Impact of teachers' support on the academic performance of students in senior secondary schools' federal capital territory, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to find out whether significant relationship existed between teachers' support and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria and also to examine the nature of teachers' support towards students. The study used descriptive survey research design with a total population of 70,162 Students out of which 32,731 were males while 37,431 were female. The sample size for the study was 381 students and the questionnaire used for data collection was designed along Likert Scale. The reliability coefficient of 0.83 was established using Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula. Descriptive and inferential tools of statistical analysis were used. The mean rating was 2.50 while the decision for comparison for hypothesis was based on 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was significant relationship beteen impact of teachers' support and students' academic performance. It is recommended that teachers should have interpersonal relationship with their students by showing interest in their social, psychological and academic wellbeing.

Keywords: teachers' support, students'academic performance, secondary schools

1. Introduction

Education is a vital process in human development and environmental management. It is a process of refining and preserving the collective values embedded in the culture of the society (Oyekan, 2010) [12]. Education is also a systematic action of imparting relevant knowledge, skills and habits to the learners in their preparation for meaningful life and contributions to a better society (Oloyede, 2016) [10]. The teacher is the builder whose performance depends on adequate qualification, experience and preparation which enhances his/ her performance. Teachers' implements educational policy and teachers' at all levels of education plays the decisive role in pivoting the growth and direction of education. The level and quality of education attained by the teacher determines the characteristics exhibited as well as the performance of the students.

Teachers are highly essential for the successful operation of the educational system and important tools for educational development through their dedication and commitment to the ethics of their profession (Adeniji, 2019) [2]. Teacher quality is an essential determinant of academic performance. Interactive activity between a teacher and the students is expected to produce learning outcomes in the students. Teachers' support is the degree to which students feel supported, respected and valued by their teacher (Cunningham, 2010) [4]. Positive, supportive teacher-student relationships are fundamental to fostering desirable socio-emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2011) [6]. Teachers' support serves as resource for children at risk for school failure, while conflicting negative relationships exacerbate that risk. Teachers' support is crucial for academic, psychological and social well being of the students.

The quality of interpersonal relationship that exist between teachers' and students is manifested through teachers having time for students, expressing positive feelings towards them, being flexible to their needs by considering their diversity. Teachers' support seems to be the strongest predictor of students' academic performance. Teachers' support in form of creating opportunities for success, flexibility, respect for students, family atmosphere and sense of belonging is essential in uplifting students' academic performance. Students' academic performance is the product-value or output of knowledge and skills attained as shown by the marks or grades achieved by students in examinations during a course of study in an educational institution (Ayeni, 2016). The quality of academic performance is determined by the teachers' capability and experience in classroom management.

This involves the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, teaching methods, psychological disposition and motivational interaction which develop students' intellectual ability during the teaching and learning process. The teachers' experience in classroom management can affect students' academic performance either positively or negatively. Students display a positive attitude to learning when the teacher creates a friendly atmosphere that stimulates students' interest in learning while a high-handed teacher makes the classroom unconducive which impact negatively on students' academic performance. Teachers' factors affecting students' academic performance are teachers' quality, experience, qualification, teaching methods and effectiveness. Studies show a stronger positive relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic performance.

The stakeholders in the education sector government should endeavour to retain veteran and experienced teachers who are

still willing to serve so that they can contribute their wealth of experience to improving the system. Teaching methods in the classroom influence students' learning, the most important teaching method of qualitative teachers are the ability to individualize instruction effectively, which would be good knowledge of pedagogy. Teaching secondary school requires a variety of teaching methods to address different learning levels, styles and intelligence of students. Some of the most important teaching methods for secondary schools include proper classroom management, motivation and effective communication as well as curriculum and activities that address a multitude of learning styles. An effective teacher possesses characteristics like efficient time management, good relationship with students, provide positive feedback, high students' success rate and also provides support for students.

Poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been linked to poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitude to work and poor pedagogical skills which have been attributed to poor motivation. Conditions that would make for effective teaching such as availability of learning resources, modern school facilities and conducive school environment and well-motivated teachers in terms of professional training and remuneration are not available (Oredein, 2010) [13]. These prevailing conditions have negative influence on the instructional quality in public schools which may translate to poor academic performance, attitudes and values of secondary school students. Other factors such as socio-economic background, family support, intellectual aptitude of the student, personality of the student, self- confidence and previous instructional quality have been found to influence students' academic performance positively or negatively (Starr, 2012) [14].

The theory that supports this study are socio-cultural theory by Vygotsky (1978) and Sensory theory by Laird (1985). Ley Vygotsky emphasized the relationship between human beings and their socio-cultural environment in terms of learning. Human beings are surrounded by family members and are impacted by the culture in which they live. Students' interaction with their society especially their teachers in terms of support is essential for their learning and development. Students develop their knowledge, problem solving ability, critical thinking under the guidance of teachers in order to succeed academically as well as in future endeavours. Laird (1985) believed that learning occurs when the sense organs are stimulated. Teachers use learning resources, like visual aids, models to make learning interesting, memorable for students. Teachers show support by guiding and allowing the students to take charge of their learning after identifying their individual abilities. Learning is said to have taken place when the students can practice what they have learnt as well as when they can relate the concept to realities occurring in their environment.

Dzulkifli (2011) [5] examined the relationship between Social Support and Academic Performance of University Students in Malaysia. The finding of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between social support and students' academic performance. Bofah & Ntow (2017) [3]

investigated perceived social support from parents and teachers' influence on students' mathematics self-beliefs. The results indicated that Perceived Social Support statistically predicts students' mathematics self- concept. Okwuduba (2022) [9] in his study of the impact of perceived learning support and students' engagement and science achievement of remedial students in the university examination during Covid 19 pandemic in Nigeria, revealed that learning support aspects including teacher, peer and parent support and students' engagement dimensions were positive predictors of students' academic performance.

Also, the work of Abiodun (2020) on teachers' skills as predictors of students' academic achievement in mathematics in secondary schools, revealed that teachers' skills of commitment, motivation and communication significantly predict students' achievement in mathematics. Furthermore, Orji (2014) [11], investigated the impact of teachers' motivation on the academic performance of secondary school students' and discovered that there was significant impact of teachers' motivation on the academic performance of secondary school students. The work of Umar (2021) [15], examined teachers' factor on students' performance on final examinations and the study revealed that teachers' positively affect students' performance especially on their teaching methodology.

The performance of secondary school students in the nation is nothing to write home about and a source of concern for teachers, parents and society. School administrators and teachers are pressurizing to initiate measures that can uplift the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. Hence the need to conduct this research in order to examine the impacts of teachers' support on students' academic performance. The area of teachers' support examined are flexibility during teaching and learning, respect for students, sense of belonging, creating family atmosphere as well as opportunity for success. In doing so, the research is guided by the following research questions:

a) What is the nature of teachers' support towards students in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

b) What is the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

c) What is the impact of teachers' support on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

The third research question was translated as null hypotheses thus: there is no significant relationship between impact of teachers' support and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey research design. It is a research design in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be a representation of

the entire group (Nwogu, 2012) [8]. It is an effective method of collecting data from the selected sample of an identified population.

A self-designed questionnaire called Teachers' Support Questionnaire (TSQ), following Likert model was used as the instrument for data collection. The structured questionnaire contains 30 items which was sub-divided into two sections, section A contains bio-data of respondents while section B comprised items on impact of teachers' support. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja to ensure content validity. The instrument was subjected to reliability test using Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula. A coefficient of 0.83 was obtained.

2.2 Population of the study

The population of the study comprised all students in 62 public senior secondary schools in the 6 Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The population of the public

senior secondary school students according to Federal Capital Territory Secondary Education Board (2019) was 70,162. Thirty-Two Thousand, Seven Hundred and Thirty one were male students (32, 731) while Thirty Seven Thousand, Four Hundred and Thirty one (37,431) were female students.

2.3 Sample and sampling procedure

The sample size was 381 students in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria and it was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) [7] who have specified appropriate sample sizes for specific populations. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to select secondary students in the six Area Council in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja that participated in the study.

3. Results

3.1 Research question one: What is the nature of Teachers' Support towards senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

Table 1: Nature of teachers' support in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja (N=381)

S/N	Flexibility	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My teachers are transparent and ready to help students	3.34	.702	Agree
2	My teachers allow my opinion in the classroom	3.36	.726	Agree
3	My teachers always talk to me very friendly	3.26	.717	Agree
4	The teachers that have more years of teaching experience are friendlier.	3.30	.683	Agree
5	The teachers with high academic qualifications are more supportive.	3.18	.731	Agree
6	My teachers make their objectives clear.	1.98	.578	Disagree
	Respect for student	3.07	-	-
7	My teachers respect students irrespective of their tribe or gender.	1.78	.600	Disagree
8	My teachers give me good advice about my career.	1.81	.587	Disagree
9	My teachers care about individual differences	2.17	.988	Disagree
10	My teachers tell me I did a good job when I make good grades.	2.26	.930	Disagree
11	My teachers nicely tell me when I make poor choices in my studies.	3.36	.695	Agree
12	My teachers know how to carry everybody along	3.39	.696	Agree
	Sense of belonging	2.46	-	-
13	My teachers allow me to discuss with them freely.	3.28	.753	Agree
14	My teachers know when to spend less or more time on some topics	3.29	.748	Agree
15	My teacher makes their teaching interesting	3.32	.755	Agree
16	My teachers show that they care about every student	3.34	.688	Agree
17	My teachers are transparent and ready to help students	2.34	1.105	Disagree
18	My teachers want to know students more about their students	2.46	.884	Disagree
	Family atmosphere	3.00	-	-
19	My teachers make suggestions about how to eat healthily.	2.43	1.063	Disagree
20	My teacher praises me when I perform well	2.60	.978	Agree
21	My teachers create a supportive and caring learning environment	3.17	.650	Agree
22	My teachers are sensitive to students' needs and emotions	3.10	.668	Agree
23	My teachers foster positive peer relationships and mutual respect among classmates to establish a sense of community	3.19	.688	Disagree
24	My teacher gives me emotional support (listens to my counsels)	3.07	.648	Disagree
	Opportunity for success	2.92	-	-
25	My teachers make suggestions about how to eat healthily.	3.13	.722	Agree
26	My teacher praises me when I perform well	3.05	.700	Agree
27	My teachers create a supportive and caring learning environment	3.06	.704	Agree
28	My teachers are sensitive to students' needs and emotions	3.04	.670	Agree
29	My teachers fostering positive peer relationships and mutual respect among classmates to establish a sense of community	2.91	.774	Agree
30	My gives me emotional support (listens to my counsels)	3.19	.760	Agree
-	--	3.06	-	-

Table 1 shows teachers support in terms of flexibility in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 3.07 shows that the respondents agreed that teachers are flexible in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

The Table showed teachers support in terms of respect for students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 2.46 shows that the respondents agreed that teachers do not have respect for students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

Teachers support in terms of the sense of belonging of students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 3.00 shows that the respondents agreed that teachers give a sense of belonging to students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

On teachers support in terms of providing a family atmosphere for students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 2.92 shows that the respondents agreed that teachers provide a family atmosphere for students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

On teachers' support in terms of providing the opportunity for success for students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 3.06 shows that the respondents agreed that teachers provide an opportunity for success for students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

3.2 Research question two: What is the academic performance of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

Table 2: Academic performance of senior secondary school students in FCT, Abuja in 2019/2020 academic session in mathematics, civic education, english language and biology (N=381)

	Minimum	Maximum	Average Score
Mathematics	23.00	93.00	60.31
English Language	12	98.00	60.61
Civic Education	23.00	93.00	58.43
Biology	11.00	98.00	60.57
Academic Performance	39.00	81.00	60.22

Table 2 shows that the minimum score in mathematics is 23.00, while the maximum score is 93.00 with an average score of 60.31. This means that the students score in Mathematics is above average. The students score in the English Language has a minimum of 12.00, a maximum of 98.00 and an average score of 60.61. This also shows that the students score in the English Language is above average.

The minimum students score in Civic Education is 23.00, the maximum score is 93.00 with an average score of 58.43. This means that the students score in Civic Education is within average. The students score in Biology, is a minimum of 11.00, a maximum of 98.00 and an average score of 60.57. This show that students score in Biology is above average.

The academic performance of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria is a minimum of 39.00, a maximum of 81.00 and an average of 60.22. The average score of 60.22 is above 50 midpoint which implies that the overall academic performance of students is above average. **Ho$_1$:** There is no significant relationship between impact of teachers' support and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja Nigeria.

Table 3: Test of relationship between teachers' support and academic performance of senior Secondary School Students in the federal capital territory, Abuja, Nigeria

Variables	N	r-cal	*p*-value	Decision
Teachers' support Students Academic Performance	381	.107	.037	Rejected

Table 3 above shows the correlation between teachers' support and academic performance of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The computed correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant relationship between teachers' support and the academic performance of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The *r*-value of 0.107 indicates a positive relationship which implies that increased teachers' support will increase academic performance. The probability value (*p*-value) is 0.037 which is less than 0.05, it is concluded that there is a statistical relationship between the two variables, therefore the null hypotheses are rejected.

4. Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that teachers' support is given to students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The study found a positive correlation between teachers' support and students' academic performance showing that increased teachers' support corresponds with better academic performance of senior secondary students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. This is in line with the study of Bofah & Ntow (2017) [3] on perceived social support from parents and teachers' influence on students' mathematics-related self-beliefs of high school students in Ghana, who found that perceived social support statistically significantly predicts students' mathematics self-belief. The support given to students are in form of flexibility, sense of belonging, family atmosphere and opportunity for success. The findings also revealed that teachers do not show adequate respect for their students which can influence students' academic performance positively. This is in line with the work of Abiodun (2020) on teachers' skills as predictors of students' academic achievement in mathematics in the secondary schools, which revealed that teachers' skills of commitment Ent, motivation and communication significantly predict students' academic achievement in mathematics.

The academic performance of students was also found to be above average. This indicates that students were in good academic standing which is in support of the work of Umar (2021) [15] on teachers' factor on students' performance on final

examinations and which revealed that teachers' positively affect students' performance especially on their teaching methodology.

5. Conclusion

From the findings in this research, it was concluded that there was significant relationship between impacts of teachers' support and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The areas of teachers' support are flexibility, respect for students, sense of belonging, family atmosphere and opportunity for success. Teachers' support impacts academic performance, although, teachers seem to give more opportunity for success to students than respect.

6. Recommendations

From the conclusions, it is recommended that the Federal Capital Territory administration should train teachers on different ways of giving students' academic, social and psychological support considering their individual differences and diversity in terms of cultural background in order to uplift their academic performance.

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