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Qualities of a Good Lecturer: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract: The paper set out to describe what CUG students considered as the most desirable (best) attributes or characteristics of a good lecturer. The cross-sectional descriptive survey was designed along quantitative paradigm. Data gathering was done through questionnaire containing 44-items placed on a Likert type scale and administered to 154 final year students of CUG across faculties in the 2021/2022 academic year. Only 4 respondents did not return their responses thereby reducing the respondents to 150. The study revealed that lecturers who covered the syllabus or course outlines; made subject intellectually exciting inter alia as the most desirable. Students, however, detest or frown on and even hate lecturers who accept gifts from them; give students undeserved grades among others. The paper, therefore, recommends that management of universities continue to use students' evaluation reports on lecturers as an essential basis for promoting lecturers. This would compel the academic staff to teach, research and publish and not research and publish but fail to teach as it is common today in most tertiary institutions. It would thus, become a factor in the quality control of teaching.

Keywords: Good lecturers, qualities, student's perspective

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the tool for progress in every person. Education is the institution or specialized agency that trains the human resources for the country. In consequence, FGN (2019) prescribes that the quality of instruction at all educational levels has to be oriented towards inculcating the values of respect of the worth and dignity of individuals; faith in man's ability to make rational decisions, moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relation, shared responsibility for the common good of society, respect of the dignity of labour and promotion of the emotional experiences to bear as they function in various capacity in the economic and social organization of the nation (Tatipang et al., 2022).

Teachers are the key persons who alone can make the curriculum design achieve what is/was meant for. Thus, the curriculum can be a great success or a dismal failure depending on the teacher. The classroom teacher is

certainly the principal executive of any functional curriculum. Teaching should involve presentation of the object or idea in a concrete and direct way, not merely through symbols or concepts (Iqbal et al., 2022). This certainly suggests that quality delivery by teachers is critical for successful outcomes. Indeed, lecturers are equally teachers and should aim at getting the learner to comprehend the concepts being taught. Lecturers are to be understood and not to demonstrate how knowledgeable they are. Thus, delivery must concretize what will bring understanding to the learner, particularly university education since they are preparing graduates for the world of work. According to (Nushi et al., 2022), teachers have to recognize that children have stages of readiness for specific kind of learning, and materials instruction should be based on developmental stages of the learner. Teachers here imply all those who impart knowledge including those who teach at the tertiary institutions such as university lecturers. Even though students at the universities are adults, one may need to

use methodology from other stages of learning to help them grasp a concept other andragogy.

The teacher is also the bridge between the family and the society as a whole, preparing the child for his adult role. This informs why teachers should be adequately motivated. A Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teacher for example, should not only have acquired the requisite skills but should also reflect those intrinsic behavioral qualities which he/she intends to inculcate in his/her students. Teachers should have a good knowledge of child development since that is crucial to the teaching techniques. Failing this, the teacher may not be able to evaluate a child's moral attitude, behavioral and learning capabilities (Hidayat et al., 2022)

In our universities today, there is great demand for publications Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al., (2022), states that this crave arises from the fact that in these places, promotion or upward mobility on the job is largely determined by the number of publications one has been able to make. This view is corroborated by Forshaw (2017) who submits that at present, lecturers know that promotion usually comes only by acquisition of a higher degree, a readership or professorship comes only from the quantity (and sometimes the quality) of papers published in reputable journals judged by an external assessor.

Lecturers under this arrangement focus most of their attention on publishing to the detriment of effective teaching, which is their primary assignment. The qualities of lecturers being likeable persons, entertain students questions, show mastery of the subject content, give feedback on students assignments, are fair, friendly and firm, punctual at lectures, covers course content before exams among others are grossly ignored by the Management in most universities. In the USA, it is a common routine in major universities to conduct students' opinionnaires on the courses and teaching. We have the Mucatine Report (2006). In Britain, not much has been done in this field apart from those of Hailikari et al., (2022). Several other studies have, however, been carried out in this area elsewhere. Chen et al., (2022), analyzed students' rating of 58 teachers in two subjects on teaching effectiveness. Teachers that ranked high by students' perception were those in general "likeability", who took interest and responsibility in the students' performances and for management and discipline in their classes.

Students' opinions are important but widely misunderstood tools for evaluating teaching effectiveness (Martín, 2019). Students' ratings of the teacher instruction are used sometimes as a measure of performance of the teacher from the student point of view. The use of students' ratings in teacher evaluation, according to Thornberg et al., (2022), is predicated on the assumptions that the students know when he/she has been motivated to learn; it is the student whose behaviour is to be changed; students rating constitute feedback to the teacher and student recognition may promote or motivate good teaching. Most of these assumptions are undeniably true. The method of using students to rate (evaluate) the teacher is quite inexpensive. Some studies have shown the usefulness and accuracy of student evaluations and their positive relationship to teaching effectiveness in comparison to other measures (Kumar & Sharma, 2022.).

There are many questions about validity, reliability, generalizability, utility, interpretability and acceptability of students' rating as means of evaluating teachers on the job especially when the results of such evaluation exercises are to serve purposes such as for promotion, determination of tenure, dismissal or other forms of award/reprimand (promotion, salary increase, appointment, and termination of contract). In the Catholic University of Ghana, Fiapre, like in most African Universities, students' evaluation of lecturers was not done until recently. The evaluation report serves as corrective and not determinant of job tenure, thus, carrying less weight compared to other countries where students' opinions weighted more and used in determining one's stay in the university. American students' opinions of what constitutes a good lecturer vary with the field of study (Hailikari et al., 2022) and type of student (Gonzalez et al., 2022) but there appears to be an agreement on the qualities of a good lecturer, viz the ability to explain issues clearly and possessing an expert knowledge of his subject. This study was conducted to answer two main questions: What are the characteristics of lecturers admired by students of CUG? What are the characteristics of lecturers detest by students of CUG?

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design

The descriptive cross-sectional survey was used in this study. According to Hagenauer et al., (2022), the descriptive type of research is commonly used in social

sciences and education to find out the present picture of the situation or population. This design was adopted because the study collected data on students' preferred attributes of a good lecturer in CUG. Polls (2004), opines that descriptive survey design is chiefly to analyze, explain and record facts about an event as they occur in their natural or current state. In descriptive designs, data are collected using questionnaires and interviews from identified respondents. In sample survey, the researcher draws a sample from the population of interest. Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al., (2022), notes that ensuring that items on the questionnaire or interview guide are clear getting respondents to respond to items in the right manner and having the questionnaire on time are some difficulties associated with the use of descriptive design. However, this concern has been taken care of by the researcher because items were easy to read and understand. This design also enabled the researchers to collect data from a large sample at one point in time during the study (Hidayat et al., 2022).

2.2 Study Population and Sampling

The population of the study was Catholic University of Ghana (CUG), Fiapre-Sunyani final year students of the 2020/2021 academic year. There were 285 undergraduate students as captured in the then President's Report on the 20th graduation and 30th matriculation report (President's Report, 20th Graduation and 30th Matriculation, 2021) across the five (5) faculties who were in their last semester. This group were best positioned to give an objective evaluation of who a good lecturer is because of their length of study in the university. Employing the purposive sampling technique, we deliberately selected respondents from across the faculties totaling 154. Tatipang et al., (2022), posit that purposive sampling allows a researcher to choose subjects, institutions or events that in his/her opinion are relevant to the study. A sample is a carefully chosen group from a population by a researcher to collect data. Chen et al., (2022) further explained that a sample size

of thirty (30) is held by many researchers as the minimum number when one wants to do statistical representation. Thus, the sample of 154 out of 285 was adequate for this study.

2.3 Instrumentation

Instruments are tools researchers adopt to collect data (Chen et al., 2022). The general research instrument used for this study consisted of two parts, the first part contained items carefully formulated to obtain demographic information and the second part contained a 44-item questionnaire derived from the books by Marris (1964) and Smithers (1976). Following Cooper and Foy (1967), all statements were recorded positively. Students were asked to assess the desirability of each particular item of behaviour on a face point scale:

A	-	Very undesirable
B	-	Undesirable
C	-	Desirable
D	-	Very desirable

These ratings were scored using frequency count to analyzing the results. One hundred and fifty-four (154) final year students of the Catholic University of Ghana drawn across the five faculties of the university, out of which 150 completed and returned the questionnaire in their last semester of their four-year programme. The retrieval rate was commendable as only 4 respondents' questionnaires could not be retrieved. The sample consisted of both male and female students irrespective of their programme of study. Table 1 gives the breakdown of the first part of the questionnaire, which consisted of demographic information and programme of study by the respondents. The researcher grouped "very undesirable" and "undesirable" together as the lecturer attributes students frown on and labeled it as Dislikes and "Desirable" and "Very desirable" grouped together as those attributes of lecturers that students admire as Likes. These grouping was to make it easier for analysis using simple tables.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the students are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Demographic characteristic of respondents

Variable	Subscale	No.	%
Gender	Male	90	60
	Female	60	40
	Total	150	100
Age range	21-25	15	10
	26-30	60	40
	31-35	45	30
	36-40	15	10
	41 or more	15	10
	Total	150	100
Programmes	B. A	10	6.67
	B. ED	40	26.67
	B. SC	100	66.67
	Total	150	100

From Table 1, both males and females students participated in the research with the males being the majority (60%), reflective of graduation data. The age group that constituted the majority was from 26-30 years old, taking 40% of the total respondents. With regard to programme distributions, 66.67% i.e. 100 respondents were B.sc students and 21-25; 36-40 and 41 or more belong to the minority with 10% each (table 1). The 10% respondents being students over 40 years of age was significant because students advance in age studying with colleagues young enough to be their wards obviously not easy. Even their outlook on issues and

attitudes differ and sometimes difficult for the older ones to accept the behaviour of the young ones.

3.2 Desirable Qualities of Lecturers

Table 2 summarizes the desirable qualities of lecturers at CUG based on students' perspectives. Notably, active participation of students, knowledge of the subject, provision of prompt feedback, punctuality, acting as role model, completion of course outlines, showing respect to students as well as intellectually exciting delivery of lessons are important qualities admired by the students.

Table 2: Desirable qualities lecturer like by students

Rank order	Scores obtained from students' ranking	Lecturer quality (likes) count	%
1	Allows students to ask questions	145	96.67
2	Has a thorough knowledge of his/her subject	143	95.33
3	Returns assignment scripts promptly	141	94
4	Is fair and firm	141	94
5	Almost always punctual for lectures	140	93.33
6	Acts as role model to the students	139	92.66
7	Covers the syllabus before examination	136	90.66
8	Treats students with respect	136	90.66
9	Makes the subject intellectually exciting	135	90
10	Regular at lectures	135	90
11	Is imaginative and resourceful	133	88.66
12	Always advise students on their moral life	130	86.66

13	Uses different methods of teaching at different times	123	82
14	Always decently dressed	120	80
15	Make students actively involved in the teaching/learning process	116	77.33
16	Maintains discipline during lectures	115	76.66
17	Is able to communicate effectively	115	76.66
18	Communicate with students at their level	112	74.66
19	Provides comprehensive lecture notes with sample questions	111	74
20	Inspires further studies on a particular topic	109	72.66
21	Keeps to himself/herself always and not mix with students.	108	72
22	Is well-informed on a wide range of subjects	107	71.33
23	Has good class room management skills	103	68.66
24	Is cheerful most of the times	101	67.33
25	Appears to enjoy lecturing	100	67.33
26	Maintains his distance from students especially the ignorant ones	100	67.33
27	Has knowledge of current affairs	100	67.33
28	Is a member of a professional body	97	64.66
29	Able to identify students with special needs	95	63.33
30	Uses teaching aids in all lessons	92	61
31	Possess high professional integrity	90	60
32	Allows students time to take notes during lecture	90	60
33	Has the appropriate qualification	90	60
34	Discourages students from making jokes during lectures	80	53.33
35	Goes over past questions	80	53.33
36	He/she is meticulous	80	53.33
37	Is deeply religious	76	50.66
38	Gives assignments regularly	74	49.33
39	Ridicules foolish questions	54	36
40	Pries into the life habits of his/her students	50	33.33
41	Cooperates with only those students who appear to be friendly	43	28.66
42	Read his lecture notes to the students	35	23.33
43	Give students undeserved grades	8	5.55
44	Accept gifts from students	7	4.66

3.3 Characteristics of Lecturers Admired by Students of CUG?

The students of Catholic University of Ghana, Fiapre-Sunyani, rated very highly a lecturer who

- Entertain students' questions (96.67),
- Demonstrate thorough knowledge of subject (95.33%),
- Give feedback on students' assignments promptly (94%),
- Act fairly, friendly and firmly (94%),
- Punctual at lectures (94%) and
- Covers course content before exams (90.66%) among others are attributes considered by the students of CUG.

3.4 Undesirable Qualities of Lecturers

The details of the findings indicating the numerical strengths and percentages are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Undesirable qualities of a lecturer dislike by students

Rank order	Scores obtained from students' ranking	Lecturer quality frown on by students (dislikes)	%
1	Accept gifts from students	143	95.33
2	Give students undeserved grades	142	94.66
3	Read his lecture notes to the students	115	76.66
4	Cooperates with only those students who appear to be friendly	107	71.33
5	Pries into the life habits of his/her students	100	67.33
6	Ridicules foolish questions	96	63.33
7	Gives assignments regularly	76	50.66
8	Is deeply religious	74	49.33
9	Discourages students from making jokes during lectures	70	46.66
10	He/she is meticulous	70	46.66
11	Goes over past questions	70	46.66
12	Has the appropriate qualification	60	40
13	Allows students time to take notes during lecture	60	40
14	Possess high professional integrity	60	40
15	Uses teaching aids in all lessons	58	38.66
16	Able to identify students with special needs	55	36.66
17	Is a member of a professional body	53	35.33
18	Has knowledge of current affairs	50	33.33
19	Appears to enjoy lecturing	50	33.33
20	Maintains his distance from students especially the ignorant ones	50	33.33
21	Is cheerful most of the times	49	32.66
22	Has good class room management skills	47	31.33
23	Is well-informed on a wide range of subjects	43	28.66
24	Keeps to himself/herself always and not mix with students.	42	28
25	Inspires further studies on a particular topic	41	27.33
26	Provides comprehensive lecture notes with sample questions	39	26
27	Communicate with students at their level	38	25.33
28	Is able to communicate effectively	35	23.33
29	Maintains discipline during lectures	35	23.33
30	Make students actively involved in the teaching/learning process	34	22.66
31	Always decently dressed	30	20
32	Uses different methods of teaching at different times	27	18
33	Always advise students on their moral life	20	13.33
34	Is imaginative and resourceful	17	11.33
35	Makes the subject intellectually exciting	15	10
36	Regular at lectures	15	10
37	Treats students with respect	14	9.33
38	Covers the syllabus before examination	14	9.33
39	Acts as role model to the students	11	7.33
40	Almost always punctual for lectures	10	6.66
41	Is fair and firm	9	6
42	Returns assignment scripts promptly	9	6
43	Has a thorough knowledge of his/her subject	7	4.66

44	Allows students to ask questions	5	3.33
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Majority of the students hate lecturers who accept gifts from students (table 3). As high as 143 respondents representing 95.33% of the total respondents think that a lecturer worth his/her sort would not accept gifts from students no matter how it is packaged and named. It was found out that 94 .66% of the respondents dislike lecturers who give students undeserved grades, because students know themselves and colleagues' strengths and weakness and they sometimes see a friend who they all know cannot obtain a certain grade unless aided by the lecturer. Also, 76.66% of the respondents frown on those lecturers who read lecture notes to the students in class, for such lecturers are boring and waste a lot of time. Seventy-one (71.33%) of the respondents are not happy with lecturers who cooperates with only those students who appear to be friendly, again, 67.33% of the respondents cannot withstand lecturers who pry into the life habits of his/her students is said to be distasteful. Yet about 63.33% among others find lecturers with the habit of mocking "foolish questions" of students as bad. One respondent said the most embarrassing moment is when "my question is ridiculed in presence of colleagues. There are other distasteful characteristics of lecturers discovered that are captured on Table 3.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study have highlighted certain critical qualities and behaviour that lecturers must have for effective teaching at CUG. These qualities associated with a good lecturer agree with the findings of (Thornberg et al., (2022) where students' rating of 58 teachers in two subjects on teaching effectiveness discovered teachers that ranked high by students' perception were those in general "likeability", who took interest and responsibility in the students' performance. American students' opinions of what constitutes a good lecturer vary with the field of study. This also confirms the varied opinions on the characteristics of a good lecturer (Martín, 2019). The students' preference for lecturers who possess thorough knowledge of their subjects confirms the findings of other studies that reported that there appeared to be an agreement on the qualities of a good lecturer, viz the ability to explain issues clearly and possessing an expert knowledge of his subject (Thornberg et al., 2022).

The study has also shown that even though gifts offering is a welcome gesture in the African society including Ghana, students of CUG think otherwise. The students

hate lecturers who accept gifts in the context of student-lecturer relationship. The gifts students offer to lecturers are not necessarily from their hearts as most of them squeeze water out stones for the lecturer for fear of failing or expecting favor from the lecturer. Some respondents disclosed to the researcher that students give gifts to lecturers in anticipation of favors for underserved grades or marks. According to them, most gifts given are not from their hearts. This collaborated an experience of the researcher where a student on teaching practice offered him gifts and researcher returned same to the student as a gift in a very polite way, to which the student was happy and exclaimed "Sir, you helped me a lot. God bless you. That was my last." This response was touching and revealing. Even though that was the last money the student has, he/she was willing to give it out for fear of failing. This also confirmed the Vice-Chancellor of CUG admonishing and advising to lecturers not to accept gifts from students.

The primary task of lecturers in tertiary institutions and indeed, universities is inter alia effective teaching and research to empower students to search for knowledge. Unfortunately, effective teaching does not contribute meaningfully to the career advancement and promotion of a lecturer to the next rank. Upward mobility is based mostly on the number of publications. There is the need for University Management to accord effective teaching equal weighting as research and publications.

This study has shown that students are more interested in and are happy with lecturers who come to class regularly to expose them to knowledge and allow them to ask questions for responses from the lecturer to satisfy their curiosity and clear their doubts. Students want to interact with lecturers in the classroom who constantly challenge to do better and are not focused mainly on their publications. Indeed, students want lecturers who challenge them with assignments, mark and return same promptly for them to appreciate their mistakes and do better. The characteristics of a good lecturer to CUG students is the one who is available, to them, punctual and understands the subject matter, acts as a role model, cover syllabus or course outlines and advise students on their moral lives inter alia.

There is a mismatch between Management expectations of lecturers and students expectations of lecturers. Whereas University Management wants lecturers to

obtain the terminate degree, conduct research and publish many publications, the students on the other hand are happy with lecturers who are guiding them in the lecture halls, being ready to advise them on morality and how to behave well in the society among others. These seemingly different expectations from management and student put the lecturer in a difficult situation. Who should the lecturer please? Of course, the lecturer has to sacrifice students' expectations for management demands to ensure job tenure and career advancement.

5. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that effective teaching is critical for acquisition of knowledge by students. From the findings this study, and in order to further improve the quality of teaching and learning at CUG to meet students' expectations, some important measures have to be put in place at CUG. Firstly, Management of CUG should review the existing promotion policy to consider weighting teaching and lecturer availability to students higher than publications for promoting lecturers. Secondly, the university should enforce the code of ethics which prohibits staff from accepting gifts from students, irrespective of how it is packaged. Students know the academic prowess of their colleagues and seeing that an academically poor student getting better grades than the good students always breeds suspicion. To avoid being labeled as giving undeserved grades, students continuous assessments mark must be given to the exams office to publish before students write their final examinations. Finally, all lecturers need to vary their methodologies in class but use more of student-centered style of teaching. Since university students are adults, lecturers should move away from pedagogy to andragogy.

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