

Teachers' Attitude as a Correlate of Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract: - The classroom climate which is often times set by the teacher is determined by the teacher's attitude. Attitude as a major determinant of a person's behavior influences the way a teacher relates with the students and thus affects students' academic performance. The study examined teacher's attitude as a correlate of students' academic performance in geography. Descriptive survey design was adopted and a sample size of four hundred selected from a population of nine hundred and sixty-eight using the Taro Yamane sample size formula. Two research questions and a research hypothesis were proposed in line with the study objectives. Average Mean Score was used to analyze responses for the research questions while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. The findings show that attitude of teachers correlated positively and significantly with students' academic performance. Poor government attitude to teachers, lack of job satisfaction, poor remuneration and delayed salary, students' learning interest and absence of teaching materials/instructional aid were found to influence the attitude of teachers. The paper strongly recommends among others that salaries and remuneration of teachers should be paid as at when due; teachers should go beyond Instruction and focus on the interpersonal aspects of teaching; constant in-service training should be provided for teachers and also provision should be made for teachers to attend educational conferences both locally and internationally as this would help them grow on the job.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Keith Harrell (1998), "attitude is everything". It affects and influences a person's behaviour which in turn affects performance. It often involves feelings, opinions and dispositions which affects behaviour. How successful a person is in achieving his or her set goals is a function of the person's attitude. A teacher's attitude to teaching will certainly affect his or her performance in the classroom. Attitude is about emotions and feelings, and effective teachers willingly share emotions and feelings (i.e., enthusiasm, affection, patience, sadness, disapproval) as well as a sincere interest and care about their students.

Studies have shown that the group climate in a classroom is almost always set by the teacher. Some classes exhibit friendliness and cooperation while others are notable for jealousy, unhealthy competition, or hostility. When either situation occurs, the teacher is almost always contributing to the climate by direct modeling and through behaviors which

foster the climate among the students. Teachers who respond favorably to differences among students in style, personality, independence, capability or motivation, are good models for other teachers and for students (Johnson, 2009; Brookfield, 2006; Mitchell, 1976).

Formal education at secondary school level is a very important determinant of the quality and quantity of intake into tertiary level of education. This is why the teaching of geography should be taking very serious at this level. Geography as an essential field in every human endeavors consists of knowledge of the world around us. It goes from studying the physical environment we live in to studying interactions that goes on within this environment. According to Ekperi (2018), geography as a vast field of study should be taught by a highly qualified and skilled teacher. He further noted that most students find geography, especially physical geography difficult and uninteresting because the teacher fails to arouse their interest for the subject.

It's been established that a good classroom strategy requires full interest and support from the teacher. If a teacher appears not interested or careful about a particular subject or student, he/she will be unable to foster a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, teachers with negative attitudes may not be as approachable to students as teachers who are positively motivated. So, students find it difficult asking such a teacher questions on the grey areas of the subject he/she teaches. Once this is the case, students begin to lose interest in the subject and learning generally, which ultimately affects their academic performance negatively.

Statement of Problem

Given the myriads of environmental issues plaguing the world today, the need for massive environmental awareness has become paramount. Among the subjects taught at the secondary school level, geography is the only subject that elaborately exposes students to his or her environment. Several studies have reported poor student enrolment in the basic geography courses in the institutions of higher learning. This problem has been associated with poor teaching of geography in at the secondary schools. While some studies have argued that the unavailability of qualified geography teachers in terms of certification is the main cause of the

problem, some other argue that the nonchalant and uncaring attitude of geography teachers account for the problem.

Ekperi (2018) observed that the performance of students in external exams has continually showed a downward trend in geography. The results from the West African Examination Council (WAEC) showed a failure rate of 44.07% in 2000, 43.02% in 2001, 42.6% in 2002, 33.0% in 2003 and in 2014 only 29.27% pass was recorded, indicating a 70.73% failure rate. The WAEC result of 2015 showed that less than 42.6% of the students who registered and sat for the examination passed geography (WAEC, 2015).

Given the overwhelming influence teachers have on students and how teachers' attitude shape and determine the classroom climate, this study therefore investigates how teachers' attitude affect students' academic performance in geography subject using the students' terminal examination result as a measure for academic performance. The study also investigated the factors responsible for the attitude of teachers.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between teachers' attitude and students' academic performance in geography?
2. What are the factors responsible for teachers' attitude?

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant between teachers' attitude and students' academic performance in geography

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Influence of Teachers' Attitude on Students' Academic Performance

Studies have shown that teachers exert enormous influence on students and thus determine to a very large extent their academic performance. Several authors argue in favour of teacher qualification, teaching methods, communication skills, gender and age as the main teacher characteristics that determine students' academic performance. While these factors are considered very crucial, this paper considers teachers' attitude as an indisputable determinant of students' academic performance since "attitude is everything" (Harrell, 1998). Some studies have found a correlation between teachers' attitude and students' interest in learning. Moreover, personality traits of the teachers are more powerful and influential than the course content or instructional strategies used in the classroom.

The study conducted by Kurgat and Gordon (2014) on the effects of teacher characteristics and attitudes on student achievement in KCSE economics examination adopted a field based survey. The study was conducted in secondary schools offering economics in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. Simple Purposive Sampling was used to get the representative sample for the study. The representative sample constituted all the fourth form students of economics in all the secondary

schools in the Rift valley province of Kenya, inspectors of schools in districts where economics was being offered and teachers from the schools where the subject was offered. A total of 187 students, 32 teachers and 4 district inspectors took part. Data was collected from the sample using questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using Excel software program. Basic statistical techniques were used to analyze various items in the questionnaire. These include calculating the averages frequencies, percentages and totals. These statistical techniques were used to make comparisons in the various data collected. The study concludes that teachers have a positive attitude towards the subject, thus, poor performance could be attributed to other factors other than teacher attitudes.

The study conducted by Mwangi (1983) focused on identifying some of the factors which influence learning and achievement in secondary mathematics in Kenya. The teacher and student characteristics were studied. Among the teacher characteristics investigated by this study, only three were found to be related to achievements in KCE mathematics where two were positively related and one was negatively related. The variables that showed positive relationship were sex of the teachers. Students taught by male teachers tended to score higher to KCE than those taught by female teacher. It would appear that the sex of the teachers of economics has some bearing in the performance of students in economics. Negative teachers' attitude towards mathematics teaching was correlated with low achievement in KCE mathematics. The remaining teacher characteristics such as time spent on lesson preparation, team teaching, group work, professional qualification, in service training, teaching experience, frequency of supervision and the use of teaching aids showed no relationship to achievement in mathematics.

Akinfe, Olofimi, and Fashiky (2012) studied teacher characteristics as predictor of academic performance of students in Osun State. The study used a survey design in investigating the perception of SS3 students on teacher characteristics in relation to students' academic performance. Using purposive sampling, 16 secondary schools were selected (10 public and 6 private) and 100 SS3 students randomly drawn from each school giving a sample size of 1600 students. Questionnaire tagged "teachers" characteristics and students' academic performance (TCSAP) was used to elicit information. Data were analyzed using percentages. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Chi-square were used to test the hypotheses of the study. Findings reveal that students' academic performance correlate positively and significantly depending on teachers' attitude to teaching and learning in the classroom; knowledge of subject matter and teaching skills.

Hooley and Jones (2006) also conducted a study on "The Influence of Teachers' Attitude on Student Performance in a Programmed Learning Situation". The study was aimed at establishing whether or not instructor attitude influenced student performance when learning a program. A

mathematics program was presented to three matched groups of students. They were given an introduction to their task in such a way that one group felt that the instructor was favourably disposed towards programmed instruction, the second group felt that the instructor was neither favourable nor unfavourably disposed to programmed instruction and the third group felt that the instructor was not favourably disposed to programmed instruction. Analysis of variance between the groups indicated that no significant differences existed between the groups in respect to their achievement, as measured by a criterion test administered at the end of the program.

Shittu and Oanite (2015) in their study on Teachers' Attitudes: A Great Influence on Teaching and Learning of Social Studies Students' attitude towards Social Studies outlined poor government attitude, lack of job satisfaction, poor remuneration and delayed salary as factors that affects teacher's attitude.

III. METHODS

The study adopted descriptive survey which is appropriate in gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection.

3.1 Area of the study

The study was carried out in Enugu North Local Government Area which is one of the local government areas that make up Enugu. This area is known for its relatively high concentration of public secondary schools.

3.2 Population and sampling technique

The population of the study consists of the students offering geography together with the geographer teachers from three selected schools. The total number of students is nine hundred and fifty-nine (959) while the number of geography teachers is nine (9), given a total of nine hundred and sixty-eight (968).

Stratified sampling method was used to divide the public secondary schools in the area into Boys' school, Girls' School and mixed school. One school each was randomly selected from each of the strata, making it a total of three schools. A sample size of four hundred was selected from the study population using the Taro Yamane Formula. Four hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed to each of the three schools based on their percentage contribution to the study population.

3.3 Instrument for Data collection

The study adopted a four-point structured Likert scale questionnaire of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Mean rating (X) was used to analyze the responses gotten from the research questions. The result was accepted when $X \geq 2.5$ and rejected when it's less. The study hypothesis was tested using Multiple Regression Analytical Technique at a $p < 0.005$. The null hypothesis was rejected when $p < 0.005$ and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

IV. RESULTS

Research Question 1:

Table 4.1: Mean rating of the relationship between teacher's attitude and students' academic performance

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN X	DECISION
1.	Teachers who are always absent from class hardly cover their syllable	125	106	100	69	2.9	Accept
2.	Students find more interest in Geography when there is a good rapport between them and the teacher	168	176	43	13	3.4	Accept
3.	Students perform poorly in Geography exams when the teacher is not friendly and approachable	207	112	65	16	3.6	Accept
4.	Students perform poorly in Geography exams under a teacher who abuses them on every slight issue.	152	138	70	40	3.0	Accept
5.	Students perform poorly when the teacher does not show deep interest in the subject he/she teaches	112	100	106	82	2.6	Accept

Source: Field study, 2017

From table 4.1 above, items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 has a mean score rating of 2.9, 3.4, 3.6, 3.0 and 2.6 above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows a relationship between teacher's attitude to work and students' academic performance.

Research question 2: What are the factors responsible for teachers' attitude?

Table 4.2: Mean rating of the relationship between teacher's attitude and students' academic performance

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN X	DECISION
1.	Poor government attitude to teachers affects teachers attitude negatively	168	176	43	13	3.4	Accept
2.	lack of job satisfaction affects teachers attitude	106	99	104	91	2.5	Accept
3.	poor remuneration and delayed salary affects teacher's attitude	134	122	100	44	2.7	Accept
4.	Students' learning interest affect teacher's attitude	98	102	122	78	2.5	Accept
5.	Absence of teaching materials/instructional aid affect teacher's attitude	98	102	122	78	2.5	Accept
6.	the sex and age of a teacher affects his/her attitude	94	102	99	105	2.4	Reject

Source: Field study, 2017

From table 2 above, items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 has a mean score rating of 3.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.5 and 2.5 above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that poor government attitude to teachers, lack of job satisfaction, poor remuneration and delayed salary, students' learning interest and absence of teaching materials/instructional aid are factors that influence teacher's

attitude. Furthermore, sex and age of teacher was found not to influence teacher's attitude.

Test of Research Hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between teacher's attitude and student's academic performance in geography.

Table 4.3: Regression analysis of the relationship between teacher's attitude to work and students' academic performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.865 ^a	.0.748	.594	7.68409

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60.025	3	20.008	42.825	0.000 ^b
	Residual	157.594	38	4.147		
	Total	217.619	41			

Table 4.3 shows the statistical relationship between teacher's attitude and student's academic performance in geography termly exams. The table shows that the independent variable with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.865 and a multiple adjusted R Square of 0.594 accounted for 59.4% of the variance in the student's academic performance. The dependent variable correlated significantly positive with the independent variable.

With an F-statistics of 42.825 and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.005), the result shows a statistical significance between the independent and dependent variable.

V. CONCLUSION

Findings from the results of research question one and the study hypothesis shows a positive and significant relationship between teacher's attitude and student's academic performance. This finding agrees strongly with the assertion made by Harrell (1998) that "attitude is everything" and Akinfe et al (2012), Afolabi (2009), Mwangi (1983) whose studies established a positive and significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. However, the finding seem to differ with the conclusion made by

Hooley and Jones (2006) and Kurgat and Gordon (2014) in their respective studies that poor performance of students could be attributed to other factors other than teacher attitudes.

Concerning the factors that affect teacher's attitude, poor government attitude to teachers, lack of job satisfaction, poor remuneration and delayed salary, students' learning interest and absence of teaching materials/instructional aid were found to influence teacher's attitude. This is supported the work of Shittu and Oanite (2015) where the authors maintained that these factors shape teachers' attitude in the teaching of social studies subject. However, sex and age of teachers was found not to influence their attitude. This agrees with the position of Afolabi (2015) that gender of a teacher does not affect teaching and student's performance.

Based on the above findings, the study thus recommends that:

1. The government should budget and invest more in education, especially in the area of teacher's welfare, provision of teaching materials and instructional aid.
2. Government at all levels should change her nonchalant attitude to teachers and the teaching profession as it has grave implication on the nation'

3. Government should embark on time to time and proper monitoring and evaluation of teachers to ensure that the teachers carry out their duties effectively in line with the guidelines for the teaching profession.
4. The salaries and remuneration of teachers should be paid as when due. Non-payment of teacher's salaries and other entitlements lower their motivation and thus negatively affects their performance.
5. Teachers should constantly create a friendly environment in the classroom as this will help to stir up a learning hunger in the students which will in turn make the classroom more engaging.
6. Parents should from time to enquire from their wards how supportive their teachers are.
7. Beyond Instruction, teachers should focus on the interpersonal aspects of teaching
8. Constant in-service training should be provided for teacher and also provision should be made for teachers to attend education conferences both locally and internationally.
9. Since attitude is about sharing emotions, teachers need to be taught how to develop and use emotional intelligence in classroom management.

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