

Innovative Teaching Practices and their Impacts on Economics Students' Academic Engagement
in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The nexus that exists between student engagement and teaching methods has been a sustained and distinct focus for colleges and institutions of higher learning. Educators are tasked with developing new pedagogical, communication, and assessment strategies to ensure the delivery of quality instruction to students. The study examined the impact of innovative teaching practices on academic engagement of Senior Secondary School (SSS) economics students in Kwara State. The multi-stage sampling technique employed involved simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The population of the study was all senior secondary school Economics teachers while the sample consisted all SSS Economics teachers from 45 SSS randomly selected from the senatorial zones of Kwara. The instrument used was a researcher designed questionnaire validated by test experts and subjected to reliability analysis and a co-efficient of 0.8 was obtained. The study revealed that teachers mostly employ teacher-centered methods which were non-innovative methods for teaching Economics. It also shows clearly the importance of the role of a teacher in learning of economics as teachers who bring their wealth of experiences in teaching; arouse the interest of the students to academic excellence. Based on these findings, teachers are employed to put to use student-teacher centered methods in teaching Economics. Such innovative approaches significantly improve student engagement by fostering active participation, collaboration, and motivation.

Key Words: Innovation, Engagement, Performance, Methodology, Education

ملخص البحث: لطالما شكّلت العلاقة بين تفاعل الطلاب وأساليب التدريس محور اهتمام متواصلٍ وتمييزٍ للكليات ومؤسسات التعليم العالي. ويُنابذ بالمعلمين مهمة تطوير استراتيجيات تربوية وتواصلية وتقييمية جديدة لضمان تقديم تعليم عالي الجودة للطلاب. تناولت هذه الدراسة أثر الممارسات التدريسية المبتكرة على التفاعل الأكاديمي لطلاب الاقتصاد في المرحلة الثانوية العليا في ولاية كوارا. استخدمت الدراسة أسلوب المعاينة متعدد المراحل، والذي تضمن المعاينة العشوائية البسيطة والمعاينة الهادفة. شمل مجتمع الدراسة جميع معلمي الاقتصاد في المرحلة الثانوية العليا، بينما تألفت العينة من جميع معلمي الاقتصاد في المرحلة الثانوية العليا من 45 مدرسة ثانوية تم اختيارها عشوائيًا من المناطق الإدارية في ولاية كوارا. استُخدمت استبانة من تصميم الباحث، تم التحقق من صحتها من قبل خبراء في الاختبارات، وخضعت لتحليل موثوقية، حيث بلغ معامل الموثوقية 0.8. كشفت الدراسة أن المعلمين يستخدمون في الغالب أساليب تدريس تقليدية تركز على المعلم، وهي أساليب غير مبتكرة في تدريس الاقتصاد. كما يُظهر بوضوح أهمية دور المعلم في تعليم الاقتصاد، إذ يُسهّم المعلمون، بما يملكونه من خبرات واسعة في التدريس، في تحفيز الطلاب على التميز الأكاديمي. وبناءً على هذه النتائج، يُوظّف المعلمون لتطبيق أساليب تعليمية تركز على الطالب والمعلم في تدريس الاقتصاد. تُحييّن هذه الأساليب المبتكرة مشاركة الطلاب بشكل ملحوظ من خلال تعزيز المشاركة الفعّالة والتعاون والتحفيز.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الابتكار، المشاركة، الأداء، المنهجية، التعليم

Introduction

As education progresses, a shift towards more dynamic, student-centered teaching strategies has emerged, aiming at enhancing engagement, fostering critical thinking and improving academic outcomes. Teaching innovation means the teachers having creativity, being able to reflect on, to design and to apply new, diverse teaching methods or activities, understanding individual differences of students, stimulating students' learning motivation and interests, enhancing the students' learning effectiveness in the preparation before teaching, in the process of teaching and in student assessment. It means teachers having creativity and showing vivid and lively teaching methods to make students interested in learning. The act of teaching and learning Economics is deemed paramount, as the field of economics focuses on current issues at the heart of contemporary society, since the goal of education is to make an individual useful to oneself and the society in which they belong.

Education has been viewed to mean different things all over the world. To some, education is the ability to read, write and reproduce. Some view it as an instructional package that makes individual becomes a productive member of his/her society. However, Oladosu (2010) described education as a process by which knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of a society are transmitted from one generation to another through a well-defined method. This is done according to Jekayinfa and Kolawole (2010) to produce members that will imbibe society's religion, culture, social life and so on. Daramola and Jekayinfa (2007) also reaffirmed education as a long life process of stimulating the mind, feelings and directing mental energies towards

general and specific goals of development and refinement of one's faculty. Thus, education encompasses all processes of human learning which enable the recipient to acquire, develop and cultivate new capacity to solve their peculiar problems and the problems that are common to the society in which they live.

Teaching at any level of education is to bring a fundamental change in the learner (Tebabal and Kahssay, 2011). To facilitate the process of knowledge transmission, teachers are to apply appropriate teaching technique that best suit specific objectives and level of outcomes. In the traditional epoch, many teaching practitioners widely applied teacher-centered methods to impart knowledge to the learners compared to student-centered technique. Research on teaching and learning constantly endeavor to examine the extent to which different teaching technique enhance growth in student learning (Hightower, 2011). Quite remarkably, rampant poor academic performance by the majority of students is fundamentally linked to application of ineffective teaching technique employed by teachers (Adunola, 2011). Effectiveness of teaching technique indicates that the quality of teaching is often reflected on the achievement of learners. According to Ayeni (2011); teaching is a process that involves bringing about desirable changes in learners to achieve specific outcomes.

Adunola (2011), maintains that teachers need to be conversant with numerous teaching methods that take recognition of the magnitude of complexity of the concepts to be covered, if teaching is to be effective. It is likely true that successful learning depends on various factors other than that of the teacher. The technique that a teacher uses continues to play an important role in students' learning and in their academic achievement. It should be recognized that the strategy used by the teachers account for the outcome of their teaching. In teaching Economics, instructional strategy is a veritable tool for the conveyance of the principles and theories of Economics for the achievement of the subject goals.

Inquiry-based teaching method employed by teachers enables the use of economic problems while following a set of disciplined and strategic analytic steps. The intent is that students learn to contextualize, understand, reason, and solve what may at the outset have been a problem for which they had no analytic tools. The inquiry-based pedagogy is rooted in the constructivist ideas and developmental learning theories of John Dewey and Jean Piaget which have been applied in diverse educational domains. Another innovative technique is the problem-based method of teaching. In the early 1970s, the Problem Based Learning (PBL) was pioneered in teaching medicine at McMaster University and in the work of Howard Barrows at the University of Southern Illinois Medical School (Bridges, 1992).

The teaching of economics as a school subject was explained by Bisschoff, Fourie, Froneman, Landey, Paxaton and Smit (1992) who focused on specific overall outcomes which are to acquaint the learners with the understanding of the national economy, basic economic problems, participate in economic matters and interpret statistical data and make informed decisions. They further asserted that main objectives of economics education are to promote the understanding of the world economic operations. The increasing nature of poor academic performance of senior secondary school students especially in external examinations like

WAEC, NECO, NABTEB and GCE tend to shift the blame on the teaching methodology adopted by the teachers among others (Oladele, Akano, Joseph and Owolabi, 2019). They further observed that, poor learning outcome of students could be attributed to poor methods of instruction and classroom interaction medium employed. By embracing innovation, educators can empower students to achieve their full potential and navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world.

Research have shown that academic performance in economics have been affected by a number of factors, including student related factors like intelligence quotient (IQ) and willingness to learn (Akinloye, 2010), school related factors like adequacy of resources and facilities (Adu & Oshati 2013) teacher related factors like teacher morale, teaching methods (Rufai, 2010) and job satisfaction (Adeyanju, 2013) and school administrators leadership traits (Anyango & Orina, 2005) among others. Ekundayo (2013) reported that performance can be largely affected by a range of statistical indicators including the student-staff ratio, qualification of teachers, years of experience of the teacher and the school environment. Yusuf (2004) noted that poor learning outcome of students could be attributed to poor instructional methods and classroom interaction medium employed.

Basically, the aim of classroom teaching and learning of economics is to satisfy the set objectives of instructions with the aim of attaining the goals of education. There is need to introduce innovative teaching in the classrooms in order to create a student-centered approach of teaching (Ekundayo, 2013). In addition, Teachers have been known to have important influence on students' academic achievement and they also play a crucial role in educational attainment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating educational policies and principles into actions based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2009).

Generally, the purpose of teaching innovation is to enhance students' knowledge and wisdom. That is, it is meant to create knowledge to cultivate a flexible and intelligent high-quality learning process. Therefore, innovation provides valuable knowledge for school students to accumulate knowledge, to be the source for students to enhance learning quality of learning and learning motivation. It is therefore acknowledged that teaching must meet the needs of social development, bring modern cloud technology into action, use online teaching or electronic whiteboards to solve teaching problems, and be able to bring teachers' creativity into play, to elevate the students' learning satisfaction, so that the students' learning effectiveness can be enhanced (Yu-Je, 2011).

Teaching methods can be categorized as follows:

- a. Teacher-Centered Methods: Under this method, students simply obtain information from the teacher without building their engagement level with the subject being taught (Boud & Feletti, 1999). The approach is least practical, more theoretical and memorizing (Teo & Wong, 2000).
- b. Student-Centered Method: Most teachers today apply the student-centered approach to promote interest, analytical research, critical thinking and enjoyment among students

(Hesson & Shad, 2007). The teaching method is regarded more effective since it does not centralize the flow of knowledge from the lecturer to the student (Lindquist, 1995).

- c. **Teacher-Student Interactive Method:** This teaching method applies the strategies used by both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. The subject information produced by the learners is remembered better than the same information presented to the learners by the lecturer (Jacoby, 1978; McDaniel, Friedman & Bourne, 1978; and Slamecka & Graf, 1978). The method encourages the students to search for relevant knowledge rather than the lecturer monopolizing the transmission of information to the learners.
- d. **Project method:** The Project method is an experiential teaching method utilized in education and helps students develop many skills. It is a modern form of teaching, starting with specific considerations on a theme and aims to achieve a goal through collaboration between the students and their active participation, focusing on the participation, rather than the final result (Brinia, 2007).
- e. **Experimental learning:** Experimental learning is a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values (Association for Experiential Education). The teacher is more a facilitator rather than a director of student progress. "The focus of Experiential learning is placed on the process of learning and not on the product of learning" (UC Davis, 2011).
- f. **Constructivism:** The constructivism is a pedagogical approach according to which the knowledge is not passed on from teacher to student but it is constructed in a social environment of the student itself, on the basis of the pre-existing cognitive structures which the student enhances, enriches or modifies (Raptis, 2002).
- g. **Multimedia learning process:** It is the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, audio and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information to an audience. The use of multimedia technology as an innovative teaching and learning strategy is a problem-based learning environment which gives the students a multimedia project to train them in a set skill. Many institutions are now moving towards problem-based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative and can think critically, analytically, and solve problems (Teo & Wong, 2000).

Several studies have found a positive effect of experience on teacher effectiveness. The learning by doing effect, specifically, is most obvious in the early years of teaching (Rice 2003). If teacher learning accumulates with longer years of teaching practice, experienced teachers should be more effective than novice teachers in improving student achievement. Many empirical studies have indeed shown a significant and positive relationship between teachers' number of years of experience and student achievement (Rice 2003). However, the relationship is not linear. Teacher's effectiveness in improving student achievement appeared to increase most in the first three years of teaching experience (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Kain, 2005).

Conventional teaching method has been the method used in conveying information to students. This implies that students obtain information from their teacher without building their

engagement level with the subject being taught. Unlike traditional lecture-based instruction, where information is passively transferred from instructor to student, innovative teaching method enables students to be active participants in their own learning (Massa, 2008). This study therefore centers on the impact of innovative teaching practice (as perceived by teachers) on the academic engagement of students in Economics in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine Teachers' Perception on the influence of Innovative Teaching Practices on Secondary School Economics Students' Academic Engagement in Kwara State. Specifically, the study was to:

- i. Identify the teaching methods employed by secondary school teachers to teach Economics;
- ii. examine the perceived influence of teaching methods employed by senior secondary school teachers on students' academic engagement in Economics; and
- iii. examine the difference in the perceived influence of teaching methods on students' academic engagement in Economics based on teachers' experience

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the teaching methods employed by secondary school teachers to teach Economics in Kwara State?
2. Does the teaching methods employed by secondary school teachers have significant impact on students' academic engagement in Economics?
3. Is there any significant difference in the perceived influence of teaching methods on students' academic engagement in Economics based on teachers' experience?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of the teaching method employed by the senior secondary school teachers on students' academic engagement in Economics

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of teaching methods on students' academic engagement in Economics based on teachers' experience

Methodology

The populations for the study consisted all Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) Economics teachers in Kwara State. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in the study. All the SSS teachers of Economics across forty-five (45) randomly selected SSS in Kwara state were involved. Fifteen (15) schools were randomly selected from each of the senatorial zone. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used. The questionnaire had three sections. The question was face validated by test and measurement expert while the responses from the questionnaire were subjected to test of internal consistency, using Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis and a reliability co-efficient of 0.80 was obtained. The demographic information of respondents and

research question one were analysed using frequency and percentages while the two hypotheses were analyzed using chi-square statistics. The hypothesis generated was tested at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS.

Results

Research Questions 1: What are the teaching methods employed by secondary school teachers to teach Economics in Kwara State?

Teachers were asked to indicate the teaching methods employed by secondary school’s teachers to teach Economics in Kwara State. Methods were categorized into teachers centered, student centered and student-teacher centered methods. While teacher centered methods are non-innovative methods, student and student-teacher centered methods were innovative methods. A mean response of 1.5 and above show that innovative teaching method was in use as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Teaching Methods employed by Secondary Schools Teachers to Teach Economics

Teaching Methods	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher Centered	1.6000	.54772
Student Centered	1.2000	.44721
Student-Teacher Centered	1.2000	.44721

As shown in Table 1, with a mean response of 1.6, 1.2 and 1.2 respectively, teacher centered method was in use, while students centered and student-teacher centered was not in use. This shows that teachers mostly employ teacher centered methods which were non-innovative methods for teaching Economics in Kwara state.

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of the teaching method employed by the senior secondary school teachers on students’ academic engagement in Economics

The impact of teaching method on students’ academic performance in Economics was tested using chi-square statistics as shown on Table 2.

Table 2: Impact of the Teaching Methods employed and students’ academic performance in Economics

Academic performance	Teaching Methods			Total Freq. (%)	Chi Square Value	P Value	Decision
	Teacher Centered Freq. (%)	Student Centered Freq. (%)	Student-teacher Centered Freq. (%)				

Fail	44(55.0)	10(45.5)	9(45.0)	63	21.338	0.00	Reject
Average	20(25.0)	8(36.4)	6(30.0)	34			
Good	12(15.0)	4(18.1)	4(20.0)	20			
Excellent	4(5.0)	0(0.0)	1(5.0)	5			
Total	80	22	20	122			

As shown on Table 2, with the chi-square 21.34 value significant at 0.05, and p-value: 0.00 less than the significant value 0.05, H_{01} is rejected. This connotes that there is a significant impact of teaching method on students' academic performance in Economics in Kwara state. With the highest frequency count of 44, teachers employed teacher centered method mostly in teaching Economics, this could be a contributory factor to most students having moderate performances.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of teaching methods on students' academic engagement in Economics based on teachers' experience

Table 3: Chi-square Analysis showing the perceived influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Economics based on teachers' experience

Experience (yrs.)	N	Chi-square	Df	P.Value	Decision
Less than 5	22	44.624	119	.001	rejected
6- 15 years	68				
16 years and Above	32				

Table 7 shows the result of the perceived influence of teachers' years of experience on the academic achievement of students in Economics. It can be observed that a Chi-square test result indicated that there exists a significant influence of teachers' educational experience on the academic achievement of students in Economics, $\chi^2 (n = 122) = 44.624, df = 119, p = .001$. Since p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, we therefore reject the stated null hypothesis. This result therefore concludes that there is a significant influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Economics based on teachers' experience.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of study revealed that both teaching and learning depend on teachers. No wonder, an effective teacher has been conceptualized as one who produces desired results in the course of his duty as a teacher (Uchefuna, 2010). This however shows the importance of the role of a teacher in learning of economics as teachers who bring their wealth of experiences in teaching; arouse the interest of the students to academic excellence.

The study further revealed that teachers mostly employ teacher-centered methods which were non-innovative methods for teaching Economics. The Economics Network (2009) identified the use of teacher centered method as one of the factors why Economics is difficult for

students. Students simply obtain information from the teacher without building their engagement level with the subject being taught (Boud & Feletti, 1999). Teacher centered methods is least practical, more theoretical and memorizing (Teo & Wong, 2000). It does not apply activity-based learning to encourage students to learn real life problems based on applied knowledge. There is no gain-saying the fact that teacher preparation is a determinant of students' achievement (Darling-Hammond, Berry & Thoreson 2001). Also, the result of this study revealed that there is a significant impact of teaching method on students' academic performance in Economics. This corroborates the findings of Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy (2001) who reported a positive connection between teachers' delivery of their subject matter and student academics performance. As such, the performance of students in Economics is a function of the teaching method employed by the teachers. This study also supported the assertion of Gamson (2010) which revealed that instructional technique employed by the teacher plays important role in the acquisition of skills and meaningful learning. Jekayinfa (2008) emphasized that for a teacher to effectively sustain the attention, interest and concentration of the students, he should know what to teach (content), how to teach (method) and the best way of organizing the different techniques used in the class to achieve certain degree of learning and the purpose of the general instructional strategies.

It was also revealed in the findings that teachers' years of experience has a significant influence on the academic achievement of students in Economics. Unlike academic qualification, the role played by on the job experience cannot be overemphasized. As a result, teachers might have tried different pedagogical practices and hold on those with tendency of yielding the desired result. In the process those pedagogical practices that yielded the expected result in learners' outcome would have been consolidated upon thereby, the teachers find it easier to discharge their day to day teaching/learning activities without compromising the set standard of performance. This finding is in line with outcome of studies such as Rice (2003) and Kwari (2007). It is believed that if teacher learning accumulates with longer years of teaching practice, experienced teachers should be more effective than novice teachers in improving student achievement. Rice (2003) reported a significant and positive relationship between teachers' number of years of experience and student achievement. Likewise, findings of Kwari (2007) showed that teaching experience was significantly related to students' achievement. Adelowokan and Makinde (2011) argued that teachers' experience tend to reflect in class control and ability to meet up with the needs of individual students

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it was concluded that teaching method played vital role on the students' academics' performance. It was therefore concluded that teachers mostly employ teacher-centered methods which were non-innovative methods for teaching Economics and that students' academic performance was low. Innovative teaching methods hold immense promise for transforming education by enhancing student engagement and academic achievement. Their ability to create interactive, meaningful, and dynamic learning experiences position them as essential tools for modern classrooms.

Recommendations

Based on the results it is hereby recommended that:

1. Seminars should be conducted for teachers on the use of innovative teaching practices.
2. Instructional resources that will facilitate effective application of innovative teaching practices should be made available in Nigerian schools.
3. A re-orientation of the students on the need to be academically industrious, so that their academic performance could be enhanced.

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