

TEACHING MANAGEMENT COMPETENCE AND STUDENTS' CLASSROOM REACTION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study investigated students' classroom reaction to lecturers' classroom teaching and management competence in southwestern Nigerian universities. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. A 25 - item questionnaire was drawn to elicit information from respondents selected randomly from two federal universities and three state owned universities in southwest Nigeria. The instrument was validated using test-retest method. The co-efficient of reliability was .69. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data gathered. The results revealed that student-lecturer relationship and lecturers' pedagogical skills are the influencing factors igniting students' classroom reaction in southwestern Universities. There is need for lecturers in Nigerian Universities to improve on their relationship and their teaching methods as these will help to reduce students' absenteeism rate and inattentiveness in the classroom.

Keywords: Students reaction, Classroom teaching, Classroom management competence, Universities

Introduction and Literature Review

The role of education as an instrument for promoting the socio-economic, political and cultural development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized (Abdulkareem, 2001). It remains the bedrock of growth and development of any nation. It can be regarded as the key that unlocks the progress of personal and national developments. This is why nations commit much of their wealth to the establishment of educational institutions at various levels. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2007) posited that the funds allocated to education should not be considered as mere expenses, but as a long term investment of immense benefit to the society as a whole.

The development of education in Nigeria can be traced to the time when teachers were seen as semi-God in the 1940s. The relationship between the students and teachers were like servant and boss during this period. Students cannot challenge teachers when giving instructions in the classroom and teachers had tremendous influence on modeling of students both in character and academics at this time. This might be due to relative low class size at this period compared to the present large class size in Nigerian schools. In addition, to having small class size, the teachers employed then were also given comprehensive training in teacher education prior to their appointment (Akinsola, 2000). This had already built in the teachers self confidence and competence in teaching skills.

The word lecturer means different thing to different people. Generally, the Free Dictionary (2012) defines lecturer as anyone who gives lecture in the university or other public places. Graham (2008) said in the United Kingdom, the word lecturer is the holder of an open-ended position at a university or a similar institution often an academic institution who teaches and also leads or oversees research activities. American Heritage Dictionary (2012) defines lecturer in the United States of America, Canada and other countries influenced by their educational system as a person who delivers lecture

professionally in a university who is below the rank of a reader but without research obligation. Lee (2006) defines lecturer in Australia as anyone who conducts lectures at a university or elsewhere but formally refers to a specific academic rank. Junlm (2010) refers to a lecturer as a "lektor" who is below the rank of a professor and primarily responsible for delivering and organizing lectures at a university. In Nigeria, a lecturer is anyone who teaches in any higher institution of learning not particularly a university. This could be likened to the teaching activities at the secondary level of education. However, in Nigerian university, a lecturer engages in teaching research and community development activities.

The competence of lecturers in the classroom activities can be measured in various ways ranging from mastery of subject matter in terms of structure, arrangement and organization of the content; interactive skills between students and lecturer, teaching skills demonstrated, the use of relevant real and improvised instructional materials for teaching, skills in the classroom management and so on. Lecturers' competence is very important because of its direct relationship with the behaviour exhibited by the student in the classroom and the standard of education within the society. Tella (2008) posited that the quality of education in the school is a function of the quality of teachers available in the school. So also Obasi (1999), Ogunmake (2000), and Yost (2001) pointed out that the quality of educational system is a function of the quality of inputs and such input include the quality of teachers, the quality of instruction and instructional materials, the quality of evaluation and feedback procedure among others.

Lecturers exert a great influence on student in the university; they look up to lecturers for guide, support and knowledge. Students learn from their lecturers formally through lecturers teaching of the subject matter and informally through observation of lecturer's attitude and general behaviour. To Coles (2003), lecturers are the spark that ignites learning in the student and they are key persons in the pursuit of educational goals in the university. This is why Alade (2004) pointed out that lecturers should not be expert in subject content alone, and should not only be interested in students' knowledge and skills acquisition but must also be interested in total development of the students.

Teaching in the university involves much more than the guidance of and directing students learning activities, it involves among others relationship with students, parents, teachers and the entire community where the university is situated. Lecturing offers a bright and rewarding career for those who can meet the intellectual, social, political and cultural challenges associated with it as no nation can develop above the quality of its teachers (Preez, 2000). University exists basically to meet the higher educational needs of the student and the society at large. In Nigeria, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) reiterated that such education is the greatest force that can be used to address the imbalance in the society and it is a greatest investment that nation can make for quick development of its economic, political, and manpower. It was further stated by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) that university education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plan, because it is the most important instrument for economic growth and development. Consequently, this statement makes teaching and management competence of lecturers become imperative.

Lecturers' classroom management competence is the ability of lecturer to create and maintain conducive teaching and learning atmosphere, establish and maintain a peaceful classroom environment, employ the appropriate teaching methods, use the appropriate

instructional materials in order to reduce student's negative reaction in the classroom. Students' classroom reaction implies the way students' behave in the classroom as a result of the impression created about the lecturer. Adegunwa (2004) describes student classroom reaction as student behaviour in the classroom spurred by teachers' classroom management competence. However, Visper (2002) opined that students' reaction in the classroom may be as a result of what has happened to the student before the commencement of the class and not necessarily as a result of teachers' classroom management skill.

From the above, the chance of student success in the university can be influenced by the level of competence exhibited by the lecturer in the classroom among other factors. Adeoti (2006) in a study conducted on classroom management as a factor affecting student learning in the university found that the behaviour of the least efficient student was ignored while attention was given to the most efficient student in the class. As a result, the least efficient student find the classroom uninteresting and thus discouraged from attending the lecturer's lesson. Also, in a study conducted by Ojo (2004) on lecturer's attitude in classroom and student's reaction, it was found that students avoided classes being taught by lecturers who showed uncared attitude toward students' physiological needs. This implies that for students to develop and sustain interest in a class, they must feel safe, secure, protected and be assisted in their attempt to learn. Lecturers must realize that whatever action they put up in the classroom have direct implications on the lives of the students in the classroom.

Akanji, Olaniyan and Ajibode (2003) concluded that when lecturers adopted teaching method that favoured the gifted students in the classroom, the average and below average students feel threatened and alienated, as a result contribute nothing or irrelevant ideas to the teaching and learning in the classroom and when the lecturers adopted teaching methods that favour the average and below average students, the gifted feels they are being drawn backward. A lecturer is expected to strike a balance when thinking of which method to adopt in the class; such a method should be able to carry all students along during the class without discrimination. In a related study, Hossler and Ellias (2006) linked learners' attitude in the classroom to the teaching method adopted by the lecturer in the classroom. They concluded that students did not form impression about a lecturer in a day or during a period; it is formed over a period of time. However, Vreel (2004) conducted a study on student behaviour and academic performance of undergraduate students in Ireland and concluded that lecturers management competence has no relationship with academic performance of undergraduate students in Ireland, undergraduate students academic performance in Ireland was attributed to other factors other than lecturers management competence.

Verdium (2001) and Kobash (2005) have argued over which of the variables influence classroom reaction of student and it was suggested that schools can make a great difference as attributable to lecturers. Specifically, differential lecturers effectiveness bring a strong determinant of difference in student to student classroom reaction far outweigh the effect of differences in class size and heterogeneity. Student who are assigned to ineffective lecturer one after the other have significantly lower academic achievement and learning outcome.

Many educational institutions had turned to the use of students reactions such as lateness to classroom, absence from class lesson, inattentive in the classroom. Rownee (1999) was

conscious about the use of interpretation of students reaction in rating teaching competence but the accumulated support from more than three decades of research later led to Rownee (2002) to make stronger conclusion that: there is a need for ascribing validity to students ratings met merely as a measure of students attribute towards instruction but also as a measure of what students actually learn from the content of the subject.

The use of student reaction to judge lecturers' competence in teaching and management of the classroom will lead to provision of feedback to lecturers about the level of teaching effectiveness, measuring the level of improvement in students learning, provides information useful for students during the period of selection of courses and instruction. Generally, the use of student reaction to assess teaching in the classroom and management competence of lecturers is for the improvement of university teaching. Gynick (2001) affirmed that this type of assessment is pre-requisite for lecturers to make improvement in their classroom teaching. In addition, Vella (1994), Taylor (1995) and Broakfield (1999) opined that giving regard and care to the students, and giving them maximum listening attention on their learning difficulties and other areas of their needs is considered a fundamental aspect of a good teaching as this will attract students' attention.

Statement of the Problem

University system depends heavily on lecturers for the execution of its educational programme. Therefore, lecturers become highly essential for a successful operation of educational programme and development in the university. Without lecturers with relevant professional behavioural traits and sound knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills, learning and educational facilities cannot be expanded. Undoubtedly, the success of any educational system depends on the quality of teachers input into the system. But where this fundamental knowledge and skills are absent in lecturers attributes, students reactions are ignited. Hence, students' exhibit various reactions in the classroom to teachers teaching and management competence when observed to affect their learning in the classroom. This study however identified the following variables (teachers' relationship with the students, teaching method, rate of student absenteeism and lateness to the class) as those that can contribute to good classroom teaching and management competence in the southwestern Nigerian universities. Consequently, this study investigates students' classroom reactions to lecturers' classroom teaching competence in Nigerian southwestern universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

find out students' reactions to lecturers' classroom teaching competence;
determine if lecturers' classroom management competence contribute to students' classroom reactions; and
examine the difference in students' reactions to lecturers' teaching and classroom management competence.

Theoretical Framework

This classroom management theory propounded by Kounini Jacob in 1970 will be used to explain this study. Kounini was an educational psychologist who propounded a theory that forced on the ability of the teacher to affect student behaviour in the class through instructional management. Kounini incorporated both the instruction and disciplinary aspect of the classroom together. He observed an intriguing pattern in student behaviour

whenever he asked students in his own classroom to put something away and also noted that the other student in the class followed in focusing their attention. He watched as the correction of one student behaviour actually spread to other students engaging in inappropriate behaviour and resulted in a more ordered room.

The development led Kounini to develop classroom management theory that was based around teachers' ability to organise and plan in their classroom with the use of proactive behaviour and high students involvement. He believed that for a teacher to have an effective connection between management and teaching there must be a good lesson movement which can be achieved through withitness, overlapping, momentum, smoothness and group focus. Withitness is the ability of the teacher to know what was going on in the classroom at all times. Overlapping is the ability of the teacher to present a new topic while present misbehaviour. Momentum is the ability of the teacher to 'role with-the-punch' (good flow of the lesson) and acknowledge that things might go wrong and being able to fluidly adapt and continue with the lesson despite distraction and disruptions. Smoothness is related to momentum, it is the ability of the leader to keep on track without being diverted or distracted by irrelevant questions and leave a topic open and not come back to it until later.

The last is the group focus which is the ability of the teacher to engage the entire members of the classroom using techniques such as asking the community or random questions and looking around at other students if they are thinking or are ready to respond.

Based on this theory, for a classroom teacher to have effective classroom management, such teacher must have withitness, overlapping, momentum, smoothness and group focus abilities.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The population for the study comprised all the southwestern Nigerian university students. A total of 300 students each were randomly selected from the five universities (two federal and three states) chosen in southwestern Nigeria based on curriculum focus (specialized and conventional university) making a total of 1,500 respondents constituting the sample size. The stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. A self-constructed 25-item questionnaire titled "Classroom Teaching and Management Competence Questionnaire (CTMCQ)" was administered on students to measure possible reactions they are likely to demonstrate behaviourally. From the 1,500 questionnaire administered, the researchers were unable to retrieve 38 from respondents. Thus, a total of 1462 properly filled questionnaires were retrieved and analysed. Descriptive (Mean and Standard Deviation) and inferential (T-test) statistics were used to analyse the data collected. The results are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Results

RQ1: What are students' classroom reactions to lecturers' classroom teaching competence?

Table 1: Students' reactions to lecturers' classroom teaching competence

How would you react when a lecturer:	N = 1462	
	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Deviation
Does not use instructional materials to teach in the class?	2.98	1.320
Does not know what to teach in the class?	3.48	1.741
Does not have good teaching skills (pedagogy)	3.57	1.773
Does not use local illustrations and examples in the class?	3.50	1.565
Does not give notes to students on topics taught?	3.25	1.629
Is not friendly, encouraging and pushful?	3.34	1.616
Does not have logical flow of facts?	3.45	1.657
Does not show adequate preparation for lesson?	3.48	1.741
Does not encourage student participation in lessons?	3.36	1.788

Table 1 shows the reactions of students to teaching competence of lecturers in the classroom. The response of students revealed that poor lecturers' classroom teaching competence that would generate reactions are poor teaching skills (\bar{X} =3.57; SD=1.773), non-use of illustration (\bar{X} =3.50; SD=1.565), inadequate preparation for lesson/poor mastery of subject matter (\bar{X} =3.48, SD=1.741), illogical flow of facts (\bar{X} =3.45; SD=1.657). Others include; self-centered teaching (i.e not encouraging students' participation in lessons), unfriendliness and abstract teaching with \bar{X} -values of 3.36, 3.34 and 3.25 and SD-values of 1.788, 1.616 and 1.629 respectively. However, non-use instructional materials to teach in the class may not generate serious reactions from students, hence the insignificant values \bar{X} = 2.98; SD=1.320.

RQ2: Does lecturers' classroom management competence contribute to students' classroom reactions?

Table 2: Classroom management competence and students' classroom reactions

How would you react when a lecturer:	N = 1462	
	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Deviation
Does not have students sitting arrangement done?	2.85	1.842
Is unable to control noise in the classroom?	3.33	1.846
Does not allow good student - teacher relationship?	3.61	1.592
Does not encourage and motivate learners?	3.45	1.564
Does not provide appropriate guidance services to the student?	3.50	1.536
Does not have time management skills?	3.69	1.874
Does not emphasize safety of the student and cleanliness in the classroom?	3.21	1.665
Does not have self-control and discipline?	3.60	1.916
Does not respect learners as persons?	3.65	1.835

From Table 2, it was discovered that poor lecturers' classroom management competence contributed largely to the reactions exhibited by students. The table revealed that poorly managed time ($\bar{X}=3.69$; $SD=1.874$), no respect for learners as persons ($\bar{X}=3.65$; $SD=1.835$), poor self-control and discipline ($\bar{X}=3.60$; $SD=1.916$) and poor student-teacher relationship ($\bar{X}=3.61$; $SD=1.592$), inappropriate guidance services to the student ($\bar{X}=3.50$; $SD=1.536$) can generate reactions from students. Other such as poor students' motivation, lack of noise control in the classroom and low emphasis on safety and cleanliness of the student ($\bar{X}=3.45$; $SD=1.564$, $\bar{X}=3.33$; $SD=1.846$ and $\bar{X}=3.21$; $SD=1.665$ respectively) could also lead to inattentiveness, truancy, playing with phone, sleeping and walking-away on lecturers. However, students do not significant react to lecturers' attention to their sitting arrangement, hence the \bar{X} -value of 2.85 and SD-value of 1.842.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference in students' reactions to lecturers' teaching and classroom management competence.

Table 3: Difference in students' reactions to lecturers' teaching and classroom management competence

Variable	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Deviation	N	t _{cal.}	t _{critical}
Classroom Teaching Competence	38.31	6.919			
Classroom Management Competence	34.47	8.694	1462	151.6*	1.96

*Significant, $df = 1460, P \leq .05$

Analysis presented in Table 3 showed the difference in students' reactions to lecturers' classroom teaching and management competence. From the Table, calculated t-value is greater than critical t-value (i.e $t_{cal.} = 151.6 > t_{critical} = 1.96$), thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the students' reactions to lecturers' teaching and classroom management competence.

Discussion

From the findings of the study, reactions of students to lecturers teaching and classroom management competence vary from noise making, absenteeism, inattentiveness, truancy, playing with phone to sleeping and walking-away on lecturers at different degree in the different situations. It was revealed that lecturers' teaching competence inform students mode of reactions which precipitate lecturers' adjustment to such reactions. This finding confirmed the result of Gynick (2001) that students' reactions and assessment is pre-requisite for lecturers to make improvement in their classroom teaching. In addition, Broakfield (1999), Taylor (1995), Vella (1994), in another study reported that giving regard to the students and giving them maximum listening attention on their learning difficulties as well as other areas of their needs is considered a fundamental aspect of a good teaching as this will attract students' attention. In a similar view, Akanji, Olaniyan and Ajibode (2003) concluded that when lecturers adopted teaching methods that favoured the gifted students in the classroom, the average and below average students feel threatened and alienated, as a result contribute nothing or irrelevant ideas to the teaching and learning in the classroom. Whereas, when lecturers adopt teaching methods that

favour the average and below average students, the gifted feels they are being drawn backward.

It was also discovered that poor lecturers' classroom management competence contributed largely to the reactions exhibited by students. This result conformed to Adegunwa (2004) who observed that students' behaviour in the classroom is spurred by teachers' classroom management competence. By implication, the chance of student success in the university can be influenced by the level of competence exhibited by the lecturer in the classroom among other factors. Similarly, Alade (2004) pointed out that lecturers should not be expert in subject content alone, and should not only be interested in students' knowledge and skills acquisition but must also be interested in total development of the students via interpersonal relationship, encouragement and learners' motivation.

Lastly, there is a significant difference in the students' reactions to lecturers' teaching and classroom management competence. In consonance with this finding, Ojo (2004) observed that students avoided classes being taught by lecturers who showed uncared attitude toward their physiological needs. This implies that for students to develop and sustain interest in a class, they must feel safe, secure, protected and be assisted in their attempt to learn. By implications, whatever actions lecturers put up in the classroom have direct effects on the lives of the students. Also, Hossler and Ellias (2006) linked students' reactions in the classroom to the teaching method adopted by the lecturer in the classroom. They concluded that students did not form impression about a lecturer in a day or during a period; it is formed over a period of time. However, Visper (2002) opined that students' reaction in the classroom may be as a result of what has happened to the student before the commencement of the class and not necessarily as a result of teachers' classroom management skill.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Classroom management competence is the ability of classroom manager to create and maintain a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere, establish and maintain a peaceful classroom environment, employ the appropriate teaching methods, use the appropriate instructional materials in order to reduce students' negative reactions and to enhance learning in the classroom. However, this study revealed that, lecturers' teaching competence informed students' various classroom reactions; lecturers' classroom management competence contributed largely to the reactions; and there is a significant difference in the students' reactions to lecturers' teaching and classroom management competence. Consequent upon the findings, it was therefore recommended that:

Lecturers should adequately prepare and update their knowledge and skills before attending classes.

In the cause of preparations for teaching, lecturers should take cognizance of students' age, background, class-size and sitting arrangement to inform his choice of teaching method. This teaching method should be balanced such that the gifted, average and slow learners would neither feel threatened nor alienated.

Lecturers need to understand students as individuals who deserve to be respected.

Lectures should take cognizance of the fact that as individuals, students do have and create impressions about them; hence, the need to use students reactions as a measure of self-appraisal.

Students, no matter how little show appreciation for good control of emotion, self-discipline and good interpersonal relationships hence, lecturers should be fair in their relationships with the students.

Good sense of teaching management competence would appreciably reduce reactions such as noise making, absenteeism, inattentiveness, truancy, sleeping in the class and loss of respect for lecturers among students.

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