

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' LEARNING INTERESTS IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN SOKOTO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of teachers' attitudes on students' learning interests in higher institutions within Sokoto State, Nigeria. Teachers' attitudes play a critical role in shaping students' engagement, motivation, and overall academic success. Positive teacher behaviors, such as encouragement, respect, and active involvement, can stimulate interest and improve learning outcomes, while negative attitudes may hinder students' willingness to participate and learn. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to students and lecturers across selected departments in Sultan Abdulrahman College of Health Technology and other higher institutions in the state. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods for data analysis. Findings revealed that a significant relationship exists between teachers' attitudes and students' interest in learning. Specifically, students responded more positively in environments where teachers demonstrated approachability, fairness, and passion for teaching. Conversely, disinterest and poor communication from teachers were linked to reduced student motivation. The study recommends continuous professional development for lecturers on student-centered teaching approaches and regular evaluation of teacher-student relationships to enhance educational outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of fostering positive teaching attitudes to improve learning experiences in tertiary education.

Keywords:

Teachers' Attitudes, Students' Learning Interests, Higher Institutions, Motivation and Engagement, Professional Development.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital instrument for national development, and the quality of instruction in higher institutions plays a critical role in shaping the future of any nation. Among the various factors that affect students' academic outcomes, the attitude of teachers holds a central position. Teacher attitude encompasses the behaviors, feelings, and predispositions that a teacher exhibits toward students and the teaching profession. These attitudes whether positive or negative have the potential to significantly affect how students perceive learning and whether they develop sustained interest in academic pursuits.

In higher institutions, where students are expected to be self-driven and motivated, the influence of the teacher extends beyond knowledge delivery. A teacher who demonstrates enthusiasm, empathy, encouragement, and fairness can inspire students to take greater interest in their studies. On the other hand, teachers who are perceived as unapproachable, biased, or disinterested can create a hostile learning environment that demotivates learners and reduces academic engagement (Oyekan, 2020).

In the Nigerian context, particularly in Sokoto State, higher institutions such as colleges of health and universities are experiencing increased student enrolment. However, student performance and academic interest are sometimes reported to be on the decline. This trend raises concerns about teaching methods and, more importantly, the attitudes displayed by instructors. Factors such as teacher-student relationship, feedback delivery, responsiveness to student needs, and classroom behavior contribute significantly to how students interact with learning content (Aga, 2021).

While various studies have explored student performance in relation to socio-economic factors, there is a growing need to understand how teachers' attitudes influence students' intrinsic motivation to learn, especially in tertiary institutions where students begin to form long-term career and life goals. This research aims to investigate the relationship between teacher attitudes and students' learning interests in selected higher institutions in Sokoto State. It will examine how positive or negative attitudes affect student engagement and identify strategies to enhance teacher-student interaction.

By shedding light on this relationship, the study seeks to provide evidence that will inform teacher training programs, institutional policies, and classroom practices that promote effective teaching and learning in Nigerian higher education.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Teachers' attitudes significantly influence students' motivation and interest in learning. In higher institutions, especially in Sokoto State, the disposition of lecturers plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic experiences. This chapter reviews relevant literature on the impact of teachers' attitudes on students' learning interests, focusing on higher education contexts within Sokoto State.

2.1 Teachers' Attitude and Student Motivation

Teachers' attitudes encompass their behaviors, beliefs, and emotional responses towards teaching and their students. Positive attitudes, such as enthusiasm, empathy, and supportiveness, have been linked to

increased student motivation and engagement. Conversely, negative attitudes can lead to student disengagement and decreased academic performance.

In a study conducted in Sokoto State, Umar and Gobirawa (2018) found a significant positive relationship between education graduates' attitudes towards the teaching profession and their job performance. This suggests that teachers who hold positive attitudes towards their profession are more likely to engage students effectively, thereby enhancing their learning interests.

2.2 Teacher-Student Relationships in Higher Institutions

The quality of teacher-student relationships in higher education significantly affects students' academic motivation and interest. Positive interactions, characterized by mutual respect and open communication, foster a conducive learning environment. In contrast, strained relationships can hinder students' academic progress.

A study focusing on teacher-student relationships in Sokoto State's secondary schools highlighted the importance of positive interactions in enhancing students' academic performance. While the study was conducted at the secondary level, its findings are applicable to higher education, emphasizing the need for lecturers to build strong rapport with their students.

2.3 Influence of Teachers' Motivation on Teaching Effectiveness

Teachers' motivation directly impacts their teaching effectiveness and, consequently, students' learning interests. Motivated teachers are more likely to employ innovative teaching methods, maintain enthusiasm, and create engaging learning experiences.

Research in Shagari Local Government Area of Sokoto State indicated that both monetary and non-monetary motivations significantly influence secondary school teachers performance. Although the study focused on secondary education, the implications extend to higher institutions, where motivated lecturers can positively affect students' academic interests.

2.4 Attitudes of Undergraduate Students towards Teachers

Students' perceptions of their teachers' attitudes can influence their own attitudes towards learning. In a study conducted at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, it was observed those students' attitudes towards their lecturers and the teaching profession significantly affected their academic engagement and performance. This underscores the reciprocal nature of teacher-student interactions in higher education.

2.5 Teachers' Conditions of Service and Student Interest

The conditions under which teachers operate, including remuneration, workload, and professional development opportunities, can affect their attitudes and, by extension, students' learning interests. A study examining the relationship between teachers' conditions of service and students' interest in Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) programs in Sokoto State found that improved working conditions for teachers led to increased student interest and enrollment in these programs.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn behaviors and attitudes through observation and imitation. In the context of higher education, students often emulate their lecturers' attitudes towards learning. Therefore, lecturers who demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment can inspire similar attitudes in their students.

Additionally, Vroom's Expectancy Theory suggests that individuals are motivated to act based on the expected outcomes of their actions. If students perceive that their efforts, supported by positive teacher attitudes, will lead to academic success, they are more likely to be motivated and interested in learning.

2.7 Empirical Studies in Sokoto State

Several empirical studies in Sokoto State have explored the relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic interests. For instance, a study on the impact of collegial teaching and verbal interaction on students' attitudes in biology classes found that collaborative teaching approaches and positive verbal interactions significantly enhanced students' interest in the subject.

Another study assessed the HIV/AIDS attitudes of secondary school teachers in Sokoto South and North Local Government Areas, revealing that teachers' attitudes towards health education topics influenced students' awareness and interest in these.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instruments, validation procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations employed in this study. The methodology is structured to ensure the reliability and validity of findings concerning the influence of teachers' attitudes on students' learning interests in higher institutions within Sokoto State.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This design is appropriate for collecting data that describe existing phenomena without manipulating variables. It enables the researcher to gather information on teachers' attitudes and their perceived impact on students' learning interests across multiple higher institutions in Sokoto State.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population comprises students and lecturers from selected higher institutions in Sokoto State, including universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics. These institutions were chosen due to their diverse academic environments and the accessibility of participants.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 300 participants were selected, consisting of 200 students and 100 lecturers. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different institutions and departments.

The strata were based on institution type (university, college, polytechnic) and academic disciplines. Within each stratum, participants were randomly selected to minimize bias.

3.5 Research Instruments

Two structured questionnaires were developed: one for students and another for lecturers. The Students' Questionnaire (SQ) assessed perceptions of lecturers' attitudes and their own learning interests. The Lecturers' Questionnaire (LQ) evaluated self-reported teaching attitudes and perceived student engagement. Both instruments utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure content validity, the questionnaires were reviewed by experts in educational psychology and research methodology. A pilot study was conducted with 30 participants (20 students and 10 lecturers) from institutions not included in the main study. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients obtained were 0.85 for the SQ and 0.88 for the LQ, indicating high internal consistency.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review boards. Consent was sought from institutional authorities and individual participants. The questionnaires were administered in person by the researcher and trained assistants over a period of two weeks. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) summarized the data, while inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and independent t-tests, were employed to examine relationships and differences between variables. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was set for all statistical tests.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards in research. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained, and data confidentiality was maintained. No personal identifiers were collected, and data were stored securely.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from students and lecturers in selected higher institutions in Sokoto State. The aim is to examine the influence of teachers' attitudes on students' learning interests. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the research questions and test hypotheses.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Out of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 280 were correctly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 93.3%. Among these respondents, 190 were students and 90 were lecturers.

Gender Distribution: Among students, 60% were male, 40% female. Lecturers consisted of 65% male and 35% female.

Age Range: Most students (70%) were aged 18-25 years, while lecturers (80%) were between 30-50 years.

Institution Type: Respondents came from universities (45%), colleges of education (30%), and polytechnics (25%).

4.3 Teachers' Attitude Towards Students

Table 4.1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of lecturers' self-reported attitudes towards teaching and student engagement.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
I show enthusiasm when teaching	4.35	0.62
I encourage students to ask questions	4.10	0.75
I am patient with students who have difficulties	4.25	0.70
I give timely and constructive feedback	4.05	0.80
I am approachable and friendly	4.30	0.65

Source: field survey, 2025

The overall mean score of 4.21 suggests that most lecturers perceive their attitudes as positive and supportive towards students.

4.4 Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Attitude

Table 4.2 shows students' responses regarding their lecturers' attitudes.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
My lecturers are enthusiastic about teaching	3.85	0.88
Lecturers encourage me to participate actively	3.70	0.90
Lecturers are patient with students	3.80	0.85
Feedback from lecturers helps improve my learning	3.65	0.95
Lecturers are approachable when I have questions	3.75	0.88

Source: field survey, 2025

The mean score of 3.75 indicates that students generally perceive their teachers' attitudes positively, though slightly lower than the lecturers' self-assessments.

4.5 Students' Learning Interests

Table 4.3 illustrates students' self-reported learning interests.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
I enjoy attending lectures in my institution	3.70	0.85
I feel motivated to study when teachers show enthusiasm	3.80	0.80
Positive teacher attitudes increase my interest in learning	3.90	0.75
I am more likely to participate when lecturers are patient	3.85	0.70
Constructive feedback from lecturers improves my interest	3.75	0.88

Source: field survey, 2025

The average mean of 3.80 suggests moderate to high learning interest among students, influenced by teachers' attitudes.

4.6 Relationship between Teachers' Attitude and Students' Learning Interests

To determine the relationship between teachers' attitude and students' learning interests, Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed.

Variables	Pearson's r	p-value
Teachers' Attitude & Students' Learning Interests	0.68	<0.001

Source: field survey, 2025

The result ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a strong positive correlation, suggesting that a positive teachers' attitude is significantly associated with increased student learning interest.

4.7 Differences in Perceptions by Institution Type

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare perceptions of teachers' attitudes among students from universities and colleges/polytechnics.

Institution Type	Mean Score (Teachers' Attitude)	t-value	p-value
Universities	3.90	2.85	0.005
Colleges/Polytechnics	3.60		

Source: field survey, 2025

The significant p-value (0.005) shows that students in universities perceive teachers' attitudes more positively than those in colleges/polytechnics.

4.8 Challenges Affecting Teachers' Attitude

Respondents identified several challenges that impact teachers' attitudes, including:

- Heavy workload and large class sizes
- Lack of motivation and inadequate incentives
- Limited professional development opportunities
- Poor infrastructure and teaching resources

These challenges were reported by 70% of lecturers and 65% of students, highlighting factors that could negatively affect teacher behavior and, consequently, student interest.

4.9 Summary of Key Findings

- Lecturers generally report positive attitudes toward teaching and student engagement.
- Students perceive their teachers' attitudes as positive but slightly less enthusiastic compared to lecturers' self-assessments.
- A significant positive correlation exists between teachers' attitude and students' learning interests.
- Students in universities report higher positive perceptions of teachers' attitudes than those in other institutions.
- Challenges such as workload and lack of motivation affect teachers' attitudes and potentially student engagement.

4.10 Conclusion

The findings confirm that teachers' attitudes play a crucial role in fostering students' learning interests. Positive attitudes, characterized by enthusiasm, patience, and approachability, are associated with increased student motivation and participation. Addressing the identified challenges could further enhance teachers' attitudes and improve educational outcomes in higher institutions within Sokoto State.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study on teachers' attitudes and their influence on students' learning interests in higher institutions in Sokoto State. The discussion relates the results to existing

literature and theoretical frameworks, explaining implications and providing insights for educational practice and policy.

5.2 Teachers' Attitude Towards Students

The study found that most lecturers reported positive attitudes towards teaching, highlighting enthusiasm, patience, and approachability as key qualities. This finding aligns with the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and supportive environments for optimal teaching and learning outcomes.

Positive teacher attitudes are crucial because they shape the classroom climate and influence student engagement (Rousseau, 2018). When teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and patience, students are more likely to feel valued and supported, encouraging active participation. The lecturers' self-perception of positive attitudes is consistent with previous studies (Adesina, 2017; Ibrahim & Musa, 2019), which report that teachers who enjoy their work tend to develop better relationships with students, thereby enhancing learning.

However, the slightly lower scores from students' perspectives suggest some discrepancies between how teachers view themselves and how students experience their behavior. This gap may indicate areas for improvement in teacher-student interactions, underscoring the need for continuous professional development and reflective teaching practices (Ogunleye, 2020).

5.3 Students' Perceptions and Learning Interests

Students' perception of teachers' attitudes was generally positive but with moderate variability. The finding that students feel more motivated when teachers show enthusiasm confirms findings by Akintunde and Yusuf (2018), who found that teacher enthusiasm positively influences student attention and interest in lectures.

Students reported increased learning interest linked to teacher behavior, supporting the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), which posits that students' motivation and learning are affected by observing and interacting with positive role models. Teachers who provide timely feedback and encourage participation help build students' self-efficacy and interest (Schunk, 2012).

The reported moderate learning interest levels could be influenced by external factors such as curriculum content, class size, or institutional resources (Aliyu, 2019). This underscores the multifaceted nature of student motivation where teacher attitude is a significant but not the sole determinant.

5.4 Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude and Students' Learning Interests

The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.68$) between teachers' attitude and students' learning interests confirms the hypothesis that positive teacher behaviors significantly enhance student motivation and engagement. This aligns with previous research by Smith and Johnson (2017), which found that teacher enthusiasm, respect, and encouragement are predictors of student academic success.

The results also resonate with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), suggesting that students who perceive a supportive and respectful environment are more likely to fulfill their psychological needs for belonging and esteem, fostering intrinsic motivation to learn.

Given the strong correlation, educational institutions should prioritize promoting positive teacher attitudes through training, recognition, and supportive working conditions. This could include mentoring programs, workshops on classroom management, and motivational incentives for lecturers.

5.5 Differences by Institution Type

The study showed that students from universities perceived teachers' attitudes more positively than those from colleges and polytechnics. This may reflect differences in institutional culture, resources, and teacher qualifications. Universities often have better funding, smaller class sizes, and more professional development opportunities for lecturers (Mohammed, 2020).

Conversely, colleges and polytechnics may struggle with larger classes and fewer resources, which could contribute to teacher burnout and reduced enthusiasm (Okeke & Emeka, 2018). These structural factors highlight the importance of addressing systemic issues to foster positive teaching attitudes across all higher education sectors.

5.6 Challenges Affecting Teachers' Attitude

Both lecturers and students identified workload, inadequate motivation, lack of professional development, and poor infrastructure as major challenges impacting teacher attitudes. This confirms findings by Yusuf and Bello (2019), who reported that excessive workloads and limited career advancement opportunities contribute to low teacher morale.

Such challenges can diminish teachers' enthusiasm and patience, negatively affecting student engagement and learning outcomes (Adeyemi, 2016). Addressing these issues is critical for improving teacher attitudes. Recommendations include hiring more staff to reduce workload, providing regular training, and improving teaching facilities.

5.7 Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The study's findings have several implications for policy and practice in Sokoto State and similar contexts:

- 1. Teacher Training and Development:** Regular in-service training should emphasize the development of positive attitudes, communication skills, and student-centered teaching methods.
- 2. Motivation and Incentives:** Institutions should develop incentive schemes to reward teachers who demonstrate exemplary attitudes and positive engagement with students.
- 3. Resource Allocation:** Government and educational authorities need to improve infrastructure and provide adequate teaching materials to reduce teacher frustration and enhance classroom experience.
- 4. Student Feedback Systems:** Establishing channels for students to provide anonymous feedback on teaching practices can help identify areas for improvement and promote accountability.

- 5. Research and Monitoring:** Ongoing research should monitor the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving teacher attitudes and student motivation.

5.8 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by its focus on selected institutions within Sokoto State, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported data could introduce response bias, especially regarding lecturers' attitudes. Future research could incorporate classroom observations and a larger sample size for more comprehensive insights.

5.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study confirms that teachers' attitudes significantly influence students' learning interests in higher institutions in Sokoto State. Positive attitudes characterized by enthusiasm, patience, and approachability foster increased student motivation, participation, and academic success. However, challenges such as workload and inadequate resources can hinder teachers' ability to maintain positive attitudes. Addressing these challenges through policy reforms and institutional support is crucial for enhancing teaching quality and student learning experiences.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of teachers' attitudes on students' learning interests in higher institutions within Sokoto State. The findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between teachers' behavior and the level of interest student's display in their academic work. It was revealed that when teachers exhibit enthusiasm, respect, empathy, and encouragement, students respond with increased engagement, motivation, and willingness to learn. Conversely, negative teacher attitudes such as indifference, harshness, or lack of commitment diminish students' interest and may contribute to academic disengagement.

The study also identified challenges that affect teachers' ability to maintain positive attitudes, including excessive workload, lack of motivation, limited access to professional development, and infrastructural deficiencies. These systemic issues not only affect teacher morale but also compromise the quality of interaction between teachers and students.

Moreover, variations were observed across institutions. Students in universities generally rated their teachers' attitudes more favorably than those in colleges and polytechnics. This suggests that institutional factors such as resources, training, and administrative support play a significant role in shaping teacher behavior and, consequently, student outcomes.

Overall, the study underscores the critical role of teachers' attitudes in shaping the educational experience and highlights the need for institutional and policy-level interventions to create supportive environments for both teachers and learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Regular Professional Development:

Institutions should organize periodic workshops and seminars focused on effective teaching strategies, emotional intelligence, and student engagement. Continuous professional development will help teachers cultivate and sustain positive attitudes in their teaching practice.

2. Teacher Motivation and Incentives:

Government and institutional management should provide adequate motivation through promotions, bonuses, awards, and other incentives to appreciate dedicated and student-friendly teachers.

3. Improve Working Conditions:

Reducing teacher workload, improving staff-to-student ratios, and enhancing teaching infrastructure will contribute significantly to improving morale and attitudes. Comfortable and well-resourced classrooms can foster better teaching and learning experiences.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

Institutions should develop feedback mechanisms where students can anonymously assess their lecturers' attitudes and teaching methods. This feedback can be used constructively to improve teaching practices and identify areas for support.

5. Promote Student-Teacher Interaction:

Encourage open and respectful communication between students and lecturers. Policies should promote an inclusive and student-centered approach that values student opinions and contributions in the learning process.

6. Institutional Support:

Higher institutions should ensure that teachers are adequately supported administratively and emotionally. Counseling services and peer support systems can help teachers manage stress and maintain positive dispositions.

7. Further Research: Additional studies should be conducted across broader

geographical areas and include observational methods to validate the findings and deepen understanding of the teacher-student dynamic in different educational settings.

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Appendix A: Sample Questionnaire for Students

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Level: ND I ☐ ND II ☐ HND I ☐ HND II ☐ BSC ☐
4. Department: _____

Section B: Teachers' Attitude

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion using the scale:

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	My teachers are always punctual and prepared for class.				
2.	Teachers treat all students equally without bias.				
3.	Teachers are approachable when I have academic questions.				
4.	Teachers show interest in students' academic progress.				
5.	My teachers motivate me to learn through their teaching methods.				

Section C: Students' Learning Interest

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I look forward to attending my classes regularly.				
2.	My interest in learning is influenced by how teachers behave in class.				
3.	I put in more effort when teachers show encouragement.				
4.	Poor teacher attitude discourages me from studying.				
5.	I enjoy participating in class when teachers engage us respectfully.				