

**University Teachers' Perception of the Effects of Students Evaluation of Teaching on  
Lecturers Instructional Practices in Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of the paper is to investigate the perceived effect of students' evaluation of teaching on university teachers' instructional practices in Nigeria. 326 respondents were randomly drawn from three Nigerian universities. A researcher constructed 20- item questionnaire Lecturers Response to Students Evaluations of Teaching (LRSET), was used to generate data. Four research questions investigating the perception of lecturers on the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices were answered. Mean statistic was used to analyze the data generated. The result showed that although lecturers generally do not accept students' evaluation of their teaching, they perceived that the students' evaluation of teaching would bring about positive changes in their instructional practices. Among others, it is recommended that students' evaluation of classroom teaching should be introduced, made mandatory and conducted regularly in the Nigerian universities.*

*Key words: Evaluation of teaching, university teachers' instructional practices*

**Introduction**

The quest for improvement in undergraduate instruction in the Nigerian Universities has remained a major concern. This is because of the poor quality of the graduates being produced by these universities. The complaints about the quality of undergraduate instruction are both current and chronic as observed by Aduwa-Oglebaen (2005). In addition, he stated that there was the need for improvement in undergraduate instruction in the Nigerian universities. He recommended better preparation of graduates for improving the quality of instruction. Therefore, there is a great desire for effective undergraduate teaching in our universities.

Nigeria has 104 registered universities owned by government (both federal and state), and private individuals and organisations (Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), 2010). The universities are established to produce high level manpower among other objectives. To achieve these objectives, various courses are offered. It is expected that the Nigerian university students, at the end of their course, should have acquired knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of world of work. A graduate is expected to acquire knowledge while in the school to give him opportunity to contribute to the development of his society. At the end of his programme, it is assumed that he has passed through a standard process of training for the award of degree certificate.

In addition, according to Agbonna, Yusuf, Ajidagba and Olumorin (2010), undergraduates are exposed to job- training programmes. For example, students in the sciences undertake months of Student Industrial Work Experience (SIWES), education students are exposed to Teaching Practice, Medical Students do Housemanship while the Law Students attend mandatory Law School. The objective of on the job- training is to give them necessary training and skills needed to face the demand of their world of work.

However, the validity of the undergraduate certificates in being questioned, doubted and debated by education stake holders. This is due to their low productivity and non performance at job. Many people have expressed their concern on the low productivity of the Nigerian university graduates. The National Association of Pro- Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (NAPCNU), in 2007, declared that many Nigeria graduates were not employable because they were of low quality (The Punch, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2007). In addition, the Nigerian Minister for Education, Sam Egwu at a political forum, stated that 80% of the Nigeria graduates were unemployable (Nigerian Compass, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2009).

A number of factors have been attributed to the low and poor quality of the Nigeria graduates. Kilpatrick (1997) observed the situation of teaching and learning in the university classrooms and he concluded that aimlessness is the most important single cause of ineffective teaching. Okebukola (2007) maintained that Nigerian education graduates were inadequately prepared in both content and pedagogy, and therefore could not teach well or at worst impart wrong knowledge all of which combined to have negative effect on the performance of the students they teach.

It has been observed that the proper implementation of any curriculum at any level is a function of the quality of the teachers. Okebukola (2007) called for increased job commitment and the need to update the knowledge of the university teachers who are responsible for the implementation of the university curriculum. This means that the teacher is the pivot on which the success of any educational programme hangs as noted by National policy on Education (2004) which professes that no nation can rise over and above the quality of its teachers. This is why Onwuka (1996) contended that it is the effort of the teachers that a curriculum which is designed by the planners depends to a large extent for its success in terms of leading to the appropriate ends of education in the society.

Many universities in Nigeria have devised various means of improving the performance of their students with a view to improving their productivity and performance in the world of work after graduation. Among this is the students' evaluation of their lecturers' teaching effectiveness and efficiency. Students' evaluation refers to a periodic evaluation of teachers. It involves a systematic gathering and analysis of information, on the basis of which decisions are taken regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the teacher.

Jackson (1998) identified nine approaches to teacher evaluation, namely: classroom observation, students' ratings, students' achievement, peer-rating, self-rating, teacher interview, parents' rating, competency tests, and indirect measures. However, recognition and evaluation of it have different applications for different institutions. While some shy away from formalising the means by which a faculty teacher's teaching competence is judged, others are reluctant to give students a voice in the decisions that affect a faculty member's career (Eble, 1974). According to David and Adebawale (1997), the value of this evaluation is a massive one which has received considerable hostility and suspicion on behalf of the university lecturers.

It is observed that while early studies tended to support the reliability, they cast doubt on the validity of the students' ratings of their lecturers. Marsh (1987) also observed that several recent reviews of studies in this area are supportive of their values. This inconsistency may be due to the fact that teaching effectiveness is multifaceted and that any students' rating that focuses on a single overall score of lecturers may be inadequate. David and Adebawale (1997) cited a lecturer who was well organised may not be a best of communicators. To them, failure to separate these different components of effective teaching has led to conflicting results of research findings.

However, institutions are beginning to appreciate the fact that there are many sources of information about teaching effectiveness and many ways of bringing that information to bear upon the evaluation of teaching. According to Richmond (2003) and Clifford (1999), student opinion is of particular importance because it represents an important addition to the data customarily used to judge competence of lecturers. It is the one source of direct and extensive observations of the way teachers carry out their daily and long-range tasks.

David and Adebawale (1997) noted some benefits of the students' evaluation to include among others, that it increases the chances of recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching; provides means of interaction between the teacher and the taught; provides the only direct and extensive information about the teacher; and provide tangible evidence of students' recognition and involvement in rebranding the. In otherwords, students' evaluation can be used to improve classroom instruction, student learning, and to foster professional growth of the teacher, and also the results of such evaluation are used for administrative/personnel decisions like promotion, salary increase, demotion, dismissal, awards and/or meeting public/government accountability demands (Gold, 2001).

Gardener and Milton (2002) asserted that, from the available literature, the question of whether or not lecturers should be evaluated is not the issue, rather, the question is largely who should do it, for what purpose, and by what means. It is on this premise that this study is based to find the university teachers' perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were answered in this study

1. How do Nigerian university lecturers perceive the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on their instructional practices in Nigeria?
2. Is there any significant difference in the perception of junior and senior lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria?
3. Is there any significant difference in the perception of old and young lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria?
4. Is there any significant difference in the perception of male and females lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria?

**Methodology**

The survey design was adopted for the study. It sought to elicit the perception of Nigerian university lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria. All the university teachers constituted the population. 326 respondents were randomly drawn from the three Nigerian universities. A researcher constructed 20- item questionnaire Lecturers Response to Students Evaluations of Teaching (LRSET), was used to generate data. The questionnaire items were structured on a four- point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The questionnaire instrument was content validated by three lecturers of University of Ilorin, Ilorin. The test- retest procedure was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument twice to University lecturers who did not participate in the study. The scores were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient and this yielded a coefficient of internal consistency of 0.59. The obtained data were analysed using mean scores.

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**Research Question One:**

1. How do Nigerian university lecturers perceive the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria?

**Table 1:** university teachers' perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria.

Item	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Total	Mean
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	Agree			Disagree		
Students should evaluate their lecturers.	50	39	78	159	326	1.94
Maturity of university students qualifies them to evaluate their lecturers	41	35	79	171	326	1.96
Students possess good value-judgment to evaluate their lecturers	65	40	58	163	326	2.02
Lecturers will be more prepared for their teaching if they know that their students will evaluate them	101	76	78	71	326	2.63
Lecturers will be more punctual to class if they know that their students will evaluate them	109	76	70	71	326	2.68
Lecturer student relationships will be improved if they know that their students will evaluate them	78	71	71	106	326	2.37
Lecturers will be more dedicated to their job	101	76	78	71	326	2.63
Lecturers will be more disciplined generally	101	76	78	71	326	2.63
Feedback on student evaluation helps lecturers to improve on their teaching	78	71	71	106	326	2.37
Lecturers will be more innovative in their teaching	78	71	71	106	326	2.37
Lecturers will be more transparent	106	76	65	78	326	2.64

to the students						
Results of student evaluation are needed to improve classroom instruction	105	75	67	78	326	2.63
Results of student evaluation are used to improve students' learning	70	71	79	106	326	2.32
Results of student evaluation can be used to assess the professional needs of lecturers	67	65	82	112	326	2.27
Student evaluation reports allow for self reflection	121	86	64	55	326	2.83
Results of student evaluation are needed for administrative decisions	70	71	79	106	326	2.32
Student evaluation results are used for the promotion of lecturers	50	39	78	159	326	1.94
Such results are needed for salary increase for lecturers	50	39	78	159	326	1.94
Student evaluation results are needed to select the best teachers for award in the faculty	83	71	68	104	326	2.41
There is the need for students' evaluation of lecturers yearly	57	39	76	154	326	1.99

From the analysis on Table 1, it showed that the mean scores of the respondents in 13 of the items were less than 2.50. This means that the respondents had negative perception of the students' evaluation of lecturers. Thus, the mean scores of the 20 items on the Nigerian university lecturers' perception of the effect of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers' instructional practices in Nigeria

is significantly less than 50 per cent. This implies that the majority of lecturers do not perceive the need for student evaluation. However, the analysis revealed that those items that relate to the components of improved classroom instruction, discipline, transparency, self reflection and dedication to duty had mean score of above 2.50.

**Research Question Two:**

1. Is there any significant difference in the perception of junior and senior lecturers of the effects of students’ evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria?

**Table 2:** University senior and junior teachers’ perception of the effects of students’ evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria.

Item	S A		A		D		S D		Total	Total	Mean	
	S	J	S	J	S	J	S	J	S	J	S	J
Students should evaluate their lecturers.	28	22	20	19	30	48	79	80	157	169	1.98	1.90
Students are qualified to evaluate their lecturers	30	11	10	25	45	34	72	99	157	169	1.99	1.69
Students possess good value-judgment to evaluate their lecturers	45	20	20	20	28	30	64	99	157	169	2.30	1.77
Students’ evaluation ensures teachers adequate preparation	70	31	26	50	41	37	20	51	157	169	2.93	2.36
Students’ evaluation ensures Lecturers punctuality												
Students’ evaluation improves lecturer- student relationship	71	38	30	46	40	30	16	55	157	169	2.99	2.59
Students’ evaluation	37	41	41	30	37	34	42	64	157	169	2.46	2.28



ensures Lecturers dedication to duty													
Lecturers will be more disciplined generally	50	51	46	30	44	31	19	57	157	169	2.83	2.44	
Feedback on student evaluation helps lecturers to improve on their teaching	50	51	46	30	44	31	20	51	157	169	2.83	2.44	
Lecturers will be more innovative in their teaching	46	32	31	40	33	37	47	60	157	169	2.48	2.26	
Lecturers will be more transparent to the students	46	32	31	40	33	37	47	60	157	169	2.48	2.26	
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers improvement of classroom instruction	63	53	41	35	45	20	8	61	157	169	3.01	2.47	
Results of student evaluation are used to improve students' learning	63	53	41	35	45	20	8	61	157	169	3.01	2.47	
Results of student evaluation can be used to assess the professional needs of lecturers	42	38	37	34	49	41	29	56	157	169	2.59	2.32	
Student evaluation reports allow for self reflection	89	32	20	40	22	45	26	52	157	169	3.09	2.48	
Results of student evaluation are needed for administrative decisions	89	32	20	40	22	45	26	52	157	169	3.09	2.48	
Student evaluation results are used for the promotion of lecturers	42	38	37	34	49	41	29	56	157	169	2.59	2.32	
Such results are needed for salary increase for lecturers	28	22	20	19	30	48	79	80	157	169	1,98	1.89	
Student evaluation results	28	22	20	19	30	48	79	80	157	169	1,98	1.89	

are needed to select the best teachers for award in the faculty												
There is the need for students' evaluation of lecturers yearly	37	69	46	30	30	35	44	35	157	169	2.48	2.79
Students should evaluate their lecturers.	47	54	46	30	44	34	20	51	157	169	2.76	2.51

The analysis on Table 2 showed that senior lecturers who were respondents in the study had good perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria than their junior counterparts as reflected in their responses to the items. The analysis showed that the mean score of the senior lecturers who were respondents in 13 of the items were above 2.50, while the mean score of the junior lecturers who were respondents was above 2.50 in only three (3) of the items . This means that there is a significant difference in the perception of junior and senior lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria.

### Research Question Three:

1. Is there any significant difference in the perception of young and old lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria?

Table 3: university teachers' perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria.

Item	S A		A		D		S D		Total	Total	Mean	
	O	Y	O	Y	O	Y	O	Y	O	Y	O	Y
Students should evaluate their lecturers.	30	20	20	19	30	48	59	100	139	187	2.15	1.78
Students are qualified to evaluate their lecturers	26	15	14	21	40	39	59	112	139	187	2.05	1.56

Students possess good value-judgment to evaluate their lecturers	35	30	25	15	33	25	46	117	139	187	2.30	1.77
Students' evaluation ensures teachers adequate preparation	70	31	26	50	41	37	20	51	139	187	2.93	2.36
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers punctuality	71	38	30	46	40	30	16	55	139	187	2.99	2.59
Students' evaluation improves lecturer- student relationship	37	41	41	30	37	34	42	64	139	187	2.46	2.28
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers dedication to duty	50	51	46	30	44	31	19	57	139	187	2.83	2.44
Lecturers will be more disciplined generally	50	51	46	30	44	31	20	51	139	187	2.83	2.44
Feedback on student evaluation helps lecturers to improve on their teaching	46	32	31	40	33	37	47	60	139	187	2.48	2.26
Lecturers will be more innovative in their teaching	46	32	31	40	33	37	47	60	139	187	2.48	2.26
Lecturers will be more transparent to the students	63	53	41	35	45	20	8	61	139	187	3.01	2.47
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers improvement of classroom instruction	63	53	41	35	45	20	8	61	139	187	3.01	2.47
Results of student evaluation are used to improve students' learning	42	38	37	34	49	41	29	56	139	187	2.59	2.32
Results of student evaluation can be used to assess the professional needs of lecturers	89	32	20	40	22	45	26	52	139	187	3.09	2.48
Student evaluation reports allow for self reflection	89	32	20	40	22	45	26	52	139	187	3.09	2.48

Results of student evaluation are needed for administrative decisions	42	38	37	34	49	41	29	56	139	187	2.59	2.32
Student evaluation results are used for the promotion of lecturers	28	22	20	19	30	48	79	80	139	187	1.98	1.89
Such results are needed for salary increase for lecturers	28	22	20	19	30	48	79	80	139	187	1.98	1.89
Student evaluation results are needed to select the best teachers for award in the faculty	37	69	46	30	30	35	44	35	139	187	2.48	2.79
There is the need for students' evaluation of lecturers yearly	47	54	46	30	44	34	20	51	139	187	2.76	2.51

Table 3 showed that old lecturers who were respondents in the study had good perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria than their young counterparts as reflected in their responses to the items. The analysis showed that the mean score of the old lecturers who were respondents in 11 of the items were above 2.50, while the mean score of the young lecturers who were respondents was above 2.50 in only seven (7) of the items . This means that there is a significant difference in the perception of old and young lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria.

**Research Question Four:**

1. Is there any significant difference in the perception of male and female lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria?

Table 4: Male and female university teachers' perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching

Item	S A	A	D	S D	Total	Total	Mean
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	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Students should evaluate their lecturers.	32	18	24	15	28	50	60	99	144	182	2.28	1.57
Students are qualified to evaluate their lecturers	32	9	16	19	40	39	56	115	144	182	2.24	1.57
Students possess good value-judgment to evaluate their lecturers	41	24	24	16	24	59	55	99	144	182	2.63	1.95
Students' evaluation ensures teachers adequate preparation	38	21	35	41	41	37	30	41	144	182	2.56	1.76
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers punctuality	51	28	36	40	41	29	76	45	144	182	2.84	1.84
Students' evaluation improves lecturer-student relationship	48	30	40	31	30	41	46	60	144	182	2.90	1.95
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers dedication to duty	30	51	46	30	44	31	24	70	144	182	2.56	2.34
Lecturers will be more disciplined generally	30	51	46	30	44	31	24	70	144	182	2.56	2.34
Feedback on student evaluation helps lecturers to improve on their teaching	36	32	31	40	30	37	47	73	144	182	2.39	2.17
Lecturers will be more innovative in their teaching	36	32	31	40	30	37	47	73	144	182	2.39	2.17
Lecturers will be more transparent to the students	50	53	41	35	45	20	8	74	144	182	2.92	2.37
Students' evaluation ensures Lecturers improvement of classroom instruction	80	53	41	35	45	20	8	61	157	169	3.01	2.47
Results of student evaluation are used to improve students' learning	42	38	37	34	49	32	29	69	144	182	2.82	2.13
Results of student evaluation can be used to assess the professional needs of lecturers	49	32	30	40	32	45	33	65	144	182	2.65	2.21
Student evaluation reports allow for	49	32	30	40	32	45	33	65	144	182	2.65	2.21

self reflection													
Results of student evaluation are needed for administrative decisions	42	38	37	34	49	32	29	69	144	182	2.82	2.13	
Student evaluation results are used for the promotion of lecturers	28	22	20	19	30	48	66	93	144	182	2.06	1.85	
Such results are needed for salary increase for lecturers	28	22	20	19	30	48	66	93	144	182	2.06	1.85	
Student evaluation results are needed to select the best teachers for award in the faculty	37	69	46	30	30	35	31	48	144	182	2.61	2.74	
There is the need for students' evaluation of lecturers yearly	47	69	46	30	40	34	45	64	144	182	2.61	2.74	

The analysis on Table 4 showed that male who were respondents had positive perception than their female counterparts. The female lecturers had negative perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on lecturers instructional practices in Nigeria as reflected in their responses to the items. The analysis showed that the mean score of the male lecturers who were respondents in (14) of the items were above 2.50, while the mean score of the female lecturers who were respondents was above 2.50 in only three (3) of the items . This means that there is significant difference in the perception of male and female lecturers of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study revealed that the university lecturers had negative perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria. The negative perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria is in tune with David and Adebowale (1997) who stated that faculty members in most institutions are skeptical of student evaluation because they might have damaging effects on their career. In addition, many university lecturers considered the students' evaluation of lecturers as abnormal in giving students a voice in the process evaluation of lecturers. This finding is consistent with Cross (2002) who noted that student evaluation does little general good and some particular harm. In other words, it is good for the system but may be harmful to the lecturers. The finding is also in line

with Richmond (2003) stated that student evaluation might arouse unhealthy competition among faculty members which many of them considered unnecessary.

On research question two, it was discovered that senior lecturers had a more positive disposition to the practice than their junior counterparts. This implies that senior lecturers had positive perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria. This finding is in line with Urevbu (1997) and Imogie (2000) who also noted that senior lecturers had a more positive disposition towards students' evaluation of teaching. The result may be due to the fact that junior lecturers are probably apprehensive of their academic and professional inadequacies that may be exposed by student evaluation. However, such anxieties seem to be alleviated if lecturers are convinced that the evaluation results are meant to help them assess their own teaching and work to improve on it. This is more likely to be true of the junior lecturers. Senior lecturers tend to be less sensitive to the harm of student evaluation by virtue of their qualification and experience and the fact that they have reached the top of their career. They are likely to advocate student evaluation as a means of improving teaching and promoting the quality of university education in Nigeria. In addition, the finding is in line with Kilpatrick (1997) who concluded that many of the senior lecturers are probably more confident, and had better pedagogical skill in their instructional delivery, compared to the junior lecturers whose teaching has been characterised by aimlessness.

The study also showed that there was a significant difference in the perception of lecturers across gender. This finding is consistent with Kilpatrick (1997) who stated that gender did influence lecturers perception. This may be due to the fact that female lecturers tend to be more sensitive to the harm that such practice could inflict on their career than their male counterparts.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following conclusions have been reached.

Nigerian university lecturers generally have negative perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria. This is because they are apprehensive and sensitive with practice in the system.

Junior university lecturers had negative perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria compared with their senior counterparts.

Female lecturers also had negative perception of the effects of students' evaluation of teaching on instructional practices in Nigeria compared with their senior counterparts.

From the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made.

1. Students' evaluation of classroom teaching should be conducted regularly in the Nigerian universities for the benefit of the university system.
2. Students' evaluation of university teachers should form part of instrument used for promotion, award, and other administrative decisions.
3. University administrators should put in place mechanisms that can balance the students rating in order to protect the integrity of teachers
4. Students should be enlightened on how best to evaluate their teacher to remove bias and prejudice from the students when rating lecturers .

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