



## The Relationship Between Informal Organization and Teachers Evaluation, From the viewpoint of students (Case Study the Students of Baghlan University)

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between informal organization and the evaluation of instructors from the perspective of students at Baghlan University. Methodologically, the research is descriptive–correlational and, in terms of purpose, it is an applied study. The research was conducted using a survey method, and simple random sampling was employed to select the participants. The statistical population consisted of all students of Baghlan University, totaling 5,252 individuals. Using Cochran’s formula, a sample of 385 students was selected. Data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire. To ensure the scientific soundness of the instrument, content validity and construct validity were assessed. The reliability of the questionnaire was also examined, and the results showed an acceptable level of reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.831. The Pearson correlation coefficient further confirmed the validity and reliability of the research instrument. To analyze the relationship between the dimensions of informal organization, particularly the psychological indicators of informal groups, and the evaluation of instructors from the students’ perspective, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used for data analysis.

The findings indicate a relatively strong and statistically significant relationship between informal organization and the evaluation of instructors from the students’ perspective. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.566$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) reveals a positive and meaningful relationship, suggesting that the activities and interactions of informal groups play an influential role in shaping students’ evaluations of teaching quality.

**Keywords:** Organization, Informal Organization, Evaluation, Informal Groups, Examination.

## Introduction

In this section, we begin by defining the central and most fundamental concept: the organization. The question arises, what is an organization? An organization is, in fact, a group of individuals who work jointly and in a coordinated manner to achieve common goals. Generally, organizations are of two types: formal organizations and informal organizations. A formal organization is one that is established based on a defined structure and administrative regulations. In such organizations, the authority of officials and the relationships among them and the employees are governed by established rules and regulations. Moreover, a formal organization is consciously created for predetermined objectives and designed in a way that enables individuals within the organization to coordinate their efforts to achieve these goals (Kiumarthy, 2011). On the other hand, an informal organization consists of unofficial and unauthorized relationships that inevitably arise among individuals and groups within the formal organization. It is understood that every formal organization inherently contains an informal organization among its members (Shariatmadari, 2016, p. 71). The informal organization is considered as the shadow and the second face of the formal organization. It emerges within the formal organization and cannot exist without it. However, it possesses characteristics distinct from those of the formal organization. The informal organization consists of groups and individuals (Shariatmadari, 2016, p. 71). In fact, the informal organization can enhance the effectiveness of the organization and help advance its goals, but it can also be in conflict with the formal organization and divert it from its objectives (Qolipour, 2016, p. 30). Within the informal organization, informal groups arise. These informal groups are formed by employees of the organization for support, friendship, growth, and security. Membership in informal groups is based on shared interests (Ahmadi, 2010). Evaluation is defined as a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine whether the intended objectives have been achieved or are in the process of being achieved, and to what extent (Seif, 2017, p. 38). Evaluation is a tool used to describe and judge the characteristics of learners, curricula, instructors, and other influential factors (Kardan, 2001, p. 309). The evaluation of instructors is conducted by students with both positive and negative perspectives (Shokournia & Asarehzadegan, 2011). Continuous and equitable evaluation of students by instructors is considered essential for enhancing educational quality and academic motivation in universities. These assessments, conducted on the basis of formal criteria such as participation in classroom activities, performance in examinations, assignments, and projects, provide the foundation for determining academic progress, identifying learning difficulties, and informing educational decision-making. However, in educational environments such as Baghlan University, informal organization among instructors and students – comprising networks of friendly relationships, linguistic groups, regional affiliations, class-based circles, and

unwritten group norms—exists as a dynamic and influential social reality. The central concern is that these informal structures may, whether intentionally or unintentionally, affect the process of instructors' evaluation of students, thereby undermining its credibility, objectivity, and fairness. Consequently, there is no clear understanding of the nature, extent, and direction of this influence at Baghlan University.

The key issues that warrant careful investigation include the following: What constituent elements characterize the informal organization at Baghlan University? In what ways might this informal organization be related to instructors' judgments regarding the individual performance of students? Can information obtained through informal sources—such as rumors or private conversations about a student—potentially influence an instructor's evaluation? Is there a relationship between the informal status hierarchy among students in the classroom and the evaluation outcomes assigned by instructors? Moreover, can the informal organization pose a threat to the credibility of the student evaluation system?

The primary and fundamental objective of this research is to examine the relationship between informal organization and the instructor evaluation process from the viewpoint of Baghlan University students. Important and related questions arise: What is the status of informal organization and instructor evaluation at Baghlan University? Is there a relationship between genuine commitment, shared sense, mutual recognition, group dependency, and evaluation?

Regarding the importance of informal organization, it can be stated that to fully understand the managerial issues of organizations, in addition to the formal structure, one must also be aware of the norms, groupings, and informal relationships among them (Mitles, 2005). Therefore, the proper understanding by managers of the impact of informal relationships on formal organizational activities leads to their appropriate and effective utilization (Hoseinzadeh, 2011, p. 151). The study of organizations encompasses both formal and informal aspects, both of which are significant. In fact, the distinction between these two aspects is primarily made for the purpose of organizational analysis and examination (Alaghebend, 2015, p. 116). In the evaluation of an educational system, the aim is to determine the educational objectives based on the philosophy of education and the societal environmental needs, and subsequently to design and implement the most appropriate operational programs (Kardan, 2001, p. 309). Informal groups arise as a result of personal relationships, dependencies, and social reactions among individuals who must work together in the same place, even though their opinions and views may have similarities and differences. These groups have their own structure, leaders and followers, group goals, social roles, and work patterns. An informal group also follows unwritten rules and behavioral norms that each member implicitly accepts and abides by (Kiumarthy, 2011, pp. 52–53). The term evaluation or assessment, in simple terms, refers to assigning value to anything. However, a more comprehensive definition of evaluation can

be given as follows: "Evaluation is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information." Furthermore, the concept of educational measurement is defined as: the method of assigning a number (commonly called a score) to a specific attribute or characteristic of a person such that the number reflects the degree to which that person possesses the attribute (Nanali, 1978). A test can be defined as a set of questions usually provided in written form (paper and pencil) to be answered by the examinees. There are different types of evaluation, including formative evaluation, continuous evaluation, diagnostic evaluation, and summative evaluation (Azimi, 2019, p. 48). Several researchers have conducted studies on the topic and its variables across different times and locations. To clarify the subject, we present some key findings from their scientific efforts. Ziaadini, Pourkiani, and Zeinaldini-Meymand (2016) conducted a study titled "Management and Informal Organization" and reported that the informal organization can either enhance organizational effectiveness and advance its goals or conflict with the formal organization, diverting it from its objectives and reducing its efficiency. Mousavi Nasab (2001) investigated the effects of informal groups on the performance of Tarbiat Modares University. The results indicated:

1. A significant relationship exists between belonging to informal groups and efficiency.
2. A significant relationship exists between belonging to informal groups and effectiveness.
3. Based on these findings, it can be argued that membership in informal groups influences university performance productivity.

Safiri and Sharifi (2005) conducted a study titled "Investigation of Students' Value Hierarchy and Its Relationship with Reference Groups." Their findings revealed that social values hold higher priority compared to other values.

Kangarani, Shamkhi, and Hosseinzadeh (2011), in their research titled "Study and Analysis of Formal and Informal Inter-organizational Networks Using a Network Analysis Approach," concluded that interactions among organizations create a complex network of relationships in which formal patterns are always influenced by informal communication networks. Hezarjaribi and Safari Shali (2016), in a study on "Examining Changes in Reference Groups among Students," found that parental modeling as a reference group and the most effective agent of socialization is weaker for boys than for girls. Rahman Seresht and Amir Khalili (2017), in research titled "Depicting the Actual Organizational Structure: A Combination of Formal and Informal Structures," examined the organizational structure, depicting formal communication among staff at various levels. Their results led to the depiction of the informal organizational structure based on the aggregation of four social networks: communication, access, authority, and trust. Rahimi, Hosseini, Darabian, Taherian, and Khosravi (2012) conducted a comprehensive study on instructor evaluation by students. Their findings indicated that 47.8% of instructors were

satisfied with the evaluation results, and 71.2% reported that feedback from evaluations had an impact. The highest satisfaction (65.5%) was related to the timing of evaluations, and most instructors considered the Center for Medical Education Studies as an appropriate evaluation unit. Instructor self-evaluation scores were higher than those from student evaluations, with low correlation between the two. Asgharpoor, Monjamed, and Baharani (2010) investigated the factors influencing students' evaluations of instructors. Their results revealed significant differences between instructors' and students' perspectives regarding average scores on instructors' personal characteristics, teaching activities, certain educational conditions, and student-related factors.

Pourderzi and Hendradar (2008) examined instructor evaluations at Jahrom University of Medical Sciences from both instructors' and students' viewpoints. They found that most instructors agreed with the principle of evaluation and recognized that multiple factors influence the process. The researchers recommended supplementing traditional evaluations with additional methods, such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and evaluation of student learning outcomes. Shokournia and Asarehzadegan (2011), in their study "Comparison of Faculty Members' Evaluation Based on Their Attitude Towards Student Evaluation," found a clear relationship between instructors' attitudes toward student evaluations and the scores they received from students. Pourdarzi, Jahaniyan, and Binshpouzh (2012) compared two stages of instructor evaluations from learners' perspectives and concluded that the timing of evaluation did not significantly affect scores. Moreover, no difference was observed between scores provided by the instructor and those provided by others.

Torkzadeh, Marzouqi, Mohammadi, and Mohtaram (2014) explored factors affecting instructor evaluations from students' perspectives. Their findings showed that the impact of expertise, personality, interpersonal relationships with students, instructor assessment of students, and classroom management varied across different faculties.

Finally, Mahdavi, Zare, and Naeimi (2014) compared student evaluations of faculty teaching performance with instructors' self-assessments. Their study suggested that, alongside student evaluations, instructor self-assessment should be employed as a complementary method to enhance teaching effectiveness.

## Material and Method

This study was conducted using a quantitative research approach, and was applied in terms of its purpose. In relation to data collection, the design was descriptive-survey, and in examining the relationships between variables, it followed a correlational framework. The primary objective was to investigate the relationship between informal organization and instructors' evaluation from the students' perspective at Baghlan University. As a two-variable correlational study, it focused exclusively on determining the degree and direction of association between these variables rather than establishing causality.

The statistical population comprised all students of Baghlan University (N = 5,252). Using Cochran's formula, a sample of 385 students was selected. The practical significance of this research lies in its potential applicability for university administrators and instructors, providing empirical evidence to enhance the quality of teaching and evaluation processes. By examining current practices and observable conditions, the study offers a descriptive account of the existing relationship between informal organizational dynamics and instructor evaluation.

Data were collected through a researcher-developed, closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 40 items designed to measure two principal variables. The independent variable, informal organization, was conceptualized based on the psychological indicators of informal groups and included four components: genuine commitment (6 items), shared feelings (5 items), mutual recognition (4 items), and group orientation or sense of belonging (5 items), totaling 20 items. The dependent variable, instructors' evaluation of students, also comprised 20 items and covered evaluative competence, benefits of examinations, drawbacks of examinations, and the content of examination questions.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Very Low (1) to Very High (5). All responses were numerically coded from 1 to 5 to facilitate statistical analysis. The instrument underwent content and construct validity procedures to ensure its accuracy in measuring the intended constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of  $\alpha = 0.831$ , indicating acceptable internal consistency.

After data collection, the coded data were entered into SPSS version 24 for analysis. Given that correlational studies commonly assume interval-level measurement and bivariate normal distribution, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationship between the two main variables. Descriptive statistics were also used to summarize the data. The level of statistical significance was set at 0.05.

It is important to note that the study was limited to analyzing the correlation between informal organization and instructors' evaluation from the students' perspective. Broader inferential-descriptive analyses concerning other variables or additional components were beyond the scope of this research.

## Findings

Each research endeavor requires a specific method according to its nature. Based on the research method, the data analysis method is determined. Various statistical methods can be used to analyze the research subject, but the choice depends on the research topic. Therefore, in this study, inferential statistical analysis was performed on the collected data. At this stage, to examine, refine, and understand the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the Pearson correlation analysis was used. Furthermore, to analyze the dimensions and aspects of the variables, a non-parametric method was applied. This allowed the researcher to compare the means of each variable dimension in the questionnaire and to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Furthermore, as well as the part that was mentioned earlier, the study's statistical population included all students enrolled at Baghlan University (N = 5,252). Applying

Cochran's formula, a sample of 385 students was drawn. The research holds practical value, as its findings can assist university administrators and instructors by offering empirical insights to improve teaching effectiveness and the evaluation process.

### Demographic Variables

Table of Demographic Variables of Students in the Seven Faculties of Baghlan University

**Table 2.** Demographic Variables of the Seven Faculties of Baghlan University

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Total Faculties	Education	44	12.3%
	Economics	87	24.3%
	Literature & Humanities	45	12.6%
	Journalism	14	3.9%
	Sharia	52	14.5%
	Engineering	64	17.9%
	Agriculture	53	14.5%
	Total	385	100%
Age of Respondents	17-21 Year	189	52.8%
	22- Year 32	169	47.2%
	Total	385	100%
Total Class Levels	First Year	55	15.4%
	Second Year	67	18.7%
	Third Year	137	37.2%
	Fourth Year	103	28.8%
	Total	385	100%

As shown in the table above, the demographic variables in this study include the faculty, the age of respondents, and the class levels of the participants. Each of these variables will be interpreted and explained separately.

Out of a total of 385 students, representing 100% of the sample, 44 students (12.3%) belonged to the Faculty of Education; 87 students (24.3%) to the Faculty of Economics; 45 students (12.6%) to the Faculty of Literature and Humanities; 14 students (3.9%) to the Faculty of Journalism; 52 students (14.5%) to the Faculty of Sharia; 64 students (17.9%) to the Faculty of Engineering; and 53 students (14.5%) to the Faculty of Agriculture participated in this study.

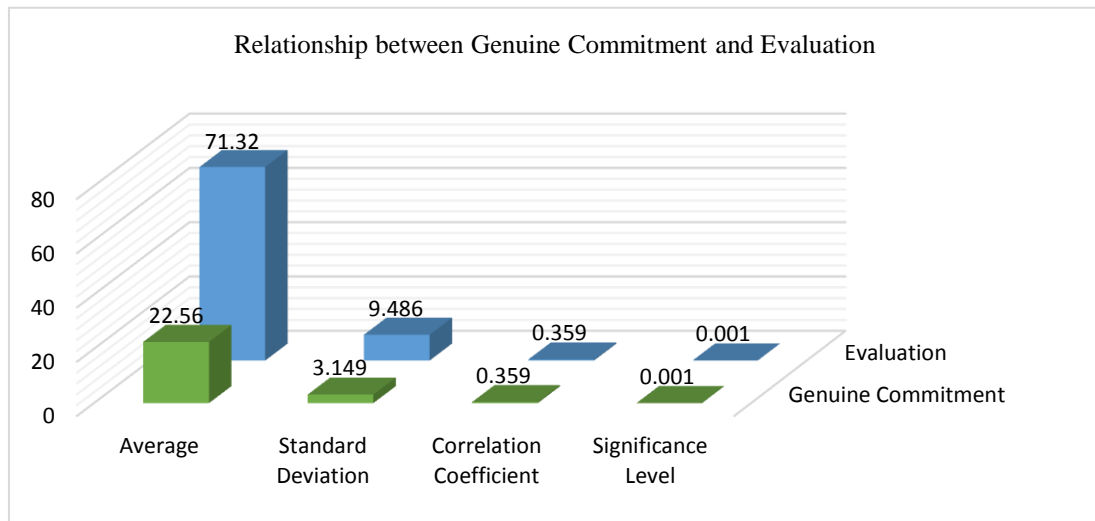
### Demographic Variable of Age

Out of the total 385 students, representing 100% of the sample, 189 students (52.8%) were between 17 and 21 years old, while 169 students (47.2%) were between 22 and 32 years old and participated in this study.

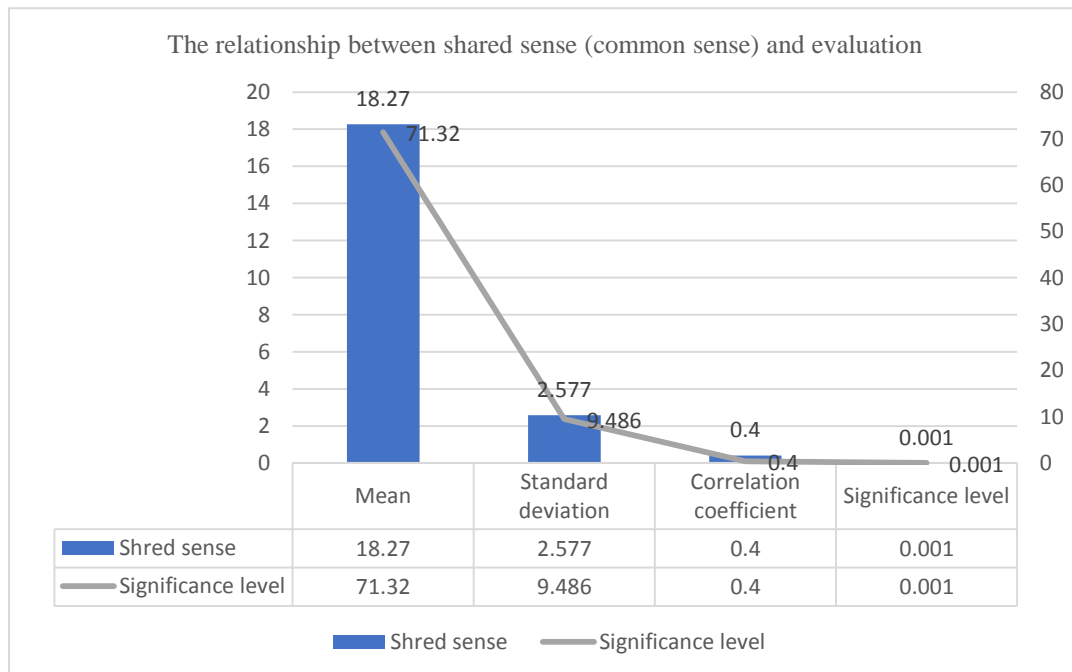
### Demographic Variable: Class Level

Of the 385 students, representing 100% of the participants, 55 students (15.4%) were from the first year, 67 students (18.7%) from the second year, 137 students (37.2%) from the third year, and 103 students (28.8%) from the fourth year across the seven faculties of Baghlan University who actively participated in this research.

Figure 1. Relationship between Genuine Commitment and Evaluation



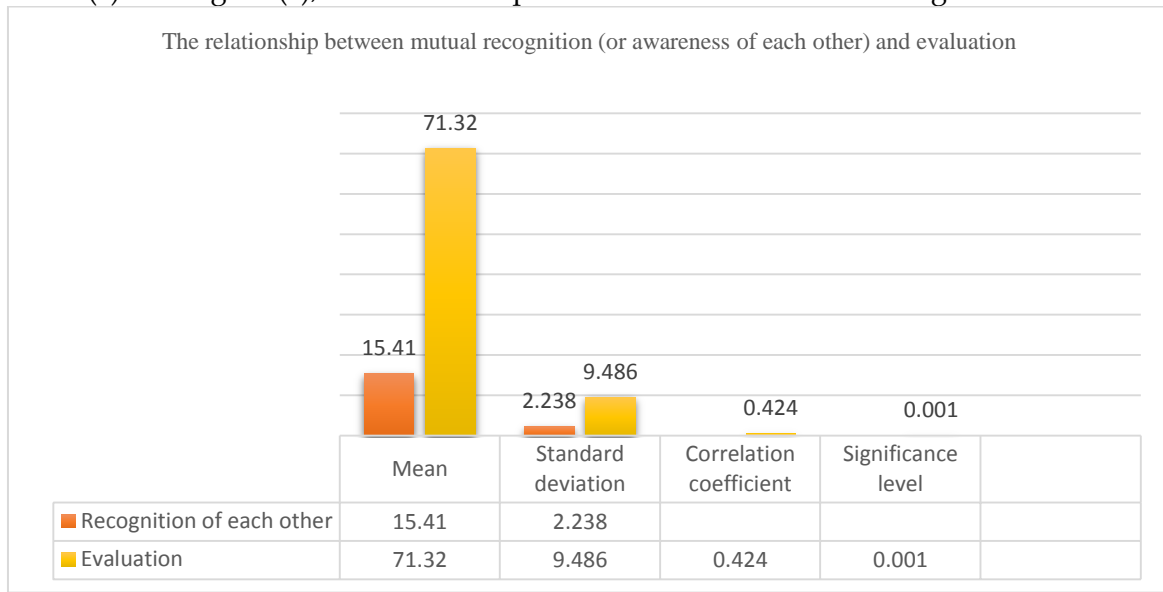
As shown in Figure (1), the standard deviation of the True Commitment component was 3.149, and that of the dependent variable Evaluation was 9.486. Similarly, the mean score of the True Commitment component was 22.56, and the mean score of the dependent variable Evaluation was 71.32. The correlation between the True Commitment component and Evaluation was  $p = 0.359$ , with a significance level of  $\text{Sig} = 0.001$ . Therefore, there is a weak but significant relationship between True Commitment and Evaluation. The Shared Sense component and the Evaluation variable Table (1) and Figure (2) show the relationship between Shared Sense and Evaluation.



As observed in Table (1) and Figure (2), the standard deviation of the Shared Sense component was 2.577, and that of the dependent variable Evaluation was 9.486. Similarly, the mean score of the Shared Sense component was 18.27, and the mean score of the dependent variable Evaluation was 71.32. The correlation between the Shared Sense component and Evaluation was  $p = 0.4$ , with a significance level of  $Sig = 0.001$ . Therefore, there is a weak but significant relationship between Shared Sense and Evaluation.

The Mutual Understanding component and the Evaluation variable

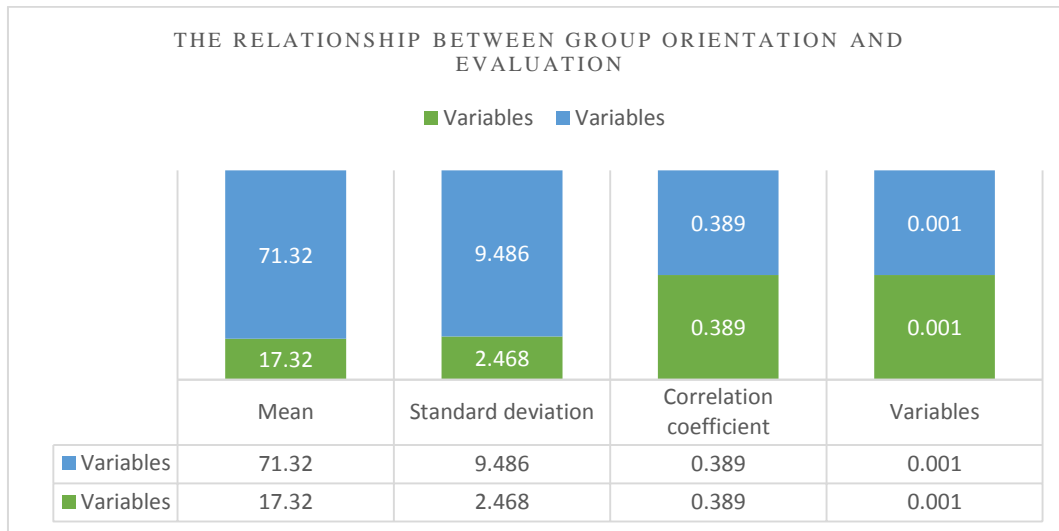
Table (2) and Figure (3), the relationship between mutual understanding and evaluation



As shown in Table (2) and Figure (3), the standard deviation of the “mutual understanding” component was 2.238, while that of the dependent variable, evaluation, was 9.486. Likewise, the mean of the “mutual understanding” component was 15.41, and the mean of the dependent variable, evaluation, was 71.32. The relationship between the “genuine commitment” component and evaluation was  $r = 0.424$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , indicating its significance. Overall, there is a relatively weak but significant relationship between mutual understanding, the knowledge of instructors and students, and evaluation.

The “group attachment” component and the evaluation variable

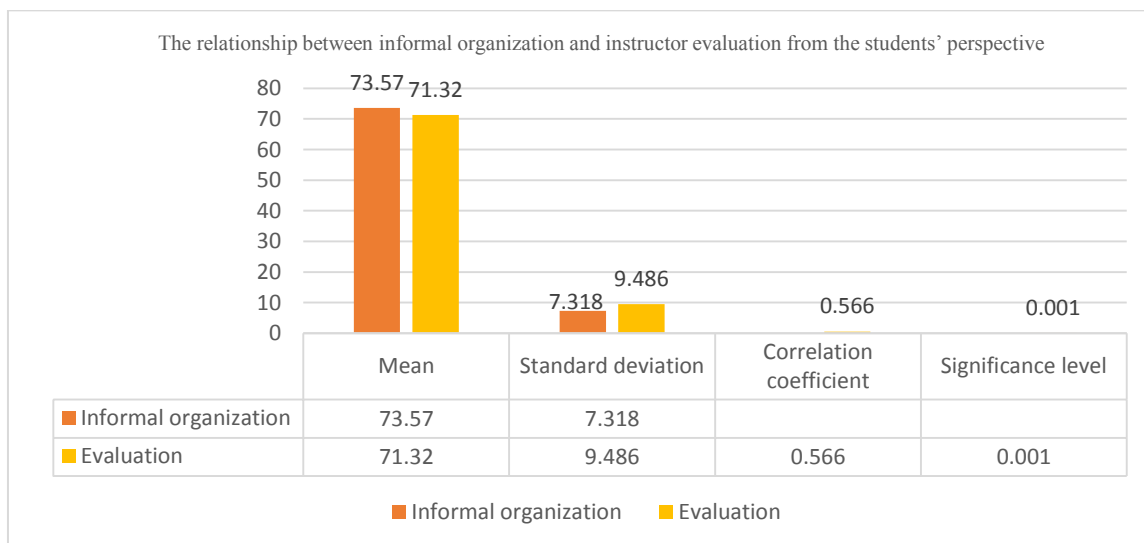
Table (3) and Figure (4), the relationship between group orientation (considering oneself as part of a group) and evaluation



As observed in Table (3) and Figure (4), the standard deviation of the “group orientation” component was 2.468, while that of the dependent variable, evaluation, was 9.486. Similarly, the mean of the “group orientation” component was 17.32, and the mean of the dependent variable, evaluation, was 71.32. The relationship between the “genuine commitment” component and evaluation was  $r = 0.389$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , indicating its significance. Therefore, there is a very weak but significant relationship between group orientation and evaluation.

The relationship between the main variables of the informal organization and evaluation. Finally, after examining the relationships between the components of the independent variable (informal organization) and the dependent variable (evaluation), an analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the main independent and dependent variables, as shown in the following table and figure.

Table (4) and Figure (5), the relationship between informal organization and evaluation



As illustrated in Table (4) and Figure (5), this study examines the relationship between informal organization –comprising components such as ethnicity, language, regionalism, and economic interests—and instructors’ evaluation practices from the students’ perspectives at Baghlan University. The descriptive data indicate that the mean scores for both variables are at relatively high levels. The reported mean for informal organization is 73.57, while the mean for instructors’ evaluation from the students’ viewpoint is 71.32, both of which fall within a desirable range. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the informal organization variable (7.318) and for instructors’ evaluation from the students’ perspective (9.486) is relatively high, reflecting a considerable degree of dispersion and diversity in respondents’ views.

On the other hand, the correlation coefficient is  $R = 0.566$ , which indicates a positive and moderate relationship between the independent variable (informal organization) and the dependent variable (instructors’ evaluation). This means that as the role of the informal organization variable—such as ethnic, linguistic, and interest-based orientations—increases, students’ perceptions of the instructors’ evaluation process also tend to change. The significance level of this relationship is reported as  $\text{Sig} = 0.001$ , which is far below the standard threshold of 0.05. This reflects a strong level of statistical significance and suggests that the likelihood of this relationship having occurred by chance is nearly zero. Therefore, it can be asserted with a high degree of confidence that the observed relationship is genuine.

This relationship is statistically very strong (significant) and, from a practical standpoint, moderately satisfactory. This means that informal organization can be regarded as a moderately influential factor shaping students’ perceptions of the evaluation system, although other important factors are also likely to play a role in this regard. This finding underscores the importance of paying attention to the informal social context and its role in understanding educational processes within the academic environment.

## Discussion

Universities and educational institutions, in order to fulfill their roles under current conditions, need to conduct review processes of their activities at both organizational and individual levels according to scientific standards. Educational organizations are established with the goal of producing and delivering a generation of skilled and competent professionals. Therefore, instructors should, free from personal or group affiliations, administer assessments to their students at the end of a program or academic year and evaluate them accordingly.

In the field of Organization and Management, organizations can be categorized into two types. The first is the formal organization, intentionally created and operating under a command structure. The second is the informal organization, which emerges within the formal organization through its members and does not follow the formal chain of command. Informal organizations can be observed within the groups that exist in an organization. These groups form around certain psychological indicators, including genuine commitment, shared sense, mutual understanding, and considering oneself part of a group. Such indicators are clearly recognizable within various informal groups, such as friendship groups, interest groups, and reference groups. Managers are responsible for

recognizing and managing these informal groups using their managerial knowledge to ensure that organizational goals are achieved.

Researchers have highlighted that evaluation becomes effective only when its results and feedback are based on established criteria and conditions. Thus, evaluation is considered a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information. Supporting this claim, previous studies provide evidence. For instance, Mousavi Nasab reported a significant relationship between membership in informal groups and efficiency, as well as between informal group membership and effectiveness. Based on these results, it can be argued that belonging to informal groups positively affects the performance and productivity of university instructors. Additionally, Safiri and Sharifi (2005), in their study "Investigation of Students' Value Hierarchies and Their Relationship with Reference Groups," further explore the impact of informal group dynamics in educational settings, finding that social values hold higher priority compared to other types of values.

Similarly, Asgharpour, Monjamed, and Beraani (2010) found significant differences between instructors' and students' perspectives regarding mean scores of factors related to instructors' personal characteristics, teaching activities, certain educational conditions, and student-related factors. Amini and Henaryar (2008) examined instructor evaluation at Jahrom University of Medical Sciences from both instructors' and students' perspectives and found that most instructors agreed with the principle of evaluation. Considering that evaluation is influenced by multiple factors, they recommended complementing it with additional methods such as peer evaluation, self-assessment, and assessment of student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, Torkzadeh, Marzouqi, Mohammadi, and Mohtaram (2014) demonstrated that the impact of five factors—expertise, personality, interaction with students, instructor evaluation of students, and classroom management—on student evaluations varied across different faculties.

Regarding the demographic variables, a total of 385 students from Baghlan University participated in the study. Among them, 12.3% were students of the Faculty of Economics, 24.3% from the Faculty of Education, 12.6% from the Faculty of Journalism, 3% from the Faculty of Sharia, 14.5% from the Faculty of Engineering, 17.9% from the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, and 14.5% from the Faculty of Agriculture. In terms of marital status, 81.3% were single, 12.8% married, and 5.9% engaged. Regarding academic year, 15.4% were first-year students, 18.7% second-year, 37.2% third-year, and 28.8% fourth-year students.

The research question examined whether there is a relationship between informal organization (psychological indicators of informal groups) and instructor evaluation from the perspective of Baghlan University students. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a moderate and significant relationship ( $r = 0.566$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), confirming the strong statistical significance of the association between informal organization and the evaluation process.

## Conclusion

Educational organizations, like other institutions, require the utilization of diverse resources in order to achieve their pre-established objectives. These resources may be categorized as human, financial, material, and informational. All organizational plans and activities are implemented and carried out by human resources and are largely supplied from the external environment. Naturally, instructors and students who are engaged in teaching and learning at universities are influenced by the broader society outside the institution. Accordingly, the factors and components inherent in the informal organization can be associated with the process of evaluating students by instructors. In accordance with the findings of this study, it can be concluded that at Baghlan University, the informal organization variable—encompassing components such as ethnicity, language, regionalism, and economic interests—plays a significant and meaningful role in shaping students' attitudes and perceptions toward the evaluation process and the results announced by instructors. This conclusion is grounded in statistical evidence indicating a positive and moderate correlation ( $r = 0.566$ ) between the two variables of informal organization and evaluation, suggesting that as the influence of informal organizational factors increases, students' perceptions of the evaluation system tend to change accordingly. Moreover, the very strong level of statistical significance ( $p = 0.001$ ) for this relationship rules out the likelihood of randomness and indicates the existence of a genuine and reliable association. Furthermore, the relatively high mean levels for both variables indicate a context in which the influence of the informal organizational variable is clearly perceptible, while at the same time the overall attitudes of students toward instructors' evaluation results remain at a desirable level. Nevertheless, the high standard deviation suggests the presence of diverse experiences and considerable variability in students' perceptions and attitudes with respect to both issues. Overall, the findings of this study affirm that informal social structures within the university environment cannot be overlooked, as they are directly and significantly associated with students' perceptions of examination results. Therefore, management and planning in educational settings—particularly in multicultural contexts such as Baghlan University - should take these variables into account and strive to mitigate their potential adverse effects on evaluation processes, objective outcomes, and the overall coherence of the educational environment. Although this relationship is of a moderate magnitude, it is statistically robust and scientifically noteworthy.

## Acknowledgment

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## Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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