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The Relationship among Organizational Commitment, Competencies and Dignity with Teaching Quality of Faculty Members, A Structural Model

¹Nima Shahidi and ²Siroos Hadadnia

¹Assistant professor, Department of education, Nourabad Mamasani branch, Islamic Azad University, Nourabad Mamasani, Iran.

²Faculty member, Department of education, Nourabad Mamasani branch, Islamic Azad University, Nourabad Mamasani, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research was to study the relationship among organizational commitment, competencies, and dignity with teaching quality of faculty members in zone 1 of Islamic Azad University. The research population included 2181 faculty members and random stratified cluster sampling used to choose 436 faculty members as sample according to Krejcie and Morgan table. A researcher-made questionnaire for assessing teaching quality with 27 statements (Chronbach alpha= 0.861) a researcher-made questionnaire with 17 statements for assessing competencies and dignity of faculty members (Chronbach alpha=0.866) and Allen & Meyer questionnaire for assessing organizational commitment of faculty members were used to conduct this research. Multiple regression and structural equation modeling were used to specify the portion of factors in teaching quality. Results showed that organizational commitment with 0.25, competencies with 0.39, and dignity with 0.15 had a positive, direct and significant relationship with teaching quality. Also, interrelationship among variables were significant .

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INTRODUCTION

Iranian higher education system has faced many challenges and issues in the past years: increasing number of applicants for Iranian universities and higher education institutions, quantitative development of higher education system without considering the capacities of admission into university, impracticality of university education, etc., to name only a few. The competitive environment of the higher education in today's world has created new needs for stakeholders including the students, the society and the employers, which entails capacity building for higher education institutions to enable them to meet such needs. Increasing the quality of university activities is one such strategy. Along the same lines, Ramsden (2003) believes resolving such challenges in higher involves maintaining, improving, and promoting quality in higher education settings which in turn, necessitates taking into account all functions of higher education.

Meeting needs and demands within higher education - which is a system consisting of faculty members, students, staff and complex processes with inter-related environmental connections and which is in contact with different needs of various stakeholders- warrants having highly-qualified professors and processes. As such, teaching quality is one important process for both students and professors, indicating the amount of satisfaction of students' need in an educational setting, on the one hand, and the quality of professors' quality of teaching, on the other. Therefore, teaching quality can act as a critical factor for assessing the amount students' educational needs are satisfied as well as for reflecting the competencies of professors.

Research suggests one problem within universities is disregard for teaching and its quality and giving weight to research activities; therefore, in the process of choosing, employing, and promoting faculty members, research is given priority over teaching skills (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Wahlén, 2002).

On the other hand, researchers have found that faculty members' teaching quality has a direct influence on students' output (Howes *et al.*, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Rice, 2003). Moreover, faculty members' qualities including their teaching quality can predict students' success more than faculty members' salary, class size, and other factors (Darling-Hammond, 1997). A high-quality teacher can neutralize the bad effects of economic and social status of students on students' learning ability and bring about an increase in students' output (Porter-

Corresponding Author: Nima Shahidi, Assistant professor, Department of education, Nourabad Mamasani branch, Islamic Azad University, Nourabad Mamasani, Iran
E-mail: shahidi_nima@yahoo.com

Magee, 2004). Barrett *et al.* (2008) believe that to improve the quality of education, both teaching and learning quality should equally be taken into account.

Teaching quality has a fundamental role in students' learning quality; knowledge and skills learnt by students are undeniably connected to the quality of their learning. Highly-qualified/ high-quality graduates can have better output in producing knowledge, applying it, and, also, in playing important roles in the society. Regard for higher education quality will be necessary in order to prevent waste of human capital and material and financial resources, and harmonizing educational systems development with their efficiency (Ramsden, 2003).

Teaching process has a complicated nature and different components which should be well known and used practically in order to achieve good teaching quality. On the other hand, various factors influence teaching process and should certainly be considered in a high-quality teaching. Continuous assessment and improvements in teaching and learning quality in higher education has been attended by academicians during the recent decades and many universities have taken actions to develop quality assurance systems in their university.

Among factors which seem to be effective on the quality of professors' teaching are organizational commitment, dignity, and competencies of faculty members of universities.

Demand has grown for professional professors who can work in highly-complicated conditions of the present era in order to educate highly-qualified/ high-quality students and graduates needed for working in the said environment, and the quality of teaching has gained special importance. High-quality teaching in such conditions increases the competitive power of nations to face the challenges of the present era. To achieve national goals in present conditions, we need highly-qualified/ high-quality professors and teaching (DEST, 2000).

Given these notions, it is necessary to ensure the teaching quality of faculty members. In addition, factors influencing teaching quality should also be dealt with. Therefore, the main issue of this research is how organizational commitment, competencies, and dignity of faculty members influence their teaching quality in university settings and how these factors contribute to teaching quality.

The main purpose of this research is to study the relationships of organizational commitment, competencies, and dignity of faculty members to their teaching quality in universities, to specify the contribution of these factors to teaching quality, and to present a structural model for showing these relationships. Also, this research, will study the interrelationships between faculty members organizational commitment, competencies, and dignity and their role in teaching quality.

Research Hypotheses were:

- 1 – There is a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' organizational commitment and their teaching quality.
- 2 - There is a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' dignity and their teaching quality.
- 3 - There is a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' competencies and their teaching quality.

Research Main Question was:

How much do organizational commitment, dignity, and competencies contribute to teaching quality?

Concept of Teaching:

Today, higher education teaching has been attended as an epistemological concept; ; however, this concept has been defined differently. Gage state teaching is any activity which is done by a person in order to facilitate learning in another person (Gage, 1978). Arreola (2000) considers teaching as an interaction between teacher and student through which the student finds opportunity for learning. He mentions four specific characteristics in the concept of teaching: interaction between teacher and students, activity based on pre-defined and predetermined objectives, regular design with reference to situation and facilities, and creating learning opportunity and facilitating learning.

Good teaching at university depends on the relationship between students' learning of a particular subject and quality of teaching that subject by the teacher. That is too say, good teaching and good learning are inter-connected; Good teaching encourages students' high-quality learning; therefore, requirements of good teaching in higher education should be noticed (Ramsden, 2003).

Theories related to teaching in higher education can totally be categorized into three groups: Teaching as conveyance and Transmission of Information , Teaching as Organization of Students' Activities, and Teaching as Facilitation of Learning .

Teaching quality is really important for educating efficient and qualified human resources in higher education. Felder & Brent (1999) believe that the mission of education is complicated, and since educational stakeholders are different with various needs, which are sometimes in conflict, quality in education and teaching cannot be clearly defined. Vlăsceanu *et al.* (2007) say: "quality in higher education is a multidimensional, multi-

faceted and dynamic concept which depends on several factors. Specifically speaking, it depends on the context of higher education, on the university aims and mission, and on special standards of a discipline, of educational curriculum and of university.

Bettors-Reed *et al.* (2003) believe that teaching quality depends on both suitability for goals and suitability of goals. Teaching and learning need goal-setting at different levels and creation of suitable standards for the determined plan. By high-quality teaching, they mean highly-effective teaching having rich materials; they mention knowledge, methodology, responsiveness, and enthusiasm as the main elements of teaching (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005) believe that high-quality teaching is a teaching which leads to learning. In other words, what makes teaching a high-quality teaching is that the student learns what the teacher teaches. OECD (2009) believes that high-quality teaching has three elements: teaching time quality, quality of materials coverage in teaching, and quality of ensuring results. Stronge *et al.* (2004) consider lecture ability, course credits, teacher's academic degree, and teacher's experience as teaching prerequisites.

Ramsden (2003) considers six factors as important for leading to high-quality teaching in higher education:

- 1 – Interest and suitable explanation
- 2 – Giving importance to students and their learning
- 3 – Good assessment and feedback
- 4 – Clear goals and mental challenges
- 5 – Autonomy, control, and engagement of students in teaching
- 6 – Learning from students

Organizational Commitment:

Organizational commitment is also important as one of the effective factors influencing jobs in organizations. Organizational commitment means that individuals have strong faith in their organization and identify themselves with their organization. (Mowday *et al.*, 1979)

According to Allen & Meyer (1990), we can say that organizational commitment as validity dependence can exist in three forms of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the individual's emotional dependence on the organization. Continuance commitment is related to willingness to stay in the organization for costs of leaving the organization or for rewards given for staying in the organization. And finally the normative commitment is the feeling of obligation for staying as one of the members of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Professors Dignity:

Professors as a pillar of higher education system play an important role in meeting academic goals. Professors enjoy appropriate rights and responsibilities regarding their activities in universities. Many universities have stated rights and responsibilities of the professors in various statements and declarations, most of which stating professors enjoy such rights as academic freedom, appreciation and appropriation and rewards for performing their professional responsibilities and academic tasks such as teaching, research, and provision of service as well as their performance and participation in scientific, administrative and other decision makings (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011; Michigan State University, 2011; University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), 2011).

Unesco (1997) recommends enjoyment of some rights and freedoms for professors dignity in higher education including:

Freedom of thought, expression and religion; academic freedom; freedom of research; freedom to participation in professional associations; right to teach without others' intervention and professional responsibility; right to do professional affairs out of university; right to participate in university administrative body and right to criticize university administrative sectors.

Professors' Competencies:

Professors' competencies are one of the other factors influencing teaching quality. Anjos Silva (2001) states that faculty members' competencies are among the most important issues having relations with their teaching quality in universities. With regard to inadequate studies on faculty members' competencies, Roelofs & Sanders (2003), consider the following components suitable for defining faculty members' competencies: faculty members' knowledge, faculty members' behavior, faculty members' thoughts, faculty members' decision-making, faculty members' personality, and faculty members' effective control on students' learning activities. Qiuyan and Qin (2009) have also presented a model for faculty members' competencies based on which faculty members' competencies are divided into 4 types of personal competency, educational competency, research competency, and cooperative competency.

Anjos Silva (2001) (quoting from Brazil Ministry of Education) states educational plans for training teachers and faculty members at each level should help develop the necessary competencies for teaching in

them. Higher education institutions should have a much active role in developing their professors' knowledge and skill. They should ensure their professors have the necessary skills for teaching, applying educational technologies and determining educational strategies in addition to expertise in their field of study.

Wangyi (2006) divides faculty members' competencies into logical thought, communication, achievement orientation, personal relationships, acquisition of information, responsibility, creativity, and innovation. Schmidt & Schumacher (2010), also, divide faculty members' competencies into 4 main groups including professional knowledge, beliefs and values, motivation, and self-regulation. Ogienko and Rolyak (2009) have categorized faculty members' competencies under three categorizations which include key competencies, basic competencies, and special competencies.

Davidovitch & Soen (2006) showed improvements in teaching were not related to instructors' participation in teaching workshops or to any other steps taken by the college to improve quality of teaching; rather, teacher's experience and age were among important factors influencing teaching quality. In addition, Goe (2007) provides a framework for teacher quality and argues "teacher qualifications and characteristics are among factors which should be prioritized in educating and hiring those teachers who are most likely to have a positive impact on student learning". He believes factors such as teacher's interest, and beliefs –as teacher's personality traits- as well as their teaching experience, appropriate level of education, and relevant academic degree are effective on their teaching quality.

Ohlson (2010) examined the relationships among teacher quality characteristics and school culture components and their influence upon student attendance and suspension rates.

In a research, Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2005) studied the relationship between faculty members' quality and students' academic achievement and concluded faculty members who lacked the necessary quality and competencies caused a decrease in students' academic achievement.

Comparing faculty members' competencies and teaching experience with students' academic achievement, Hanushek *et al.* (2005) found there was a positive and linear relationship between faculty members' competencies and teaching experience and students' academic achievement.

Ramzden and Martin (1996) showed that special issues of faculty members' academic spirit are associated with factors related to non-observance of professors' dignity including inappropriate rewards and not appreciating their performance.

Gibbs (1995) found that attempting to promote faculty members' dignity and status and appreciate them and help to enhance and improve their situation lead to improved professional tasks in professors including in their teaching quality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was applied with regard to its purpose; design of the study was descriptive in nature and survey method was utilized to collect data; meanwhile, the research is considered causal-correlation for its use of Structural Equation Modeling. 2181 full- and part-time faculty members of Islamic Azad University, who were selected from among faculty members of different branches of Zone 1 of the university, participated in this study. Sampling method was random sampling and of stratified cluster sampling type. Specifically speaking, to conduct sampling, first some university units (strata) were selected through cluster sampling, and then stratified sampling was used to select participants from among the strata so as to take into account the proportion of the participants in the study to their proportion in the population. Sample size equaled to 327 participants using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size table; however, as the variation of population was not equal across all university branches, it was decided 20 percent of the population size (equal to 436 participants) be included as the sample of the study to ensure more caution in the interpretation of the results.

Data collection method in this research was field research in which the questionnaires used among faculty members were studied and after the questionnaires were completed and returned, the required data was extracted out of them.

To collect data for this research, the following questionnaires were used.

Teaching Quality Evaluation Questionnaire:

This researcher-made questionnaire has 27 statements and is designed based on a five-point Likert scale. In this questionnaire, 6 dimensions of planning and preparation, class management, education, evaluation, professional responsibilities, and participation are tested. Its validity was confirmed through using opinions of authorities and specialists and through using hierarchical analytical method and also factor analysis, and its reliability is 0.861 by the use of Chronbach Alpha Coefficient calculation.

Faculty Members' Competencies and dignity Questionnaire:

This researcher-made questionnaire has 17 statements and is scored on a 5 point Likert scale; its lowest point is 1 given to very low degree, point 2 is allocated to low degree, point 3 is allocated to medium degree, point 4 is allocated to high degree, and point 5 is allocated to very high degree. In this questionnaire, three

dimensions of faculty members' capabilities, teaching experience, and interest in teaching are evaluated. Validity of this questionnaire was also confirmed in the same method as validity of teaching quality questionnaire. To test the validity of this questionnaire, Chronbach Alpha Coefficient was used whose value was 0.866.

Allen & Meyer (1990) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed based on *Likert scale* with regard to 3 dimensions of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment and its reliability was 0.97 by calculating chronbach alpha.

To analyze data in this research, multiple regression method and structural equation modeling were used to show contribution of each factor (Organizational Commitment and competencies and dignity) to teaching quality.

Results:

First hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between faculty members' Organizational Commitment and their teaching quality.

To test this hypothesis, regression method was used; Tables 1, 2 and 3 present the results.

For studying the relationship between faculty members' organizational commitment and their teaching quality, regression method was used; results are presented in the following tables:

Table 1: Regression between organizational commitment and teaching quality.

Model	R	R ²	Revised R ²	Standard error of estimate	F	P value
1	0.262	0.069	0.067	0.30835	32.075	0.000

Table 2: Beta coefficient and its significance level for organizational commitment.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Significant level
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	3.553	0.120		29.611	0.000
	Organizational Commitment	0.203	0.036	0.262	5.663	0.000

As it is observed, findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' organizational commitment and their teaching quality. In Table 3, multiple regressions between components of organizational commitment and teaching quality are presented.

Table 3: Multiple regressions between components of organizational commitment and teaching quality based on Beta coefficient.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Significant level
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	3.585	0.122		29.305	0.000
	Affective Commitment	0.056	0.019	0.139	2.990	0.003
	Continuance Commitment	0.121	0.039	0.197	3.150	0.002
	Normative Commitment	0.017	0.039	0.027	0.433	0.665

As it is observed, continuance commitment competent has a Beta coefficient of 0.197 and its value is significant at 0.002; this component was found to be the most accurate predictor of teaching quality followed by affective commitment (with a Beta coefficient of 0.139 whose t value is significant at 0.003 level). However, normative commitment did not have an appropriate predication power.

Second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between faculty members' dignity and their teaching quality.

To test this hypothesis, regression method was used; results are presented in the following tables:

Table 4: Regression between organizational commitment and teaching quality.

Model	R	R ²	Revised R ²	Standard error of estimate	F	P value
1	0.224	0.050	0.047	0.31784	4.646	0.032

Table 5: Beta coefficient and its significance level for organizational commitment.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P value
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	4.112	0.056		73.849	0.000
	Dignity	0.038	0.018	0.224	2.155	0.032

As it is observed, Findings indicates a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' dignity and their teaching quality. The Beta coefficient for this variable is 0.224 and this means that each unit of change in standard deviation of this variable equals to 0.224 unit of positive change in teaching quality.

Third hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between faculty members' competencies and their teaching quality.

To test this hypothesis, regression method was used and the results have come in the following tables:

Table 6: Regression between faculty members' competencies and teaching quality.

Model	R	R ²	Revised R ²	Standard error of estimate	F	P value
1	0.349	0.122	0.120	0.29944	60.214	0.000

Table 7: Beta coefficient and its significance level for faculty members' competencies

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P value
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	3.338	0.116		28.886	0.000
	Competencies	0.222	0.029	0.349	7.760	0.000

As it is observed, findings show a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' competencies and their teaching quality. The Beta coefficient for this variable is 0.349, and this means that each unit of change in standard deviation of this variable causes 0.349 unit of positive change in teaching quality. In Table 8, multiple regressions between components of faculty members' competencies and teaching quality are shown.

Table 8: Multiple regressions between components of faculty members' competencies and teaching quality based on Beta coefficient.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P value
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	3.322	0.160		20.824	0.000
	Capabilities	0.084	0.044	0.107	1.921	0.045
	Teaching Experience	0.088	0.029	0.201	3.007	0.003
	Interest	0.051	0.030	0.101	1.675	0.095

As it is observed, teaching experience with a Beta coefficient of 0.201 and a t value that was significant at 0.003 was the most accurate variable of all the other components followed by faculty members' capabilities with a Beta coefficient of 0.107. However, the interest component did not have a good prediction power.

To determine contribution of each factor - faculty members' organizational commitment, dignity and competencies - to their teaching quality, multiple regressions were used. The results are shown in the following tables.

Table 9: Multiple regressions between effective factors and teaching quality.

Model	R	R ²	Revised R ²	Standard error of estimate	F	P value
1	0.493	0.243	0.238	0.27866	46.222	0.000

Table 10: Beta coefficient and its significance level for effective factors on teaching quality.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P value
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	2.282	0.167		13.633	0.000
	Organizational Commitment	0.182	0.034	0.239	5.448	0.000
	Dignity	0.155	0.033	0.16	2.121	0.037
	Competencies	0.153	0.028	0.241	5.446	0.000

As it is observed, value of R or regression coefficient is 0.493 and use of F test showed that this value is significant at 0.000, and this shows a positive and significant relationship between the factors and teaching quality. Value of R² or coefficient of determination of multiple regressions equals to 0.243. This value shows that 24.3 percent of changes in teaching quality are explained through these factors and the rest of changes are made by other unknown factors. Also the Beta coefficient for dignity equals to 0.16, for organizational commitment it equals to 0.239, and for competencies it equals to 0.241. According to the above results, the following structural model can be presented for the relationship between these factors and teaching quality.

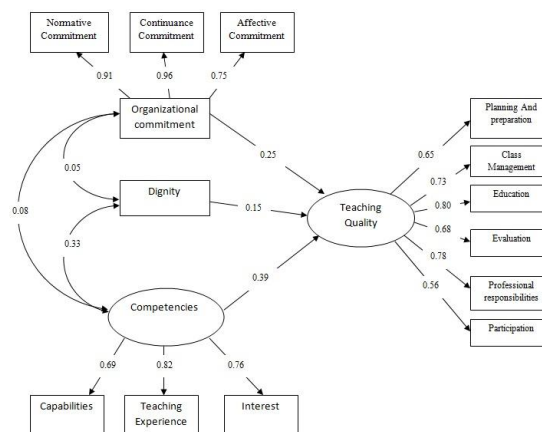


Fig. 1: A model of Structural Relationship between Variables.

Fit indices of the model are as CMIN/dF=1.841; P-value= 0.537; GFI=0.974; RMR=0.012; CFI=0.973; NFI=0.951; RMSEA=0.041 and all show model's good fitness

Discussion and Conclusion:

results show a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' organizational commitment and their teaching quality. This means that faculty members' organizational commitment can be a good predictor of their teaching quality. Also, components of continuance commitment and affective commitment have a high prediction power of teaching quality. So, the feelings of attachment to and dependence on one's university, and also, willingness to stay at university because of costs of leaving the organization or rewards of staying in the organization make faculty members have a good commitment to the organization and this causes their teaching performance to be of high quality. In other words, faculty members' organizational commitment brings about their good performance in activities of planning, education, evaluation, class management, fulfillment of professional responsibilities, and participation. This in turn brings improvement to students' learning and good output in universities. Direct effect of this variable on teaching quality equals to 0.23 and its indirect effect equals to 0.034, and therefore, total effect of this variable on teaching quality equals to 0.261. This shows that organizational commitment, both directly and through influencing faculty members' teaching quality. Also, the contribution of this variable to teaching quality is 0.23 based on the model achieved. The results achieved are consistent with results of the researches done by Tamosaitis (2006), Smeenk *et al.* (2006).

Also, the results show a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' dignity and their teaching quality. This means that faculty members' dignity can be a good predictor of their teaching quality. In other words, faculty members' dignity brings about their good performance in activities of planning, education, evaluation, class management, fulfillment of professional responsibilities, and participation. This in turn brings improvement to students' learning and good output in universities. Dignity both directly and through influencing faculty members' organizational commitment and competencies, can increase faculty members' teaching quality. Also, the contribution of this variable to teaching quality is 0.21 based on the model achieved. The results achieved are consistent with results of the researches done by Dest (2000), Ramsden, P., & Martin, E. (1996), Gibbs(1995).

The results also show a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' competencies and their teaching quality. This means that faculty members' competencies can be a good predictor of their teaching quality. Also, components of faculty members' teaching experience and capabilities have a high prediction power of teaching quality. So, it seems that having necessary capabilities for teaching at universities and, also, having teaching experience are faculty members' necessary competencies for having a suitable teaching quality; it also causes their teaching performance to be of high quality. In other words faculty members' competencies bring about their good performance in activities of planning, education, evaluation, class management, professional responsibilities fulfillment, and participation. faculty members' competencies, both directly and through influencing faculty members' organizational commitment and their dignity, can increase faculty members' teaching quality. Also, the contribution of this variable to teaching quality is 0.32 based on the achieved model. The results achieved are consistent with results of the researches done by Goe (2007), Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2005), Hanushek *et al.* (2005), Davidovitch & Soen (2006).

Also, the interrelationships among variables is also significant; the relationship between dignity and competencies was 0.33 at significance level of 0.001, the relationship between organizational commitment and competencies was 0.08 at significance level of 0.02, and the relationship between dignity and professors'

organizational commitment was 0.05 at significance level of 0.037. This shows that these variables having mutual relationship with each other and strengthening each other can increase teaching quality.

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