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PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE 75 PERCENT CLASS ATTENDANCE AS A PARADIGM FOR EFFECTIVE SCIENCE EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

The research was intended to investigate the perceptions about the 75 percent attendance rule by science education practitioners at the levels of teacher trainers and teacher trainees in Colleges of Education in Kano State. Using a non-parametric statistic, the Chi-square (X^2) to interprete the data generated from two sets of questionnaire administered to both groups of respondents, it is revealed that not all lecturers give the 75 percent attendance concept the total implementation it deserves. While the concept plays the vital role of making students to stay in class, it has the potentials of being manipulated to play the unenviable role of an instrument for sex discrimination, possible victimisation and favoritism of students. The study further notes that the rule has tremendously enhanced the learning of science education in Colleges of Education in Kano State, and suggests that compartmentalized admissions into pre-NCE programmes could be removed through individualized College entrance examinations.

INTRODUCTION

The sharp deviation from the trimester system of instruction in Colleges of Education to the semester system brought with it some basic structural reforms. Under the former dispensation course works and examinations were cumulatively taken in what was termed in Local parlance as "the almighty June". The trimester system afforded the recopied of instructions the privilege to stay away from classes and still have enough time to meet up with any arrears of cumulated academic work. This approach to teaching and learning gave students the ample opportunity to resit any failed course(s) in the "September conference".

The appointment of supervisory agency in 1989, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) brought among other regulatory reforms, the semester system of learning whereby the minimum duration of 3 years to obtain the National Certificate in Education (NCE) was each broken into 2 independent semester where course contents covered would never be taught again except in another related course. Students are examined once and for all and that was it. Under the semester dispensation, the NCCE (1993), states that to qualify for examination, a candidate must have fulfilled all College, School and Departmental requirements including the 75 percent attendance at lectures in respect of courses to be examined. To make this possible, Ojelabi, (91981), Postulated that a register of attendance should be kept by the teacher who must check the 75 percent attendance at lectures is that any student that fails to satisfy this condition should automatically earn a carry-over in the course involved.

It has been noted that students attainment of instructional objectives in science, technology and mathematics education depends to a large extent on the teacher's proficiency in doing their

work (Ihiegbulem, 1997). Non-documented instance abound of lecturers failing to record attendance of students in the class but fake up figures when the need arose. Also, students admission into Colleges through the pre-NCE is often done in batches. This makes it difficult for every student to resume classes at the same time and receive the same number of actual contact hours. Mathematically speaking, this presupposes that attendance may be erroneously computed. In instances where multiple admission is given in a particular academic year it becomes very difficult for lecturers to compute the 75 percent attendance effectively. The inconsistency here is that a student who resumes lectures earlier but fails to attend a couple of classes may fail to attain the minimum attendance required and may be disallowed from writing the examinations, whereas a student that resumes late and attends all lectures thereafter scores 100 percent attendance from the date of resumption and is allowed to write the examination. Course evaluation whether formative or summative, help teachers to diagnose students level of competence attained after a prescribed set of instructions (Shuaibu, 1999. To this end, Ojebi, (1982 op. Cit) posited that a register of attendance be kept to help diagnose students level of academic competence, and to trace the attendance of any child who is backward or in trouble (academically) and thus assist the class teacher in helping the child.

PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

The meaning, essence and need for the 75 percent class attendance in science lecture rooms is still vague to some science education practitioners in some Colleges of education. Some teachers trainers in science disciplines see taking class attendance as an unnecessary task which is reminiscence of primary and Secondary Schools. Also, some teachers trainees see the exercise as overbearing non-pragmatic and draconian. In a few cases the issue of 75 percent attendance is disdainfully treated as a non-issue by teacher trainers hence great majority of them have not deemed it necessary to examine the pros and cons of the concept. This study is therefore motivated to:-

1. Examine lecturers and students perception of the tenets of the 75 percent class attendance in College of Education in Kano State.
2. Assess the usefulness of the 75 percent attendance rule to science education.
3. Make suggestions towards better administration of the rule in Nigeria Colleges of Education.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested in this research:

1. H_o Lecturers are not consistent in taking attendance at lectures.
   H_1 Lecturers are consistent in taking attendance at lectures.
2. H_0 the 75 percent attendance rule does not enforce disciplines on students attendance at lectures.
   H_1 the 75 percent attendance rule enforce discipline on students attendance lectures.

3. H_0 male lecturers do not use the 75 percent rule as a means of victimizing female students.
H_1 Male lecturers victimize female students with the 75 percent attendance rule.

4. H_0 the rule does not improve students learning of science education.
H_1 The rule improves students learning of science education.

METHODOLOGY

The sample used in the study consist of 81 students and 40 lecturers of science education background, randomly selected from the Federal College of Education Kano, the State College of Education Kumbotso, Kano, and the Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi also in Kano State. A 10-item questionnaires and another 15-item questionnaire drawn on a 4-point Lickert Scale of Strongly (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) were validated by 5 science educationists at FCE (T) Bichi and then administered to students and lecturers respectively in the above Colleges to generate information on their perceptions of the tenets, administration and effects of the 75 percent lecture attendance rule for students in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analysed using a non-parametric, statistics, the chi-square (x^2) approach of Asika, (1991)

Table I: Lecturer's perceptions, and commitment to the 75% attendance rule

Area	SA	A	D	SD	Column totals
FCE KANO Observed Expected	24 35.2	46 36.0	30 27.2	12 13.6	122
HUMBOTSO Observed Expected	30 24.2	19 24.75	21 18.7	07 9.35	77
BICHI Observed Expected	34 28.6	25 29.25	17 22.1	15 11.05	91
ROW TOTAL	88	90	68	34	280
percentage frequency	31.43%	32.14%	24.29%	12.14%	

$\partial f = 6$

$X^2 = 21.34 > X^2_{095} = 12.592$

Table I above shows that the null hypothesis ($1H_0$) that "lecturers are not consistence in taking attendance at lectures" has a calculated value of 21.34 which is greater than $X^2_{095} = 12.592$. Therefore, we reject $1H_0$ at the 0.05 level of significance and accept $1H_1$ which states that "lectures are consistent in taking attendance at lectures".

Table II: The attendance as a tool for class discipline

Area	SA	A	D	SD	Column Total
FCE KANO Observed Expected	07 10.8	35 30.8	12 12.8	10 9.6	64
KUMBOTSO Observed Expected	08 7.43	24 21.18	07 8.8	05 6.6	44
BICHI Observed Expected	12 8.78	18 25.03	13 10.4	09 7.8	52
ROW TOTAL	27	77	32	24	160
Percentage Frequency	16.88%	48.13%	20%	15%	

$\partial f = 6$

$X^2 = 8.35 < X^2_{095} = 12.592$

Table II above reveals that the null hypothesis ($2H_0$) that "the 75 percent attendance rule does not enforce discipline on student's attendance" has a calculated value of 8.35 which is less that the critical value of 12.592 at 0.05 level of significance. We therefore accept 2H0, and reject 2 H1 which states that "the 75 percent class attendance rule enforces discipline on students attendance.

Table III: perception of the 75% attendance rule as an instrument of victimization

Area	SA	A	D	SD	Column Total
FCE KANO Observed Expected	05 8.45	18 16.5	28 23.35	13 15.7	64
KMBOTSO Observed Expected	09 5.8	10 11.35	15 16.05	10 10.79	44
BICHI Observed Expected	07 6.74	13 13.15	15 18.6	16 12.51	51
ROW Total	21	41	58	39	159
Percentage Frequency	13.21%	25.79%	36.48%	24.53%	

$\partial f = 6$

$X^2 = 8.35 < X^2_{0.95} = 12.592$

This table with the null hypothesis (3 H_0) that "male lecturers do not use the 75 percent rule as means of victimizing female student" with a calculated value of 8.35 which is less than the critical value of 12.592 at 0.05 level of significance accepts the null hypothesis 3 H_0 and rejects 3 H_1.

Table I: Student's Perceptions of the 75% attendance rule.

Area	SA	A	D	AD	Column Total
FCE KANO Observed Expected	133 97.18	97 82.55	38 46.48	22 33.8	260
KUMBOTSO Observed Expected	44 44.85	41 38.1	16 21.45	19 15.6	120
BICHI Observed Expected	142 156.98	126 133.35	89 75.08	63 54.6	420
Row Total	299	254	143	104	800
percentage Frequence	37%	31.75%	17.88%	13%	

$\partial f = 6$

$X^2 = 16.57 > X^2_{0.95} = 12.592$

This table reveals that the null hypothesis ($4H_0$) which states that "the 75 percent rule does not improve students learning of science education has a calculated value of 16.57 which is greater than $X^2_{0.95}=12.592$, therefore, we reject 4 H_0 at the 0.05 level of significance.

SUMMARIES OF FINDINGS

1. Although not every lecturer may be involved in taking class attendance at lectures, the majority of them that take attendance show a high level of consistency in it.

2. The 75 percent attendance rule does not enforce the discipline of making students to attend lectures because every serious student knows that he/she must attend lectures to pass his/her test and examinations. Students would still attend lectures if the 75 percent attendance rule were not there.

3. Male lecturers in College of Education do not use the privileged provisions of the mandatory 75 percent attendance rule before qualifying for examinations to victimize female students.

4. The percent attendance rule may not enforce any notable class attendance discipline among students, however, it has discretely and significantly improved students motivation to stay at school, attend lectures and consequently record appreciable level of improvement in instructional behaviourial outcomes in science education.

DISCUSSION

Investigations on this concept is very few, almost non-existent. The student has noted that not all lecturers and students comply with the provisions of the 75 percent attendance. Even though not all lecturers enforce the rule to the letter, a high number of students comply fully with it. It is also observed that computation of the 75 percent attendance for pre-NCE students starts on the first day of commencement of lectures for returning students and on the candidates first day in the class for freshers which is arbitrary and pose problems of different numbers of contact hours for different students in the same course. It is heart warming to notice that lecturers do not take attendance by proxy. Most lecturers rejected the notion that enforcing the 75 percent rule may prevent good students with lapses in attendance from writing examination. They reasoned that a good student would naturally not have any lapse in attendance without approved exeats. While the lecturers denied the possibilities of using the 75 percent attendance to victimize female students as supported in Table III, some students reasoned on the contrary and further agreed that some lecturers show favouritism to some of their (students) colleagues while compiling the list of 75 percent faithful and non-complaints respectively. Both categories of respondents however, rejected the suggestion to scrap the 75 percent attendance rule. In agreement with the postulates of Obelabi (1981), lecturers have carefully through their resolute implementation of the 75 percent attendance rule improved the teaching and learning of science education in the Colleges of Education in Kano State.

SUGGESTIONS

1. More research is invited from scholars to elucidate more facts on the relevance of the 75 percent attendance in Colleges of Education.

2. Admissions into the pre-NCE programmes of Colleges of Education should be through common entrance examinations to be conducted by each institution so as to streamline the resumption dates for every fresher.

3. Taking attendance should be made mandatory for all lecturers and submission of examination question manuscripts for moderation, processing and administration should be accompanied by the list of students qualified or not qualified to write the examination vide the 75 percent attendance rule.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of the 75 percent attendance rule for students in Colleges of education is well informed. Students would find it difficult to cope with the demands of the semester system if they had loopholes and opportunities to stay away from classes as they wished. Lecturers are therefore, encouraged to implement this rule to the letter so that student would stay in classes and work courageously towards the attainment of their academic goals.

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