Attitudes of German teachers and students towards public online ratings of teaching quality

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Abstract: Introduction: Rating scales evaluating the quality of teaching are widely used by academic institutions and have become increasingly popular in the World Wide Web. This study examines teachers' and teacher-education students' knowledge and experience with public online ratings of teaching quality and their attitude towards them. Method: Based on focused interviews, a questionnaire was constructed. Data was collected from 225 teachers at seven schools and from 538 teacher-education students at four universities in Germany. Results: 42 % of all students questioned knew that they could evaluate their professors on MeinProf.de (the German version of RateMyProfessors.com), but only a total of 1.5 % had posted one or more ratings on this website. Analysis of the data showed that teachers were more reserved towards public online ratings than teacher-education students (p < .001), that senior teachers were more reserved about them than younger teachers (p < .001), and that females were more reserved than males (p < .01). Conclusion: The results indicate that a teacher's age is the most important factor influencing attitudes towards public online ratings, which can presumably be attributed to an age-related difficulty in getting high ratings. © Education & Psychology I+D+i and Editorial EOS (España).

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