
Teacher's Effectiveness and Students' Academic Achievement in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research project examined Teacher's effectiveness and students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria. Ex-post factor design was adopted for the purpose of the study. The population of the study comprised 14,297 JSS III students and the sample was 1,200 JSS III student selected through stratified random technique from the three Educational zones in State Secondary Education Board, Cross River State, Nigeria. The instrument (Teachers' effectiveness, and students' academic achievement) used was a structured six-point likert scale questionnaire, the reliability estimate of which ranged from 0.7 to 0.8 and achievement test scores adapted from Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination, Ministry of Education, Cross River State (2004) were used to collect information from sample used in the study. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation and Multiple Regression. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance and 1198 and F (9,1190)

degree of freedom to ascertain the extent of reliability that existed between those variables. The result showed that teachers' effectiveness in student-teacher relationship, teachers' classroom management skills, mastery of subject matter by the teacher, and teachers' communication skills significantly relate to each other towards improving the academic performance of students in Social Studies. Based on the findings, it was concluded that all the independent variables achievement in Social Studies. It was recommended that Social Studies teachers should be retrained on teachers' effectiveness skills mentioned in this study through seminars, conferences and in-service programmes. There should also be an encouraging classroom climate for students' confidence and initiative.

According to Uche and Umoren (1998), Thomas Gordon is the originator of Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET). Gordon instructed teachers on how to reduce negative behavior by the use of clever and provocative classroom communication authority. Whichever way this is done will reflect the teachers' personality, character and general approach to teaching on the one hand, and the context (the type of students, subject matter, and school ethos) on the other hand. To achieve this, the teacher needs to be purposeful during lessons, besides sustaining students' attention and motivation and ensuring the appropriateness of the learning activities. Loughran (2006) stated that basically the teacher's authority needs to be based on effective teaching rather than on coercion. Teacher effectiveness has a lot to do with the teacher's authority. Hahn Good (2003) had identified four main factors involved in establishing and maintaining authority namely: status, teaching competence, exercising control over the classroom and exercising control over discipline.

Berecter (2002) concluded that no teacher can be effective unless he has thoroughly learned what he is to teach; understood the teaching-learning environment; can assess the impact of his/her own teaching methods and attitudes on the learners; and can evaluate scientifically the learning outcomes. Teachers should move away from dedicate teaching where students are essentially passive, towards setting up learning experiences where students are active and have some control over the course of the learning-taking place. Social Studies has been globalized with environment problems like deforestation, population hazards, health, environmental disaster, desertification, ozone depletion, urbanization, etc (Ukpong, 1994). Therefore the teacher needs to effectively regulate classroom activities and teacher-pupil interaction during instruction, including the circumstances under which students can speak and move from their seats (Education Review Office, 2006).

According to Altan-Lee (2003) the concept of learning experiences and/or learning activities is so central in teaching-learning situations that hardly can any meaningful teaching and learning take place in the absence of a determined effort to

integrate learning experiences into the overall classroom instruction. According to Akpan (1998) and Akpan (2006), teachers generally occupy a unique position in any society as they have the major responsibility to influence youths to develop their capabilities. Social Studies teachers have the same responsibility but in addition, they are required to help the students develop basic skills and knowledge needed for understanding of the environment, acquisition of values and for the unity of the society. In the teaching of Social Studies there are levels of professional certifications like Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E.) (Social Studies), Bachelor of Science (Education) B.Sc.(Ed.) (Social Studies), Masters in Education (M.Ed.) (Social Studies) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) (Social Studies). Ekpenyong (2005) also confirmed that what constitutes teaching has been conceptualized in a number of ways; namely: Communication (Bathsie, Bell and Loughran (2009), and Praxis, and Art (Stenhouse, 1975). It can also be described as teacher-learner interaction (Rietveld, 2002). The sum total of these is that teaching consists of a system of activities directed to learners that takes place under specific conditions. Effective teaching thus requires that the teacher gives students plenty of opportunities to contribute and elaborate their own ideas and listen genuinely to what students say (or are trying to say) and attempts to consider this from the students' perspective. (Kohlmeier, 2006).

Generally, teachers' effectiveness may have an undoubted influence on students' academic achievement in Social Studies just as in any other subject or course of instruction. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 1996), the 21st century education will demand more of a higher level of skill and knowledge. Teachers should be able to reason analytically, solve complex problems, gather and synthesize data. By so doing students' performance/ achievement must rise to a higher level. The commission emphasized that as the society raises its expectation for students' achievement, it must concomitantly raise standards for teachers. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 1996) noted that many at time, teachers are assigned to teach out-of-field course in shortage areas such as Mathematics and Science. This is more pronounced in Social Studies where there are very few qualified and effective teachers considering how old it is in the school curriculum. If this commission has an opportunity of studying Social Studies on this same subject matter, the result would have been terribly discouraging.

Darling-Hammond (1999) pointed out that fully prepared teachers are more effective in the classroom, and their students demonstrate larger achievement gains than students whose teachers are less effective and unprepared in knowing how to guide and encourage individual student's learning, knowing how to individualize students learning; how to plan productive lessons and how to diagnose students' problems. Fully prepared teachers have an in-depth knowledge of content and how it can be taught

effectively so that students learn. Darling-Hammond (1992) reported that over 100 research students reviewed in 1992 provided this evidence.

Wenglinsky (2000) in Educational Test Service (ETS) found out that teachers' classroom practices greatly influence students' academic achievements, and that 'more attention needs to be paid' to improving classroom practices. Students' achievement increases when students' have teachers who are trained in developing higher order thinking skills, who are skilled at implementing hands-on experiences in the classroom, and who are trained to work with special populations. The findings support the need for content-specific pedagogy, the 'how to teach', portion of teacher development, and dispels the idea that only subject matter knowledge is necessary in order to teach effectively. Effective teaching today requires audio-assisted, computer and all that is associated with it (Obanja, 2002).

Okon (1998) in a research study compared the performance of Social Studies students taught by effective teachers with the performance of students taught by ineffective teachers. Independent t-test was used to analyze the data and the analysis showed that the mean (x) score for students taught by effective teachers was 63.00 and Standard Deviation was 14.18 and the mean (x) score of students taught by ineffective teachers was 40.38 and Standard Deviation (SD) was 15.63. The comparison yielded a t-ratio of 12.40, which was statistically significant at .05 level of significance, and 298 degrees of freedom. The result showed that students who perceived their teachers as effective performed better in Social Studies than their counterparts who perceived their teachers as ineffective.

Donovan, Branford and Pellegrino (1998) published a report, which indicated that teachers must be highly skilled in working with students to develop true understanding of concepts. The level of skills that a teacher must have to ensure students' understanding takes time to develop. It does not happen overnight. Donovan, Branford and Pellegrino (1998) in their study also found that teachers must be very skilled at working with students' pre-existing and mistaken ideas about how the world works. Teachers must be able to devise formative assessments that examine the understanding of the students. All of these principles and data provide strong evidence that content alone, while necessary, is not sufficient for a teacher today. Clinical practice and professional study are crucial.

In addition, Sanders and Rivers (1996) reported data from Tennessee which showed that two equally performing second graders can be separated by as many as 50 percentile points by the time they reach fifth grade, solely as a result of being taught by teachers whose effectiveness varies greatly. A study by Dana (1997) in 1996-1997 showed that Texas students perform better on State examinations when instructors are

fully licensed in the subjects they teach. On the other hand, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (1998) showed that the influence of teachers on students' academic achievements is many times greater than any other commonly observed variable. A survey of teacher preparation programmes across the country by Feistritzer (1999) confirmed that 62 percent of these programs require a major equivalence of a major in the subject area of the license and 26 percent require at least a minor subject content as prepared in the content area. Similarly, Fuller (1999) also confirmed in their study that accredited teachers performed at about 91 percent better than unaccredited teachers in the classroom. As to what can be done in ensuring teachers' effectiveness, Darling Hammond (1999) and Wise (1999) opined that teacher preparation programmes should be expanded. They were also of the opinion that truth-in-labeling a qualified and effective teacher should be applied and different titles for those who are not qualified and effective should be applied to the knowledge of both the parents and the public.

Commenting on teachers' effectiveness, Cooper (2002) identified some traits possessed by each teacher to include teachers' approachability, cheerfulness, dependability, enthusiasm, fairness, honesty, intelligence, morality and patience. According to Cooper (2002) individual differences, plans and the process of planning contribute to a teachers' effectiveness in the classroom situation. Obsolete.

Gage (1963) in a research study argued that it is all right for a teacher to know about learning, to know his subject matter, to have appropriate instructional materials, and to fit into a given organization for instruction. But what a teacher really wants to know is: What should I do in the classroom? According to Bassey (2002) there are several ways by which teachers' effectiveness can be evaluated. One way is to sample the opinion of students about their teachers. Teaching is not merely giving information but it also involves offering a child systematic guide to learn how to learn. Desforges (2000) described teaching as involving the consideration of the nature of the child, the goals to be attained, and finally the methods and materials required to attain those goals.

Reitveld (2003), in his study reported that, a good teacher explains, is patient and marks students' work regularly and fairly. Reitveld (2003) however lamented that the contemporary emphasis on 'good personal relationships' in teaching, and on close and sympathetic contact with children, may actually interfere with teacher's performance of his task as an instructor. Teacher's effectiveness is an old concept that underlies students' academic achievement in schools. Reitveld (2003) maintained that the effective teacher should maintain a marked social distance from his students.

In the United States, for example, the Stanford Teacher Competence Appraisal Guide (STCAG) as contained in Stones and Morris (1972) lists a total of 17 qualities,

grouped together under five headings: ‘aim’, ‘planning’, ‘performance’, ‘evaluation and community’ and ‘professional’.

Nuthal (2004) in a seminar study, attempted to identify the effective techniques used by teachers in dealing with pupil misbehavior to include wittiness, overlapping, smoothness and momentum. Hahn Meitner Institute (1982) in their study identified five qualities of effective teaching with their constituent statements to include teacher-pupil relationship and class management, planning and preparation of work, teaching process and match of work to students, language used in the classroom and questioning techniques. Gersten, Baker, Smith-Johnson, Dimino & Peterson, (2006) discussion of the quality of language used in the classroom, they commented thus: “where dialogue and discussion are common features of lessons, students are more likely to express their own thoughts and ideas and to engage in the sort of talk which allows them to make new ideas of their own, which leads them to understand process ...”. They further highlighted that good questioning techniques contribute both to sound classroom management and the development of good teacher-pupil rapport, and stated that good teachers need varieties of teaching approaches, sound and skillful planning of the classroom skills and ideas.

The sub-independent variables considered under teacher’s effectiveness for the purpose of this study consisted of student-teacher relationship, classroom management skills, mastery of subject matter, motivation of students, communication skills and evaluation effectiveness.

The comparative poor performance of students in Social Studies examinations in Cross River State as seen in table 1 was what informed the researchers to carry out this study to examine whether there is a significant relationship between teachers’ effectiveness and students’ academic achievement in Social Studies.

Table 1: JSS 3 Results for Social Studies and Christian Religious Education for the Period 2009-2011

Year	Subject		Total No. of Schools	Total enrolment	No. of percentage		No. in percentage	
2009	Social	Studies	12	2197	1098	49.79	1099	50.02
	Christian Religious Education		12	2197	1637	74.5	560	25.5
2010	Social	Studies	12	1974	849	43.00	1125	57.0
	Christian Religious Education		12	1974	1916	97.1	58	2.9
2011	Social	Studies	12	1897	752	40.02	1127	59.98
	Christian Religious Education		12	1897	1865	99.3	14	0.7

Source: *Cross River State Ministry of Education Examination and certificate Unit 2009, 2010 and 2011 Master List Result Summary*

The study therefore attempted to answer the question: Has teachers' effectiveness any significant relationship with students' academic achievement in Social Studies?

Theoretical Framework

It is expected that one should have an insight into the background of a theory or some theories that support such a research study and from where a problem is identified and hypothesis or hypotheses formulated. The researchers examined the Social System Theory since the study dealt with relationships and interactions between and among variables within a social system which in this context is the 'school'. Bertalanffy (1968) is generally considered as the father of the general system theory whose idea was proposed in 1947.

According to Katz and Kahn (1978), the theory offers a way of interpreting organization as a system. Peretomode (1999) and Inyang (2002) summarily saw a system as a set of inter-related parts that operate as a whole to achieve common goals. Choforas (1965), Hall and Fegen (1968) reconciled their meanings of system to mean a group of interdependent elements acting together to accomplish a predetermined purpose. A system approach to educational institutions attempts to view the school as a unified, purposeful organization or as a system composed of interrelated parts. Educational institutions are systems and sub-systems in which the components among others include people. Each individual behaviour within the system is shaped by its psychological uniqueness and sociological attributes (Peretomode, 1999). According to Katz and Kahn (1978), a system is characterized as 'open' or 'close'. All organizations including the school are open systems because their survival depends on interactions with and inputs from the external environment. These inputs include raw materials, human resources and capital that may transform them into outputs, in this case 'achievement'.

A social system can be defined as plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation, which has at least a physical or environmental aspect (Parsons, 1951). The basic concept of Social System theory was derived by Parson (1951) and its basic application to school administration was delineated by Getzels and Guba (1957). A Social System could be identified by the following characteristics: a group of people; these people are in purposive interactions; these interactions are interdependent; the pattern of interdependence is formed into institutions; and these institutions have identifiable geographical locations. This means that social system consists of inputs, processing unit, outputs, feedbacks and environment.

Although this theory has some setbacks as opined by Peretomode (1999), its implication for this study is still very important because it deals with the efficiency and effectiveness areas in which this research is focused. The systems theory is very relevant to this study because it deals with the relationships and interactions between and among inputs to be transformed into outputs. For teaching to be effective, all the variables involved must interact either jointly or individually for achievement to actualize. It is through the feedback medium that the environment (parents, teachers, students) complains about the output (poor academic achievement in Social Studies) that even formed the basis for this study. The study sought to examine the relationships between the sub-units in teaching effectiveness (student-teacher relationship, teachers' classroom management skills, teachers' level of mastery of subject matter, students' motivation by the teacher, teachers' communication skills, teachers' evaluation effectiveness) and students' achievement in a given subject (social studies).

Given the system theory, it sounds logical to expect variations in inputs to be reflected in variations in output. Specifically, do input variables such as students-teacher relationships, teachers' classroom management skills, teachers' level of mastery of subject matter, students' motivation by the teachers, teacher's communication skills and teachers' evaluation effectiveness relate to system output such as achievement of students in Social Studies? If for example, teachers are found to score high in communication skills, will this also result (either jointly or individually) in high score in students' achievement?

Methodology

Expost factor design was adopted by the researchers since they had no direct control of the independent variables as their manifestations had already occurred. The study was carried out in the three Educational zones (Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja) of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population was made up of 14,297 JSS III students in 228 schools under the State Secondary Education Board (SSEB). The sample drawn for the conduct of this study consisted of 1,200 male and female students from 24 out of 228 Secondary schools through stratified and random sampling techniques. The criteria for selection were based on the three Educational zones and gender as shown in table 2.

Table 2
Distribution of Sample by Educational Zone and Gender

Gender	Calabar	Ikom	Ogoja	Total	Percentage
Male	260	119	186	565	47.
Female	280	172	193	645	53.
Total	540	291	379	1200	100

The instruments used for data collected consisted of a set of survey questionnaire which reliability values ranged between 0.7 and 0.8 and achievement test scores adopted from Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE), Ministry of Education in Cross River State (2011), which indices for validation included knowledge, memory, comprehension and application.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using the Computer Software Statistical Package (CSSP) for Science Release 11.00. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance and 1198 degree of freedom.

Null Hypothesis

Student-teacher relationship, teachers' classroom management skills, teachers level of mastery of subject matter, student motivation by the teacher, teachers' communication skills and teachers' evaluation effectiveness do not significantly contribute jointly to the variance in students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

This hypothesis was tested with Multiple Regression statistics since there were many independent variables and a single dependent variable and the data for all the variables are interval data. The Pearson product Moment Intercorrelation of the dependent and independent variables are shown in table 3.

Table 3
Intercorrelation of the Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher-student relations	1.000	.055	-.010	.009	.044	.041	.018
Classroom management skill		1.000	.191*	.125*	.114*	.242*	.128*
Mastery of subject matter			1.000	.148*	.127*	.116*	.062*
Motivation of student				1.000	.192*	.269*	.117*
Communication skills					1.000	.116*	.067*
Evaluation effectiveness						1.000	.189*
Academic achievement							1.000

* P < .05

The result in table 3 indicated that teacher-student relationship is significantly related to academic achievement only, while classroom communication skills is significantly related to the other variables except teacher-student relationship. Similarly, mastery of subject matter is significantly related to all the variables and

academic achievement while teachers' motivation of student is not significantly related to academic achievement only. Also, teachers' communication skill is significantly related to their evaluation effectiveness. The results of the regression analysis are shown in table 4.

Table 4
Regression Statistics of the Independent Variables

Variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	R	R ²
	4197.197	6	466.355	5.945*	.207	.043
	93350.296	1190	78.446			
	9754,493	1199				

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	
	B	Std Error	β	t
	67.907	5.375		12.634*
Independent Management	-.092	.050	-.053	-1.852
Subject matter	-.113	.036	-.094	-3.133*
Motivation of Student	-.097	.037	-.053	1.805
Effectiveness	-.062	.041	-.046	-1.513
Communication skills	-.025	.040	-.019	-.616
	.015	.050	.009	.300

$F(6,1190) = 1.88$

The result of the multiple regression analysis indicated that the calculated F-value, which is 5.945, significance level and (6,1190) degrees of freedom. This implies that at least one of the independent variables contributes significantly to variance in the academic achievement of students in Social Studies. It also means that the calculated multiple coefficient r, which is .207 is statistically significant.

The results also indicate that about 4.3% (i.e. $R^2 \times 100\%$) of the variance in students' academic achievement in Social Studies can be jointly accounted for by all the independent variables taken together.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis

Student-teacher relationship, teachers' classroom management skills, teachers' level of mastery of the subject matter, teachers' motivation of students, teachers' communication skills, teachers' effectiveness in evaluation of students, do not significantly contribute jointly to the variance in students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

The results indicated that about .043 percent (i.e. $R^2 \times 100\%$) of the variance in students' academic achievement in Social Studies could be jointly accounted for by all the independent variables taken together. The result further shows that only the individual contribution of teachers' classroom management skills is significantly at .05 significance level.

The result implies that at least one of the independent variables contributed significantly to variance in the academic achievement of students in Social studies. Based on the F-value of 5.945 that is significant at .05 significance level and (6,1190) degrees of freedom.

The result means that all the variable (student-teacher relationship, teachers' classroom management skills, teachers' level of mastery of the subject matter, students' motivation by the teacher, teachers' communication skills, teachers' effectiveness in students' evaluation are almost interrelated; which means that some can only be effective with the help of the others. For instance, from table 4, teachers' communication skills are significantly related to their evaluation effectiveness and both are significantly related to students' academic achievement.

The result of this study seems to be in consonance with most of the literature reviewed except that each of these independent variables were not considered as a system.

According to Darling-Hammond (1992), fully prepared teachers are more effective in the classroom, and their students demonstrate larger achievement gains than those students whose teachers are less effective. From this assertion, an effective teacher is expected to possess almost all these features or variables as mentioned in this study. Also, Wenglinsky (2000) found out that students' achievements increase when they have teachers who are trained in developing higher order thinking skills, who are skilled at implementing hands-on experiences in the classroom and who are trained to work with special population. A close examination shows that these demands cut across all the variables and their interrelationships as mentioned above.

Also Donovan, Brassford and Pellegrina (1998) reported that, teachers must be highly skilled in working with students to develop true understanding concepts during instruction. Rivkin, Hanusheik and Kain (1998) reported that the influence of teachers on students' achievement is many times greater than any other commonly observed variance. Of course, this teachers' influence consists of teacher's classroom management skills, teacher's communication skills, and effectiveness in students' evaluation among others discussed in this study. Teachers, who do not possess almost all of these, can by no measure perform equitably with teachers who have these qualities. No wonder Fuller (1999) in his study, confirmed that accredited (effective) teachers perform at about 91 percent than unaccredited teachers in the classroom.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected, analyzed and interpreted, which formed the results of this study, it was concluded that poor academic performance of students in Social Studies is related to ineffectiveness teaching or teachers' effectiveness. Thus, the academic achievement of students in Social Studies is dependent upon the level of student-teacher relationship, the indispensable skills of the teachers in classroom management, an encouraging level of mastery of subject matter by the teacher and teachers' effectiveness in utilization of students' evaluation results. Also students' motivation by the teacher, teachers' communication skills during instruction are all indispensable towards improving students' academic achievement in Social Studies. This implies that students' academic achievement in Social Studies cannot improve except all these independent variables are also improved.

The independent variables in this study are interrelated and at least one of them contributes significantly to variance in the academic achievement in Social Studies. It generally implies that for students; academic achievement to increase, teachers are expected to possess the skills involved in the independent variables mentioned in this study. Teachers must be highly skilled in working with students to develop true understanding of concepts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion reached, it was generally recommended that teachers should be made to improve the skills involved in all the independent variables involved in this study through regular seminars, workshops, teachers retraining and in-service programmes.

Specifically, other recommendations made based on findings include;

- i) Student-teacher relationship and students' motivation by the teacher should not be too personal as this tends to decrease the level of academic achievement of students in Social Studies.

- ii) Teachers' preparation programmes should be expanded, thus: teachers should be encouraged to acquire equitable classroom management skills so as to help improve the academic achievement of students in Social Studies.

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