



Teachers' Conduct And Students' Academic Performance In Port Harcourt Secondary Schools

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Abstract:

This paper investigated teacher conduct and students academic performance in Port Harcourt Secondary Schools. It was a descriptive survey aimed at determining the extent to which teachers' conduct influenced student's academic performance. A sample of 302 teachers representing 50 percent of 604 was selected through simple random sampling technique. A 2-part, 10-item, 4-point scale well structured instrument titled "Teacher Conduct and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire" (TCSAPQ) was used to generate data for answering 2 research questions and testing 2 hypotheses. The instrument was validated by a team of experts in the Department of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt. Test retest method was used to establish reliability co-efficient using Pearson's' Product Moment Correlation at 0.85. Means were used to answer the 2 research questions. t-test statistics was used to test the 2 null hypotheses. The findings among others are that teaching styles affect students' academic performance and concluded that interrelationship exists between teaching styles and students' academic performance. It was recommended that government should re-examine the relationship that exists between teachers and students, teachers and the management with a view to establishing a good rapport that can lead to improved academic performance.

1. Background To The Study

The school as a social system provides a forum for the interaction of different people within it. The principal players in the school social system and sub systems are the governing authorities, the teachers, the students and the parents. The behaviour of the teachers who operate in the school system as role model to the students is of greater interest in their study. The conduct of the teachers is watched closely by the students in all their activities, from when they enter the school each day till when they go back to their hostels or homes.

The study is keenly interested in the relationship between the teachers conduct and students academic performance in schools. It will therefore, focus on some basic concepts that address this issue squarely. The teachers' conduct in school which can be monitored by school authorities include: their teaching disposition in classroom, the complete control and management of their classes, promptness to classroom lessons, regularity to school, the teacher-teacher relationship, teacher-students relationship, teacher-management interaction patterns and how the teachers idiographic / normotatic roles are played for the school's goals to be achieved.

In the first place, the teaching role of the teacher is so important to the successful achievement of the educational goals of the students. The conduct of the teachers in classroom either mars or promotes the academic development of the students. The academic achievement of the students is therefore predicated on the successful execution of their roles as teachers in classrooms. In support of this assertion was Ahukanna (1990) who maintain that the school teacher whether elementary or secondary is perhaps the most important administrative position in our school system. He noted that the most important element in the job of educating the students is the quality of teaching service provided in the class. The good conduct of the teacher includes their commitment to the students, teaching specific activities of the students. This type of teachers conduct is no doubt helpful to the academic achievement of the student. There is no gain saying that the students tutelage by a teacher that is less committed to teaching duties will achieve less in their academic pursuit.

As the teacher monitors the activities of the students, so also they are monitored by the school authorities in order to achieve the set goals of the school. Koko (1998) in Akpana (2003) remarked effective monitoring of existing performance is a collaborative mandate which can only be actuated by the willing co-operation of everyone. It is a fact of life

that when people become conscious of the monitoring of their activities, they work more for quick achievement of the stated goals.

The regular attendance in school and the students' problems take the achievement of the school goals to a higher pedestal. The student and the teacher when very regular in attendance to school activities often achieve more than those not very regular in attendance. That is, the teachers are able to communicate the school processes to the students that are very regular at school. Knowing the existing school policies, also assist the students to be more focused than when they are ignorant.

Also found very germane to the successful achievement of school goals is when the teachers use the appropriate teaching methods and styles in presentation of their lessons. Amaewhule (2008) believed that an important point to note when teaching a subject in a secondary school is to employ a method that is students centered. Learning becomes more effective if the method of teaching emphasizes activities and action of students rather than those of the teachers. These and many other areas are the places the teachers need to be firm and active in dispensing knowledge and skills to the students. Any student that is so well prepared will no doubt achieve the needed goals of their academic endeavours. These are the reasons why the researcher is interested in the relationship in the conduct of the teachers and students academic performance in secondary schools.

In the light of the foregoing therefore, this paper investigated if there is a relationship between teachers' conduct and the students' academic performance in Port-Harcourt Secondary Schools.

2.Statement Of The Problem

All those who are concerned about education will be interested in the factors and characteristics which make for effective teaching to bring about the students expected performance in the course of their interaction. Several factors in the past have been considered the cause of student's varied performance in our secondary schools. Parents have blamed the teachers, teachers in turn blamed the low standard of performance of students on poorly defined and half heartedly articulated government policies. But the constraints on the success of achieving the goals of education are a matter of seriousness in recent times. Governments in turn have, in spite of all odds invested so much on massive training programmes for teachers to bring about the expected educational goals. The agitation arising from this rather disturbing phenomenon in students' performance

has turned the interest of educators to look critically at all ramifications of the school system in order to identify crucial areas that need tending to.

This study specifically determines if a relationship exists between teachers' observed conduct and students' performance in Rivers State Secondary Schools especially Port-Harcourt Local Government Area. To further expound the elements of the problem, the teachers' roles are indispensable if the schools desired educational objectives must be achieved.

3.Purpose Of The Study

The major purposes of this paper include:

- To determine the extent teaching styles influenced students academic performance
- To examine the extent teachers communication approaches affect student's academic performance.

4.Research Questions

To really find out the solutions to these problems the following research questions were addressed:

- To what extent does the teachers' teaching style influence students' academic performance?
- How does the teachers' communication approach affect students' academic performance?

5.Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were posited:

- H_01 : There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of teaching style and students' academic performance.
- H_02 : There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of teacher's communication approaches and student's academic performance.

6.Methodology

It was a descriptive survey design where a small group of the population called sample is used for the study and results obtained thereafter are generalized which has been

accepted as a useful tool for describing existing conditions and for evaluating the relationship between teachers' conduct and students' academic performance in Port-Harcourt secondary schools.

A population of 604 made up of 15 principals, 15 vice principals, 74 teachers and 500 students was used. A sample of 302 made up of 8 principals, 7 vice principals, 37 teachers and 250 students was selected through simple random sampling. A 2-part, 10-item, 4-point scale instrument titled "Teacher Conduct and students academic performance questionnaire" (TCSAPQ) was used to collect data for answering 2 research questions and for testing 2 null hypotheses. The instrument had the options; very great extent, great extent, less extent & no extent and had the weights: 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

The content and face validity of the instrument were established by a team of experts in Educational Management, from the Department of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The instrument was subjected to reliability using 30 teachers who are not part of the sample. The instrument was re-administered to this group, the scores generated was collated with the scores of the 1st attempt after two weeks and the 2 scores were subjected to Pearsons' Product Moment Correlation that yielded an $r=0.85$.

Means were used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

6.Result

6.1.Research Question One: To what extent does the teachers' teaching style influence students' academic performance?

S/No	Teachers Teaching Style	Students mean	Teachers Mean	Principals Mean	Aggregate mean
1.	The teacher normally allows students to ask questions in order to clarify issues.	3.62	3.59	3.20	3.47
2.	The teacher requests students to learn.	3.18	3.39	3.35	3.30
3.	The teacher encourages students to learn.	3.16	3.44	2.66	3.23
4.	The teacher is high handed and autocratic.	2.58	1.94	1.67	2.06
5.	When students are in doubt the teacher helps them out.	2.43	2.08	2.35	2.28
6.	The teacher relates the objectives of the subject to the understanding of the students.	3.23	3.33	2.65	3.40
7.	The teacher clarifies the doubt in a subject.	3.24	3.24	4.00	3.49

Table 1: Mean Responses of Teachers' Teaching Style and Students' Academic Performance.

Data on table 1 show teachers' teaching style has a vital relationship with the students' academic performance. The mean response is as follows: the teacher allows students to ask questions in order to clarify issues (aggregate mean 3.47).

The teacher requests students' input (aggregate mean 3.30). The teacher encourages students to learn (aggregate mean 3.23). The respondents are of the view that teaching style affects students' performance, while those two items, the teacher is high-handed and autocratic (aggregate mean 2.06), when students are in doubt, the teacher helps them out (aggregate mean 2.28) suggest that the performance of students is influenced but not measurable. The teacher relates the objectives of the subject (aggregate mean 3.40) and the teacher always clarifies the doubt in a subject (mean set 3.49) are of the view that the teaching style influences the students' academic performance to a great extent.

6.2. Research Question Two: How does the teachers' communication approach affect students' academic performance?

S/No	Teacher Communication Approach	Scores	Students	Teacher s Mean	Principa ls Mean	Aggrega te mean
1.	The teacher encourages students to express their view concerning what they are to learn.	293	3.20	3.34	3.75	3.43
2.	The teacher requests students to learn.	285	2.96	3.19	2.80	2.98
3.	The teacher gives students feedback on their academic matter.	289	3.31	3.35	3.16	3.27

Table 2: Mean Responses of teachers' communication approach and students academic performance

Table 2 indicates that the teachers' communication approach has a significant relationship with students' academic performance. These are the items and their aggregate mean; the teacher encourages students to express their views concerning what they are to learn (aggregate mean 3.43), the teacher requests students to learn (aggregate mean 2.98), the teacher gives students feedback on their academic matter (aggregate mean 3.27).

6.3.Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the communication approach and students' academic performance.

Group	No	Mean	SD	DF	Probability level	t-cal.	t-test crit.	Remarks
Teachers Communication Approach		3.0287	.7341					Reject Hypotheses
	302			300	.P<0.05	10.49	1.960	
Students' academic performance		2.9139	.9830					

Table 3: t-test of difference between the communication approach and students' academic performance.

In table 3, teacher communication approach recorded a mean of 3.03 and a standard deviation of .73 while students academic performance recorded a mean of 2.91 with a standard deviation of .98. Thus, at 300 degree of freedom, calculated t-value of 10.49 is significant at 1.96 critical t.

Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of the communication approach and students' academic performance is hereby rejected.

6.4.Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of teachers teaching style and students' academic performance.

Group	No	Mean	SD	DF	Probability level	t-cal.	t-test crit.	Remarks
Teacher's teaching style		2.9016	.6536					Reject Hypotheses
	302			300	.P<0.05	14.73	1.960	
Students' academic performance		2.9139	.9830					

Table 4: t-test of difference between teaching style and students' academic performance.

In table 4, teachers teaching style had a mean of 2.9 and a standard deviation of 0.65 while students' academic performance recorded a mean of 2.91 with a standard deviation of 0.98. Thus, at 300 degree of freedom, calculated t-value of 14.73 is significant at 1.96 critical t.

Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of teachers teaching style and students' academic performance hereby rejected.

7. Discussion Of Results

Data in table 1 reveal that teachers' teaching style has a significant positive relationship with the students' academic performance. The above finding is highly congruent with the work of Ahukanna (1990) who maintained that the most important element in the job of educating students is the quality of teaching service the teacher provides in the class.

Accordingly, he stressed that the teacher as a class controller and manager has to perceive his duty as a behavioural scientist. Ahukanna emphasized further that the teacher must know how to use his style of teaching to achieve learning irrespective of noise and other classroom distractions.

Similarly, Firestone (1993) observed that for learning to take place in class, the teacher must demonstrate three types of commitment. These according to him include: commitment to students, commitment to teaching and commitment to specific school goals.

In keeping with findings of this work, Firestone still stresses that the most important role the teacher plays during lessons is to control students effectively so that there will be a positive outcome after the learning and a teacher who does it very well encourages academic excellence.

The above observations are further amplified by Hornby (1996) who defines the word monitor as a device used to observe; record and test something over a period of time. The above feelings expressed in that definition, agree with the findings of this work which corroborates the fact that the teacher monitors, observes and records the activities of students in class to achieve teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Akpan (2003) observed that effective monitoring of existing performance is a collaborative mandate which can only be actualized by the willing co-operation of everyone. He emphasizes that the teacher must use adequate teaching styles to buy over the students' co-operation in order for learning to excel in the classroom.

Additionally Koko (1998) advised that to monitor school effectiveness in the areas of both staff and students, the teacher has to monitor the extent to which members of the school community abide by rules and regulations governing sensitive aspects of the school activities.

In continuation, Amaewhule (2000) pointed out that an important issues to note when teaching subject in secondary schools is to employ a teaching style that is students centered. He further stresses that learning becomes more effective if the style of teaching emphasizes more activities and the action of the teacher.

Observations of Ahukanna (1999) corroborated the findings of this work when he advised that verification is the only style that the students are flowing with him during the repetition and demonstration in a French class for instance.

Results indicate that teachers' communication approach has a significant relationship with the students' academic performance. Okoroma (2000) agreed with this finding when he observes that if the teachers' approach to communication in the class is positive and effective, the teaching-learning process will be very effective too. Supporting the above, Okeke, Nosiri, Elele, Ozurumba & Igwe (1985) maintained that where ideas, opinions, feelings and thoughts of the teacher are properly expressed and presented, they will enhance teaching and learning, promote good result in the school system and equally lead to the achievement of goals of the school.

8. Conclusion

Teachers' teaching style influenced students' academic performance. Teachers' communication approach also influenced students' academic performance. There is also a significant difference between the teachers' teaching style and students' academic performance hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

9. Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed towards the effective administration of secondary schools in Port-Harcourt.

- Government should re-examine the relationship that exists between the teachers, the students, teachers and the management with a view to establishing good communication which can lead to improved academic performance in school.

- The Inspectorate Division of Education Ministry should intensify their supervision of teaching used for a particular subject that is taught in class with a view to using them to raise the standard of education for excellent academic performance.
- School managers should encourage teachers' positive conduct or behaviour in the school system and to publicize the school achievement, to recognize the best behaved teacher of the year during seminar, or work / workshop organized by the Ministry of Education for teachers, to raise the morale of both the teachers and students.
- Teacher should not be high handed and autocratic. This will make them approachable so as to help the students when they are in doubt with their studies.

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