

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' DEDICATION, KNOWLEDGE AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined teachers' dedication, knowledge and skills as predictors of students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. It adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 317 principals, 634 vice principals (academic) and all the 96,527 students in the entire 317 public secondary schools in the State. Cluster sampling technique was used to group LGAs in the State into senatorial districts. Random sampling technique was used to select two LGAs from each of the senatorial districts. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the principal and vice principal (academic), while 10 students were randomly selected from each of the sampled schools. Teachers' Dedication, Knowledge and Skills Questionnaire (TDKSQ) and Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) were used to collect data. The TDKSQ was validated and found reliable with reliability coefficients of 0.72, 0.70 and 0.83 for dedication, knowledge and skills respectively. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria ($r=0.671$, $p<0.05$). The study recommended that, Kwara State secondary teachers should be more dedicated to the teaching profession by regularly going to schools at the right time, preparing comprehensive lesson notes, paying attention to students' learning difficulties, going to the classroom to teach at the right time and the likes, in order to facilitate their effective services delivery which would enhance students' academic performance.

Keywords: Teachers' dedication, Knowledge, Skills; and Students' academic performance

Introduction

Globally, teachers are at the epicenter of the success of education system, regardless of the level. This is because they are saddled with the sensitive responsibility of imparting knowledge to the learners. Not only that teachers impart knowledge to the learners, they are also responsible for guiding, protecting, caring, supporting, correcting and stimulating the learners towards developing positive attitudes to their studies. In fact, it could be stated that, no matter how classrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, chairs, tables, instructional materials and internet services are adequately provided in schools, students' academic performance would not be well enhanced, unless teachers discharge their duties effectively.

However, for teachers to effectively perform their statutory roles; dedication, knowledge and skills are part of the instruments which they need. To support this assertion, Saad (2014) stated that, teaching skills and dedication and knowledge are part of the key teacher-related

factors which determine students' academic performance. According to Sulyman (2020), dedication is a key element which should not dissociate teachers, regardless of the level, because it helps in facilitating effective delivery of their official duties and consequently enhances students' academic performance. Mart (2013) believed that when teachers are dedicated, they would find it easy to stimulate students towards active learning and guide their intellectual and moral development; hence, outstanding academic performance could be enhanced.

Jolayemi (2008) observed that, adequate possession and utilisation of teaching skills goes a long way in assisting teachers to plan the classroom activities in a way that would enhance effective learning; organise sitting arrangement of the students properly; monitor the students' behaviour towards learning and coordinate their general activities during the lesson to enhance their academic performance. Henry (2016) opined that, dedication is one of the fundamental factors needed from teachers to help enhance students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria. If teachers are poorly dedicated, their effective job performance could be hampered and this might lead to poor students' performance.

Knowledge of the subject matter is one of the instruments which teachers need to enhance students' academic performance. Kimberly (2009) asserted that, if a teacher does not have adequate knowledge of the subject he teaches, the hope of effective teaching goes right out the window and the end result could be poor students' academic performance. It can be deduced that, students' academic performance is hinged on teachers' knowledge of the subject matter. Kola and Sunday (2015) asserted that, it is very important to categorically state that knowledge of the subject matter is crucial to all teachers. The level of teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and how they impart it determines the students' success academically. Looking at the discussions above, it could be deduced that, dedication, knowledge and skills are needed by teachers to enhance students' academic performance; but information gathered from some education stakeholders in Kwara State secondary schools shows that some teachers do adequately possess them. It against this background that this study investigated relationship between teachers' knowledge, skills and dedication as predictors of students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The menace of poor students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria has been a phenomenon of concern to the stakeholders in education since years back. According to Usman (2015), in Nigeria, poor students' academic performance in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) has been giving stakeholders in education, especially parents and government a ceaseless concern. This is because the investment they are making has not been commensurating with the students' academic performance. To support this, WASSCE results of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019; showed that only 38.68%, 52.97%, 26.01%, 49.98% and 17.13% candidates respectively had at least five credits including English language and General Mathematics in Nigeria (WAEC, 2019). The information above showed that in the last five years, candidates who sat for WASSCE performed above average in the 2016 only; this scenario is not encouraging and it could be as a result of inadequate dedication, knowledge and skills of some teachers.

However, many researchers had worked on the variables related to this study. For example, Adediwura and Tayo (2007) examined perception of teachers' knowledge, attitude and teaching skills as predictors of academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. Akinsolu (2010) conducted a study on teachers and students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools: Implication for planning. Also, Ekperi (2018) investigated the

impact of teacher characteristics on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. However, all these previous studies are relevant to this present study, but none of them examined the relationship between teachers' dedication knowledge and skills and students' academic performance in Kwara State Secondary Schools, Nigeria. Hence, this is the gap which this study filled.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

- i. is there significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria;
- ii. is there significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria; and
- iii. is there significant relationship between teachers' skills and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated to guide the study:

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' skills and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Literature review

Dedication is a fundamental factor which teachers need to show to their job to aid students' academic performance. Igbogi (2018) maintained that dedication of teachers is one of the factors which determine the success of education, especially in the aspect of students' academic performance. Mart (2013) that, dedicated teachers are characterised by their commitment to actualisation of improved students' academic performance. They are always consider academic development of their students as a prime issue; assiduously work and motivate students towards learning; tirelessly develop curiosity spirit in students and ready to assist students to excel academically.

Dale Carnegie Training (2012) stated that a dedicated employee tends to create smooth interpersonal relationship with the employer and his/her colleagues within the organisation, foster positive working environment and always eager to take the risk which could facilitate success of the organisation. Watson (2012) stated that, a school which has highly dedicated teachers would be more effective in its operations and achieve better students' academic performance than the one with poorly dedicated teachers, all things being equal.

Knowledge of the subject matter is an important instrument which teachers need to effectively perform their job. Agoro and Akinsola (2013) argued that, poor knowledge of some knowledge of the subject matter of teachers could be among the factors responsible for poor academic performance of students in SSCE in Nigeria. Ekperi (2018) believed that, the effectiveness of teaching and learning which consequently impact on students' academic performance is influenced by teachers' knowledge of the subject matter. Schneider and Plasma 2011) maintained that the success of students in learning as well as academic performance, to some extent, depends on how knowledgeable their teachers are in their areas of specialisation.

The importance of skills to the employees in an organisation cannot be over-emphasised. Gitome, Katola and Nyabwari (2013) stated that when teachers possess skills, their job performance could be effective and eventually enhance academic performance of students. Bhanot (2009) posited that skills are not only important to teachers' personal professional growth but also the success of students academically.

Kola and Sunday (2015) argued that the level of teachers' skills might determine how they impart knowledge to students and how they impart knowledge could determine academic performance of students. Caleb (2008) asserted that one of the factors responsible for poor students' academic performance in Nigerian public secondary and primary schools is inadequate possession of teaching skills by some teachers. Government should ensure that applicants for teaching profession are properly scrutinised to ensure that those with adequate teaching skills are appointed.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design of correlation type. The population of the study comprised all the 317 principals and all the 96,527 students in the entire 317 public secondary schools in Kwara State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. First, cluster sampling technique was used to group the Local Government Areas (LGAs) into senatorial districts. Random sampling technique was used to select two LGAs from each of the senatorial districts (Kwara central, Asa and Ilorin South; Kwara South, Ekiti and Offa; and Kwara North, Baruten and Edu). Five secondary schools were randomly selected from each of the selected LGAs to make a total of 30. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the principal and vice principal (academic) while random sampling technique was used to select 10 students from each of the sampled schools to make a total of 360 respondents for the study.

A researchers' designed instrument entitled "Teachers' Dedication, Knowledge and Skills Questionnaire" (TDKSQ) was used to collect information from students, principals and vice principals on the extent to which teachers in their respective schools were dedicated to their job, possessed knowledge of the subject matter and skilled. The questionnaire was based on Likert scale rated as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. A pro-forma captioned "Students' Academic Performance Proforma" (SAPP) was used to collect information from school principals on the total number of students who sat for West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and the exact number who had five credits and above including English language and General Mathematics in their respective schools from 2017 to 2019. To validate the instrument, its draft was presented to three experts in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. To determine the reliability of the instruments, 15 copies were administered to some respondents who were not part of the respondents of the study. The data gathered were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha and reliability coefficients of 0.72, 0.70 and 0.83 were realised for dedication, knowledge and skills respectively. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Out of the 360 copies of questionnaire distributed, only 325 were returned for analysis.

Results

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. To test this formulated hypothesis, PPMC was used.

Table 1: Teachers' Dedication and Students' Academic Performance

Table 2: Teachers' Dedication and Students' Academic Performance						
Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Dedication	325	3.39	1.27	0.671	0.004	Ho ₁ Rejected
Students' Academic performance	325	2.84	0.96			
p-value<0.05						

Table 1 shows the calculated r-value (0.671) while the p-value (0.004) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis one (Ho₁) is rejected. This implies that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. To test this formulated hypothesis, PPMC was used.

Table 1: Teachers' Knowledge and Students' Academic Performance

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Knowledge	325	3.06	1.11	0.655	0.017	Ho ₂ Rejected
Students' Academic performance	325	2.84	0.96			
p-value<0.05						

Table 2 shows the calculated r-value (0.655) while the p-value (0.017) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis two (Ho₂) is rejected. This implies that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between teachers' skills and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. To test this formulated hypothesis, PPMC was used.

Table 3: Teachers' Skills and Students' Academic Performance

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Skills	325	3.44	1.29			
				0.689	0.001	H_{03} Rejected
Students' Academic performance	325	2.84	0.96			
p-value<0.05						

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value (0.689) while the p-value (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis one (H_{03}) is rejected. This implies that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between teachers' skills and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Discussion

The finding revealed that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. This means that, if teachers are wholeheartedly dedicated, their official duties would be effectively carried out and consequently enhance students' academic performance. This finding agrees with the finding of Igbogi (2018) that there was a significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Supported this finding is also the finding of Henry (2016) which revealed that teachers' dedication and students' academic performance are significantly related in Taraba State public secondary schools, Nigeria. The view of Mart (2013) also agrees with this finding that, dedicated teachers are characterised by their commitment to actualization of improved students' academic performance.

The finding also revealed that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. This signifies that, when teachers adequately possess knowledge of the subject matter, it would aid their smooth job performance which could facilitate excellent students' academic performance. This finding supports the finding of Ekperi (2018) that Teachers' knowledge and students' academic performance are significantly related. In the same vein, the finding of Abubakar (2014) also supports this finding that, the teachers' knowledge has strong relationship with students' academic performance.

The finding also revealed that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between teachers' skills and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria. This signifies that, if teachers adequately possess and also utilise the required skills to perform their job, it would enhance students' academic performance.

This finding agrees with the finding of Henry (2016) that there was a significant relationship between teachers' dedication and students' academic performance in Taraba State public secondary schools, Nigeria. Not only that, the finding of Saad (2014) also corroborates this finding that, teachers' dedication and academic performance of students are significantly related.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, if teachers develop high dedication towards their job, their effective services delivery would be achieved thereby enhancing students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria; teachers' knowledge significantly contributes to the students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria; and teachers' skills are also a veritable tool for enhancing students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

- i. Kwara State secondary teachers should be more dedicated to the teaching profession by regularly going to schools at the right time, preparing comprehensive lesson notes, paying attention to students' learning difficulties, going to the classroom to teach at the right time and the likes, in order to facilitate their effective services delivery which would enhance students' academic performance. Also, government should intensify its efforts in motivating teachers to make them increase their dedication to the job and consequently enhance students' academic performance;
- ii. government should ensure that seminars, workshops, conferences and lectures are regularly and periodically organised for teachers in order to update the knowledge in subject matter, utilisation of appropriate instructional materials and methodologies for imparting knowledge to the students, classroom management and the likes, to assist them discharge their duties in a way which would continually and effectively harness students' academic performance; and
- iii. there is need for government to heighten its efforts in organising seminars, workshops, conferences and lectures for teachers in order to make them acquire the necessary skills in lesson presentation, in interaction with students, time management, students' assessment and the likes needed to enhance students' academic performance.

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