

Students' Preference for the Various Teaching Methods in Tourism Courses: A Case of Tourism Management Department, Madawalabu University

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Abstract

This study was design to assess the student's preference of the various teaching methods in tourism management department, Madawalabu University. Students and teacher were the subjects of the study. Lottery randomization sampling technique was employed to select 23 s from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year student for the questionnaires. Five teachers were purposively selected for in-depth interviews including the team leader. Six formal lesson observations were conducted. Qualitative data was narrated and presented thematically and quantitative data was analyzed with the help of SPSS Version 20 used to compute descriptive statistics measures (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and the relationship between different variables were analyzed through Pearson correlation. The result showed that field trip is preferred as most interesting method of teaching for students to learn tourism courses followed by discussion, problem solving and brainstorming whereas lecture method is labeled as least interesting.

Keywords: Active learning methods; Assessment and preference

Introduction

Education has been understood so long as the art and science of teaching/'leading' the learners [1] with students as the center. Learning is a dynamic process that aims at bringing behavioral changes (in terms of understanding, attitude and skill) on the pupils [2]. To bring effective teaching-learning environment and to attain the objectives we set, selection and implementation of various appropriate teaching methods is an indispensable agendum [3]. Hence, the active involvement of students in the decision making process and recognizing of their preferences on the teaching methods are vital to create conducive emotional educational environment thereby bringing effective teaching learning process [4]. The academic achievement of students is also subjected to be influenced by their attitude and desire to the teaching methods to be handled [5]. It is noticed in literatures that more successful learning occurs when teachers' teaching methods are matched to students' learning styles that students are able to adapt more readily to different learning situations [6]. Therefore, determining suitable learning styles for tourism students can lead to an increase in students' attitude towards learning, productivity, academic performance and creativity in their life [6].

Nevertheless, what is practically applied in our university including tourism management department is the direct antithesis of this. Though the studies made on the teaching and learning methods used in hospitality education are not found so far [7]. In literatures, several researches indicated that lecture is the primary mode of delivery in college and university followed by discussion [8]. However, lecture method is the aged teaching method which includes explanation of contents orally by the teacher without the consent of students in most of Ethiopian tourism institution [9].

The disparity between students' preference and the method of teaching applied has a major influence on the success of students [10]. Therefore, the main essence of this study is to assess students' preference in teaching-learning methods so as to help produce innovative, creative, competitive and whole rounded tourism graduates.

Literature Review

Students' preferences for teaching methods

In higher education particularly in the field of tourism, it is strived to bring better education by employing effective teaching methods in the way of students' preferences to achieve effective teaching-learning process [9]. In line with this, the goals and objectives for teaching and selecting the subject matter in the curriculum, number, type, and preference of students, and the facilities available like, class room and instructional materials determines choice of appropriate teaching methods [11]. Teaching methods are "the means by which the teacher attempts to impart the desired learning or experience in a way that the learners understand and bring behavioral changes". With regards to preference, basically some students prefer certain methods of learning over others. These are what we call learning preference. Therefore, knowing a student's unique preference for learning can aid teachers in the planning of group and individualized instruction [12].

Many studies identified commonly used teaching methods in both approaches, both teacher-centered and student-centered in higher education. Under teacher-centered methods lecture and demonstration are the commonly used. Whereas student-centered methods such as discussion, presentation, brainstorming, case study, field trip, problem solving, role playing, questioning method, team teaching and etc. [13].

The various types of individual preferences for the most effective mode of instruction or study are referred to as learning styles or

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learning preferences [9]. Understanding students' learning styles or preferences is important for improving learning and developing an appropriate learning environment accordingly [8].

In terms of students' preferred teaching methods [14] suggests that students do not favor active learning methods because of the in-class time taken by the activities, fear of not covering all of the material in the course, and anxiety about changing from traditional classroom expectations to the active structure. In contrast, research [3] examined perceptions across six teaching methods: lecture/discussion, lab work, in-class exercises, guest speakers, applied projects, and oral presentations. Students most preferred the lecture/discussion method. Lab work, oral presentation, and applied projects were also favorably regarded. Khan [8] also noted favorable student attitudes towards active learning methods.

Jason [7] in his research on Effective teaching methods for large classes has made an assessment of students' preference of five teaching methods (lecture, Jigsaw, Lecture/ Discussion, Case study and Team Project) by conducting survey on the students. He found that, most students enjoy a blend that includes at least some component of active learning/participation in combination with traditional lecture, and confirms the importance of including some level of discussion during the class, but also providing structure through an organized lecture.

Factors affecting student's preference

Differences between individuals' preferences can be detected in many aspects of learning processes, such as, physical, behavioral, thinking styles, interaction styles, method of learning, rate of learning, and the cognitive styles that students choose when receiving new knowledge [9] Students' learning style, personality type and multiple intelligences, freedom of speech in childhood, social interaction, may influence their preference of teaching methods. Learning styles can be described in many ways but commonly are broken down to three preferences: auditory, visual, and tactile (also called kinesthetic) [3].

Therefore, it is important for teachers to recognize different learning styles so that students are not greatly disadvantaged in the classroom [2]. Students are not limited to a single preference and may learn to adopt other methods of learning through exposure in the classroom. Learning styles are not the only ways to explain different preferences of students. Personality type and multiple intelligences may also explain differences. Besides, Selection of a right instructional method for a particular lesson depends on many things. Among them are the age and developmental level of the students, what the students already know, and what they need to know to succeed in the lesson. The subject matter content, the lesson-situation, the objectives of the lesson, the available people, time, space, and material resources and the physical setting also need to be considered. By implication, there is no one right methods for teaching a particular lesson [8] and hence bring about students' good performance and achievement.

Study Objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess students' preference of the various teaching methods at the department of Tourism Management, MWU. Specifically the study is aimed:

1. To identify the most commonly employed teaching methods in the department
2. To investigate students' preferences of teaching methods
3. To identify the reasons why students prefer methods of teaching.

Methods and Materials

This study was intended to assess students' preferences of the teaching methods in Tourism Management Department in Madawalabu University. Mixed research approaches both quantitative and qualitative were employed to answer the research questions and achieve the desired objectives. To do this, descriptive research design was employed to explore students' preferences. Both primary and secondary sources of data were collected. The primary data were collected through questionnaire and interviews, and secondary data were also collected via literature reviews.

The researchers selected the target population from tourism management students using lottery randomization sampling technique and purposively selected five teachers Therefore, 11 students from 1st year and 2nd year, and 12 students from 3rd year tourism management were selected for the questionnaire surveys. Both open and closed-ended questionnaires were administered with multiple questions and four Likert scale to investigate students' preferences of teaching methods and their reasons and factors for their preferences. The most common using teaching methods also identified via interviews and six formal class room lesson observations.

The data collected through close-ended questions analyzed by using descriptive statistics to calculate frequency and percentage and to investigate the correlation between student preferences with level of interactiveness, childhood freedom of expression, and teaching styles, for this Pearson's correlation was employed. Qualitative information gathered through open-ended questions, interviews and formal classroom lesson observation were analyzed through qualitative data analysis via grouping similar ideas together, narrate and describe according.

Results and Discussion

From Table 1, the majority of respondents are female (56.5 %) and male (43.5 %). In the same table 60.9 % of respondents came from urban, 30.4% from sub urban and the rest 8.2% from rural. Most of the respondents (69.6%) had freedom of expression at the time of childhood. Only 30.4% of respondents have no freedom to express their opinions in childhood.

With regard to the way the students learn most, it is by doing exercise that most of the respondents (47.8%) learn. A considerable number of respondents, 39.1%, learn most by listening while 13% of them are more of visual learners (Table 2).

As noticed on the above Table 3, 47.8% of respondents are highly interactive, 21.7% of respondents have medium interactive level. 17.4% of respondents are interactive and 13.0% of respondents are least interactive by their nature.

	Students sex			Place where the students grew				Childhood freedom of expression		
	Male	female	total	urban	Sub- urban	rural	Total	yes	No	Total
Frequency	10	13	23	14	7	2	23	16	7	23
Percent	43.5%	56.5	100	60.9	30.4	8.7	100.0	69.6	30.4	100.0

Table 1: Respondents' background information.

As elicited on Table 4, 82.6% of respondents said that column-row is the commonly seat arrangement in the class. And 47.8 % of respondents prefer to front sit. 13.0% respondents said that cluster is the commonly used seat arrangement. And 34.8% of respondents also prefer back sit. Only 4.3% of respondents said horse shoe is the commonly used seat arrangements and 17.8% of respondents prefer middle sit.

Commonly using teaching methods by teachers in the class room

The data collected from key informant interviews, most teachers are using the following teaching methods in the class.

- Lecture
- Questioning
- Individual presentation
- Demonstrations
- Brainstorming
- Case studies
- Group discussion

The way students learn most				
	Listening	Doing Exercise	visual	Total
Frequency	9	11	3	23
Percentage	39.1	47.8	13.0	100.0

Table 2: Respondents learning styles.

	Students' level of interaction				Total
	Highly interactive	Interactive	Medium	Less interactive	
Frequency	11	4	5	3	23
Percent	47.8	17.4	21.7	13.0	100.0

Table 3: Respondents' level of interaction.

	Current class seat arrangement				Students' seat preference			
	Column-row	Horse shoe	Cluster	Total	front	Middle	Back	Total
Frequency	19	1	3	23	11	4	8	23
Percent	82.6	4.3	13.0	100.0	47.8	17.4	34.8	100.0

Table 4: Students' seat preference and class room arrangement style.

Method	very interesting		Interesting		Indifferent		Least interesting	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Lecture	4	17.4	8	34.8	3	13.0	8	34.8
Field trip	13	56.5	5	21.7	3	13.0	2	8.7
Discussion	12	52.2	10	43.5	1	4.3	1	4.3
Role play	6	26.1	11	47.8	4	17.4	2	8.7
Questioning	3	13.0	9	39.1	7	30.4	4	17.4
Brainstorming	8	34.8	8	34.8	5	21.7	2	8.7
Individual presentation	5	21.7	12	52.2	4	17.4	2	8.7
Demonstration	4	17.4	15	65.2	4	17.4	0	0
Problem solving	9	39.1	10	43.5	2	8.7	2	8.7
Case study	3	13.0	13	56.5	6	26.1	1	4.3
Independent study	1	4.3	5	21.7	14	60.9	3	13.0

Table 5: Students' preference of teaching methods.

h. Home study/library/independent study

As it can be seen from Table 5, 56.5% of the response by the students indicate field trip as the very interesting teaching method while indicate discussion as very interesting method. Considerably, 39.1%, 34.8% and 26.1% responses have indicated problem solving; brainstorming and role play as very interesting teaching methods respectively. Demonstration, case study, individual presentation and role play are said to be interesting methods by 65.2%, 56.5%, 52.2% and 47.8% respectively. The majority of the response, 34.8%, regarded lecture method as the least interesting teaching method, and questioning (with 17.4% choice) and individual study (with 13% choice) are also said to be least interesting compared to the rest methods in the opinion of the respondents (Table 6).

The correlation coefficient -0.105 shows there is a negative correlation between students' level of interaction and their preference of lecture method although this correlation is fairly weak. Hence, the more the students are interactive the lesser they prefer lecture method. In most of the learner centered methods including discussion, individual presentation, demonstration, case study and independent study the students' preference showed an increase as their interactivensess increase. The respective positive correlation coefficients (0.111, 0.325, 0.200, 0.055 and 0.056) indicate that there is linear relationship between students' interactivensess and those teaching methods though weak (Table 7).

In an attempt to see the relation between students' preference of methods and their childhood freedom to express their feelings, the result showed that there is an opposite relationship between the childhood freedom of expression and preference of lecture method and some learner centered methods. Meaning, the more the students had no freedom of expression during their childhood days the more they prefer lecture method (0.47), however the lesser they prefer fieldtrip (-0.112), brainstorming (-0.327), individual presentation (-.102), and problem solving method (-0.219). On the other hand, the more they had freedom to express their feelings during their childhood the more they prefer discussion (0.139), role play (0.042), questioning (0.137), demonstration (0.320), case study (0.063) and independent study (0.299) (Table 8).

Conclusion

Field trip is preferred as most interesting method of teaching for students to learn tourism courses followed by discussion, problem solving and brain storming. The reason for preferring the methods to

Reasons for Rating Various Teaching Methods as Very Interesting Teaching Methods	
Tourism teaching Methods	Reasons
Field trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Helps to acquire new knowledge and skill for learner ➤ Since tourism by its nature needs field work to explore the different attraction sites, field trip is necessary method. It thus helps students to get practical knowledge in the destination sites. ➤ It helps to enable students develop alternative potential sites and tourism products ➤ Learn through doing and visual ➤ Helps learner to release their mental stress ➤ Promotes sharing of experiences ➤ The Chance to give solutions for the problem related to the sites ➤ Promotes sense of ownership and pride for resources ➤ Build up confidence to interpret the sites for visitors ➤ It helps to change theoretical knowledge into practical
Active learning Discussion, presentation, brain storming, problem solving and role play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More student participation ➤ Students listen to other's opinion and express their opinion ➤ Students learn on their own and find out key points ➤ Students exchange their ideas ➤ The learning is more effective and makes teaching learning process more active ➤ Develops creativity among students ➤ It evokes thinking among students ➤ Viewing yourself in the eyes of others ➤ Helps to enhance learners interactivness
Reasons for Rating Various Teaching Methods as Least Interesting Teaching Methods	
Lecture method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is more of one way communication ➤ It makes the teacher more active and students more passive ➤ Limited students' participation ➤ It is boring ➤ It is teacher centered approach
Independent study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited knowledge and skills ➤ There is one independent individual involved ➤ Sharing of ideas are limited ➤ No discussion with peers ➤ It is not appropriate for many tourism courses
Individual presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited students creativity ➤ Chance of copying from different websites ➤ Less participation ➤ Limiting students capacity

Table 6: Reasons for students' preference of tourism teaching methods.

		Lecture	Field trip	Discussion	Role play	questioning	brainstorming	individual presentation	Demonstration	problem solving	Case study	Independent study
Students' level of interaction	Pearson Correlation	-0.105	-0.040	0.111	-0.090	-0.085	-0.206	0.325	0.200	-0.044	0.055	0.056
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.634	0.857	0.615	0.685	0.700	0.345	0.131	0.359	0.843	0.804	0.799
	N	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 7: The relationship between student's level of interaction and preference of teaching methods.

		lecture	Field trip	iscussion	Role play	questioning	Brainstorming	Individual presentation	Demonstration	problem solving	Case study	Independent study
Students' childhood freedom of expression	Pearson Correlation	0.047	-0.112	0.139	0.042	0.137	-0.327	-0.102	0.32	-0.219	0.063	0.299
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.83	0.61	0.528	0.849	0.532	0.128	0.645	0.136	0.315	0.776	0.166
	N	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 8: The relationship between childhood freedom of expression and student preferences.

others are summarized as fostering learning by doing, enjoyableness, promoting acquirement of the three blooms taxonomy enhancing experience sharing etc. This implies that the students prefer the methods in the learner centered approach and are ready to adore shouldering responsibility for taking leading roles.

Most of the students labeled lecture method as the least interesting

and questioning/Socratic method as indifferent. This shows that pupils are not as such glad to attend classes run by lecture method and most of them are neither eager nor irritated if independent study is employed as a method of teaching. The major rationale behind taking some methods like lecture, independent study and individual presentation as least interesting are generalized as limiting the discussion between

the teacher and students to one way communication, boringness, limitation of the objectives to be met, limitation of learners' capacity etc.

Majority of the students who grow in the urban areas and enjoy freedom to express their opinion of their childhood have negative view towards learning via lecture method whereas students who are denied the right to freely express their opinion during their childhood and remain passive develop negative attitude towards learner centered methods. Besides, with increase in their level of interactivenes/ interaction with people, students tend to opt discussion, individual presentation, demonstration, and they like learner centered methods betraying lecture method.

Recommendation

Since the preference of students for the methods of teachings are vital for the effective ongoing of teaching learning process and the achievement of objectives set, the role of creating fertile condition for the state of affair is not limited to certain individual(s) or organization(s).

Instructors are the stakeholders that sit at the top with reference to the attachment of teaching methods. Hence, they should give precedence to studying students' preferred methods of teaching (field trip, discussion and presentation according to this research) to create good teacher-students interaction and conducive learning environment. To this end they should undergo task division, and facilitation of programs and strategies which would promote the stated methods materially, financially and emotionally.

It is obvious that the achievement of teachers attempt could not be true unless school coordinators and curriculum developers shoulder the responsibility of doing research on the stated arena and incorporate the reached results as the basics that the teachers employ while working. They should also take steps to force policy makers and budget planners to consider teaching and learning issues.

Tourism is a very important tool for states' image building besides income generation and employment. Tourism education in this case takes a lion's share because it creates educated professionals for the sustainable development of the sector and the country at large. This makes facilitation of tourism education and creation of good learning environment indispensable. Thus, the university should give a due concern for the enhancement of the education by allocating enough budgets and creating well equipped teaching learning places.

Students, as one of the major stakeholders have to be active and

frank enough to forward their feeling about the way they want to be thought by and so that they can attain what they learn. They should also bear responsibility of helping the instructors and school coordinators by arranging the classroom environment, and preparation of instructional media that are affordable to them.

The role of tourism institutions like hotels, destination management offices, tour operators is also very much noticeable here. They are the very ones to grow the education and the sector to exploit mutual benefit. They can take their parts in subsidizing the program or providing materials, arranging FAM tours, providing conducive environments for students to take internship or practical attachments.

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