



Perception of professional competence of business studies teachers and students' academic performance in Nigeria: The industrial relations approach

Olugbenga Adeyanju Akintola¹
Johnson Fejoh²
Adedayo Patrick Adeyemi³
Oluwabunmi Amos Oluwo⁴

Abstract

The goal of this research was to investigate the professional competence of business educators as the determinant of academic performance of junior secondary school students in Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun state, Nigeria. This study investigated the professional competence of business educators as determinants of academic performance of selected junior secondary school students in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun state, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study was correlational in nature using survey research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select twenty respondents from twenty schools, totaling 400 sample of the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection and it consisted of two (2) sections. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Correlation and independent t-test were used in analyzing the hypotheses. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' performance in business studies. Furthermore, there was no significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teachers' professional competence. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that professional body (Association of Business Educators of Nigeria) should be bold enough to collaborate with employers of business educators to carryout performance audit in order to reduce the prevalence of below-standard teachers in this profession and strengthening the roles of universities in the preparation of professional business studies teachers.

Keywords: professional competence, business studies teachers, students' academic performance

Introduction

The maxim that 'no educational system can rise above the level and quality of its teachers' has proved to be an enduring truism across generational boundaries. The quality of the teaching force in any educational system is pivotal to the learning outcomes, academic achievement and behavioural change of the students. Controversially, some researchers found that competent teachers could make up for deficiencies in educational resources and curriculum (Amie-Ogan & Etuk, 2020). Still, the sustained consensus among researchers and educators is that the most important factor in determining the student academic performance is the competence of the teachers (Oredina & Ebueza, 2020; Podungge et al., 2019). Albeit, UNESCO (2006) mentioned that it is necessary to balance the quantity and the quality of teachers: there was a need to add 10.3 million teachers to the existing 54 million teachers globally to meet its education for all (EFA) agenda, which, unfortunately, cannot provide the standard professional competence (Akintola, 2013). To ensure that the country's educational goals are achieved, it is expected that, first, there are sufficient teachers to do the job, and, second, they should play an important role in education through their commitment, motivation, and teaching competencies.

The issue of students' academic performance and its attendant challenges on the development of business education have been so worrisome in contemporary time; having been a subject of discussions and debate among stakeholders. Olatoregun (2017), for instance, stated that student's performance is very important because it appears to be the major criterion by which effectiveness and success of any educational institution could be judged. Academic performance is a fundamental benchmark by which all teaching-learning activities are measured, using some standards of excellence and the acquisition of particular grades in examinations, measures candidate's ability, mastery of the content, skills in applying the knowledge acquired to a particular situation.

In Nigeria, business education as an academic programme is studied at junior secondary schools, which is a prevocational subject geared towards developing the head, heart and hands of its beneficiaries. It is meant to inculcate professional and occupational competencies in the students. At junior secondary level, its major objective among others is to prepare the students who might not further their academic pursuit with vocational skills to enter into the world of work. In countries, where many young people do not continue their education after school, and need to start their jobs, business studies will prepare school graduates to get jobs and be successful in them. Olatoregun (2017) avowed that business studies is one of the core courses in the curriculum. It is taught as an integrated business subject comprising of bookkeeping, shorthand, office practice, commerce and typewriting (Osuala, 2004). From its components, it can be seen as a practical-ly-oriented subject that can expose the students to the world of business early in their academic pursuit.

The objectives of business studies as contained in the National curriculum for junior secondary schools in Nigeria include: to enable students to acquire the basic knowledge of business studies; to develop the basic skills in office occupation; to prepare student for further training in business studies; to provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further

1 Department of Educational Management and Business Studies, Faculty of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun state, Nigeria. gbenga.akintola@gmail.com; akintola.olugbenga@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

2 Institute of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun state, Nigeria. fejoh.johnson@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng;

3 Department of Business Education, School of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Lagos State University of Education (LASUED). adedayoadeyemi756@gmail.com;

4 Department of Business Education, School of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Lagos State University of Education (LASUED). oluwoamos1@gmail.com



training; to provide basic skills for personal use in the future; to relate the knowledge and skills acquired to the national economy among others. The preponderance of these objectives is on the premise of professional competence of the teacher (business educator) who had received business training on the tertiary level with a minimum qualification of National Certificate of Education (NCE).

Undoubtedly, teacher's competence seems to have remained non-negotiable factor in the teaching-learning activities, as teachers are unequivocally accountable for interpreting educational policies and principles into learning experiences with the students. This becomes achievable where the professional competence of the teachers corresponds to the standards (Onyilo & Shamo, 2017; Amie-Ogan & Etuk, 2020). According to Abosede and Akintola (2012), competence is an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and superior performance on the job. Parry (1996) sees competence as a cluster or related knowledge, skills and attitudes that reflect a major portion of one's job that correlates with performance on the job that can be measured with a well-established standard and can be improved with training and development. Chukhraj (2017) as cited by Chernysh et al. (2020, p. 65) avowed that professional competence of teachers is formed by an array of competencies which include: intellectual, subject, methodological, psychological, analytical, communicative, managerial, motivational, project, information, productive, multicultural, social, moral, legal and autonomous-based competences. The subject competence reveals the knowledge, skills and abilities of a teacher related to a specific subject. The peculiarity of psychological competence is the teacher's ability to use his/her own knowledge, skills and abilities to coordinate the relationships in the educational process. Autonomous-based competence characterizes the teacher's ability to self-development, creativity, self-education, and self-determination (Chernysh et al., 2020). This implies that the competence of a teacher can be measured, among others, from the academic performance of students. The professional competence of a teacher seems to be a non-negotiable factor in the education system as quality instructional delivery in business hinges on it. In fact, the worrisome and untold dwindling academic performance of students in business studies beams a searchlight on professional competence of business educators. This seems to be responsible for skill deficiencies in the component areas of business subjects, which, if not addressed, might negatively affect the enterprise and office management potentials of the students.

The industrial relations approach to competence of teachers is becoming prominent in the school system. Teacher as an employee in a school system is one of the principal actors in the context of industrial relations which deals with a set of interactions at the workplace predicated upon employment contract involving work parties and their representatives in job regulation (Zeb-Obipi, 2018). Ironside and Seifert (2005) argued that in order for schools to continue to function, industrial relations must be given priority in the school system. It has implications for employers and managers and the management of human resources (teachers) within the school system. This ranges from the process of ascertaining incompetence and the procedures in handling cases of incompetence among teachers. It was avowed that if management believe a teacher's performance to be unsatisfactory, there are procedures to be carried-out by the Local Education Authority (LEA) personnel officer who advises the head of school to dismiss an incompetent teacher. The LEA procedures have profound implications for school system, especially with regard to the incompetence of teachers and how such matters are resolved. Traditionally, some of these would have been dealt with through LEA officers in liaison with school staff, but with industrial relations practice in schools, these may no longer be practicable.

The goal of this research was therefore to investigate the perceived influence of professional competence of business educators on academic performance of junior secondary school students in Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun state, Nigeria. The objectives were to ascertain the correlation between the professional competence of teacher and students' academic performance, on the one hand, and gender, on the other.

Statement of the problem

The consequences of below-standard competence among business studies teachers seem apparent in the deficiency of vocational, entrepreneurial, book-keeping and office skills among senior secondary students in commercial disciplines. Findings have supported the fact that certain multidimensional teacher-related factors play a part in determining students' academic performance (Akintola, 2013; Abosede, 2015). In practice, especially during academic program evaluation and accreditation, students' perceptions on the teachers' competence form a major input in establishing the viability of an academic program. However, there is a dearth of literature with respect to the students' perception on teachers' competence and their academic performance in business studies (Chernysh, et al., 2020; Olatoregun, 2017). This is why this research investigated students' perceptions of teachers' professional competence as a correlate of students' academic performance in business studies. The researchers were also interested whether gender was a significant factor in these perceptions.

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between students' perception of teachers' professional competence and students' academic performance in business studies.

H₀₂: There is no significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teacher professional competence

METHOD

Design

The research adopted a correlational design. The population comprised of 15,031 junior secondary school students who were involved in business studies in 2021 academic year within Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun state. Stratified random sampling technique was used. Twenty schools were randomly selected and the respondents were stratified into male and female gender. Ten respondents were randomly selected through balloting from each stratum; meaning that twenty respondents were selected from each school. In all 400 respondents were sampled to participate in the study.



Instruments

A self-designed Perceived Teachers' Professional Competence Questionnaire (PTPCQ) was used for data collection on the perception of the students on the professional conduct of the teachers with respect to lesson delivery, as well as pedagogical and classroom management skills of business studies teachers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, with section 'A' section that elicited demographic data of each respondent and 'B' section that sought to know the opinion of the respondents about the professional competence of business studies teachers with a 4-point scoring scale. The items included such criteria as *'the teacher patiently explains what I do not understand during a lesson'* and *'I think the teacher should improve on how s/he explains difference concepts'* (see the questionnaire items in the appendix). The 15-item scale was validated by an expert in psychometrics for the content validity. Further, a reliability test was conducted using split-half method. The instrument was found consistent, having a resultant Cronbach Alpha of .74. Also, secondary data on the academic performance of students in business studies were adopted from the selected schools after necessary permission for utilisation and consent approval by the participants.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered personally and answers to it retrieved by the researchers after the due consent from the participants and schools' management was granted. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The data obtained from the study were analysed using inferential statistics. The data collected were coded and subjected statistical analysis using Pearson Correlation and independent t-test. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS- 26.0) was used for the data analysis in the study.

Results

The obtained results are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between students' perception of teachers' professional competence and students' performance in business studies.

The PTPCQ that indicated statements on the professional competence of business teachers was distributed to the students. The maximum score resulted from the administration of the questionnaire was 56, while the minimum score was 18. From the interval, the classification of the questionnaire score is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of students' response on business teacher's professional competence

Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
44-56	High	82	20.5
31-43	Moderate	102	25.5
18-30	Low	216	54
		400	100

The majority of the students (54%) perceived business teachers' professional competence as low.

Table 2. Classification of students' academic performance in business studies

Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
60-78	High	64	16
40-59	Moderate	92	23
14-39	Low	244	61
		400	100

The majority of the students (61%) performed below the passing grade in the business studies.

**Table 3.** Pearson correlation analysis of the students' perceptions of teachers' professional competence and students' performance

		Teachers' Professional Competence	Students' Academic Performance
Teachers' Professional Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.524
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Students' Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.524	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

Variable	N	Mean	STD	R	Sig of r
Competency	400	26.66	6.42	0.524	0.000
Performance	400	51.97	11.76		

The result in Table 3 revealed a significant outcome ($r = 0.524, p < 0.05$). This outcome implied that there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' performance in business studies. The mean teachers' professional competence score (26.66) has a significant positive correlation with the mean students' performance (51.97) in business studies. The difference is statistically significant. Hence, there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' performance in business studies. This means that the higher the perception of teachers' competence level, the better the students' academic performance in business studies. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teachers' professional competence.

Table 4. T-Test analysis of male and female students' perception of teachers' professional competence

Variable	N	Mean	STD	Df	T	Sig of t
Male	184	27.09	6.87	398	1.207	.228
Female	216	26.31	5.99			

$$t = 1.207, p = .228 > .05$$

The result in Table 2 revealed a non-significant outcome ($t = 1.207, p > .05$). This implied that there is no significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teachers' professional competence. The mean perception score (27.09) of teachers' professional competence recorded by male students is not significantly different from that recorded by female students (26.31). The difference is statistically insignificant. Hence, there is no significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teachers' professional competence. Therefore, null hypothesis 2 was accepted.

Limitations

This study has some limitations, which include the delimitation of the respondents to junior secondary schools in Ijebu-North Local Government area. Widening the research population could increase the generalizability of results. Based on this, future study could cover broader geographical areas and various indices of professional competence of business educators. Another limitation of the study deals with the research method – students' perceptions (especially, less successful students' perceptions) may be biased, as they may completely blame teachers for their lack of achievement. An experimental design should be applied in the future, to get more reliable results.



Discussion

The findings from analysis of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' performance in business studies. This is in line with the major finding of Amie-Ogan & Etuk (2020) that teacher's subject content knowledge and pedagogical competence influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Akwa-Ibom state, Nigeria. Indeed, teachers have been identified as the heart of the educational process and the main determinant of quality and effectiveness of its result. The main bottleneck to the improvement of students' academic performance is professional competence of the Nigerian teachers.

Teachers' competencies do influence students' performance meaningfully due to be ability of the teacher to manage the classroom and manipulate the instructional materials towards teaching effectiveness and endearing learning outcomes. The competence embodied the contemporary knowledge of the subject-matter and the pedagogical dexterities (Amusan, 2016; Amie-Ogan & Etnike, 2020). The skill gap in the teachers' professional competence could have been as a result of inadequately planned and deliberate professional development programme for teachers. This is supposedly an industrial relations approach in the school system. It is about teachers' learning how to learn, and converting their knowledge into practice for students' academic performance and total development. Teacher professional learning is a dynamic process, which requires intellectual and emotional involvement of teachers exclusively and cooperatively, the ability and readiness to examine one's position in terms of persuasions, views, scrutiny and enactment of strategic options for improvement or change (Bautista & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015; Stuart, 2019). The system of teachers' education in order to ascertain the professionalism and qualifications of modern teachers should be guided by a competence-based strategy. In addition, contemporary pedagogical experiences reveal that in the formation of professional competence of teachers, their knowledge, skills and abilities are important elements in the transformation process (Chernysh et al., 2020).

This insight reinforces the drive to make vigorous efforts towards producing competent business studies teachers because teaching profession is a versatile field that requires at all times the correct identification of indices of developments in the society. Abolarin and Orji-Uzor (2012) noted that only teachers who possess all the skills, knowledge and values needed to function effectively in a classroom situation are competent to teach. This is in congruence with the assertion of Akintola (2013), that competence refers to effectiveness or ability of anyone concerned to apply the acquired knowledge and skills to achieve desired results (impressive academic performance of the students in business studies). Similarly, LaRocca (2005) sees competence as behaviors that encompass the knowledge, skills and attributes required for successful performance. The foregoing implies that professional competence of business educators has a direct implication for the performance of students irrespective of other moderating variables.

Furthermore, the results from the analysis of hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teachers' professional competence. This is in consonance with the findings of Ibad (2016) who reported that both genders had reciprocal perceptions regarding what constitutes effective teaching. Concerning the student perceptions of teaching effectiveness (competence) of teachers, Penny (2004) opined that student evaluations that are recognised as feedback could bring a significant improvement in teaching. Al Hinai (2011) upholds the view that student evaluations of teachers have gained importance as data for teacher evaluations. On the contrary, Mondoh (2001) contends that individuals differ in learning, and perception of teaching quality. It was argued that males and females have their own unique cognitive styles that may affect perception and academic performance. Interestingly, the influence of gender on human behaviour has been an enduring controversial debate among researchers, but it is important to stress that gender is a range of characteristics distinguishing between male /masculinity and female/femininity and vary from sex to social role (Abosede, 2015).

Conclusion

The current study concluded that there was a significant relationship between professional competence of business educators and academic performance of students in business studies. No significant gender difference in the students' perception of their teachers' professional competence was found, so the obtained result is true for both genders.

Recommendations

In line with the foregoing discourse, it is recommended that the training and skill development of business educators should be prioritized by the employers in order to enhance their professional competence. It is believed that the success of educational reforms is predicated on the teachers' professional development through acquisition of array of competencies, knowledge and skills that are related to professional practice, collaboration, leadership, commitment to education integrity and social change.

Training and development are central to building competencies and are an important feature of industrial relations in any organisation. This has been considered as employer's investment to the employees which will eventually enhance organisational performance. In the context of the school system, teachers' employers should invest in the teachers through training and development in order to enhance their professional competencies. Ultimately, this could serve as industrial relations strategy that mediates between the conflicting interests of the employers (Government and school proprietors) and the employees (teachers) in realising the utmost education objectives in the school system.

The recruitment system of candidates into business teachers' training programme should ensure attracting enough qualified applicants, while raising the status of business studies teachers to an enviable level that attracts the best qualified applicants should be embraced. The professional body (Association of Business Educators of Nigeria) should collaborate with employers of business educators to carry out performance audit in order to reduce the prevalence of below-standard teachers in the profession and strengthen the roles of universities



in the preparation of professional business subject teachers.

Legislation should be put in place to compel all Nigerian universities (private and public) to run business teachers' education programmes. This will not only add to the quantity of the business teachers needed to achieve the universal basic education, but also ameliorate the competence deficiency in the profession. There is an urgent need for a dynamic and result-oriented business teachers' education curriculum transformation that will be responsive to the needs of the society and changes within the global community. New knowledge, technologies, social issues should be addressed in appropriate ways as part of the curriculum change. Continuing business teachers' education should be made compulsory, as teacher qualifications and knowledge directly impact their competence.

References:

- Abolarin, E.E. & Orji-Uzor (2012). Strategies for enhancing teacher competence and quality of classroom instruction. *Global Voice of Educator*, 1 (1), 1-6.
- Abosede, S.C. (2015). Gender, parents' job-type and family size as determinants of junior secondary school students' academic performance. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(4), 75-81.
- Abosede, S.C. & Akintola, O.A. (2012). Fostering entrepreneurial core competencies among the Nigerian youths. *Ogun Journal of Counseling Studies*, 3, 74-79.
- Akintola, O.A. (2013). Professional competence of Nigerian teachers: The bane and bounty for educational development. In P.K. Ojelade, M.O. Arikewuyo & A.C. Njoku (Eds) *Challenges of educational development in Nigeria*, pp. 506-525. 1st ed. Ondo: National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration.
- Al-Hinai N.S. (2011). *Effective college teaching and students' ratings of teachers: What students think, what faculty believe, and what actual ratings show. Implications for policy and practice in teaching quality assurance and control in higher education in Oman*. Doctoral thesis. Durham University.
- Amie-Ogan, O.T. & Etuk, E.F. (2020). Influence of teachers' competence on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ikot Ekpene and Essien Udim local government areas of Akwa Ibom state. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research*, 8(4), 118-128.
- Amusan, M.A. (2016). Cultivating effective pedagogical skills in in-service teachers: The role of some teacher variables. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*, 20(1), 83-89.
- Bautista, A. & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2015). Teacher professional development: International perspectives and approaches. *Psychology, Society and Education*, 7(3), 240-251.
- Chernysh, V.V., Zadorina, O., Melnyk, K., Khromova I.O., Danyliuk, M.M. (2020). Development of professional competence of present and future teachers under the conditions of transformational processes in education. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, 11(1). 56-67.
- Ibad, F. (2016). Student perceptions about the professional competence of university faculty members: evidence from Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4, 201-207.
- Ironside, M. & Seifert, R. (2005). *Industrial relations in schools*. Routledge.
- LaRocca, M. (2005). Career and competency pathing: The competency modelling approach. Retrieved March 14, 2012, from http://www.hp.com/wd/professional_resource_portal/htm
- Mondoh, H.O. (2001). A comparison of activities carried out by boys and girls during their free time in relation to their achievement in mathematics. A case of Eldoret municipality, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Human Resources*, 1, 49-56.
- Olatoregun, M. (2017). Resource availability and utilization as correlates of academic performance in business studies in public junior secondary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria. *A doctoral Thesis*. Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun state, Nigeria
- Oparaji, I.C., Ugwuode, A.C., Chime, G., & Ugochukwu, A.V. (2021). Teachers' recruitment as determinant of the academic performance of students' in public secondary schools in Imo state. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 11(9), 419-423. doi:10.29322/IJSRP.11.09.2021.p1750



- Oredina, N.A., Ebueza, R.D. (2020). Teachers' competence and students' academic performance in mathematics: A brief cross-sectional case in Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, Philippines. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(12A), 7766 - 7774. doi: 10.13189/ujer.2020.082564.
- Osuala, E.C. (2004). *Principles and methods of business and computer education*. Enugu, Enugu state: Cheston Agency Ltd.
- Onyilo, B.O. & Shamo, I.I. (2017). Teacher competence as a tool for effective and sustainable human capital development in the federal capital territory: Implications for career guidance. *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 9(3), 17-22.
- Parry, S R. (1996). The quest for competence. *Training Magazine*, 33(7), 48-56.
- Penny, A.R. (2004). *Effects of student ratings feedback and a group intervention on the quality of university teaching: A randomized controlled trial*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Durham, UK.
- Podungge, R., Rahayu, M., Setiawan, M., & Sudiro, A. (2019). Teachers Competence and Students Academic Achievement. *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, volume 144. 23rd Asian Forum of Business Education (AFBE 2019), 69-74. Atlantis Press SARL.
- Stuart, M. (2019). The industrial relations of training and development. In D. Guile, D. & L. Unwin (Eds.). *The Wiley handbook of vocational education and training*, pp. 165-185. Wiley & Sons. doi:10.1002/9781119098713.ch9
- UNESCO (2006). *Teachers and educational quality. Monitoring global needs for 2015*. Montreal: UNESCO institute for statistics.
- Zeb-Obipi, I. (2018). Frameworks of industrial relations analysis: a re-visit to industrial relations theory. *International Journal of Human Resources Management (IJHRM)*, 7(1), 1-12.

APPENDIX

Perceived Teachers' Professional Competence Questionnaire (PTPCQ)

Section B

Please tick the appropriate responses from the statement below as it applied to you

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D
1	I like the subject Business Studies				
2	I understand what the teacher explains during the lesson				
3	The teacher awards grades fairly				
4	I think the teacher should improve the ways how he/she explains different concepts				
5	I feel my teacher helps me academically				
6	I always look forward to attending Business Studies class				
7	The teacher allows me to express my ideas in the class				
8	I like the method which my teacher teaches me with				
9	I feel I can approach my teacher for guidance				
10	The teacher patiently explains what I do not understand during the class				
11	The teacher comes to class regularly				
12	The feedback my teacher give is comprehensive				
13	The teacher grades my assignment				
14	The teacher seems confident in the class while teaching me				
15	The teacher's attitude in class inspires me to want to become a teacher				

