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On The Relationship Between Organizational Commitment and Competencies with Teaching Quality of Faculty Members:A Structural Model

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ABSTRACT: The main purpose of this research was to study the relationship between, organizational commitment and competencies with teaching quality of faculty members in zone 1 of Islamic Azad University. The population of this research was 2181 faculty members and random stratified cluster sampling used to choose 436 faculty members as sample according to Krejcy & Morgan table. A researcher-made questionnaire for assessing teaching quality with 27 statements (Chronbach alpha= 0.861) ,Allen and Meyer questionnaire for assessing organizational commitment, and a researcher-made questionnaire with 13 statements for assessing competencies (Chronbach alpha=0.866) 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 competencies with 0.39, and dignity with 0.25 had a positive, direct and significant relationship with teaching quality. Also, competencies and dignity had a significant relationship with 0.22.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Competencies, Quality, Teaching, Faculty Members

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 university professors, 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 university professors, 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-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 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 university professors. In addition, factors influencing teaching quality should also be dealt with. Therefore, the main issue of this research is how competencies, and organizational commitment of university professors influence faculty members' 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 self-efficacy, 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' self-efficacy, competencies, and dignity and their role in teaching quality.

Research Hypotheses

There is a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' organizational commitment and their teaching quality.

There is a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' competencies and their teaching quality.

research main question is: How much do competencies and organizational commitment 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:

First Theory: Teaching as conveyance and Transmission of Information

Followers of this theory believe that learners have little or no knowledge. Therefor it lies upon professors to enable them to acquire knowledge or learning materials (Trigwell et al., 1999). Professors who believe in this theory consider knowledge as a product which can be transferred from one place to another, and thus refer to activities such as transference of knowledge or information.

Second Theory: Teaching as Organization of Students' Activities

According to the second theory, teaching is a supervising process requiring determination of principles and methods designed for ensuring students' learning. In this theory, it is accepted that there is a fixed collection of rules which can enable students to perceive and elicit knowledge (Ramsden & Martin, 1996)

Third Theory: Teaching as Facilitation of Learning

While the first and the second theories focus on the role of teacher and the role of student, respectively, in the third theory, teaching and learning are considered as two sides of the same coin. In this theory, the student and the subject to be learned are connected by means of a comprehensive framework or system (Ramsden & Martin1996). Dalby (2001) believes that the main purpose of an effective teaching is students' learning. Therefore, teaching is

considered as a factor providing opportunities for students' learning.

Teaching Quality

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. Betters-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 which are :Interest and suitable explanation ;Giving importance to students and their learning ;Good assessment and feedback ;Clear goals and mental challenges; Autonomy, control, and engagement of students in teaching ; and 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) presented the first extended theory of organizational commitment and (Allen & Meyer (1990), found all previous definitions of the concept totally contained three general subjects. So, according to Allen & Meyer (1990), we can say that 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 (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

On the whole, there are two general views about organizational commitment:

Affective or Attitudinal Viewpoint: this viewpoint considers commitment as an affective or attitudinal process. According to this viewpoint, individuals identify themselves with their organization and commit to organizational membership for following their own aims. So, "affective commitment" can be categorized under this viewpoint. This method became typically operational by the scale designed by Porter et al.

Behavioral viewpoint: in this viewpoint it is believed that commitment is a behavioral concept. According to this

viewpoint, in special conditions, people have a strong commitment for their organization. Therefore, continuance commitment and normative commitment can be categorized under this viewpoint (Porter et al., 2003).
These two viewpoints or, in other words, dimensions and elements of organizational commitment are not opposed to each other; they rather complete each other. So, the correct recognition of organizational commitment process requires examination of both attitudinal commitment and behavioral commitment (Porter et al., 2003).

Faculty members' Competencies

Faculty members' 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: university teacher's knowledge, university teacher's behavior, university teacher's thoughts, and university teacher's decision-making, university teacher's personality, and university teacher's 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 university professors 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 this study teacher self-efficacy was one of the teacher quality factors which helped improve teachers' leadership and teaching capabilities.
Schroder (2008) also found the most important variables to predict organizational commitment in faculty members and university managers were their organizational policy, nature of the job, salary, working conditions, and promotion.

Tamosaitis (2006) studied the relationship between employee performance ratings and the three components of organizational commitment and found while affective and continuance commitments were related to employee performance, there was no significant relationship between normative commitment and employee performance. In a research to study the effects of human resources management practices and experience on university staff's organizational commitment, Smeenk et al. (2006) concluded staff's age, level of self-regulation, working hours, organizational position, and social responsibility influenced their organizational commitment.

In a research, Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) studied the relationship between university teachers' quality and students' academic achievement and concluded university professors 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.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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 units, 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

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.

Research Instruments

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 Questionnaire

This researcher-made questionnaire has 17 statements and is scored on a 5 point Likert scale .In this questionnaire, three dimensions of faculty members' abilities, 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 evaluates organizational commitment with regard to 3 dimensions of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. This questionnaire was designed based on 5 point Likert scale and has a high validity. Also, reliability coefficient of the whole questionnaire is 0.97 based on Chronbach Alpha Coefficient and coefficients related to affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are 0.86, 0.85, and 0.92, respectively.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

To analyze data in this research, multiple regression method and structural equation modeling were used to show contribution of each factor (self-efficacy 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; 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
1	0.262	0.069	0.067	0.30835

Table 2. Regression significance test between organizational commitment and teaching quality

Model		SS	Degree of Freedom	MS	F	Significant level
1	Regression	3.050	1	3.050	32.075	0.000
	Residual	41.265	434	0.095		
	Total	44.314	435			

Table 3. 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, value of R or regression coefficient is 0.262; F test shows that this value is significant at 0.000 and this indicates a positive and significant relationship between faculty members' organizational commitment and their teaching quality. Value of R^2 or coefficient of determination for organizational commitment equals to 0.069. This value shows that 6.9 percent of variations in teaching quality are related to organizational commitment components and the rest is explained by other factors. Also, the Beta coefficient for this variable is 0.262 and this means that each unit of change in standard deviation of this variable equals to 0.262 unit of positive change in teaching quality. In Table 7, multiple regressions between components of organizational commitment and teaching quality are presented.

Table 4. 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' competencies and their teaching quality.

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

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 5, multiple regressions between components of faculty members' competencies and teaching quality are shown.

Table 5. 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 6. 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

Table 7. 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.

Table 8. Multiple regressions between effective factors and teaching quality

Model	R	R^2	Revised R^2	Standard error of estimate
1	0.493	0.243	0.238	0.27866

Table 9. Regression significance test between effective factors and teaching quality

Model		SS	Degree of Freedom	MS	F	Significant level
1	Regression	10.768	3	3.589	46.222	0.000
	Residual	33.546	432	0.078		
	Total	44.314	435			

Research Main Question

How much is contribution of faculty members' organizational commitment, and competencies to their teaching quality?

To determine contribution of each factor - faculty members' self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and

competencies - to their teaching quality, multiple regressions were used. The results are shown in the following tables.

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

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Significant level
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	Constant	2.282	0.167		13.633	0.000
	Organizational Commitment	0.155	0.033	0.200	4.730	0.000
	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 R^2 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 organizational commitment equals to 0.200, and for competencies it equals to 0.241. So, the following equation can be written for teaching quality:

According to the above results, the following structural model can be presented for the relationship between these factors and teaching quality.

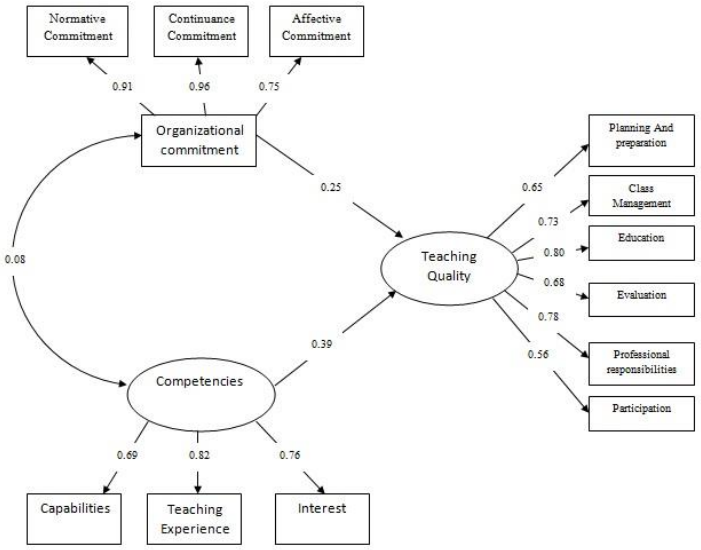

Figure 1. A model of Structural Relationship between Variables

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 of this study showed 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 university professors have a good commitment to the organization and this causes their teaching performance to be of high quality. In other words, university professors' 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 university professors' self-efficacy and competencies, can increase university professors' 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), Schroder (2008), Rajaeipour & Bahrami (2008).

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 among 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. The results achieved are consistent with results of the researches done by Goe (2007), Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), Weiqi (2007), Hanushek et al. (2005), Davidovitch & Soen (2006). Also, the relationship between organizational commitment and faculty members' competencies is with a coefficient of 0.08 and a significance level of 0.030. This shows that these variables having mutual relationship whit each other and strengthening each other can increase teaching quality.

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