Teachers' Gender and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Economics Students' Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Ondo State

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Abstract

The study examined the predictions of gender and self-efficacy of teachers to Economics students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State. The study adopted a survey research design. A sample of 576 respondents involving 540 Senior Secondary School (SSII) Economics students and 36 Economics teachers were randomly selected from 36 sampled Senior Secondary Schools. Two validated research instruments titled: Economics Students' Performance Test (ESPT) and Teacher's Attributes Questionnaire (TAQ) were used for data collection. The data collected were subjected to Multi-linear regression analysis. Results obtained revealed that teacher's sex and self-efficacy have positive contributions of (0.06 and 0.11) respectively to students' performance in Economics. Result of the analysis also showed that there is no significant difference (F=0.180, p>0.05) in the contributions of teacher variables. The study therefore concluded that teachers' sex and self-efficacy contribute to Economics students' academic performance in Ondo State.

Introduction

In every nation of the world, education sector seems to be democratic in nature in that it allows people of different sex, belief, level of training, experience and exposure e.t.c. make their contributions towards the development of the nation. It is a known fact that development of a given society/nation at any stage of life (primitive/modern) requires the concerted efforts of every member of the society irrespective of the age, sex, belief, training/experience, exposure etc. For education to serve as an effective developmental tool, it must relate to the needs and challenges of the nation. Nigeria as a society is faced with enormous economic challenges because of the beliefs and views of majority of the people about who has the potential, who are involved and who should be involved in the economy/business activities of the society.

Economics can be confusing and finding a clear definition of economics can be a challenge this is because scholars have varying views on the concept. There are many definitions of Economics, but Robinson (1975) has the most acceptable definition as a social science subject that studies human interaction and behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means that have alternative uses. However, there are other definitions such as Adu (2006) that Economics is basically the study of the allocation of resources among alternative uses to satisfy human wants. It is concerned with the choice we make in using limited resources to satisfy these wants, and it deals with production, exchange, distribution as well as consumption of goods and services and of the conduct of various other Economics activities by individuals, organizations and the state.

Likewise, Jonathan (2015) defined Economics as a social science that studies the choices that individuals, businesses, government and entire societies make as they cope with scarcity that influence and reconcile those choices. It can be inferred from this definition that Economics is relevant to all individuals from every section of the society which buttresses the relevance of Economics to all and the need for inclusion of Economics into school curricular (all levels/stages of Education.)

Having realized the importance of every member of the society in the work of nation building, the leadership of the nation did not underestimate the need to expose children and youth to the knowledge of income and resources management. Thus right from the Primary school level, pupils are directly/indirectly exposed to Economics education while demonstrating buying and selling in solving Word Problem in Mathematics. Likewise, Business Studies are taught at junior secondary school level to integrate students with Economics curriculum contents such as financial institutions, occupation, trade and aids to trade among others. At the senior secondary school level, this subject is recommended to teach topics similar to Business Studies, incorporating other advance topics such as basic concepts of Economics, inflation, and national income. It was introduced to create in the learner awareness of production, distribution and consumption that are the primary focus of a nation (Adu, 2004).

At this level, students are made familiar with basic concepts of economic principles and ideas. Likewise, students are exposed to the sectors of the economy topics such as unemployment, population, occupation, inflation, financial institutions to mention among others. Knowledge and experience gained become useful for the students in the day to day activities; in the future, the knowledge is used in making decisions and formulating right policies useful for the progress of the economy. Economics at the secondary school level is organized such that it would prepare students to contribute positively to the economic development of the nation through critical thinking and judgmental reasoning. After a stipulated period of learning Economics, teachers are expected to have covered the Economics curriculum contents which could be tested in internal (school) examination or/and external examinations such as Senior Secondary School Examinations (SSCE) in Nigeria(FRN, 2013). Despite the value of this subject and its relevance in solving the problem of a nation's development, students still perform poorly in examinations (internal and external).

Opinion varies as regard factors militating against students' performance in Economics. These varying opinion include: student factors, family background, teacher factors, school factors among many others. According to Obadiora (2016), the society sees teacher as the ultimate implementer of the curriculum, he/she dictates the quality of the instruction the learner receives, and therefore seen to be the main factor influencing students' academic performance. Teacher as a basic tool in curriculum implementation remain a very crucial factor that influences students' experience and achievement, and continuing educational development (Afolabi, 2009). As a result of this crucial position, focus has been on teacher's quality and the effort made in ensuring qualitative lessons in the classroom. Some group of people believed that the teachers have not been

teaching the subject very well, probably because they are not well grounded and lack adequate training in the subject (academic and professional qualifications).Some believed that teacher acquire adequate qualifications, they can't perform any better in any given task if there is no intrinsic ability and self-belief that he can transmit the needed instruction to the learner given to his/her charge. On the other hand, some people agreed that no matter how adequate the training given to the teachers, the subject must be taught by those teachers who have natural potential to teach the subject (Obadiora and Adesinna, 2010). It was the belief of some people that woman possesses natural ability to handle and manage family finances. Therefore, if Economics is taught by woman to the students with the passion and experience they use to handle family finances, there is tendency that students will learn and understand better. On the other hand, some are of the opinion that this subject should be taught by male because of their position as the head of the family and decision makers. Likewise, male occupy sensitive positions in various sectors of the Nigerian economy, most especially in policy making. Some are of the opinion that every subject could be taught by either a male or a female sex-teacher.

Teacher's sex has become controversial in a way that teacher's effectiveness and students' performance in examinations (internal and external) are considered functions of the teacher's sex. This has called the attention of researchers such as Afolabi and Audu (2007) to investigate the influence teacher's sex has on students' performance. Results of their study revealed that students' performance in primary science is influenced by teachers' sex. This assertion was buttressed by Marcus, Robert, Thomas and Kathy (2012) on the effect of same-sex teacher on middle and high students' grade, it was found out that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the students' grade and their teacher's sex. (Dee, 2006) stated that students' likeness for a male or female sex teacher may determine the students' performance in the teacher's subject. Moreover, some learners are more attentive when taught by the same gender teacher while some are more attentive when taught by an opposite sex teacher. In 2010, Dee found out that learning from an opposite sex teacher had a detrimental effect on students' academic progress and their engagement in schools. This was further established in Josep-Orioland Toni (2013), pupils who studied mathematics with a female teacher obtained higher results on the blind-test than those with a male teacher. Escardibul and Calero (2007) in a study carried out on teacher's sex and students' performance in Mathematics, found out that teacher's sex affects students' results and is positively correlated with having a female teacher. In the same vein, students assigned to female teachers perform better since female teachers tend to be more supportive, provide a more positive classroom atmosphere, and tend to use a more student-oriented style of teaching stressing the importance of motivation (Krieg, 2005; Nelson Laird, 2011). It was further stated by Holmlund and Sund (2008) in the study carried out on gender gap and school performance affected by the sex of the teacher, it was found that teachers prefer teaching students of their own gender or that gender stereotypes may influence teacher evaluations of their students. From the studies reviewed, it is observed that the sex of a teacher has an influence of students' performance.

Human vary in potentials, family/educational backgrounds, level of exposure, beliefs, ideas, acts and way of life. There is no doubt that the performance of people in the society differ because of the above stated

variables. The school setting is not left out as there are diversities in teachers' opinion, methodology, pedagogical skills, ideas, even self-efficacy. Evidently, these variations could give rise to differences in the students' academic performance. Teacher's self-efficacy is a factor observed to be consistently associated with the numerous qualities of an effective teacher that as well dictates examination outcome in a learner (Winston and Kwesi, 2013). Teacher's self-efficacy has been defined as the extent to which a teacher is confident enough to his or her ability to promote students' academic performance and attitude towards learning. Teachers with strong self-efficacy rely more on their own judgments, motivation, self-reflection, capability, experience and relationships to influence students learning. It should be noted that self-efficacy in a teacher is reflected in every aspect of his teaching including preparation of lesson note and the delivery of the curriculum content. There is always a sense of capability in his or her teaching which enables him carry along the different categories of students to achieve efficacy expectation.

A number of studies have elaborated the influence self-efficacy has on teacher's productivity and the students' level of performance. Ahmad and Marzieh (2012) determined that teacher's self-efficacy belief may influence a students' achievements in several ways: a teacher with high self-efficacy belief is more likely to implement instructive innovations in the classroom, to use adequate teaching methods and encourage students' autonomy, to be more responsible to students with special learning needs, to manage classroom problem, and to keep students on task than teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy. In addition, Tournaki and Podell (2005) examined how the interaction between student and teacher characteristics affects teachers' predictions of students' academic success. The findings indicated that teachers with high efficacy made less negative predictions about students, they have positive minds towards their students' performance and seemed to adjust their predictions when student characteristics changed, while low efficacy teachers seemed to be paying attention to a single characteristic when making their predictions and never give their students' better achievement a thought.

Teacher's self-efficacy is expected to guide teachers' behaviour, decision, and motivation with regard to teaching and motivation. with high level of teaching efficacy also demonstrate a love or passion for teaching that impacts their practice as teachers As stated by Jerald (2007) teacher's behaviouris related to his/her sense of efficacy and considered to contribute maximally to the level of students' attainment. Also, Tella (2008) in a study carried out on the influence of teacher's self-efficacy, interest, attitude, qualification, and experience on primary schools pupils' academic achievement in Mathematics finds teacher's self-efficacy to have the highest significant influence on learners' achievement. As reported by Ahmad and Marzieh (2012) on an investigation carried out on Iran students' achievement in English, results revealed that teacher's self-efficacy dictates the teacher's competence and the students' level of academic performance. From these points of view, it can be deduced that a high efficacious teacher could produce a better turn out in the learners taught.

A substantial body of research has revealed that teacher's sex and self-efficacy have influence on teachers and students respectively (Rushton, Morgan, and Richard, 2007; Afolabi, 2009).

However, the reviewed studies failed to investigate the link between teacher's sex, and self-efficacy; and students' academic performance. This study hereby seeks the influence of these variables on Economics students' academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

This study intends to investigate teachers' sex and self-efficacy as predictors of Economics students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State;

Specifically, the study is to;

i) identify the relative contributions of each of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State; and

ii) compare the contributions of the teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance in the State.

Research Question

i) What are the relative contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State?

Hypothesis

i) There is no significant difference between the contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy on students' academic performance in Economics in Ondo State.

Methodology

Survey Design research method was adopted to find out if teacher's sex and self-efficacy contribute to Economics students' academic performance. The population comprised the Senior Secondary School Two (SSII) Economics Students in Ondo State. A study sample of 576 respondents involving 540 Economics students (SSII) and 36 Economics teachers were selected. Six Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from the 18 in the State using simple random sampling technique. Three public and three private senior secondary schools were selected from each of the sampled LGAs using stratified random sampling technique. One Economics teacher was selected from each of the chosen senior secondary schools using a simple random sampling technique. Also, 15 Economics students were selected from each of the sampled schools using simple random sampling technique.

The research instruments for the study were: Economics Students' Performance Test (ESPT), to assess the current academic performance of the Economics students and Teacher's Attributes Questionnaire (TAQ) to gather data on teacher's sex and self-efficacy. One research assistant was employed to stay back and collect the instruments administered to the teacher and student respondents in the visited schools.

Results

Research Question: What are the relative contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance in Ondo State?

Table 1: Relative contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	β	Std.Error	B		
(Constant)	0.21	1.17		0.180	0.904
Teacher's Sex	0.09	0.26	0.06	0.35	0.753
Teacher's Self-Efficacy	0.13	0.06	0.11	2.167	0.043

Results of the analysis revealed that teacher's sex contributed 0.06 and teacher's self-efficacy 0.11 to Economics students' academic performance which reflected that the sex of a teacher and belief a teacher possesses can contribute to the teacher's effectiveness and relatively to learners' success. It can also be deduced that teacher's sex and self-efficacy have positive relationship with students' academic performance in Economics. However, the contribution of teacher's sex is not significant ($p>0.753$) while the contribution of teacher's self-efficacy is significant ($p<0.043$).

This means that the academic performance of the students in Economics is influenced by the teacher's sex either male or female. This is in line with the study of Afolabi and Audu (2007), whose findings stated that teacher's sex and students' academic performance are related; and Heathen, Ozkan and Serkan (2012) that teacher's sex does contribute mainly to the academic performance of students. However, the result of this study is in contrast to the study of Afolabi (2009); Edu, Grace, and Kalu (2012) whose result stated that teacher's sex has no contribution to Mathematics score of students. In like manner, teacher's self-efficacy contributes to academic performance of Economics students similar to the findings of Jerald (2007), Jerald (2007), Ahmad and Marzieh (2012) revealed that teacher's self-efficacy dictate the teacher's belief and competence.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance in Ondo State.

Table 2: Contributions of Teacher's Sex and Self-efficacy to Economics Students' Academic Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.807	2	0.403	0.180	0.836
Residual	73.943	33	2.241		
Total	74.750	35			

The result showed that there is no significant difference in the contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance ($F=0.180$, $p>0.05$). Therefore the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to Economics students' academic performance in

Ondo State is not rejected. This means that these teacher variables contribute similar quota to students' academic performance in Economics. In other words, teacher's sex and self-efficacy give the same measure of contributions to students' performance in Economics. The teacher's belief in his/her ability to bring out the best in a learner will instigate the teacher to upgrade his/her level of academic/professional qualification, read deep and wide to increase in knowledge, and motivate the students to learn irrespective of the sex.

The result of this analysis supports the findings of Escardibul and Calero (2007) that teacher' ssex affects students' results and is positively correlated with having a female teacher. As well as the findings of Isore (2009) that teachers with a high level of self-efficacy may be more likely to adapt to and moderate dynamics in schools whose students come from different backgrounds or present particular challenges. Lastly, Ahmad and Marzieh (2012) suggested that teacher's self-efficacy dictates the teacher's competence and the students' level of academic performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that; there are connections between teacher's sex and self-efficacy; and students' academic performance in Economics. Also, there is no significant difference in the contributions of teacher's sex and self-efficacy to students' academic performance in Economics in secondary schools in Ondo State. Hence, the following recommendations are made: teacher needs to build more self-confidence and belief in respective of the sex (sex stereotype should not be a hindrance to their classroom effectiveness). Teachers' sense of efficacy can potentially influence both the kind of environment that they create as well as the various instructional practices introduced in the classroom (Bandura, 1997). Teacher of Economics is thus implored to create a conducive environment during Economics lessons to help promote fast learning among the students.

Recommendations

Based on the results generated from this study, the following recommendations were provided;

i. Economics teachers should develop in them intrinsic ability at can foster the teaching rather than involving in sex stereotype. In other words, teachers could develop high self-esteem to allow for a well-organized, coordinated though non tensed teaching-learning environment.
ii. Economics teachers should employ different plans, organize instructions in various ways to gear up the interest of the students to learn Economics. Likewise teachers should develop the ability to carry out classroom activities in such a way that Economics students' interest will be aroused to learning.
iii. Personnel in the Ministry of Education are implored to visit schools regularly to observe teachers teach and assess their teaching efficacy.

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