

STUDENTS' EVALUATION AND TRAITS EXPECTED OF LECTURERS: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, ONDO CITY, NIGERIA.

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Introduction

The Ondo State Government in 2014 approved the establishment of the Pioneer and Specialized University of Medical Sciences in Nigeria. The proposal was approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in April 2015. According to the Academic Brief of the University, the institution is a deliberate effort by Government to sustain the remarkable achievements in reducing the high trend in rates of maternal and child mortality in the state, prepare future generations of competent health professionals and provide a stepwise referral system essential for successfully addressing the health needs in the State. Therefore the University is expected to function as the apical centre of research, education and service delivery in health care that will be second to none in the world.

In addition, the institution is required to address the immediate training, research and service delivery needs of Ondo State and its environs in all aspects of health care. It will also address the human resource and health care need of all Nigeria States as well as the entire West and Central African regions which are characterized by high endemicity of infections and non-communicable diseases, and with the deficit of quality human resources to confront the health challenges. In fact, the University is expected, with time to develop and evolve as a central hub of medical education, training, research and service delivery for the West and Central Africa and indeed, the entire African region.

Accordingly, students' enrolment and staff recruitment would focus on the entire African region, while collaboration and partnership would be sought with top ranking health and related institutions in all parts of the world (UNIMED Academic Brief 2015:1). The University commenced academic activities in 2015/2016 academic session with the admission of the first set of 192 students and lectures commenced immediately with the recruitment of 50 academic staff.

Justification for the study

Tertiary education in Nigeria as in other countries around the world has over the years, taken a changed dimension. The modern trend is centred toward the pedagogical skills of teaching as opposed to the andragogical teaching methods. Not only that, the modern trend which is becoming largely prevalent is to shift from the traditional didactic, teacher-focused teaching to student-centered methodologies that encourages active engagement of students in the learning process (Eiman Abdel Mehid and Matthew Collins, 2017). Recently, the latest technologies and media are used in teaching, and new methods and procedures of assessment are developed and being utilised. This is consistent with the constructivist learning theories, which considers the learner as an active partner in the process of learning, teaching and assessment (Katrien Struyven, Filip Dochy, Steven Janssens, 2003)

Teaching especially in tertiary institutions is now considered as involving not just the transmission of content and skills (Maphosa C, Kalenga RC, 2012) but as a major preparatory phase (Aregbeyen Omo, 2010) for students who are to be launched into the society as major impact makers and solution providers. Effective teaching and learning is now considered as one which involves active involvement and participation by students (Cannon R, Newble D, 2002) and not just a scenario in which students are mere passive listeners (Richmond E 2003). This development in the tertiary educational system not only lends credence to deeper concentration on students but also to serious considerations being given to their perceptions and feed-backs on their teachers qualities and on the teaching methods used in teaching and imparting knowledge in them.

The fact that teachers exhibit certain qualities and characteristics in the art of teaching cannot be denied. This has been established in a study conducted as far back as the 1960s (Ryans D.G., 1960). The fact that students- the recipients of knowledge during the teaching process also have perceptions of what they consider as effective teaching methods and what they consider as effective traits which they desire to see in a teacher cannot also be denied (Aregbeyen Omo, 2010).

Perhaps the assumption that effective teaching and effective learning cannot be accurately measured or defined and the divergent views held on what qualifies as effective learning among scholars have led researchers to conduct studies on identifying elements of teaching and characteristics of teachers which may be useful in making students' learning possible, enthusiastic and deep. Indeed, the feedback obtained from students will not merely serve to gain their perspectives only, but will also be taken into cognizance in proposing needed reforms and changes that can be made to further improve the teaching and learning processes in tertiary educational systems.

It is against this background that this study was embarked on to ascertain the characteristics and traits which students desire to see in their lecturers. This study will assist lecturers in tertiary institutions to gain an insight into the desirable traits that are expected to be exhibited by them and which will improve learning outcomes among students.

It is expected that this study will also contribute to the existing literature on teaching methodologies and lecturer traits and characteristics.

Evaluation of the teaching disposition of Lecturers

The focus of the University render it mandatory for the University to monitor the quality of teaching of the teachers recruited more closely in order to ensure good quality students at all times. Besides, the special nature and the anticipated global outlook of the University makes it imperative for the University to adequately prepare the students who would become more selective and more demanding in their academic pursuits. This expectation makes it important for the institution to better understand the expectations of both current and prospective students.

Thus, towards the end of the first year of existence, the University resolved to evaluate the performance of the lecturers by the students in 2016. The outcome was revealing. This exercise

was followed up in 2017, this time by requesting the students to indicate the traits they would expect their teachers to exhibit/demonstrate in their teaching tasks.

Methodology

In the evaluation of lecturers' survey, a total number of 5,340 questionnaires was administered to 192 Students. The 100 level Students were given 25 copies of the questionnaire each while the 200 level Students had 35 copies of the questionnaires each. This was based on the number of Lecturers and Courses taught by them (lecturers) to the different levels of the Students.

Each item in the 30 item-questionnaire had a maximum score of 5 and a minimum score of 1. Therefore the maximum mean score of any lecturer from the exercise was 150 and the minimum mean score, 30. The mean score of each lecturer was then converted to percentage to ascertain the placement of each lecturer on the scale. The collation and analysis of Students perception of the lecturers were done on departmental basis and then at the institutional level. This method was adopted because the students were taught the same courses by these lecturers though at different levels.

The method adopted to ascertain the traits of the lecturers in the study could be supported by similar exercises conducted by researchers before now. In fact, Voss R and Gruber T (2006) referred to several publications in support of the role of teachers and students in the determination of service quality of higher institution. For instance, Pozo-Munoz et al (2000, p.253) opined that teaching staff are key actors in a University work; therefore the behaviour and attitudes of lecturers should be the primary determinant of students' perceptions of service quality in higher education. Hansen et al (2000) supported the view when they stated that the institutional quality of the lecturer is the main influence on the perceived quality of the subject. Hill et al (2003) also averred that the quality of the lecturer belongs to the most important factors in the provision of high quality education.

As a follow-up to the first exercise, the second exercise was undertaken using a community-interactive method with the students in 2017. During the interaction students were enjoined to freely state in writing anonymously the traits/character they would expect their lecturers to exhibit in their teaching-learning interactions with them.

Justifying the need for the views of the students to be heard in ascertaining their desires and operations of institutions, Joseph et al (2005) indicated that there is the view that research on service quality in higher education has relied too strongly on the input from academic insiders while excluding the input from the students themselves. They believe that traditional approaches leave decisions about what constitutes quality of service, such as deciding what is most important to students, exclusively in the hands of administrators and/or academics. They therefore suggested that academic or administrators should focus on understanding the needs of their students who are the specific and primary target audience.

Also, Oldfield and Baron (2000, p. 86) were of the opinion that there is an inclination to view service quality in higher education from an organization perspective. They suggested that institutions should better pay attention to what their students want instead of collecting "data based upon what the institution perceives its students find important"

Furthermore, Winsted (2000) and Zeithaml et al (1990) observed that if lecturers know what their students expect, they may be able to adapt their behaviour to their students' underlying expectations, which should have a positive impact on their perceived service quality and their levels of satisfaction. In fact, Sander et al (2002) and Hill (1995) observed that Students' expectations are a valuable source of information. New undergraduate students may have idealistic expectations; and if higher institutions know about their (new) students' expectations, they may be able to respond to them to a more realistic level. At least, universities could inform students of what is realistic to expect from lectures. The knowledge of student expectation may help lecturers to design their teaching programmes.

Furthermore, Hill (1995) found that student expectations in general, and in particular, in relation to academic aspects of higher education services such as teaching quality, teaching methods, and course content, have been quite stable over time. Telford and Masson (2005) similarly pointed out that the perceived quality of the educational service depends on students' expectations and value. There is also a positive impact of expectations and values on variables such as student participation (Claycomb et al, 2001), role clarity, and motivation to participate in the service encounter (Lengnick-Hall et al; 2000; Rodie and Kleine, 2000). Hence, Telford and Masson (2005) believe that it is imperative to understand expectations and values of students in higher education.

To successfully ascertain the views of students on the expected traits of their lecturers in 2017, 300 of them participated in the community-interactive session. 204 or 68% of them made submissions on the subject matter after the exercise. The responses were analysed and aggregated under the following sub-heads: Expertise, Approachability, Good Communication Skills, Teaching Skills, Friendliness and Congeniality, Enthusiasm, Good Sense of Humour, Good Personality, Vision of High Expectations, Good Class Management with Effective Discipline Skills, Mentorship, Equity, Punctuality, Good Time Management and Non Abusive and Cursing. Thereafter, the frequency and percentage distribution of the aggregated responses were obtained.

Findings

The Evaluation of the performance of the Lecturers by students revealed interesting information on how the students perceived their lecturers in terms of general conducts, attitude to work, teaching methodology, relationship with students, knowledge of subject area, time management among others. While many of the students acknowledged the friendly and sometimes fatherly disposition of some of the lecturers towards them particularly in listening to their complaints/needs, answering their questions and encouraging them on study guides/methodologies, some other students perceived some of the lecturers as too harsh, intimidating and insulting.

Besides, some other lecturers were perceived as lacking in self-confidence/nervous, inaudible, boring, impatient, incapable of managing the class during lectures, casual disposition to teaching, inadequate grasp of their subject area, inadequate preparation before coming to class, non-utilization of teaching aids such as slides, irregular attendance at lectures resulting in the rush to

cover course outlines of twice in a semester, lateness to lectures use of old lecture notes, non-giving of assignments, non-marking of assignment even when given, dissimilarity between class assignments and examination questions, inequity in dealing/ relating with students, refusal of lecturers to answer students' questions in class, non-revision of taught topics before examinations, non-recognition of cognition differences among students, negative impact of administrative tasks on the performance of some lecturers in their teaching tasks, impatience with students questions.

Similarly, the community-interactive approach showed that the students rated friendliness and congeniality, Good Classroom Management with Effective Discipline Skills, Good Sense of Humour, Good Communication Skills and Expertise as the five most desirable traits of a good lecturer. These traits scored 46.1%, 38.7%, 36.3%, 33.8% and 32.8% respectively as in Table 1 and figure 1.

On the other hand, the five least desirable traits identified by the students were equity (4.4%), mentorship (4.9%), enthusiasm (6.9%), Vision of high expectation (7.8%) and approachability (8.3%) respectively as in Table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students Response

Qualities	Frequency	%	Total
Friendliness and congeniality (<i>kind and have strong rapport with students, allow students to share their problems without being afraid or hesitant</i>)	94	46.1	204
Good class management with effective discipline skills (<i>Ensure good student behaviour, effective study and work habits and overall sense of respect in the class</i>)	79	38.7	204
Good sense of humour (<i>The quality of being funny</i>)	74	36.3	204
Good communication skills (<i>Use of right word to gain access to contents of students minds, tailor messages to best suit students' language abilities and preferences</i>)	69	33.8	204
Expertise (<i>Knowledge of subject matter, Knowledge of curriculum and standards, Intellectual curiosity, Clear objectives for lessons, Awareness of changes in subject area, Confidence</i>)	67	32.8	204
Good time management (<i>Doesn't exceed lecture schedule or devote lecture schedule to irrelevant activities</i>)	56	27.5	204
Not abusive or cursing	36	17.6	204
Punctuality (<i>timely attendance at lecture</i>)	35	17.2	204
Good personality (<i>Good, decent, likeable, dress sensibly well, being a little gentle and kind</i>)	30	14.7	204
Teaching skills (<i>Selection of appropriate course contents, give lessons logical structure</i>)	25	12.3	204
Approachability (<i>A good listener, patience, Maturity</i>)	17	8.3	204
Vision of high expectations (<i>Encourages students to work at their best</i>)	16	7.8	204

<i>level)</i>			
Enthusiasm (<i>transmit excitement and interest in the subject</i>)	14	6.9	204
Mentorship (<i>The desire to influence students positively</i>)	10	4.9	204
Equity (<i>not partial in dealing with male and female students</i>)	9	4.4	204

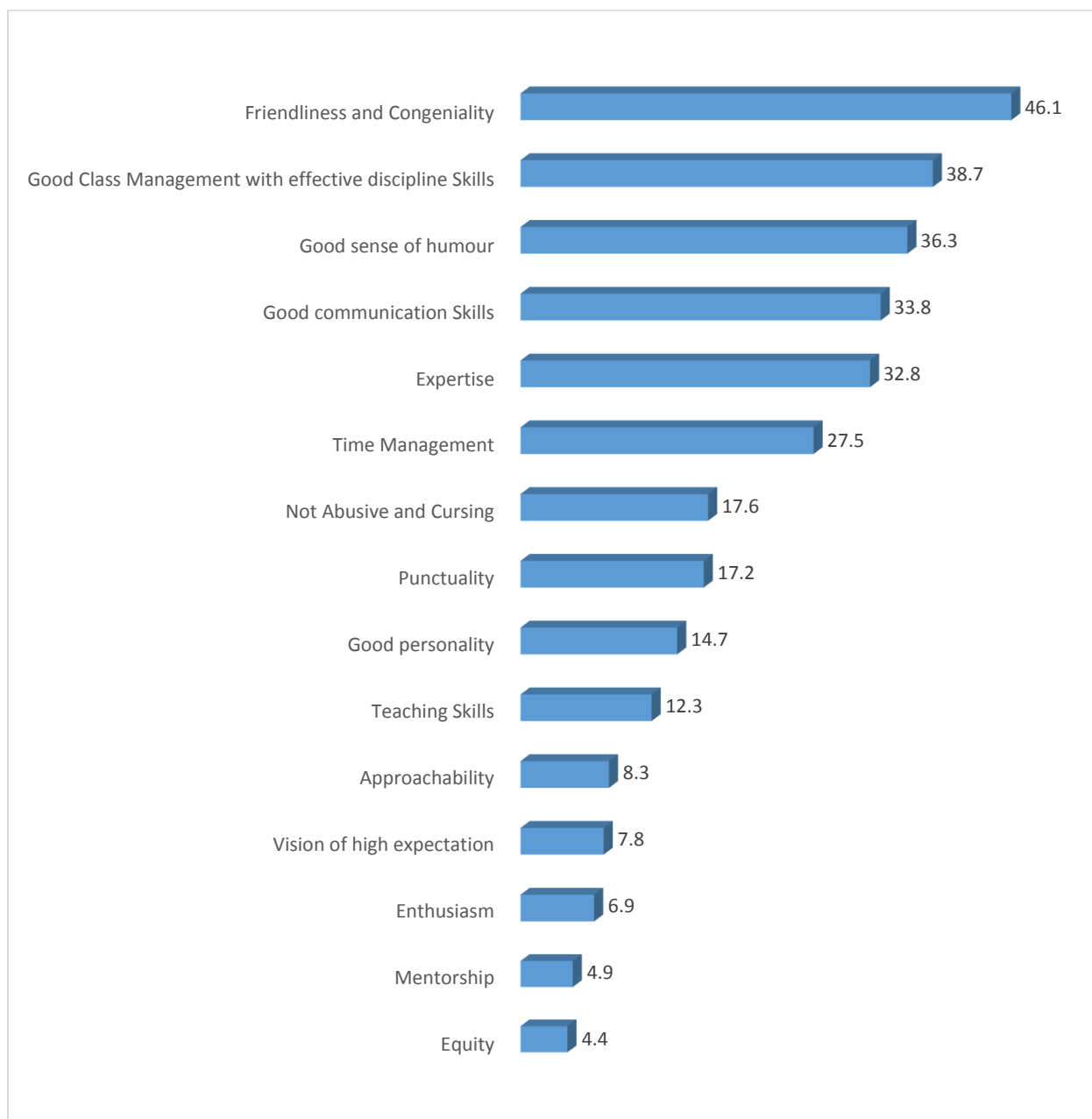


Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of the Traits/Qualities in Descending Order of Magnitude

Conclusion and Recommendation

The exercise brought to the fore some of the traits the students would expect their lecturers to exhibit/demonstrate in their interactions with them. It is hoped that the lecturers would note these views and adopt/exhibit them in their future interactions with the students.

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