



Tertiary Institutions Undergraduates Opinion on Psychology Lecturers' Promotion of Interpersonal Relationship and Relating Previous Knowledge to New Experiences for Quality Learning in Cross River State

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Abstract

The paper assessed the opinion of second year under graduate students in Faculties of Education on the promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge to new experiences by educational psychology lecturers for quality learning in Cross River State. The paper specifically examined if educational psychology lecturers promote interpersonal relationship, and relate previous knowledge to new experiences in the teaching and learning process. To achieve this, two research questions were raised, and two null hypotheses were formulated for the study. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “ Tertiary Institutions Undergraduates Opinion on promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge Questionnaire”. The questionnaire was designed with 13 items, 3 items elicited information on demographic variables, and 10 items expressed students’ opinion about lecturers’ promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge to new experiences in teaching. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and population t-test. The results revealed low use of previous knowledge by psychology lecturers. The results also revealed that there is a low promotion of interpersonal relationship by lecturers. It was therefore recommended that lecturers should give students engaging class assignments that will help them achieve long term goals. It was also recommended that lecturers should relate previous learning to new experiences for quality learning.

Key words: Quality Learning, Previous Knowledge, Interpersonal Relationship.

Introduction

Education is a basic foundation for development and determinant of economic, political, technological and social advancement of any nation. One of the many ways of improving the falling standard of education in the country is quality teaching. This can only be achieved by equipping teachers through the promotion of retraining exercises on methods, principles and facilities that will help them in effective lesson delivery.

The teacher is expected to teach, and create conducive environment that would help develop students’ self-management skills, create positive teacher-student relationship, sustain task behaviour, identify and assist students with varying learning difficulties.

All these responsibilities are made possible if the teacher encourages interpersonal relationship and previous knowledge in the teaching/learning process. These could promote



effective teaching/learning, enable the teacher to have an understanding of learners, as well as assist teachers incorporate supported practices for quality and effective learning.

Adesulu, Uwandu, and Iruoma (2016) worried that Nigeria's education system has lost its glory by occupying the 145th position in primary education advancement in the world's record. The reason according to them could be traceable to the abrogation of Grade II education which was solely responsible for training teachers by the government of General Ibrahim Babangida. Adesulu et al (2016) noted that not all who teach in institutions of learning are grounded with the methodology of imparting knowledge. Adesulu et al (2016) further reported that most students learn in crowded classrooms with 80/100 pupils without chairs and electricity. While teachers' working conditions are next to nothing, as they are treated with disregard which is why the society holds them in low esteem. In the guardian newspaper of 21st September, 2016, Oby Ezekwesili decried that the falling quality of education could be traceable to poor teacher quality, incomplete curriculum, ethical gap, policy inconsistency and many other challenges. The curriculum is a road-map for teacher and students to follow the path for quality learning. Unfortunately, there is no stable curriculum in the educational sector, due to changes in policy that has hindered the smooth adherence to the curriculum.

Over the years, there has been a growing concern by psychologists about the poor quality of undergraduate learning, and they have been an advocacy for curriculum review for improved quality of teaching among psychology lecturers. Sadly, the value of undergraduate education in educational psychology is not always recognized. In most tertiary institutions, educational psychology programmes are not recognized or developed at the undergraduate level. The recent Nigerian University Curriculum guidelines sent to various universities for imputes marginalized educational psychology, with most courses given guidance and counselling course codes. Not too much can be learnt when undergraduate students only offer some general psychology courses or when psychology courses are been taught by lecturers who are not versed with the in-depth knowledge of educational psychology. The use of psychological techniques in the teaching of educational psychology courses to undergraduate students could improve the quality of learning, thereby produce citizens who are mentally and socially balanced.

In the teaching and learning process, the teacher needs to be equipped with techniques that can promote instructional delivery for quality learning. Unfortunately, most teachers do not apply these techniques during teaching despite the fact that they are aware of the relevance of these techniques in the teaching and learning situation (Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, and Willingham 2013). The researchers have observed that students in tertiary institutions do not understand the relevance of interpersonal relationship between student and student, and between student and teachers. They see their classmates only as co-learners and not as people who could contribute to their academic and social advancement. Students' inability to also relate previous knowledge to new experiences or studies have made the researcher wonder that despite the fact that all the students in faculty of education offer compulsory educational psychology courses their behaviour disposition with regards to their relationship with fellow students and teachers and their inability to connect past experiences to present experiences needs to be addressed.

The world is an interconnected place, where individuals are expected to interact with one another to build healthy social relationships. Unfortunately, information flow and social interaction has been altered by technological advancement and innovation of the telephone, internet, computer, and different social network systems. The fact that a healthy school environment can promote quality education is the reason why the researchers want to find out if



teachers' encouragement of interpersonal relationship among students can promote quality learning in Nigeria.

Students and teachers are affected by the presence of each other as they form relationships. Singh and Mural (2014) in their study discovered a significant positive relationship between teacher/student and student/student interpersonal relationship with the teaching and learning process. Byamugisha (2010) carried out an investigation on effects of school environmental factors on pupils learning achievement in Ugandan primary schools and found out that teacher/student interpersonal relationships significantly influenced teaching and learning process. There is therefore a need for teachers to effectively apply this technique for quality learning.

Darrell et al' (1998) investigated the relationship between Teacher-student interpersonal behaviour and teacher personality using 108 teachers from eight secondary colleges (Grade 11 & 12) in Tasmania, Australia, and found a greater positive association between student teacher interpersonal behaviour in terms of students' perception of their teachers regarding how much freedom student were allowed

Jonathan (2016) in a study using first year masters in education students (N38) taking an online course in quantitative research methodology relating to the quality of their interpersonal relationship, revealed that quality interpersonal relationship is related to higher school achievement. Fan (2012) in his study using a sample of 1954 junior secondary school JSS III from 50 government secondary school in Calabar education zone of Cross River State revealed a significant relationship between teacher-students interpersonal relationship and students' academic achievement in social studies. He revealed that good interpersonal relationship is a major lubricant of high productivity among students.

This is another fundamental psychological technique that promotes learning. It is important for teachers to relate prior knowledge to new experience for the facilitation of learning and understanding of the fact that students build on what they already know and understand through their experiences at school and at home. Application of this technique by the teacher is important because students' prior knowledge could hinder or promote learning, and fosters student engagement and critical thinking.

In educational psychology, prior knowledge is very crucial. The degree of prior knowledge of a student must be substantial for quality learning. Learners come to class with a wide range of prior knowledge which determine how they interpret and organize new information. It is important for the teacher to apply this technique in other to design instructional activities that can build up their strength and address their weaknesses (Hailikari, Katajavuori, Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008).

The high premium placed on quality learning in Nigeria can be justified if the teachers especially lecturers in the tertiary institution can consider strategies that will promote learning. That brings us to the question; are educational psychology lecturers actually encouraging interpersonal relationship and relate previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning in Nigeria? The researcher sought to answer these questions by investigating if educational psychology lecturers who already know the relevance of interpersonal relationship and prior knowledge in learning satisfactorily utilize them for the promotion of quality learning in tertiary institutions.



Harilikari, Katajauvori, and Lindblom-Ylanne (2008) carried out a study to determine how different types of prior knowledge (declaration and procedural) impact students achievement and how prior knowledge assessment can be used as an instructional design tool. The study sample consisted of 115 pharmacy students, using the regression analysis and the results revealed that prior knowledge from different courses significantly influence students' achievement, and that student reacted positively toward prior knowledge instruction.

Jason, Braasch & Goldman (2010) examined if inconsistent effects of analysis in promoting new content learning from text are related to prior knowledge of the analogy per se, using two experiments involving college students. The results showed that those with more prior knowledge of the analogy performed better on weather system learning measures (i.e sentence verification and number of concepts in essays).

Wood & Lynch (2002) examined the role of prior knowledge in learning new product information. Three studies were carried out to demonstrate the comparison between consumers with lower prior knowledge and consumers with higher prior knowledge and the results of their studies showed that consumers with higher prior knowledge learn less about new products. The problem of poor quality of education has left education stakeholders searching for ways to improve on the quality of learning so as to have a sound generation of leaders of tomorrow. It is on this note that the researcher sought to evaluate the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve this, the researcher sought to;

1. Evaluate the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers' promote interpersonal relationship for quality learning.
2. Evaluate the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers relate previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning.

Research Questions

1. What is the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers promote interpersonal relationship for quality learning?
2. What is the opinion of tertiary institutions under graduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers relate previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning.

Research hypotheses

1. The opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers promote interpersonal relationship for quality learning is not statistically significant.



2. The opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers relate previous knowledge to real life experiences for quality learning is not statistically significant.

Methodology

The design of the study: The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design. The choice of the design is due to the fact that the study is concerned with gathering information about peoples' opinion on issues. It is appropriate therefore since the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on educational psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge with new experiences for quality learning is required.

The population of the study comprised of lecturers in faculties of Education from tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The population therefore consisted of lecturers in Faculties of Education in University of Calabar, Cross River University of Technology, Cross River State college of Education, Akamkpa, and Federal college of Education Obudu. The study adopted population sampling technique. This is because all the subjects in the population were used for the study. The sample consists of all the Educational Psychology lecturers in Faculties of Education spread across four tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The sample consists of 39 Educational Psychology Lecturers in tertiary institutions, sixteen (16) from University of Calabar, three (3) from Cross River University of Technology, four (4) from Cross River College of Education, Akamkpa, and fifteen (15) from Federal College of Education, Obudu.

The researcher designed an opinion questionnaire titled "Tertiary Institutions Undergraduates' Opinion on Lecturer's Promotion of Interpersonal Relationship and Relating Previous Knowledge Questionnaire" consisting of 13 items. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part one (1) consist of 3 items on students' bio data, while part (2) two consisted of 10 statements targeted at eliciting responses that would answer the research questions on promotion of interpersonal relationship and relating previous knowledge to new experiences. The questionnaire was administered to 195 tertiary institutions undergraduates who assessed the 39 lecturers from the various schools. The ratio of assessment was five students to one lecturer. The researcher visited the selected schools, and personally administered the questionnaire to 195 students. The instrument was scrutinized by 3 experts in the area of Educational psychology, and 3 in the area of test and measurement from the department of Educational Foundations in University of Calabar. For the reliability of the instrument, the researcher carried out a pilot study on 50 students of University of Uyo who were not part of the main study. The reliability estimate yielded a coefficient of .75.

Presentation of results

Research Question 1: *What is the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers' promote interpersonal relationship for quality learning?*

This research question was answered using descriptive statistics. Respondents were grouped into four (Never, Rarely, Often and Always) based on their responses to items 1 – 5 of Section B of the research instrument. The results are presented in Table1.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of tertiary institutions undergraduates opinion on lecturers promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning



SN	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	My lecturer does not communicate high expectations for all students.	2.14	1.04
2.	My lecturer does not give assignment that will help students achieve larger distal goal.	2.40	1.23
3.	My lecturer does not care about the lives of his/her students outside the school	2.57	1.21
4.	My lecturer does not engage students in learning projects that would require them work in group.	2.22	1.12
5.	My lecturer does not develop models that will include components of social interaction.	2.24	1.11
GRAND MEAN		11.57	

The results as presented in Table 1 showed that the mean score on lecturers do not communicate high expectations for all students produced a mean of 2.14 with a standard deviation of 1.04 while lecturer do not give students engaging class assignment that will help them achieve larger distal goal produced a mean of 2.40 with a standard deviation of 1.23. The result also showed that lecturers do not care about the lives of his/her students outside the school produced a mean of 2.57 with a standard deviation of 1.21 while lecturers do not engage students in learning projects that would require them work together produced a mean of 2.22 with a standard deviation of 1.12. The result finally showed that lecturers do not consider the development of models that will include components of social interaction produced a mean of 2.24 with a standard deviation of 1.11.

Research Question 2: *What is the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which psychology lecturers relate previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning?*

This research question was answered using descriptive statistics. Respondents were grouped into four (Never, Rarely, Often and Always) based on their responses to items 1 – 5 of Section B of the research instrument. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Consideration of previous knowledge for quality learning

SN	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	My lecturer does not use effective classroom instruction to connect new experiences	2.20	1.07
2.	My lecturer does not ask questions regarding previous lessons.	2.29	1.11
3.	My lecturer does not create opportunity for students to share their experiences in class.	2.26	1.05
4.	My lecturer does not clearly interpret test results to students.	2.51	1.14
5.	My lecturer does not communicate to students about their results early enough.	2.44	1.23
GRANDMEAN		11.7	



The results as presented in Table 2 shows that the mean score for lecturers do not use effective classroom instruction to connect new experiences produced a mean of 2.20 with a standard deviation of 1.07 while lecturers do not ask questions regarding previous lessons produced a mean of 2.29 with a standard deviation of 1.11. The result also showed that for lecturer does not create opportunity for students to share their experiences in class produced a mean of 2.26 with a standard deviation of 1.05 while lecturers do not clearly interpret test results to students produced a mean of 2.51 with a standard deviation of 1.14. The result finally showed that lecturers do not communicate to students about their results early enough produced a mean of 2.44 with a standard deviation of 1.23. **Null Hypothesis 1:** Tertiary institutions undergraduates' opinion on Psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning is not statistically significant.

For tertiary institutions undergraduates' opinion on Psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning to be significantly high, the mean score should be significantly greater than the reference mean of 12.5 (the midpoint between, which is 2.5 multiply by 5, the number of items measuring subject mastery). This hypothesis was analysed using one sample mean (population t-test) analysis tested at .05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Population t-test analysis of tertiary institutions undergraduates' opinion on Psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning(N=39)

Variable	\bar{x}	Standard deviation	Mean difference	t-value	p-level
promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning	11.57	3.72	-.93	-2.38*	.019

*Significant at .05, $p < .05$; $df=38$. Critical $t = 1.68$.

The result of the analysis in Table 3 revealed that the obtained mean score for psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning was 11.57 with standard deviation of 3.72 is less than the reference mean of 12.5. This shows that the mean difference is statistically significant since the calculated t-value in absolute sense is 2.38 is greater the critical t-value of 1.68 at .05 level of significance with p-value of .019 and 38 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and this implies that Psychology lecturers' promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning is not statistically significantly .

Null Hypothesis 2: Tertiary institutions undergraduate's' opinion on the extent to which Psychology lecturers' relate previous knowledge for quality learning is not statistically significant.

For the opinion of tertiary institutions undergraduates on the extent to which Psychology lecturers' relate prior knowledge for quality learning to be statistically significant, the mean



score should be significantly greater than the reference mean of 12.5 (the midpoint between, which is 2.5 multiply by 5, the number of items measuring subject mastery). This hypothesis was analysed using one sample mean (population t-test) analysis tested at .05 level of significance. The result is presented into Table 4.

Table 4: Population t-test analysis of tertiary institutions undergraduates’ opinion on Psychology lecturers’ do not relate previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning (N=39)

Variable	\bar{x}	Standard deviation	Mean difference	t-value	p-level
Relating previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning	11.69	3.56	-.81	-2.16*	.033

*Significant at .05, $p < .05$; $df=38$. Critical $t = 1.68$.

The result of the analysis in Table 4 revealed that the obtained mean score for psychology lecturers’ relating previous knowledge to new experiences for quality learning was 11.69 with standard deviation of 3.56 is less than the reference mean of 12.5. This shows that the mean difference is statistically significant since the calculated t-value in absolute sense is 2.16 is greater the critical t-value of 1.68 at .05 level of significance with p-value of .033 and 38 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and this implies that Psychology lecturers’ relating prior knowledge with new experiences for quality learning is not statically significant.

Discussion of Findings

The result on tertiary institutions undergraduates opinion on psychology lecturers promotion of interpersonal relationship for quality learning with a mean score of 11.57 revealed that educational psychology lecturers do not significantly promote interpersonal relationship in the teaching and learning process. The researcher is of the view that the findings of this result could have emanated from the over familiarity between lecturers and students, since over familiarly breeds contempt. Although, lecturers to some extent maintain interpersonal relationship with students, there exist margins that help check the excesses of students. The findings contradict the findings of Singh and Mural (2014) who discovered a significant positive interpersonal relationship between teachers and students, and between students and students. However, Jonathan 2016 revealed that quality interpersonal relationship among students is related to higher achievement which contradicts the revelation of the present study.

The result on tertiary institutions undergraduates’ opinion on psychology lecturers relating prior knowledge for quality learning with a mean score of 11.7 also revealed a low use of prior knowledge by psychology lecturers in the teaching learning process. The outcome of this result could be attributed to the time limit allocated for a particular lesson. Lecturers may be rushing to cover up the course content due to several obstruction or alternations in the academic calendar, like strike actions, and students’ unrest that could close down schools for a period of time. Another reason could be attributed to team teaching which may not allow lecturers to keep



track of what other colleagues may have taught, since topics are mostly shared and taught on individual basis. The present study is not supported by Hailikarieta's (2008) views, which stresses categorically that the use of prior knowledge helps build up students' strength and weaknesses.

Conclusion

It was therefore concluded that psychology lecturers' encouragement of interpersonal relationship for quality learning is significantly low. It was also concluded that relating of prior knowledge with new experiences is significantly low.

Recommendations

1. From the findings, the researcher recommended that psychology lecturers should always give assignments that will help students achieve larger distal goals.
2. The researcher recommended that psychology lecturers should engage students in learning projects that would require them work in groups.
3. Again, the researcher recommended that, psychology lecturers should create opportunities that will help students share their past experiences in class.
4. Also, it was recommended that psychology lecturers should use effective class room instructions to connect new experiences.

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