



Relationship between Social Studies Teachers' Knowledge of Subject Matter, Teaching Skills and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Bauchi State

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the relationship between perceived teacher competence and students' academic performance in Bauchi State. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 84,319,000 out of which a sample of 384 was chosen using cluster and proportionate sampling techniques. Survey and correlation research designs were adopted for the purpose of this study. Data was collected using a researcher made questionnaire. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation technique was used to analyse the data. The findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance. Also, there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance. It was recommended that governments should ensure that knowledge of the subject matter is given high premium during interview and selection of new teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are regarded as the most imperative school-based factors that influence students' academic performance. "Teaching is a collaborative process which encompasses interaction between learners and teachers" (Garba, 2015). No matter how smooth the interaction goes between them, if the teacher is not competent, students couldn't achieve. Competent teachers are the most critical piece in students' achievement and closing achievement gaps. A competent teacher is one who is able to present information clearly and logically to students, helps students, puts their ideas into words, improves their communication skills and provides appropriate analogies to assist planning. Due to increasing nature of poor academic performance in educational sector especially in external examinations, many educationists tend to shift the blame on lack of funds from the government to provide quality textbooks and other infrastructures. However, this might not be the reason why students perform poorly in examinations. This is so because the most important determinant of students' performance is teachers' competence.

Teacher competence is an umbrella term encompassing a number of qualities possessed by the teacher. It covers a broad range of higher order skills and behaviours such as mastery of the subject matter, teaching skills, attitudes, leadership styles and teachers' qualifications.

Within the context of this study, teacher competence is limited to teachers' knowledge (mastery) of the subject matter and teachers' teaching skills. The main aim of the study is to determine what students perceive as teacher competence in relation to the two qualities mentioned, and also determine how the perception does relate with their academic performance.

According to Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009), teacher competence is regarded as a multi-dimensional construct which encompasses numerous interconnected elements towards transmission of knowledge to learners. Based on this, Adediwura (2007) added that different elements of teacher competence include teachers' mastery of subject matter, teachers' teaching skills, teachers' qualification, attitudes and leadership styles. In a similar study conducted by Bada, regarding the effect of teachers' classroom effectiveness on students' academic performance, it was found that effective teachers produce better performing students. Other studies establishing relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject matter with teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance could be seen in the works of Akpan (2008), Nwaiwa (2009) and Lawrence (2002).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Find out relationship between perceived social studies teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance.
2. Find out relationship between perceived social studies teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance.

Research Questions

1. Is there significant relationship between perceived social studies teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance?
2. Is there significant relationship between perceived social studies teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance?

Hypotheses

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between perceived teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between perceived teaching skills and students' academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey and correlational designs. A total population of 84,319,000 distributed across 413 Junior Secondary School in the State entailed the population of this study. Cluster and proportionate sampling technique were used to select a sample size of 384 students from the population. A researcher made questionnaire and a proforma were used to collect data. The draft copy of the questionnaire was given a face-value by experts in both curriculum and measurement and evaluation. The instrument was also pilot tested and a reliability estimate was ascertained using both Cronbach's alpha and split half techniques. The questionnaire items were found to have reliability estimates of 0.62 and 0.64 respectively. The data obtained through the questionnaire were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation technique on Statistical package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between perceived teacher's knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic achievement

Table 1: Result of PPMC Analysis between Teachers' Knowledge of the Subject Matter and Stud. Acad. Performance

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	r-cal	r-crit	Df	P	Decision
Teachers' Knowledge of the Subject Matter	384	3.18	0.45	0.615	0.195	382	0.05	Ho Rejected
Students' Academic Performance	384	3.09	0.582					

The above table shows that the calculated $r = 0.615$ as against the critical $r = 0.195$. Since the r calculated is greater than the r critical, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between perceived teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance was rejected and an

alternate one was upheld. Similarly, this has answered research question one (1) which sought to find out whether there is relationship between perceived social studies teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between perceived teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance.

Table 1: Result of PPMC Analysis between Teachers' Teaching Skills and Stud. Acad. Performance

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	r-cal	r-crit	Df	P	Decision
Teachers' Teaching Skills	384	3.15	0.477	0.719	0.195	382	0.05	Ho Rejected
Students' Academic Performance	384	3.09	0.582					

The above table shows that the value of the calculated $r = 0.719$ is greater than the r critical $= 0.195$. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance was therefore rejected, consequent upon which the alternate one was retained. Furthermore, this has successfully answered the research question two (2) which sought to find out whether there is relationship between perceived social studies teachers' teaching skills and students' academic performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the above findings, from the two hypotheses tested in the study, the results obtained indicated agreements with previous researchers. Test of the first null hypothesis proved that there is significant positive relationship between the two variables. This supports the findings of Adediwura (2007) on effects of students' perception of teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance. The result shows that students' perception of teachers knowledge of the subject matter has a significant positive relationship with students' academic performance with a coefficient of $r = 0.70$, $p < 0.05$

The testing of hypothesis two showed that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived teachers teaching skills and student academic performance. Examining lectures teaching and its effect on student academic achievement, Akpan (2008) found that the teachers teaching skills have significant positive impact on students' academic performance. Nwaiwa (2009) has also agreed with the above submission; where he found that significant relationship exist between teachers' teaching and student academic performance $r = 0.64$, $p < 0.05$.

CONCLUSION

The study has been able to ascertain the relationship between perceived teachers' competence (as expressed in teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and teachers teaching skills)

and students' academic performance. It was found that there was a significant positive relationship between the perceived teachers' competence and students' academic performance in JSS in Bauchi state. Students' performance was generally high as competent teachers have proven to have a direct interaction with the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings of this study, the following recommendations were offered:

1. Governments as employers of teachers should ensure that knowledge of the subject matter is given high premium during interview and selection of new teachers. During the interview, representation of all subjects should be drawn and led by expert in those specific areas for proper drill and selections.
2. Teachers (in the service) should be provided with the opportunities for further studies with a view to getting in-depth knowledge of the subject matter as well as higher qualifications.
3. Governments should ensure that teacher's capacity is built through seminars, conferences and workshops where new skills of teaching and evaluation could be learnt consistently at regular intervals.
4. Some teaching skills have correlated positively with students' performance, it should be considered for not only employment of teachers but their subsequent promotions
5. The study recommends further research to be carried out to cover wider areas and subject. This enables wider coverage and generalizations.

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