



Teacher Characteristics, Classroom Management Skills and Students' Academic Performance of Upper Basic Social Studies Students in Delta State

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated teacher characteristics, classroom skills and students' academic performance of upper basic Social Studies students in Delta State. The study adopted ex-post facto correlational research design. The sample of this study consisted of three hundred (300) Social Studies teachers and students drawn from 15 secondary schools across the three Senatorial Districts in Delta State, selected through the Multi-stage sampling procedures. Two research instruments were used for this study- "Teachers Characteristics and Communication Skill Questionnaire (TCCSQ) and Students Academic Performance Test (SAPT)". The reliability was tested by using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics and yielded a reliability index of 0.73 and 0.74, respectively. The research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation with a benchmark of 2.50, while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, the study showed that there is a significant influence of teachers' preparedness, teachers' creativity, and teachers' classroom management skills on the academic performance of Social Studies students. It was recommended among others that teachers in upper basic should always prepare for their lessons before commencement of teaching; teachers should be creative in the course of carrying out their duties to enhance students' performance, to ensure high academic performance, and teachers with classroom management skills should be recruited to handle the students.

KEYWORDS:

Teacher Characteristics, Classroom Skills; Academic performance; Upper Basic; Social Studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic performance could be seen as an ideal measurement for teaching and learning processes. It might be considered an appropriate tool to underscore teacher characteristics and classroom management skills in relation to students' academic outcomes. It is a determinant factor for evaluating teachers' teaching and students' learning, which is seen at the end of the term or academic session after examinations (Misan-Ruppee, Obro, & Akpochofo, 2023). According to Abdullahi and Akin (2016), academic performance is the knowledge gained, which is assessed by marks, by a teacher and or educational goals set through students and teachers to be achieved over a period of time. Also, Abdullahi and Akin (2016) maintained that in recent

times, academic performance in Social Studies has been an area of most concern to stakeholders and other researchers in the field of education. This has been so because the major objectives of education are to produce expected behavioural changes on the parts of the learner. It is also targeted to bring about a well-balanced personality to live by the societal norms and values (Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu & Nwabuaku, 2024).

It is obvious that students' performance in Social Studies is quite dependent on a number of factors, which might include teacher characteristics, environmental factors and many others. These factors have contributed immensely to the academic performance of the students in the subject matter in their respective schools. There has been some serious debate about factors affecting academic performance (Obro & Enayemo, 2022). Burger (2022) remarked that it is pertinent to note that over the years, there have been arguments among many psychologists and educationists about the determinants of the academic performance of students. While some stressed the character or attitude of teachers, others attribute it to environmental factors.

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Teacher characteristics imply those attributes, attitudes, characters and behaviours which the teacher displays in the classroom during the teaching and learning processes. It might not be out of place to say the teacher represents the most important aspect of the educational system because the implementation of the curriculum depends so much on the teacher (Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu, 2012). Teacher characteristics are those behaviours which teachers display in the class that provoke students' learning interest, which help them to develop self-confidence (Inyang, 2020).

Recently, Social Studies educationists and researchers have expressed worry concerning the unpleasant performance of upper basic students in Social Studies; the pathetic nature of this problem has led stakeholders of Social Studies education to brainstorm on the causes of the problem and the way forward. Before now academic performance of students was blamed on the failure of government to provide financial support to educational institutions in Nigeria, but with recent government investment and private sector financial support in providing better learning facilities and human resources to promote education one expects an improvement in the academic performance of students but this has not been the case (Owan, Nwannunu & Madukwe, 2018, Oyovwi & Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu, 2021). Since this has not been realised, it means that other factors may be responsible for the problem, factors which may include teacher factor, learning environment, individual student's barriers, instructional supervision, or non-usage of instructional resources may be associated with the weak academic performance of students, especially those of Social Studies.

Teachers' characteristics are professional skills that enable the integration of knowledge, experience and effective use of resources for Social Studies. These are skills that produce potential capabilities to achieve the aims of education, which help in the promotion of consciousness and knowledge of the child's immediate culture as well as an understanding of other cultural values both within and outside their national boundary (Enwelim, 2016). Walker (2022) opined that teacher characteristics are in relation to a teacher who had the greatest impact on the students' academic performance, who was most successful in teaching the subject matter, and who has imparted their lives, and through special qualities inspired them. Thus, Walker enumerated twelve point's personality traits or lifestyle characteristics that could be credited as characteristics of an effective teacher; they are preparedness, creativity, personal touch, sense of belonging, compassion, participatory class session, respect for students, admits mistakes, apologises, and is always forgiving.

The term classroom management skills refers to the procedures, strategies, and instructional techniques teachers use to manage student behaviour and learning activities. Effective classroom management skills create an

environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Okoso (2016) defined classroom management skills as the methods and strategies an educator uses to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to student success and learning. Okoso (2016) points out the importance of students feeling safe at school and states that the term classroom management skills refers to the procedures, strategies, and instructional techniques teachers use to manage student behaviour and learning activities. Starlin (2017) stated that a well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. Thus, effective classroom management skills create an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning, whereas ineffective classroom management skills often create chaos. Hence, effective classroom management skills are the most important -- and the most difficult -- skill a new teacher has to master. Even veteran teachers often find themselves faced with a student- or an entire class- who challenges their established management skills and forces them to find new ways of dealing with classroom situations. Therefore, it becomes very important that teachers' characteristics, classroom skills, and academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies Students in Delta State, Nigeria, is worth investigating.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of teachers' preparedness on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State?
2. What is the influence of teachers' creativity on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State?
3. What is the influence of teachers' classroom management skills on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State?

Hypotheses

- Ho₁ There is no significant influence between teachers' preparedness and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.
- Ho₂ There is no significant influence of teachers' creativity and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.
- Ho₃ There is no significant influence of teachers' classroom management skills and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design employed for this study is an *ex-post facto* research design. The researcher has no control over the variables of interest and therefore cannot manipulate them. Thus, the researcher considered this design appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to statistically determine the relationship between the variables. The population of this study consists of 14,877 and 218,402 Upper

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Basic School Social Studies teachers and students in all the 471 public secondary schools during the 2023/2024 academic session. The population was drawn across the three Senatorial Districts in Delta State (Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Asaba, 2023). The sample of this study consists of 300 Social Studies teachers and 300 Social Studies students drawn from 15 secondary schools across the three Senatorial Districts in Delta State. The sample teachers represent 40% of the entire Social Studies teachers across the three Senatorial districts in Delta State. Multi-stage sampling procedures, which comprise of purposive sampling technique and a simple sampling technique, were employed in composing the sample for the study.

Two research instruments used for this study are “Teachers Characteristics and Communication Skill Questionnaire (TCSQ) and Students Academic Performance Test (SAPT)”. The instruments were designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was subdivided into three sections; Section A was designed to collect respondents’ biodata, such as the name of school and gender. Section B consists of six subsections with a total of forty-six (36) statements that measured teacher characteristics and classroom skills. In section B, the respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on a modified four-point rating scale with close-ended items as Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) points (as shown in Appendix C). The reliability of the instruments was determined using the test-retest method. Using the method, the instruments were administered twice to 20 Social Studies teachers and 20 Social Studies Students, which was selected from schools outside the main schools that will be used for the study. The data obtained from the two different administrations of the instruments were collated and correlated using Pearson Product-moment coefficient statistics, and it yielded a reliability index of 0.73 and 0.74, respectively, for the “Teachers Characteristics and Communication Skill Questionnaire (TCCSQ). In order to answer the research questions raised the mean and standard were used with a benchmark of 2.50. This stands as a means of decision, which means that a mean score above 2.50 stands as agreed, while a mean score below 2.50 was rated as disagreed. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the influence of teachers’ preparedness on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of Influence of teachers’ preparedness on academic performance of Social Studies students

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
1	I mastered the content I teach	300	3.73	0.60	Agreed
2	I always update myself on innovations in teaching.	300	3.60	0.56	Agreed
3	My lesson notes are up to date	300	3.64	0.48	Agreed
4	I use instructional materials when teaching	300	3.75	0.43	Agreed
5	I manage effectively the subject I teach	300	3.83	0.37	Agreed
6	I have a high level of experience in teaching my subject	300	3.82		Agreed
Grand Mean			3.73		

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the influence of teachers’ preparedness on the academic performance of social studies students in Delta State. It showed that respondents agreed to all the items on the influence of teachers’ preparedness on the academic performance of social studies students in Delta State, since their mean response is above 2.50, which is the acceptance region. The table also indicated a grand mean of 3.73.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of teachers’ creativity on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of teachers’ Influence on the creativity of academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

S/ N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
7	Teachers often clarify the expected behaviours required for a reward to students	300	3.63	0.64	Agreed
8	I use maps in teaching social studies during teaching in the classroom.	300	3.58	0.59	Agreed
9	I ask students questions during teaching	300	3.55	0.68	Agreed
10	I engage students in real, practical things like drama instead of verbal teaching	300	3.69	0.54	Agreed
11	I give students work to do during/after my teaching	300	3.66	0.65	Agreed
Grand Mean			3.62		

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Table 2 indicates the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the influence of teachers’ creativity on the academic performance of social studies students in Delta State. It showed that respondents agreed to all the items on the influence of teachers’ creativity on the academic performance of social studies students in Delta State since their mean response is above 2.50, which is the acceptance region. The table also showed a grand mean of 3.62.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of teachers’ classroom management skills on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard deviation of teachers’ Influence on classroom management skills on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
12	Teachers always involve students in the development of classroom rules	300	3.72	0.52	Agreed
13	Teachers review disciplinary procedures with the students.	300	3.68	0.66	Agreed
14	Students are often made to face the specified consequence whenever there is a rule violation.	300	3.88	0.33	Agreed
15	Teachers often encourage self-discipline among students	300	3.77	0.42	Agreed
16	Students are not allowed to get out of their seats without permission	300	3.71	0.45	Agreed
Grand Mean			3.75		

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the influence of teachers’ classroom management skills on the academic performance of social studies students in Delta State. It showed that respondents agreed to all the items on the influence of teachers’ classroom management skills on the academic performance of social studies students in Delta State, since their mean response is above 2.50, which is the acceptance region. The table also indicated a grand mean of 3.75.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of teachers’ preparedness and academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Table 4: Analysis of Pearson r between teachers’ preparedness and academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Variables	N	Pearson -r	P-value	Remark
Teachers preparedness	300	0.132	0.022	Sig
Academic Performance	300			

Table 4 shows a Pearson’s r value of 0.132 and a p-value of 0.022. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is less than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant influence between teachers’ preparedness and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State, was rejected. Hence, this implies that there is a significant influence between teachers’ preparedness and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of teachers’ creativity and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Table 5: Analysis of Pearson r between teachers’ creativity and academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Variables	N	Pearson -r	P-value	Remark
Teachers Creativity	300	0.123	0.034	Sig
Academic Performance	300			

Table 5 shows a Pearson’s r value of 0.123 and a p-value of 0.034. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is less than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant influence between teachers’ creativity and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State, was rejected. Hence, this reveals that there is a significant influence of teachers’ creativity and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of teachers’ classroom management skills and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Table 6: Analysis of Pearson r between teachers’ classroom management skills and academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

Variables	N	Pearson -r	P-value	Remark
Teachers’ Classroom Management Skills	300	0.113	0.032	Sig
Academic Performance	300			

Table 6 reveals a Pearson’s r value of 0.113 and a p-value of 0.032. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is less than the alpha level; therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant influence between teachers’

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classroom management skills and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State, was rejected.

IV. DISCUSSION

The result of hypothesis one shows there is a significant influence between teachers' preparedness and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State. This finding indicates that teachers' preparedness influences the academic performance of Social Studies students. Taking regular breaks, such as micro breaks, lunch breaks, and longer breaks, has a positive relationship with well-being and productivity. Teacher preparedness brings about productive, engaging lessons for students and maximization of the effectiveness of the teacher's time and resources. Teachers who prepare adequately for lessons can efficiently deliver the subject concepts to learners in a style that promotes understanding and internalisation of the content. This finding concurs with the studies of Ekperi (2018), Ondimu and Ferrini-Mundy (2018), and Nyarko and Enang (2023), who found an association between teachers' preparedness and academic performance of students.

The result of hypothesis two shows there is a significant influence between teachers' creativity and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State. The consequence of this finding is that teachers' creativity influences the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State. The ability of teachers to be creative gives an opportunity for students to learn in a fun way. This aids students' learning without the pressure of learning. It is not surprising that the finding was a positive one because creativity directly enhances learning by increasing motivation, deepening understanding, and promoting joy. This finding is in line with Obule and Ubong (2014), Ojo (2018), Onu (2019), and Yusufu, Utuluand Achor, (2021), who discovered that teacher creativity significantly influences students' academic performance in schools. Teacher creativity influences students' cognitive development. This is because it makes students learn with fun, have emotional development, enhances their thinking capability, boosts problem-solving skills and improves their focus and attention, thereby influencing their academic performance.

The result of hypothesis three indicates a significant influence between teachers' classroom management skills and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State. This implies that teachers' classroom management skills are a factor that influences the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State. The possible reason for this finding could be due to the fact that teachers' classroom management skills offer students the opportunity to build their knowledge and also to prevent misbehaviour in the classroom. It allows the teacher to have total control of

the classroom and better manage the activities in order to achieve success. Hence, the result of significant influence between teachers' classroom management skills and the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State was significant. The finding is in agreement with Khan (2017), Osuafor and Nkem (2019), and Obilor (2020), who reported the significant influence of teachers' classroom management skills and students' academic performance. The study contradicts the study of Olanrewaju (2017), who revealed that teachers' classroom management skills do not significantly influence the academic performance of students.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it established that teachers' preparedness, teachers' creativity, classroom management skills, teachers' communication skills and time management skills all influence the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State. However, the study discovered that teachers' organisational skills and teachers' respect have no impact or are not factors that influence the academic performance of Social Studies students in Delta State.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Teachers in upper basic should always prepare for their lessons before the commencement of teaching.
- 2 Teachers should be creative in the course of carrying out their duties to enhance students' performance.
- 3 To ensure high student academic performance, teachers with classroom management skills should be recruited to handle the students'

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