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## Influence of Economics Teachers' Personality on Secondary School Students' Classroom Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State

- There was no significant difference between the mean classroom performance scores of students when taught by male and female Economics teachers
- Teaching experience of the teachers influenced the students' classroom performance in Economics
- The teachers' qualifications significantly influenced the students' classroom performance in Economics
- The teachers' interpersonal relationship with students significantly influenced the students' classroom performance in Economics
- The knowledge of the subject matter by the teachers significantly influenced the students' classroom performance in Economics.

**Purpose:** The study investigated the influence of Economics teachers' personality on students' classroom performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

**Design:** The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. The sample consisted of 19 teachers randomly selected out of thirty one and their SS2 Economics students numbering 326. An observational schedule titled Economics teachers' personality test (ETP) was the instrument for data collection. The academic records (grades) of the Students were collected from the 19 teachers. One research questions was answered using mean and standard deviation and four null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance using t- test and ANOVA.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that teachers' gender had no effect on the classroom performance of the students. However, teachers teaching experience, qualifications, interpersonal relationship with students, knowledge of subject matter, and attitude of the teacher had influence on students' classroom performance. It was recommended that only teachers with relevant teaching qualifications in Economics should be employed to teach the course in Secondary schools. Also, teachers should be given proper incentives that will make them remain in their job so as to gain experience as they grow in the profession.

### Keywords:

Teacher's personality, subject matter knowledge, classroom Performance

### 1 Introduction

As air is an indispensable factor for the survival of humans, so are teachers indispensable in achieving any educational goal. Therefore, teachers' effectiveness is undoubtedly one of the most important factors shaping the learning and growth of Students (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005). Contributing to teachers' effectiveness is teacher's intrinsic personality attributes among other factors such as teaching experience and qualifications (Akinsolu, 2010). The prevailing conditions of these factors would definitely have a negative or positive influence on the instructional quality in schools, which may translate to either good or poor academic performance of secondary school students.

A teacher's personality is a major factor affecting how he or she relates, communicates and deals with students, which are translated into students' classroom performance. There are two basic determinants of personality, namely, heredity and past interactions with the environment (Pierce & Gardner, 2003). Traits such as teacher's

attitude (behaviour), teacher's relationship with the students are often hereditary whereas other traits such as knowledge of the subject matter, years of experiences, qualification come as a result of interaction (education) with the environment. These traits have either negative or positive influence on students' classroom performance.

Poor academic performance of students has been reported in literature and linked to poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitude to work and poor teaching habits. Report on the trends of Economics students' performance in WAEC in Enugu State stated that the percentage of the students that made D, E and F between 2012 and 2016 were above 60% whereas less than 40 % of the students made grade C and above in Economics. The West African Examination Council Chief Examiner's report (WAEC, 2015) also noted that poor performance in Economics has continued to linger from year to year.

A focus on Economics teacher's personality could be a good effort in identifying factors that could influence their classroom performance. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the influence of teacher's personality attributes, on the Secondary school students' academic performance in Economics in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

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### 1.1 Theoretical significance

This study is based on Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1986). It can be seen as the capacity to produce a desired effect. Bandura emphasized that self-efficacy is the very foundation of human motivations and achievement. Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-efficacy was offered in order to improve the current classroom practices (McLeod, 2011). In this study, Bandura's theory provided the framework to apply teachers personality traits and classroom performance by learners.

### 1.2 Conceptual and empirical framework

Teacher's personality is organized set of characteristics possessed by a teacher, which uniquely influences the cognition, motivation and behaviour of the teacher in various situations (McKenny, 2008). According to Khan, Shah, Khan and Gul (2012), the teachers' personality has a significant role in the success or failure of students. If a teacher exhibits positive personality traits, which support students' learning, share knowledge in multiple ways, create an environment of learning and cooperation, and encourage the students to come forward and show participation in the class activities, then the students will learn more. Their skills and competencies will increase and students' level of confidence on the teacher will be enhanced and vice versa (Garcia, Kupczynski, & Holland, 2011). The teacher with pervasive authoritarian characteristics, for example, is likely to reflect these traits/attributes in his or her relationships with students and in the techniques he uses in his instruction (Morrison & McIntyre, 2005). Usually when we talk about someone's personality, we are talking about what makes that person different from other people, perhaps even unique. This aspect of personality is the basis of individual differences. These theories often spend considerable attention on things like types and traits and tests with which we can categorize or compare people: Some people are neurotic, others are not; some people are more introverted, others more extroverted; and so on (Boeree, 2006). People who have different backgrounds have different attitudes, values and norms. Some people have strong personalities such that they can influence others to act and do things.

A study carried out by Ezeamuzie, Ogbonna and Uba (2013) on the influence of Economics teacher's personality on students' academic achievement in Igbo-Eze South local Government Area of Enugu state showed that teachers' good look, sympathy, good rapport with students, knowledge of the subject matter, sense of humour, good motivator etc. promote students classroom performance. The study also demonstrated that where good relationship exists between the teacher and students, the students will be active in the classroom and such will positively boast their classroom performance. On the other hand, talkativeness, cruelty, verbal abuse etc inhibits a child's classroom performance. This work relates to the present work as it indicates among other

factors, teachers' attitude and inter-personal relationship with the students among other factors that may affect students' classroom performance positively or negatively.

### 1.3 Statement of the problem

Economics is one of the most popular elective subjects offered in secondary schools. However, despite the popularity, reports have shown persistent poor performance of students in the subject. Poor academic performance of students in Economics in Nigeria as reported in literatures has been linked to factors such as poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, and teacher's negative classroom attitude. Personality attributes that form the behaviors and attitudes of the teachers which directly influence students' performance has become a topical issue in the field of education for the realization of objectives of any discipline including economics. This is because the teacher occupies a paramount position in any teaching and learning situation. More so, no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. The present study is therefore designed to investigate the influence of Economics teachers' personality on students' classroom performance in Secondary schools' in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

### 1.4 Research question

The following research question guided the study:

What is the influence of Economics teacher-students relationship on the classroom performance of the students?

Research hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant influence of teacher's teaching experience on the Economics students' classroom performance

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** Economics teachers' interpersonal relationship with the students does not significantly affect students' classroom performance.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant influence of teacher's Knowledge of the subject matter and Economics students' classroom performance.

**HO<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant influence of teacher's attitude and students' classroom performance.

## 2 Research design and methodology

### 2.1 Area of study

The study was carried out in Nsukka Local government Area of Enugu State Nigeria. Nsukka has an area of 1,810 Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 309,633 by the 2006 Census (NPC, 2006). There are thirty one(31) public Secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area, for 2014/2015 academic session (PPSMB, 2014). One of Nigeria's foremost Universities, the University of Nigeria is located in Nsukka. The choice of Nsukka Local government Area, is borne of the persistent report of poor performance of students in the area (Onuoha, 2015).

## 2.2 Design of the study/sample and sampling technique

The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. According to Nworgu (2014), this design deals with non-manipulative independent variables such as sex, socio-economic status etc. in which the researcher only attempts to link some already existing effects or observations to some variables as causative agents. Thus the researcher deemed it appropriate to use this design to determine how such independent variables as teachers' years of teaching experience, interpersonal skills among others influence students' classroom performance. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 19 Economics teachers randomly selected out of 31 public secondary schools in Nsukka Local government Area of Enugu State and their SS2 Economics students numbering 326. The SS2 students were selected because they are the only students who had spent at least one complete academic Session with their teachers and do have a complete Session results, namely 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> term results at the end of the academic year. An observational guide titled Economics Teachers' Personality Test (ETPT) items, developed by the researcher, was used for data collection. The instrument consisted of 35 items divided into sections A and B. Section A elicited information on the teachers' school, gender, qualification and years of experience. Section B had three clusters. Cluster one, elicited information on the influence of teachers' interpersonal relationship with the students; Cluster 2 sought information on how Economics teacher's knowledge of the subject matter affects students' classroom performance. Cluster 3 sought information on how Economics teachers' classroom attitudes influence students' classroom Performance. The teachers were scored with the instrument as either 'Yes' or 'No' against each of the items in every cluster and the percentage of 'Yes' and 'No' in each cluster determined proportionally. In each cluster, a teacher is then marked as 'Good' if the number of entries the teacher scored 'Yes' were up to 50 % & above and 'Poor' if the number were less than 50%.

## 2.3 Validation and reliability of the instrument

The instrument was validated by six (6) experts in various fields in the Faculty of Education, namely, Educational Psychology (3), Guidance and Counseling (1), Economics Education (1) and Science Education (1). After validation, the instrument was subjected to trial testing by administering it to 13 Economics teachers in 5 schools in Igbo-Eze North local government area of Enugu State and their students' continuous assessment collected. These schools were outside the study area, but shared the same characteristics with the sample schools. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and internal consistencies of 0.80, 0.85 and 0.88 for the three clusters and an overall reliability of 0.924 was found.

## 2.4 Data analysis

Mean and Standard Deviation were used in answering the research questions while independent sample student t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were

used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## 3 Results

Results are presented in tables (1-6) according to research hypotheses outlined above

The result of the influence of teachers' teaching experience on the students academic performance as depicted in Table 1, showed that the mean scores of students taught by teachers with 1 to 5 years teaching experience was 47.48 with an SD of 26.38. Students taught by teachers who had 6 to 10 years of experience, 11-15 years and above 15years had mean scores of 55.16, 56.46 and 55.66 respectively. The study identified a strong relationship between teachers teaching experience and students' academic performance.

Data in Table 2 indicate that the exact probability level of '0.497' is less than the already set alpha level of 0.05 at 3 degrees of freedom. This means that teaching experience of Economics teachers had a significant effect on the students' classroom performance. Therefore, the Null hypothesis that the Economics teachers' teaching experience has no significant influence on the classroom performance of students was rejected.

Out of the 19 Economics teachers sampled, 5 were ranked low in their interpersonal relationship by the students while 14 were ranked high on interpersonal relationship. The results as presented in Table 3 showed that students taught by teachers who were scored low in interpersonal relationship with students had a mean score of 40.3 and an SD of 8.81 while those taught by teachers with high interpersonal relationship had a mean score of 54.63 and SD of 13.7. This implies that interpersonal relationship between Economics teachers and their students influenced classroom performance. This finding was further verified by hypothesis two. Table 6 indicates that the probability level of 0.014 is less than the already set alpha level of 0.05 at 17 degrees of freedom. Hence, the Null hypothesis of no significant difference between Economics teachers' interpersonal relationship with the students and students' classroom performance is therefore rejected. This means that the interpersonal relationship of the Economics teachers with the students significantly influenced the students' classroom performance.

Data in table 4 shows that eleven out of nineteen (19) sampled Economics teachers demonstrated a low knowledge of the subject matter while eight (8) teachers had a high knowledge of the subject matter. The results showed that students taught by Economics teachers with a low knowledge of the subject matter had mean scores of 44.01 and an SD of 9.11 while teachers that had a high knowledge of subject matter had students mean classroom performance score of 56.19 and an SD of 15.28. This implies that a teachers' knowledge of subject matter influences students' classroom performance. To further verify the finding, hypothesis three were tested. Table 6 indicates that the probability level of 0.028 is less than the already set alpha level of 0.05 at 17 degrees of freedom. This means that Economics teachers' knowledge of

the subject significantly influences the students' classroom performance.

Table 5 shows that 5 out of the 19 sampled Economics teachers demonstrated were scored low in attitude while 14 teachers scored high in classroom attitudes to student. The results also showed that students taught by Economics teachers that were rated high in classroom attitude had mean scores of 57.31 and SD of 15.22 which was above the mean score of students taught by teachers' with low score in classroom attitude. This means that Economics teachers' classroom attitude had an influence on the classroom performance of their students. Table 6 indicates that the obtained probability level of 0.04 is lesser than the already set alpha level of 0.05 at 17 degrees of freedom. Hence, the Null hypothesis of no significant influence of Economics teachers' classroom attitude on the students' classroom performance was rejected.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of Economics teachers' experience in Public Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State

Teaching experience	Number/Frequency	Mean score of students	Standard deviation
1 to 5 years	2	47.48	26.38
6 to 10 years	7	55.16	13.89
11 to 15 years	5	56.46	13.71
Above 15 years	5	55.66	13.38

Table 2: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the Economics teachers' scores based on their teaching experience

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	118.99	3	39.67	0.196	0.049	Significant
Within Groups	3028.06	16	201.87			
Total	3147.06	19				

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation scores of teachers' interpersonal relationship with the students

Teacher-students relationship	Number of teachers	Mean	Standard deviation
Low	5	40.30	8.81
High	14	54.63	13.79

Table 4: Mean and Standard deviation scores of teachers' knowledge of subject

Teacher's Knowledge of the subject matter	Number of teachers	Mean	Standard deviation
Low	11	44.01	9.11
High	8	56.19	15.28

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation scores of Economics teachers' classroom attitude

Teachers attitude	Number of teachers	Mean score of students	Standard deviation
Low	5	41.14	8.54
High	14	57.31	15.22

Table 6: t-test of Economics teachers' scores based on their personality characteristics

t- test for equality of means	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Teacher-students relationship	-2.7	17	0.014	Significant
Teacher's knowledge of the subject matter	-2.36	17	0.028	Significant
Teachers' attitude	-1.92	17	0.04	Significant

## 2.5 Discussion of findings

The results obtained in this study indicate that years of teaching experience of the teachers did significantly influence the students' performance in Economics. A test of the corresponding hypothesis showed that students taught by teachers with up to 6 years of teaching experience and above performed significantly higher than those taught by teachers with 1 to 5 years of experience. This suggests that teaching experience of up to 6 years and above is necessary to acquire the required skills and experiences needed to adapt instruction to students' understanding and high academic performance. Classrooms are dynamic and so adaptations are sometimes more desirable than a well-written lesson plan (Stronge, 2007; Kini and Podolsky 2016). Teachers develop adaptability through experience and awareness. Therefore, the longer a teacher stays on a teaching job, the more likely he or she is to demonstrate adaptability compared to beginners. Kini and Podolski (2016) noted that as teachers gain experience, their students not only learn more as measured by standardized tests, they also more likely to do better on other measures of success such as attendance. The authors further observed that teachers effectiveness increase at a greater rate when they teach in a supportive and collegial working environment, and when they accumulate experience in the same grade level, subject or district. The more a teacher lasts in a



teaching profession, the more he/she masters the art of teaching and becomes more effective in handling pedagogical challenges. Consequently with the passage of time, teachers get more command of their subjects and become more competent in the art of teaching through experience.

The result presented in table 3 showed that students taught by teachers with good students-teachers interpersonal relationship as measured by the observational guide, Economics Teachers Personality Test (ETPT), were found to perform significantly higher than those taught by teachers with low interpersonal relationship. This suggests that healthy teachers' relationship with the students has substantial influence on the classroom performance of the students. This is in agreement with the reports of Landsford, Antonucci, Akiyama and Takahashi (2005) and Martin (2014) that interpersonal relationships have profound effects on quality of life and performance of students academically. Similarly, in a study to identify the relationship between teacher-students' interpersonal relationships and students' academic achievements in Social Studies, Fan (2012) concluded that a significant positive correlation exist.

As regards the influence of the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter on the students' classroom performance, results presented in Table 4 showed that students whose teachers had good knowledge of the subject matter as measured by the ETPT performed significantly higher than those taught by teachers with low knowledge of the subject matter. This result is in agreement with Taylor (2011) who found that, when combined with time on task, teacher knowledge leads to substantial gains in student learning. Similarly, two case studies in the Gauteng by Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor, (2010) and the NorthWest provinces of South Africa by Carnoy and Arends (2012) have also provided evidence of a positive relationship between teacher's knowledge and learner's performance. Economics is perceived as a difficult Subject, a problem which had generated much controversy over the teaching of economics in secondary schools (Yusuf, 2009; Mises, 2012). Hence, teaching of Economics to secondary schools students whose power of deduction and abstract reasoning are not well developed requires teachers with good knowledge of the subject matter for high academic performance by students.

The results of this study as presented in Table 5 showed that the mean score of students taught by teachers with good attitude was higher than those taught by teachers who scored low in attitude as measured by the ETPT. Analysis of results as shown by t-test for equality of means showed that the mean score of students whose teachers have good classroom attitude was significantly higher than those whose teachers had poor classroom attitude. This implies that Economics teacher's classroom attitude can influence the classroom performance of the students. A good classroom attitude exhibited by the teacher provides a healthy environment for learning. Wirth and Perkins (2013) observed that the teacher's attitude contributes significantly to students' attention in

classrooms. The results of this study also agree with the report of Ulug, Yildirim and Erilmaz (2011) who demonstrated that teachers' positive attitude have a positive influence on students' personality as well as their life performance.

### 3 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed a number of Economics teachers' personality related factors that significantly influence classroom performance of the students. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the teachers' interpersonal relationship with the students and their classroom attitudes have significant influence on the classroom performance of the students in Economics. Also, the study, revealed that the teachers' years of teaching experience and the knowledge of Economics content correlated positively with the students' classroom performance.

### 4 Recommendation

Sequel to the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to improve the classroom performance of students in Economics in Secondary schools. Only teachers with relevant teaching qualification in Economics should be employed to teach the subject in Secondary schools. Teachers including those that teach Economics should be well remunerated and be given proper incentives that will make them remain on their job so as to gain experience as they grow in the profession. It is recommended that stakeholders in the education industry should organize periodic seminars and workshops for teachers on the need to create a positive school environment that engenders a healthy classroom attitude and interpersonal relationships. Economics teachers should be encouraged to develop good classroom attitude and interpersonal relationship with their students.

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