

Assessing Students in Addis Ababa University: Indian and Ethiopian Faculty Members' Perceptions and Reflections

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Abstract: *Professors can play an important role in the lives of students in higher education. Generally speaking, training students in higher level cognitive skills is the focus and purpose of higher education, and the assessment of students with appropriate tools is as important as imparting instruction and developing capabilities. In the context of massification of higher education in the country, on 3 issues related to assessment of students in Addis Ababa University (AAU), the views of faculty members were solicited. The sample included 52 Indian faculty members, and 24 Ethiopian faculty members. Among the sample participants, 85% Indian and 68% Ethiopian faculty members felt that the students need to develop the skills of writing long descriptive and explanatory answers, whereas 73% Indian and 62% Ethiopian faculty member felt that students generally have mistrust in any faculty member during evaluation, and students' reaction to evaluation is unjustified. The paper argued for improving standards, removing the mistrust and developing the students' skills in writing long answers. Maintaining examinees' confidentiality and using external examination are suggested as useful tools in this context.*

Introduction

The purpose of university education is to impart knowledge and new ideas, to develop critical thinking skills, to promote personal growth and prepare students for a career (Alexitch & Page, 1997). In the curriculum for higher education, outcomes are usually articulated in terms of 'capabilities' relating to effective communication, self-management, critical thinking, information handling, and acting appropriately in the context of social and cultural

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diversity, though precise definition of these capabilities has not been straightforward (Leathwood & Phillips, 2000). Assessment of students on these espoused purposes is as important as imparting them. Literature has evidence that students learn the requisite skills and acquire knowledge if they perceive that they will be assessed, and if they approach their learning and if the examinations are based on the manner in which the students will be assessed.

It is generally accepted in academic circles that the instructor as the giver of possible knowledge also has the authority to evaluate students on the academic/professional skills they have gained. However, the challenge is how to (a) provide appropriate guidance and feed back to the students, (b) face the unsavory and agonizing repercussions if students think they have not been evaluated according to 'their expectation'.

In Addis Ababa University (AAU), there is a high expectation on the part of the students regarding their overall/total marks which determine their grades and consequently their further education or career. This expectation results in palpable tension between the instructor and the students, especially when the instructor's evaluation does not match the expectation of the students. No matter what the extent of discussion or argument on the part of the instructor, the student is never convinced. How many students can the instructor convince in a class of 30 Post-graduate students, or in a class of 100-120 Undergraduate students? What is the solution? When the country is embarking on massification of higher education, there appears to be a need to look at the assessment process taking place in Universities of Ethiopia in general and in AAU in particular. Professors can play a significant role in students' aspirations and intellectual development through their interactions with students (Pascarella, 1984). This makes it important to examine the current attitudes of professors towards evaluation in higher education. Cafeteria discussion among Indian faculty members is centered, among other academic and non-academic issues, also on the evaluation of students in AAU in particular and in other universities of Ethiopia in general. To concretize the perceptions and share these perceptions among a large

section of the academic community in Ethiopia, an attempt has therefore been made to assess the perceptions of Indian faculty members teaching in AAU along with perceptions of Ethiopian faculty members. The inclusion of Ethiopian faculty members is not for comparison, but to assess their perceptions on the same issue.

Objectives

The following specific objectives were set:

1. to assess the perceptions of Indian and Ethiopian faculty members on the evaluation of students in Addis Ababa University.
2. to look for viable alternatives in light of Indian experiences on evaluation of students' learning.

Method

Participants and Procedure

In Addis Ababa University (AAU) there were about 90 Indian faculty members at the time of data collection during May-June of 2006 teaching in various departments excluding the faculties of Medicine, Veterinary Sciences and Technology. From 90 faculty members, 52 Indian faculty members across departments participated in this study. The sampling procedure was incidental sampling which ensured representation from each department.

The faculty members were Assistant Professors/Professors, with teaching experience in India ranging from 5 years to 40 years with a median of 17 years. Their teaching experience in Addis Ababa University ranged from 1 year to 4 years. Two thirds of this group taught between 1 to 6 courses. A profile of Indian participants of the study is given in Table 1a.

Table 1a: Description of Indian Faculty Participants

Teaching in India		Teaching in AAU		Courses taught at AAU	
Years	f	Years	f	Number	f
3-5	6	1-2	38	1-3	18
6-10	14	3-4	13	4-6	22
11-20	14	15	1	7-10	10
21-30	10			Above 11	2
31-40	8				
Median	17	Median	1	Median	5

Table 1b: Ethiopian Faculty Participants

Teaching in Ethiopia		Teaching in AAU		Courses taught at AAU	
Years	f	Years	f	Number	f
1-2	4				
3-5	6	1-2	6	1-3	4
6-10	9	3-4	6	4-6	8
11-20	3	5 & Above	12	7-10	9
21-26	2			11&Above	3
Median	7	Median	4	Median	6

The study also tried to obtain responses to the evaluation process from Ethiopian faculty members, but not for comparison with Indian faculty's reaction. Through incidental sampling, the study obtained responses from 24 Ethiopian faculty members across various departments. Including only 24 faculty members from among the large number of Ethiopian faculty members teaching in the University is a limitation of this study.

The 24 Ethiopia participants had teaching experience at AUU between 1 year and 26 years with a mode of 1 year, and a median of 4 years. The total teaching experience of these participants in the country was between 1 year and 26 years, with a median of 7 years. A profile of the sample of Ethiopian faculty members was presented in Table 1b earlier in this paper.

Measures: A 19-item questionnaire was prepared on the basis of informal discussions with Indian faculty members to assess their views on (a) post-evaluation students' reaction, (b) post-evaluation emotional experiences of professors and (c) suggestions for improving the standard of students and the evaluation system. The 19 items had 4 response options – Agree, Partially Agree, Cannot Say, and Disagree. The 'Cannot Say' option would mean that the respondent was not able to choose any of the other alternatives. The respondents were requested not to disclose their identities, but were asked to provide information on the position they held at AAU, total teaching experience in India / their own country, teaching experience in AAU, and number of courses they have taught.

Reliability of the data: Cronbach Alpha reliability of the data from 19-items was found to be 0.856 on Indian sample, 0.822 on Ethiopian sample, and 0.845 on the total sample of 76 participants.

Procedure of data collection: The author visited each of the Department and distributed the questionnaire to Indian faculty members. With the help of the Indian faculty members of the respective department, Ethiopian participants were requested to participate in the study. All participants were given sufficient time (2 to 6 days) to respond to the questionnaire.

Results of the Study

The results of the study presented in different tables below show (a) the number of respondents (b) the corresponding percentages. The results are shown for both groups separately and together as total sample responses. The results were interpreted under 3 issues – a) evaluation and students' reactions, b) emotional experiences of faculty on evaluation, and c) perceptions of the evaluation system.

A. Students' reactions to evaluation: A large percent age of Indian instructors (more than 50% for each issue) felt that students expect more marks than what the answers deserve. They also said students resort to arguments, and repeatedly request for higher grades on the grounds of personal problems. Partial agreements by the Indian faculty on the above issues ranged from 20% to 40%. Only a small number (4% to 8%) disagreed on this issue. Though none of the Ethiopian counterparts disagreed on this issue, there were more partial agreements (30% to 60%), whereas agreements ranged between 30% and 80% across different items. This is an indication of how students react to the assessment and grades, where it is the instructor's responsibility to assess and award grades. The items tapping these issues are presented below in Table 2 (items 1, 2, 3, 11, 15, and 18).

Table 2: Perceptions on Students' Reactions to Evaluation

Items	Indian Instructors (n=52)				Ethiopian Instructors (n=24)			
	DA	CS	PA	A	D A	CS	PA	A
1. In evaluating answers, in general, satisfying students is difficult	8 15	1 2	17 33	26 50	0 0	2 8	15 63	7 29
2. Usually students argue that the answer they have written is appropriate	5 10	1 2	12 23	34 65	0 0	2 8	9 38	13 54
3. Usually students want a score higher than what the answer actually deserves	3 6	0 0	15 29	34 65	0 0	0 0	7 29	17 71
11. Students argue for higher marks even when the answer does not deserve higher marks	3 6	3 6	18 34	28 54	0 0	1 4	12 50	11 46
15. Some students repeatedly request instructors to change grades in view of their personal problems	2 4	1 2	21 40	28 54	0 0	0 0	5 21	19 79
18 Merit of answers is less important to students; they insist on asking for higher grades / marks.	4 8	1 2	22 42	25 48	0 0	3 13	13 54	8 33
5. Students mistrust the instructor, when it comes to evaluation	10 19	4 8	24 46	14 27	0 0	9 38	7 29	8 33
12. students generally think that the instructor is wrong as an evaluator	18 35	8 15	18 35	8 15	0 0	14 58	8 33	2 8

(Numbers in second line indicate percentages, rounded-off)

In response to two items (item 5 and item 12), about 35% Indian instructors and 58 % Ethiopian instructors partially agreed that the students perceive instructor to be wrong in assessment. Whereas 73% Indian (27% Agree + 46% partially Agree), 62% Ethiopian instructors (33% Agree + 29% Partially Agree) felt that students mistrust the instructors as evaluators. None of the Ethiopian instructors disagreed at this issue but about 20% Indian instructors expressed disagreement on the mistrust issue.

B. Emotional consequences of Student evaluation: Instructors' emotional reactions subsequent to student evaluation are assessed by items 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, and item 16 (Table 3). Reactions include anxiety, agony of convincing students, strained relations, and facing physical threats. The feeling of anxiety and discomfort expressed by Indian instructors ranged from 30%-60% whereas it ranged from 0% to 40% in the case of Ethiopian instructors. Threats of physical harm faced subsequent to evaluation were expressed by 2 Ethiopian instructors and 6 Indian instructors. 42% of Ethiopian instructors and 14 % of Indian instructors partially agreed on physical threat by students. However 96% of Ethiopian and 90% Indian faculty members expressed that they consider the students' argument if it deserves merit (need to be seen in the context of the type of questions included in the examination by respective instructors).

Table 3: Reactions on Emotional Consequences to Evaluation

Items	Indian Instructors (n=52)				Ethiopian Instructors (n=24)			
	DA	CS	PA	A	DA	CS	PA	A
7. Students who get a grade/ marks lower than their expectation, become un-cordial overnight	2 4	6 11	18 35	26 50	0 0	7 29	8 33	9 38
8. A few students who get a grade / marks lower than their expectation, try to threaten the instructor with physical harm	26 50	13 25	7 14	6 11	0 0	12 50	10 42	2 8
10. Most unsavory aspect of my teaching is not the evaluation of students, but the agony of convincing them	7 14	1 2	18 35	26 50	0 0	7 29	7 29	10 42
13. I do consider student's argument, if it has merit	2 4	2 4	1 2	47 90	0 0	0 0	1 4	23 96
14. I feel vulnerable and anxious to show how evaluated answer-scripts to students	19 36	1 2	15 29	17 33	0 0	22 92	2 8	0 0
16. Most instructors resort to objective type questioning just to avoid the agony of convincing students on long answers/descriptive type answers	2 4	6 11	13 25	31 60	0 0	10 42	6 25	8 33

(Numbers in second line indicate percentages, rounded-off)

C. Perceptions of and Reactions to the system of evaluation: The questions focused on 'evaluation to be done by external examiner', by 'university-level body', and the 'need for improving standard' of students through descriptive / long-answers. The items designed to elicit instructors in this regard are 4, 6, 9, 17, and 19 (Table 4). Between 60% - 85% Indian instructors felt that it is better if evaluation is done by an external examiner but only 33% to 42% Ethiopian instructors agreed on this issue. However, a majority of the Indian instructors (85%) and a majority of the Ethiopian instructors (68%) felt that students need to develop the habit of writing long answers, descriptions and explanations to improve their academic standards. If responses of the combined sample are considered, between 53% to 70% felt that there should be external examinations, and about 80% instructors felt that students need to improve their standards through writing descriptions and explanatory long-answers.

Table 4: Reactions to System of Evaluation

Items	Indian Instructors (n=52)				Ethiopian Instructors (n=24)			
	DA	CS	PA	A	DA	CS	PA	A
4. I will be happy if evaluation of answer-scripts of final examination is done by external examiner	6 11	2 4	5 10	39 75	0 0	12 50	4 17	8 33
6. If a university-level examination body does the allotment of grades to students, the relationship between students and instructors will be cordial	2 4	11 21	4 8	35 67	0 0	12 50	2 8	10 42
9. If a mechanism of re-evaluation is in place at the university level, it increases the students' confidence in the evaluation system of the university	5 10	9 17	7 14	31 60	0 0	9 38	6 25	9 38
17. Students need to develop the habit of writing long answers / descriptions & explanations to improve their standards	1 2	2 4	5 9	44 85	0 0	4 16	4 16	16 68
19. If the final examination is conducted as an external examination, it is good for students and instructors	4 8	2 4	3 5	43 83	0 0	4 16	10 42	10 42

(Numbers in second line indicate percentages, rounded-off)

Discussion and Implications

Students' reaction to evaluation: The results of the study showed that most Indian faculty members feel that students' reactions to evaluation are unjustified: students are simply interested in higher marks and higher grades rather than the answers they write. These perceptions need to be seen in the context that Indian faculty members give relatively less weightage to objective questions and more weightage to descriptive / long-answer questions. This is in contrast to the general practice of setting more objective type questions and less descriptive questions by Ethiopian faculty members.

About 73% of Indian faculties (27% Agree + 46% Partially Agree) feel that students generally mistrust instructors whereas 62% Ethiopian faculty members (33% Agree + 29% partially agree) have a similar feeling. If the combined sample is considered, it can be interpreted that more than 60% of the total teaching community experience student mistrust. What is the reason for this? Is this mistrust based on the reality of the nature of evaluation? It is possible to ascribe students' motives to instructors when the evaluator is known to the examinee. In the Ethiopian context, the (unfounded) motives attributed are on the basis of ethnicity, regionalism, etc. But there is no reason to attribute such motives to Indian faculty members who 'rarely' understand the regional or ethnic identities and regional/ethnic bias. When students are aware of the identity of the evaluator, ascribing motives is easy in a situation when students do not get the grades they want. The Indian faculty takes up teaching assignments in AAU or any other Ethiopian university on a short term basis. They are not likely to have any 'stake' either in the ethnic or regional issues. Neither are they likely to have an 'interest' in becoming biased towards anyone. In this context, the mistrust by students is totally misplaced and unjustifiable. It is unfortunate that Ethiopian faculty members are also under pressure of accusations. This could only be corrected through an external evaluation, where the identity of the evaluator as well as the examinee remains anonymous.

The post-evaluation emotional experience of the faculty members is noteworthy. Faculty feels it agonizing to convince each student (in case of long / descriptive answers). Above 85% of Indian faculty members (50 Agree + 35 Partially Agree), and 71% of Ethiopian faculty (42% Agree + 29% Partially Agree) reported this agony. Similar to the above, Indian and Ethiopian faculty members felt vulnerable and anxious when they discuss the evaluation with each student. They also felt the agony of convincing each student in addition to their facing of different kinds of accusations of bias on regional or ethnic grounds. Moreover, there is a burden of emotional guilt feeling on the part of these instructors when students argue or repeatedly request for upward revision of marks or grades.

Faculty Members' Dilemma: The faculty members always confront a dilemma between fairness in marking a written answer, fairness to other students who have written answers in a similar manner, and helping students who cite personal problems (genuine or otherwise) for upward revision. If the faculty members do not agree to such requests, the examinees become uncordial, aggressive, and at the extreme, resort to physical threat. At least 6 Indian faculty members and 2 Ethiopian faculty members reported being threatened with physical harm by those who did not get the grade they expected. Though the data does not indicate exactly how many students actually did the threatening, the result should be considered as significantly alarming and as something that warrants attention, in the context of a generally peaceful cultural milieu. This is an unfortunate situation, where the entire atmosphere of evaluation becomes vitiated. The consequence of such a vitiated atmosphere is that the faculty member is forced to succumb to such pressures and threats, or resort to other behaviours – maintaining a distance from students, or resorting to such evaluation method that does not attract the desire of students. About 85% of Indian faculty (60% Agree + 25% Partially Agree) perceived that instructors in AAU generally resort to objective type questions in the examinations, only to avoid the unsavory experience of convincing students on long / descriptive-explanatory answers. This perception was expressed by 58% of Ethiopian faculty (33% Agree + 25% Partially Agree).

Low level testing: It is unfortunate that at the higher education level, like secondary-school level students are tested and evaluated with objective questions. Students at the higher education level are expected to describe, explain, critically evaluate, creatively synthesize issues, ideas, or theoretical positions. They are expected to develop scholarly pursuits and become researchers, and problem solvers in the social and administrative arena. In the real-life problem-solving situations, an individual is not asked to choose from given alternatives. Life requires a person to describe, analyze or synthesize before he/she identifies alternatives and takes a decision. Most of AAU faculty members, in this study were resorting to objective testing not because they 'like it', or not because they were averse to descriptive/explanatory questions. They were using objective test because they intended to avoid accusations of bias, attributions of ethnic / other motives. This is also evident from faculty members' responses to a question on the need for students to develop the habit of writing long descriptive / explanatory answers. About 91% of Indian faculty (85% Agree + 9% Partially Agree) and about 81% Ethiopian faculty members (68% Agree + 16% Partially Agree) vouched for this (see item 17). Should expediency rule academic behaviour?

What is wrong with Objective tests? When such a large percentage of the faculty feels the need for improving standards of students by an evaluation comprising questions for long descriptive/ explanatory answers, the reason why examination papers are based on objective type questions is largely to avoid the agony of convincing students. One may ask what is wrong with objective questions. Though the evaluation expert argues positively for objective questioning and objective evaluation, (and also argues that both objective and subjective test questions have their share of strengths and shortcomings), it is important to consider how far these objective questions at 'higher education' level can develop skills of describing, explaining, critical thinking, expressing creative ideas and logical argument. How many of the examination papers of objective nature contain questions that test the 'higher cognitive' skills? What level of cognitive skills do these objective tests measure other than recall and recognition level? It is

difficult to assume that higher level cognitive skills at 'higher education' level can be developed through objective testing / evaluation. Students learn and develop skills on the basis of what and how they are expected to be evaluated.

There is no dearth of research literature on students' learning. Students' approaches to studying are significantly associated with their perceptions of teaching and *assessment methods* in academic departments (Entwistle & Ramsden 1983). Bizzell and Singleton (1988) state essay questions tell students that it is not only important to know isolated facts and concepts, but it is also important for them to know that facts and concepts must be interrelated, placed in a broader perspective. Essay questions encourage this kind of understanding. Students need to think critically and analytically about the materials presented. They should be able to use the knowledge learned. Faulconer et al. (1988) observe that critical reasoning and writing are important since all writing is ultimately persuasive writing.

Rigour in Assessment: In AAU as well as in other universities in Ethiopia, as per the present researcher's observation, the system of evaluation is supposed to include continuous assessment and a final examination. At an undergraduate level as well as at the graduate level, the continuous assessment includes only one mid-term test, and probably one or two assignments. Because of the large number of students per class, an assignment is usually a 'group' assignment. The reality is that one or two students of the group write the assignment 'on behalf' of the group. This results in no opportunity / requirement for other students of the group to learn how to express themselves, to describe or to use creative capacities. Faculty members generally cannot identify who were active participants and who were not active enough. In situations like these, neither the continuous assessment (largely objective-nature of mid-term test and the 'group' assignments) nor the final examination is enabling students to 'learn' descriptions, explanations, logical analysis or creative synthesis. Neither can objective questions create opportunities for students to develop such skills. In such an academic environment how can the standard of students be improved?

Continuous assessment/evaluation can provide opportunities for students to learn and develop expected skills if students are engaged in writing long answers which can ultimately result in a better ability to write descriptive/explanatory answers in the final examination. Evaluation methods in the AAU do not expect students to give descriptive/explanatory answers. Because of this, students never get an opportunity to develop higher cognitive skills. It is unfortunate that undergraduate and postgraduate students are missing such opportunities to develop their cognitive abilities.

Can Nexus be severed? : It is also important to look at the nexus between the marks/grades students generally get from an instructor, and the evaluation of a course/of a faculty member by the students. It shall mutually benefit the students and faculty members if the instructor does not have to worry about student assessment. Literature is replete on the 'inflation of grades' phenomenon in other countries. Student questionnaires for evaluating faculty members have become a standard practice in the Ethiopian universities to provide insights about the strengths and weaknesses of the instructor, the usefulness of the course and the textbook and other features of the course. Since the adoption of the student evaluation as a means of monitoring and motivating faculty classroom performance, a phenomenon that caught the attention of many researchers in developed countries is that the average grades of students have increased substantially over prior years (McKenzie, 1979; Nelson & Lynch, 1984). One of the several explanations provided by the researchers is that after introduction of faculty evaluation by the students, grade inflation emerged as a consistent practice among faculty for self-protection (Kolevenzon, 1981, Dickson, 1984). A student is said to evaluate instructors according to the student's performance in class. If students are 'doing well', they give the instructor a high rating; if they are not doing well, they rate the instructor low (Zangenehzadeh, 1988). One wonders whether the students and the instructors are happy about the assessment method (of resorting to objective type questions) in AAU.

Grading process: After assessment in the form of marks (for internal assessment and final examination), conversion of marks into grades is becoming arbitrary. The relative grading system has its own advantages and disadvantages. Do the advantages out-weigh the disadvantages?

Arbitrary conversion of marks into grades keeps students in pain. In some courses students get a higher grade while in other course they might get low grades because of the differential grading criteria followed by different faculty members even though the marks achieved by a student are the same. Based on the mistrust/suspicion of the instructor, some students keep pestering the instructor to raise their grade to the next higher level. This might put the instructor under constant pressure. The mistrust and pressure are avoidable if the grading process is taken up by a 'body' at the department/ faculty or university level.

Recommendations

External examinations as an option: From the combined responses to post-evaluation situation and consequent emotional ambience, there is a need for alternatives to be explored. There is an overwhelming response to the question of external evaluation, 88% of Indian faculty (83% Agree + 5% Partially Agree) and by 84% of Ethiopian faculty (42% Agree + 42% Partially Agree). Evaluation literature suggests that an important distinction be taken into account to decide who should do an evaluation-the distinction between an internal evaluator and an external evaluator. Obviously, the internal evaluator's objectivity and credibility might be lower (from the standpoint of examinees) than that of an external evaluator who is not directly engaged in teaching and learning (Scriven, 1975; Stake & Gjerde, 1974; Stufflebeam et. al., 1971).

Possibilities: Assuming that the final examination should expect students to write long descriptive/ explanatory answers for a higher weightage (probably for 75% weightage) along with objective/ short-answer questions for a lower weightage, the following options may be considered.

a) Getting final examination prepared by external examiners and getting the answers evaluated by same instructors. The institutions can be appointed by the university. Examinee identity may not be revealed on answer-scripts, and an examination number is allotted. Examiner's identity may also be not revealed to the students. This arrangement shall help to eliminate student mistrust and the resultant agony for the examiner; The grading of students be decided by a committee from the department or at the faculty level, after the instructor submits the 'internal (through-term) assessment' of students and after the external examiner submits 'assessment on final examination' to the department / the university. Let the department or university declare the grades. Students who are not satisfied with the grade decided by the department / university can have the option of re-evaluation by a different examiner.

b) Getting the final examination set and marked by an external examiner without the examinee identities. The instructor submits the assessment to the department / university without the students' intervention. The grading of students may be decided by a committee of the department or by a faculty level committee, after the instructor submits the assessment of students to the department/the university – both 'internal (through-term) assessment' and 'assessment on final examination'. Let the department or university declare the grades. If there are cases of request for re-evaluation by the students, let the university appoint an external examiner from the same department or from outside university to re-evaluate the answer scripts.

Any external evaluation will act as a balancing factor by removing the inconvenience and/or connivance between the students and the instructor.

Faculty member's role: As far as internal assessment is concerned, let the students and the instructor have the opportunity to discuss the mode of evaluation (which would include questions for long descriptive/ explanatory answers), and the expected knowledge and understanding to be reflected in the answer script during the 'internal assessment' as part of continuous evaluation.

This arrangement should be sufficient to a) help students get the required guidance from the instructor on the course related to the knowledge and understanding expected from the students in that course b) eliminate the suspicion / mistrust of the student regarding the instructor's assessment, c) avoid any perceived bias that might be present during internal assessment.

The Department's role:

There are situations in which students complain to department heads about a faculty member, when they assume that the instructor's manner of evaluation is going to be difficult / tough during 'internal (through-term) assessment'. After all, most students want to get higher grades even without appropriate answers. If a policy of 'live and let live' is adopted by the instructor, why should students have a complaint?

When such a complaint about an instructor is made by the students or if both the instructor and the students are unhappy with each other (it is mostly the students who are unhappy), the department should devise the following balancing mechanism. If students are to be treated as consumers then consumer satisfaction is to be ensured provided the dissatisfaction is justifiable. Justifiableness could be decided by a 3- member-committee with at least two senior faculty members on the committee. The role of the committee can be very significant during the 'internal assessment'.

Conclusion

Evaluation process should ensure academic standards of students in higher education. It also needs to carry credibility among the examinees. Unfortunately, the instructors in AAU seem to be resorting to objective questions during examinations, only to avoid unfounded student accusations. External examinations without revealing examiner and examinee identity could bring in a semblance of credibility. Examinations with a higher weightage for long descriptive and explanatory answers along with a lesser weight for objective/short-answers aimed at developing higher level cognitive skills are necessary to set higher academic standards.

Note: 1. *The study focused only on AAU Indian faculty members as more Indian faculty are present in AAU compared to other universities in Ethiopia* 2. *Reflections are based on experiences of the author in India.*

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