

TEACHERS CHARACTERISTICS AS PREDICTOR OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OSUN STATE – NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study investigated the perceptions of students on teachers characteristics in relation to students academic performance. The study was carried out in Osun State Senior Secondary Schools. A population of 1600 purposively selected SSS III students from 16 rural and urban schools were used for the study. Questionnaire tagged teachers characteristics and students academic performance (TCSAP) was used to elicit information from the students. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and chi-square to test the hypotheses generated in the study. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers characteristics on students academic performance. It was recommended that a proper evaluation of teachers based on examination and supervision should be well organized before promotion and appointment. A situation where mass promotion based on year of graduation does not occur well for good academic performance of students.

Keywords: Perception, Academic Performance, Teachers Characteristics, Predictor Students.

INTRODUCTION

There are hues and cries among stakeholders in education over the growing rate of failure and subsequent drop-out in the Nigeria secondary schools in recent times. The growing failure rate could be noticed in the yearly decline in students' performance in the Senior School Certificate (SSCE). Stakeholders in education blamed students for general unpreparedness to study as one of the major causes of students' failure. Teachers were also blamed for lack of dedication to their jobs which has inadvertently affected the academic performance of student. Whoever to be blamed, the general view is that high quality teachers are education's best resources and assets (Ayodele 2004).

Adeogun (2001) opined that the quality of the educational system depends on the quality of its teaching staff and that a school without human resources may not be able to achieve the goal and objectives of the educational system. Adesina (1980) also noted that teachers are the major indicator and determinant of quality education. Highly professional teachers, who are dedicated are needed in schools. It has been established that there is high correlation between what teachers know and what they teach. Thus the ability to teach effectively depends on the teachers knowledge and knowledge occurs in a variety of forms. Teacher effectiveness is

impeded if the teacher is unfamiliar with the body of knowledge taught and the teachers' effectiveness is subject specific. The implication of this for teachers is that they must thoroughly understand the content of what they teach. The teacher whose understanding of topic is thorough use clearer language and they provide better explanation than those whose background is weaker. The way the students perceive the teachers in terms of their (teachers) knowledge of content of subject matter may significantly affect the students academic performance.

A non-challant attitude of some teachers to work, has been attributed to poor academic performance of students. According to Eggen and Kauchak (2001), positive teachers attitude are fundamental to effective teaching. They identified a number of teachers attitude that will facilitate a caring and supportive classroom environment, they are: enthusiasm, caring, firm, democratic practices to promote students responsibility, use time for lesson effectively, have established efficient routines, and interact freely with students and providing motivation for them. Fisher et al (1980) also noted that high level of learning occur and learners feel good about themselves and the materials they are learning when teachers use instructional time efficiently. The way teachers outreach with students influences their attitude toward school and their academic performance. How students perceive their teacher attitudes to teaching in the classroom will be measured in this study Qualification, Teaching experience and Teaching skills are variables noted to have effect on student academic performances.

Ehinder and Ajibade (2000) asserted that "students, who are curious stakeholders in educational enterprise, have long suspected and speculated that some of their teachers lack the necessary professional qualifications. That is, skills, techniques, strategies required to communicate concepts, ideas, principles in a way that would facilitate effective learning." They believed that these deficiencies contribute significantly to the growing rate of failure and subsequent drop out of students in secondary institutions. These observations by stakeholders necessitate the need to investigate the effects of teachers characteristics such as professional qualification, teaching skill and techniques necessary for teaching and learning in secondary schools on academic performance of students.

As a result, of this, the following questions are raised.

- Do teachers knowledge of the subject matter in the classroom have influence on students academic performance in SSCE in public secondary schools in Osun State?.
- What relationships exist between teachers attitude to work and students academic performance in Osun State secondary schools?.
- What effect has teachers teaching skill have an academic performance of students.

The following research hypotheses were generated to guide the research study.

1. There is no significant relationship between secondary school students academic performance and their perception of teacher knowledge of subject matter.
2. There is no significant relationship between students perception of teachers' attitude in the classroom and students academic performance.
3. There is no significant relationship between students perception of teacher's teaching skills and students' academic performance

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the views of Allport discussion on the psychological concept of perception as the way through which we evaluate people, that we are familiar with. Allport conceived that in perception, the perceiver is the "judge" and person perceived the "other". In this study therefore, the secondary schools students are to serve as judges judging their teachers professional competence and their teaching effectiveness. The study is hinged on Allport (1966) theory. It served as the theoretical basis for students perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter, attitude to work and teaching skills in Osun State Secondary schools.

Allport theory was found appropriate for this study because of his explanations on the process involved in person perception. He explained three concepts:.

1. Common judgement sets: In evaluating a person, there must always be a special reason in view. The reason for this study is to determine whether students' perception of the selected teachers' variables with determine or correlate with students academic performances.

Categorization Tendency: Allport asserted that one of the most important things to do in perceiving and any object is to place it in a familiar category. That is to place a person in the category of generalized order. This study is evaluating the secondary school teachers based on standard assessment of teachers as stipulated in literatures. The selected variables and students' academic performance belongs to familiar category in education psychology.

Combining Cues:- Allport claimed that judging peoples involves putting together many bits of information. This study therefore will determine the reliability of students perception of teachers knowledge, attitude and teaching skills, using a statistical measure of their responses with their academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive research of the survey type. It is descriptive in the sense that, it is a form of planned collection of data from a large population for the purpose of analyzing the relationships between variables (Oppenheim, 1992).

Population

The study population comprised of Senior Secondary School III (SSIII) students in Osun state Nigeria. Samples of 1600 third year senior secondary school students were purposively selected from 16 satisfied selected secondary schools in the state. Ten states owned secondary schools and six privately owned school. 100 SS3 students were selected from each school. A total of 1600 students formed the sample population. The selected samples were adjudged to have had adequate exposure in the schools that could enable them to give valid responses to the questionnaire items.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was divided into four sections of A, B, C and D. Section A contains items on demographic information about the respondents such as name, of schools, sex, class,. Section B contains 10 items designed to find out student's perception of teachers' mastery of the subject matter, and general pedagogical knowledge. The items were adopted from Eggen and Kauchak (2001) Section C of the questionnaire is a 10 items perceived teacher's attitude in the classroom. The items were adapted from students' responses to teachers who "care" and do not care" developed 7 items were re-modified to accommodate other previous researches on teachers' attitude in the classroom. Section D consist of 10 items on essential teaching skills as enumerated in literature. The section adopted Rosenshire (1977) teacher rating scale.

In conducting the reliability for the questionnaire, Section B C, D of the instrument has a test-retest reliability of over a period of two weeks ($n=40$, $r=0.62$, 0.67 & 0.63 $p < 0.05$ and Cronbach Co-efficient alpha (0.69 0.70 and 0.71). This showed that the instrument is consistent and reliable for the study.

The minimum and Maximum scores in the inventory for each section B, C and D subjects with score greater than 40 were regarded as having positive perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matters, attitudes to work and teaching skill, while subject with score less than 40 were regarded as having negative perception.

For academic performance of students, students results in the mock examination which prepared them for the final senior School certificate (SSCE) were collected from the selected schools. Average raw scores of the student in five subjects were calculated and used as students academic performance. The five subjects used in English language, a Nigeria language (Yoruba), Mathematics, Biology and Economics. These subjects were selected because they are common to all the respondents. The data collected were analysed using chi-square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

RESULTS

Question 1: What are student perception of Teachers knowledge of subject matter, Attitude to work, and teaching skills?

Table 1: Perception of Students on Teachers knowledge of subject matter attitude to work and teaching skill

Perception	Teachers variables		
	Knowledge of subject matter	Attitude to work	Teaching skill
Positive	1250 (78.1%)	1224.76.5%	1251 (78.2%)
Negative	350 (21.9%)	376 (22.5%)	34.9 (21.8%)
Total	1600	1600	

Table 1 showed that 1,350 respondents had a negative perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter while 1,250 respondents. 78.1% had a positive perception of their teachers. 376 respondents 22.5% had a negative perception of teachers attitude to work while 1, 224 respondents. 76.5% had a positive perception of the same variable . 349 respondents (21.8%) had a negative perception of teachers teaching skills, while 1251 (78.2%) had a positive perception of teachers teaching skills.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Data

Variables	N	Mean	S.D
Teachers knowledge of subject matter	1600	58.13	12.51
Teachers attitude to work	1600	57.63	13.51
Teachers Teaching skill	1600	58.33	12.37
Academic performance of student	1600	55.32	11.37

Table 2 showed that the mean score of students perception of teachers knowledge of the subject matter to be $X = 58.13$, teachers attitude to be $x = 57.63$ and Teachers teaching skills to be $x: 58.33$ while the average score raw score of the respondents in the mock examination in five subjects was $x = 55.32$..

Correlation between Academic Performance and Students Perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter, attitude to work and teaching skills.

Table 3: Perception of Students on Teachers knowledge of subject matter attitude to work and teaching skill

Variable	Academic performance	Teachers knowledge	Teachers attitude	Teachers teaching skills
Academic performance	1,000	0.61	0.67	0.57
Teachers knowledge of subject matter	0.61	1.000	1.000	1.000
Teachers attitude to work	0.67	0.61	0.67	0.57
Teachers teaching skills	0.57	0.61	0.67	0.57

Analysis from table 4 showed that Students perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matter, teachers attitude to work and teachers teaching skills correlates positively and significantly with students academic performance with Pearson moment correlation value ($r = 0.61$, $r = 0.67$ and $r = 0.57$ $p < .05$ respectively,. It shows that there is a significant and high positive relationship between students perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter, teachers attitude to work and teachers teaching skills and student academic performance. This assumption was confirmed on table 4 with the standardized beta coefficient giving the measure of contribution of each independent variable on the academic performance. The obtained beta values (0.706, 0.879 and 0.694) for perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter, attitude to work and teaching skills respectively indicates that a unit change in these predictor variables has a large effect on the independent variables (academic performance).

Table 4: Standardized Beta coefficient

Variables	Unstandardised coefficients		n	Standardized coefficient	Sig
	B	Std error			
Constant	-322.078	31.500		-7.623	
Teachers knowledge	1.312	0.253	0.706	6.159	0.000
Teachers attitude	1.254	0.164	0.879	7.587	0.0000
Teachers teaching Skill	0.531	0.154	0.694	5.395	0.0000

DISCUSSION

Table 3 and 4 showed that the average academic performance of students in five subject in the selected schools correlate and depend significantly on students' perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter. the result is consistent with previous findings of (Ehinder and Ajibade 2001) They showed that there is significant relationship between students perception of teachers knowledge of subject matter and academic performances. Hence if a teachers knows his or her subject very well, it is natural for the students to like him or her and performed well in the subject.

The tables also indicated students academic performance correlate positively and significantly to teachers' attitude to work in the classroom. The findings is consisted with the finding of Durojaiye (1976) and Nakpodia (2001), Akomolafe (2004) they supported the idea that teachers positive attitude and good personal qualities affect students academic performance. The result of this study reject hypothesis two.

It was further revealed in the study that students academic performance correlate positively and depends significantly on teacher teaching skills. This findings is consistent with the views of Sotonwa (2003) which identified the qualities related to teaching skills such as content knowledge, clarity of expression, questioning etc. (Mushra, Sharm and Bansal 2007) also asserted that teachers verbal or intellectual aptitude always correlates with better students academic performance. Based on the previous research findings and the finding of this study on students perception of teachers on knowledge of subject matter, attitude and teaching skills on academic performance, the study shows a significant relationship.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study. It is evident that the heart of Nigerian educational system is the teacher and that teachers are the major indicator and determinant of quality education. Obanyan (2000) noted that teachers are considered instrumental to translating content standards into teachable classroom lessons, the teachers remains a constant factor in the successful implementation of any educational programme. Ajayi (1986) expressed the opinion that the classroom teacher is one of the chief determinants of the educational achievement of students in that their academic qualification, professional training among other variable are most significant determinants of academic performance of student.

From the study, it can be concluded that employing unqualified teachers in the school system can affect academic performance of student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has meaningful implications for teachers, school administrators, ministries of education, Teaching Service Commission, just to mention a few in the sense that, it will provide useful hints on the evaluation of teachers, promotion. Criteria and appointment of teachers into Nigerian schools.

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