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Teacher-Student Class Interaction on Academic Performance: A Case of Senior Secondary Economics Students in Benue State

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Abstract

The study investigated teacher- student class interaction on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics in Benue State, Nigeria. Survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all the Senior Secondary School II Economics students for the 2011/2012 academic session while the sample is made up of 390 students from 15 secondary schools. The study was guided by 3 hypotheses. The instrument was a self structured questionnaire on teacher-student interaction (QTSI) with 30-items, 4-point Likert scale type was used to collect data. A pilot study was conducted using 100 SSII students and Cronbach Alpha method of estimating reliability was adopted and the reliability coefficient was .93 Chi-square and t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses at .05 level

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of significance. The result showed that teacher-students interaction has a significant impact on the academic performance. Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers should always interact positively with their students for better academic performance of students. Workshops, seminars among others should be organized for teachers in order to enlighten them on the need for interaction and how they can interact with their students for better academic performance of students. Parents should be enlightened through PTA meetings to always assist their children in carrying out assignments given by their teachers.

Teaching is a unique and dynamic profession. What a nation becomes is dependent on the type and quality of her teachers. As the school is the mirror of society and an agent of social change, teaching becomes a process and an instrument of nation building

In education, the classroom teacher is accountable for the destiny of the nation because there is a strong tie between his instructional activities, the eventual outcome of his instruction and the development or otherwise of the nation. Since the inference of teachers' action has multiplying effects on the destiny of person, groups and nations, teaching becomes an overwhelming responsibility and a 'task' word.

The teaching responsibility is more tasking for the fact that the benefit and or performance of the students are measured in terms of the academic performance of the learners. In relation to the above, Eschemann (1999) as cited in Nugent (2009) postulated that if teachers take time to build relationship with their students, they can motivate them to learn. Whitaker (2004), therefore, urged teachers to have a strong belief that building relationship are important to motivating the learners to learn. There is a need to capitalize on these beliefs for the child's benefits. Hence it is important that educators recognize the impact they have on their students and consider strongly their students perception of them (Escheemann, 1999). According to Tyler and Boelter (2008), positive teacher expectations are associated with high academic performance or academic gains; whereas negative teacher expectations can result in decrease in academic performance. The significance of knowing teachers' beliefs regarding their roles in students' performance is crucial due to the accepted correction between their perception and action.

From the forgoing' teachers have to ensure that they are meeting students' needs, both academically and emotionally by creating learning environments that promote positive cultures with healthy interaction, as it can induce students to channel their educational goals. The interaction include among other things teacher's and

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pupils question, class work, assignments marking of these work and making corrections, friendliness of the teacher to learners, illustrations among other things.

The federal government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Education (2004) in her National Policy of Education highlighted the goals of secondary education as preparing the individuals (students) for useful living within the society. This means contributing to the nation's economic, political and social development and sustainable goals and preparing them for higher education. The secondary education is generally considered the gateway for development of other sectors of education system. It provide primary school leavers the opportunity for education of a higher level, also, it provide students who will not go for higher education in the colleges, polytechnics and universities but provide them with the skills and knowledge for vocational work. Over the years, a good percentage of research on teaching has made considerable strides in identifying many factors that are associated with low academic performance. Morakinyo (2003) believed that the falling level of academic achievement is attributed to teacher's non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Odia and Omofonmwan (2007) pointed to the fact that the public school system in Nigeria has suffered serious neglect; hence as near-total collapse, while Dike (2002) pointed out that most private schools only exist for the purpose of financial gains. Sergiovanni (2006) attributed this to the culture of the school a child attends. Orokpo (2006) attributed this poor academic performance to the students' poor attitudes towards practical work, while Nugent (2009) attributed it to lack of motivation of students. Others like Udida, Bassey, Udofia and Egboa (2009) argued that most students exhibit such a high level of ignorance and illiteracy resulting from the weak instruction that they received. Arume and Sokan (2003) attributed the low academic performance in secondary school to students' low retention ability and parents' factor why Arume and Oluwole (2001) attributed it to association with wrong peers and low retention.

The performances of both male and female students in Economics' examination as well is poor. This deplorable condition of students' performance in economics examination can be attributed to several factors: as a reflection of this students' genetic inferiority, the culture of the school a child attend attitudes of the principals and teachers to their students and so on.

According to the chief examiners report of WAEC, November/December in 1997, and 1999, the students' performances in economics were reported to be below average while in that of May/June 2007; the students' performances were reported to be poor. Adeyimi (2010) reported that the academic performance of senior secondary school students is less than satisfactory. The knowledge of economics is important to every human being. It is even more important to those who struggle to be rational in utilizing available resources within their environment. The universality of this

proportion is that on a daily basis, human beings make choices and forgo many alternatives either consciously or unconsciously based on the fact that resources are scarce relatively to the demand for them. Though, individuals may take accidental decisions which are economic safe, many are made to suffer because of reckless or ignorant economic decisions they have been making. The knowledge of economics therefore becomes a *sin qua non*.

The knowledge of economics is required for the development of every nation. As such, increasing importance of functional education has been attached to the application of economics principles for overall planning and development of this nation (Nigeria). This important knowledge which is required in virtually all aspect of human endeavour can only be obtained maximally through efficient teaching with their teachers. In Nigeria, teacher-student interaction in the area of economics begins at the senior secondary school level. The senior secondary school level therefore, forms the bedrock of teacher-student interaction under the subject matter of economics. Therefore, it is a challenge to all economic teachers in secondary school to be creative and industrious in their interaction with students so as to enable them (students) apply the acquired knowledge, skills, values in solving personal and societal problems.

The researchers seeks to investigate on this topic because in the recent pass the SSCE results of Economics students in secondary school in Benue State is not encouraging .They therefore, intend to know if teacher-student interaction is one of the factors that inhibit students to pass their examination in the area of economics and if so proffer suggestions that could be in useful to teachers in administering teaching on the basis of student-teacher interaction. This could assist the students in understanding what they are taught as well as concentrate on their studies thereby passing their existing examination very well including economics among others.

Statement of the Problem

Empirical evidence in Nigeria education system indicates that secondary school students' academic performance in economics (just as in other areas) is still declining despite numerous reforms in the education system to improve the standard of education. These reforms ranges from 7-5-4 (seven years in primary school, five years in secondary school and four year in university), 6-5-4 (six years in primary school three years in junior secondary school, three in senior secondary school and four years in university) and the present 9-3-4 (nine years in basic education, three years in secondary school and four years in university). The poor academic performance is evidence in the grades that students get at the end of their senior secondary school external examination result (SSCE/WAEC) which has continue to be on the decline. The situation is that the goal of secondary school education has not been fully realized. One of such factor that lead to this decline in academic performance may be lack of

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proper interaction between teachers and students in the course of learning. The effect of this is that school teachers are always at variance in terms of what they need to do in order to achieve the goals of secondary school education and this in the final analysis affects the level of students' performance. The researchers are of the opinion that proper teacher-students' interaction could produce high academic performance among secondary school students.

In addition, this nation (Nigeria) is faced with many economic problems which demand the knowledge of economics to help solve them. Therefore, it is important to analyse the interaction of teachers with their students in economic class since teaching are often accused of employing wrong pedagogies in teaching their students. If students are well taught and are prepared to learn, it will not be difficult for them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in economics in solving the nation's problem. Hence, the need to analyse the interaction between teachers and students in economic classes.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to determine if the teacher-student class interaction could have influence on academic performance of senior secondary school students' in economics in Benue State. Specifically, the study is sets out clearly among other thing.

1. To find out the type of assignment given to students as homework so as to keep them busy after school hours.
2. To find out the impact of teachers' friendliness on student academic performance.
3. To determine the impact of teacher's illustration on student academic performance.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses will be tested

1. Teachers' work/assignment does not have any significant impact on academic performance of student.
2. Teachers' friendliness does not have a significant impact on student's academic performance.
3. Teachers' illustration does not have any significant impact on academic performance of student.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to be of great benefit to economics teachers as well as other teachers in secondary schools. The result of the study may help them in identifying important areas which they can formulate behavioural objectives as a basis for interaction with students. The result of the findings could also be important to

educated parents. The researchers are optimistic that enlightened parent will adopt the recommendations to achieve one of the cardinal objectives of education; the building of great and dynamic economy.

In addition, the result of the study is likely to form the basis for further research in the area of classroom interaction. Therefore, it may encourage constant professional development for teachers in the study area. The findings of this research could hopefully inform teachers of the effects of their interaction with the students' academic performance. The need for them to provide positive interaction in order to boost students' ego and act as counsellors to students could also be highlighted.

Method

The survey design was used in this study. This is because the researchers need to obtain information on a large random sample of people in a large geographical area (Benue State). The design is considered appropriate for this research work because data was collected from a large number of subjects in order to gather information about variables from a representative sample of the population for whom the study was carried out.

Area of the Study

This research work is on teacher-student class interaction on academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics in Benue State. The researchers thus wish to confine their empirical study within the boundaries of the state only. Also, the researchers do not intend to study everything about the academic performance of senior secondary school students but only concerned about the interaction between the teachers and the students on the academic performance of the students.

Population

The target population for the study consists of all the 3900 Secondary School II Economics students for the 2011/2012 academic session in Benue State.

Sample and Sampling

The sample comprised of 390 SSII students randomly selected in twenty three local government areas in Benue State. 240 males and 150 females were selected representing 10% of the total population.

Instrumentation

The research instrument that was used for this study was questionnaire on Teacher-Student Interaction (QTSI). This instrument is a 30-item structured questionnaire of the Likert scale type that was used in collecting the pertinent data for

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the study. The instrument QTSI is a modification from motivated strategies for learning questionnaire (MSLQ) which is a 12 questions web version adapted and available on the University of Florida's website. It was created to measure the impact of teacher-student interaction on students' motivation and achievement.

The survey instrument used in this study comprises of four sections of which the first section contains demographic information while other sections contains six to nine questions. The first section is students' Bio-Data, the second section is design to elicit information on type of for work/assignment, the second is for teacher's friendliness, and the third is for teacher's class illustration. The response options for the items in the questionnaire include: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1.

Validation of Instrument

The questionnaire was presented to three experts in Measurement and Evaluation for validation. These experts were expected to correct the items on the questionnaire to suit the topic so that the researchers will be able to collect data that will test the hypotheses adequately. It was during this validation that the questionnaire was modified in accordance to their comments and suggestions.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers administered 390 copies of the questionnaire to the students by hand without any research assistance. This was to enable students respond to the items on the questionnaire without any form of interference from their teachers. The advantage of administering by hand was to ensure high return of the questionnaire as well as to give explanation to the items the students may not understand. All the questionnaire were retrieved by the researchers from the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for the study was subjected to analysis Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Chi-square and t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Chi-square was used to find out the observed frequencies.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Data presentation has been done in Tables serially in accordance with the stated hypotheses. Data was analysed to enable the researchers answer all the hypotheses. The results were analysed and interpreted at .05 level of significance. Each hypothesis is on Tables using chi-square f analysis.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Distribution by Sex

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--------|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Male | 240 | 61.5 | 61.5 | 61.5 |
| Female | 150 | 38.5 | 38.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 390 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The sex (gender) in Table 1 shows that the number of male respondents was 240 (61.3%), while the female respondents were numbered 150 (38.5%).

Hypothesis 1: Work/assignment given by teachers does not have any significant impact on academic performance of students.

Table 2: Chi-square Tests of Mean Impact of Teachers' Work/Assignment on Students' Academic Performance

| Observed | N | Expected N | Residual |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2.33 | 1 | 16.2 | -15.2 |
| 2.56 | 4 | 16.2 | -12.2 |
| 2.67 | 6 | 16.2 | -10.2 |
| 2.78 | 5 | 16.2 | -11.2 |
| 2.89 | 10 | 16.2 | -6.2 |
| 3.00 | 6 | 16.2 | -10.2 |
| 3.11 | 6 | 16.2 | -10.2 |
| 3.22 | 19 | 16.2 | 2.8 |
| 3.33 | 10 | 16.2 | -6.2 |
| 3.44 | 18 | 16.2 | 1.8 |
| 3.56 | 18 | 16.2 | 1.8 |
| 3.67 | 13 | 16.2 | -3.2 |
| 3.78 | 22 | 16.2 | 5.8 |
| 3.79 | 26 | 16.2 | 9.8 |
| 4.00 | 32 | 16.2 | 15.8 |
| 4.1 | 29 | 16.2 | 12.8 |
| 4.22 | 26 | 16.2 | 9.8 |
| 4.33 | 24 | 16.2 | 7.8 |
| 4.44 | 28 | 16.2 | 11.8 |
| 4.56 | 26 | 16.2 | 9.8 |
| 4.67 | 24 | 16.2 | 7.8 |
| 4.78 | 11 | 16.2 | -5.2 |
| 4.89 | 8 | 16.2 | -8.2 |
| 5.00 | 18 | 16.2 | 1.8 |
| $\chi^2 = 123.840$ | df = 23 | Sign. = 0.001 | Significant |

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Table 2 revealed that there is a significant impact between teachers given work/assignment and academic performance of students. This was significant at $P = 0.001 < 0.005$. It means that teacher’s work/assignment has significant impact on the academic performance of students. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that teachers work/assignment significantly impact on the academic performance of students.

Hypothesis 2: Teachers’ friendliness does not have a significant impact on students’ academic performance.

Table 3: Chi-square Test on Mean Impact of Teachers’ Friendliness Toward Academic Performance

| Observed | N | Expected N | Residual |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2.22 | 1 | 15.0 | -14.0 |
| 2.33 | 2 | 15.0 | -13.0 |
| 2.44 | 1 | 15.0 | -14.0 |
| 2.56 | 3 | 15.0 | -12.0 |
| 2.67 | 7 | 15.0 | -8.0 |
| 2.78 | 12 | 15.0 | -3.0 |
| 2.89 | 21 | 15.0 | 6.0 |
| 3.00 | 18 | 15.0 | 3.0 |
| 3.11 | 24 | 15.0 | 9.0 |
| 3.22 | 44 | 15.0 | 29.0 |
| 3.33 | 24 | 15.0 | 9.0 |
| 3.44 | 21 | 15.0 | 6.0 |
| 3.56 | 24 | 15.0 | 9.0 |
| 3.67 | 25 | 15.0 | 10.0 |
| 3.78 | 21 | 15.0 | 6.0 |
| 4.00 | 19 | 15.0 | 4.0 |
| 4.11 | 14 | 15.0 | -1.0 |
| 4.22 | 14 | 15.0 | -1.0 |
| 4.33 | 16 | 15.0 | 1.0 |
| 4.44 | 18 | 15.0 | 3.0 |
| 4.56 | 10 | 15.0 | -5.0 |
| 4.67 | 5 | 15.0 | -10.0 |
| 4.78 | 4 | 15.0 | -11.0 |
| 4.89 | 2 | 15.0 | -13.0 |
| 5.00 | 10 | 15.0 | -5.0 |
| $\chi^2 = 184.800$ | df = 25 | Sign. = 0.001 | Significant |

Table 3 revealed that teachers' friendliness has a significant impact on students' academic performances. This is significant since $P = 0.001 < 0.05$. It means that there is significant difference between the teachers' friendliness and academic performance of secondary school students. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Teachers' illustration does not have any significant impact on academic performance of students.

Table 4: Chi-square Mean Perception of Students on Impact of Teachers' Illustrative Teaching on their Performance

| Observed | N | Expected N | Residual |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1.83 | 1 | 20.5 | -19.5 |
| 2.00 | 1 | 20.5 | -19.5 |
| 2.33 | 2 | 20.5 | -18.5 |
| 2.50 | 3 | 20.5 | -17.5 |
| 2.67 | 6 | 20.5 | -14.5 |
| 2.83 | 11 | 20.5 | -9.5 |
| 3.00 | 18 | 20.5 | -2.5 |
| 3.17 | 29 | 20.5 | 8.5 |
| 3.33 | 41 | 20.5 | 20.5 |
| 3.50 | 40 | 20.5 | 43.5 |
| 3.67 | 64 | 20.5 | 43.5 |
| 3.83 | 28 | 20.5 | 7.5 |
| 4.00 | 33 | 20.5 | 12.5 |
| 4.17 | 20 | 20.5 | -005 |
| 4.33 | 33 | 20.5 | 12.5 |
| 4.50 | 15 | 20.5 | -5.5 |
| 4.67 | 12 | 20.5 | -8.5 |
| 4.83 | 9 | 20.5 | -11.5 |
| 5.00 | 24 | 20.5 | 3.5 |
| $\chi^2 = 248.33$ | df = 18 | Sign. = 0.0001 | Significant |

Table 4 revealed that teachers' illustration is a significant factor on the academic performance of students. It is significant at $0.001 < 0.05$. This means that there is a significant factor on the academic performance of students. It is significant at $0.001 < 0.05$. This means that there is a significant difference between the mean impacts of teachers' illustration on academic performance of students. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that teachers' illustration has a significant impact on the academic performance of students.

Discussion of the Findings

This section discussed the result of the study with respect of perceived impact of teacher-student interaction on academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics. The findings of this work were discussed according to the areas addressed in the work such as impact of teachers' questioning, work/assignment, friendliness, and illustration on academic performance of students.

Table 2 reveals the mean score of students' perceived impact of teachers' work/assignment on students' performance. The test for hypothesis in Table 2 shows that teachers' given work/assignment has significant impact on students' academic performance. This implies that the level of teachers' work/assignment given to students has great impact on the academic performance of students. This findings is in agreement with the earlier findings of Nugent (2009) which showed a positive relationship between teacher-students' interaction on motivation and academic achievement. This according to Nwoke (2004) means that when a child associates the learning of subjects with success, he will develop favourable attitude towards the study of that subject and will work hard at it. Therefore, teachers should always motivate the learners by rewarding them on the work/assignment they do to encourage them work hard for good performance. This finding also agrees with Peng (2006) who pointed out that group work/activities is a technique that makes it possible for learners with needs and challenges who could not be reached by the language teacher to be helped by able learners in the groups. He continued that when we consider the fact that learners are coming from different backgrounds and experiences the use of group work/activities makes it possible for them to share their experiences with others and bring their rich varied background to the tasks which turn large classes to a resource rather than a problem. In addition to the above, the finding agrees with Clanfield and Tenant (2010) who suggested a thin-pair-share strategy of teaching language. In using this strategy, the teacher puts up on the board or projects the words Think-Pair-Share and briefly explains the meaning. Think individually about your answers to the question, Pair with the person next to you and share your thoughts, in the target language. The teacher raises a question on an issue which the students can handle, the students are expected to close their eyes and think about it as it affects them for 3-5 minutes. After this, they pair with another student and share their thoughts before telling the whole class. Teachers should always give work that can involve the learners at all time for good performance.

The result in Table 3 shows the mean scores of teachers' friendliness and the test hypothesis. The Table 3 shows that teachers' friendliness has a significant impact on students' academic performance. This implies that teachers' friendliness has great impact on the academic performance of students. This agrees with Boss and Vaughn (2002) who stated that it is imperative that educators look for positive or desirable

behaviour and let students know they have observed such. Here, positive feedback may act as an antecedent for positive behaviour. In the same vein, Gbamanja (2002) pointed out, that students, especially younger children, often model or reflect what is projected to them. The result of the study also agree with Theobald (2006) who argued, that teachers' action tend to have significant impact on the students' learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to reflect positive attitudes. This is based on the fact that the nature of the relationship that is often formed between teachers and students, the students may be apt to adopt a similar attitude.

Table 4 shows the mean scores of teachers' illustration on students' performance and the test of hypothesis. The Table reveals that teachers' illustration is a significant factor on the academic performance of students. This implies that the level of teachers' illustration has something to do with the academic performance of students. This agrees with the earlier findings of O'kwu and Itodo (2010) which showed that students' attitudes and their achievement in biological drawings were high and positive. This means that there is a significant relationship in biological drawings achievement and students' attitude towards biological drawing. The findings also agrees with Ofoefuna (1992) who pointed out that instructional materials like chalkboard, diagrams, graphs, charts, pictures, specimen among others are either manipulated, seen, heard, read or talk about to facilitate effective teaching and learning. The mere use of these materials according to Asoga-Allen (2002) neither generates effective communication nor teaching.

Conclusion

The study investigated perceived impact of teacher-student interaction on academic performance of students in Kwande local government area of Benue State. 15 secondary schools in Kwande local government area were selected from which 26 students comprising of 16 boys and 10 girls were selected from each secondary school making up 390 students were used for the study. Questionnaire on Teacher-Student Interaction (QTSI) were used to collect data. Based on the analysis of the collected data and the findings, the following conclusions were drawn;

1. Teachers' questioning during class time improves the academic performance of students.
2. Work/assignment teachers given to students help students to improve on their academic performance.
3. The friendliness of teachers' to students' impact positively on students' academic performance.
4. It was also found that illustration by teachers during teaching learning situation impact positively on academic performance of students.
5. That the difference between male and female students in their perception of the impact of teacher-students interaction was not significant.

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The findings of this study may have significant implication for national both within and outside the educational industry. If teachers recognize the importance of interacting with their students, it may have great positive effect on the educational development since the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) states that education is meant to prepare individuals for useful living in the society as well as preparation for occupational careers. Based on the findings from this study, supported by existing theories and related empirical studies, it is in order to establish that Victor Vrooms expectancy theory is effective in improving the education of the students in our society.

Finally, it is important to note that the findings from this study could contribute greatly in the problem of failing examination, especially external examination if teachers will give more attention to positive interaction with their students.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and the discussions, the following recommendations were made.

1. Teachers should at all time interact with their students positively in order to enable them (students) pass their exist exams, further their education as well as contribute meaningfully to the development of the society.
2. Workshops, seminars among others should be organized for teachers in order to enlighten them on the need for interaction and how they can interact with their students for better academic performance of students.
3. Parents on their own part should be enlightened through PTA meetings to recognize the importance of their children interactions with their teachers and help in advising their children appropriately. This could be done by advising their children to always pay more attention during class time as well as participate in class activities. Parents should also, help their children in doing assignments given by teachers.
4. All students irrespective of their gender should be given the same level of encouragement and attention for better academic performance in economics.
5. Teachers on their part should always ask questions and guide the students by finding answers to students' questions. They should always give work/assignments, mark them and do corrections.
6. Guidance counsellors should give professional assistance to students on ways of interacting positively with their teachers.
7. Curriculum planners should involve in the secondary school curriculum of economics, contents and learning experience that will bring about meaningful interaction between teachers and their students.
8. Government should provide more instructional materials to enhance interaction during class time. In the absence of any, teachers should endeavour to improvise.

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