

Teachers' Communication Skills and Resourcefulness as Correlates of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Ekiti State

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Abstract:

The study investigated the relationship between teachers' communication skills and resourcefulness as correlates of secondary school students' academic performance in Ekiti State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The sample for the study consisted of 300 teachers from 30 public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. Two research instruments tagged "Teachers' Communication Skills and Resourcefulness Questionnaire" (TCSRQ) and an inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results were used to collect relevant data for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by experts in the field of Educational Management. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method within an interval of two weeks. Reliability coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained for TCSRQ was considered high enough for reliability. The data collected through the instruments were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that teachers' communication skills and resourcefulness were significantly related to students' academic performance in Ekiti State. It was recommended that teacher training Programs should be designed to focus on the development and enhancement of teachers' communication and resourcefulness abilities.

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Introduction

Secondary education is one of the foundational strategies for enhancing the human capital of the nation. Specifically, secondary education is the education intended for youngsters between 11 years to 17 years (FGN, 2014). This stage of education occupies a peculiar position in the educational system in Nigeria, this is because it serves as a link between the primary and tertiary levels of education. In addition to this, it also provides some semi-skilled labor for the economy. But it seems that secondary schools are falling short of expectations when it comes to fulfilling their duties. Omoregie (2005) voiced concern that because today's secondary school graduates are incapable of thinking for themselves, they will neither be able to contribute to society or pursue higher education without the help of their parents or through forgery. The academic performance of secondary school students is also reflected in their inability to express themselves in simple and correct English despite the fact that the mode of communication in secondary schools in Nigeria is in English Language. However, the trend of performance of secondary school students in West African Examination Council seems to be improving over the past few years, but parents and other stakeholders in the education sector believe there is room for improvement considering the resources invested by the parents and government educating the learners.

In Ekiti State, the percentage of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects; including English Language and Mathematics in WAEC Examination was 56.81% in 2018, 57.84% in 2019, 65.46% in 2020, and 76.36 in 2021 in all public secondary schools (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The implication of the trend of academic performance of students in West Africa Examination Council results indicates that the students who failed to pass the examination might not be opportune to gain admission into the tertiary institutions. Resulting from the observed academic performance of students in public secondary schools, one wonders if teachers' communication skills in schools could bring about further improvement. The researchers observed that good teachers' communication skills is an educational construct that researchers and educational stakeholders need to pay more attention to in Nigeria with specific reference to Ekiti State. Students depend on their teachers to provide them with instruction, guidance, feedback throughout the learning process. When a teacher fails to communicate effectively with the students, use poor languages, shout at students when they ask questions, do not listen to appreciate students' concerns, use gestures and facial expressions in an improper manner, exhibit unfriendly attitudes in the classroom, this could make students' concentration level drop, dampen their morale and eventually lose grasp of the subject matter which can lead to poor academic performance.

Teacher resourcefulness appears to be another factor that can affect students' academic performance. Resourcefulness is a key skill that teachers in Nigeria should possess as a lot of public schools including secondary schools are underfunded and ill equipped, teachers then have no choice other than to make do and improvise with the little that is available to facilitate instructional delivery. It has been observed that students learn more when instructional aids are used during the teaching-learning process, but these teaching aids are not usually available or are in poor conditions in most public schools. Teachers ought not to



use inadequate equipment as an excuse to resort to poor teaching: instead, they should learn to improvise.

Literature Review

Communication skill is a crucial non-technical skill of the teacher. Communication is said to be the backbone of teaching as it is the primary way through which a teacher imparts knowledge and transmits information to students. It appears that one of the most significant factors that can affect students' academic performance is the communication skill of a teacher. Communication skills of a teacher are the basic need of academic success of students, and their professional success in life. If the teacher has good communication skills, then he can easily convey the lesson in a manner students will comprehend. Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. In the classroom, instructions are delivered through communication: communication in terms of speaking to students to pass messages across to them, listening to hear and understand students' reactions, gestures to emphasize the importance of a message, attitude to express feelings, strengths and threats, and facial expression to inform, like, dislike, acceptance and more. For effective teaching, a teacher must be highly skilled in these areas of communication. Teacher's communication skills have been tipped to have important influence on student academic achievement and at the same time play a crucial role in the educational attainments of students. This is because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy to action and principles based on practice during interaction with students (Afe 2001). According to Morale and Pearson (2000) Good communication skills of the teacher are the basic needs of academic success of students. If the teacher has good communication skills, he can easily convey his message in an understandable manner to students (Andrade 2015). Jakhanwal (2021) also stated that teachers who hone their communication skills are prepared to instruct, advise and mentor students entrusted in their care. Browne (2013) emphasized that with positive communication, teachers may prevent behavior from occurring and promote academic performance of the students.

According to Banj in Asiegbu and Okpala (2019), teacher resourcefulness is conceptualized in terms of the teacher's ability to utilize the appropriate language, method, and available instructional materials to bring the best results from the learners. It appears that secondary school teachers do not care about being resourceful with respect to improvisation and utilization of improvised resources in facilitating the teaching and learning process. They seem to teach students in abstract form because instructional materials are not readily available. According to Farombi in Tety (2016) The availability of instructional materials in classrooms can influence teaching, which can have positive effects on students' learning and academic performance. This could imply that the non-Resourcefulness of teachers with regards to teaching aids could have a negative impact on students' academic performance.

Academic performance can be understood as the nucleus, around which a whole lot of significant components of education system revolve, which is why the academic performance of students has been the area of interest among researchers, parents, policy framers and planners. Since a sound academic performance is considered as a pre-requisite for securing



good jobs, a better career and subsequently a quality life, significance of the students' academic performance is immense. Although it may seem to be a simple outcome of education, but the impact of academic performance of students in any nation is multi-faceted. The academic performance of students is the key feature (Rono, Onderi & Owino, 2014) and one of the important goals (Narad & Abdullah, 2016) of education, which can be defined as the knowledge gained by the student which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. The attainment of academic excellence of students through making them portray better academic performance is the foremost motive of academic institutions (Adeyemo, 2001). Further, academic performance is something immensely significant for anyone who has a concern with education (Osiki, 2001).

According to Narad and Abdullahi (2016) academic performance is the knowledge acquired and evaluated through the instructors' marks and/or educational goals set by students to be achieved over a predetermined amount of time. They went on to say that the outcomes of exams or ongoing assessments are used to gauge these objectives. According to Annie, Howard and Mildred (quoted in Arhad, Zaidi & Mahmood, 2015) academic performance is a strong indicator of education outcome. They emphasized that it demonstrated and measures the degree to which an educational institution, teachers and students have achieved their objectives. Similarly, Yusuf, Onifade and Bello (2016) opined that academic performance is a measurable and observable student behavior of a student within a specific period. They added that it consists of scores obtained by a student in an assessment such as class exercise, class test, mid-semester, mock examination, and end of semester examination. Again, Martha (2009) emphasized that academic performance of students is defined by a student's performance in an examination, test, and in a course work.

Sule (2011) said that the determination of academic performance is a complex task because there are many intricately related factors associated with it. Popoola (2017) said there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are the most important procedural knowledge such as a skill or declarative knowledge such as a fact. It can be viewed that without students attempting their internal or external examinations, it may be difficult to determine the academic performance effectiveness and vice versa. Popoola said in educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance or how well a student meets standards set by the examination bodies. Standardized tests are taken by secondary school students in order to measure their performances. External examination is organized by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO), while school teachers conduct internal examinations. The outcomes of examination (both internal and external) or test taken by the students will determine how the students understand what they have been taught by the teachers.

Okoedion and okolie (2019) stated that the major factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigeria are student, teacher and school related factors. According to Ali, Zubair and Fahad (2013), students related factors that affect the academic performance of students include insufficient effort, lack of self-motivation, learning preference, previous and



recent academic performance, students' academic attitude and previous school. Udoh (2011) alludes to examination malpractice, poor study habits, peer influence, absenteeism and lack of self-confidence. Absenteeism, study habits, indiscipline and cultism were established by Odumbe (2012). Commenting on the teacher related factors affecting students' academic performance among students, Killen, Marais and Loedioff (2003) allude to poor student-lecturer relationship, poorly coordinated supervisory activities, lack of commitment and poor attitude by teachers, poor grounding in the subject area, poor teaching methods. Immoral, unethical behaviour and attitudes. School related factors that affect the academic performance of students include inadequate libraries, inadequate laboratories, inadequate instructional materials, curriculum related factors, inadequate number of teachers as well as academic policies implemented by the government.

Objectives of the Study

It seeks to establish a relationship between teachers communication skills and secondary school students academic performance. It is to establish a relationship between teachers resourcefulness and secondary school students academic performance.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers communication skills and secondary school students academic performance in Ekiti State.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers resourcefulness and secondary school students academic performance in Ekiti State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of this study consist of all the teachers in the public senior secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consists of 300 teachers from 30 public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. In stage one, 30 schools were selected from the 205 schools using systematic random sampling technique, the 205 schools were divided by the 30 schools to be sampled, to get the interval to use when selecting schools: $(205/30 = 6.81)$. Therefore, every six (6) schools were selected from the 205 public secondary schools in Ekiti State, to make a total of 30 schools. In stage two, 10 teachers were selected from each of the 30 public secondary schools earlier selected using simple random sampling technique, making 300 teachers. The principals assessed the teachers' communication skills and resourcefulness in their respective schools.

The instruments used for this study were self-designed questionnaires titled "Teachers' Communication Skills and resourcefulness Questionnaire" (TCSRQ) and an inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results was used to collect relevant data for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by experts in the field of Educational Management. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method within an interval of two weeks. Reliability coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained for TCSRQ was considered high enough for reliability. The data collected through the instruments were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Hypotheses

were tested using inferential statistics of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive analysis showing students' academic performance

Year	Number Reg.	5 credits and above including English and Mathematics		5 credits and above with English		5 credits and above with Mathematics	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
2019/20	13029	7536	57.84	8257	63.37	8894	68.26
2020/21	15042	9847	65.46	11669	77.57	11594	77.17
221/22	14370	10440	72.65	13018	90.59	10935	76.10

In Nigeria, the minimum pass mark obtainable in secondary school leaving examination is five credit passes including English and Mathematics. Table 3 reveals that students' academic performance in Ekiti State was high as 57.84%, 65.46% and 72.65% of the candidates examined obtained five credits in the West Africa Examination in 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 sessions respectively.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State

In testing this hypothesis, data on communication skills were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of TCSRQ (item 1 – 5) in the questionnaire. Data on students' academic performance were collected from the Students' Academic Performance Inventory. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between teachers' communication skills and students' academic performance

Variables	No of Schools	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P- Value
Communication Skills	30	12.25	1.94	0.420*	0.000
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.02	1.07		

***P<0.05**

Source: Researcher computation

The above table shows that the r-cal value of 0.420 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is

significant relationship between teachers' communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' resourcefulness and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State

In testing this hypothesis, data on resourcefulness sub-variable of teachers' non-technical skills were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of TCSRQ (item 6 – 10) in the questionnaire. Data on students' academic performance were collected from the Students' Academic Performance Inventory. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 3: Relationship between teachers' resourcefulness and students' academic performance

Variables	No of Schools	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P - Value
Resourcefulness	30	10.49	3.17	0.672*	0.000
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.02	1.07		

***P<0.05 Source: Researcher computation**

Table 3 showed that the r-cal value of 0.672 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between teachers' resourcefulness and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State. One probable reason for this significant relationship is that effective communication skills are essential for teachers to convey information clearly, explain complex concepts, and engage students in the learning process. Teachers who can communicate effectively are more likely to facilitate understanding and retention of subject matter.

Communication skills are considered one of the core competencies for effective teaching (Shalian, 2021, Obilor, 2020). Research has consistently shown that teachers who can communicate clearly, listen actively, and adapt their communication style to student needs tend to have a positive impact on student academic performance (Akudo, 2020). Moreover, the study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' resourcefulness and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State. Teachers who demonstrate resourcefulness are often skilled at finding creative solutions to challenges in the classroom. They can adapt to limited resources, utilize innovative teaching methods, and engage students effectively. These qualities can lead to improved student understanding and academic performance. Resourcefulness is often considered an important characteristic of effective educators (Jekayinfa, 2012). Research has shown that teachers who

are resourceful are better able to engage students, adapt to changing circumstances, and foster a positive learning environment (Bomide, 2011; Utibe-Abasi, 2016). Asiegbu and Okpala (2019) concluded that teachers' resourcefulness affects students' academic performance. Additionally, resourceful teaching is especially valuable in resource-constrained environments where schools may lack adequate materials and facilities. The finding highlights the importance of promoting resourcefulness as a valuable skill in teacher training and professional development programs. Teachers should be encouraged to develop their problem-solving and adaptability skills.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have shown that students' academic performance is influenced by teacher's communication skills and resourcefulness in Ekiti State. This has helped to improve student academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State. Teachers communication skills is vital in the classroom for an enhanced student academic performance. Also, teachers resourcefulness is crucial for improved student academic performance. Teachers communication skills and resourcefulness are important factor that contribute to student academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. It is therefore important to provide teachers with training and professional development opportunities to enhance their communication skills.
2. Principals should organize programs for teachers that focus on effective classroom communication, active listening, and providing constructive feedback to students.
3. Schools and educational institutions should foster a culture of resourcefulness by providing teachers with the necessary support to make the most of available resources.
4. Principals should encourage teachers to maintain the resources available in the school for an improved student academic performance.

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