



LECTURE ATTENDANCE HABIT AMONG STUDENTS IN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: FACTORS RESPONSIBLE AND MANAGERMENTS' OPTIONS

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Abstract:

This study investigated the factors responsible for students' lecture attendance habit and managements' options for improvement in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Five research questions guided the study. A descriptive method of ex-post facto research design was adopted with a sample size of 345 lecturers in Colleges of Education in Delta State. A validated and reliable questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that the students displayed a positive attitude toward lecture attendance; male students resume lectures before female students but female students are more regular with lectures than their male counterparts; lecture attendance habits of students are attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraint, unconducive learning environment, availability of course outline on the textbook, student illness, students feel they can pass without attending classes and time fixed for class. The findings also revealed that most students show a negative attitude toward lectures because they believe they can borrow lecture notes from fellow students, buy a textbook, create a study group or engage in personal reading; and that positive lecture attendance habit of students can be enhanced if the mark is awarded for attending lectures, making the learning environment more conducive and making students understand the need to attend lectures. The study recommended that school management should develop a policy for awarding marks to students who attend lectures, this will encourage those students who have a negative attitude to lectures.

Keywords: lecture attendance habit; students; colleges of education; lectures; habits

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1. Introduction

One of the most traditional forms of classroom teaching in Colleges of Education is the lecture method. The lecture method is a teaching approach in which the instructor (lecturer) is the main source of information. The lecturer usually stands in front of the students and instructs or lectures them using a visual aid such as a PowerPoint presentation, chalkboard, textbook, or handout. During lectures, students are supposed to listen and take notes, with little contact and communication between teachers and students. In colleges of education, lecturing is frequent since it is a convenient and easy way to convey information to a large group of people at once. The lecture method of instruction may be difficult for students who are not auditory learners or who lack note-taking skills.

The lecture gives students a robust perspective on the material besides just the textbook. Even if students think they already understand the material well, the lecture always adds something new. The lecturer may go over examples or applications students have not seen, concepts in the lecture may be presented in a different way than in the textbook or material(s) used for the study, and students' questions and discussions may elaborate on the material or provide new insights. Lecturers in Colleges of Education often use questions or lecture discussion to enhance critical thinking skills. Attending lectures can be an opportunity for College of Education students to better understand the material with the guidance of the lecturer and the help of other students. A lecturer may pose a question or lead a discussion in class that directs students to make connections between concepts. This helps students to think about and see the material in better ways.

The textbook may not explain something to students like a lecturer would. Even though College of Education teachers appear to be simply going over the subject in the textbook, there will always be additional clarity and insights available to students in lectures. The lecture period lasts one to two hours, during which time students are actively thinking about and practising the content. Lecturers also emphasise key topics, providing students with a greater understanding of what matters and what should be prioritised. The lecturer is an expert on the subject, and they structure their presentations to organise the primary ideas and extract the key principles. As a result, attending lectures and taking notes can assist College of Education students in putting their thoughts together and focusing on what is required.

Some teachers at colleges of education are not textbook centred (Allen, 2013). Their lectures may differ significantly from the textbook's presentation of the subject, and they may be utilised to express the lecturer's personal ideas and perspectives. Because test questions are frequently dependent on lecture notes, attending lectures and taking notes is one of the greatest ways for students to prepare for exams. Lectures give College of Education students more comprehensive interaction with the lecturer and other students in the lecture room.

Undermining the benefits of attending lectures, some College of Education students believe that since they paid their fees, they should be the ones to decide whether

or not to attend lectures, and should not be penalized for failing to show up. While some students even suggested that they can learn more by not attending lectures (Schoenbrum, 2007). Some students believe that instead of wasting time being bored and distracted in the lecture room, they can sit down on their own, focus, and learn the material(s), others believe they can study online thereby having a negative attitude towards attending lectures. The attitude of College of Education students toward lecture attending can be viewed as a personal decision based on both the ability and motivation to attend lectures (Kottasz, 2005).

Several factors influence students' decision to attend or not to attend lectures. At one extreme, there will be those conditions which make attendance virtually impossible like an unconducive learning environment, work, illness, accommodation, or an urgent trip to mention but a few, while at the other extreme there are circumstances where College of Education lecturers would say that there is no justification whatsoever for negative attitude towards lecture attendance. Fundamental reasons why students develop a negative attitude toward lecture attendance include completing assessment pressures, poor lecturing, the timing of the lecture, the pressure of other learning tasks and poor quality of the lecture content. According to Bennett (2001), lecturers who have low regard for their students' motivation, competency, and behaviour may not feel as devoted to their teaching obligations as others. Also, Bennett (2001) noted, that such lecturers might adopt teaching methods and technologies different from those employed by lecturers who hold their students in high regard.

Many of these contributing factors towards lecture attendance are, to a greater or lesser degree, under the control of the educators. Conditions such as long lectures without a break, lectures that are scheduled late into the evening, numerous assessments due for submission around the same time, lectures in which interaction is not encouraged and where either the content or the delivery methods are dull, uninteresting and/or irrelevant are all deterrents to students. Academically stronger or more self-directed students will likely seek out additional resources and achieve, but not necessarily excel, while students with less academic strength or motivation will likely struggle to pass (Sharma, Mendez & O'Byrne, 2005).

However, not every College of Education lecturer is an effective speaker, which often inspires students to skip lectures or attend them sporadically, at best. Instead of regarding them as passive note-taking exercises, good students know how to maximize the benefits of attending lectures which offers an ongoing opportunity to deepen your understanding of the material that is being presented (Heibutzki, 2016). Yet these are contributing factors that educators can reduce by reviewing and reflecting on their own practice in terms of how they facilitate (or not) learning and strive to foster an enthusiasm for their subject.

In view of the above, the aim of this study is to examine the factors responsible for students' lecture attendance habit and managements' options for improvement in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

2. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide this study

- 1) What lecture attendance habits are displayed by students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
- 2) What lecture attendance habits are displayed by Male and Female students?
- 3) What factors are responsible for the lecture attendance habits of students?
- 4) What options are available for the lecture attendance habits of students?
- 5) What management options can be used to enhance the positive lecture attendance habit of students?

3. Methods

The study is a descriptive survey which adopted the ex-post-facto design. The population of this study comprised 865 lecturers in Delta State Colleges of Education in the 2016/2017 academic year. As at the time of this study, College of Education Agbor has 268 lecturers, College of Physical Health Education Mosogar has 171 lecturers while College of Education Warri has 426 lecturers. That is a total of 865 lecturers in the institutions. A sample of 345 lecturers is used for this study. The sample represents 40% of each institution's lecturers. A stratified random sampling technique is used to draw the sample. This was done by dividing the population into strata on the basis of the institution, then schools and departments then a random selection was made within each stratum separately and the results were combined to form the sample.

The instrument that was used for the study is a self-developed questionnaire titled "Lecture attendance habit of Students and Management Options Questionnaire, (LAASMOQ)". The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A was used to seek demographic data while section B consisted of 44 items and respondents were required to rate on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

The instrument was validated by experts. The items were examined to find out if they were adequate for the study. Based on the experts' suggestions, comments, recommendations, corrections on spelling errors, grammatical errors as well as the addition of new items made, the instrument was approved as valid. Thus, the suggestions, comments, recommendations, and corrections on spelling errors, and grammatical errors were put considered before the final draft was produced for the study. To ensure that the instrument measured considerably and consistently what it intended to measure, it was subjected to a split-half reliability test using 20 lecturers from Edo State College of Education, Igueben. Edo State College of Education, Igueben is an institution outside the study area. The instrument was administered to the respondents after which the items were divided into halves of odd and even numbers. The scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics and a Co-efficient of 0.56 was obtained, however, this co-efficient was stepped up with Spearman Brown

formula and 0.72 was obtained which showed high reliability, thus the instrument was used for the study.

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researchers and six research assistants who were properly briefed and instructed during a day's training to enable them to get familiar with the modalities for administering the instrument appropriately. The researchers acquainted the research assistants with the purpose of the study, as well as an explanation of the items in the instrument. It was necessary to use research assistants to make sure that the actual respondents for whom the instrument is meant are indeed those who completed the instrument and also help to make clarifications to the respondents on the items whenever the need arises. The instrument was retrieved on the spot. Descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation were used to provide answers to the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 was the benchmark for agreeing, any score below is said to disagree.

4. Results

Research Question 1: What lecture attendance habits are displayed by students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean Score Analysis on Lecture Attendance Habits Displayed by Students

| S/No | 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

Data in Table 1 shows mean score analysis on lecture attendance habits displayed by students. The result revealed that respondents agreed that students are regular to lectures, students are punctual to lectures, students attend lectures on Monday, students attend lectures on Tuesday and students attend lectures on Wednesday with mean scores of 2.56, 2.71, 2.79, 2.99 and 2.80 respectively. But respondents disagreed that students resume lectures in the first week of resumption, students' absenteeism rate is high, students do not attend lectures on Thursday and students attend lectures on Friday with mean scores of 2.13, 2.11, 2.44 and 2.00 respectively. However, the aggregate mean score of 2.50 shows that students display a positive attitude to lecture attendance. This is true since they are regular and punctual to lectures as well as attend lectures on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Research Question 2: What lecture attendance habits are displayed by male and female students?

Table 2: Mean Score Analysis on Lecture Attendance Habits Displayed by Male and Female Students

| S/No | Lecture attendance habits displayed by male and female students | Mean | SD | Decision |
|------|---|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Male students resume lecture before female students | 2.98 | 0.75 | + |
| 2. | Female students resume lecture before male students | 2.43 | 0.61 | - |
| 3. | Male students are regular to lecture | 2.07 | 0.52 | - |
| 4. | Female students are regular to lecture | 2.66 | 0.67 | + |
| 5. | Female students come to lecture on Friday | 2.33 | 0.58 | - |
| 6. | Male students come to lecture on Friday | 2.29 | 0.57 | - |

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed

Data in Table 2 shows mean scores analysis on lecture attendance habits displayed by male and female students. Respondents agreed that male students resume lectures before female students and female students are regular to lectures with mean scores of 2.98 and 2.66 respectively. But disagreed that female students resume lectures before male students, male students are regular to lectures, female students come to lecture on Friday and male students come to lecture on Friday with mean scores of 2.43, 2.07, 2.33 and 2.29 respectively. Conclusively, male students resume lectures before female students but female students are more regular with lectures than their male counterparts.

Research Question 3: What factors are responsible for the lecture attendance habits of students?

Table 3: Mean Score Analysis on Factors Responsible for Lecture Attendance Habits of Students

| S/No | 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 outline 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

Data in Table 3 shows mean score analysis on factors responsible for lecture attendance habits of students. 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 feel they can pass without attending classes and time fixed for class (e.g. 7am or 5pm, daily) with mean scores of 3.36, 2.56, 3.16, 3.29, 2.79, 3.16, 3.13 and 3.45 respectively. But disagreed on clashes with social life, class attendance is not compulsory, classes are not stimulating, students intend to engage in examination malpractice and students' engagement in part-time work with mean scores of 2.11, 2.19, 2.06, 2.26 and 1.56 respectively.

It is apparent that lecture attendance habits of students are attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraints, unconducive learning environment, availability of course outline on the textbook, student illness, students feel they can pass without attending classes and time fixed for class (e.g. 7am or 5pm, daily).

Research Question 4: What options are available for the lecture attendance habits of students?

Table 4: Mean Score Analysis on Options Available for Lecture Attendance Habits of Students

| S/No | Options available for lecture attendance habit of students | Mean | SD | Decision |
|------|--|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Borrowing lecture notes from fellow students | 3.47 | 0.87 | + |
| 2. | Buying of textbooks | 3.50 | 0.93 | + |
| 3. | Creating a study group | 2.97 | 0.74 | + |
| 4. | Download lecture materials from internet | 2.03 | 0.51 | - |
| 5. | Study online | 2.20 | 0.55 | - |
| 6. | Personal reading | 2.58 | 0.65 | + |

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed

Data in Table 4 shows mean score analysis on options available for lecture attendance habits of students. Respondents agreed on borrowing lecture notes from fellow students, buying textbooks, creating a study group and personal reading with mean scores of 3.47, 3.50, 2.97 and 2.58 respectively. But disagreed on downloading lecture materials from the internet and studying online with mean scores of 2.03 and 2.20 respectively. Thus, most students show a negative attitude toward lectures because they believe they can borrow lecture notes from fellow students, buy a textbook, create a study group or engage in personal reading.

Research Question 5: What management options can be used to enhance the positive lecture attendance habit of students?

Table 5: Mean Score Analysis of Management Options to Enhance Positive Lecture Attendance Habit of Students

| S/No | Management options for lecture attendance habit | Mean | SD | Decision |
|------|--|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Awarding marks for attendance | 3.38 | 0.85 | + |
| 2. | Make the learning environment more conducive | 3.35 | 0.84 | + |
| 3. | Make students understand the need to attend lectures | 3.29 | 0.82 | + |
| 4. | Allowing class debate among students | 3.26 | 0.81 | + |
| 5. | Make classes more interesting | 3.28 | 0.82 | + |
| 6. | Mandatory monitoring of attendance | 3.20 | 0.80 | + |
| 7. | Promises to discuss exam-related topics | 3.11 | 0.78 | + |
| 8. | Unpredicted classroom assessment | 3.29 | 0.82 | + |
| 9. | Giving unannounced test | 3.33 | 0.83 | + |
| 10. | Subtracting marks for nonattendance | 3.14 | 0.89 | + |

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed.

Data in Table 5 shows mean score analysis on management options to enhance positive lecture attendance habit of students. Respondents agreed on all items. Specifically, respondents agreed with mean scores of 3.38, 3.35, 3.29, 3.26, 3.28, 3.20, 3.11, 3.29, 3.33 and 3.14 on awarding marks for attendance, making the learning environment more conducive, making students understand the need to attend lectures, allowing class debate among students, make classes more interesting, mandatory monitoring of attendance, promises to discuss exam-related topics, unpredicted classroom assessment, giving unannounced test and subtracting marks for nonattendance.

Thus, positive lecture attendance habit of students can be enhanced if the mark is awarded for attending lectures, making the learning environment more conducive, making students understand the need to attend lectures, allowing class debate among students, making classes more interesting, and mandatory monitoring of attendance promises to discuss exam-related topics, unpredicted classroom assessment, giving unannounced test and subtracting marks for nonattendance.

5. Discussion of Findings

Findings of research Question 1 show that students display a positive attitude to lecture attendance. This finding agrees with Hunter and Tetley (1999) who interviewed 168 lecturers and discovered that students have a positive attitude to lecture attendance. This finding also supports Massingham and Herrington (2006) who examined student attitudes, participation, performance and attendance in the faculty of commerce at the tertiary institutions of Wollongong and discovered that students have a positive attitude to lectures. This finding also supports Woodfield, Jessop and McMillan (2006) who illustrated that student attendance is the strongest predictor of degree outcome (at the University of Sussex) with clear differences between attendance rates of males and females. But this finding disagrees with Sharma et al. (2005) who stated that students have a negative attitude to lectures when there is no break before the next lecture, lectures that are scheduled late into the evening, and numerous assessments due for submission

around the same time. Students are discouraged from attending class when the interaction is not encouraged and the topic or delivery method is dull, unenthusiastic, or irrelevant, or when the relevance is not explained.

Finding on research Question 2 shows that male students resume lectures before female students but female students are more regular with lectures than their male counterparts. This finding has not supported any authority since literature has not revealed lecture attendance habit displayed by male and female students. However, this study has shown that respondents agreed male students resume lectures before female students and female students are regular to lectures with mean scores of 2.98 and 2.66 respectively.

Finding on research Question 3 shows that lecture attendance habit of students is attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraint, unconducive learning environment, availability of course outline on the textbook, student illness, students feel they can pass without attending classes and time fixed for class (e.g. 7am or 5pm, daily). This finding supports Kirby and McElroy (2003) who found travelling more than 30 minutes to college had a positive impact on attendance. This finding also supports Trotter and Roberts (2006) who found that teaching and learning strategies that involve students actively in class are likely to be more successful in enhancing the early student experience. This finding also supports Gabrielle (2012) who studied lecture attendance rates at university and related factors and discovered that factors such as living on/off campus, the lecture schedule in the students' timetable, day of the week and transport problems are revealed. Factors in students' personal lives, such as engagement in part-time work, irrespective of purpose, are seen to be related to satisfaction with studies and lecture delivery. This finding also supports Moore, Armstrong and Pearson (2008) who revealed that 60% of students gave reasons for non-attendance such as being too tired, bad weather, or engagement in social activities, which were classified as indicative of low motivation; 23% of students gave reasons that indicated moderate motivation (including putting a higher priority on completing other assignments), and 17% indicated high motivation levels (illness or family bereavement).

Finding on research Question 4 shows that most students show a negative attitude toward lectures because they believe they can borrow lecture notes from fellow students, buy textbooks, create a study group or engage in personal reading. This finding has not supported any authority since literature has not shown options available for lecture attendance habits of students. But this study has revealed that respondents agreed on borrowing lecture notes from fellow students, buying of textbooks, creating a study group and personal reading with mean scores of 3.47, 3.50, 2.97 and 2.58 respectively.

Finding on research Question 5 shows that positive lecture attendance habit of students can be enhanced if the mark is awarded for attending lectures, the learning environment is more conducive, making students understand the need to attend lectures, allowing class debate among students, making classes more interesting, mandatory monitoring of attendance, promises to discuss exam-related topics, unpredicted

classroom assessment, giving unannounced test and subtracting marks for nonattendance. This finding supports Bennett (2001) who suggested that lecturers might adopt teaching methods and technologies different from those employed by lecturers who hold their students in high regard. The finding also supports Hughes (2005) who suggests an increase in self-directed learning, a family-friendly approach to curricula and a reduction in the number of theory hours as an attempt to facilitate students who struggle to attend class due to family commitments. This finding also supports Childs and Grooms (2018) who suggested strategies such as praising students who attend lecture and punishing those who are absent themselves could be employed because it is believed that it will do little to address the core issues and causes of non-attendance.

6. Conclusion/Recommendations

Students of Delta State Colleges of Education display a positive attitude to lecture attendance. Male students resume lectures before female students but female students are more regular with lectures than their male counterparts. Lecture attendance habits of students are attributed to completing assignments at the last minute, emergency travels, financial constraints, unconducive learning environment, availability of course outline on the textbook, student illness, students feel they can pass without attending classes and time fixed for class (e.g. 7am or 5pm, daily). However, most students show a negative attitude toward attending lectures because they believe they can borrow lecture notes from fellow students, buy textbooks, create a study group or engage in personal reading. There is a need to enhance the positive lecture attendance habit of students by awarding marks for attending lectures and the learning environment should be more conducive.

Based on the result of this study, the researcher presents the following recommendations:

- 1) School management should develop a policy for awarding marks to students who attend lectures, this will encourage those students who have a negative attitude to lectures.
- 2) Learning environment should be more conducive, this could be done by installing electronic gadgets such as audio speakers, ceiling fans as well as whiteboards in the lecture rooms.
- 3) School management should work hard to educate students, especially the new ones on the need to attend lectures.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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