

## Typical Teaching Styles among ELC Lecturers at Salalah College of Technology, Oman

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### Abstract

Teaching style and its impact on students learning have always been among the main concerns of any educational system. Different teachers approach classroom environment in different ways to accommodate learners' needs. The current study has a comparative look at teaching styles utilized by lecturers at Salalah College of Technology (SCT), sultanate of Oman. Grasha-Riechmann Teaching Style Survey (GTSS) is used as a research instrument to investigate the most prevalent teaching styles among 65 lecturers in English Language Center, SCT. It further aims to explore any meaningful relationship among variables such as gender, lecturers' level of education, teaching experience and their teaching style. According to GTSS, teaching styles can be classified into five main categories: Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator. The obtained Mean score for various teaching methods show that ELC lecturers use different teaching styles at average to higher level (3.31-3.82). Furthermore, there was no significant relationship between aforementioned variables and ELC lecturers teaching style.

**Keywords:** teaching style, expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, delegator

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching style and its impact on students learning have always been among the main concerns of any educational system. Different teachers approach classroom environment in different ways to accommodate learners' needs. Who is an ideal teacher? This is the question that all those who are involved in education frequently ask. As much as the number of teachers there are different teaching styles. Even one teacher has different teaching methods in different classes depending on factors like learners' level of education, age, cultural background and so on. Nevertheless, there is not a clear cut criterion to identify the best teacher and the most effective teaching method. However, as most of us understand, an ideal teacher helps the student to learn. He or she contributes to this in a number of ways. The teacher's role goes well beyond

information giving, with the teacher having a range of key roles to play in the education process.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Every teacher has a unique way to present lessons. In other words, different teaching outcomes, despite following the same delivery plan, guidelines and instruction, might be due to different styles teachers apply to present information in the class. The author believes that scrutinizing the teaching methods of teachers at SCT might have positive effect on the educational patterns of the teachers as well as the students' educational success.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Grasha (1996) defines teaching style as a particular pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviors that teachers display in the classroom. She points out to four clusters of teaching style and the relevant teaching method: Cluster 1: Expert/formal authority, Cluster 2: Demonstrator/personal model, Cluster 3: Facilitator/personal model/expert and Cluster 4: Delegator/facilitator/expert.

### **Expert**

A teacher/instructor with an Expert Teaching Style (ETS) attempts to display detailed knowledge and challenge students to enhance their competence. S/he focuses on transmitting information, and makes students learn and use that information. The advantage of ETS is merging knowledge, information and skills which might benefit experienced learners. However, displaying detailed knowledge may intimidate less experience students.

### **Formal authority**

In Formal Authority Style (FAS) teacher provides positive and negative feedback, establishes learning goals and expectations and rules of conduct. FAS makes students concentrate on correct, acceptable, and standard methods. The main advantage of FAS is vivid expectations and approved methods. Nevertheless, strong attachment to FAS may lead to rigid, standardized, and less flexible ways of managing students and their concerns.

### **Personal mode**

Teachers with Personal Mode Style (PMS) establish a prototype for thinking and behavior. S/he oversees, guides, and directs students by showing how to do things. A PMS teacher encourages students to observe, and then emulate the instructor's approach which is considered as an advantage of PMS. However, attaching to role model may cause some students feel unqualified if they cannot live up the expectations and standards of the method.

## Facilitator

Facilitator Teaching Style (FTS) emphasizes on the teacher-student interaction. FTS teachers act as facilitators. They guide and direct students by asking questions, examining options and suggesting alternatives. They encourage students to be initiative and develop independence and responsibility. Focusing on learners' needs and goals contributes to their personal flexibility and allows them to think about other options and alternatives which could be the main advantage of FTS model. Nevertheless, the main downside with FTS is that it is time consuming.

## Delegator

Delegator Teaching Style (DTS) enhances students' capacity to function independently. DTS teachers encourage learners to work autonomously or as part of independent teams. In this way, learners perceive themselves as independent learners which are the main advantage of DTS model. However, some students may become anxious when given autonomy.

The results of Razagi et al (2010) cross-sectional study on 100 faculty members at Rafsanjan University of Medical Science, Iran, show that Expert and Delegator are the most common teaching styles among the participants. Furthermore, the cross-gender comparison between male and female academic staff showed that ETS and DTS were the most preferred teaching style among men whereas female instructors' preference was FTS and ETS. Razagi et. al., in addition, found out that teachers' university degree might be an effective factor in their tendency to prefer one teaching method rather than other.

A study on 100 faculty members by Amini. et. al., (2012) using Grasha's questionnaire shows that the highest average score belonged to "Expert" method and the lowest to "Personal Model". In addition 96% of the academic staffs were inclined to "Expert" method and %97, %83, %78, %80 to "Formal", "Personal Model", "Delegator" and "Facilitator" methods, respectively. The cross-gender comparison showed no significant difference between male and female, but in "Expert" method, the obtained average score for females was higher. Furthermore, the finding showed no meaningful difference between academic staff's teaching styles and variables such as educational degree and age.

In their study Quamrul and Kawshik (2014) compared faculty members' teaching styles from Bangladesh and the USA to determine the similarities and differences. The results of their study show that teachers in the US rated themselves significantly higher than the teachers in Bangladesh in all five types of teaching styles. Teachers from the USA rated themselves more in the role of delegator or facilitator than those in Bangladesh. Quamrul and Kawshik opine that it could be possibly due to the difference in educational norms between two countries, or it could possibly indicate that teachers in the USA do not see their roles the same as teachers in Bangladesh. Moreover, the

comparison between Expert and Formal Authority teaching style shows not meaningful difference between teachers from the USA and Bangladesh.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Instruments

The current study used Grasha-Riechmann Teaching Style Survey. It is a useful tool to raise teachers' awareness of their teaching method. The questionnaire contains 40 items in five sections: Expert (8 items), Formal authority (8 items), Personal model (8 items), Facilitator (8 items) and Delegator (8 items). Teaching styles are used at three; low, average and high scale. A range of scores (1-5) were allocated for each teaching style to determine the level of usage (Table 1).

100 questionnaires were distributed among ELC lecturers (at Foundation and Post Foundation levels) from among which only 65 questionnaires were used as the data for the current study. Some questionnaires were not returned and some were excluded from the study due to some incomplete demographic information.

**Table1.** Grasha's teaching styles and scores to determine the level

Teaching Style	Expert	Formal Authority	Personal Model	Facilitator	Delegator
Low	1-2	1-2.8	1-3.2	1-3	1-2.5
Average	2.1-3.1	2.9-3.9	3.3-4.1	3.1-4	2.5-3.7
High	3.2-5	4-5	4.2-5	4.1-5	3.8-5

### Population

The population for this study comprises SCT lecturers. The sample population includes 65 ELC lecturers from Foundation and Post Foundation programs.

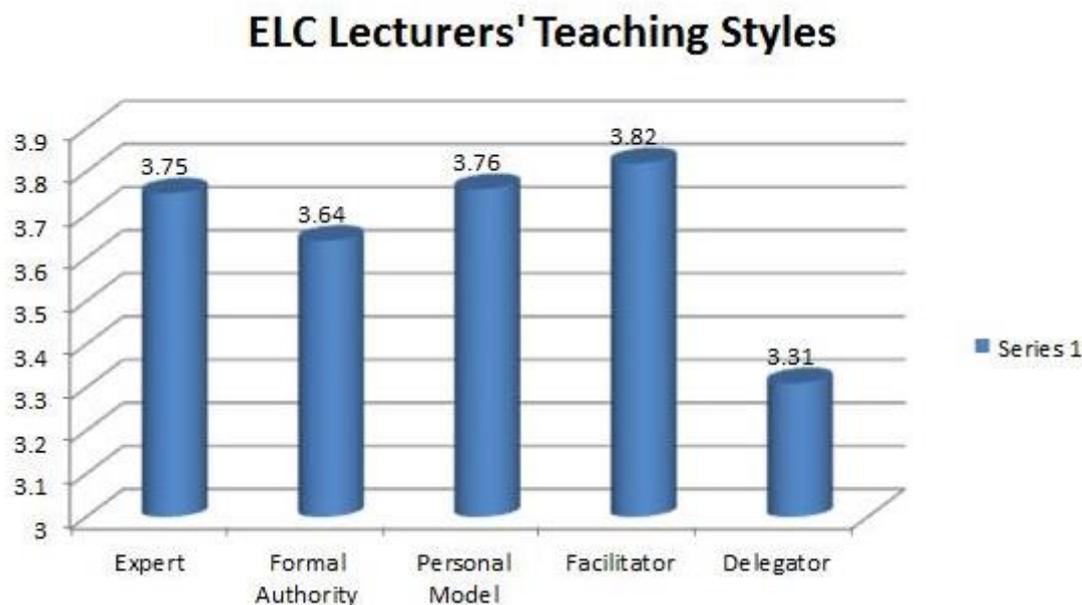
### DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using online Grasha-Riechmann Teaching Survey software. Table 2 presents the Mean and level obtained for five teaching styles used by ELC lecturers at SCT.

**Table 2.** Teaching styles used by ELT lecturers and their level of usage

Teaching style	ELC lecturers(65)
Expert	3.75 (High)
Formal authority	3.64(Average)
Personal Model	3.76(Average)
Facilitator	3.82(Average)
Delegator	3.31(Average)

As illustrated in Table 2, while Expert teaching method was utilized highly, the other methods were used averagely by ELC lecturers. In other words, ELC lecturers prefer to act as expert by displaying knowledge, transmitting information, and making students learn and use that information.



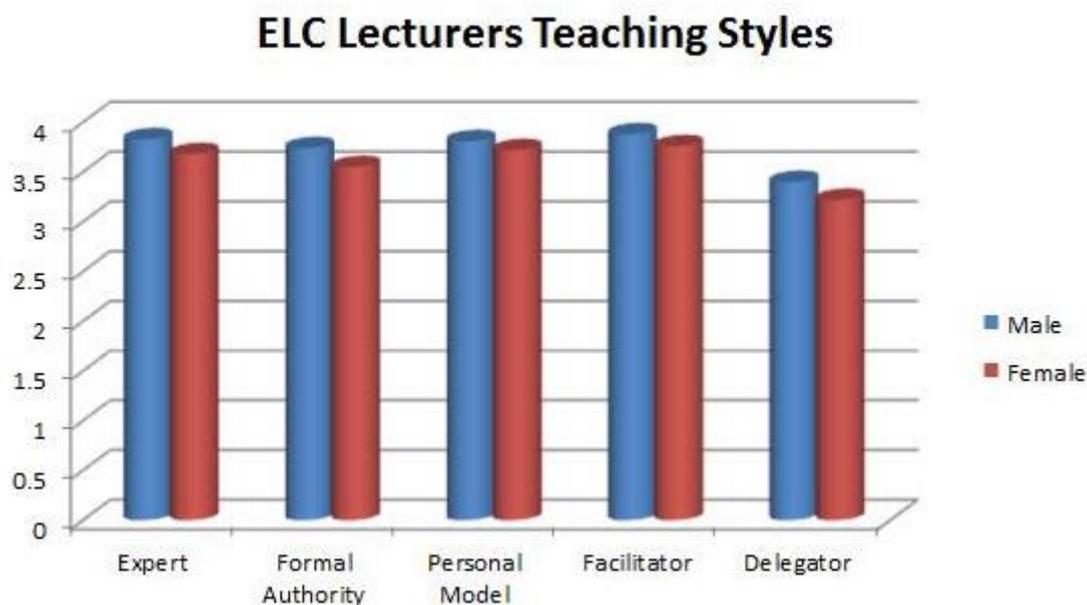
**Figure 1.** Typical teaching styles among ELC lecturers at SCT

Among the concerns of this study was to find out if there is any meaningful relationship between the gender of lecturers and their teaching methods. There were 39 male vs. 26 female participants in the study. Table 2 presents the obtained Mean score for male and female ELC lectures for five teaching styles.

**Table3.** Cross-gender comparison of teaching styles among ELC lecturers at SCT

Teaching style	Male(39)	Female(26)
Expert	3.83(High)	3.68(High)
Formal authority	3.74(Average)	3.55(Average)
Personal Model	3.81(Average)	3.72(Average)
Facilitator	3.88(Average)	3.76(Average)
Delegator	3.40(Average)	3.22(Average)

As it is illustrated in above table, both male and female lecturers used Expert teaching style highly whereas the other teaching styles were used averagely. A comparative look at the obtained Mean scores for both gender groups shows that there is not a big discrepancy between male and female lecturers' scores. To find out if the difference between the scores obtained for two gender groups is significant, Chi-Square test was applied. The results show that there is no meaningful relationship between the gender of lecturer and using different teaching styles ( $0.2 < 0.5$ ) (See Appendix A).



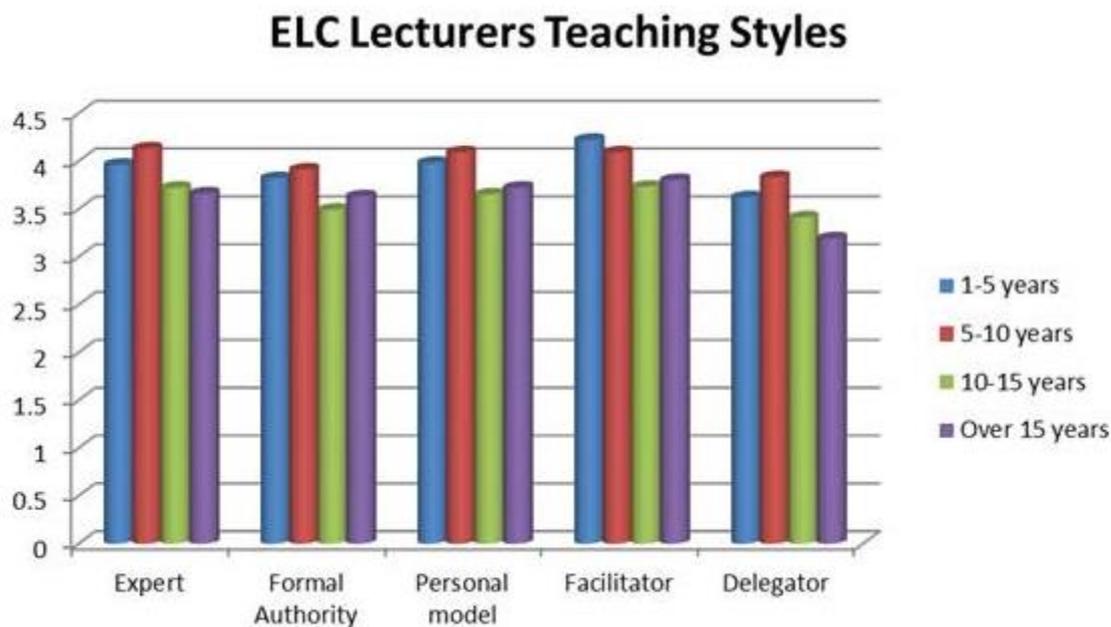
**Figure 2.** Cross-gender comparison of teaching styles among ELC lecturers at SCT

ELC lectures come from various teaching background. The collected demographic information show that majority of the lecturers are highly experienced with over 15 years of teaching experience (35 lecturers). Assuming that there might be relationship between the teaching style and teaching experience, ELC lecturers were classified into four groups: 1) 1-5 years, 2) 5-10 years, 3) 10-15 years and 4) over 15 years of teaching experience. Table 4 shows the obtained Mean score for teachers with various years of teaching experience.

**Table 4.** The relationship between teaching style and years of teaching

Teaching Experience Teaching style	1-5 years (7 lecturers)	5-10 years (9 lecturers)	10-15 years (14 lecturers)	Over 15 years (35 lecturers)
Expert	3.96(High)	4.13(High)	3.72(High)	3.66(High)
Formal Authority	3.82(Average)	3.91(Average)	3.49(Average)	3.63(Average)
Personal Model	3.98(Average)	4.09(Average)	3.65(Average)	3.72(Average)
Facilitator	4.22(High)	4.09(Average)	3.73(Average)	3.80(Average)
Delegator	3.62(Average)	3.83(High)	3.41(Average)	3.19(Average)

As it is presented in Table 4, ELC lecturers with various years of teaching experience are apt for Expert teaching style highly. Another reading of the table is that while lecturers with 5 and less than five years of teaching experience prefer Facilitator role highly, the other lecturers use this teaching style averagely. Another highly used teaching style is Delegator utilized by lecturers with 5-10 years of teaching background. To find out any significant relationship between the preference for one teaching style and the years of teaching, Chi-Square test was conducted the results of which show that there is no significant relationship between the years of teaching and the preferred teaching style ( $0.2 < 0.5$ ). (See Appendix B)



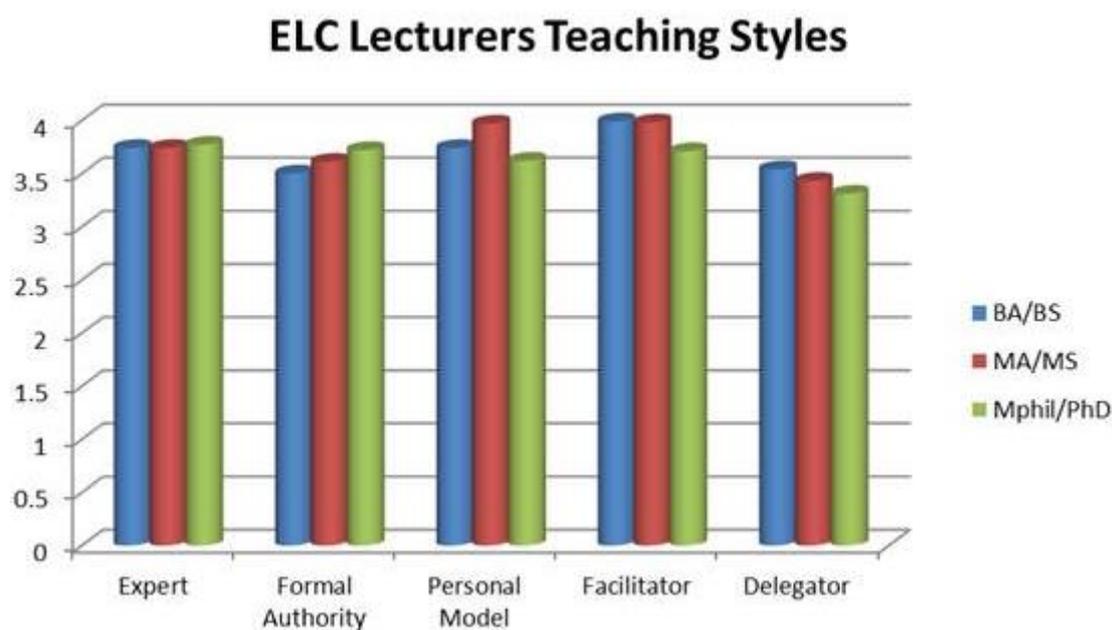
**Figure 3.** Teaching experience oriented comparison of ELC lecturers’ teaching style at SCT

There were 18 MPhil/PhD holders, 42 Master and 5 Bachelors among the participants in the study. The results of obtained Mean score for the five teaching styles according to the level of education have been displayed in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Relationship between teaching style and educational degree

Degree	B.A./B.S. (5 lecturers)	M.A./ M.S. (42 lecturers)	MPhil/PhD (18 lecturers)
Teaching style			
Expert	3.74(High)	3.74(High)	3.77(High)
Formal Authority	3.50(Average)	3.61(Average)	3.72(Average)
Personal Model	3.74(Average)	3.97(Average)	3.62(Average)
Facilitator	3.99(Average)	3.98(Average)	3.71(Average)
Delegator	3.54(Average)	3.43(Average)	3.31(Average)

As Table 5 illustrates, ELC lecturers regards less of their educational degree used Expert teaching method highly whereas the other teaching styles were used averagely. Chi-Square test was carried out to find out any meaningful relationship between lecturers’ teaching style and the educational degree. The results do not show a meaningful relationship between ELC lecturers’ level of education and their preferred teaching styles ( $0.2 < 0.5$ ). (See Appendix C).



**Figure 4.** Degree wise comparison of ELC lecturers' teaching style at SCT

## CONCLUSION

The fact that teaching style represents those personal qualities and behaviors teachers use in conducting their classes, they should know what type of teaching style is most effective at delivering the lessons. There are variety of determining factors that make teachers to select a specific teaching style rather than the other among which could be 1) how capable are the students to handle course demands, 2) what is the students' current level of proficiency, 3) to what extent teachers need to control classroom tasks directly and 4) teacher's willingness to establish and maintain relationship with students.

The outcome of this investigation suggests that a variety of teaching styles blend together in SCT classrooms. However, ELC lecturers opt for Expert teaching style more than other styles. In other words, Expert teaching method is highly used among both male and female lecturers in ELC. Although some discrepancies observed among teachers with various years teaching experience and their preferred teaching style, the results of Chi-Square test showed no meaningful differences. In addition, there was no meaningful relationship between gender, lecturers' level of education and ELC lecturers teaching style. The findings of this study backs up Amini, et, al., (2012) findings.

Bearing in mind that awareness of teaching style affects the way teachers presents information, interact with students and ultimately student's success, the current study was an attempt to find out what are the most preferred teaching method(s) for ELC lecturers at SCT. Although every teacher has a dominant, preferred teaching style, almost all teachers try to implement five teaching methods to varying degree in their classes (Grasha, 1996). As each teaching style has advantages and downsides, recommending one specific method and preferring one over the others is similar to prescribing one remedy for different diseases.

Last but not least, a successful teacher constantly tries to find ways to improve the effectiveness of his/her teaching method. Having a plan for the next session, working relentlessly, checking students' comprehension of the subject matter taught are among the traits of an excellent teacher.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Cross-gender Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000 <sup>a</sup>	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.446
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.906	1	.048
N of Valid Cases	5		

25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

### Appendix B

Chi-Square Tests for 1-5 years vs. 5-10 years of teaching experience			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.000 <sup>a</sup>	12	.241
Likelihood Ratio	13.322	12	.346
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.805	1	.094
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum

expected count is .20.

Chi-Square Tests for 1-5 vs. 10-15

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000 <sup>a</sup>	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.446
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.293	1	.070
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Chi-Square Tests for 1-5 vs. over 15 years of teaching experience

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000 <sup>a</sup>	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.446
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.245	1	.072
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Chi-Square Tests for 5-10 vs. 10-15 years of teaching experience

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.000 <sup>a</sup>	12	.241
Likelihood Ratio	13.322	12	.346
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.838	1	.050
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Chi-Square Tests for 5-10 vs. over 15 years of teaching experience

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.000 <sup>a</sup>	12	.241
Likelihood Ratio	13.322	12	.346
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.717	1	.099
N of Valid Cases	5		

## Chi-Square Tests for 10-15 vs. over 15 years of teaching experience

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000 <sup>a</sup>	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.446
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.783	1	.095
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

## Appendix C

## Chi-Square Tests for Bachelor vs. Master holders

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.000 <sup>a</sup>	12	.241
Likelihood Ratio	13.322	12	.346
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.791	1	.095
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

## Chi-Square Tests for Bachelor vs. PhD holders

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.000 <sup>a</sup>	12	.241
Likelihood Ratio	13.322	12	.346
Linear-by-Linear Association	.728	1	.393
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

## Chi-Square Tests for Master vs. PhD holders

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000 <sup>a</sup>	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.446
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.433	1	.231
N of Valid Cases	5		

a. 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.