



AN ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDES ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN PANKSHIN LGA, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought an Assessment of Teachers' Attitudes on Secondary School Students' Performance in Pankshin LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria. The study adopted the correlational research design with two research objectives, two questions, and a hypothesis. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 73 samples of 23 economics teachers and 50 SS3 economics students from the population of 311 economics teachers and SS3 economics students respectively in Pankshin LGA of Plateau State. The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. Descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) were used to analyse the research questions while the Chi-Square was used to test the hypothesis at 5% level of significance. The study findings revealed that teachers' attitude influences students' academic achievement in economics and that economics teachers' experience also significantly contributes to economics students' achievement. The study recommended that teachers should be able to establish good relationships with their students; this will enhance their attitude and interest in learning Economics.

Keywords: Achievement, Economics, Attitude

Jel Classification: A10, A13, A20

1.0 Introduction

Teaching is imparting knowledge, skills, and values to others. It entails the transmission of knowledge from a teacher or instructor to a student or learner using a variety of approaches such as lectures, discussions, demonstrations, and practical exercises. Teaching is to help students gain new knowledge and skills, comprehend concepts and ideas, develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, and foster positive attitudes and values. Effective teaching involves careful planning, effective communication, and appropriate teaching methods and strategies. It requires the teacher to have a deep understanding of the subject matter and the ability to connect and engage students of different backgrounds and learning styles.

Teaching economics is necessary in any country that is interested in offering training skills and tools of economic analysis as well as researchers who can contribute to the growth of society. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2014), Economics is one of the elective subjects to be studied at the Senior Secondary School level as presented by the National Policy on Education, developed by the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre and now reviewed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. Teaching Economics like every other subject requires the use of interesting, engaging, and simple to complex teaching strategies, methods, or techniques to help gain the attention of the learner and to further explain concepts. The teaching of

Economics offers the learner the opportunity to engage effectively within the changing economic world.

The objectives of teaching Economics to students include; equipping the students with the basic principles of Economics necessary for useful living and higher education, preparing and encouraging students to be prudent and effective in the management of scarce resources, and raising student respect for the dignity of labour and appreciation of economic, cultural and social values of our society, as well as to enable students to acquire knowledge for the practical solution of the economic problems of the society, such as Nigeria, developing countries and the world at large. However, despite the importance attached to the learning and teaching of economics in our educational system, the performance of students in secondary schools in Nigeria has remained an issue of concern to all stakeholders (Ajagun, 2018).

Observing the trends of Economics students' achievement in WAEC, Onuoha (2015) postulated that the percentage of the students that made D, E, and F grades between 2001 and 2012 was above 60% whereas less than 40 % of the students made grade C and above in Economics. Studies by Oguguo and Uboh (2020) Evaluating the participation and the performance of Candidates in WASSCE participation and achievement of five credit passes including Mathematics and English Language were examined for a period of five years for each State in Nigeria from 2014 to 2018, law. Thus, Etsey (2015) coined that teacher absenteeism, inability to complete the syllabi, and less interest in children's understanding of lessons cause poor performance in students. David, (2014) also asserts that poor quality and ineffective teaching were some of the factors that contributed to the mass failure of secondary school students in Economics.

Many studies have explored how teachers' characteristics impact students' academic performance, consistently indicating a notable influence on educational attainment. Such variables include teacher qualification, teacher teaching experience, teacher's attitude, and teaching methods adopted by the teacher. Other variables that may affect student achievement in Economics in secondary schools include teacher motivation and engagement, teacher-student relationships, teacher professional development, and teacher demographics such as age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Hence, the characteristics of teachers are crucial in influencing the standard of education students obtain. By recognizing and dealing with these factors, such as offering continuous training and assistance to teachers, schools and educational institutions can enhance student academic performance.

Teacher qualification can have a significant influence on student academic performance in Economics in secondary school. A qualified teacher is a professionally prepared teacher in content and methods of teaching any subject (Economics). Teachers who have a deep understanding of Economics content are better able to help students learn and achieve in the subject. That is why Aliyu, Dang, and Makson, (2021) asserted that teacher quality matters, and it is one of the important teachers factors that influences student achievement. More so, well-qualified teachers undergo extensive training in educational theory and pedagogy, which helps in fostering a learning environment that is conducive to academic excellence. This allows them to continually refine and improve their practice, which can ultimately benefit student learning and academic performance.

Teacher teaching experience can also have a significant influence on student performance in economics. Experienced teachers are familiar with their respective curricula and the standards and expectations of their respective schools and districts. Thus, a teacher with experience is better positioned to build strong relationships with students. Such relationships are crucial in creating a comfortable learning environment to facilitate communication and trust between the teacher and the student. An experienced teacher can quickly identify the different learning

needs of the students and tailor their teaching methods to cater to them. In addition, experienced teachers have a clear and innate understanding of how to provide positive feedback and redirection. They understand how to provide specific and useful performance feedback to students when they are motivated and persistent in their efforts.

Teachers' attitudes can also have a significant impact on students' performance in economics. A person's attitude to an idea or object determines what the person thinks, feels, and how the person would like to behave towards that idea or object (Audu, Galloway & Oloye, 2014). Thus, Positive attitudes from teachers can create a motivating and supportive learning environment that encourages students to engage with the subject matter and excel in their studies. Conversely, negative attitudes or lack of enthusiasm from teachers can have a demotivating effect on students and may lead to lower levels of achievement. On the other hand, teachers who lack enthusiasm or show a negative attitude toward economics may inadvertently convey the message that the subject is unimportant or difficult. Thus, teachers' attitudes can play a crucial role in students' performance in economics. Positive attitudes from teachers can create a motivating and supportive learning environment, while negative attitudes can have a demotivating effect and hinder students' progress.

Teacher teaching methods can also have a significant impact on student academic performance. Teaching methods are varieties of instructions and techniques used to help students achieve learning outcomes. This may include lectures, discussions, project-based, and field trips among others. The methods of teaching employed by the teachers in the delivery of the curriculum may enhance or hinder the achievement of the set goals. Teachers who use a variety of teaching methods, such as interactive lectures, group work, case studies, and visual aids, can help increase student engagement and improve their understanding and retention of the material. Teachers who use differentiated instruction methods are better placed to cater to the different learning needs and styles of their students. Teachers who have a strong knowledge of the subject matter can use different teaching methods to help students grasp complex theoretical concepts and apply them to practical situations. This approach can foster critical thinking and analytical skills in students.

1.1 Statement of The Problem

Available statistics show that students' performance in Economics in Plateau State is low. WAEC analysis results show that in 2020, 33.44 per cent passed the subject at the credit level while 66.56 per cent could not pass the subject at the credit level. In 2021, 31.49 percent passed the subject at the credit level while 68.51 percent could not pass the subject at the credit level. In 2022, 64.67 percent passed the subject at the credit level while 14.26 percent could not pass the subject at the credit level. In 2023, 46.93 percent passed the subject at the credit level while 53.07 percent could not pass the subject at the credit level. Ononye and Obiakor (2020) confirmed that poor quality and ineffective teachings are some of the factors that contribute to the mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent. Other teacher variables Such as teacher qualification, teachers teaching experience, teachers' attitude, and teaching methods adopted by the teacher are factors that contribute to poor academic achievement of students in economics at the Secondary level.

The Plateau State Government made significant efforts to enhance student achievement. These initiatives included training and retraining teachers, hiring new teachers for secondary schools, constructing classrooms, and supplying desks and other resources. Despite these measures, student performance remained unsatisfactory. This ongoing poor performance could hinder students from pursuing courses that involve economics at the tertiary level. Therefore, a study on teacher factors influencing student performance is necessary to address this issue. The researcher is not aware of any current effort aimed at improving student

performance using a study on teacher variables as a correlate of student performance, so the need to conduct the present study to fill the gap. The present study therefore seeks to answer the broad question; to what extent do teachers' variables affect students' performance in economics in Plateau State?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine Assessments of Teachers' Attitudes on Secondary School Students' Performance in Pankshin LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the relationship between teachers' attitudes and personality traits on student's achievement in economics in the Pankshin Local government area of plateau State
2. Examine whether teachers' experience influences students' academic achievement in economics.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised to guide the study.

1. How do teachers' attitudes and personality traits influence students' achievement in economics in Pankshin Local government area of Plateau State?
2. How do teachers' experiences influence students' academic achievement in economics?

1.4 Hypothesis

The following hypotheses have been formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and personality traits on student's achievement in economics in the Pankshin Local government area of plateau State
2. There is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and the academic achievement of economic students in Pankshin LGA of Plateau State.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Conceptual review

Teacher variables refer to teachers' characteristics, behaviours, and actions that can influence student learning and classroom dynamics. Teacher variables play an important role in shaping the quality of education that students receive. Understanding and addressing these variables, including providing teachers with ongoing professional development and support, schools, and education systems can help to improve student academic achievement.

A teacher's qualities include preparation and training, the use of a particular instructional approach, and experience in teaching. Mullis, Kennedy, Bolarinwa, and Kolawole (2020) point out that the performance of students is greatly influenced by the quality of their teachers. They emphasize that the key to a good education lies in the effectiveness of teaching provided in the classroom. This highlights the crucial role of teachers in compensating for any shortcomings in the curriculum and resources. When a country has well-trained and competent teachers in its education system, the standard of teaching in schools will be elevated, resulting in enhanced academic outcomes for students. Qualified teachers often display a sound knowledge of subject mastery and teaching methodology. Fakeye and Ayede

(2013) believed that a teacher's understanding of the subject, students, teaching methods, and effective communication skills all play a crucial role in influencing the academic success of students.

Qualified teachers are professionally prepared teachers in content and methods of teaching any subject including Economics. Abe and Adu (2014) opined that professional qualification is the certification that enables a person to become a registered teacher at the level in which he/she is operating. In Nigeria, to be acknowledged as a qualified Economics educator, one must be duly registered with the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria. The individual must have read B.sc (ed) in Education Economics or have Economics as the major subject of specialization with a post-graduate Diploma in Education (P.G.D.E.) or Nigerian certificate of education (N.C.E.) with Economics in combination with any other Social Science subject (Geography, social studies or with Mathematics). A well-qualified teacher has a profound knowledge of the topic, enabling them to employ different teaching techniques to aid students in understanding intricate economic theories and ideas. When students receive instruction from teachers with genuine expertise in economics, they are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of the material and perform better on assessments.

Competency also goes with teachers' quality. A competent secondary school teacher is someone who is formally trained and qualified to instruct students at the secondary level. They possess the essential attributes and abilities required for teaching effectively (Osaat, 2014) A competent teacher attends conferences, workshops, and seminars, has good classroom control, effective communicative skills, adequate knowledge of the subject, utilizes a variety of teaching methods, or strategies, and shows enthusiasm for teaching (Akinbobola, 2020). Such a teacher should equally, be able to understand students' abilities to exploit the educational benefits of the social context within which he/she lives. A teacher should be able to assist Students in reaching their full intellectual and social potential.

2.2 Empirical review

Samuel (2021) in his study on teacher variables and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Economics in the Shongom local government area of Gombe state found that the professional qualifications of teachers significantly and positively influence the academic performances of their students in economics. It implies that when economics teachers understand the subject matter and possess the qualities needed in a qualified teacher, students understand what is taught to them which equally enhances their academic success in the subject matter.

According to Carty (2014), students who are instructed by highly qualified and experienced teachers, with a deep understanding of the subject matter, tend to achieve better academic results compared to those taught by teachers who are less qualified but have more experience. Ichazu and Omoregie (2020) in their study to investigate the influence of teachers' qualifications on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Delta State revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' Qualifications and students' academic performance in secondary schools. Secondary school students taught by qualified teachers performed significantly better than those taught by unqualified teachers. Thus, teachers' qualification plays an important role in students' academic performance.

Kini and Podolsky (2016) reviewed a large number of published studies on the effect of teachers' teaching experience on student outcomes in the United States and discovered that teachers' teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout their careers. Experience makes teachers more successful. These benefits are strongest in the first few years of a teacher's career, but they still last well into the second and

even third decades. Also, as teachers gain experience, their students not only learn more, as measured by standardized tests, but they are also more likely to do better on other measures of success, such as school attendance. Yusuf and Dada (2016) opined that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of students based on the teachers' teaching experiences such that students taught by teachers with teaching experience between 6-15 years performed better than those taught by teachers with teaching experience between 1-5 years.

Similarly, Agbo-Egwu, Adadu, Nwokolo-Ojo, and Enaboifo (2017), schools with a higher number of teachers who have over a decade of teaching experience tend to yield superior academic outcomes compared to schools with a higher proportion of teachers who have less than 10 years of teaching experience. Experienced teachers typically possess a profound understanding of the curriculum and possess a wide range of successful teaching techniques. This enables them to simplify intricate economic concepts for students by delivering captivating and interactive lessons.

Experienced educators are also more adept at managing the classroom, thereby fostering a learning environment that is both positive and conducive. They can successfully develop routines, control student behaviour, and foster a culture of respect and inclusion. Such a classroom environment promotes student involvement and active participation, which in turn improves academic performance. Furthermore, experienced teachers frequently have a plethora of curriculum knowledge and insights, allowing them to develop well-structured lesson plans that are consistent with educational standards. They understand the special requirements of economic assessments, exams, and assignments and may help students properly. This familiarity improves pupils' preparedness and performance on such tests. Furthermore, experienced teachers have a greater awareness of students' learning styles, specific requirements, and obstacles, allowing them to adjust their training accordingly. They can identify problematic pupils and offer additional assistance or interventions to help them achieve academically. This personalized approach contributes to improved student outcomes.

Aransi (2019) examined the extent to which school location and teacher characteristics influenced economics students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Osun State's Irewole and Isokan Local Government Areas. The study found a substantial difference in student academic performance depending on teachers' teaching experience, with students who were mentored by teachers who had spent ten years or more in the teaching profession outperforming their peers.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design for data collection, instrument development, and sampling. In this study, correlational design was used to meet the objectives of the study. The design was considered most appropriate for the study because it involves identifying relationships between two or more variables and understanding how they relate.

The population of the study was all the Senior Secondary Schools' Economics teachers and S.S.S three (3) students in Pankshin Local Government Area, with a total number of 32 senior secondary schools and having a total population of 45 economic teachers comprising 31 males and 14 females and 267 students as the population of the study. The sample size for the study consists of 23 Economics teachers and 50 SSS three (3) students which will be drawn out of the population using a research advisor (2006). The sample of the 23 economic teachers in Pankshin consists of 16 males and 7 females. The Sample size is considered fair because it consists of more than 40 per cent of the population.

The study uses a random sampling technique to choose participants, aiming for a balanced representation. This technique involved selecting 23 teachers and 50 students randomly from each school. This approach ensured that all economics teachers in the school population were covered in the sample, aiding in the generalization of the results to the entire population.

The instrument that was used to collect data for this research will be a researcher-made teacher variable questionnaire. (RMTVQ) and Researchers made students questionnaires. (RMSQ). The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A" deals with demographic information of the respondents, such as gender, level of educational qualification, and experience, while section "B" seeks information on the relationship between teacher variables and secondary school students' performance in economics. This section was subdivided into (2) parts according to the variables identified to affect the performance of secondary school students. Items 1 -5 were on teachers' attitudes and personality traits; items 6 - 10 were concerned with teacher experience. The instrument response rate was the Likert - scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree and not sure with attached values of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

The collection of data was carried out by the researchers in the sampled senior secondary schools in Pankshin LGA. Each of the samples was given two days to fill the questionnaire items after which it was received by the researchers. The questionnaire was in line with the objectives of the research. The questionnaire was purposely meant for the teachers. The research questions also will be analyzed using mean and standard deviation and the cumulative means will be compared with the decision mean of 3.00 to determine agreement or disagreement with the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistics at a 0.05 level of significance.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Research Question One: How do teachers' attitudes and personality traits influence students' achievement in economics in Pankshin Local government area of Plateau State?

Table 1: Summary of Result of Teachers' attitude and personality traits influence student's achievement in Economics

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	teachers' attitudes and personality traits affect students' academic outcomes in economics	3.36	0.65	Agreed
2.	The frequency and quality of teacher-student interactions influence students' achievement in economics	3.27	0.81	Agreed
3.	I attend my class regularly and being punctual	3.20	0.79	Agreed
4.	As an Economics teacher I don't abuse my students in the slightest Issues	3.25	0.87	Agreed
5.	As an Economics teacher I am always ready to teach the subject	3.21	0.79	Agreed

Source: Field survey, (2024)

The result in Table 1 showed mean scores and standard deviation of items constructed to answer research question 1. From the result presented, it is observed that the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents were 3.36, 3.27, 3.20, 3.25, and 3.21 respectively with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.65, 0.81, 0.79, 0.87, and 0.79. All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 3.00 which implies that the respondents sampled are aware of the influence of teachers' attitudes and students' performance in economics. This implies that all

the items are measures of the influence of teachers’ attitudes on student performance in economics.

Research Question Two: How does teacher experience influence students’ academic achievement in economics?

Table 2: Summary of Result Showing how teachers' experience influences students' academic achievement in economics.

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
6.	does teachers’ experience play in their professional development and continuous improvement in teaching economics?	3.28	0.59	Agreed
7.	the experience of teachers influences their expectations and feedback provided to students in economics	3.19	0.78	Agreed
8.	the experience of teachers affects their collaboration with colleagues and contribution to the overall academic environment	3.10	0.71	Agreed
9.	teachers' experience in teaching economics specifically affect students’ understanding and retention of economic concepts	3.19	0.74	Agreed
10.	Do students taught by more experienced teachers perform better in standardized economics tests compared to those taught by less experienced teachers?	2.53	1.10	Disagreed

Source: Field survey, (2024)

The result in Table 2 showed mean scores and standard deviation of items constructed to answer research question 2. From the result presented, it is observed that the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents were 3.28, 3.19, 3.10, 3.19, and 2.53 respectively with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.59, 0.78, 0.71, 0.74, and 1.10. All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 3.00 except item 5 which is below 3.00. This implies that the respondents sampled agreed with the statements that teachers’ experience influences students’ academic achievement in economics.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitudes and personality traits on student’s achievement in economics in the Pankshin Local government area of Plateau State.

Table 3: Showed the Result of Chi-Square on the relationship between teachers’ attitudes and personality traits on student’s achievement in economics

	Value	df	p-value	Decision
Pearson Chi-Square	14.828	9	.016	Significant
Likelihood Ratio	10.350	9		
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.010	1		
N of Valid Cases	73			

The results of the analysis in Table 3 revealed that $\chi^2(9= 14.83, p= 0.016)$, which implies that the probability value (p-value) computed as 0.016 is less than 0.05 used as the level of significance. The implication of this is that we reject the null hypothesis since the p-value of 0.016 is less than the level of significant 0.05 and conclude that, there is a significant

relationship between teachers' attitudes and personality traits and student's achievement in economics.

Hypothesis two: There is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and the academic achievement of economic students in Pankshin LGA of Plateau State.

Table 4: Showed the Result of Chi-Square on the relationship between teachers' teaching experience and the academic achievement of economic students

	Value	df	p-value	Decision
Pearson Chi-Square	78.869	6	.000	Significant
Likelihood Ratio	83.512	6		
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.890	1		
N of Valid Cases	73			

The results of the analysis in Table 4 revealed that $\chi^2(16= 78.87, p= 0.000)$, which implies that the probability value (p-value) computed as 0.000 is less than 0.05 used as the level of significance. The implication of this is that we reject the null hypothesis since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the level of significant 0.05 and conclude that there is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and the academic achievement of economic students in Pankshin LGA of Plateau State.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

The empirical outcomes that emanated from the study revealed that economics teachers' attitude plays a significant role in influencing students' achievement in learning Economics. Aliyu, Dang and Makson (2021) contend that the attitude of students can be influenced by the attitude of the teacher and his method of teaching which goes to influences students' achievement. This is in line with the findings of Adu (2015) which states that "Teachers' characteristics are positively correlated with students' attitude towards Economics". Jelman and Mangut, (2023) also illustrate that student achievement was related to teacher characteristics.

The research also found that teachers' backgrounds significantly impact students' performance in economics. It was discovered that the experiences of teachers have a direct effect on students' academic success. This aligns with Zumu's (2017) findings, which showed that students taught by experienced teachers tend to perform better due to the teachers' expertise in the subject matter and their ability to effectively manage classroom challenges.

On hypothesis one, the result revealed that, $\chi^2(9 = 14.83, p = 0.016)$, which implies that the probability value (p-value) computed as 0.016 is less than 0.05 used as the level of significance. The implication of this is that we reject the null hypothesis since the p-value of 0.016 is less than the level of significant 0.05 and conclude that, there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and personality traits and student's achievement in economics.

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5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are arrived at academic achievement of students at the State is influenced by teachers' attitude and their experiences. Findings from the study also revealed that all teacher variables (pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, teacher-student relationship, teachers' qualification and experience) when taken together made significant contributions to students' achievement in Economics. However, all the teacher variables (independent variables) relatively (alone) made no significant contribution to students' achievement in Economics except subject matter knowledge, which was found significant. The implication is that teachers' variables influences student's achievement in economics. Therefore, teachers with positive attitudes toward teaching and teachers' teaching experience help improve student performance to those with negative attitudes.

5.2 Recommendations:

The following recommendations were made.

1. Teachers should be able to establish good relationships with their students; this will enhance their attitude and interest in learning Economics.
2. Regular and continuous professional development is paramount to developing and maintaining high-quality economics teachers. The Ministry of Education should ensure that all teachers have the chance to improve their classroom instruction by receiving ongoing training aimed at professional growth and better student outcomes.
3. Teachers need to be encouraged to develop and maintain a positive attitude towards the learner and also the subject. This can greatly improve interpersonal communication between the teacher and the learner.

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