



Attitudes of Lecturers Toward Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) and Relationship with Self-Image in Library Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper employed a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach to investigate the attitudes of Library and Information Science (LIS) lecturers towards Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) and the relationship between these attitudes and the lecturers' self-image. The accessible population consisted of 525 LIS lecturers registered on the NALISE WhatsApp group. A questionnaire was shared via Google Forms using voluntary-response sampling, and 384 lecturers responded (73.14%). Data analysis was performed in IBM SPSS version 20 using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings showed moderately positive attitudes toward SET, with lecturers distinguishing clearly between its purposes: it was accepted as a tool for reflection and instructional improvement but treated with caution in high-stakes decisions such as promotion, salary, and reappointment. Lecturers reported a strong professional self-image grounded in identity, competence, and academic belonging rather than evaluation outcomes, and largely unaffected by critical student feedback. A statistically significant but modest positive correlation emerged between Student Evaluations of Teaching attitudes and self-image, indicating that the constructs are related without strongly predicting the other. The study concludes that LIS lecturers engage critically and selectively with Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) without loss of professional confidence. It recommends that institutions separate its formative and administrative uses in evaluation policy.

Keywords: LIS lecturers, Student Evaluation of Teaching, Self-image, Professional identity, Library and Information Science Educators.

Introduction

Today, it has become a common practice in tertiary institutions to carry out student evaluation of teaching effectiveness and teaching quality. Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) refers to the systematic collection of students' ratings and feedback on the effectiveness of instruction, typically through end-of-course questionnaires, and is widely used by higher education institutions for both formative and summative assessment of teaching. Student evaluations of teaching were originally designed to help lecturers improve their teaching. It is not surprising that while some shy away from validating the means by which a lecturers' teaching competence is judged, others are reluctant to give students a voice in the decisions that affect a lecturers' career (Iyamu, & Aduwa-Oglebaen, 2005). Today, institutions are increasingly acknowledging the fact that there are various sources of information about teaching effectiveness and many ways of bringing that information to bear upon. Universities are increasingly using SET results to help make decisions regarding faculty promotion, tenure, reappointment, contract renewal, merit-based remuneration and job security (Quansah et al., 2024; Close, 2025). Library schools are not left out of these practices as well. University of Ibadan is one of the oldest library schools in Nigeria. The University of Ibadan's promotion guidelines overtly identify peer and student evaluation of actual delivery and presentation of lectures as evidence that may be considered in promotion decisions (University of Ibadan, 2022).

This widespread application indicates that SET is a reliable tool. However, the situation is far more complicated. Quite a few scholars express doubts concerning the fact that SET measures good teaching. For example, Quansah et al. (2024) report that students provide inconsistent ratings. Such concerns about the measurement properties of SET give lecturers a reasonable basis for questioning the reliability of the results. The concern is not limited to measurement, however. SET also intersects with how lecturers view themselves as teachers because teaching is an important part of academic professional identity. Student feedback can therefore carry personal as well as professional meaning. Hammer et al. (2018) examined this connection and found that many faculty members held negative views of SET. Some believed that students could use evaluations to penalise lecturers who were strict or demanding. Despite these concerns, more than half of the faculty members in their study expressed some trust in the evaluation process. Their findings suggest that lecturers' attitudes toward SET can accommodate both confidence in its usefulness and reservations about its fairness and validity.

This tension is worth exploring further. First of all, lecturers may feel vulnerable because of students' ratings. This is especially applicable in cases where ratings question their competence. However, on the other hand, lecturers may consider evaluations as constructive feedback. Consequently, self-image should play a very important part in this interaction. Self-image of lecturer is the way how lecturer views and evaluates himself/herself as a professional. It concerns

the lecturer's self-perception regarding his/her teaching skills, knowledge of the subject, effectiveness of the lecturer's work and importance as an academician. A lecturer who is confident in his/her professional identity will view criticism as constructive. However, a lecturer with low self-image will perceive the same criticism as a personal insult. This pattern can be particularly interesting to research in Library and Information Science (LIS) education. Many of them teach both practical skills and theoretical content. This dual role may shape how they view themselves as educators, given the varied academic and practical demands placed on LIS lecturers (Ninh & Nguyen, 2025). LIS lecturers may therefore respond to student evaluations differently than lecturers in other fields. At the same time, wider issues of unfairness in SET cannot be overlooked. Some studies have raised the issue of potential bias in student ratings. The biases might include those concerning the gender of an instructor (Heffernan, 2022). The issues are relevant to LIS lecturers as well, as the field has a variety of teaching personnel. In case some lecturers perceive their assessment as being unfair, this might influence their attitude to SET and their identity as educators.

Statement of the Problem

Student evaluation of teaching (SET) plays a large role in how universities judge teaching quality. Yet, this practice creates a real dilemma for lecturers. Many lecturers view SET with suspicion, since they see it as unreliable or unfair (Quansah et al., 2024). At the same time, institutions continue to use these evaluations to inform decisions about lecturers' careers. This creates tension between what lecturers believe about the process and how the process is actually used. Such tension may affect not only how lecturers respond to feedback, but also how they see themselves as teachers. When evaluations are negative, some lecturers may feel their professional identity is threatened (Hammer et al., 2018). Some people might be emotionally detached from the results in order to preserve their self-concept. Both responses might influence how lecturers teach and interact with future assessments.

The issue seems to become even more relevant in the case of Library and Information Science (LIS) education. LIS lecturers typically combine technical and academic roles, which is not always sufficiently addressed in the broader literature on the topic (Ninh & Nguyen, 2025). However, very few scholars have studied how LIS lecturers perceive SET and how it correlates with their self-concept as educators. The vast majority of papers addressing this topic have focused on the general context of higher education or on completely different fields. Thus, it remains unclear whether LIS lecturers share the same issues as other people or whether their particular circumstances create unique patterns of behavior. In this situation, there is a chance that institutions will develop the wrong evaluation system for LIS lecturers. It will reduce the effectiveness of SET as an improvement tool and influence how LIS lecturers view their professional role. Therefore, there is a clear need to examine LIS lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations, and how these attitudes relate to their self-image as lecturers.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What attitudes do LIS lecturers hold toward student evaluations of their teaching in library schools in Nigeria?
2. How do LIS lecturers in library schools in Nigeria describe their self-image as lecturers?
3. What is the relationship between LIS lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations and their self-image as lecturers in library schools in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant relationship between LIS lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations of teaching and their self-image as lecturers in library schools in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Lecturer Attitudes Toward Student Evaluations of Teaching

There have been several studies on how lecturers view and react to student evaluations of teaching (SET). These studies reveal that lecturers hold diverse views about SET, and some view it as an important source of information, while others view it as biased, unreliable or unfair. For instance, Nasser and Fresko (2002) noted differences in the attitudes of lecturers on the validity and importance of student ratings. Although attitudes were generally somewhat positive, relatively few instructors reported changing their teaching in response to student feedback, suggesting that accepting SET as a source of information does not necessarily translate into using it for instructional improvement. According to Hammer et al. (2018), many lecturers harboured negative views regarding student motivation, especially the view that students utilise evaluations to "get back at" strict lecturers. However, more than half of the respondents indicated that they trusted SET as a method which was an accurate representation of how they teach, and they found the feedback helpful. More importantly, those who rated themselves as teachers higher than the ratings given by the students were more likely to embrace negative views towards SET.

However, lecturers' perceptions of SET are not developed in a vacuum and are, to a large degree, contingent upon the perception of fairness and objectivity of the evaluation process. In a literature review on biases in student evaluations, Heffernan (2022) notes that students' assessments may be influenced by variables that have nothing to do with the quality of instruction provided, for example, by the gender of an instructor. This fact proves that a widespread lecturer concern that student ratings are often related more to the instructor or the context than to teaching per se is valid. Sceptical attitudes to SET cannot always be attributed simply to lecturer resistance to feedback. In addition, issues

of fairness are present in current research on lecturers' attitudes towards teaching evaluation.

However, the purpose for which SET was intended should not be overlooked either. Matthews (2025) asserts that student evaluation provides important formative data, but suggests that SET is inappropriate to rely upon as an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher. It is recommended that this type of data should be used alongside self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and other information. Similar conclusions were drawn by Zhao et al. (2022), after their systematic review. SET is a controversial tool in regard to its reliability, validity, and utility. Students' evaluations can reveal something true in their perceptions, yet interpreting the data needs great caution, because there may be other reasons for students' opinions than only teaching effectiveness. Stakes involved in the process of student evaluations affect people's attitude to them. Once the data is being used to evaluate such aspects as promotion, salary, and retention, questions of fairness acquire more significance. It is suggested by Zipser and Mincieli (2025) to treat SET as one aspect of teaching evaluation.

Lecturer Self-Image and Professional Identity

Self-image refers to how a person perceives themselves, and for lecturers this construct often overlaps with professional identity. In another study by Zeng and Liu (2024), a tool was created and validated to evaluate the concept of teacher professional identity within the context of a Chinese university, thereby proving the measurability and multidimensionality of the construct, which includes both individual perceptions and societal expectations related to the role of a teacher. This concept is also seen as one that changes over time and with experience, and affects lecturers' perception of themselves as professionals. This perspective is reinforced by Orfali et al. (2024) in the description of teachers' identity as a construct that is continuously formed and reformulated throughout their entire career, influenced by personal beliefs, working conditions, and societal expectations. Given that self-image is influenced by factors that include feedback from other people, there can be an assumption that SET influences the image of a lecturer. This notion is further buttressed by Cornes et al. (2023), who point out that negative feedback from students can threaten lecturers' perceptions of their professional competence and identity, especially when it is interpreted as an assessment of their professional worth, which, in turn, can affect their professional identity in the long term.

Extant empirical studies reinforce the view that self-image shapes, and is shaped by, other professional outcomes. Li and Khairani (2025), surveying preservice teachers in China, found that self-image exerted both direct and indirect effects on professional identity formation, with commitment mediating the relationship between the two constructs — indicating that self-image does not act in isolation but operates through other psychological factors. In a related study, Ye et al. (2025) surveyed 632 preservice teachers in China and found that self-concept, a construct closely related to self-image, mediated the relationship between learning engagement and professional identity, with a stronger self-concept associated with a stronger overall professional identity. Together, these studies support the view that self-image is not a fixed trait but a dynamic construct shaped by experience, which in turn influences how educators relate to their profession.

The Concept of Student Evaluation of Teaching

Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) is a widely used process through which students provide feedback on their experiences of teaching and learning. It generally involves students assessing aspects of a lecturer's teaching, such as clarity of presentation, organisation, communication, interaction with students, assessment practices, course content, and overall instructional effectiveness (Caldwell et al., 2024). Zhao et al. (2022) describe SET as a means of evaluating teaching quality and teaching outcomes, while Quansah et al. (2024) view it as a process through which students assess teaching activities, lecturers' behaviours, course content, and other elements of instruction. SET is commonly carried out through structured questionnaires administered during or at the end of a course. Because students are directly exposed to lecturers' teaching practices, they are considered an important source of information about the teaching and learning process. Hence, their feedback could prove useful in pointing out how well a teacher performs and the areas that he or she could work on. Nevertheless, student feedback might not give an all-round view of the quality of teaching since other elements are not related to teaching that might influence their ratings (Constantinou & Wijnen-Meijer, 2022; Quansah et al., 2024).

The literature also identifies two major purposes of SET. First, it serves a formative purpose by providing lecturers with feedback that can help them improve their teaching. Second, it may serve a summative purpose when institutions use students' ratings in decisions relating to promotion, tenure, performance appraisal, and course allocation (Vargas-Madriz & Nocente, 2023). This dual role has fueled ongoing debates about the reliability, fairness, and appropriate use of SET; therefore, it provides important background for understanding lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations of their teaching.

The Relationship Between Attitude towards SET and Lecturer Self-Image

Few studies have examined SET attitudes and self-image within a single framework, and Hammer et al. (2018) remains one of the clearest examples. Their findings suggest that lecturers whose self-perceptions of their teaching align closely with, or are not higher than, the ratings they receive from students are more likely to trust SET and regard its feedback as useful, whereas lecturers who perceive themselves as considerably better than their students' ratings suggest tend to mistrust SET and endorse more negative beliefs about the evaluation process. Hammer et al. (2018) interpreted this pattern as consistent with a possible self-protective response to a perceived threat to self-image. This relationship is consistent with broader research on teachers' professional identity and self-perception. Zeng and Liu (2024) identify professional self-efficacy, professional knowledge, and career commitment as important dimensions of teachers' professional identity, highlighting the role of professional self-perception in how teachers understand themselves within their work. Li and Khairani (2025) similarly found that self-image influences the formation of teacher professional identity. These findings suggest that self-image may shape how lecturers interpret experiences that provide feedback about their professional competence, including student evaluations.

If self-image influences how teachers interpret professional experiences and feedback (Li & Khairani, 2025; Zeng & Liu, 2024), a similar dynamic may operate in the context of SET. Lecturers who perceive student ratings as inconsistent with their professional self-image may be more inclined to question the credibility or fairness of the evaluation, whereas those whose self-perceptions are broadly consistent with the ratings may be more receptive to the feedback. This remains insufficiently examined among LIS lecturers, particularly within Nigerian library schools. Examining the relationship between SET attitudes and professional self-image therefore represents an important empirical gap addressed by the present study.

Few studies have examined SET attitudes and self-image within a single model, and Hammer et al. (2018) remains one of the clearest examples. Their findings suggest that lecturers whose self-perception of their teaching aligns closely with, or falls below, the ratings they receive from students are more likely to trust SET and accept its feedback constructively, whereas lecturers who see themselves as considerably better than their students' ratings suggest tend to mistrust SET and hold more negative beliefs about it, a pattern consistent with a self-protective response to a perceived threat to self-image. This pattern is consistent with broader research on professional identity: Zeng and Liu (2024) argue that self-image shapes how teachers interpret workplace events generally, which suggests a similar dynamic may apply specifically to how lecturers interpret SET. If self-image shapes how individuals interpret feedback in other professional contexts (Li & Khairani, 2025; Ye et al., 2025), it is reasonable to expect a comparable pattern in the context of SET. This is one of the key empirical gaps the present study addresses.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluation of teaching (SET) and their self-image in library schools in Nigeria. The target population comprised LIS lecturers teaching in Nigerian universities and polytechnics offering LIS programmes. The accessible population consisted of 525 LIS lecturers on the Nigerian Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) WhatsApp platform, which served as the principal access point for reaching LIS educators across library schools in Nigeria. For this study, a non-probability voluntary response sampling technique was used, in which case the researcher provided a questionnaire to all 525 accessible lecturers through the Google Form. Out of these, 384 lecturers provided feedback, making the response rate 73.14%. Data collection took place from June to September 2025, following an electronic consent declaration from all respondents. The questionnaire comprised three sections. Section A captured respondents' demographic characteristics; Section B, consisting of 12 items, measured attitudes toward SET, with items 5, 9, and 10 reverse-coded. The attitude scale was guided by the insights from existing literature (Hammer et al., 2018; Chikazinga, 2018; Quansah et al., 2024; and Cornes et al., 2023). Section C contained 12 questions related to lecturers' self-concept, with items 4 and 6 reverse-coded, and was guided by the ideas of Hammer et al. (2018) and Zeng and Liu (2024). Both sections B and C used a four-point Likert scale, from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). Because the test

was developed independently, expert review ensured content validity, and the pilot study determined internal consistency. The reliability analysis resulted in Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .878 and .825 for sections B and C, respectively, thus revealing good internal consistency. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the data, and the findings were presented using tables.

Results

In the following sections, we present our findings on (1) Demographic details of respondents (2) LIS lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations of their teaching in library schools in Nigeria, (3) LIS lecturers' self-image as lecturers, and (4) the relationship between LIS lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations of teaching and their self-image as lecturers.

Table 1: Demographic details of respondents

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	218	56.8
	Female	166	43.2
	Total	384	100.0
Academic rank	Graduate Assistant/Assistant Lecturer	157	40.9
	Lecturer II/Lecturer I	108	28.1
	Senior Lecturer	53	13.8
	Reader	26	6.8
	Professor	157	40.9
	Total	384	100.0
Years of experience	Less than 5 years	56	14.6
	5–9 years	94	24.5
	10–14 years	130	33.9
	15 years or more	104	27.1
	Total	384	100.0

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the 384 respondents. Men accounted for 56.8% of the sample, compared with 43.2% women. By academic rank, Lecturer II/Lecturer I constituted the largest group (40.9%), followed by Senior

Lecturers (28.1%), while Professors made up the smallest group (6.8%). Respondents with 10–14 years of professional experience were the largest experience group (33.9%), whereas those with less than five years represented 14.6%.

Lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations of their teaching effectiveness in library schools in Nigeria

Table 2: LIS Lecturers' Attitudes toward Student Evaluation of Teaching

S/N	Item	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)	Mean	SD
1	Student evaluation of teaching is a fair way to assess my teaching effectiveness.	231 (60.16)	149 (38.80)	4 (1.04)	0 (0.00)	3.59	0.51
2	Students are competent enough to judge the quality of my teaching.	141 (36.72)	206 (53.65)	33 (8.59)	4 (1.04)	3.26	0.65
3	Student evaluation results help me to improve my teaching methods.	214 (55.73)	163 (42.45)	7 (1.82)	0 (0.00)	3.54	0.53
4	Student evaluations accurately reflect my true performance in class.	72 (18.75)	167 (43.49)	120 (31.25)	25 (6.51)	2.74	0.83
5	Students often give low ratings out of personal bias rather than honest judgement. (R)	7 (1.82)	80 (20.83)	166 (43.23)	131 (34.11)	1.90	0.78
6	I trust the process used to collect student evaluations.	106 (27.60)	209 (54.43)	60 (15.62)	9 (2.34)	3.07	0.72
7	Student evaluation results should be used for promotion decisions.	122 (31.77)	129 (33.59)	106 (27.60)	27 (7.03)	2.90	0.93
8	Student evaluation results should be used for salary or reward decisions.	137 (35.68)	125 (32.55)	89 (23.18)	33 (8.59)	2.95	0.97
9	I feel anxious whenever I know that students will evaluate my teaching. (R)	34 (8.85)	120 (31.25)	91 (23.70)	139 (36.20)	2.13	1.01
10	Demanding lecturers tend to receive unfairly low ratings from students. (R)	13 (3.39)	76 (19.79)	158 (41.15)	137 (35.68)	1.91	0.83
11	Student feedback motivates me to prepare better for my lectures.	173 (45.05)	172 (44.79)	39 (10.16)	0 (0.00)	3.35	0.66
12	I am comfortable receiving critical feedback from students.	196 (51.04)	160 (41.67)	28 (7.29)	0 (0.00)	3.44	0.63
Overall Mean/SD						2.90	0.26

Note: (R) indicates a negatively worded item that was reverse-coded before calculating the mean and standard deviation.

Table 2 presents the attitudes of the respondents toward Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET). The results generally indicate a positive attitude toward student evaluation of teaching, although the respondents expressed some reservations about the use and fairness of SET for administrative decisions.

The highest mean score was recorded for the item that student evaluation of teaching (SET) is a fair way of assessing teaching effectiveness ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.51$). Respondents also agreed that SET results help them improve their teaching methods ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.53$). These responses point to a generally positive view of SET, both as a means of judging teaching effectiveness and as a source of feedback for instructional improvement.

Respondents were also comfortable receiving critical feedback from students ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.63$) and agreed that student feedback motivates them to prepare better for lectures ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.66$). Their responses indicate an openness to using student feedback in improving their teaching. The relatively high mean for the view that students are competent to judge teaching quality ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.65$) further reflects respondents' acceptance of students as legitimate participants in the evaluation of teaching.

Some reservations emerged around the use of SET for high-stakes personnel decisions. Respondents were less supportive of using student evaluation results for promotion ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.93$) and for salary or reward decisions ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.97$). Their responses indicate a distinction between accepting SET as a source of feedback and accepting it as a basis for decisions that directly affect lecturers' careers and remuneration.

There was also less certainty about whether student evaluations accurately reflect actual classroom performance ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.83$), pointing to some reservations about the validity of SET as a complete measure of teaching performance. This comparatively lower mean indicates some uncertainty among respondents about whether student evaluations provide a complete and accurate representation of lecturers' actual teaching performance.

The overall mean for the construct was 2.90, with a standard deviation of 0.26. Based on the 4-point Likert scale, this represents a generally high/positive attitude toward student evaluation of teaching. The relatively small overall standard deviation also suggests that respondents' overall attitudes were fairly consistent.

LIS lecturers' description of their self-image as lecturers**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics of Self-image as lecturers

S/ N	Item	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)	Mean	SD
1	I see myself as a competent lecturer.	259 (67.45)	125 (32.55)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3.67	0.47
2	My teaching ability is central to how I view myself professionally.	182 (47.40)	193 (50.26)	9 (2.34)	0 (0.00)	3.45	0.54
3	I feel confident in my skills as a lecturer.	251 (65.36)	129 (33.59)	4 (1.04)	0 (0.00)	3.64	0.50
4	Negative feedback from students makes me question my ability as a lecturer. (R)	35 (9.11)	141 (36.72)	134 (34.90)	74 (19.27)	2.36	0.89
5	I have a clear sense of who I am as an educator.	243 (63.28)	137 (35.68)	4 (1.04)	0 (0.00)	3.62	0.51
6	My self-worth as an academic depends on how well I teach. (R)	5 (1.30)	42 (10.94)	158 (41.15)	179 (46.61)	1.67	0.72
7	I feel secure in my professional identity as a lecturer, regardless of external feedback.	194 (50.52)	179 (46.61)	11 (2.86)	0 (0.00)	3.48	0.55
8	I consider myself a respected member of my academic community.	264 (68.75)	109 (28.39)	11 (2.86)	0 (0.00)	3.66	0.53
9	I am proud of my identity as a Library and Information Science lecturer.	304 (79.17)	76 (19.79)	4 (1.04)	0 (0.00)	3.78	0.44
10	My teaching reflects who I truly am as a professional.	228 (59.38)	149 (38.80)	7 (1.82)	0 (0.00)	3.58	0.53
11	Criticism of my teaching does not shake my overall self-confidence.	195 (50.78)	158 (41.15)	22 (5.73)	9 (2.34)	3.40	0.71
12	I continually strive to grow and develop my professional self-image.	275 (71.61)	109 (28.39)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3.72	0.45
Overall Mean/SD						3.34	0.29

Note: (R) indicates a negatively worded item that was reverse-coded before calculating the mean and standard deviation.

Table 3 presents the respondents' self-image as lecturers. The results show that the respondents generally have a high and positive self-image in their professional roles as Library and Information Science (LIS) lecturers.

The highest mean score was recorded for the statement “I am proud of my identity as a Library and Information Science lecturer” (Mean = 3.78, SD = 0.44). This implies a highly developed sense of professional pride among the respondents. Likewise, the respondents strongly believed that they always strive to grow and develop their professional image (Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.45), which implies that professional development is an integral part of their professional lecturer identity.

The respondents also showed a high level of the feeling of competence and professionalism. They believed that they see themselves as competent lecturers (Mean = 3.67, SD = 0.47), respect members of their academic community (Mean = 3.66, SD = 0.53) and are sure of their lecturer competence (Mean = 3.64, SD = 0.50). Additionally, they claimed to have a clear idea of who they are as teachers (Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.51) and their teaching reflects their professional identity (Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.53). These findings demonstrate that the respondents generally possess a strong and positive professional identity.

The respondents also expressed a relatively high level of security in their professional identity. The statement “I feel secure in my professional identity as a lecturer, regardless of external feedback” recorded a mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.55). Likewise, respondents agreed that their teaching ability is central to how they view themselves professionally (Mean = 3.45, SD = 0.54) and that criticism of their teaching does not shake their overall self-confidence (Mean = 3.40, SD = 0.71). This suggests that, although teaching is an important component of their professional identity, their overall self-confidence is not necessarily dependent on positive evaluations from students.

The lowest mean scores were observed for “My self-worth as an academic depends on how well I teach” (Mean = 1.67, SD = 0.72) and “Negative feedback from students makes me question my ability as a lecturer” (Mean = 2.36, SD = 0.89). These responses suggest that respondents generally do not base their overall academic self-worth solely on their teaching performance, and they are less likely to allow negative student feedback to undermine their perception of themselves as lecturers.

Overall, the construct recorded a mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.29, indicating a high level of positive self-image among the LIS educators. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that respondents' perceptions of their professional self-image were fairly similar.

Testing Hypothesis

Table 4: Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Between Attitudes Toward Student Evaluations and Lecturer Self-Image (N = 384)

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Attitudes toward student evaluations	2.90	0.26	—	
2. Lecturer self-image	3.34	0.29	.223**	—

Note. ** $p < .001$. Correlation is significant at the .001 level (two-tailed).

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics and the zero-order Pearson correlation between LIS lecturers' attitudes toward student evaluations of teaching (SET) and their self-image as lecturers (N = 384). On average, lecturers reported moderately positive attitudes toward SET (M = 2.90, SD = 0.26) and a somewhat higher level of professional self-image (M = 3.34, SD = 0.29). The correlation between the two constructs was positive, small in magnitude, and statistically significant, $r = .22$, 95% CI [0.13, 0.32], $p < .001$. This indicates that lecturers with more favorable perceptions of SET tend to view themselves more positively as educators, although the association accounts for only about 5% of the variance in self-image ($r^2 \approx .05$). The finding suggests that while attitudes toward SET are meaningfully related to lecturer self-image, self-image is predominantly influenced by other individual and contextual factors beyond evaluation attitudes. Accordingly, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship (H01) is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined how Library and Information Science (LIS) lecturers in Nigeria view student evaluation of teaching (SET), and how this view relates to their professional self-image. The findings present a picture that is more nuanced than the two positions common in the wider literature, which either assume that faculty distrust SET or that faculty generally accept it.

Lecturers in this study did not hold one fixed view of SET. Instead, they made a clear distinction between its use for improving teaching and its use in administrative decisions. SET was viewed positively when used to reflect on and improve teaching. That confidence was weaker when student evaluations were linked to decisions about promotion, salary, or reappointment. The pattern is consistent with Hammer et al. (2018), who found that faculty attitudes toward evaluation can combine trust in its developmental value with concerns about its use for high-stakes decisions. It also accords with Quansah et al. (2024), who argue that reservations about the validity of SET reflect genuine measurement concerns rather than simply academic defensiveness. In the present study, this distinction is evident among LIS lecturers, whose roles often combine academic instruction with the development of practical professional skills (Ninh & Nguyen, 2025). They appeared willing to use student feedback to improve

teaching but were more cautious about treating it as a basis for decisions that could affect their careers. This suggests that the wider question in the literature, whether SET works, may not be the most useful question to ask. For this group, the more relevant question is what purpose SET is trusted to serve.

The findings on self-image challenge a common assumption in the evaluation literature: that negative or unwelcome feedback necessarily threatens academic identity. Instead, the professional self-image reported by this sample appeared to rest on something broader than teaching evaluation results alone. It was based more on a general sense of professional identity, competence, and belonging to an academic community than on any single piece of feedback. This supports Orfali et al. (2024) view that teacher identity builds up over time and is shaped by many factors, rather than reacting sharply to single events. Lecturers in this sample reported clearly that criticism does not seriously affect their sense of competence. This is more direct evidence than earlier studies have offered, since much of that earlier work relied on theory or on related but different measures.

The relationship between SET attitudes and self-image was confirmed statistically, but the size of that relationship is itself an important part of the finding. The association was real but small. This tells us that the two constructs are connected, without one simply explaining the other. It suggests that lecturer self-image in LIS education is not mainly shaped by how lecturers feel about being evaluated. Instead, self-image seems to draw on a wider range of sources. This fits the broader pattern found in the professional identity literature, where self-image or self-concept works as one part of a larger set of influences rather than the main driver of outcomes, as shown in the work of Ye et al. (2025) and Li and Khairani (2025). Seen this way, the findings suggest that efforts to reform SET, aimed at improving faculty wellbeing or morale, should not be expected on their own to significantly change how lecturers see themselves professionally. The two are related, but self-image clearly depends on much more than evaluation experience. At the same time, the small size of the relationship is reassuring. It suggests that even when lecturers have real concerns about the fairness or accuracy of SET, these concerns are not strongly linked to a weak or threatened sense of self.

In a nutshell, the findings suggest that LIS lecturers in this context act as practical, thoughtful evaluators of the system used to judge them, rather than as passive recipients of it. They are able to hold a critical, selective view of SET, accepting its value for improving teaching while questioning its use in administrative decisions, without this view weakening their sense of professional security. This pattern builds on, rather than simply repeats, what Hammer et al. (2018) found. On its own, their finding that weaker self-image is linked to more negative SET attitudes could suggest a fairly direct connection between the two. The present findings add nuance to that idea. Because the relationship found here is real but modest, a critical or selective attitude toward SET clearly does not require, and is not simply caused by, a weak self-image. The picture that emerges instead is one where a secure professional identity can exist alongside, and may even support, a more selective and critical view of institutional evaluation practices, rather than one construct simply causing the other.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design of this study limits any claims about cause and effect. It cannot show whether a secure self-image leads to a more favourable view of SET, whether a favourable view of SET strengthens self-image, or whether both are shaped by a third factor not measured here, such as institutional culture or a general sense of fairness within the organisation. The use of self-report data also raises the possibility that responses to identity related items were shaped by social desirability, particularly since admitting to a weak professional self-image may feel uncomfortable. Finally, because the main relationship found in this study was modest in size, it should not be treated as the main explanation for how LIS lecturers see themselves professionally. Future research should look beyond this single relationship to better understand the wider sources of professional identity among this group.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. University management and library school administrators should separate the formative and summative uses of SET. Since lecturers in this study readily accepted SET as a tool for improving teaching but were far less supportive of its use in promotion and salary decisions, institutions should consider using SET mainly for developmental feedback and pairing it with other, more complete measures, such as peer review, teaching portfolios, or research output, before applying it to decisions with major career consequences.
2. Institutions should increase transparency on the collection and use of SET data. The concerns raised by the lecturers about the validity and fairness of the student ratings point to a need for more information regarding the administration, scoring, and use of the evaluation process.
3. NALISE and the library school management should arrange for regular training or orientation for LIS lecturers on how to interpret and react positively to SET results. This will ensure that the positive and resilient professional self-image found in this study is maintained among the lecturers.
4. Institutions should examine the gender and rank-related differences in attitudes toward SET before making changes to evaluation policies. Female lecturers and Senior Lecturers reported less favourable attitudes than their counterparts, warranting further investigation into the factors underlying these differences. Consultations with these groups could help determine whether concerns about bias, career-stage pressures, or other institutional conditions shape their views of SET and should inform any subsequent policy changes.

5. Library schools need to help promote the psychological well-being and career development of lecturers, not just because of any changes being made in SET. Due to the fact that the lecturer's self-image relied on a lot more than just his/her attitudes towards assessment, it would be advisable for organizations to allocate some resources to these ends.
6. Further research into SET and professional identity among LIS educators should be done in Africa. It might prove helpful to conduct comparative research with other African nations as well as with other areas of study to see if these trends are peculiar only to Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how LIS lecturers in Nigeria view student evaluation of teaching, and how this relates to their professional self-image. From the findings, it can be seen that LIS lecturers do not view SET as one particular thing. There is a clear differentiation made between its application in enhancing teaching and in administration, with the former being accepted and the latter viewed cautiously. This selective view is held in the context of an overall relatively stable self-image that is not based solely on evaluation results but is rather identity-based. This negates the view that a critical view of SET implies a poor academic self-image. The modest but significant relationship between the two constructs further suggests that although attitudes toward SET and self-image are connected, self-image depends on a much wider set of personal and professional resources than evaluation experience alone can explain.

These findings have practical value for institutions that use SET in personnel decisions. When SET is presented mainly as a tool for development, lecturer support for it appears strong. When it is extended into decisions with real consequences, such as promotion or pay, that support becomes weaker. This is a distinction institutions should consider when designing and explaining their evaluation systems. In terms of theory, this study adds to the literature on faculty evaluation and professional identity by showing, within a group that has received little attention so far, that a critical or cautious attitude toward evaluation systems does not have to signal, or cause, psychological weakness among academic staff.

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