

# A PSYCHOMETRIC APPROACH TO ASSESSING UNIVERSITY LECTURERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

**Prof. Ijeoma Chinyere Okafor**

Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Federal University, Oye Ekiti, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Teaching quality is widely recognized as a critical determinant of student learning, often outweighing socio-economic factors in influencing academic outcomes. Effective lecturers are central to fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among students, equipping them to thrive in a knowledge-based society. Given the pivotal role of lecturers as nation-builders, the quality of teaching today directly impacts the competence of future citizens and educators. Despite this, measuring lecturers' perceptions of their profession remains underexplored, limiting efforts to enhance teaching effectiveness. This study aims to develop a reliable and valid attitude scale to assess university lecturers' perceptions of the teaching profession in Southwest Nigeria. The proposed instrument will provide educators, administrators, and policymakers with a standardized tool to understand and improve teaching quality, ultimately contributing to the preparation of competent, skilled graduates capable of sustaining national development.

**Keywords:** Teaching quality, Lecturer perception, Attitude scale, University education, Southwest Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching quality seems to be one of the most powerful school-based factors in student learning. Kolawole (2017) opines that quality teaching outweighs students' social and economic background for differences in students' achievement. To achieve a fundamental transformation of education and help students meet the higher performance set by the common core standards, the very culture of how lecturers are supported must change.

A strong and effective school educational system is integral to individual success, social cohesion, progress, and national prosperity. It has been observed that lecturers have to be more successful with a wide range of learners in order to prepare future citizens with the sophisticated skills needed to participate in a knowledge-based society. The sort of pedagogy needed to help students develop the ability to think critically, create, solve complex problems and master complex subject matter, is much more demanding than that which is needed to impart and develop routine skills. Hence, teachers have to be both knowledgeable in their content areas and be extremely skillful in a wide range of teaching approaches to cater for the diverse learning needs of every student.

Since lecturers are regarded as nation builders and the future of a nation rests on their hands, it invariably follows that the quality they possess today will inevitably reflect in the citizens of tomorrow. In other words, good lecturers would beget good students from which the system can get a replenishment of its teaching stock, while poor lecturers will beget poor students and consequently poorer future teachers, (Olakulelin, 2007). The teaching

learning process is known to involve the interaction of the three important components: the teacher, the subject matter and the learner. In so doing, there is need to find a means of improving these three components in order to give a sound education.

Attitude is important to understand human behaviour and it has been defined in a number of ways (Gourneau, 2005). According to Üstüner (2006), attitude is a tendency attributed to the individual and forming his thoughts, feelings, and behaviours about a psychological object. It is a cognitive, affective, and behavioral reaction. It is organized by the individual's experiences, motivations and knowledge which are oriented towards himself/herself or any social affair, subject or event around him/her.

Mehtap, Hakan and Bulent (2014) studied on "The Investigation of Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards Teaching Profession". Results revealed that while teaching experience has an important effect on attitudes towards teaching, gender, field, and program variables do not have any significant effect on it. Also, it was found that the teacher candidates in the pedagogical formation certificate program have a positive attitude toward the teaching profession. A profession which affects individual's lifestyle and status has a crucial role in satisfying individual's psycho-social needs. It is believed that teachers should be furnished with general culture, domain, and knowledge. In addition to this, it is expected that they should have positive attitude towards the teaching profession for professional satisfaction and success (Mehtap, Hakan and Bulent, (2014).

The attitude of an individual towards their profession has an impact on their performance and success in that profession. If the teacher has a positive attitude, he/she will not dishonor the name of her/his profession. He/she will be proud of the teaching profession. And also, will not wait for or let others regulate the professional work. The professionals will control and adjust their conduct themselves. Moreover, they enjoy and dedicate themselves to this profession. And, they are aware that it is socially necessary and important (Temizkan, 2008). That is to say, teachers' positive attitude towards their profession have a great importance in fulfilling the requirements of the profession and bringing along professional contentment. Attitude is also considered as an acquired and psychological variable that directs an individual's behavior towards a situation, an incident, an object, a person, a place, or an idea (Tavşancıl, 2014; Papanastasiou 2002; Eagly&Chaiken 2007; Tavsancil 2006 and Temizkan, 2008). Attitude becomes more important as the teaching profession itself (Capri and Celikkaleli, 2008). The manner of the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession affects the way the student learns (Kavcar, 2005).

Scaling is the branch of measurement that involves the construction of an instrument that associates with qualitative metric units. Scaling involved the act of efforts in psychology and education to measure "unmeasurable" construct like self-esteem, temperament, emotion, perception and so on. In many ways, scaling remains one of the most difficult research tasks to measure abstract concept. It involves a high degree of operationalization and allows researchers to measure complex issues. It also enables researchers to summate values of several variables into one score and this with a relatively high degree of reliability. In general, it offers

respondents a choice of picking their answers out of given sets of alternatives which are established in a very careful but also a cumbersome way. The study is geared towards achieving the above goal by developing an instrument that can give at a glance some psychological trait in relation to teaching profession

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of some lecturers, most probably those who are not from educational background could be that they lack some psychological principles of human behavior and pedagogy of teaching, which could have helped in inculcating positive attitude about teaching, this prompted the Institute of Education in Ekiti State University to present a proposal for post graduate diploma for university lecturers, but could not sail through due to the attitude of majority of the lecturers who are from other faculties in the university on the basis of certain psychological traits; such as, inferiority or superiority complex.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to develop Attitudinal Scale (AS) for University lecturers' towards teaching profession in Southwest, Nigeria. Specifically the study:

- developed attitudinal scale (AS)
- determined the reliability of the attitudinal scale (AS)
- examined the validity of the attitudinal scale (AS)
- determine whether the attitudinal scale (AS) discriminate between Lecturers from various faculties

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised

1. Is the attitudinal Scale (AS) reliable?
2. Is the attitudinal Scale (AS) valid?

### **Research Hypotheses**

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The Attitudinal Scale will not significantly differentiate among Lecturers from, Faculty of Education, Engineering, Social Sciences, Art, Sciences, Management Science and Agricultural Science.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using a descriptive research of the survey type to gather information from a representative sample of the population under study. No manipulation of the variables was involved. This design enables an interpretation of theoretical meaning of the construct being measured. It enables the researcher to obtain accurate data and high response rate from the sample. Their response to the instrument formed the basis of inference on the psychometric characteristics of the instrument and of its consequent refinement.

The population for this study comprised of 18,967 university lecturers in the Southwest, as obtained from the universities establishment and management. A total of 300 university lecturers were selected through multistage sampling procedure.

Stage one involved the selection of three states by using simple random sampling technique. The second Stage involved the selection of Six Universities by using stratified sampling technique to take care of Federal and State Universities

The last stage involved the selection of 50 lecturers per university by using stratified sampling technique to take care of gender and faculty. In each state, there were 100 university lecturers selected to make the 300 samples from the three States.

The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a self-constructed and validated attitudinal scale (AS). The instrument was divided into two sub-sections, A and B. Section A was designed to reflect personal data of the respondents in relation to name of institution, gender, age, year of experience, qualifications and faculty. Section B contained the finally selected 12 items that reflects lecturers' attitude towards teaching profession. The respondents were asked to indicate how the concept appears to them by making a mark ( $\surd$ ) on the appropriate point of the scale on a 4-point continuum: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

#### **Development of the AS**

The AS was developed along the lines of the assumptions, principles and guidelines of Likert (1932) known as the summated rating scale. The 4-points response was from strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree, and were assigned numerical values from 1 to 4 accordingly.

#### **Construction and Validation Procedure**

At the construction stage, a total of sixty (40) items were generated from statements from lecturers through interview; journals, textbooks and literature review. The items were constructed to elicit lecturers' attitude to teaching activities. The items were reviewed and all items that look ambiguous, invalid, irrelevant and duplicated were removed. Badly worded ones were restructured to make them better. They were removed where necessary, thereby remaining 31 items. At this stage, it was expected that all inadequate items would have been eliminated significantly. The validity of the instrument was done in two phases. Phase one involved the use of experts. Twentytwo (22) statements on Lecturers' Attitudinal Scale were assembled and presented to Educational Psychologist and Tests and Measurement experts for scrutiny with regard to face and construct validity.

The second phase involved the use of item-total correlation to eliminate inferior statements. In this case, the instrument was pre-tested on a group of 30 lecturers who were not among the sample for this study. Only twenty (20) of the twenty-two (22) attitudinal statements survived this stage of analysis.

Construct validity of the items was carried out through discriminant procedure using divergent characteristics. Exploratory Factor Analysis of the items was done to select the best items that fit for the factors under consideration; only 16 items survived this phase of analysis. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, copies of the instrument were administered on a group of 30 lecturers who were not among the sample for this study and a reliability coefficient of 0.56 was obtained using Cronbach's (coefficient) Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability method. The instrument was administered to the three hundred lecturers selected as sample for this study with the help of a trained research assistant.

Data generated for the study were analyzed. The analysis was centered on the assessment and psychometric (reliability and validity) properties of the AS. The reliability of the scale was determined by using Cronbach Alpha (for internal consistency coefficient) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (for convergent validity). Also, inter-item correlation was conducted using item statistics on SPSS to determine the relatedness of the items. Inferential statistics such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

### RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** Is the attitudinal Scale (AS) reliable?

To achieve the internal consistency of the scale, the reliability analysis was conducted. This led to the deletion of some items, which were considered not suitable to measure the construct. Although the 16 – item version of the AS was reliable, its reliability coefficient could be increased by looking closely at the contribution of each item to the construct it was meant to measure. This led to the reliability analysis, the results of which were used in item removal from or retention on the AS.

The criteria set for item deletion in this study was based on Cronbach's Alpha and item-total correlation. Any item with both Cronbach's Alpha of less than .600 and item-total correlation less than 0.300 were deleted.

**Table 1: Preliminary Lecturers' Attitudinal scale items**

Attitude					
S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	My duty is to equip myself with the latest technology of teaching.				
2	My relationship with the students ends in the school.				
3	I consider teaching a noble profession				
4	I find it important to seek out others thoughts and ideas when working out a problem at work.				
5	I give special attention to students from different cultures				
6	I don't tolerate students coming late to my lectures				
7	I like to teach in the morning				
8	I give due opportunities to the students for proper motivation				
9	I always prepare before going for lecture				
10	I always appreciate student's opinions and demands in the class				
11	I keep friendly and brotherly relationship with my colleagues.				
12	I respect all students without discriminating their social and economic status				
13	I have proper rapport with my students				
14	I am smart, active and cheerful in the school				
15	I always to adapt to changes in the society				

16	I see teaching as a rewarding profession				
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**Table 2: Reliability Analysis of AS**

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
47.157	40.521	6.3656	16	0.561

This scale had 16 items with mean value of 47.157 and a standard deviation of 6.366. The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.561 was positive, acceptable and reliable in measuring the influence of the scale. The item total statistics was examined in table 3 with a view to removing items with low corrected item total correlation in order to improve the reliability of the scale.

**Table 3: Item Total Statistics of AS**

Items	Scale Mean if Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Item1	43.9667	40.03	-.037	.355	.481
Item2	44.4167	38.43	.090	.282	.458
Item3	44.0833	38.94	.035	.380	.469
Item4	44.9867	36.72	.320	.507	.443
Item5	44.8433	34.76	.318	.473	.403
Item6	43.9233	34.07	.313	.081	.470
Item7	43.8300	38.73	.302	.461	.449

Item8	44.3167		.317	.370
		34.97		
		3		
Item9	43.7367		.306	.442
		37.20		
		5		
Item10	44.3367		.415	.553
		35.21		
		4		
Item11	43.7733		.410	.434
		37.64		
		7		
Item12	44.9333		.324	.293
		36.34		
		3		
Item13	44.2867		.311	.155
		30.54		
		0		
Item14	44.0300		.401	.316
		37.99		
		6		
Item15	43.8667		-.035	.469
		40.12		
		9		
Item16	44.0200		.302	.262
		38.52		
		8		

Table 3 shows that items 1, 2, 3 and 15 will be deleted because the corrected item-total correlation for the items were less than the criteria of 0.3. The remaining 12 items on the scale which are item 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 were appropriate in measuring the construct.

**Research Question 2:** Is the Attitudinal Scale (AS) valid?

To answer this question, the Attitudinal Scale was subjected to item total correlation analysis. The result is presented in table 4

**Table 4: Inter-item correlation of the Attitudinal Scale**

Items	r(i) (T- i)	Items	r(i) (T- i)
1	0.296	9	0.301
2	0.332	10	0.357
3	0.302	11	0.258
4	0.316	12	0.302
5	0.333	13	0.226
6	0.274	14	0.317
7	0.325	15	0.319
8	0.265	16	0.291

$p < 0.01$  (Significant Results)

A cursory look at table 4 showed that item validity coefficient of the AS vary from 0.226 to 0.357. As a result of the sample size used to determine the validity coefficients ( $n=30$ ), they were all found to be significant beyond  $p < 0.01$  levels when all these values at 0.01 alpha level, they were all significant. This clearly indicated that the items of the scale were meaningfully related and contributed to the construct being measured.

### Research Hypothesis

The Attitudinal Scale will not significantly differentiate among Lecturers from, Faculty of Education, Engineering, Social Sciences, Art, Sciences, Management Science and Agricultural Science.

**Table 5 Analysis of Variance showing mean difference in the attitude of Lecturers based on Faculties**

Variations	SS	df	MS	Fcal	p
Between Groups	16378.011	6	2729.669	*17.286	0.001
Within Groups	46269.375	293	157.916		
Total	62647.387	299			

\* $p > 0.05$  (Significant Result)

Table 5 shows that the  $F_{cal}$  (17.286) is significant at 0.05 level of significance; this implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the rating of University Lecturers from Faculty of Education, Engineering, Social Sciences, Art, Sciences, Management Science and Agricultural Science on the attitudinal scale.

**Table 6: Scheffe's Post-Hoc Analysis of University Lecturers' rating on the attitudinal scale based of faculties**

	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Faculty of Arts	50	37.58	
Faculty Agricultural Science	36	38.83	
Faculty of Social Sciences	43	39.67	
Faculty of Sciences	35	42.20	
Faculty of Management Sciences	30	44.80	
Faculty of Engineering	48	45.12	
Faculty of Education	58		58.66
Sig.		.291	1.000

\*The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level.\*

The result of post-hoc analysis reveals that there is a significant difference in the rating of University Lecturers from Faculty of Education, Engineering, Social Sciences, Art, Sciences, Management Science and Agricultural Science on the attitudinal scale.

## DISCUSSION

The initial items generated for the attitudinal scale (AS) was 40 items. The items generated were subjected to three criteria that gave rise to the deletion of 18 items through the reliability analysis of the scale. The constructed and validated scale in the study gave rise to 12 final items on the scale. Based on finding relatively superior psychometric qualities in the scale, there was deletion of items from initial 40 items returning a total of 12 items after the scale reliability was conducted.

Attitude towards teaching profession is one of the factors responsible for job effectiveness of University lecturers in tertiary institutions; it enhances teaching quality and makes teaching more dynamic and goal-oriented. This corroborated the finding of Olanrewaju (2019), who refers to teacher education as professional education of teachers in other to attain attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable in making them effective in their work in accordance with the need of the society.

The result of this study showed that there was a significant difference in the rating of University Lecturers from Faculty of Education, Engineering, Social Sciences, Art, Sciences, Management Science and Agricultural Science on the attitudinal scale. That is to say that the background of lecturers could have influence on their attitude towards teaching profession. Lecturers from faculty of education are more likely to have been exposed to pedagogy in teaching than those from other faculties. This finding is in contrast to the findings of Tahir (2011), who submitted that relationship exists in the job performance of university lecturers in all the faculties.

**CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that the 12-items attitudinal scale (AS) developed in this study is reliable and valid. The scale can therefore be used to adequately measure University Lecturers' attitude towards teaching profession in Southwest.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made

1. Lecturers should develop positive attitude towards teaching profession so as to enhance teaching quality
2. Lecturers should develop positive view of teaching profession in other to have superiority complex.
3. Lecturers in other faculties who do not have their background in faculty Education should enroll for post graduate diploma in Education

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