

THE VIEWS OF SECONDARY TEACHERS IN BEIRUT REGARDING STUDENT
EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND THE ELEMENTS INFLUENCING THOSE VIEWS

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of
Haigazian University
By Rana Wazir
for the degree of
Master of Arts in
Educational Administration and Supervision

Beirut, Lebanon
May 2018

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By
Rana Wazir

is accepted by the Graduate Thesis Committee as satisfying the thesis requirements for the
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) under the leadership of Mr. Elie Haddad who believed in me and supported me in every possible way to reach my goals.

I would like to dedicate this thesis as well to my beloved father who passed away in December 2017.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God, my Lord and Savior, for His blessings.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Hagop Yacoubian, for making it possible to complete my thesis. He consistently allowed this thesis to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction whenever needed. I'm very thankful for his guidance, time, feedback, and support in various ways.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Hanine El Hout and Dr. Yara Hilal Jurdi as the readers of this thesis, and I am grateful for their very valuable comments and perspectives.

I would like to thank my friends Layan Al Khatib, Sisil Al Agha and Mathilda Vania, for their continuous support and willingness to help in every possible way.

I am forever grateful to my family for their unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

Nobody has been more important to me in the pursuit of this thesis than my husband, Walid, who believed in me and continuously provided me with unending inspiration. He's been my best friend and the best husband. I am truly thankful for having him in my life.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Rana Wazir

for Masters of Arts

Major: Educational Administration and Supervision

Title: The Views of Secondary Teachers in Beirut Regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching and the Elements Influencing those Views

This study was designed to explore the views of secondary teachers in Beirut regarding student evaluation of teaching (SET) and to provide additional insight by exploring elements contributing to their views. SET is when students provide feedback about their courses and report on their experiences anonymously, allowing teachers to view their feedback. Many studies have examined different forms of SET and the views of teachers and faculty members teaching at schools and universities respectively. Moreover, previous research has shown that elements such as gender, age, teachers' years of experience, subject taught, and school leadership can contribute to teachers' views of SET. However, not much has been written about secondary teachers' views of SET within the Lebanese context. A qualitative approach with survey design was adopted in the study. Data sources included: (a) surveys for teachers in schools that use SET, (b) surveys for teachers in schools that don't use SET and (c) semi-structured individual interviews with teachers and school leaders. All data was analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers in general hold positive views regarding SET and consider the evaluation beneficial for students' empowerment as evaluators, teachers' self-improvement, and school administration's role in enhancing the school's accountability towards students. Teachers identified several factors related to teachers and students that affect the validity of SET and asserted that schools have a vital role in SET. Elements such as purpose of evaluation, school environment, and interpretation and dissemination of results were found to be contributing to teachers' views of SET. This study contributes towards filling in a gap in literature in the Lebanese and international context. Recommendations were discussed for future research.

Keywords: Student evaluation of teaching; evaluation; survey; secondary schools

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THE VIEWS OF SECONDARY TEACHERS IN BEIRUT REGARDING STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND THE ELEMENTS INFLUENCING THOSE VIEWS

Chapter I

In recent years, an increased attention has been given to systems of evaluating K-12 teachers (Dretzke, Sheldon, & Lim, 2015). Evaluation tools used are criticized as they offer minimal feedback to teachers on how they can improve (Hull, 2011, 2013). For that reason, a number of educational researchers are encouraging schools to use multiple data sources when evaluating teachers, ones that identify areas where teachers can benefit from professional development (Peterson, 2004; Peterson, Wahlquist, Bone, Thompson, & Chatterton, 2001). Some of the most commonly used data sources are student achievements and classroom observations (Hull, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2013). Moreover, an increasing number of educational researchers are studying the use of student evaluation of teaching (SET) in a school setting (Dretzke et al., 2015; Elstad, Lejonberg, & Christophersen, 2017; Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008).

SET is one of the many common tools used to measure the extent to which teaching and learning are taking place and how they can be improved (Slade & McConville, 2006). SET is when students provide feedback about their courses and report on their experiences anonymously, allowing teachers to view their feedback. Teachers are expected to reflect on the data as part of contributing to their professional career leading to performance improvement. Standard questions included in SET provide data that can be viewed by individuals, groups and the institution for monitoring and enhancing teaching (Stein, Spiller, Terry, Harris, Deaker, & Kenned, 2013).

Several researchers (e.g. Follman, 1992; Goe et al., 2008; Peterson, Wahlquist, & Bone, 2000; Worrell & Kuterbach, 2001) noted that SET can provide reliable and valid information concerning teacher performance since students have direct and daily contact with

the teachers more than any other evaluator. According to Peterson et al. (2000) students' evaluation is significant to the work of teachers, as students see teachers from a point of view different from those of administrators, other teachers, parents, or researchers. However, while SET is an important consideration in school teacher evaluation, not much effort has been made towards the development of principles and practices for these evaluations in schools (Peterson et al., 2000).

According to Hejase, Kaakour, Halawi, and Hejase (2013), in recent years, SET has been established in many countries worldwide but it is still a humble experiment in the Arab world's universities. In Lebanon, universities have established their own SET. However, little research exists in Lebanon to discuss SET in schools.

The usefulness of SET is linked to teachers' views towards the evaluation system (Elstad et al., 2017). The present study examined secondary teachers' views of SET in Lebanon and the elements that influence their views.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore secondary teachers' views of SET at a number of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon, and identified the elements that influence teachers' views.

Research Questions

- 1- What views do secondary teachers at schools operating in Beirut hold about SET?
- 2- What elements influence secondary teachers' views of SET?

Rationale

SET is still a developing phenomenon in the Arab World which differs from the way student evaluations are carried out in other countries like Canada, USA, and Australia (Hejase et al., 2013). To the best of knowledge and as reported by Hejase, Kaakour, and Hejase (2014), there are only two studies that have been conducted in Lebanon that addressed students' views of SET and one that addressed faculty views. These studies are the ones conducted by Hejase et al. (2013) and that of American University of Beirut (2005).

Hence, the current research in Lebanon on SET and teachers' views of that evaluation is insufficient (Hejase et al., 2014).

As reported by Engstrom (2000), SET has been commonly used at higher education institutions for more than 76 years. However, at the secondary level, student input has largely been ignored. Nevertheless, Dretzke et al. (2015) indicated that there is an increasing number of schools, specifically in the U.S, that include SET in their teachers' assessment. Although limited research has pointed out school teachers' views of SET, studies are on the rise for exploration of SET in schools (Dretzke et al., 2015). Many research studies have been conducted abroad specifically in university setting (Engstrom, 2000, Hejase et al., 2013, Hejase et al., 2014). There is a serious need to conduct similar studies in the Lebanese setting and at schools. It will be necessary to ascertain the views of teachers towards SET, as well as identifying elements which influence their views. Implementing SET will bring new cultural dynamics that teachers will need to explore. Other studies related to teachers' views of SET such as Kauchak et al. (1985), Schwan and Iwanicki (1985), Joshua and Joshua (2004), Dretzke et al. (2015), Elstad et al. (2017) have used a quantitative approach with scale-type of questions to come up with their conclusions. This research study came up with new findings by using a qualitative approach.

Since this topic has been discussed explicitly in university setting with a consideration that students have the maturity to evaluate in this phase of their education, the researcher decided to focus in the study on secondary teachers and no other grade levels since it's a new research context in Lebanon and it would be better to focus on secondary teachers' views of SET as secondary students are closer in age to university students and they would be more mature than elementary and intermediate students.

The current study contributes towards filling in a gap in literature. This research study targeted teachers' views of SET in schools. The latter is a minimally researched topic not only in Lebanon, but also worldwide (Dretzke et al., 2015).

Significance

This study contributes to the knowledge about teachers' views of SET in the Lebanese context and how they view SET. Such knowledge would be valuable for helping teachers, administrators, and policy makers evaluate, construct, and refine their current practices of SET and other evaluation mechanisms for teaching and learning.

The current study is important because it sheds light on the SET used at private schools in Beirut. The study contributes to the international literature through clarifying particularities of the context. It also gives school administrations clearer perspective of teachers' views of SET and thus provide them with some recommendations for a positive change in the assessment practices employed.

Chapter II

Literature Review

SET has been studied for more than 80 years (Clayson, 2009; Elstad et al., 2017). However, SET continues to be an argued topic in educational practice and among educational researchers (Jong & Westerhof, 2001; Clayson, 2009; Tuytens & Devos, 2014). SET can contribute to teachers' self-evaluation and reflection on their practices, stimulating personal growth and learning (Darling-Hammond, 2013). However, introducing SET in schools has met with resistance (Avalos & Assael, 2006; Flores, 2010; Elstad, et al., 2017). Moreover, the claim that SET could promote professional development remains controversial (Smylie, 2014).

SET has been commonly used at higher education institutions for many years but largely ignored at the school level (Dretzke et al., 2015, Engstrom, 2000, & Peterson et al., 2000). Although there is an increasing number of schools that include SET in their teachers' evaluation, there is still very limited research that discusses SET in schools (Goe et al., 2008). Moreover, little has been written about teachers' views of SET by secondary students (Peterson, 2000; Ellet & Teddlie; 2003; Marzano & Toth, 2013; Elstad et al., 2017). Therefore, this study focuses on teachers' views of secondary students' SET. This section explicates the issues that are raised in the literature on teachers' and faculty views of SET in both school and university settings respectively and the elements that influence their views. It also provides a comparison between the two settings. The section starts with a focus on (1) teachers' views of SET, (2) teachers' views of the effectiveness of SET, (3) extent to which teachers value SET (4) elements that influence teachers' views of SET, and (5) contribution of SET to the professional growth of teachers.

SET in Schools

Teachers' views of SET. One of the studies that investigated school teachers' views of SET was carried out by Kauchak, Peterson, and Driscoll (1985). The researchers interviewed and surveyed 228 teachers in public schools in Utah and Florida about different evaluation methods, including SET. Their results indicated that teachers were equally divided among three different views regarding SET. The most positive third felt that SET could provide valuable information about a teacher's performance. The middle third were quite skeptical about the use of SET and indicated that, if used, student feedback should be taken with caution. The least positive third were opposed to the use of SET and doubted that students could provide valid or reliable information about teaching performance. When the responses were examined by teaching level, it was found that elementary school teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to express negative views regarding the use of SET. Teachers with negative views stated that it was doubtful that students, especially younger ones, could understand the complexities of teaching and differentiate between competent and incompetent teachers.

The results of a research study conducted in New Hampshire and reported by Schwab and Iwanicki (1988) were consistent with those of Kauchak et al. (1985). Schwab and Iwanicki (1988) concluded that 41% of the teachers who participated in their study indicated that they did not support the inclusion of SET in their evaluation, 47% supported the inclusion of SET with some reservation, and only 11% strongly supported the inclusion of SET. Schwab and Iwanicki (1988) also found that secondary teachers indicated more supportive views for the use of SET than other school teachers.

In a recent study conducted by Dretzke et al. (2015), similar results to Schwab and Iwanicki (1988) and Kauchak et al. (1985) were reported. The study investigated K-12 teachers' views about the use of SET as part of their evaluation. Surveys were administered

to teachers in 16 schools in Minnesota, USA. Teachers viewed the student evaluation differently based on the grade level. The higher the grade level taught by teachers, the higher their support of SET was. Primary grade teachers gave significantly lower agreement than secondary grade teachers to questions related to student feedback improving their teaching effectiveness.

LaFee (2014) interviewed teachers in three school districts in the US that use or plan to use SET. He came up with the conclusion that teachers in schools view students as too young, immature, and erratic to fairly and reliably evaluate their instructors. Additionally, students have limited knowledge on teaching, leading them to evaluate based on personal feelings and their own expectations and lacking any objectivity in their judgement.

Teachers' views of the effectiveness of SET. Regardless of the criticism and arguments about the use of SET, supporters of its use argue that if this feedback tool is used effectively, it will provide valuable information for teachers that consequently will enhance student learning (Chan, Luk, and Zeng, 2014).

In a recent study on teachers' views of SET in 5 Norwegian secondary schools conducted by Elstad et al. (2017), it was concluded that, in general, teachers tend to agree that SET is an acceptable means of assessing their teaching and it may be helpful for administrative decision-making. However, students' level of maturity affects how much they can provide proper evaluation. Students in high school reported a mixture of mature and immature assessments of their teachers' educational practices. This study also concluded that teachers who had a positive professional relationship with their students had confidence in SET more than those who had a less positive relationship with their students. The research findings also suggested that feedback from SET can improve teaching practices by providing secondary teachers with constructive feedback with which to help improve the quality of their teaching.

According to the research done by Balch (2012) in Georgia, USA, teachers reported that SET results were used to improve their teaching. Balch (2012) found in his study that school teachers used their student evaluation of their teaching, identified areas for improvement and worked with their colleagues on developing appropriate strategies. Balch (2012) suggested that teachers will invest more in SET when they are given the opportunity to analyze the data the reports provide and understand their value for enhancing teaching effectiveness.

In their paper, Schulz, Sud, and Crowe (2014) highlighted the experience of US states, districts, charter management organizations, and teacher preparation programs who were the early users of SET. The two identified challenges when using SET in schools are: a) gaining teachers' buy-in and support, and b) making effective use of the results. Teachers continuously report that SET is a popularity contest and they are very skeptical and resistant to the student evaluation.

In a study conducted in Nigerian schools, Joshua and Joshua (2004) assessed the attitudes of Nigerian secondary school teachers towards SET. Four hundred eighty teachers from 20 schools in one state in Nigeria were sampled, as similar conditions apply for teachers in all states in Nigeria. They found that Nigerian teachers had significant negative views towards SET, regardless of the benefits the evaluation might produce in a) summative (administrative decisions for merit, retention, and promotion) or b) formative (identification of strength and weaknesses and the improvement of teaching effectiveness) purposes. The reason is that given the age, social background and / or orientation of Nigerian students, teachers considered that the results from SET can't be valid, reliable, interpretable and generalizable. They considered that students will be affected by many other factors.

In their study conducted in Australia about the usefulness and effectiveness of SET, Slade and McConville (2006) found that certain teachers argued that SET did not serve their

educational purpose; and furthermore, it violated their rights as teachers and their freedom in classrooms.

Elements that influence teachers' views of SET. According to Joshua and Joshua (2004), several elements affect the teachers' views towards SET. See Figure 1 for elements that influence teachers' views of SET.

Timing of SET. Teachers tend to be less supportive for SET throughout the year. When results were compared between fall and spring semester, Dretzke et al. (2015) noticed that there was a consistent decrease in teachers' support for including SET in their performance evaluation but at the same time not strongly opposed to them. Teachers became more skeptical about the use and validity of the surveys at the beginning of the school year and again in the spring. The analysis of teachers' responses indicated that teachers tend to be supportive of including student evaluation in their performance assessment when asked at the beginning of the year and become less supportive throughout the year. Teachers at the beginning of the year viewed SET to be valuable for providing information that could help them in improving their effectiveness with some uncertainty related to students' ability to provide valid feedback.

Teachers' experience. Experience is also an essential factor in shaping teachers' views of SET. Based on Dretzke et al.'s (2015) study, years of experience had an effect on teachers' views. Teachers with more experience had the tendency to view the use of SET in teacher evaluations with more skepticism than teachers with less experience. According to Dretzke et al. (2015), as years of experience increased, teachers viewed the student evaluation as less helpful as they felt more confident with what they're teaching and students do not have the experience they have. Contrary to Dretzke et al. (2015), Joshua and Joshua's (2004) study on Nigerian teachers' perceptions of SET found that teachers' perceptions were not significantly influenced by academic qualification nor by teaching experience.

Geographical location. As previously mentioned, the Nigerian teachers' perceptions (Joshua & Joshua, 2004) were not significantly influenced by their academic qualification nor teaching experience. Nevertheless, it was affected by geographical location. Teachers in urban areas had more negative views of SET than teachers in rural areas.

Gender. Based on Joshua and Joshua's (2004) study, when the purposes to be served by SET was summative, Nigerian teachers' views to SET were significantly influenced by gender. Female teachers had more negative perceptions than male teachers.

School leadership. The school leaders are assumed to be the ones responsible for the process of SET. It is then expected that school leaders do follow up conversations with their teachers when they receive SET results (Elstad et al., 2017). According to Heck (1992), the school leader's role is to communicate the school's goals and expectations so teachers would understand the expectations from them. Based on Leithwood (1994), transformational leadership assumes that when teachers understand the school's goals, this will help them develop their teaching practices. Delvaux, Vanhoof, Tuytens, Vekeman, Devos, and Van Petegem (2013) found that transformational leadership had no significant effect on professional development. However, Tuytens and Devos (2010) found that the principal's vision and leadership are significantly related to how teachers view their evaluation. This means that when school leadership clearly communicates to teachers what is expected of them, it affects how teachers view the usefulness of SET (Elstad et al., 2017). School administrators' leadership can likewise impact teachers' views of SET encouraging a more positive effect on its benefits (Elstad et al., 2017). The amount of trust teachers have in the school leadership has a significant impact on their views of SET.

Purpose of evaluation. Teachers' view of SET is related to their understanding of the purpose of evaluation. Their views vary according to how they perceive the results of such evaluation, whether it is to a) develop their own efforts as teachers, or b) be used as a means of controlling teachers (Elstad et al., 2017; Katsuno, 2010).

On the contrary, Delvaux et al. (2013) found that perceived summative purposes had a significant and positive effect on professional development, while formative purposes did not. Some studies found that teachers' views of the purposes of evaluation are related to the ways they understand the evaluation (Flores, 2012; Katsuno, 2010).

There is still very limited research that discusses SET in school (Dretzke et al., 2015, Engstrom, 2000, & Peterson et al., 2000) and very few discussed teachers' views of SET in specific (Peterson, 2000; Ellet & Teddlie; 2003; Marzano & Toth, 2013; Elstad et al., 2017). On the contrary, SET in universities is largely discussed. The section that follows will look at SET in university setting as it will bring a deeper understanding of how faculty view SET.

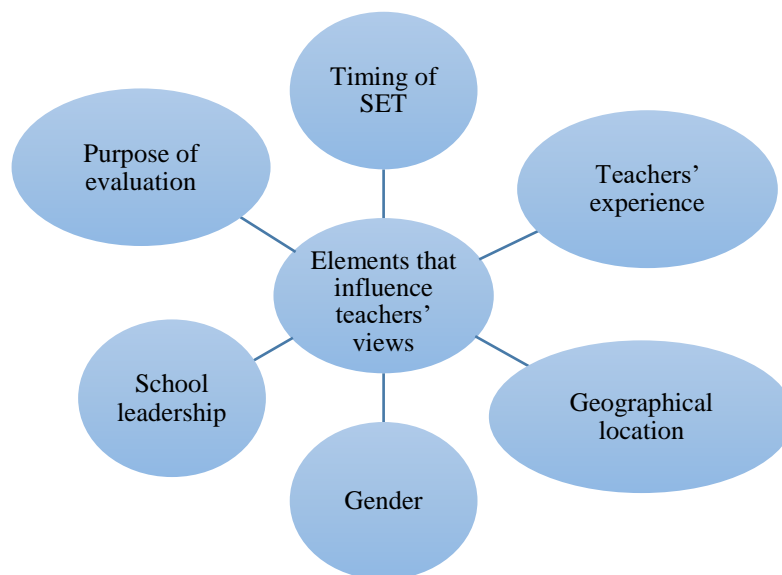


Figure 1. Elements that influence SET in schools
SET in University Setting

Faculty views of SET. While using SET in universities, Greenwald and Gillmore (1997) reported that faculty viewed SET as a competition for popularity and as a reason to blame for grade inflation.

Beran and Rokosh (2009), Chan et al. (2014), and Marsh (2000) found that many faculty members believed that SET is affected by many elements including course difficulty, instructor popularity, grading leniency, lack of interest in the courses and class size. Furthermore, Sojka, Gupta, and Deeter-Schmelz (2002) revealed in their research study that faculty members believed that students gave better ratings to less demanding instructors, professors with high entertainment ability, and character. In addition, faculty reported that SET affected the grading of students as it encouraged them to grade more leniently to get better evaluations. Based on Sojka et al. (2002), faculty's opposition to SET was based on two concerns: students' ability to evaluate accurately and the use of data by administrators when making decisions regarding a faculty member's promotion and salary increase.

Faculty views of the effectiveness of SET. Amidst the widespread criticism of SET, many faculty members have voiced support for SET. In a study across several colleges, Schmelkin, Spencer, and Gellman (1997) found that 43% of faculty make changes from semester to semester based on students' comments. Likewise, Beran and Violato (2005) stated that faculty members had a generally positive or neutral view about the effectiveness of SET. Yao and Grady (2005) also reported that most faculty members gave attention to SET as a means of assessing their own teaching. Chan et al. (2014) and Sojka et al. (2002) as well reported that faculty members made changes to their course content and teaching styles as a result of student evaluations.

Based on a study completed at the American University of Beirut in 2005, 81% of faculty did not agree that SET results should be used in making decisions concerning their promotions and salaries. In addition, faculty considered that students' ratings were affected by their assigned workload. In order to receive a higher rating, faculty might be required to change their expectations in class (ICE report, 2005).

In a study carried out at an Irish university, Surgenor (2013) found that faculty members had both positive and negative attitudes towards the purpose, validity, usefulness, and consequences of the student's evaluation of their teaching. Regarding its purposes, teachers stated that the surveys helped them recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, certain faculty members were concerned that the use of SET was only a means of making decisions regarding their reward or penalty. As for validity, usefulness, and the consequences of students' evaluation, more barriers than opportunities had been identified. Regarding validity, faculty expressed concern towards sampling bias, which may result in questionable extreme comments: extremely positive comments from committed students and extremely negative comments from dissatisfied students. Faculty also commented that the sample might include students who attend classes regularly and those who do not attend regularly and do not have the whole picture of what is happening in class.

Moreover, Stein et al. (2013) found that certain faculty members were uncertain about the reliability of students' evaluations since students can be biased towards teachers that are popular among them and liked by their students. In spite of the doubts and concerns the faculty expressed about the validity and reliability of SET, a small proportion of faculty in Surgenor's (2013) study suggested that using the unified survey as an evaluation method among all faculty will increase the objectivity level in teachers' evaluation. Regarding the usefulness of the survey results, faculty were aware of the possible influence of extraneous factors on the SET survey results, and of the possible ways to increase their scores such as giving higher grades and lowering the standards of the course.

Certain faculty members had shown concerns about the confidentiality and the use of data (Beran & Rokosh, 2009; Nasser & Fresko, 2002; Surgenor, 2013). There is a general consensus that faculty should receive their evaluations by students (Nasser & Fresko, 2002)

and that the results should not be made available to other staff members, students, or the public (Beran & Rokosh, 2009).

Elements that influence faculty's views.

Gender. At Western Land Grant University in Colorado, Kogan, Schoenfeld- Tacher, and Hellyer, (2010) asked all teaching faculty to complete an anonymous online survey. The survey included demographic questions (i.e. gender, rank, and position) as well as questions related to the faculty member's views of SET. No Major differences were found based on Faculty rank or position, but many differences were found based on faculty gender. Female faculty were more negatively impacted by SET than male faculty. They also responded with greater unhappiness and anger after reading SET results than did the male faculty members.

When assessing how feedback from other people affect self-image and self-assessment, Kogan et.al (2010) suggested that when the feedback is objective, males and females are impacted similarly. On the other hand, females evaluated themselves more negatively than males when the feedback is subjective. This assumes that women do not think less of their own performance than males as long as the feedback they are given is objective (Kogan et.al, 2010). According to Kogan et.al (2010), it is hypothesized that this could lead to emotional differences in how male and female faculty members react to subjective evaluative feedback, such as SET. Moreover, female faculty are more likely to change the material they teach based on SET.

In support to this, Asassfeh and Al-Ebous (2013) documented the differences between male and female faculty views regarding SET. They conducted a study on 166 faculty members from the Faculty of Sciences and Faculty of Educational Sciences at a major public university in Jordan to explore their views about SET and the elements that influence their perceptions. Asassfeh and Al-Ebous (2013) argued that males are less influenced by negative evaluations since their self-perception is more influenced by positive evaluation and not by

negative evaluation. Males are more likely, however, to assign a greater value to SET than females, believing they are an accurate reflection of teaching quality, and therefore, improving overall instruction and student-faculty relations. Females on the other hand, even though more willing to make changes to their courses based on SET results, the reason behind it is the impact it has on their self-image. Unlike male counterparts, female faculty gave little credibility to these evaluations, viewing them as no more than a popularity contest. Female faculty tend to believe that these evaluations are subject to factors such as gender and popularity, therefore proving to be ineffective at gauging actual teaching quality. Females also believe that these evaluations undermine student-faculty member relations.

Years of experience. While studying Jordanian universities, Asassfeh and Al-Ebous (2013) discovered that faculty members' views are influenced by the years of experience they have. This means that when faculty have more years of experience, they recognize a students' right to evaluate their teaching and consider it as a duty students must fulfill. Because faculty with more years of experience have been exposed to previous evaluation results, this has influenced their views of SET and affected their teaching performance and their course planning.

Subject being taught. Another factor that affects how faculty views SET is the subject being taught. In the same research study that Asassfeh and Al-Ebous (2013) conducted in universities in Jordan, they argued that science faculty held a stronger belief that faculty must be exposed to evaluation while education faculty believed that students' evaluation are affected by those of other students. As for the level of evaluation of standards, science faculty held stronger beliefs that students rate faculty according to whether space was given for self-expression, test clarity, and the ability to transfer learning outcomes to real life situations. As for developing their performance based on previous evaluations, Asassfeh and Al-Ebous (2013) stated that education faculty believed more strongly that SET helped in improving

their lectures' effectiveness, improving the use of variety of teaching aids and educational technology, and enhancing their respect towards students. On the other hand, science faculty held stronger beliefs that they benefitted from previous evaluations in improving their use of different assessment methods, fairness in grading students' performance, and objective treatment of students (Asassfeh & Al-Ebous, 2013).

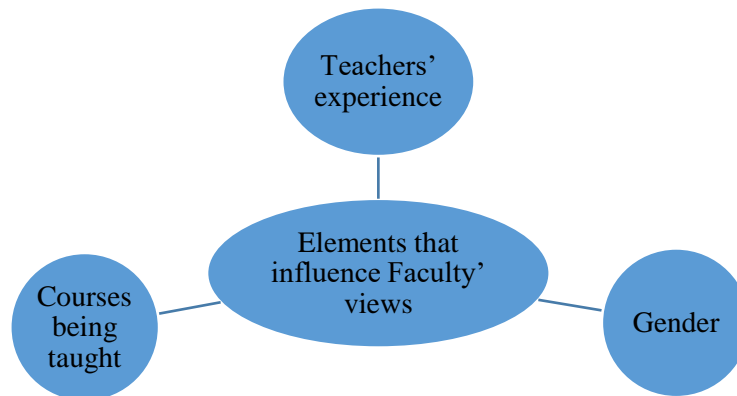


Figure 2. Elements that influence SET in universities

After looking at teachers' views of SET in schools and faculty views of SET in universities and the elements that affect these views, this section will look at the similarities and differences between teacher and faculty views.

Comparison of the Views of SET by Teachers and Faculty

Similarities and differences based on the literature. After reviewing the literature on SET in both school and university setting, there emerge both similarities and differences common to school teachers and university faculty in their views on SET.

SET subjectivity. Both school teachers and university faculty agree that students evaluate based on personal feelings which is not an objective tool for evaluation. Based on Lafee (2014), teachers view students as too young and immature, and their inability to evaluate objectively leads them to evaluate based on personal feelings. Regarding views of SET in universities, Sojka et al. (2002), Beran and Rokosh (2009), Chan et al. (2014)

explained the reason for faculty objection to SET is that SET is affected by multiple elements that are very subjective like course difficulty, instructor popularity, grading leniency, lack of interest in courses, and class size. Although in universities the main reason for objecting to SET as an evaluative tool is not students' immaturity or being too young, both school teachers and faculty agree that SET is not an objective tool.

Views of SET effectiveness. Comparing teachers and faculty views of SET effectiveness, Balch (2012) and Chan et al. (2014) reported that teachers used their SET to work on areas for improvement. Similarly, Beran and Violato (2005), Sojka et al. (2012), Yao and Grady (2005) also reported that faculty use SET to make changes to their courses. There is agreement among teachers and faculty that SET can be used to improve areas in their courses.

Validity and reliability of SET. Validity and reliability of SET and using SET for making decisions about promotions and salary were discussed in the faculty views of SET but not by school teachers. One of the reasons could be that many schools don't make promotion and salary decisions for teachers.

Similarities between secondary level and university students.

Similarity of factors in rating. Worrell and Kuterbach (2001) examined the validity of SET within a two-cohort sample of high school students. The participants were two groups of high school students attending a six-week summer program for the academically talented at a major research university in the United States.

All students were entering grade 10 or higher the semester after the program. The Results from the 1997 and 1998 cohorts indicated that low-inference teaching behaviors, as rated by high school students, form factors that are similar to the factors found with college students. Low-inference behaviors are precise and tangible classroom teaching behaviors that can be

easily and objectively identified and do not include unclear or general statements (Worrell and Kuterbach, 2001).

Comparison between Elements that Influence Teachers' and Faculty Views

Elements that affect SET. Several elements were discussed in the previous section that affect teachers' views of SET in school and faculty views of SET in universities.

Gender. Gender is a common element that influences teachers and faculty views. As mentioned by Kogan et al. (2010), Assassfeh and Al-Ebous (2013), Joshua and Joshua (2004), both teachers and faculty views are influenced by their gender. Females tend to be more negative than males in how they view SET. According to Kogan et al. (2010), males and females are affected similarly when they receive an objective feedback. While there is a difference when the feedback is subjective. Then, females evaluate themselves more negatively. This applies to how faculty view SET based on gender relates to the emotional differences in how they react to subjective evaluative feedback, such as SET.

Years of experience. The influence of years of experience on teachers and faculty is different. For faculty, when they had more years of experience, they recognized a students' right to evaluate their teaching because they would have been exposed to previous evaluation results. Teachers, on the other hand, had a different response. According to Dretzke et al. (2015), as teachers increased in years of experience, they viewed SET as less helpful.

Based on the above discussed review of literature, the study examined the following research questions:

- 1- What views do secondary teachers at schools operating in Beirut hold about SET?
- 2- What elements influence secondary teachers' views of SET?

Chapter III

Method

To study teachers' views of SET and the elements that influence these views, a qualitative approach was utilized in the present study using the survey design. The survey design is a descriptive research method (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). According to Cohen et al. (2007), descriptive research seeks to describe, categorize, compare and/or contrast, analyze and interpret one's person of study within a particular field of study. "Surveys gather data at a particular point in time to describe the nature of existing conditions, or identify standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determine the relationships that exist between specific events" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 205). Surveys are useful for gathering factual information, data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, and behavior and experiences (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1996).

Survey design is usually used to scan a wide field of issues and populations in order to describe any generalized features (Cohen et al., 2007). The survey design is appropriate for this research as this study aims at exploring the teachers' views. Additionally, the researcher looked at different schools in Beirut using the survey design. This format allowed the researcher to identify the views of many teachers within a shorter period of time. Moreover, gathering data on a one-shot basis is economical and efficient.

The nature of the study is exploratory, hence using qualitative approach is of an advantage. According to Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest, and Namey (2005), the advantage of qualitative approach in exploratory research is that the use of open-ended questions gives participants the opportunity to write their own thoughts and not just choose from fixed responses as is the case in quantitative research. Open-ended questions have the ability to induce meaningful and culturally relevant responses to the participant, responses that are unanticipated by the researcher, and are rich and explanatory in nature.

When looking at the elements that affect teachers' view of SET, the researcher came up with new elements derived from the teachers' explicit responses to the survey questions. That's why the open-ended questions in the survey were more favorable in this research as it gave the researcher the opportunity to come up with new views and elements that were not considered in previous research.

Procedure of the Study

The following represents the process that was followed for school and participant selection, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Selection of schools and participants. The researcher received a list of private schools (2015-2016) in Lebanon from the Center of Educational Research and Development. Contact, through phone calls, was made with all schools in Greater Beirut that have a secondary department. The researcher decided to focus on Greater Beirut for convenience. The sample was purposive as it was further limited to schools at which secondary students evaluate their teachers. There are 10 schools in Greater Beirut who use SET out of 110 schools, only 5 of the 10 schools accepted to participate in the study. Schools were given formal letters from the university and the researcher explained the nature of the study. The researcher was given approval from 5 schools permitting the study to be conducted at their schools. Four of five schools target students that have middle socioeconomic status and one school targets students that have upper middle socioeconomic status. 4 of the schools are religiously affiliated schools and one only is a secular school. All five schools follow the American system and English is their first language of teaching. Moreover, all 5 schools were established at least 15 years ago.

A total of 40 secondary school teachers (16 males and 24 females), recruited from five schools who use SET, completed the teacher's survey. The description of sample characteristics are in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
Description of Sample Characteristics of Teachers in Schools who have SET

| | | N | % |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|------|
| Gender | Male | 16 | 40.0 |
| | Female | 24 | 60.0 |
| Subjects they teach | Sciences | 12 | 40.0 |
| | Languages | 11 | 27.5 |
| | Math | 7 | 17.5 |
| | Social Studies | 7 | 17.5 |
| Academic Qualifications | Not Mentioned | 2 | 5.0 |
| | Sciences and Math | 1 | 2.5 |
| | Bachelor Degree | 22 | 55.0 |
| | Master's Degree | 13 | 32.5 |
| | No degree | 3 | 7.5 |
| | High School | 1 | 2.5 |
| | PhD | 1 | 2.5 |

Table 2
Scale Description of Teachers in Schools who have SET

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|
| Age | 38 | 22.00 | 69.00 | 43.11 |
| Years of Experience | 39 | 1.00 | 48.00 | 19.03 |

In order to better understand the topic, the researcher also chose 3 schools in Greater Beirut that don't use SET from the most updated list of private schools (2015-2016) in Lebanon from the Center of Educational Research and Development. The schools were chosen as a purposive sample that have similar characteristics as the other 5 schools that have SET. Two of the schools target students that have middle socioeconomic status and one school targets students that have upper middle socioeconomic status. 2 of the schools are religiously affiliated schools and one only is a secular school. All three schools follow the American system and English is their first language of teaching. Moreover, all 3 schools were established at least 15 years ago.

The schools were contacted for permission to conduct the study in their schools. By including the teachers from the schools who don't use SET, the researcher was better able to understand and compare the similarities and differences between both views. According to

Lewis, Nicholls, Ormston, and Ritchie (2013), comparing groups in qualitative study helps the researcher better understand the population that is the main focus of the research.

Comparison in qualitative study can contribute to the study by identifying the absence or presence of particular phenomena among different groups and exploring how the explanation of the phenomena, its impact and consequences is different between groups (Lewis et al., 2013).

A total of 23 secondary teachers in schools who don't use SET (6 males and 17 females), completed the teacher's survey. The description of sample characteristics are in Tables 3 and 4).

*Table 3
Description of Sample Characteristics of Teachers in Schools who do not have SET*

| | | N | % |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|------|
| Gender | Male | 6 | 26.1 |
| | Female | 17 | 73.9 |
| Subjects they teach | Math | 6 | 26.1 |
| | Sciences | 5 | 21.7 |
| | Languages | 5 | 21.7 |
| | Religious Studies | 2 | 8.7 |
| | No answer | 1 | 4.3 |
| Academic Qualifications | Bachelor Degree | 14 | 60.9 |
| | Master's Degree | 8 | 34.8 |
| | No answer | 1 | 4.3 |
| | | | |

*Table 4
Scale Description of Teachers in Schools who do not have SET*

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|
| Age | 22 | 25.00 | 55.00 | 34.14 |
| Years of Experience | 22 | 3.00 | 28.00 | 10.36 |

Even though the sample from schools who have SET is bigger (N=40), the two samples from the schools who have SET and from the ones who don't have SET are similar

in many ways. The number of female teachers were more than the number of male teachers in both samples, teachers' year of experience in both samples varied between few years of experience and many years of experience, and the majority of teachers in both samples were holders of a Bachelor's degree. One difference would be that many of teachers in schools who use SET are languages teachers while more math and science teachers completed the survey in schools who don't have SET.

Data collection procedures. The researcher used semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys with teachers in schools who have SET, teachers in schools who don't have SET, and school leaders as sources of data. Data from these different sources were used to triangulate the findings. According to Merriam (2009), "instrument triangulation" is a procedure that relies on several sources of data to validate findings in a qualitative study.

Surveys. The researcher distributed the surveys to all secondary teachers in the selected schools and the surveys were self-administered. The researcher included in the survey a question if the teacher would like to be interviewed. Those teachers were later interviewed. This process was applied in the schools that use SET and in those who don't use SET. The survey questions were piloted with 6 teachers who didn't participate in the research before distributing the surveys to teachers in different schools.

The teachers' survey and interview included questions derived from the literature review section. The survey questions are in Appendix A and the interview questions are in Appendix B and C. Some examples of how the questions were formulated are as follows:

Based on Kauchak et al. (1985) study, certain teachers felt that SET could provide valuable information about teachers' performance and few others felt that student feedback should be taken with caution. Other teachers stated that they have doubts about students' ability to understand the complexities of teaching. Based on this, the researcher asked in the survey if teachers think SET could provide valuable information about their performance, and

if they think students' feedback is reliable. Also if they believe that students are able to understand the complexities of teaching profession. Do they think students are able to make judgments about the quality of teaching and their learning experience?

According to the research study conducted by Schwan and Iwanicki (1985), certain teachers supported the inclusion of SET in their evaluation and few others did not.

Accordingly, the researcher asked teachers if they support the use of SET by school administrators and to what extent.

Lafee (2014) concluded from his research that teachers view students as immature and they evaluate based on feelings without objectivity. Hence, another question asked was teachers' view about if it is right to take students' opinion when evaluating teachers. Are students serious enough to provide meaningful feedback to teachers?

For teachers who support SET, Chan et al. (2014) argued that SET, if used effectively, will provide valuable information and enhance student learning. Therefore, the researcher asked how SET can be used as an effective tool to enhance student learning. Who do they think the evaluation system is for? What does the school do with the data?

Regarding the second research question that this research sought to answer, the researcher asked about the elements that influence the teachers' views of SET. The researcher used Dretzke et al. (2015), Joshua and Joshua (2004), Kogan et al. (2010), Asassfeh and Al-Ebous's (2013) studies identified the elements that influence teachers' views. The questions were in the first section in the demographic information and introductory questions: teachers' gender, subjects taught, years of experience. Other elements emerged from the data that the researcher received in the surveys and interviews.

Same survey was used in schools that don't use SET to study their views about SET and if they would have preferred if their schools use it. The survey questions can be found in Appendix C.

Interviews. After receiving the surveys from the teachers, those who accepted to be interviewed, they were contacted to assign an interview date and time. Five interviews were made in schools that use SET and 3 in schools that do not use SET. The purpose of the interview was to obtain more in-depth information from the teachers about personal feelings and views that they were not able to express in the survey. A face-to-face interview helps the researcher capture verbal and non-verbal cues, including body language, which can point out a level of discomfort with the questions or show enthusiasm about the subject being discussed in the interview (Merriam, 2009).

Prior to the interviews, the researcher verbally briefed the participants about the purpose and the use of gathered information from the interview. This had already been explained in the initial letter that was given to the school and to the teachers. All interviews were audio recorded so that the researcher could capture all the details of the interviews. The participants were informed about the audiotaping and they were asked for their approval. Interview questions with teachers who work in schools that use SET are in Appendix B and interview questions for teachers in schools that do not use SET are in Appendix C. The researcher interviewed secondary teachers individually with open-ended questions. Each interview took around twenty minutes. The interviews were semi-structured whereby the researcher used key questions prepared beforehand but also allowed the interviewees to diverge from the questions in order to pursue more detailed responses (Chadwick, Gill, Stewart & Treasure, 2008). This allowed for the discovery or elaboration of information that was important to the participants but perhaps not considered by the researcher (Chadwick et al., 2008). The interviews were conducted in English except for one participant who preferred to express himself in Arabic. In that case, the interview was conducted in Arabic and was translated by a translator to confirm the accuracy of the material. There was also back translation. All interviews were later transcribed.

During the individual interviews, participants were encouraged to share personal examples to illustrate their views. The researcher posed the questions and had the participants provide their own definitions and reveal their in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Sample Characteristics. Five teachers from schools who have SET were interviewed.

Table 5 depicts certain demographics of the five teachers.

Table 5

Description of Sample Characteristics of Interviewed Teachers in Schools who have SET

| Teacher | Years of Teaching | Number of Teaching hours per week |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Teacher 1 | 12 | 24 hours per week |
| Teacher 2 | 3 | 29 hours per week |
| Teacher 3 | 24 | 24 hours per week |
| Teacher 4 | 30 | 14 hours per week |
| Teacher 5 | 7 | 10 hours per week |

Three teachers from schools who do not have SET completed the interview. Table 6 depicts certain demographics of the three teachers.

Table 6

Description of Sample Characteristics of Interviewed Teachers in Schools who do not have SET

| Teacher | Years of Teaching | Number of Teaching hours per week |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Teacher 1 | 1 | 12 sessions per week |
| Teacher 2 | 7 | 24 hours per week |
| Teacher 3 | 10 | 26 hours per week |

To have a more in-depth understanding of the role of school leadership, the researcher interviewed 3 school principals from the schools that use SET. Interview questions are in Appendix D.

Ethical concerns. As mentioned above, the schools were sent an official letter explaining the nature of the study and what was required from the school if they accepted to participate. No work was done at the schools before receiving their consent.

To protect the privacy of the participants, each of the schools was given a special number (1 till 8) and participants were coded ¹as well. All information gathered was saved with a password on the researcher's computer.

In addition, all participants were treated with respect, with assurance that no physical or psychological harm was intended through the participation in this study. All participants were debriefed before their participation. Surveys and interview questions did not contain any offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise unacceptable language. The participant information letter is in Appendix E and the agreement to participate in this research is in Appendix F.

As for trustworthiness, the researcher didn't use a survey that is tested for reliability. The researcher built the survey questions on previous literature that were already tested. However, for the researcher to promote validity and reliability, the researcher triangulated the data by using different data sources. Moreover, the researcher used the help of another researcher where each one separately analyzed the data and came up with themes and then discussed them. Any disagreement was resolved by discussion and further referring to the data.

Data analysis. Data collected from the open-ended surveys and from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. In order to reach a reasonable interpretation, the data underwent several stages of analysis. The researcher followed the six-phase framework for doing thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

¹**T** refers to teachers who are at schools that have SET
t refers to teachers who are at schools that don't have SET
The **number** next to T or t is the teacher's number
i denotes interview
s denotes survey
L refers to school leaders
The **number** next to L is the school leader's number

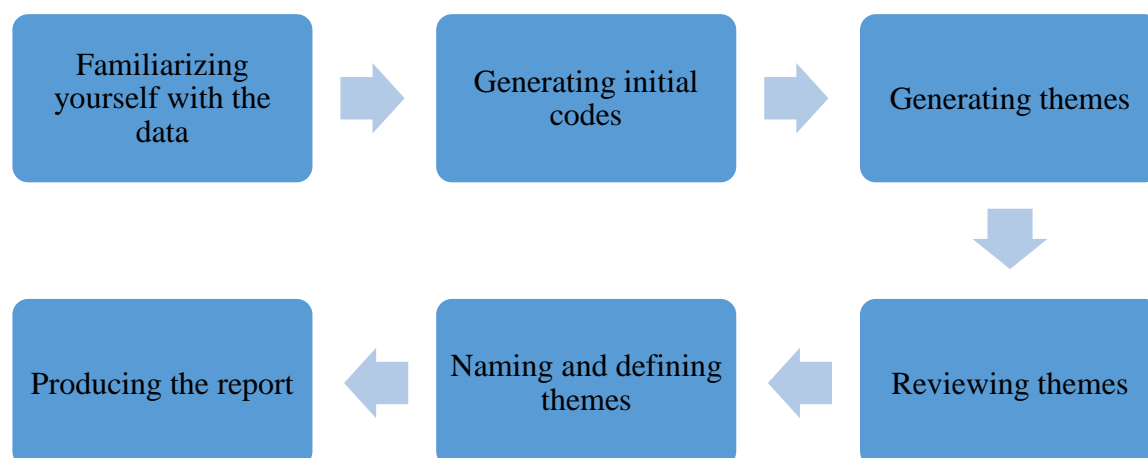


Figure 3. Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data

The researcher transcribed the interviews. This happened through playing back the audio recordings of the interviews and putting them in written form. In order to ensure that the transcription was accurate, the researcher play backed each audio recording twice.

After writing up the participants' data, the researcher read the data several times in order to be familiar with the data and to write down some initial ideas.

Later, the researcher entered all answers to the interviews and surveys an Excel chart in order to make the data more accessible. This allowed the researcher to go through each participant's responses without having to go back and forth to every transcript.

2. Generating initial codes

After organizing the data, the researcher began identifying extracts from the participants' responses that could be combined to reflect specific ideas and patterns. These combinations of data extracts are called codes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p 77), "Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon". List of codes is in Table 7.

3. Generating themes

After the data was collated and coded, the researcher reviewed the codes, established coherent connections between them, and categorized them within appropriate themes.

4. Reviewing themes

After generating themes, the researcher checked if themes work in relation to the coded extracts, as well as to the entire data set. The researcher then developed a thematic map of analysis.

5. Naming and defining themes

After themes were generated and reviewed, themes were named and defined appropriately based on the codes within each one. Also, some subthemes emerged under each theme.

6. Producing the report

After the themes were generated, reviewed, named, and defined, the researcher was required to write a “coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.22).

Finally, the thematic analysis was checked based on a 15 point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis produced by Braun and Clarke (2006). The list is included in Appendix I.

Table 7

List of Codes

| Codes | Feature |
|-------|----------------------------|
| sr | students' rights |
| le | legitimate evaluators |
| emp | Empowerment |
| eval | evaluation |
| sd | self-development |
| rc | relationship/communication |
| adm | administration right |
| acc | accountability |
| ac | age and class level |
| mat | maturity of students |
| com | complexity of teaching |
| hgo | objective answers |
| ser | student seriousness |
| rev | revenge |
| ds | demands of subjects |
| gr | grades |
| abi | teacher's ability |
| char | teacher's character |
| ques | questionnaire development |
| se | scope of evaluation |
| sa | student awareness |
| pi | introduction of SET |
| anal | data analysis |
| lim | limitation of results |
| int | integrating results |
| shar | sharing of results |
| dev | school development |
| res | teachers' responsibilities |
| tc | impact on teachers' career |

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter reports on the teachers' views of SET in schools in Beirut and the elements that influence those views. The sections below report the findings that stemmed from the following 5 instruments: 1) Survey of teachers in schools that have SET, 2) Survey of teachers in schools that don't have SET, 3) Interview with teachers in schools that have SET, 4) Interview with teachers in schools that don't have SET, and 5) Interview with school leaders.

Teachers' General Views of SET

When teachers were asked about their views toward their school using SET, the majority of teachers took a positive stance toward using SET or a positive stance with reservations. However, few reported that they believe that having SET at their schools is "fine", "ok" or "necessary", indicated an explicitly negative view towards SET, or had no answer.

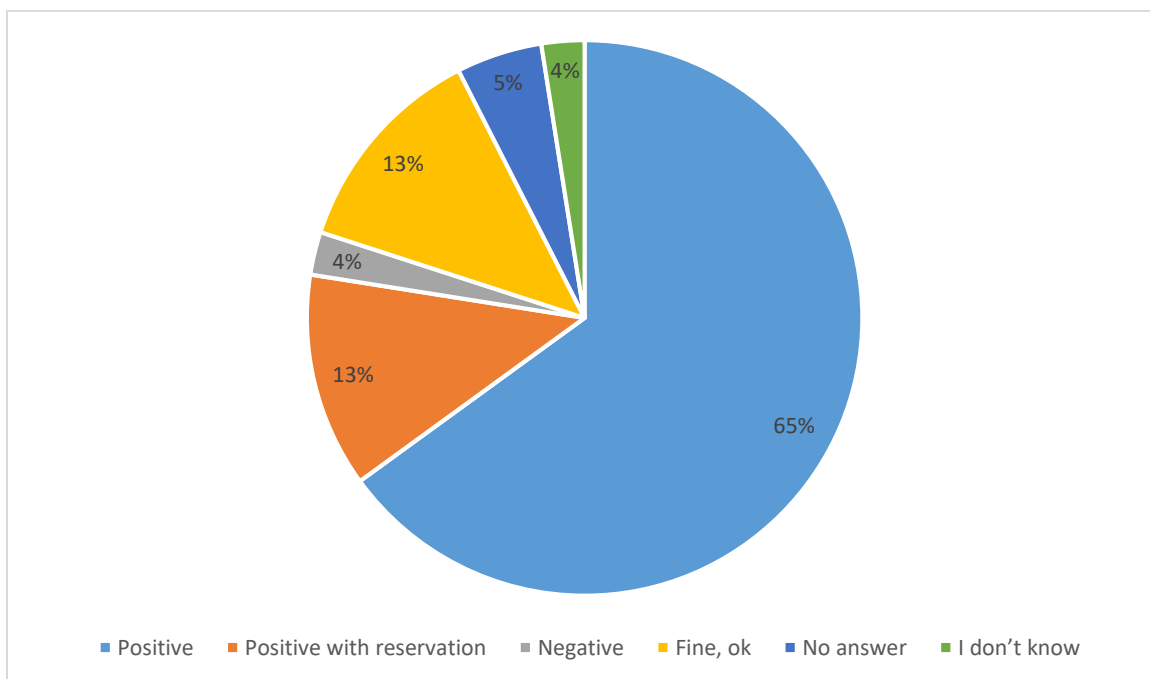


Figure 4. Teachers' views in schools that use SET

Similarly, when teachers in schools who do not use SET were asked about their views toward their school using SET, the majority had a positive stance toward using SET or a positive stance with reservations while a few teachers had no answers.

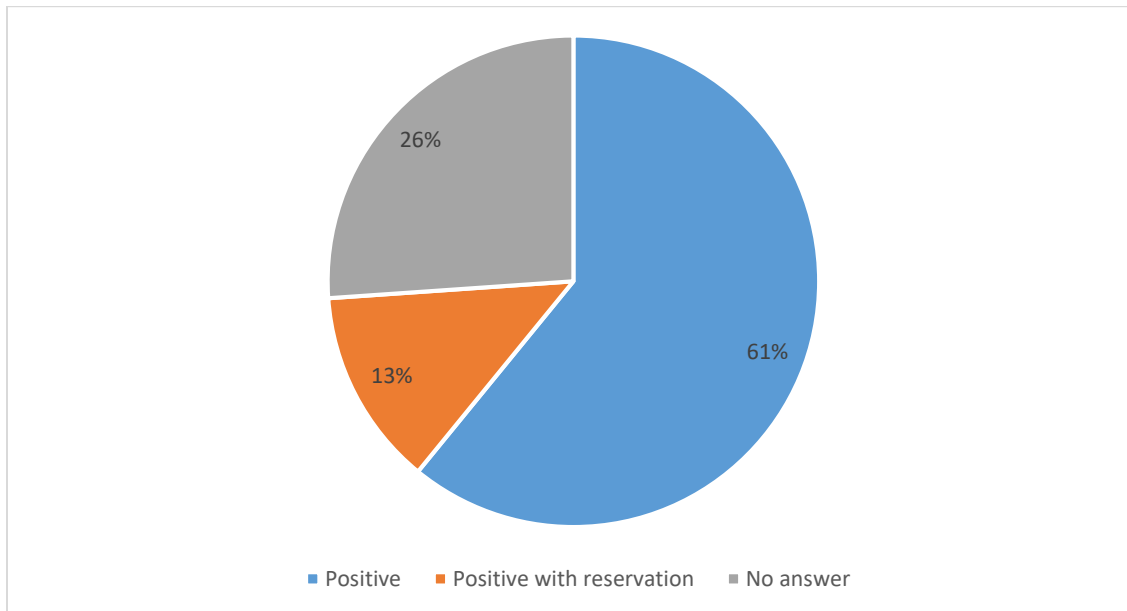


Figure 5. Teachers' views in schools that don't use SET

Patterns Derived from Codes Related to Theme 1

Students' rights to express their voices. In the survey for teachers in schools that have SET, twelve teachers reported that students have the right to express their voices. In fact, teachers viewed students as an essential part of the educational system and as such have the right to evaluate their teachers and the whole educational system. For example, "Students have the right to reflect their opinion both positively and negatively. They are the target group learners who should receive quality education by qualified teachers" (T18s). T31s added that "students are the clients in the institution; they have the right to express their opinions freely."

Also, when teachers were interviewed, three out of five teachers reported that SET was highly beneficial for students. Teachers reported that SET fulfils the right of students to voice

their concerns and opinions. “Students are part of the educational system so they have the right to give feedback and yes I can see my weakness and strength points” (T_{5i}).

Similarly, five teachers in schools who do not have SET consider students as the main beneficiaries and recipients of the educational system of the school. As such, SET gives them the chance to express their views anonymously. “Students are kind of our customers, and just like there is such a thing as comment card filled by customers in a restaurant, there is a good reason to have the same done at schools” (t_{4s}). “Students are the recipients and target audience. Their opinion is the only thing that matters. Their voice is the most important” (t_{7s}). “I think that students till certain extent know how to judge the teacher and the teaching process, they don't see things from all the angles but till certain extent they can give a certain judgement because at the end they can compare between a teacher and another and they can see things maybe the teacher is not able to notice” (t_{2i}). “SET give the students a voice when sometimes the voice comes only from the principle and administration” (t_{3i}).

The three school leaders who were interviewed also emphasized that SET is an essential tool that helps students to express their voices and play an important role in the learning process. “The students are the main and major element in the educational process and it is important to know how they views teachers and teaching and how we can help them to do better” (L_{1i}).

Students as legitimate evaluators. Seven teachers also held that students are legitimate evaluators of their teachers; they are in direct and daily contact with their teachers and as such they can provide the most accurate feedback about their teachers. For example, T_{9s} offered that “students interact with their teachers for a relatively long period of time, so their opinions are relevant in evaluating their teachers. T_{27s} added that “students look at things differently from teachers, so they could see certain things that the teacher can sometimes not pay attention to.”

This has also been explicitly mentioned by teachers in teachers' surveys in schools that do not use SET. Seven teachers considered students as legitimate evaluators of teachers as they are the ones who are in direct contact with teachers every day and as such they can shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. For instance, t_{4s} explained that "Any evaluation of the teacher should be done from within the classroom. Any evaluation that is done for instance by the administration would not give a full-picture as the members of the administration are not the ones exposed to the teacher's lectures, teaching tools, disciplinary methods, mood swings." "Because students are always in classroom and experience the teacher in the class continuously. They do not just enter one time to evaluate her and leave. They are exposed to all sides of the teacher in all circumstances so they are able to provide unique feedback that is not possible by an occasional visitor into the classroom" (t_{5s}).

Two teachers out of the five teachers also reported in the interviews that students are legitimate evaluators of teachers. For example, T_{1i} asserted that "what we think is if the students are having fun, they love the teacher, so they're going to be nice in the evaluation but I know for a fact that it turned out not true. They know that we are having fun but this teacher is not giving us what we want or what we need or what he or she supposed to give us so they do know and even for lower classes, to a certain extent also they can differentiate and they can tell the difference that we are learning something, we are doing something productive such as being productive or we're not doing anything, we're not getting anything."

SET's empowerment of students. Only four teachers viewed SET as an empowering tool for students; it equips students with the power to be involved in the educational system, to be decision makers and an integral part of the school. "It is important for students to feel their

voices are heard” (T_{20S}), “students feel that they are decision makers” (T_{38S}) and “students feel that they are part of their own modes of learning” (t_{39S}).

When students express their opinions and play an active role in the educational system at the school and when their comments are taken seriously by the school administration, then they feel empowered. For example, t_{7S} explained that “SET will also make the students feel respected and that they have a voice and feel engaged in the process of their own learning journey.” “If their comments are taken seriously through regular evaluations and action plans, then the students will feel more respected and valued and will also reciprocate that with respect to the administration and the teachers” (t_{4S}).

Teachers’ evaluation of their work. Seven teachers indicated that they use SET as direct evaluation of their own work. By using SET they are able to inspect how their students evaluate their teaching process, to explore their weaknesses and strengths and to reflect on their teaching in general. For example, T_{7S} reported that “SET shows our strengths and weaknesses.” T_{17S} added that “SET point out the positive/negative aspects of learning process, reinforce the positive and amend the negative ones.” Two teachers in the interviews also confirmed that SET gives them the chance to evaluate their work and to pinpoint their weaknesses and strengths. T₁₁ asserted that if “students pinpointed a certain weakness or a certain strength I’ll do work more on working on the strength points in order to still improve them and see how and where I can use them more often and regarding the weakness, I will try to find something new in order to improve them.”

Twelve teachers in the schools that do not have SET considered that SET provides them with valuable feedback on their performance and gives them insight on their strengths and weaknesses. “SET will surely provide some valuable information about the teacher’s

performance since it comes from the side of the learner who is put face to face with the teacher's performance" (t₆s). "It helps give insight on how the students feel about the topic and how relevant is the material and what areas I can grow in whether enhancing material or teaching style. Also it helps see how effective and beneficial the learning that is taking place is" (t₇s).

Self-development and development of learning process. Fifteen teachers explained that SET also has a self-development role and an impact on the refinement and progression of the learning process. SET encourages teachers to work on their weaknesses and to improve themselves. It also allows them to work on improving their teaching techniques and quality of teaching. For example, "SET keeps the teacher alert and more considerate of the learning process... it prevents teachers from taking teaching process for granted" (T₁₆s). "SET helps instructors to improve their teaching to meet students' different needs" (T₁₈s).

Likewise, more than ten teachers in the schools that do not use SET asserted that feedback from students allow them to improve themselves as teachers, to cater for students' needs and to improve the learning process altogether. t₆ explained that SET "will contribute to better learners as well as teachers, who is turn become learners when attending proactively to the SET results." t₁₇s added that "providing feedback is an excellent tool towards improving learning and teaching." t₂₂s also explained that students' "opinion will change your point of views on issues you didn't notice it before."

Three teachers in the interviews reinforced the views mentioned previously about the role of SET in helping them to develop themselves and develop the learning process. "SET is important for me to be better, to teach better maybe. Maybe there's some points didn't notice in my teaching and the way I explain the class or maybe on my exams or everything...what advises

they can give me to really improve my teaching and I have been improved by these comments really” (T_{3i}).

When teachers who do not have SET in their schools were interviewed, they were welcomed the idea of implementing SET at their schools, emphasizing the importance of SET on their development and the progression of the learning process. As an example, “SET helps teachers to adjust their teaching style and curriculum to make relevant to the students` needs and learning styles”(t_{1i}), SET makes me feel that I am in need to be a long life learner that need to keep improving and help others improve. Again, if SET is used as a constructive tool, then it will make me feel that improvement is needed for the benefit of the school, learners and teachers” (t_{2i}), and “SET makes me happy not threatened, it helps me realize my strength and my weaknesses” (t_{3i}).

The improvement of relationship/communication between students and teachers. A small number of teachers (Five teachers) also indicated that SET fosters their relationship and communication with their students. SET indirectly helps them understand their students’ needs and vision, and ensures that both the teachers and students play essential roles in the teaching process. For example, “SET makes a good communication between teachers and students” (T_{13s}) and “SET improves the relation between the teacher and the students” (T_{28s}).

Only three teachers in school that do not use SET asserted that when teachers welcome students’ feedback openly and work on attending to students’ needs and comments, then their relationship and communication with students will improve. For instance, t_{5s} explained that “It is good to hear feedback and see where I can better connect with my students.” t_{15s} added that SET “will enhance the student- teacher relationship.... improves student- teacher relationships and helps teachers understand their students better.”

The role of SET in building good relationship and communication was neither mentioned in the interviews with teachers in school that have SET and those who do not have SET, nor in the interviews with school leaders.

Schools' administration right to evaluate teachers. Five teachers viewed that school administrators have the right to know the students' sincere feedback about their teachers as teachers are an integral part of the school's success. For example, T_{6s} claimed that "the school has the right to know the students' opinion about the teacher." T_{38s} explained that "coordinators and administrators cannot spend every session with the teacher in the classroom... student's feedback is based on daily contact."

The three school leaders that were interviewed shared their view of using SET in their teachers' evaluation. L_{1i} said that "SET are used as part of the whole evaluation process for teachers. SET are used to improve things in the school and in the classrooms are viewed negatively by students especially when students' views are aligned with school's observations." L_{2i} emphasized that "it is good that we know objectively what students think about a certain teacher, about his way of teaching, his behavior with the students, his console of the classroom, his knowledge of the subject." L_{3i} added that SET "gives us a perspective that no one can give us for the students... It is important for the students to know that they do have an opinion because the most contact is happening between teachers and students, they are spending most of the time together." L_{3i} added that SET "has benefit for teachers, it has benefits for students and it has a benefit in creating this environment of we are all here to help each other improve."

Teacher's accountability. Six teachers' responses highlighted that SET ensures that teachers comply with the rules and regulations of the school, as well as maintain the school standards of academics. For example, T_{9s} expressed that SET "ensures that teachers are

accountable to certain standards” and T_{21S} asserted that “SET makes sure teachers are held accountable.”

Teachers’ views about the school administration’s right to evaluate teachers and teacher’s accountability were only highlighted in the surveys with teachers in schools that use SET and not by teachers in schools who do not have SET.

Emergence of Theme 1

Teachers reported that the use of SET is highly beneficial for three stakeholders the students, teachers and the school administration. The theme that emerged is that SET has fundamental benefits for school’s stakeholders with the subthemes: SET has fundamental benefits for students as empowered evaluators, for teachers’ self- improvement, and for school administration’s role in enhancing accountability.

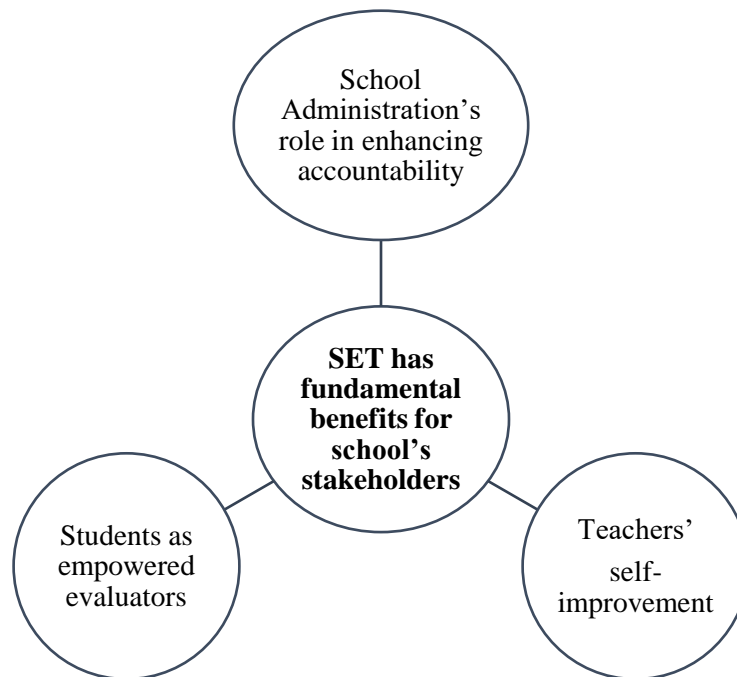


Figure 6. Theme 1: SET has fundamental benefits for the school’s stakeholders

Patterns Derived from Codes Related to Theme 2

Age and class level of students. Seven teachers asserted that the validity of SET depends on the age and class level of students; mainly middle and secondary students only are reliable in providing accurate evaluation of their teachers. For example, T_{1S} reported that “most middle and secondary students are mature enough to give meaningful feedback.” T_{31S} added that “students of lower levels can’t express their thoughts correctly. T_{1i} asserted that “students in the middle and upper class they know and they can differentiate and they can tell.”

Three teachers in the schools who do not have reported that young students have no experience to be part of SET and SET should be reserved for middle and high schools only. For example, t_{10S} asserted that SET is linked to the “age of the learner” and t_{18S} added that SET should be completed by “middle and high schools.”

Maturity of students. Ten teachers felt that not all students are mature enough to reliably evaluate their teachers. For instance, T_{26S} asserted that “some students are brave enough to detect the defects of teachers and express them freely... while other students are not qualified to criticize constructively what teachers do.” T_{20S} considered that “students are not knowledgeable enough for accurately evaluating their teachers.” Other teachers, however, were very positive regarding the maturity of students; for example, T_{17S} expressed that “students can reason, compare, and judge from their own experiences.” T_{37S} described that “students nowadays are aware of what they want and need from school and teachers.”

Two teachers in the interviews added that “not all students are mature and serious to take such a test” (T_{2i}). T_{3i} also added that if students “are mature, they are sincere. If they do not want they can hurt the whole process they can damage it. Well we have to pay attention to this.”

Three teachers from schools who do not use SET asserted that maturity of students may hinder the validity of the results of SET. For example, t_{1s} asserted that “students may not have enough maturity.” t_{12s} added that students “are not mature yet to express their own emotions much less how they feel about their education.”

Understanding complexity of teaching process. In agreement with teachers’ mixed perceptions of the maturity of students, twelve teachers also had mixed views regarding students’ understanding of the complexities of the teaching profession. For instance, T_{2s} explained that “we studied 4 years in education to understand the complexities of teaching process.” T_{9s} described that “students lack the appreciation of the size of teachers’ responsibilities.” T_{5s}, however, reported that “some students have the ability to understand the complexities of the teaching process” and T_{8s} stated that “secondary students are adults and most of the time understand the complexities of teaching.”

Similarly, ten teachers in schools who do not use SET agreed that some students, if not many of them, do not understand the complexities of the teaching process. For example, “Students cannot know what it's like to regularly address students in different classes with pressure of needing to finish the curriculum, as well as be patient, interesting, fun, well-read, up to date with news, unless they get a taste of it through regular projects that they are asked to present in front of their classmates”(t_{4s}). “Learners are not always able to understand the complexities of the teaching profession since they are not in the shoes of the teacher... however learners, being at the core of the learning process, can shed insights to teaching that cannot be seen from the teacher’s side” (t_{6s}). While t_{16s} asserted that students “are aware of the learning process and the complexities of teaching to a certain extent.”

Students' honest, genuine and objective answers. Six teachers explained that SET is valid as long as the students' answers are honest, unbiased, genuine and objective. However, teachers also indicated that students can lack emotional self-discipline, and be affected by their peers. For example, T_{19s} described that “students exaggerate when they evaluate their teachers”. T_{19s} claimed that “students are driven by their own emotions/opinions... and T_{39s} reflected that “students would mix their personal feelings along with their answers.”

Five teachers asserted that SET can be a valid tool to assess their work if students answer it objectively in a real and honest manner. For instance, t_{16s} asserted that SET is highly beneficial if “we are sure that the student's answers are reliable” and t_{23s} added that if “students can be objective and positive in their criticism.”

Student seriousness. Ten teachers also responded with concern that the seriousness of the students directly affects SET validity. Teachers viewed that some students are serious and are careful in their evaluations while others take SET recklessly without understanding the impact of their evaluations. For example, T_{38s} stated that “some students are careless, while others understand that this feedback will get back to them in a good way.” T_{4i} added that some students are serious while others “are not serious, they take it for fun ...it depends on their last grade, they quarrel with the teacher.”

Seven teachers considered that student seriousness is an important factor in determining the validity of SET and they agreed that some students are serious while others are not. For instance, t_{4s} asserted that “some students often take the initiative to suggest to the class can be better. They gladly give their feedback, preferences, and suggestions even without an official SET. Others, would take it as an opportunity to say negative things or dismiss the class altogether.” t_{5s} added that “many students would like to be heard and voice their opinions; these

students would be serious to give meaningful feedback” while t_{15s} incongruently reported that “most of the students won't be serious enough.”

SET as form of revenge. Three teachers reported that some students use SET as a platform to take revenge on their teachers. For example, T_{10s} expressed that “some students might use the form to retaliate against teachers they don't like.” T_{38s} described that some students “may take this as a mean of revenge or they will not fully grasp the consequences of such evaluation.” T_{2i} added that “some students take this as ok I like this teacher and I'm going to fill in as correct and as of high percentage or whatever and other students I don't like this teacher, this is my revenge and they start to.”

Three teachers in schools who don't have SET also reported that students may take the SET as a form of revenge to express their grudges toward teachers and may judge teachers based on personal biases. For example, t_{11s} asserted that students tend to judge the teacher sometimes based on tiny and meaning less things and t_{13s} asserted that “a student holds grudge against a teacher.”

Demands of subjects. Fifteen teachers viewed that demanding subjects necessitate a more serious, less humorous, and a more demanding approach towards their students. Teachers acknowledged that students must work harder in these more difficult subjects and have greater difficulty earning a good grade. As such, teachers felt that the level of demand in certain subjects might influence students' evaluations of teachers. For example, T_{9s} asserted that “students often confuse the difficulty of the course with their perception of the teacher.” T_{26s} explained that “students tend to vent out when evaluating the teachers especially if the course requires a lot of work.”

Nine teachers reported that the type of subjects taught and the demands of subjects can skew students' answers on SET. For instance, t_{1S} stated that "students are not very mature. They might be biased towards teachers who don't demand much work from them." t_{5S} added that "students like fun and more homework and hard work is not their pleasure in general. I would think that students would like the material itself to the teacher." "It all relies on the teacher how they make the students feel about the demanded course" and "it depends on the course some fields are harder to make students like it. But a good teacher is a good teacher no matter what he is teaching" (t_{7S}, t_{9S}).

Student grades in the subject. Ten teachers also reported that student grades influence their evaluations of teachers. A student might give negative feedback if he/she obtained a bad grade on the subject. For example, T_{17S} explained that "students take their own performance in the course as the major criteria in the teaching process." T_{30S} described that "students may resort to complains to justify their poor performance."

Teacher's ability. Five teachers felt that students' evaluations of teachers are also influenced by teachers' abilities and knowledge; they tend to give positive evaluations to teachers who are knowledgeable of the subject and who have an adequate course design and delivery. T_{1S} explained that to receive adequate feedback, teacher should be "knowledgeable, teacher should also be accurate in his timing and corrections." T_{39S} added that "course design and delivery of content, positive encouragement... affect SET."

Teacher's character and relationship with students. Ten teachers viewed that students usually love the friendly and funny teacher who is easily approachable and who establishes a relationship of trust with them. As such, the personality of the teacher and the student-teacher relationship influence the SET results. For example T_{27S} asserted that "students like the

personality of the teacher more than the way the lesson is taught.” T₁₁S added “some students would answer positively if they like their teacher or if she is funny.”

Ten teachers reported that students consider their teachers as role models and are highly influenced by their characters. As such, a teacher’s personality may skew students’ evaluations. For example, t₅S asserted that “if students like the teacher and think she/he is fun they go easy on evaluating her/ his abilities while completing the SET... If they do not like the teacher and think she/he is not fun or mean they will evaluate abilities in a negative way in accordance with character.” t₆S added that “learning is relational by nature and we live in a highly relational and collectivist environment” and t₂₁S claimed that “in evaluating, students will focus more on the teacher’s character since if they do like the teacher, they won’t have any complaint and they will filling SET as fine with the course & on teacher’s feedback.”

Emergence of Theme 2

A further theme that emerged in the analysis of teachers’ views of SET were teachers’ concerns that the validity of SET is affected by factors related to teachers and students. Teachers’ responses indicated a variety of factors which they considered might affect validity including students’ maturity and understanding of the teaching process, students’ personal biases, subject demands and the grades of students, and teachers’ ability, character, and rapport with students.

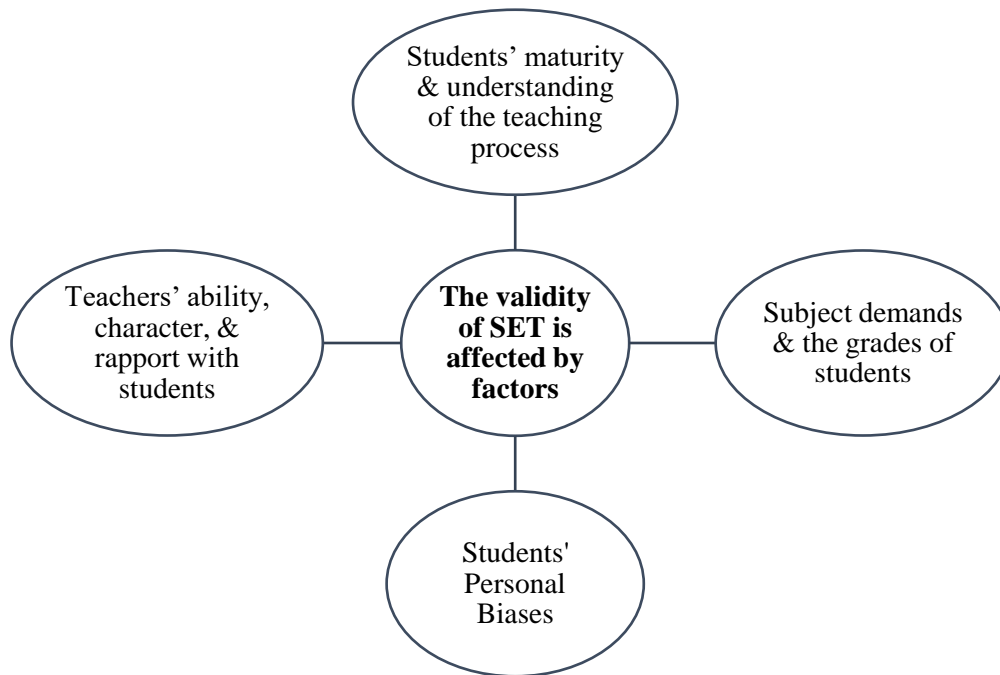


Figure 7. Theme 2: The validity of SET is affected by factors related to teachers and students

Patterns Derived from Codes Related to Theme 3

Questionnaire development and data collection. In the survey, eight teachers indicated that to ensure the validity of SETs and to address the potential biases, the school itself has the responsibility to develop an objective questionnaire that has scientific basis. School administration ought to take into consideration the level of understanding of students and develop questions that guide students toward understanding the complexities of teaching. For example, T_{23S} explained that “questions could be carefully crafted to prevent some students’ biases.” T_{14S} felt that “evaluation questions could be well designed and objective.”

Nine Teachers in schools who do not use SET also reported that the school administration is in responsible to develop a reliable SET that is standardized, that takes into consideration different levels of students, and also accounts for the biases mentioned above. For example, t_{4S}

explained that “SET questions can be standardized for any class. No need to change the questionnaire for different classes. Only the language can be simpler for younger students.” t_{5s} added that it is important that “SET takes into consideration the type of material each teacher is teaching. After all, we cannot compare a physical education class to a physics class.” And t_{7s} added that “It is SET that needs to know how to address the questions and not how knowledgeable the students are in the complexity of teaching. t_{3i} explained that “it's good to get feedback from students, it depends how you also write the questions because you get the answers according to the questions. Good questions will provide you with the right information to know whether your data or the style of teaching is effective or not.” SET can be used “to enhance the learning process that includes both learners and teachers, but not as a tool to “discipline” teachers” (t_{2i}). t_{3i} also added that the school administration can do the SET to “evaluate the teachers to see if they're good or not or to use it as a firing tool to see how we can grow, and after that, a training should be conducted, if not we're only half way, we are damaging and not helping.”

Scope of evaluation. Five teachers felt that the SET should focus on various aspects of teaching and learning. For example, T_{1s} felt that the SET should utilize “objective questions that target learning and teaching experience rather than teacher’s character/personality.” In contrast, T_{4s} indicated that evaluations should focus on issues of character and personality, related to whether “[a] teacher is punctual, fair, humane, respectful, good teacher, caring and conscientious.” T_{40s} explained that “students are not competent to make judgements on course design and grading, their opinions are valid for assessing the quality of delivery and instructions.”

While the issue of the precise content of the evaluation varied in teachers responses, there was wide agreement that various aspects of the teaching and learning experience should be included.

All five teachers who were interviewed reported that if they had the chance they would put certain standards or limitations for SET. For example T_{1i} asserted that it is essential to have teacher portfolio documented because “because a lot of teachers do a lot of amazing things and it's not seen.” T_{2i} wanted to limit the scope of SET to students who are mature “Perhaps I would choose a number of students not all of them, a few number if there is 30 I will choose 10 and I am pretty sure that these 10 would give an objective answer and then the answers that we get and the evaluation that we get it would be much more serious and much more practical.” T_{5i} explained that it is good to “restrict the objectives but for teaching and learning more than the character or personality of the teacher” as the main scopes of the evaluation.

Interestingly, teachers in schools who do not have SET did not mention a scope of evaluation in their survey responses. The reason could be that they are not fully aware what SET questions include and what kind of evaluation it is.

The Fostering of students' awareness. This code was apparent in various responses by teachers about how to improve SETs. Given all the biases that students have while completing SET, ten teachers viewed that the school administration must raise the awareness of students to take SET seriously, to be objective, to understand the importance of their feedback. For example, T_{23s} reported that “students can be serious if they indirectly get educated about what's at stake in the feedback.” T_{40s} added that “we teach students that their feedback is essential to make teachers grow and therefore evaluations could be taken seriously.”

All five teachers in their interviews also reported that it is highly essential to build a favorable school environment that facilitates the implementation of SET and ensures the reliability of the results. This can be done by raising awareness of students and by building a school system that welcomes constructive feedback. For example T_{1i} claimed that the school environment influences students as “students see it, they see it how much we are supportive to each other.” T_{2i} added that “I’m teaching the students after all and their feedback is very important in terms of content if they just sit to learn something new or to modify something.” T_{4i} added that “if the leaders were very serious and they told the students that SET course will be taken into consideration and that the results are important for the career of the teacher, yes I think they will take it more seriously and then we can hence depend on SET. I mean it starts from above I think they should tell the students how serious this step is.” In general it is important to note that the five teachers agreed that the environment at their schools is very supportive. For example, T_{4i} asserted that the school environment is “is supportive, in fact we are like a family and we meet on regular basis and we discuss our problems, and we have the remedial classes, we have counseling and we’re like a family.” T_{5i} added that the school “environment is supportive.”

As mentioned by five teachers in schools who do not have SET, the school administration has the responsibility to raise the awareness of students about the importance of their objectivity and the validity of their answers: this has direct impact on students’ seriousness. For example, t_{4s} asserted that when students “get used to the fact that their opinion is valued and acted upon, they will start taking it more seriously.” t_{19s} added that the school administration can ensure that “the criteria... be clear... for students.”

Proper introduction of SET into the school. Additionally, to ensure the validity of students’ evaluations, four teachers explained that SETs should be gradually introduced into the

school environment. This, they felt, should be done along with an explanation of guidelines of SET, and administrative support for teachers' needs before implementing SET. T_{23S} reported that SET can be effective if "it is gradually and properly introduced into the overall school environment." T_{29S} added that "judgement is scientific and objective and the administration could provide before head all teachers' needs."

Two teachers asserted that the school administration is responsible for properly and adequately introducing the SET into the school environment. For example, t_{19S} asserted that Set "should be implemented and assessed first since it's a way new idea so not sure how serious students might be and if they use it against the teacher." t_{23S} added that "School administrators should be aware of what is going on with regards to teacher – student interaction before applying SET to avoid judgment based on personal narrative."

Data analysis and further evaluation. Ten teachers explained that school administration had a role in analyzing the data, providing clear results and probing for further analysis in needed cases. For example, T_{9S} explained that the role of school administration is to "look for consistent issues that require feedback." T_{17S} added that the school administration "use the data gathered from SET to get more information about learning process for further evaluation and assessment." T_{39S} also added that "if high percentage of students agrees on one similar aspect, then this aspect must be further analysed and highlighted."

Only two teachers reported that the school administration bears the responsibility of adequately analysing the results. For instance t_{4S} asserted that school administration has to "go through it, take the serious points, and discard the jokes and invalid points; they should discuss the valid points and introduce their application into an action plan, so that the students eventually see that at least some of their comments are being translated into action." t_{7S} added that the

school administration has to “analyze it and put it in a form that helps the teacher improve in different areas.”

Three teachers reported in their interviews that if the majority of students have a consistent evaluation then this evaluation is valid. For example, T_{4i} explained that “if 80% of the students admit that this teacher is not good then he is not good.” T_{2i} added that “It also depends on the number, if a small percentage highlighted a certain point while others they did not highlight it, I wouldn't take it into consideration.” T_{1i} explained that the school administration could take into consideration the limitation of the data and address it with other data sources. For example, T_{1i} reported that “if the SET test was the only mean or resources of evaluating a teacher than it is a critical problem, it's not healthy.” T_{3i} added that “we have to take the feedback about the teacher in all aspects and from all places means from the coordinator, from the head of division, from the students, from the parents and also from the teacher himself, we should ask him/her, is it true or not, we should have an interview with the teacher so from all points of view.” T_{3i} added that SET results should be under control and “should be in addition to appraisal done by the administrator also. It's a part of the evaluation of the teacher, it's not all and we should have a proof, we should follow up to see if this is true or not.”

Understanding the limitations of results. Seven teachers viewed that the school administration should understand the limitations of SET results given all the biases and validity factors. For example T_{12s} reported that “SET can provide feedback about 70% of teachers' performance.” T_{19s} added that the school administration “could take into consideration that the bias of students and other factors that may be judging the teacher unfairly.” T_{35s} also added that the school administration could “take into consideration that few number of students are not serious about their answers.”

Analyzing the data properly is completed when the school administration understands that the results of SET can be biased or skewed by the factors mentioned above. T_{5s} explained that the results of SET “if it is taken from a wrong angle it could lead to a deterioration of education since in general children prefer to have fun instead of learning and taking responsibilities.” T_{19s} added that the results of SET can be valid “to a certain extent cause the students should attend a certain level of maturity.”

The integration of results with other data sources. Given the limitations of SET, twelve teachers recommended that school administrators not base the evaluation of teachers solely on SETs. Rather, they felt SET results should be integrated with other sources of data collection such as classroom visits and coordinators’ evaluation of teachers. For example, T_{3s} reported that the SET could not be used alone rather “could be added to the evaluation done by the coordinator and administration... student evaluation is about 75% correct.” T_{20s} added that SET “could be used with a whole battery of other measures to train, coach, monitor and evaluate teachers.”

Ten teachers reported that the SET should not be the only tool to evaluate teachers, rather it could be integrated with other the evaluations done by coordinators and administrators. For instance, t_{10s} explained that school administration could analyze SET with “the teacher's feedback, in order to help the teacher.” t_{14s} added that the school administration can analyze the SET with teacher's feedback, in order to help the teacher improve.” t_{15s} claimed that “coordinators and admin advisors are the ones eligible to evaluate teachers because they are more experience.”

Communication of results with teachers. Eight teachers also described that school administration is responsible to conduct individual meetings with teachers and openly sharing

with them the results of their SETs. T_{24s} reported that the school administration could “send appraisal letters or comments to teachers.” T_{39s} added that the school administration could “discuss the results with encouraging words and professionalism.” T_{40s} finally added that the school administration could discuss with teachers... weaknesses and strengths.”

After properly analyzing the data from SET and integrating it with other sources of data analysis, the school administration could share the results with the teachers anonymously and welcome their feedback. t_{4s} explained that “feedback from students about a certain teacher should not be heard by all teachers. There should be some sort of confidentiality where the teacher meets with the other subject teachers and their supervisor for instance and they discuss the feedback.” t_{9s} added that the school administration can share the results with “teachers to improve their work and the right position for each one.”

Three teachers who were interviewed finally agreed that the school administration should share the results of SET constructively with them. For example T_{2i} reported that “The coordinator actually tells you about the evaluation at the end of the year ... they tell for example this is the highest percentage where students not agree with whatever the aspect is and they start to give solutions maybe or help us to go the way around such aspects.”

All three school leaders emphasized that they adequately analyze the data of SET and share the results with teachers in an open and constructive manner. L_{1i} explained that “We analyze the results and share them with teachers immediately in case there is a major negative feedback. Also, we compare the results with other feedback from other tools we use to see if there the results are correlated or aligned any data we have.” L_{2i} added that “Yea, when the data is collected, I study it and then I present the results of the study (both of the parents and students evaluation) to the board of trustees, then the board of trustees prepare a letter for each and every

teacher appraising the positive points and commenting on the negative points telling that we will be glad that next year u will take into consideration the following remarks came from the students or the parents etc.” L_{3i} finally added that “When we receive them, first I receive them again I take this data and I arrange it I turn it into a form that is informing for teachers in terms of percentages...and we just share them as they are, we share the data, the charts as they are with the teachers and we discuss them together. First we send them before that so they can look at them alone and reflect on them and then we sit and discuss.”

Development of the school. Seven teachers described that the school administration can use the results of the SET in the development of the school such as improving the teacher’s academic performance, improving the educational level of the school, and using the data for promotional purposes. T_{10s} reported that school administration can “develop strategies to improve employees’ skills and work dynamics.” T_{18s} added reported that the school administration can “draw conclusions that make informed decisions to enhance students’ achievement and develop the whole educational system.”

Two teachers reported that school administration can use the data to devise actions to improve the educational system of the school. t_{5s} explained that school administration could “try to learn from the data about how students view the teacher. They should see if there is an approach to learning that they can change according to their findings. They should also add this evaluation to the teachers file and consider it in the general evaluation of the teacher.” t_{11s} added that school administration can “Analyze it and make action plans to improve and create new teaching methodologies.”

Teachers’ responsibilities. In addition, seven teachers indicated that the implication of SET necessitates that teachers use the results of SETs to improve their skills, to receive

constructive feedback, and to take students feedback sensitively. For example, T_{2s} explained that the “teacher can use these notes to improve their skills.” T_{7s} added that “ideal teacher should be open minded and flexible.” T_{30s} added that “an objective teacher will do self-criticism and use SET to enhance his career.” T_{38s} finally added that “when teachers know about this evaluation, they start to improve themselves... teacher will improve their planning in order to highlight their potentials to students.”

Three teachers reported that their role in the school system is to be open to feedback and change. t_{7s} asserted that “This will also show how serious the teacher is about learning new methods or enhancing style” and t_{17s} added that “teachers... shouldn’t feel offended if the feedback was negative.”

Impact on teachers’ career. The SET implication on teachers’ career and renewal of contracts depend on school policies. Twelve teachers explained that SET results could lead to termination of the teacher’s contract, if they agree with other evaluations. For example, T_{1s} explained that the SET results can have serious impact on the teacher if “it agrees with the coordinator and head of divisions’ evaluation.” T_{4s} added that SET results can also have negative impact on the teacher “if 90% of students agree on a weakness...” T_{36s} finally added that SET can serve as “another reason for termination in case the administration is not happy with the teacher.”

Seven teachers asserted that the impact of SET on teachers’ career is highly related to the policies of the school. t_{5s} asserted that “: if the SET is use wisely it can help (not being the sole type of evaluation) identify which teachers should stay or change or move to a different career.” t_{6s}, however, explained that “It should not get there! I would raise a question mark on the performance of the academic coordinator overseeing the teacher if SET is needed to decide the

direction of the teacher's career. SET ought to be a constructive tool that enhances the learning process and in its way suggests valuable observations to the teacher towards a better performance." t₂₃s added that "It might jeopardize the career of a teacher if students agree beforehand to be negative because of personal issues with teachers."

The Emergence of Theme 3

In addition to the benefits of SETs and factors affecting their validity, the final theme that emerged from teachers' responses to the survey about SETs concerned the role of the school in their implementation. According to the teachers surveyed, the school plays important roles in the implementation of SET related to the following subthemes: development of reliable SET, building appropriate school environment, interpretation and dissemination of results, and implication of results.

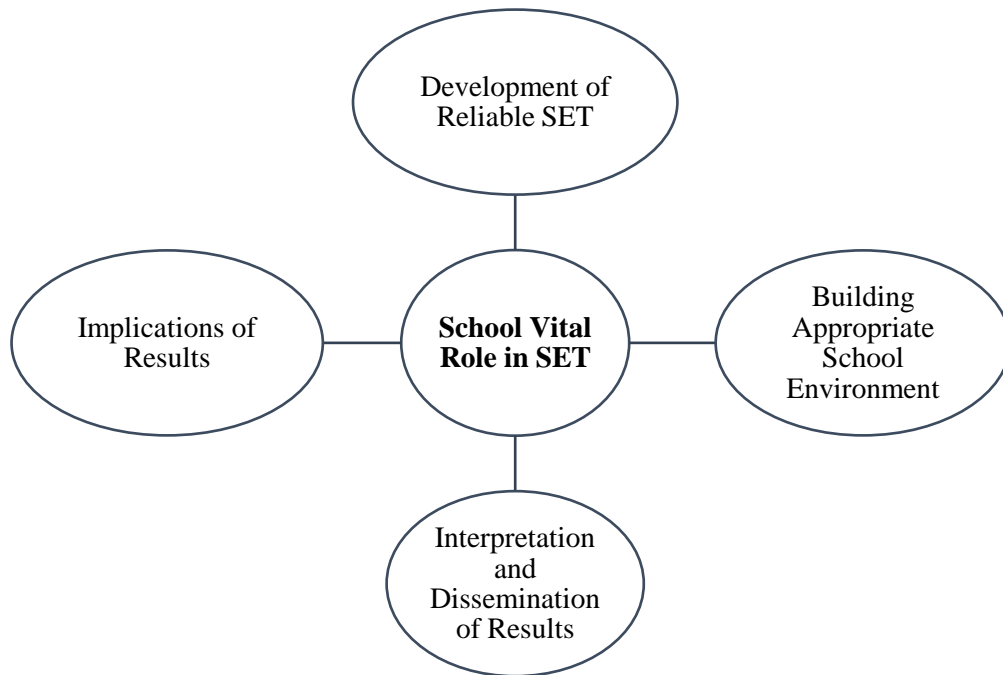


Figure 8. Theme 3: Schools have a vital role in SET

The themes and subthemes that emerged from the data are as follows:

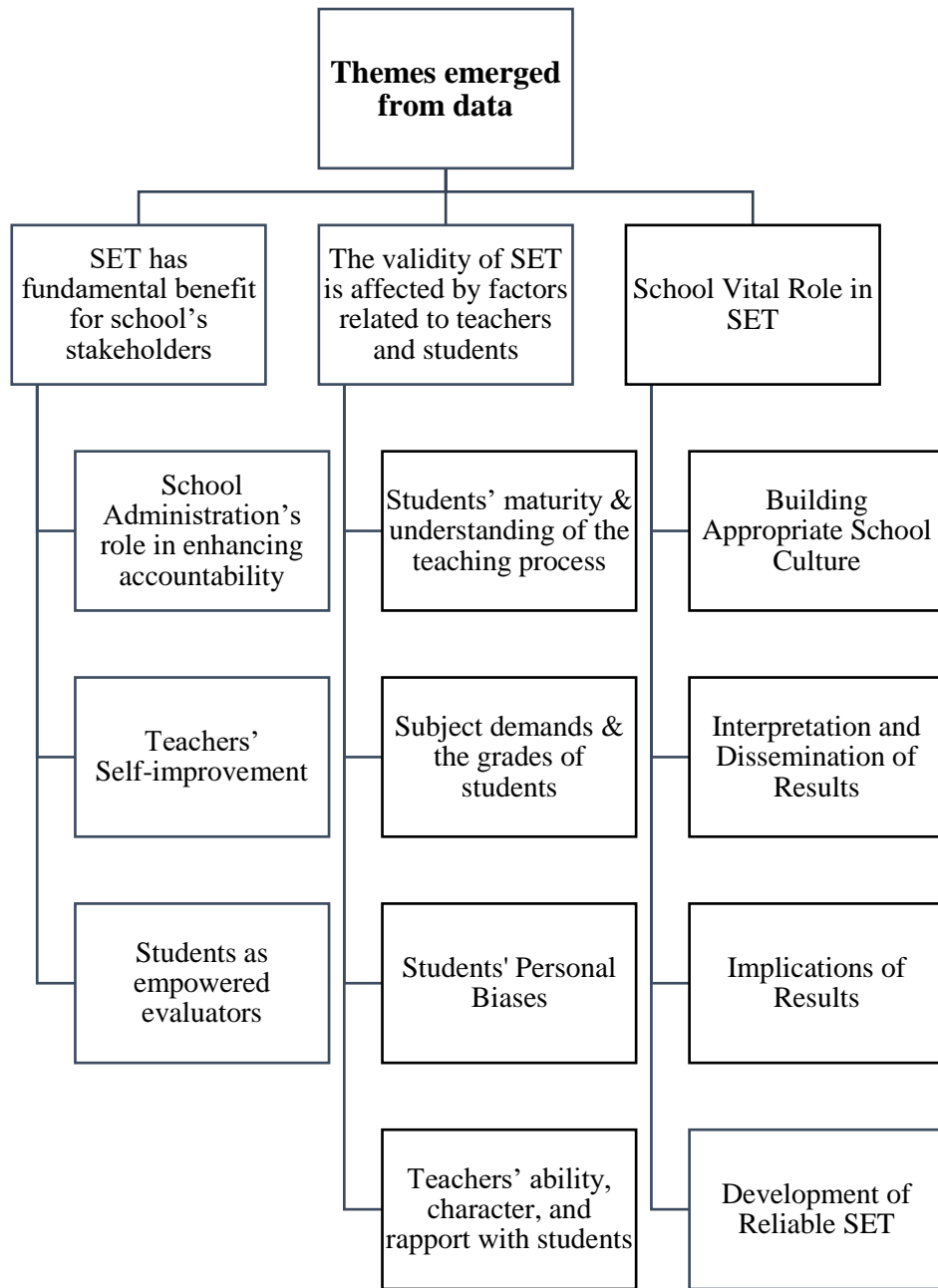


Figure 9. Themes and subthemes that emerged from data

Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter gives an overview of the study highlighting its purpose, the research questions, and the analysis of the findings, including implications and recommendations for practice and research. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study's significance, limitations and recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore secondary teachers' views of SET at a number of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon and to identify the elements that influence teachers' views.

The research questions were as follows:

- 1- What views do secondary teachers at schools operating in Beirut hold about SET?
- 2- What elements influence secondary teachers' views of SET?

The research design focused on the views of 73 teachers in secondary schools in Beirut. Surveys and Interviews were the main sources of data collection.

Using thematic analysis, 3 main themes with subthemes emerged from the results of the data collected: 1) SET is beneficial for students, teachers, and school administration; 2) There are factors affecting the validity of SET such as students' understanding and knowledge, students' personal biases, subjects taught, and teachers' abilities and characteristics; 3) Schools have a vital role in SET: development of reliable SET, building an appropriate school environment, implications of results, and interpretation and dissemination of results. The themes and subthemes are presented in Figure 9.

Teachers' Views of SET

In general, a majority of teachers in schools who have SET and in those who don't have SET had positive views towards SET, a few of them had some reservation, and very few

had negative views. When comparing this with previous literature, it is remarkable that teachers from the 8 schools who participated in this research had more positive views than shown in other research. As an example, in the research conducted by Kauchak, Peterson, and Driscoll (1985), teachers were equally divided among three different views regarding SET; the most positive third was positive, the middle third had reservations, and the least positive third were opposed to the use of SET. Also, based on Schwab and Iwanicki's (1988) study, 41% of the teachers who participated in their study had negative views of SET, 47% had positive views of SET some reservation, and only 11% had strong positive views of SET. On the other hand, although there are no specific percentages mentioned in their study, Elstad et al. (2017) found that teachers tend to agree that SET is an acceptable means of assessing their teaching but have several reservations, which is similar to this study's result.

Theme 1: SET has fundamental benefits for the school's stakeholders. Teachers reported that the use of SET has fundamental benefits for the school's stakeholders: students' role as empowered evaluators, teachers' self-improvement and the school administration's role in enhancing accountability.

SET has fundamental benefits for students' role as empowered evaluators. Based on the results gathered from the surveys and interviews, many teachers view SET as beneficial and important for students as it gives opportunity for students to express their opinion. This was explicitly mentioned in the survey for teachers in schools that have SET, the ones who do not have SET, and in the interviews. Teachers described students as an essential part of the educational system, its main customers, and the target audience so it makes sense for them to exercise their rights by stating their opinion about their teachers. Additionally, school leaders also emphasized the importance of giving students the right to voice their opinion.

Students' right to evaluate was mentioned in the responses of all the five instruments used in this research. Teachers stressed the importance of students' involvement in their evaluation. However, this view was minimally mentioned in the research used in the study. Almost none of the studies that the researcher found highlighted teachers' views of the benefit of using SET for students to fulfill their rights to voice their opinion. For the teachers to mention it vividly in the different instruments used in the research, it means that teachers respect the students' right in evaluating their performance.

Additionally, teachers viewed students as legitimate evaluators of their teachers. Recognizing that students are in direct and daily contact with their teachers every day, the consensus was that they can provide the most accurate feedback about their teachers. This view is in agreement with several previous studies such as Follman (1992); Goe et al.(2008); Peterson, Wahlquist, and Bone (2000); Worrell and Kuterbach (2001) who noted that SET can provide reliable and valid information concerning teacher performance since they have direct and daily contact with the teachers more than any other evaluator. Moreover, Peterson et al. (2000) discussed that students are significant to the work of teachers, and they see teachers from a point of view different from those of administrators, other teachers, parents, or researchers.

In addition, teachers considered that SET can empower students to play an active role in the school. It makes students feel more respected and valued. This was mentioned a number of times in the survey of teachers. However, the researcher couldn't find this discussed in previous research.

It is evident from the findings that teachers view SET as beneficial for students. Some of these finding were not conferred in other studies; hence, this study could suggest that SET benefits on students be further investigated by other researchers in the future.

SET has fundamental benefits for teachers' self-improvement. Teachers view SET as valuable for their own work as it serves as an evaluation for their work, it fosters their self-development and development of the learning process, and it improves their relationship and communication with students.

Teachers tend to use SET to evaluate their work, discover their strengths and weaknesses, and reflect on their teaching. SET also gives teachers an insight on how relevant the material is for the students. This result is similar to what Elstad et al. (2017) and Surgenor (2013) found in their studies. Teachers tend to agree that SET is an acceptable means of assessing their teaching (Elstad et al., 2017) and it helps them recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching (Surgenor, 2013).

Moreover, teachers view SET as providing a self-development role and an impact on the refinement and progression of the learning process. SET encourages teachers to work on their weaknesses and to improve themselves. It also allows them to work on improving their teaching techniques and quality of teaching. This finding is consistent with previous research. According to Chan, Luk, and Zeng (2014), SET can provide valuable information for teachers that will enhance student learning. Also, according to Balch (2012) teachers use SET results to improve their teaching, to identify areas for improvement and to work on developing appropriate strategies. Moreover, this finding is similar to Yao and Grady (2005), Chan et al. (2014) and Sojka et al. (2002) where faculty members make changes to their course content and teaching styles as a result of student evaluations.

According to teachers' views, another benefit for SET on teachers is building more positive relationships with students. This happens when teachers welcome student feedback and work on making changes according to the feedback. This is an area that previous literature hasn't been discussed and is worth investigating more in the future.

SET has fundamental benefits for school administration's role in enhancing the school's accountability towards students. Teachers considered that schools have the right to evaluate teachers through SET as administrators cannot always attend entire class sessions as students do. This method of evaluation also ensures that teachers comply with the rules and regulations of the school and that they are up to the school standards of academics.

Interestingly, this subtheme was only mentioned by teachers who are in schools that have SET and was not stated in any way by teachers who are in schools that do not have SET.

Perhaps having never experienced this type of evaluation, they could not identify the role or outcome of the administration. Another reason could be that schools who do not have SET yet are not used to having evaluation as part of their school environment, so they cannot see its benefits for the administration. For instance, (t₂₁) said that “my school does not apply SET as part of the evaluation system since accountability is not part of its environment and since that informal evaluation process might be taking place.”

This result is contradictory with a previous study the researcher used in literature by Slade & McConville (2006) where teachers argued that SET does not serve their educational purposes; and furthermore, it is a violation of their rights and freedoms in class and as teachers.

From the first theme that emerged from the data, teachers evidently consider the use of SET as beneficial on the three different levels. Therefore, it should give an incentive for school administration to either implement SET in their school if they do not have this practice or strengthen the evaluation system if it is already in place. It is very interesting to see that teachers appreciate the role of students in this process; it is, in fact, remarkable as it was not highlighted in any previous research that the researcher found.

Theme 2: The validity of SET is affected by factors related to teachers and students. A further theme that emerged in the researcher's analysis of teachers' views of SETs were teachers' concerns that the validity of SET is affected by factors related to teachers and students. Teachers' responses indicated a variety of factors which they considered might affect validity including students' maturity and understanding of teaching processes, students' personal biases, subject demands and the grades of students, and teachers' ability, character, and rapport with students.

Students' maturity and understanding of teaching process. One significant factor that teachers indicated might affect the validity of SET was the students themselves. Students are the ones who take the SET; as such, their age, class level, maturity, and understanding of the complexity of teaching play an essential role in determining the validity of the results of SET.

Teachers view the validity of SET as dependent on the age and class level of students. They would say that mainly middle and secondary students are the reliable ones in providing accurate evaluation of their teachers. This is in agreement with previous research such as Dretzke et al. (2015), where teachers viewed SET differently based on the grade level. The higher the grade level taught by teachers, the higher their support of SET was. Primary grade teachers gave significantly lower agreement than secondary grade teachers to the use of SET in improving their teaching effectiveness.

Teachers had mixed views about the maturity of students. The majority of teachers agreed that not all students are mature enough to reliably evaluate their teachers. While some others viewed students as mature, with the ability to compare and judge reliably. This is consistent with previous studies such as LaFee (2014) who concluded that teachers in schools view students as too young, immature, and erratic to fairly and reliably evaluate their instructors. Meanwhile, a more recent study by Elstad et al. (2017) found that students in high

school reported a mixture of mature and immature assessments of their teachers' educational practices. Similar to the teachers' mixed views of students' maturity, teachers also had mixed views regarding students' understanding of the complexities of the teaching profession. Some of these views are in agreement with Kauchak et al. (1985) when teachers were doubtful that students could understand the complexities of teaching and differentiate between competent and incompetent teachers.

Students' personal biases. In addition to the age, maturity, and students' understanding of teachers' profession, the results found that teachers view SET as a biased instrument for many reasons such as students' lack of honesty and subjectivity, lack of seriousness, and use of SET forms to take revenge on teachers.

Teachers asserted that SET can be a valid tool to assess their work if students answer it objectively in a real and honest manner. Teachers tend to agree that many students are subjective in their evaluations. LaFee (2014) discussed this factor in his study and concluded that teachers believe that students have limited knowledge on teaching, leading them to evaluate based on personal feelings, their own expectations and a lack of any objectivity in their judgement. Additionally, Surgenor (2013) also highlighted in his study that, regarding validity, faculty expressed concern about sampling bias, which may result in questionable, extreme comments: extremely positive comments from committed students and extremely negative comments from dissatisfied students.

Teachers considered that student seriousness is an important factor in determining the validity of SET and they agreed that some students are serious while others are not. This is consistent with Sojka et al. (2002) who stated that faculty's opposition to SET is based on two concerns: students' ability to evaluate accurately and their lack of seriousness.

Subject demands and the grades of students. A further factor that affected the validity of SETs according to teachers' views was what teachers described as student bias

related to the subject. The majority of teachers viewed that SET validity might be affected by the difficulty of subjects of study. This theme is related to both the subject itself and students' responses to grades received in that subject.

Teachers felt that the level of demand in certain subjects might influence SET since students work harder in these more difficult subjects and have greater difficulty earning a good grade. Several studies mentioned in the researcher's literature is in agreement with this result. For instance, Beran and Rokosh (2009), Chan et al. (2014), and Marsh (2000) found that many faculty members believed that SET is affected by many factors including course difficulty, grading leniency, and lack of interest in the subject taught. Also, Sojka, Gupta, and Deeter-Schmelz (2002) revealed in their research study that faculty members believe that students give better ratings to less demanding instructors. There is also an agreement (ICE report, 2005) where faculty considered that SET was affected by the workload that they give students.

Teachers' ability, character, and their rapport with students. In addition to students' understanding and knowledge, students' personal biases, and the subject matter itself, the final factor that teachers viewed to have an effect on the validity of SETs was the teachers themselves. Teachers view the abilities of the teacher as well as his or her character to have direct influence on students' evaluations. Different studies are in agreement with this result. Elstad et al. (2017) concluded that teachers who have a positive professional relationship with their students have confidence in SET more than those who have a less positive relationship with their students. Sojka et al. (2002) also showed that faculty members believe that students give better ratings for professors with high entertainment ability and personality. Moreover, Stein et al. (2013) found that some faculty members were uncertain about the reliability of SET since students can be biased towards teachers that are popular among them and liked by their students.

According to this theme, teachers consider that SET needs to be cautiously used as there are some factors that affect its validity. The results of this theme are very much in agreement with all the international literature. It can be noted that teachers in the Lebanese context are not much different in how they consider these factors. The implication of this result is for a school's administration to be aware of the factors mentioned that affect SET and to be cautious with their resulting evaluations, keeping in mind the limitations of this evaluative tool.

Theme 3: Schools have a vital role in SET. In addition to the benefits of SETs and factors affecting their validity, the final theme that emerged from teachers' responses about SET concerned the role of the school in their implementation. According to teachers, the school plays an important role in the implementation of SET related to the following subthemes: developing a reliable SET, building appropriate school environment, interpreting and disseminating the results and their implications.

Development of reliable SET. The majority of teachers considered that school administration has an important role in developing reliable SET questionnaires that are standardized, that take into consideration different levels of students, that account for the biases and that determine the scope of evaluation. The researcher could not find literature that discussed this issue. Hence, this is a new finding highlighted in this study.

Building appropriate school environment. Teachers consider it important for the school administration to build an appropriate school environment to ensure that the SET provides valid results and limits the biases involved in SET evaluations. In other words, the school administration bears the responsibility of raising the awareness of students regarding SET and the proper introduction of SET into the school.

Teachers viewed that the school administration must raise the awareness of students to take SET seriously, to be objective, and to understand the importance of their feedback. It

is essential to build a favorable school environment that facilitates the implementation of SET and ensures the reliability of the results. This can be done by raising awareness of students and by building a school system that welcomes constructive feedback.

Additionally, to ensure the validity of students' evaluations, teachers explained that SETs should be gradually introduced into the school environment. This, they felt, should be done along with an explanation of guidelines of SET, and administrative support for teachers' needs before implementing SET.

This said, building an appropriate school environment through raising awareness and proper introduction of SET in schools is a new point of discussion. The researcher found no prior study related to this finding. This is a unique point that shows the level of maturity teachers have in our schools. Environment will also be more explicitly discussed among the elements that may influence teachers' views of SET.

Interpretation and dissemination of results. A third subtheme related to the role of schools in SET, according to teachers, was the function of school administration in interpreting and disseminating data from the SETs. This involves data analysis and evaluation by understanding the limitations of results, integrating results with other data sources, and sharing results with teachers. In agreement with the literature, Schulz, Sud, and Crowe (2014) identified one of the challenges when using SET in schools is making effective use of the results. Also, Joshua and Joshua (2004) concluded that teachers consider that the school administration should understand the limitations of results given that the ages, social backgrounds and orientations of Nigerian students don't allow SET to be valid, reliable, interpretable and generalizable.

Teachers asserted that schools are responsible for sharing the results individually with them. This supports the study by Elstad et al. (2017) that found that feedback from SET can improve teaching practices by providing secondary teachers with constructive feedback with

which to help improve the quality of their teaching. Additionally, Balch (2012) suggested that teachers will invest more in SET when they are given the opportunity to analyze the data these reports provide and understand their value for enhancing teaching effectiveness.

Implication of results. Finally, in addition to developing a reliable SET, building an appropriate school environment, and interpreting and disseminating results, teachers viewed that schools play a vital role in the implication of results. The results of SETs have important implications for the development of the school and on the teachers' careers. As such, school administrators and teachers have certain responsibilities regarding SET results.

The SET implication on teachers' career and renewal of contracts depend on school policies. Teachers consider that if SET is used wisely it can help identify which teachers should stay or leave but it should not be the only evaluation tool. Teachers believe that these decisions cannot be made entirely based on SET results. This is agreeable with a few previous studies, such as, Sojka et al. (2002) who highlighted the opposition to the use of data by administrators when making decisions regarding a faculty's promotion and/or a salary raise or penalty. Similarly, Surgenor (2013) expressed teachers' concerns about the use of SET as the only means of making decisions regarding their reward or penalty. Moreover, based on a study completed at the American University of Beirut in 2005, 81% of the faculty did not agree that SET results should be used in making decisions about them concerning their promotions and salaries at work.

Based on the third theme, schools have a vital role in SET, putting a big responsibility on school administrations to create the environment of evaluation in their schools before they actually impose evaluation on teachers. This requires spreading awareness among students on how to evaluate objectively and how to use SET effectively. It equally requires building awareness among teachers on how the results could be used and how they might benefit from SET results. There is also a responsibility on the school to integrate the results from SET with

other evaluation tools as it was clear from the themes before that SET cannot be used as the only evaluation method for teachers.

Elements that Influence Teachers' Views of SET

In previous studies mentioned in the literature review section, researchers found different elements that might influence teachers' views of SET such as gender, age, years of experience and subjects taught. The researcher collected data about these elements but did not find any relevance of these results on teachers' views. Further study using quantitative methods is suggested to get more input about these elements. Nevertheless, the research was able to come up with new elements from the data collected that were embedded in the teachers' and school leaders' responses in the surveys and interviews. In the third theme from the data, schools have a vital role in SET, the researcher found the following:

Theme 3: Schools have a vital role in SET. According to teachers, the school plays important roles in the implementation of SET and among them is building appropriate school environment, interpretation and dissemination of results and implication of results.

Building appropriate school environment. Teachers view is as important for the school administration to build an appropriate school environment. In other words, the school administration bears the responsibility of raising the awareness of students regarding SET and the proper introduction of SET into the school. This implies that when the school provides a school environment of evaluation that teachers and students are aware of and trained on using, teachers would have more positive views towards SET. School environment is used to refer to "the atmosphere, culture, resources, and social networks of a school" (Loukas & Murphy, 2007, p.293). Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) recognized four aspects of school environment: physical and social-emotional safety, quality of teaching and learning between individuals at a school, relationships and collaboration, and structural

environment (Cohen et al., 2009). These aspects influence the experiences of individuals within the school (Cohen et al., 2009).

Teachers in their interviews asserted that the school environment paves the way for adequate and reliable SET. For instance, t2i reported that “the environment of the school motivates for teaching and learning and upon my experience there is a certain environment, the environment that encourages the students for evaluating.” t2i also added that the school environment has direct contact on the teachers’ views toward SET “if the school is open and allows such an evaluation system to be used by its students then I will be accepting of it in a better way, and if it is the opposite I will be submitting to what the school has without compromising about the learning process.” Also, t2i added that “my school does not apply SET as part of the evaluation system since accountability is not part of its environment and since that informal evaluation process might be taking place. Sometimes within the environment there is no room for growth and seeking other perspectives or other systems so sometimes they are very traditional in what they do” (t3i).

The influence of school environment on teachers’ views of SET was also evident when the school leaders were interviewed. School leaders emphasized that their effort in creating the appropriate environment of SET had impacted the validity of SET and teachers’ view of SET. For instance, L3i explained that “at the beginning not everyone was comfortable with the idea; now they just wait for it They wait for the feedback and there are some teachers who trace the results from three years ago but now you see they really worked on certain areas and they really improved and they do take the comments seriously and they work on that even if sometimes they don't admit it.” L1i also clarified that “I have never gotten negative feedback from teachers...Moreover, I believe that teachers feel supported when you involve them in concerns and problems and when you and they try to solve the issues in a constructive manner.” L2i finally added that “this is my first year as principle so I

can speak about that feeling first hand. The first year was very difficult, but then we got used to it. Half of the teachers, when they get the letter, come back to ask questions.”

School environment is certainly an important element that influences teachers’ views of SET. When the school provides the right environment for evaluation in school, there will be less hesitation of the part of teachers to be evaluated by their students. A positive school environment results in an increase in teaching efficacy and teachers’ job satisfaction (Taylor & Tashakkori, 2010).

Interpretation and dissemination of results. One of the school’s role in terms of SET is to interpret and disseminate data from the SETs. This involves data analysis and evaluation, understanding the limitations of results, integrating results with other data sources, and sharing results with teachers.

The way school administrators interpret results and use other data sources impacts teachers. The three school leaders who were interviewed emphasized that the results of SET are not analyzed alone, rather data from other sources are integrated with SET results to obtain valid and sound results. L_{1i} explained that the “The teacher evaluation process has different elements at our school and hence does not depend on one single factor to avoid bias and subjectivity. We have: 1- Classroom observations: coordinators must conduct a minimum of two every term (we have 3 terms). 2- Parents' input through phone calls, meetings and Parent - Teacher meetings' documents. 3- SET 4- Appraisal Form that includes: Self - Assessment - Coordinator's Assessment and Head of Division's Assessment. This is a summative tool that is completed at the end of the academic year. 5- Students' results and academic improvement.” L_{2i} added that “At the end of the year in May, we send questionnaires to the parents' committee or sometimes to the parents themselves, asking about not only the teachers, specific teachers individually but also overall on the school's atmosphere, the classes, the lessons, everything - the hygiene, and activities...Students from

about grade 8 and above to 12 gather in the hall and we distribute to them questionnaires with 10 questions for each student which they fill, and they also have the right to comment, to write their own comments either positive or negative and then we evaluate it.” L_{3i} finally explained that “the teacher evaluation process includes formative and summative points. The formative is basically based on the continuous work that is done with the teachers, supervision or classroom observation, meetings, coordination, and feedback. The evaluation process is not something done once at a certain point in the year. It is an ongoing process of working with the teacher, getting feedback, giving feedback, and working on developing certain areas. So, it is a continuous process. It is a cycle and all of the, let's call it information or data that emerge during the process gets compiled into what we called the summative evaluation at the end of the year.”

The interpretation of results and integrating them with other sources are also elements that affect teachers' views. If the schools use SET results alone, teachers would be more negative towards SET and would have more reservations. It was mentioned by many teachers that SET results should be integrated with other data sources such as the evaluation done by the coordinators and school principals. Teachers would be more positive if the results of SET are not used alone in their evaluation. Integrating results with other data sources could be one of the elements that affect teachers' views of SET.

Implication of results. Teachers' views are affected by how the results are going to be used. This was evident when teachers were not supportive of the use of SET alone for firing teachers. “I would raise a question mark on the performance of the academic coordinator overseeing the teacher if SET is needed to decide the direction of the teacher's career. SET ought to be a constructive tool that enhances the learning process and in its way suggests valuable observations to the teacher towards a better performance” (t_{6s}).

The purpose of evaluation could be an element that influence teachers' views depending on how the results are going to be used, if for summative or formative purposes. This is consistent with previous studies such as Elstad et al. (2017) and Katsuno, (2010) where they found that teachers' view of SET is related to their understanding of the purpose of evaluation. When teachers view the purpose of evaluation as useful for developing their own efforts as teachers, they tend to be positive. However, if it is used as a means to control teachers, their views may vary.

Conclusion

The present study explored secondary teachers' views of SET at a number of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon and identified elements that influenced teachers' views. In general, secondary teachers in Beirut have positive views towards SET in terms of its fundamental benefits on students as empowered evaluators, on teachers as it helps them in self-improvement and in having better communication with students, and on administration as it helps them in enhancing the school's accountability towards students. Also, teachers view that students' maturity and understanding of the complexity of teaching process, subject demands and the grades of students, as well as teachers' ability, character and rapport with students are factors that affect the validity of SET. Moreover, teachers asserted that schools have a vital role in developing reliable SET, building appropriate school environment, analyzing the data, understanding the limitations of SET results, integrating results with other data sources, sharing results with teachers, and making appropriate decisions. As for the elements that might influence teachers' views, school environment, and interpretation and implications of SET results can contribute to teachers' views of SET.

This study looked into the particularities of the Lebanese context and few conclusions can be made based on that. First, there are only 10 schools in Beirut that use SET as part of their teachers' evaluation. This is a very small number in relation to the large number of

schools in Beirut. This could mean that the culture of teacher evaluation is not yet well integrated in the Lebanese schools. It might be that teachers still understand evaluation as a critique and not as an opportunity to improve. The resistance to evaluation speaks to a deeper cultural issue that needs to be addressed in this context. Second, the number of male teachers versus female teachers is very low. In all the eight schools that participated in the study, the number of female teachers was higher than male teachers. This may also be a cultural factor related to the Lebanese context. Third, one of the themes that emerged from the data was teachers' views on factors that affect the validity of SET. When comparing teachers' views about the factors that affect the validity of SET in this study with other previous studies, it is evident that teachers have similar views to other teachers in other countries and their views are not different from their counterparts abroad. On the other hand, the views of teachers on the fundamental benefits of SET on students is quite unique in comparison to other studies done before. Very little has been written about the benefits of SET on students. This study showed that teachers view students as legitimate evaluators and their voice is very central in evaluation.

Recommendations for Practice

This study can facilitate some recommendations to school leadership. SET as shown in this study is an important instrument to evaluate teachers. Teachers emphasized the students' rights to evaluate and the legitimacy of their evaluations. This should give motivation to schools who have not previously used SET in their schools to consider adding SET as part of their teachers' evaluation. Students as the first contact with teachers in classes and the ones mainly affected by teachers' teaching, it is important to include their evaluation of teachers as part of the teachers' evaluation. However, this needs to happen carefully. First, the development of SET questions need to be carefully considered. The questions need to be written in a simple language that is understandable for students with different levels of

understanding and maturity. Moreover, the evaluation questions should be written in measurable terms. Vague and complex evaluation questions need to be avoided. General questions need to be broken down into specific questions that ask for concrete evidence. Second, students should not be asked to evaluate teachers before they are trained on how to evaluate. Students need to first understand the importance of evaluation before they start evaluating. School leadership need to build the capacity of students to be able to evaluate by improving the knowledge and skills of students about evaluation. This could happen through training students on how to evaluate. Students need to understand the importance of evaluation and the significance of expressing their voices. This may not happen in one session. It's a continuous process that may happen over a period of time until students are ready. Also, schools have the responsibility to provide an appropriate school environment that not only accepts evaluation but imbibes evaluation as part of who they are. When the schools provide the appropriate environment and awareness, teachers will be more accepting of SET and students can be better evaluators. Moreover, the school leadership has a role in developing trust between administration and teachers where teachers understand the importance of evaluation for their own development and not as a tool to make decisions about them. Third, teacher evaluation as a term may be a reason for teachers' resistance because of the label "evaluation". One suggestion can be using the term teacher development instead. The word development shows more the purpose rather than the mean. Also, instead of using the term SET, schools can use Reciprocal student reflections. This means that the evaluation would rather be a reflection on self and on the teachers. The questions can then be targeted on how much the students are learning, engaging, and participating in their courses and at the same time reflecting on teachers' teaching. Fourth, schools should be more aware of the factors that influence SET such as students' age, maturity, subjectivity, etc. and not make decisions about teachers based on SET alone. The results need to be compared to other

evaluations such as the coordinator's evaluation. Relying on SET as the only means of evaluation questions the validity of evaluation. Students are not experts in the area of teaching so their evaluation is not sufficient enough if not included with other means of evaluation. Fifth, the teachers emphasized the importance of sharing results with them. Teachers have the right to know their evaluation so they can work on their weakness and highlight their strengths. Also, teachers maybe more positive with the use of SET in their evaluation when they are aware of the results and get the chance to discuss them with their colleagues or superiors.

Limitations

One of the limitations that occurred during data collection is getting the school's approval to participate in the research. The researcher could not get the approval of the all the schools that use SET and worked with 50% of the schools that were previously assigned to be involved in the research study. Another limitation was that in some schools, not many teachers completed the survey. In some schools where they have at least 15 secondary teachers, only 4 teachers completed the survey.

This research targeted teachers' views in secondary schools in Beirut. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the whole Lebanese population of private secondary schools as teachers' views might differ in other areas in Lebanon. In addition, the sample of teachers consisted of 73 teachers who agreed to participate in the research. This sample is small, hence, results related to the views of teachers cannot be generalized to the whole population of secondary teachers in private schools operating in Lebanon.

Another limitation is that the researcher couldn't evaluate certain elements such as gender, age, years of experiences, subjects taught, and academic qualifications. To study these elements, the researcher could have used a mixed method.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study identified different views of teachers regarding SET in Beirut. It could be interesting as well to investigate different views of teachers regarding SET in other areas in Lebanon to compare any differences related to the area where the schools are. It would also be enriching for research to look at the views of students regarding SET and more in-depth study on the school leaders' views of SET. This brings input from three main stakeholders of the schools. School environment was highlighted in this study as contributing to teachers' views of SET and that building a favorable school environment that facilitates the implementation of SET could bring more meaningful evaluations. It would then be valuable if future research targets the influence of school culture on teachers' views. This could happen through using a culture scale that teachers can complete and then studied in a quantitative approach. For future research, it would be of importance to do this study with a mixed method. Using a mixed methods approach can greatly enhance our understanding of teachers' views of SET and can also assist in increasing the findings' reliability and credibility through the triangulation of the difference evidence results. Through this, generalisation of the study findings can be proposed. Moreover, the elements that might influence teachers' views such as gender, years of experience, and age can be studied quantitatively which will enhance the research results.

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APPENDIX A**Survey questions for teachers in schools that use SET and for those who don't use SET:**

This survey contributes towards my research study titled “The Views of Secondary Teachers in Beirut Regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching and the Elements Influencing those Views”. Student Evaluation of Teaching known as **SET**, is when students provide feedback about their courses and report on their experiences anonymously allowing teachers to view their feedback.

Thank you for accepting to fill the survey below. Your answers will be treated with high confidentiality. If you wish to participate in an interview about the same topic, please write your name and answer with YES on question 13.

Age: _____

Gender: Male Female

Classes you teach: _____

Subjects you teach: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

Academic qualifications:

High school

Technical training

Bachelor's degree, area of specialty: _____

Master's degree; , area of specialty: _____

Other: _____

1- Does your school use SET?

2- How do you feel about your school using SET? Why?

3- In your opinion, is it right to take students' opinion when evaluating teachers? Why?

4- In your opinion, are students able to understand the complexities of the teaching profession? Why?

5- In your opinion, are students serious enough to provide meaningful feedback to teachers?

Why?

6- Do you think that SET could provide valuable information about teacher's performance?

Why?

7- Do you support the use of SET by school administrators? To what extent? Why?

8- What do school leaders do with the data gathered from SET?

9- Do you think that SET can seriously jeopardize the career of a teacher? Why?

10- Do you think SET could be used as an effective tool to enhance student learning? Why?

(Another question: If yes, How?)

11- Do you think SET results would be different if the course is demanding? Why?

12- Do you think students are influenced by teacher's character or teacher's ability when completing the SET? Why?

13- Would you like to take part in an interview to discuss SET more in depth? Yes No

APPENDIX B**Interview questions with teachers in schools that use SET:**

Introduction questions:

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How many hours do you teach per week?
3. Are you fully responsible for the courses you teach? How much power do you have to be able to make changes etc.?
4. Do you typically engage in professional development activities?

Teachers' Views of SET:

1. Generally, do you think students are able to make judgements about the quality of teaching and their learning experience?
2. Would you make significant changes to course content based on SET? Why?
3. Can you say that SET provides you with feedback that will enable you to identify strengths and weaknesses in your teaching methods? Why?
4. Do you discuss student feedback with colleagues (e.g. teaching colleagues, academic staff developers etc.) in order to make sense/learn from it? How does this happen? Is there encouragement to do this?

School Environment and Leadership:

1. If you want to describe your school environment, can you say that it is supportive? Why?
2. Do you think the school environment can influence your opinion about SET? In what sense?
3. Would the way the leadership uses SET affect your views about SET? How? Why?

Closing questions:

1. If you had the power to change the evaluation system to maximize the value to teaching and learning, what would you do?
2. Would you like the opportunity to review the transcript of the interview?

APPENDIX C**Interview questions with teachers in schools that don't use SET:**

- 1- How long have you been teaching?
- 2- How much teaching do you do?
- 3- Are you fully responsible for the courses you teach? How much power do you have to be able to make changes etc.?
- 4- Do you typically engage in professional development activities?
- 5- Generally, do you think students are able to make judgements about the quality of teaching and their learning experience?
- 6- Would you like your school to use SET? Why?
- 7- How does it make you feel if your students evaluate you?
- 8- Would you make significant changes to course content based on SET? Why?
- 9- If you want to describe your school environment, can you say that it is supportive? Why?
- 10- Do you think the school environment can influence your opinion about SET? In what sense?
- 11- Why do you think your school leadership doesn't apply SET as part of your evaluation system?
- 12- Can you say that SET would provide you with feedback that will enable you to identify strengths and weaknesses in your teaching methods? Why?
- 13- Would you like the opportunity to review the transcript of the interview?

APPENDIX D

Interview questions with school leaders:

- 1- What is the teacher evaluation process that you follow in your school?
- 2- Why do you use SET as part of teachers' evaluation?
- 3- How long have you been using SET in your school?
- 4- For what purposes do you use the SET results?
- 5- What steps do you follow after receiving SET results?
- 6- What do you think teachers feel about using SET in your school?

APPENDIX E

Participant information letter

Dear Ms./Mr.

I am Rana Wazir, a student at Haigazian University in the Department of Education at the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences. As part of my MA thesis, I am carrying out a research study titled “The Views of Secondary Teachers in Beirut Regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching and the Elements Influencing those Views”, supervised by Dr. Hagop Yacoubian. Kindly read the below information to decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

Purpose of the Research Project

This research study aims to explore secondary teachers’ views of SET at a number of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon and identify the elements that influence teachers’ views. This study will contribute towards the partial fulfillment of my MA thesis requirements at Haigazian University.

Participation in this Research Project

- Participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to withdraw anytime without having to give any reason for your withdrawal.
- If you choose to participate in this research study, you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire and be interviewed if you wish so. Your participation will involve completing a survey that entails open-ended questions that you will have to answer and some demographic information that you will have to provide. An interview is requested if you wish to participate. The interview may involve note-taking or audio-recording. If you are unwilling to be audio-recorded in an interview you are free not to participate.
- Participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life.
- You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however your participation does help researchers better understand the teachers’ views of SET and the elements that influence them.

Participant rights

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Your name or any other identifying information will not be asked. Data you provide along with data from all participants in the present research will be stored on the personal computer of the researcher, Rana Wazir, and it will be password protected. No individual information will appear. Only the investigators of this study will have access to the compiled data which will be stored for a period of 5 years post data collection as per the regulations of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to refuse participation or withdraw will not involve any

penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Discontinuing participation in no way affects your relationship with Haigazian University.

- This research study has been reviewed and has received clearance from the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University. If you have any further concerns about your rights as a research participant, please, do not hesitate to contact myself or my advisor using the contact information provided below.

APPENDIX F

Agreement to Participate in Research for teachers and school leaders

Researcher: Rana Wazir

Title of research project: The Views of Secondary Teachers in Beirut Regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching and The Elements Influencing those Views

I have been asked to participate in an interview that is investigating teachers' views of SET.

I understand that:

1. I will be interviewed at school.
2. The possible psychological risks may be some discomfort based on reaction to the interview questions. No physiological risks are anticipated.
3. There are no discernible benefits to me personally, although the results of this study will help expand my knowledge of teachers' views of SET.
4. The results of this study may be published, but any information from this study that can be identified with me will remain confidential and the data will be pooled to maintain anonymity. Any questions about my participation in this study will be answered by Rana Wazir.
5. My consent is given voluntarily without being coerced. I may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study, and I may withdraw at any time.
6. I have received a copy of this consent form for my record.

I have made a decision whether or not to participate. My signature indicates that I have read the information provided and that I have decided to participate.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

APPENDIX G

Request for permission to conduct research in schools:

Dear Mr. /Mrs. _____,

I am Rana Wazir, a student at Haigazian University in the Department of Education at the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences. As part of my MA thesis, I am carrying out a research study titled “The Views of Secondary Teachers in Lebanon Regarding Student Evaluation of Teaching and the Elements Influencing those Views”, supervised by Dr. Hagop Yacoubian. Kindly read the below information to decide whether you allow me to conduct this research at your school. The research will include surveys to secondary teachers and interviews with some secondary teachers and school principal.

Purpose of the Research Project

This research study aims to explore secondary teachers’ views of SET at a number of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon and identify the elements that influence teachers’ views. This study will contribute towards the partial fulfillment of my MA thesis requirements at Haigazian University.

Participation in this Research Project

- Participation in this project is voluntary. The teachers are free to withdraw anytime without having to give any reason for your withdrawal.
- If teachers choose to participate in this research study, they will be asked to fill in a questionnaire and be interviewed if they wish so. Their participation will involve completing a survey that entails open-ended questions that they will have to answer and some demographic information that they will have to provide. An interview is requested if they wish to participate. The interview may involve note-taking or audio-recording. If they are unwilling to be audio-recorded in an interview they are free not to participate.
- Participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to teachers beyond the risks of daily life.
- Teachers will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however their participation does help researchers better understand the teachers’ views of SET and the elements that influence them.

Participant rights

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Teachers’ names or any other identifying information will not be asked. Data you provide along with data from all participants in the present research will be stored on the personal computer of the researcher, Rana Wazir, and it will be password protected. No individual information will appear. Only the investigators of this study will have access to the compiled data which will be stored for a period of 5 years post data collection as per the regulations of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University.
- Teachers have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Their decision to refuse participation or withdraw will not

involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Discontinuing participation in no way affects your relationship with Haigazian University.

- This research study has been reviewed and has received clearance from the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University. If you have any further concerns about the teachers' rights as research participants, please, do not hesitate to contact myself or my advisor using the contact information provided below.

APPENDIX H

Table 8

A 15-Point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis Process (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

| | | |
|----------------|-----|---|
| Transcription | 1. | The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'. |
| Coding | 2. | Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process. |
| | 3. | Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach) but, instead, the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive. |
| | 4. | All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated. |
| | 5. | Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set. |
| | 6. | Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive. |
| Analysis | 7. | Data have been analysed rather than just paraphrased or described. |
| | 8. | Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims. |
| | 9. | Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic. |
| | 10. | A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided. |
| Overall | 11. | Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly. |
| Written report | 12. | The assumptions about ThA are clearly explicated. |
| | 13. | There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent. |
| | 14. | The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis. |
| | 15. | The researcher is positioned as <i>active</i> in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'. |