

STUDENTS' STATUS ON PERCEPTION OF LECTURERS' IMMEDIACY IN UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigates students' status and perception of lecturers' immediacy, irrespective of their social class, gender, and physical statuses in Faculty of Education in University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. In doing that three research objectives, three research questions and three research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Literature related to the variables was consulted based on the investigated phenomenon. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Total sample of two hundred (200) respondents were randomly selected for the study. The selection was carried out through simple random sampling techniques. One instrument used for data collection was self-developed questionnaire. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance with the use of independent t-test and one-way analysis (ANOVA). Summary of the result of the analysis indicated that there is a significant influence of students' social class and perception of lecturers' immediacy, gender and perceptions of lecturers' immediacy except disability. It was recommended that, "rapport" scale provide an accurate assessment of lecturers' immediacy and good relationships with students, lecturers should be encouraged to have student-faculty interaction out of class without any biased expectation of the students on their gender, social class, just like disability.

Keywords: Perception, immediacy, social class, gender, physical statuses

Introduction

The term immediacy means different thing to many people. It is true that people cannot come together without being close to one another. Immediacy enhances social interaction in all human societies. Reason is that there will be no effective communication between one another, and among people in their social groups without concept of immediacy. Immediacy is the act of communicating positive feelings to people around us without any form of discrimination or bias treatment. The significance of immediacy is communication within social institutions, has been recognized by many recently. This is because people cannot exist together without interacting with one another in social institutions. Instructional immediacy is behaviour that brings the instructor and the students closer in terms of perceived distance.

Over the years, lecturers' immediacy has being overlooked and has not been given due attention to in order to remediate the plights of students; good relationship and closeness with their lecturers in their mother campuses. Consequently, there is a high level of discrimination and bias treatment among lecturers and their students in the school. In order to reduce this menace of bias treatment and discrimination among lecturers in the Universities, there is need to carry out a research on the phenomenon. A careful observation by the researcher has revealed that many students most times are afraid and reluctant to get close to their lecturers. Consequently, many of them suffer within themselves to solve their academic problems and become over dependent on other students who they think can solve their academic problems.

On the foregoing, it is a direct opposite of what should be obtained in the University because academic success and fortunes of the students depended solely on the lecturers who are the teachers to train them

and correct their mistakes and flaws. Grimsly (2015), observed that immediacy is very important component of communication because it provides people with signal of a positive desire and willingness to communicate. Immediacy enhances warm and friendly attitudes in a social environment.

It is noted that the way human beings view and perceive things or people in their social environment depends on how things appear to them. Students relate simply based on how they perceive and view the attitude of their lecturers around them. The perception is seen as both positive and negative perceptions. Grimsly (2015) studies have shown that students whose perception is negative towards their lecturers tends to move away from where their lecturers are and as such distort the sound relationship that should exist among them. Human beings are free moral beings and moves around his social environment, he get interacts with others to make his social life healthy and when that privilege is denied, he may exhibit different negative behaviours that could endanger his task. Perception is, then evidently synthetic experience.

The extent to which students perceive or view lecturers' closeness, good relationship and familiarity could depend largely on gender, social class, and vulnerability in the University. Most times, it is those who belong to higher social class that often enjoy certain privileges, benefits and high level of immediacy than those who are in middle and low social class. This is evident in the high rate of discrimination and bias treatment in the Nigerian Universities and other tertiary institutions. Many lecturers discriminate against students not because of the low intelligent level of the students, but because of their social statuses such as social class, gender, and those who are physically challenged. In Nigeria, discrimination and bias treatment are promoted. In the ideal society every member in the community is expected to be given equal moral treatment without bias on their gender, socio-economic background, and vulnerability. Most times it is those who belong to higher social class would enjoy certain privileges, benefits and high level of immediacy than those who are in the middle and low class (Grimsly, 2015).

Discrimination has been identified as the root cause of the problem of lack of immediacy in all human institutions. Discrimination against student's social class, gender, and disability by lecturers can seriously affect their perceptions on immediacy in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. Students cherish such times when they come close to their lecturers, and when they are not discriminated. Discrimination is bad, it does not allow peaceful coexistence in our society.

People can only come together when they share common ideas, understanding and interest. Lecturers are the giver of knowledge while the students are the receiver, the knowledge cannot be transferred and received between these two groups of people without immediacy between them.

A social scientist, Okeke (2002), maintained that social class indicates people belonging to classes that propagate their difference beliefs and values that propagate social relations. Consequently, social class normally relate to involvement and recognition accords to those who are in upper class in the society. All would have an equal shot at success, and excellent schools and lecturers have dedicated themselves to the goal. However, social class can greatly affect students' perception of lecturers' immediacy and this correlation between low socio-economic status and perceptions of lecturers' immediacy problem. Lack of lecturers' immediacy can create negative perceptions in the students' mind about their lecturers in the University.

Statement of the Problem

In most of the Universities in Nigeria, there is continuous tendency in students to be isolated from their lecturers. This negative tendency has eaten deep into students' consciousness, which does not allow them to be close to their lecturers. This menace has made many students to suffer academic setbacks

as a result of not relating and familiarizing with their lecturers to solve their academic problems for them. The indication of in the Universities and other tertiary institution students not been close and familiar to their lecturers is some students not knowing the names of their lecturers who are teaching them the courses in the different departments. An instance of the same scenario happened in the Faculty of Education in University of Calabar where a lecturer tested students' knowledge of the names of their Heads of departments during one of the semester test items examinations in 2014, because he identified the problem among students. The result of the test item showed that many students were unable to pass that option.

It is not good for students not to know their lecturers' names in Tertiary institutions, and is worse embarrassing if students cannot identify their lecturers by name, if this happens it shows apart the relationship between students and their lecturers is is. Some lecturers in Nigerian Universities have not seen anything good in the students they are teaching and some are harsh with the students to the extent of awarding grades base on discretion not based on what the students got from the test or examinations. Some of the lecturers usually complains of the workloads as such the students should not disturb them for any reason, some would abandon and refuse to attend to students but give more attention to their personal matters during office hour. Here, students do not have voice to speak out rather than to die in silent.

Lack of lecturers' immediacy has been the cankerworm that has seriously wounded students' conscious efforts towards learning in recent times. Consequently, student poor academic performance in the University. Some students lack positive attitudes towards their lecturers this also hinders the chances of relating effectively with their lecturers in the University. A careful observation by the researcher in the University of Calabar has shown that students always complains that their lecturers are not cordial and friendly, they refuse to attend to me. These are some of the exclamatory statement of regret that students usually made when they have the experience.

In spite of the committed efforts by educators and clergy men teaching and preaching against discrimination and bias treatment in Nigerian schools and churches, the problem is still persistent in our institutions. There is no significant change in many people's attitudes towards discrimination towards one another in Nigerian Universities. Therefore, the study will unravel how gender, social class, and disability contribute to the problem and suggest possible ways of solving it for sound human relation among students and their lecturers to be maintained in our Universities. It is imperative to address this problem in the proper approach through research findings because students cherish such times of having good relationship with their lecturers in the University.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this study are:

1. Examine whether social class influence lecturers' immediacy negatively.
2. Find out whether gender influence students perception lecturers' immediacy
3. Investigate whether students' disability affects the perception lecturers' immediacy friendly attitudes and positive feelings will lead to students' academic success irrespective of their disabilities.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study.

1. Does social class influence lecturers' immediacy negatively?
2. Does gender influence student's perception of lecturers' immediacy?

3. Does students’ disability affect the perception of lecturers’ immediacy?

Research hypotheses

H0₁ Student’s status does not significantly influence the students’ perception lecturers’ immediacy.

H0₂ Student’s gender does not significantly influence the perception of lecturers’ immediacy.

H0₃ Student’s disability does not significantly influence the perception of lecturers’ immediacy.

Methodology

Survey research design is used for the study. This according to Denga and Ali (1998), is a form of descriptive research that is aimed at collecting large and small sample from the populations in order to examine the distribution. The population of the study is five thousand (5000) students. The 200 to 400L levels are considered as the respondents for the study. This is because this category of students has had the experience of the problem under investigation. The sampling techniques adopted for the study is the simple random sampling techniques. The sample for the study consists of two hundred (200) students randomly selected through simple random sampling techniques from five out of thirteen departments in the faculty for the study.

Sample Frame

S/N	Departments	No of Students	Male	Female
1.	Educational Foundation	50	25	25
2.	Educational Admin. /Planning	50	25	25
3.	Curriculum/Teaching	50	25	25
4.	Arts Education	30	15	15
5.	Special Education	20	10	10
	Total	200	100	100

The questionnaire is self-designed by the researcher and divided into two sections. Section A is designed to collect data from the respondents’ personal data such as Age, Sex, Social Class, and Disable. Section “B” is a-twenty (20) items on Likert scale-type designed to measure students’ perceptions of lecturers’ immediacy. In order to ensure that the items selected for inclusion in the instrument are capable of eliciting relevant responses from respondents, the researcher presented the designed instrument to the expert for face and content validation before used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established at .80 which shows that the instrument was reliable for the study. The statistical tools used for the analysis were independent t-test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

H0₁ Student’s status does not significantly influence the students’ perception lecturers’ immediacy.

To test the hypothesis, ANOVA statistical analysis was used test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

The summary of the result obtained from the analysis is presented in table 2

Table 2: One-way analysis of the influence of students’ social class on lecturers’ immediacy

Social class	Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F Sign
Upper class	Between Groups	1880.8	2	940.4	13.5
Middle class	Within Groups	13681.1	197	69.5	
Low class	Total	15561.92	199	78.2	

Critical- value =3.04, significant of .05

Since the calculated t-value of 13.5 is greater than the critical t-value of 3.04, the null hypothesis which states that students’ social class does not significantly influence students’ perceptions of lecturers’ immediacy is rejected. In other words, students’ social class influences lecturers’ immediacy.

In order to isolate the variable (s) with the greater influence, the Fisher’s Least Significant Difference Multiple Comparison was done. The result is presented in the table 3 below.

Table 3: Influence of the perception of lecturers’ immediacy

Dependent Variables	(i) Tiles Freedom	(g) Tiles of Means	Standard dev. error	F sign
Immediacy	Upper Middle	7.0	.1234	.002
	Middle Low	2.6	.13680	.000
	Low Upper	-10.0	.12349	.0000
Total		-0.4	0.38369	0.002

@ 0.05 significance

The result indicate that the variable with the highest immediacy was the upper social class (x44.3); it followed by middle class (x47.3); the least was the low class (x44.71). Therefore, it is evident that those students in the upper social class received the highest level of immediacy followed by the middle class.

H0₂ Student’s gender does not significantly influence the perception of lecturers’ immediacy.

Table 4: The result of independent t-test analysis of the influence of student gender (sex) on lecturers’ immediacy

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	P-value
Male	100	47.1	9.78			
Female	100	49.8	7.62	-2.178	± 1.97	0.03
Total	200	96.9	17.4			

Significance @ 0.05 alpha

Since the calculated t. value of -2.178 is greater than the critical t-value of ±1.97 and since P-value of 0.03 is less than alpha (0.05), the null hypothesis is which proposed that there is on significant influence of students’ gender or sex on lecturers’ immediacy is rejected. This means that students’ gender significantly influenced lecturers’ immediacy.

H0₃ Student’s disability does not significantly influence the perception of lecturers’ immediacy.

Table 5: The result of independent t-test analysis of the influence of students’ physical status on lecturers’ immediacy.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	P-value
Physically Challenged	23	46.3	7.94			
Non-physically Challenged	177	48.8	8.93	-0.037	± 1.97	0.97
Total	200	95.1	16.87			

@ 0.05 significance

Since the calculated t-test of -0.037 is less than the critical t-value of ±1.97; and the p-value of 0.97 is greater than the alpha (0.05), the null hypothesis, which stipulates that student’s disability does not significantly influence their perceptions of lecturers’ immediacy, is retained. This means that lecturers’ immediacy is not significantly influenced by students’ physical ability or disability.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant influence between students’ social class and perceptions of lecturers’ immediacy. However, on the bases of the result obtained from the statistical hypothesis. The null hypothesis was reflected because the calculated value was greater than the critical t-value. The implication of this result is that there is a significant influence between students’ social class and lecturers’ immediacy in the study area. The finding of this hypothesis is connected to the position of a social scientist Okeke (2002) who states that social class indicate people belonging to classes that propagate social relations. That, there is a clear distinction of treatment given to people base on social strata. The expert further explained that people tends to give more preference to those who belong to high class and this always tends to shape the perceptions of the former.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of gender and perception on lecturers’ immediacy. However, this null hypothesis was rejected because the calculated t-value was found to be greater than the critical t-value. This means that there is a significant influence of students’ gender on lecturers’ immediacy in the research area.

The results of this hypothesis is in line with the earlier position of Dinda and Jones (2014), who suggested that lecturers may subtly communicate that they have different academic expectations of male and female students. The bias expectation of the lecturers may then become fulfilling when students response to them that it is adverse effect. Brophy (2002), concluded that lecturers discriminating against students of the opposite sex.

The third hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of disability on lecturer’s immediacy. This null hypothesis was retained because the calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value at 0.05 significant level. This means that students’ physical challenge had no significant influence on lecturers’ immediacy in the research area and irregularities between lecturers and their disabled students in the research area. This further show that disability as a variable being a concept can take different value and varies from time to time, from area to area. That is to say that the findings on this particular concept may not be the same if another area and group of disable students are studied. This finding is contrary from the general notion about how disable people are treated in the society as maintained that the attitude of Nigerians towards disable students vary from that of sympathy, indirect reflection to total neglect.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that students' social class, gender significantly influenced lecturers' immediacy, while disability was not. Lecturers are very important element in the institutions, and as such they are expected to have an embracing attitude towards their students irrespective of the student's social status. The study on Student's Status and Perceptions of Lecturers' immediacy in University of Calabar, it has been revealed that to some extents lecturers' immediacy towards their students is based on the student's social class, except disabled.

Recommendations

1. There should be "Rapport" scale provide an accurate assessment of the lecturers' sound Lecturer's sound relationship with the students.
2. Lecturers should be encouraged to have student- faculty interaction out of class without any biased expectations of differences in sex, social class.
3. Government should organize sensitization programmes and seminars to educate Lecturers on the strategies of relating and maintaining good relationship.
4. Lecturers should be exposed to counselling exercise on the strategies that geared towards enhancing positive relation in the school with the students.
5. Discrimination between male and female students among lecturers should be avoided to ensure equal treatment.

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