the method, tools as the platform of the evaluation process are also important to be identified to make sure the evaluation process can be done smoothly and effectively. The implementation of e-LEva gives positive impact on UiTM Pahang, especially on the management side. Results from the study also show that e-LEva is positively accepted by

the academics. Even though the results show positive feedback, improvement on e-LEva has to be done continuously to make sure that e-LEva will always fulfill UiTM Pahang's objectives.

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