LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR STUDENTS' LECTURE ATTENDANCE IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study investigated lecturers' perception of factors responsible for students' lecture attendance in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Four research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study used an ex-post facto research design with a descriptive survey method. The study's population consists of 865 lecturers from Delta State's colleges of education. A sample size of 345, representing 40% of the total population was selected through a stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was validated through experts' judgement and the reliability was estimated through split-half reliability, which yielded a coefficient of 0.72, indicating that the instrument is reliable. The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and independent samples t-test. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study's findings revealed that lecturers believe students have a positive attitude toward lecture attendance; that there is no significant difference in male and female lecturers' perceptions of students' lecture attendance habits; and that students' lecture attendance habits are attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraints, an unconducive learning environment, the availability of course outline on textbooks, and the availability of course outline on textbooks. The study concluded that school administration should adopt a strategy for assigning marks to students who attend lectures, based on the data.

Keywords: lecturers; students; perception; lecture attendance; habit; colleges of education

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1. Introduction

Lecture is designed for the delivery of information to a group of persons. It allows the lecturer to maximize control of the students' learning experiences. A lecture is an oral presentation given by a higher institution lecturer to deliver information or teach people about a specific subject (Murphy, 2015). Critical information, history, background, theories, and equations are all conveyed through lectures. A politician's speech, a minister's sermon, or even a sales presentation by a businessman may resemble a lecture in format. The speaker will usually take the stage at the front of the room and deliver information relevant to the lecture's topic. Despite widespread criticism of lectures as a teaching style, higher institutions have yet to develop workable alternatives for the vast majority of their courses (Bassey, 2008). Critics argue that lecturing is primarily a one-way communication strategy that relies on passive learning rather than major audience participation. As a result, lecturing is frequently compared to active learning. Lectures provided by gifted speakers can be extremely interesting; at the very least, lectures have persisted in academia as a quick, inexpensive, and effective manner of introducing large groups of students to a particular topic of study (Worthen, 2015).

Outside of the classroom, lectures play an important function. Academic and scientific honours frequently involve a lecture, and academic conferences are frequently centred around "keynote addresses", or lectures. In both the sciences and social movements, the public lecture has a long history. Historically, union halls have sponsored a number of free and public talks on a variety of topics. Churches, community centers, libraries, museums, and other organizations have also given lectures to enhance their objectives or the interests of their constituents. In contrast to written communication in books and other media, lectures constitute a continuance of oral tradition. Lectures might be thought of as a form of grey literature (Bligh, 2000).

Hawkins, Best, and Coney (2001) define an 'attitude' as a long-term organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes in response to some component of our environment. This suggests that attitudes are formed as a result of environmental factors. The attitude of students towards lecture attendance at higher institutions of learning seems to be an on-going problem that appears to transcend countries, tertiary institutions (e.g., university, polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges of education) and even discipline. To fully comprehend the extent of this occurrence, it is necessary to review the literature on the subject (Gump, 2006; McCarey, Barr & Rattray, 2006; Sharma, et al, 2005; Nicholl and Timmins 2005; Hughes 2005). Students' attitudes regarding lecture attendance are an intriguing and annoying phenomenon, but there is little evidence of institutions of education studying it. It is generally accepted that tertiary institution is a rite of passage for their students and is, therefore, as much about a 'coming of age' and the development of autonomous adults, as it is about training and 'education' (Bourgeois, Duke & Guyot 1999). As a result, the institution's ethos does not encourage forced lecture attendance (Cleary-Holdforth, 2007). As a result, attendance policies are frequently non-existent, and when they are implemented, they appear to differ not just

between educational institutions, but also between departments (Cohn & Johnson, 2006). When there is a 'professional' element to the program, for example, when a high 'minimum' attendance is required, attendance becomes an issue (Bord Altranais, 2005).

Lecturers in higher education institutions are frequently frustrated and perplexed by student attendance. Academics may be angry and perplexed that students frequently opt not to attend, especially given the widespread perception that students profit from going. There is a plethora of factual evidence to back up the idea that more attendance leads to better results. Newman-Ford, Fitzgibbon, Lloyd, and Thomas (2008), for example, find a strong link between attendance and achievement, whereas Woodfield (2006) found that student attendance is the strongest predictor of degree outcome (at the University of Sussex), with clear differences between male and female attendance rates.

Despite the sizeable literature on the positive relationship between attendance and performance (Rau & Durand, 2000), understanding and improving attendance rates remains a complex problem. Institutional changes in education can also affect attendance in positive and negative directions. An increase in student fees in UK universities, according to Mearman, Webber, Ivlevs, Rahman, and Pacheco (2012), may provide an incentive for students to attend because each class missed increases the average cost per class. Advances in learning technology, and institutions' growing willingness to use it, maybe motivated by a perceived need to satisfy their paying clients, which may, on the other hand, create systems in which students are more inclined to choose not to attend.

In 2005, there was mounting anecdotal evidence that student attendance at lectures at the University of Wollongong was falling (UoW). Every discipline seemed to be in trouble. According to anecdotal evidence, this tendency has been going on for several years, but attendance is presently at an all-time low. Attendance in tutorials or seminars appears to be higher than that of lectures, usually, because tutorials have an assessment component or attendance is tracked. For example, the University of Wollongong's Faculty of Commerce has a regulation requiring students to attend 75 percent of tutorials or risk failing the course. It's possible that institution teaching pedagogy hasn't evolved to meet the wants of its customers. As a result, there are conflicts between professional and academic principles (Massingham & Herrington, 2006).

The above discussion has shown that literature on students' lecture attendance habit is limited, with considerable work done in the USA, Australia, Taiwan and UK. Much less has been done in Nigeria and very little attention has been devoted specifically to lecturers' perception. While researchers have focused on the link between attendance and academic performance methods of improving attendance at lectures the researcher did not find any direct-action research-based intervention of lecturers' perception of students' lecture attendance habit. This research is therefore a contribution in this direction thus, necessitating this study to fill the gap.

2. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide this study:

1) What is the perception of lecturers on the lecture attendance habit of students?
2) Is there any difference between Male and Female lecturers' perception of lecture attendance habit of students?
3) What is the perception of lecturers on the factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students?
4) Is there any difference between Male and Female lecturers on perceived factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students?

2.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study
1) There is no significant difference between Male and Female lecturers' perception of lecture attendance habit of students.
2) There is no significant difference between Male and Female lecturers on their perceived factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students.

3. Methods

The study used an ex-post facto research design with a descriptive survey method. In the 2016/2017 academic year, there were 865 lecturers in Delta State Colleges of Education. A total of 345 lecturers were sampled. The sample comprises 40% of the lecturers at each institution. The sample was drawn using a stratified random sampling procedure. This was accomplished by separating the population into strata based on institution, followed by schools and departments, and finally, a random selection within each stratum, with the results merged to produce the sample.

The study was conducted using a self-developed questionnaire with two sections. Section A was used to collect demographic information such as the institution and the gender of lecturers, whereas section B had 32 items that respondents had to score on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. Face and content validity were used to validate the instrument. This was accomplished by having the instrument screened by experts. The items in the questionnaire were assessed to see if they were suitable for the research. The instrument was approved as legitimate based on the experts' ideas, comments, and recommendations, as well as fixes to spelling and grammatical problems and the addition of additional items. Thus, suggestions, comments, recommendations, corrections of spelling and grammatical problems were all taken into account before the instrument's final draft was completed.

A split-half reliability test was performed on the instrument with 20 lecturers outside of the study area. The responders were given the instrument, which was then divided into halves with odd and even numbers. The scores were associated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics, yielding a co-efficient of 0.56; however, this co-efficient was increased using the Spearman-Brown method, yielding a co-efficient

of 0.72, indicating strong reliability, and therefore the instrument was adopted for the study.

The researchers and six research assistants who were properly briefed and educated throughout a day's training to enable them to get familiar with the modalities for administering the instrument appropriately administered the instrument to the respondents. The researcher explained the goal of the study to the research assistants, as well as the items in the instrument. It was required to engage research assistants to ensure that the actual respondents for whom the instrument was designed completed the instrument, as well as to assist in providing clarifications to respondents on the items as needed. On the spot, the instrument was retrieved.

The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using the t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. A mean score of 2.50 was used as the baseline for agreeing on the research questions; any score below that was considered disagreeing.

4. Results

Research Question 1: What is the perception of lecturers on the lecture attendance habit of students?

Table 1: Mean Score Analysis on the Perception
of Lecturers on the Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

S/N	Lecture attendance habit	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Students resume lectures in the first week of resumption	2.13	0.53	-
2.	Students are regular to lectures	2.56	0.64	+
3.	Students are punctual to lectures	2.71	0.68	+
4.	Students' absenteeism rate is high	2.11	0.53	-
5.	Students attend lectures on Monday	2.79	0.70	+
6.	Students attend lectures on Tuesday	2.99	0.75	+
7.	Students attend lectures on Wednesday	2.80	0.70	+
8.	Students attend lectures on Thursday	2.44	0.61	-
9.	Students attend lectures on Friday	2.00	0.50	-
Aggregate Mean Score		**2.50**	**0.62**	**+**

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed

Table 1 presents the mean score analysis of lecturers' perceptions of students' lecture attendance habits. The results revealed that respondents agreed that students are regular to lectures, timely to lectures, and attend lectures on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, with mean scores of 2.56, 2.71, 2.79, 2.99, and 2.80, respectively. Respondents disagreed, with mean scores of 2.13, 2.11, 2.44, and 2.00, that students resume lectures in the first week of resumption, that students' absence rate is significant, and that students do not attend lectures on Thursday, and that students attend lectures on Friday. As a result of the findings, lecturers believe that students have a good attitude about lecture attendance.

Research Question 2: Is there any difference between Male and Female lecturers' perception on lecture attendance habit of students?

Table 2: Mean Score Analysis on Difference between Male and
Female Lecturers' Perception on Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

S/N	Lecture attendance habit	Male Lecturers (N=184)			Female Lecturers (N=161)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Students resume lectures in the first week of resumption	2.15	0.54	-	2.18	0.55	-
2.	Students are regular to lectures	2.59	0.65	+	2.53	0.63	+
3.	Students are punctual to lectures	2.61	0.65	+	2.51	0.63	+
4.	Students' absenteeism rate is high	2.01	0.50	-	2.10	0.53	-
5.	Students attend lectures on Monday	2.89	0.72	+	2.69	0.67	+
6.	Students attend lectures on Tuesday	2.79	0.70	+	2.85	0.71	+
7.	Students attend lectures on Wednesday	2.60	0.65	+	2.50	0.63	+
8.	Students attend lectures on Thursday	2.34	0.59	-	2.14	0.54	-
9.	Students attend lectures on Friday	2.40	0.60	-	1.90	0.48	-
Aggregate Mean Scores		2.49	0.62	-	2.37	0.60	-

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed

Data in Table 2 shows mean score analysis on difference between male and female lecturers' perception on lecture attendance habit of students. Aggregate mean scores of 2.49 and 2.37 for male and female lecturers. These aggregate mean scores show that there is no difference between male and female lecturers' perception on lecture attendance habit of students. The rationale for this conclusion is based on the fact that both aggregate mean scores are less than the benchmark mean score of 2.50.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of lecturers on the factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students?

Table 3 displays a mean score analysis of lecturers' perceptions of the factors that influence students' lecture attendance habits. With mean scores of 3.36, 2.56, 3.16, 3.29, 2.79, 3.16, 3.13, and 3.45, respondents agreed on completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraints, unconducive learning environment, availability of course outline on the textbook, student illness, students believing they can pass without attending classes, and time fixed for class (e.g., 7am or 5pm, daily). However, with mean ratings of 2.11, 2.19, 2.06, 2.26, and 1.56, students disagreed on clashes with social life, class attendance is not required, classes are not stimulating, and students aim to engage in examination malpractice, and students' engagement in part-time work. Students' lecture attendance habits are attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraints, an unconducive learning environment, the availability of course outline on textbooks, student illness, the belief that they can pass without attending classes, and the time set for class, according to the findings (e.g., 7am or 5pm, daily).

Table 3: Mean Score Analysis on the Perception of Lecturers
on the Factors Responsible for Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

S/N	Factors responsible for lecture attendance habit	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Clashes with social life	2.11	0.53	-
2.	Class attendance is not compulsory	2.19	0.55	-
3.	Classes are not stimulating	2.06	0.52	-
4.	Completing assignments at the last minute	3.36	0.84	+
5.	Emergency travels	2.56	0.64	+
6.	Financial constraint	3.16	0.79	+
7.	Students intend to engage in examination malpractice	2.26	0.57	-
8.	Unconducive learning environment	3.29	0.82	+
9.	Availability of course outlines on textbook	2.79	0.70	+
10.	Student illness	3.16	0.79	+
11.	Students feel they can pass without attending classes	3.13	0.78	+
12.	Time fixed for class (e.g., 7am or 5pm, daily)	3.45	0.86	+
13.	Students' engagement in part-time work	1.56	0.39	-

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed.

Research Question 4: Is there any difference between male and female lecturers on perceived factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students?

Table 4: Mean Score Analysis on Difference between Male and Female
Lecturers on Perceived Factors Responsible for Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

S/N	Factors responsible for lecture attendance habit	Male Lecturers (N=184)			Female Lecturers (N=161)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Clashes with social life	2.24	0.56	-	2.03	0.51	-
2.	Class attendance is not compulsory	2.23	0.56	-	2.02	0.51	-
3.	Classes are not stimulating	2.27	0.57	-	1.83	0.46	-
4.	Completing assignments at the last minute	3.35	0.84	+	3.36	0.84	+
5.	Emergency travels	3.25	0.81	+	3.36	0.84	+
6.	Financial constraint	3.45	0.86	+	3.18	0.80	+
7.	Students intend to engage in examination malpractice	2.14	0.54	-	2.22	0.56	-
8.	Unconducive learning environment	3.35	0.84	+	3.30	0.83	+
9.	Availability of course outlines on textbook	2.01	0.50	-	2.17	0.54	-
10.	Student illness	3.36	0.84	+	3.16	0.79	+
11.	Students feel they can pass without attending classes	3.25	0.83	+	3.12	0.78	+
12.	Time fixed for class (e.g., 7am or 5pm, daily)	3.11	0.78	+	3.41	0.85	+
13.	Students' engagement in part-time work	3.12	0.78	+	3.53	0.88	+
Aggregate Mean Scores		2.86	0.72	+	2.82	0.71	+

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed

Data in Table 4 shows mean score analysis on the difference between male and female lecturers on perceived factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students. Aggregate mean scores of 2.86 and 2.82 for male and female lecturers show that there is

no difference between male and female lecturers on perceived factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students. Both mean scores were greater than the benchmark mean score of 2.50. Thus, there is no difference between male and female lecturers on perceived factors responsible for the lecture attendance habit of students.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception on lecture attendance habit of students in Delta State Colleges of Education.

Table 5: t-Test Summary Table on Difference between Male and
Female Lecturers' Perception on Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	df	Level of sign.	t-Cal.	t-Crit.	Decision
Male Lecturer	184	2.49	343	0.05	1.81	±1.96	Not Significant
Female Lecturers	161	2.37					

Data in Table 5 shows that t-calculated of 1.81 is less than t-critical of ±1.96 with df of 343 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception on lecture attendance habit of students in Delta State Colleges of Education.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers on their perceived factors responsible for the lecture attendance habit of students in Delta State Colleges of Education.

Table 6: t-Test Summary Table on Difference between Male and Female
Lecturers on Perceived Factors Responsible for Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	df	Level of Sign.	t-Cal.	t-Crit.	Decision
Male Lecturer	184	2.49	343	0.05	0.50	±1.96	Not Significant
Female Lecturers	161	2.37					

Data in Table 6 shows that t-calculated of 0.50 is less than t-critical of ±1.96 with df of 343 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female lecturers on their perceived factors responsible for lecture attendance habit of students in Delta State Colleges of Education.

5. Discussion

One of the study's findings revealed that instructors feel students have a positive attitude toward lecture attendance. According to a related hypothesis, there is no substantial difference in male and female lecturers' perceptions of students' lecture attendance habits. Hunter and Tetley (1999), who questioned 168 lecturers and discovered that students have a positive attitude about lecture attendance, concur with this conclusion. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Massingham and Herrington (2006), who investigated whether attendance matters. An investigation of student attitudes,

involvement, performance, and attendance in the faculty of business at Wollongong's tertiary institutions revealed that students enjoy lectures. This research is consistent with Woodfield (2006), who found that (at the University of Sussex), student attendance is the strongest predictor of degree outcome, with clear variations between male and female attendance rates. However, this finding contradicts Sharma et al. (2005), who claim that students have a negative attitude toward lectures when there is no break before the next lecture, lectures are scheduled late into the evening, multiple assessments are due around the same time, lectures are not interactive, and either the content or the manner in which they are delivered is dull, unenthusiastic, or irrelevant, or the relevance is not explained, all of which are factors.

Students' lecture attendance habits are also attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraints, and unconducive learning environment, the availability of course outline on textbooks, student illness, the belief that they can pass without attending classes, and the time set for the class, according to the findings (e.g., 7am or 5pm, daily). According to a related hypothesis, there is no substantial difference between male and female instructors in terms of the factors they believe are responsible for students' lecture attendance habits. This research is consistent with Kirby and McElroy (2003), who discovered that driving more than 30 minutes to college increased attendance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Trotter and Roberts (2006), who discovered that teaching and learning practices that engage students actively in class are more likely to improve the early student experience. This conclusion is consistent with Gabrielle's (2012) research, which looked into lecture attendance rates at universities and related factors and discovered that factors include living on/off campus, the lecture schedule in the students' timetable, the day of the week, and transportation issues are revealed. Factors in students' personal lives, such as a part-time job for any reason, have been linked to satisfaction with their studies and lecture delivery. This finding supports Pearson's (2008) findings that 60 percent of students gave low motivation reasons for not attending class, such as being too tired, bad weather, or engaging in social activities; 23 percent of students gave moderate motivation reasons (such as prioritizing other assignments), and 17 percent of students gave high motivation reasons (illness or family bereavement).

6. Conclusion/Recommendations

From the data analysis carried out on the data obtained in the fieldwork, the study concluded that lectures perceived the lecture attendance habit of students as positive. They perceived that majority of the students exhibit a positive attitude to lecture attendance. Male and female lecturers perceived the lecture attendance habit of students similarly. No difference was observed among them on the basis of their gender. The study also concluded that some of the factors that affect students' lecture attendance habit include social life on campus, stimulating effect of class attendance, assignments, emergency travels and financial constraint. This position was the position of both male

and female lecturers. In view of this conclusion, the study recommended that: learning environments should be more conducive, which could be accomplished by installing electronic gadgets such as audio speakers, ceiling fans, and whiteboards in lecture rooms; and school management should work hard to educate students, particularly new ones, on the importance of attending lectures.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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