EFFECTS OF TEACHERS’ COMPETENCE ON STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF IKEJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW:

Complete Project: 56 Pages
Literature Review: 2005 Upward
Data Analysis: Chi Square Statistical Tool
Research Population: 40 Teachers
Research Location: Ogun State, Nigeria
Questionnaire: 20 Items x 40 Respondents
1.1 Background to the Study

The school environment has a strong positive relationship with students' ratings of their overall school satisfaction, students' self-esteem, and academic performance. Teacher’s competency enhances a teacher’s ability to create an environment that is fair, understanding, and accepting of diverse students, ideas, experiences, and backgrounds. Teachers have been found to be the single most important factor influencing student achievement (Cochran-Smith, 2002; Kaplan & Owings, 2002; Lasley, Siedentop, & Yinger, 2006). The present study will focus on factors which may influence teacher’s competency in classroom situation, including (a) teacher use of Continuous Assessment, a technology-based tool the teacher can use for communication with students, (b) number of special education students, (c) class size, (d) teacher use of research based best practices, and (e) instructional leadership. Few studies have examined the factors together applying a mixed methods research approach to identify the complex relationships between all of the factors and student achievement.

A study of teacher classroom practices as they relate to student achievement is important for several reasons. Understanding the reasons why the teacher is important will give insight to professional development planners. Identifying such factors contributing to increased student achievement is paramount in this age of accountability. The Federal of Nigeria mandates for student achievement through the various examination bodies are not going away; schools are held accountable through statewide assessments of all students. Teachers need to be held to high standards and implement research-based best practices in their classrooms. Identifying factors contributing to student achievement is very important. Regarding
leadership, the principal indirectly impacts the performance of teachers under his or her leadership as well as the climate and culture of the building (Stewart, 2008).

The idea of highly qualified teachers is a good one, but compliance has not been widespread (Viadero, 2007). Some states in Nigeria have set low expectations for teacher quality, and sometimes it depends on what school in which a teacher teaches in. The question which begs to be asked is what defines teacher quality? If a student is asked about a teacher who is highly qualified, they will most likely say that it is the teachers who spend extra time with them and who makes the class content clear and attainable (Lewis, 2005). Conversely, the unqualified teachers are the ones who are boring and don’t connect with them. Students don’t care about educational certificates or years of experience. Anobi (2006) recognizes that as true educators, teachers are always learning; and teachers need to continue to define the meaning of highly qualified, instead of doing as little as possible within the meaning of the law. As teachers, educators need to move from mere competence to excellence in practice.

Defining teacher quality is a question that resurfaces again in the literature on teacher preparation. Does content knowledge in addition to knowledge about teaching make a difference in student achievement (Kaplan & Owings, 2001). One group believes quality teachers possess content knowledge and have studied instructional ideas and practices that have increased student achievement, while another group believes teachers just need strong content knowledge. Kaplan and Owings (2001) found disagreement in the literature over whether traditional teacher preparation positively affected student achievement. They found that teachers who learn and practice sound pedagogical practices techniques can affect students’ measured achievements and also students whose teachers had strong content
knowledge and had learned to work with students who came from different
cultures or special needs tested higher than one full grade over their peers.

Due to the increasing nature of poor academic performance of
secondary school students especially in external examinations like West
African Examination Council (WAEC) or Joint Admission Matriculation
Board (JAMB), many educationists tend to shift the blame on lack of fund
from the government to provide quality textbooks. However, these might not
be the main reasons why students perform poorly in examinations. It is clear
from all indications that some secondary school teachers are not competent
which might lead to poor academic performance of the students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Competent teachers are the most critical piece in improving student
achievement and closing the achievement gap. The most important difference
between the most and least effective classrooms is the teacher (William, 2007).
The single most important influence on student learning is the quality of
teaching, yet most schools don’t define what good teaching is (Danielson,
2006). This is a problem because if it is not defined, teachers may not be given
the opportunities to improve practices in the classroom, it is the student’s
achievement that may be harmed as a result.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the effects of teacher’s
competence on students’ academic performance. This general aim is
expressed in the following specific objectives which are to:

i. Assess teacher’s competence in secondary school;
ii. investigate the Importance Of Teacher Training In Developing Professional Competence

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed by this study:

i. To what degree does teacher’s competence affect students’ academic performance

ii. Is there any significant relationship between Teacher Training In Developing Professional Competence

1.5 Significance of the Study

A major concern in schools is to increase student achievement. One way to do this is to focus on classroom environment with the teacher at the centre which will influence student achievement and create the best environment in which to facilitate learning and engage students. The study is therefore significant for the following reasons:

- This study will be useful to both teachers and students who may want to know the factors that could make or mar student’s academic performance.
- Understanding classroom climate variables will allow for professional development for teachers to focus on areas to increase student achievement.
- Lastly, understanding the importance of teachers and their impact on student performance will help school administrators at secondary schools retrain teachers to make their teachings student-centered.
1.6 Scope/Delimitations of the Study
This study centers on the effects of teacher’s competence on academic performance of students in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State. It is aimed at all secondary school students in Ikeja Local Government but due to time, money and other factors it will be limited to only five schools in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State.

1.7 Definitions of Terms
Relative to this study, definitions to the following terms are provided in order to clarify each in the context of the topic:

**Academic Achievement**- Student performance on state assessments (Cunnigham, 2003).

However, for the purpose of the proposed study, overall class average will be the measure of academic achievement used. This term is used interchangeably with student achievement.

**Class Size**- The number of students in a class, which varies considerably from day to day; and at different times throughout the day because of student mobility, truancy, and absences

**Classroom Climate**- The classroom environment involving the shared perceptions of the students and the teachers.
School Climate - The shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students, teachers, principals, and set the tone of acceptable behavior for the school

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