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# Perceived Impact of Attitudes and Competencies of Lecturers on Academic Performance of Female Students at a University in Zimbabwe

Lilian Manwa

Regis Chireshe

Excellent Chireshe

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Lilian Manwa,[1] Regis Chireshe[2] and Excellent Chireshe[3]

## Abstract

This study sought to discover how lecturer attitudes and competencies influence academic performance of university female students, since they are generally lagging behind in academic performance at a university in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The transactional theory is the main theory that anchored this study. The population comprised all Part two to Part four female university students and all the lecturers that taught the female students who were at the institution. A sample of 25 female students and 5 lecturers in four faculties was selected using the convenience sampling strategy. The study employed a case study research design which involved use of individual interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. Data was analysed in narrative form and thematically. The study revealed that the academic performance of female university students was determined by lecturer attitudes and competencies. The study recommends the training of lecturers who are holders of non-teaching degrees in order to improve their competencies and in-service training for the old horses so as to renew, sharpen their minds and refine their skills.

*Keywords:* Academic performance, Attitudes, Female student, Lecturer competence, women students, Zimbabwe, lecturer competencies.

## Introduction and background of the study

This study focuses on perceived impact of attitudes and competencies of lecturers on academic performance of female students at a university in Zimbabwe. It is anchored on the most widely accepted theory in the field of child development, the "transactional theory of child development" propounded by Sameroff. Seifert and Hoffnung (1994:62) posit that Sameroff's transactional theory views development as an on-going process of the reciprocal transactions between the child and the various social and physical environmental contexts in which she or he lives. The social contexts include parents, teachers and peers while the physical contexts include

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[1] Lilian Manwa holds a PhD and is a senior lecturer in Home Economics at Great Zimbabwe University. She has published extensively in the areas related to primary and secondary teacher training, family studies, gender issues, textiles and nutrition. She is particularly interested in researching and publishing on women.

[2] Full Professor of Educational Psychology and Special Needs Education in the Special Needs Education Department at Great Zimbabwe University. He is a registered educational psychologist with the Allied Health Professions Council of Zimbabwe. Has over 70 publications in reputable journals and publication outlets. He has supervised 11 PhD students to completion. He serves on the editorial boards of a number of reputable journals. He is currently on secondment to the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education.

[3] Excellent Chireshe is an Associate Professor in Religious Studies in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe. She holds a doctorate in Religious Studies. Her research interests include religion and gender, and sociology of religion. She has a considerable number of publications, mostly on religion and gender.

the geographical locations such as urban or rural environments. This theory underpins the present study since the university students will have gone through a long process of reciprocal transactions between their social environment (including lecturers) and themselves, which inevitably has an impact on their academic achievement.

Lecturer self-efficacy, interest, attitudes, qualification and experience have of late been under scrutiny in relation to pupil's academic performance or achievement (Muzenda, 2013:7; Berns, 2010:233; Crossman, 2009:55; Tella, 2008:16). Choi, Zaiton and Tan (2014:37) assert that lecturer competence is closely linked to students' learning outcomes. Knowledge about the subject and students is equally important since knowledge delivery is greatly influenced by the nature of students. Female students are a group of people that requires different treatment from their male counterparts (Watkins, 2000:194). The present study focuses on the female student since research has established that female students lag behind in academic performance (Witt, 2012:2; Lacour & Tissington, 2011:224; Rao, 2004:135; Ford, 2002:184; Watkins, 2000:196). Proper handling of students, not withstanding their gender differences under various circumstances, is pivotal so as not to under or overreact when dealing with them. This is because studies have shown that effective teaching is best achieved when teachers attend to individual needs of learners (Long, Kowang, Fei & Jusch, 2016; Adunola, 2011:6). This implies that knowing the needs of female learners may guide the lecturer on how best to present their subject matter. Students' academic performance will increase if lecturers' competence on knowledge, creativity, discipline, communication and preparation is maintained (Arif, Elvira, Darin & Anisa, 2017; Hakim, 2015).

Girl children have been the main focus of much research while little attention has been given to women who, like girl children, are also vulnerable, disadvantaged in many ways and are lagging behind in many areas, including education. In some African countries women seldom reach the highest levels of education because they face obstacles at every stage of their careers that decrease the ratio of women to men at each step (Lekalake 2015). According to the World bank, sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest level of tertiary enrolment for females. Women in Zimbabwe continue to drop out, perform more poorly, and have less access to education than men (Chireshe & Mapfumo 2017). Chireshe (2006) states that worldwide, students experience social, personal and academic problems at school or college. Female students in Zimbabwe experience numerous challenges which are linked to the culture that regards females as second to the male child. Gendered cultural codes related to domesticity and the place of women in the home inhibits females in Zimbabwe to excel in education (Mapuranga & Chikumbu 2015). A study conducted by Mapuranga and Chikumbu (2015) in Zimbabwe revealed that female students' treatment in schools, at home and in society led to their underperformance in schools. Lekalake notes that despite growing public support for gender parity, and government initiatives to promote it in some African countries, inequalities in educational attainment remain a significant obstacle to women's empowerment.

Lecturing entails engaging students/pupils as active learners to induce positive and comprehensive changes in their pre-existing knowledge and skills (Hakim, 2015:12; Tope, 2012:5). Thus, good academic achievement is a combined effort of the teacher and the learner. Effective teaching and meaningful learning are pivotal in achieving good grades. Good teaching motivates and engages students in ways that are consistent with their philosophies of teaching and learning and with theories of development, learning and motivation (McMillan, 2000:2). Effective lecturers believe that they can make a difference in learners' lives and they teach in ways that demonstrate that and it is reflected in high academic achievements (Tope, 2012:5;

Tella, 2008:22). Self-efficacy is one of the major ingredients of powerful lecturing and is believed to produce good pass rates. It is the belief that one is capable of exercising personal control over one's thinking and emotions so as to cater for the needs of both male and female university students. Bhatt (2007:70) states that in the layman's language, self-efficacy can be regarded as self-confidence towards teaching or lecturing. Matoti et al. (2011:141) argue that it is crucial to understand teachers' beliefs about their own effectiveness, known as lecturer efficacy, as it helps to explain many instructional decisions that they make especially when assessing students' work which also affects academic performance. Chireshe and Shumba (2011:114) assert that the lecturer's self confidence and motivation is a basic requirement for effective teaching and for meaningful learning to take place.

Teacher quality is an important educational issue that is connected to student achievement, and teacher qualifications and competence are important components of teacher quality (Long et al. 2017; Okpala & Ellis, 2005:380; Darling-Hammond, 2000:110). Lecturer quality entails the qualifications, competencies and attitudes which cater for students' needs. Mohanty (2007:151) studied teachers and lecturers in India and established that the secret of the teacher's success in producing good results lies in his or her professional efficiency as well as personality traits. Hailemariam et al. (2017) argue that teacher quality and behaviour influence students' academic performance. This implies that there is a relationship between academic performance of students and teacher behaviour and competencies. From the writings of educators, one can infer that whatever facilities are available, whatever content is taught, whichever environment the school is situated and whatever kind of pupils are given to teach, the important and vital role of the teacher or lecturer cannot be overemphasised (Matoti, Junqueira & Odora, 2011:141; UNESCO, 2003:13).

Matoti et al. (2011:140) suggest that lecturers need to develop capacity that enables them to make intelligent decisions in order to handle ambiguous and challenging situations when lecturing. In the same vein, Muzenda (2013:6) states that lecturers should regularly review their knowledge of students and subject matter in order to be able to interpret the needs of their students. This implies that good academic performance can be achieved when the teacher is able to present data to the students in an effective and efficient manner. Studies on academic performance of students were done by most researchers without focusing on female students only as a special group of students who need to be understood by lecturers, hence the present study.

It is intuitively obvious that teachers and lecturers must possess professional knowledge of the subject matter (Tella, 2008:17; McMillan, 2000:2). This implies that teachers and lecturers feel comfortable in teaching their areas of specialisation since they will be able to effectively impart skills and knowledge. Taking care of female students' individual needs is enhanced when the lecturer is allocated subjects in their area of specialisation. In the case whereby the teacher is allocated subjects other than their specialist subjects, the morale and the level of performance of the teacher may be reduced. This subsequently compromises the teacher's teaching performance and the student's academic achievement. Haegeland, Raaum and Salvanes (2005:17) state that unskilled teachers have a negative effect on academic achievement in all subjects; the effects are however, significant in mathematical and physical education.

Nziramasanga (1999:177) revealed that the main challenge of the government of Zimbabwe is to overcome the traditional, stereotyping and other practices that impede equal access to education and academic achievement of women in education at all levels. This implies that attitudes towards females are likely to affect their academic performance. HeeChee et al.

(2005:2) assert that women and men are known to differ in their college experiences and face different outcomes. Educational outcomes are one of the key areas influenced by the attitudes of teachers (Ferguson, Bovaird & Mueller, 2007:702; Robertson, Novelli, Dale, Tickly, Dachi & Alphonce, 2007:7). Similarly, Uwaifo (2008:124) states that attitudes of the teachers towards females may inhibit good academic achievements. Teacher's competency enhances a teacher's ability to create an environment that is fair, understanding, and accepting of diverse students, ideas, experiences, and backgrounds (Tope, 2012:5). The teacher's interest in teaching a particular subject usually goes a long way to improve the performance of their learners (Tella, 2008:19). It is against this background that the present study sought to establish the impact of attitudes and competencies of Zimbabwe university lecturers on academic performance of female students. This study is part of a larger study on the determinants of academic performance of female students at a state university in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

**Research design**

Gray (2009:131) defines a research design as the overarching plan for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study adopted a qualitative approach which involved a phenomenological design in order to solicit data from the participants. The central question under the phenomenological method is: "What are the meanings, structure and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people? (Best & Khan 2006:255). Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:600) state, the phenomenological design is the study of the world as it appears to individuals. Furthermore, given that the phenomenological design tries to paint a factual and accurate picture of the situation as it unfolds in the natural setting (Denscombe, 2007:75; Sidhu, 2003:110; Neuman; 2000:122), the method was found suitable for this research mainly because it describes, clarifies, analyses and interprets conditions, situations and aspects of education (lecturer competencies and attitudes) and students' academic performance as they exist and as interpreted by the participants.

The population for this study comprised all (500) the Part/Level Two to Four female university students at the institution's four faculties and all the lecturers who taught the female students. A sample of thirty (30) participants was selected for the study. The sample consisted of twenty (20) female students and ten (10) lecturers (6 females and 4 males) who taught the female students. The present study used convenience sampling technique to select students and lecturers. Convenience sampling or the accidental or opportunity sampling, as it can be called, involves choosing the nearest individuals who were willing to participate in the study to serve as respondents (Gray, 2009:153; Cohen et al., 2011:155). Gray (2009:152) says that, in convenience sampling, the researcher deliberately selects the respondents against one or more traits to give what it is believed to be a representative sample. The convenience sampling was appropriate for both the students and lecturers so that lecturers and students of various backgrounds were included in the research in order to solicit data which included as many variables as possible that determine academic performance. Ethical considerations in this study focused on those issues that infringe on the participants' rights. Leedy and Ormond (2001:56) claim that most ethical issues fall into one of the four categories such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and protecting participants from harm. All the mentioned ethical issues were observed.

## Instrumentation

Data collection was done using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The two instruments combined are best for a qualitative research which deals with soft data. The main advantage of combining the two data collection tools was that in-depth interviews allowed for the collection of confidential information while group discussions catered for the general issues which required deliberations among the participants. Johnson and Reynolds (2011:1) posit that along with in-depth interviews, group discussions comprise one of the main forms of data sources for interpretation and analysis in qualitative research. The following table is a summary of how instruments were administered.

| Instrument | Number of participants | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | |
| Focus group discussions | Nil | 20 students | 20 |
| In-depth interviews | 4 lecturers | 6 lecturers | 10 |

*Interviews: in-depth interviews*

The in-depth interview or a conversation with a purpose was the best tool used to solicit data from the ten lecturers. Interviews are usually conducted in a relaxed atmosphere since people usually feel more comfortable having a conversation as opposed to filling out a survey (Wiersma & Jurs, 2008:207). The other advantages of the interview are that it is flexible and adaptable to any kind of situation and types of persons (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:210). Since in-depth interviews allow person to person discussion in a natural manner (Best & Khan 2006:268; Boyce & Nealev 2006:2; Neuman, 2006:272), they were found suitable for the study. Furthermore, given that in-depth interviews are excellent tools to use because they use an open-ended, discovery-oriented method (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald 2012:2), they enabled researchers to deeply explore the respondents' feelings and perspectives on teacher competencies and attitudes in relation to female university students' academic performance.

## Focus group discussions

Given that focus group discussions allow the researcher to collect as much information as is possible (Gay & Airasian, 2008:218), focus group discussions were used in this study to gather a lot of information within a short time. In this study there were four groups of five university female students each which meant that, instead of interviewing twenty individuals, only four groups were involved. The size of the focus group discussions was based on Fraenkel and Wallen's (1996:461) suggestion that focus group discussions are made up of a small group of people, usually between four and eight, who sit together and discuss a series of questions under the direction of a moderator. The moderator in this study was one of the researchers. Denscombe (2007:177) suggests that grouping individuals with the aim of trying to solve a common problem or a case justifies the use of focus group discussions in case studies. In view of this, the current study employed focus group discussions in order to collect information from grouped female university students.

**Results**

*Data presentation*

Data from students and lecturers was presented separately. The following were the codes and their meanings: FGP.1—focus group participant number one (1), ISP.1—in-depth interviews student participant number one (1) and PL.1—lecturer participant number one (1). The respondents were university female students whose age ranged from twenty to above fifty years. Most of the lecturers were above forty years of age, having a minimum of five years work experience as lecturers at the institution.

*Influence of lecturer attitudes on academic performance of female students*

The findings from this study revealed that attitudes of lecturers and stereotyping as well as their (lecturers') treatment of female students have influence on academic performance of the female university students. It also emerged from this study that most lecturers passed negative comments, such as, that female students are failures and that discouraged female students. Some female students also indicated that the attitudes of female students also influence the attitudes and confidence of lecturers.

*Responses from university female students*

The following vignettes from the focus group discussions reflect the views of the female students on the influence of attitudes of lecturers on the academic performance of female students:

> *We are discouraged by lecturers who pass negative comments to us female students who are repeating, such as, we failures (FGP.14).*

> *Our self-esteem is reduced if lecturers demand sexual favours from us and that places us in a difficult place as we may find it difficult to reject the proposal (FGP.11).*

> *Some female students have negative attitudes towards male lecturers and that may cause the lecturers to be negative towards us female students (FGP. 17).*

The findings from in-depth interviews were similar to those from focus group discussions that the attitudes of lecturers influence the female student's level of confidence and self esteem. The following in-depth interview verbal quotes from the female students illustrate the finding:

> *We are discouraged as some male lecturers have an attitude that associates us female students with laziness and failure (ISP.4).*

> *There are some lecturers who label us female students as slow learners or low performers, and this is a source of discouragement (ISP.1).*

> *I feel that labels and stereotypes from lecturers reduce my self-esteem and reduce my confidence to work hard and to achieve good results (ISP.2).*

Most female students indicated that most female lecturers viewed the academic performance of the female university students in a positive way. It also emerged that some male lecturers had a

positive attitude towards female students. The following verbal quotes from focus group discussions confirm the finding:

> *Most science lecturers treat all students equally and this has a positive effect on our academic performance (FGP.15).*
> *Most female lecturers are positive towards us as they understand that we have too much on our hands especially the domestic chores. This attitude is encouraging (FGP.8).*

Findings from in-depth interviews concur with those from the focus group discussions as it was noted that most lecturers, especially female lecturers, had a positive attitude towards female students except for a few. Lecturers with positive attitudes encourage the female students to work hard so as to do well academically. The following in-depth interview verbal quotes from the female students illustrate the finding:

> *I have noted that most female lecturers have positive attitudes towards us. They treat us female students fairly and encourage us to fight through all challenges (ISP.3).*

> *I have observed that a few female lecturers have negative attitudes towards us as compared to male lecturers (ISP.5).*

*Influence of lecturer competence on the academic performance of female university students*
The study revealed that most female students indicated that lecturer competence influenced their academic performance. Most of the female students stated that poor lecture delivery comprising lack of proper media and illustrations which simplify the concepts to be mastered had a negative effect on their academic performance. The following verbal quotes from focus group discussions reflect the finding.

> *I have experienced that poorly presented lectures cause confusion as concepts are not clear and not simplified (FGP.18).*
> *Some lecturers just give notes without explanations and that causes us female students to suffer most as we have limited time to study due to domestic chores (FGP.17).*

The findings from in-depth interviews echoed those of female students who participated in focus group discussions. The following in-depth interview verbal quotes illustrate the finding that lecturer competence influences the academic performance of female university students:

> *Some lecturers read notes and give handouts as they say openly that they are not teachers by profession but are business administrators (ISP.1).*

> *Some female lecturers may also face challenges in presenting good lectures since they may also be overwhelmed by gender roles (ISP.4).*

*Responses from university lecturers*

Findings from lecturers, like those from the female students, indicated that lecturer attitudes and competence influence the academic performance of the female students.

*Influence of lecturer attitudes on academic performance of female students*

The study revealed that, like the female university students, lecturers also suggested that their attitudes towards the female students influenced the students' academic performance. It emerged from this study that most male lecturers had negative attitudes towards the female students and that they lacked confidence in them while most female lecturers had positive attitudes and were confident in the academic performance of the female university students. The finding concurs with that from the female university students that there is a difference between female and male lecturers' attitudes and level of confidence in the ability of female students. For the most part, female lecturers had positive attitudes and confidence in the ability of female students as they seemed to have an understanding that female students had a lot of other duties that caused them to lag behind in academic performance. The following views from lecturers express this finding:

> *My experience is that lecturers who were socialised to believe that females are not gifted are less confident and expect low performance from them which may lead to their failure (PL.3).*

> *From my experience as a lecturer, I noted that female students are usually passive. They are afraid of taking the lead and controlling discussions. This causes me to lack confidence in their ability (PL.4).*

*Influence of lecturer competence on the academic performance of female students*

The study revealed that most lecturers, like the students, indicated that poor lecture delivery or presentation greatly determines the academic prowess of the female university students. Poor lecture presentation was noted to be characterised by lack of adequate content and being boring. Some lecturers confirmed the students' concerns that some lecturers were not trained to be lecturers but were technocrats in their areas of specialisation such as lawyers who teach commercial law. The lecturers viewed poor lecture delivery as resulting from lack of pedagogical skills. The following are the views of lecturers that illustrate these findings:

> *Lack of preparedness reflects incompetence and results in lecturers expecting too much from students. Non-resident female students are the worst affected as they in most cases have less time to study due to domestic chores (PL.2).*

> *Poor lecture presentation by lecturer, combined with female students' social pressure such as motherly roles, causes poor academic performance (PL.3).*

> *My observation is that lecturers' lack of pedagogical skills results in poor lecture presentation (PL.5).*

**Discussion**

*Influence of lecturers' attitudes and competencies on academic performance*

The study revealed that two out of four male lecturers had negative attitudes towards female students while most female lecturers had positive attitudes towards them. It can be inferred that male lecturers who were socialised in such a way that they see females as inferior to males carry that same attitude to lecture rooms and treat female students as inferior. This finding on lecturer attitudes is consistent with Haralambos and Holborn's (2008: 688) assertion that the socialisation process instils traits that influence one's social interactions. The same finding resonates with the "transactional theory of child development" (Meggitt & Walker, 2007:194) which postulates that through socialisation children learn how their cultures and or societies define their expected behaviour. It is likely that lecturers may make wrong judgements about female students because of the way they were socialised. It was noted by fifteen students out of twenty that lecturers who had an attitude that females were inferior are likely to be identified by their comments such as that females are low performers.

The findings on lecturer attitudes also indicated that lecturers may attach labels which are negative due to the way the female students dress. The lecturers may see a relationship between dressing and level of seriousness of a student. This finding of the current study is consistent with Manwa, Ndamba and Manwa's (2010:1) observation that dress is a non-verbal communicator, which communicates one's personality and gender issues. Three out of ten lecturers indicated that female students who concentrate on how they look and beauty are usually low performers.

The study also revealed that two out of four male lecturers from the Faculty of Commerce and Sciences had very positive attitudes towards the female university students who were doing the so-called difficult subjects such as Maths and Science. The lecturers who were in the Faculty of Commerce were of the young liberal cohort who may have accepted the changes brought about by feminism hence, their positive attitudes towards female students. Three of the young generation and liberal male lecturers blamed gendered codes as the factors that negatively influenced female students' academic performance. Their conviction was that given an enabling environment, female students can compete equally with their male counterparts. This is consistent with the transactional theory that informed this study which stipulates that the transaction between the seed (genetics of the student) and the grounds (environment such as the university physical and social ambience) are both pivotal in producing good results. Lecturers with such a positive attitude encouraged female students to work hard and excel.

The current study revealed that student-lecturer relationship may create a barrier to effective lecturing and learning and this compromises the attainment of good results. This may mean that female students who have negative attitudes towards lecturers may cause lecturers to have a negative attitude towards them. They may not pay attention during lectures as a result of these negative attitudes. The lack of attention may negatively affect their performance. Hailemariam et al. (2017: 212) and Myers (2008:119) posit that both teachers' and students' attitudes combined influence academic performance. The social climate or ambience of the school and a good learning atmosphere that is characterised by good relations between scholars and teachers/lecturers is known to be a conducive environment for teaching, learning and assessment of students' work (Briccia & Pessoa de Carvalh, 2016; Choi et al. 2014:38; Manwa, 2013:352; Adekola, 2012:280). In the same vein, Macionis and Plummer (2008:233) posit that teachers who try to work closely with students have an understanding that provides a successful and rewarding learning environment. On the other hand, students who had a positive attitude towards lecturers benefited from their lecturers and also found it a pleasure to be a student and

not enduring being a student. Lecturers' input and positive attitudes contribute a lot towards good academic performance (Arif et al., 2017:89; Uwaifo, 2008:124).

It also emerged from the study that three male lecturers and two female lecturers lacked confidence in the ability of female students. It is likely that they may consciously or subconsciously know that male students usually perform better than female students. The lack of confidence by the lecturers may be seen in how they allocate topics for presentation, mark assignments and their comments during lectures. This present finding is inconsistent with Loukas and Murphy's (2007:295) suggestion that lecturers should use fair ways of marking and rewarding students' work regardless of sex. In the same vein, Omenge and Nasango (2010:228) suggest that teaching methods which are used should not disregard the female students and also stigmatise them.

The study revealed that lecturer attitudes were sometimes negative because of the passive behaviour of some female students. This may mean that the students who were passive had accepted that they lag behind in academic performance. When they grow older female university students especially the single ones speak less and less in classroom settings, hence lagging behind in educational outcomes (FAO, 2012:3; Hung, 2011:21; Saito, 2011:15; Nhundu, 2007:642). It may be that some lecturers have experienced that some of the female students, even when encouraged to excel, may not be able due to low self-esteem. Teachers are in most cases biased towards good students and are negative to problematic and weak students (Briccia & Pessoa de Carvalh, 2016; Loukas & Murphy, 2007:295). Lecturers in most cases may have confidence in female students who are respectful and stable and consistent in what they do and in who they are.

It also emerged from the study that lecturer competences influenced the academic performance of the female university students. The study revealed that poor lecture delivery comprising of high volumes of notes which lacks explanations and illustrations had a negative effect on female students' academic performance. Lecturers who were not trained to be in the teaching/lecturing profession were noted to be data banks that lacked pedagogical skills of delivering the data. A related study by Tella (2008:17) revealed that a teacher who does not have both the academic and professional teaching qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. The study indicated that two out of ten lecturers left a lot of work to the students and because of too much domestic work sixteen out of twenty females failed to complement the lecture notes given. Such lecturers were said to be dictating high volumes of notes without explaining the notes. For the all the female students, volumes of notes become a challenge since most of them will not have enough time to digest the notes due to domestic chores. All the participants indicated that domestic chores are a major setback in their academic performance. Illustrations and examples which are given during lectures help in grasping difficult concepts by the already tired students due to domestic chores. Effective lecturers teach in ways that include demonstrations that create an environment conducive for learning and this is reflected in high academic achievements (Hakim, 2015:11; Tope, 2012:5; Tella, 2008:22). An effective lecturer creates a conducive learning environment and gives all the students an equal platform so that both male and female students participate and are awarded marks they deserve.

The study established that availability of resources has an impact on the competence of lecturers. Crossman (2009:55) established that teacher competence is not only determined by training but also by level of support in terms of salaries and resources. Lack of support causes teachers to be exhausted by anxiety and stress. Lack of appropriate media and equipment greatly

influences the quality of lecture presentation. All the female students submitted that mass lectures are usually a challenge to lecturers when there is no appropriate teaching equipment. The distance between the lecturer and the student may be reduced by the use of a projector and a micro phone. The use of the chalk board in such cases is not feasible because of distance. Choi et al. (2014) posit that knowledge on the needs of female students is critical in improving their academic performance. Teacher or lecturer skills and knowledge, as well as the level of support and resources, are important to consider if students are to attain good academic performance (Hailemariam, Getiye & Beza, 2017:213; Manwa, 2014; McMillan, 2000:6).

**Conclusion and recommendations**

The study revealed that attitudes of most male lecturers were negative and different from those of most female lecturers. The study indicated that lecturers who were socialised to see females as inferior to males brought that to lecture rooms. The attitudes of lecturers and stereotyping were viewed as affecting the level of confidence of female students and ultimately their academic performance. The study established that poor lecture presentation and lecture delivery was a factor that influenced the academic performance of female university students. Some lecturers were viewed as dictating lots of notes which were difficult to understand since they were not explaining or trying to add flesh to the skeleton notes. Poor teaching methods mostly affected female students since they in most cases failed to have enough time to study due to gender codes. Lecturer attitude and competence were noted as variables, among others, that significantly determine the academic performance of the female university students.

This study recommends that lecturers be informed about how female university students can be assisted to improve their academic performance. Literature on how to create a female-friendly lecture room environment is necessary. Literature of that sort should emphasise social university ambiance that emphasise good relations and ethics in treating female university students. The overall educational environment should be supportive of female university students.

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