

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER IN DELTA STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL, DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine students' perception of an effective teacher. All students of the Delta State University Secondary School, Abraka constitute the population. A sample of three hundred students was randomly selected for the study. The instrument for the study was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Students' Perception of Effective Teachers' Questionnaire (SPETQ)". Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and t-test for the null hypothesis. Results showed that students have correct perception of teacher's qualities that relate the effectiveness, and male and female students do not differ in their perception of an effective teacher.

Keywords: *Student's Perception, Effective Teacher, Staff Secondary Schools, Abraka, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

The basic task of school organizations is teaching which contains the element of planning, implementation and evaluation. Teachers play a vital role in the country's educational process. The National Policy on Education (2004) recognized when it asserted that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teacher. In fact, it can not be ignored that teachers stand at the centre of success of the educational process at any level of the system. The state of Nigerian education at all levels has been on grave and growing concern to educationists, planners, policy executors and teachers. The National Policy on Education which became the catechism for direction in education calls for re-evaluation and re-assessment. The success of the policy no doubt calls for the effective of the teacher at all levels of education to achieve the educationally stated goals and objectives. This is because education is essential to individuals and the role of education towards achieving national growth cannot be overemphasized through the teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivational needs. (Okorie, 2003).

In fact, the classroom activities of teachers and students are interdependent. Therefore, just as an understanding of knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers is necessary for providing insights into classroom management and supervisory problems in the school, it is important to be aware of the perception of the students in terms of their knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and expectations of the teacher's effectiveness. Teachers need to be well versed in basic knowledge areas such as the subject matters and teaching process. The subject matter knowledge refers to the

knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. It is concerned with the teachers' mastery of concepts and principles of the subject in his own area of specialization. On the other hand, the process knowledge refers to the knowledge of the process by which the subject matter is transmitted to students such as classroom management techniques, inquiry, questioning and other instructional skills; and other teacher behaviour associated with programmed instruction, discovery approach to learning and interpersonal skills. Both subject matter knowledge and process knowledge are complementary to each other, and as such, both are imperative for effective teaching to occur. On the other hand, Ali (1992) classifies the skills required of a teacher into three competency areas:

- a. Knowledge competencies which specify the cognitive aspects which the teacher is expected to demonstrate.
- b. The brilliant scholar who cannot communicate what he knows to the students.
- c. The process teacher with nothing to communicate or
- d. The disciplinarian who does little except maintain order.

Borich (1977) classified the skills required of a teacher into three competency areas: **Knowledge Competencies:** These specify the cognitive aspects which the teacher is expected to demonstrate.

Performance Competencies: These specify the teacher process which the teacher is expected to demonstrate; and

Consequence Competencies: These specify the student behaviour that are seen as evidence of the teacher's effectiveness.

By the same token, effectiveness becomes necessary for the existence of any school and for the promotion of standards. It is the process used in measuring the achievement of an expectant goal or objectives. It evolves investigation or research about what has been achieved and how good the task assigned has been carried out and implemented. It is the measurement of how an organization achieves its output requirements in relation to the set goals or objectives. In other words, effectiveness can be classified as the harmonization between performance and the set objectives. It consists of value judgement which can at times reveal what is causing problems or failure within the system. For example, if a certain percentage of students, say about 70 % failed English examination, people might conclude that the teacher who taught the subject is ineffective since the students could not pass the respected English examination, (Ogunsaju: 1995)

As observed by Makama (1998) effectiveness relates to the accomplishment of co - operative purpose, which is sound and non - personnel in character. Sincerely, most parents believe that a teacher is effective if only he can bring up his students to the level of passing any standardized examination administered to them. The teacher stands out as one of the most important factors determining the quality of education and its contributions to national development. At every level people who go to school look on the teacher for the acquisition of necessary skills to enable them become what they want to be. Thus students often look on the personal qualities of the teachers,

their educational qualities and professional competence which are rewarded to them (the learners). It is on this note that the role of the teacher is helping the students achieve the objective of instruction in their various fields of endeavour stands paramount. How should the teacher present himself in order to get his message across? How can he communicate effectively in the class? Under what kind of environment can the message get across? What pedagogical approaches are effective? These among other questions are of interest not only to students, but to teachers themselves, parents, educational institutions and the general public.

A teacher is said to be effective if his approaches in the teaching-learning process leads to the attainment of educational objectives. The concept of effectiveness suggests efficiency in producing desired result. Effectiveness is therefore result oriented. Makama (1998) reported that if we are to stimulate and develop critical thinking which will be useful to students in future, the following should be expected in our classroom: an overall teaching approach that is essentially directive; a lesser emphasis on students compliance with traditional classroom behavioural expectation; and a classroom climate that encourages students participating to a large extent achievable through effective use of wait and halt time. Ali (1992) notes that the evaluation of teaching may be based on three distinct criteria: the outcome of teaching; the learning behaviour or experiences of learners that the teacher provides; and The behaviour of the teacher while teaching.

Other work reported by Ali in the same book revealed that the criteria most favoured by supervisors for evaluating teaching is the criterion of teacher behaviour while teaching. The public and policy makers on the other hand seem to prefer the other criterion which is the "teaching outcome" because they feel it is reasonable to judge teaching by its result. In the course of teaching - learning process students exhibit some behaviour characteristics which indicates whether learning is taking place or not; even outside the classroom, learning experiences are re - enacted as students describe teachers' qualities and methods, judge which teacher is effective and which ones are not. Certainly, students who are the benefactors of teaching - learning enterprise know when learning is taking place and those qualities of the teacher that help them to learn.

This study therefore sought to find out how students perceive an effective teacher. Evaluation on teacher effectiveness as perceived by students of Delsu secondary School has not been effectively carried out and should be done from time to time if teaching should worth its salt. Such evaluation aids in acquiring and processing the evidence needed to improve students' learning and the teaching process. It also serves as quality control to ensure better results. It is worthwhile to identify the qualities of teachers that make for effectiveness. What attributes of the teacher do the students in Delsu secondary school perceive as the attributes of an effective teacher? The provision of answer to the above question is the focus of this paper. The purpose of the study was to find out students' perception of an effective teacher.

Specifically, it sought to find out teacher's qualities that relate to effectiveness,

and to establish if differences exist in students' perception as a result of gender.

The following research questions were raised to address the problem:

1. What are the teachers' qualities that relate to effectiveness?
2. How different are the perception of male and female students on qualities of teachers that account for effectiveness?

A comprehensive research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study

H₀: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on qualities of teachers that account for effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised all the students which were 300 in number in the staff secondary school, Delta State University, Abraka at the time of the study. However, only students at Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) were randomly selected making total of 145 of male and female students respectively, using simple random sampling technique. The data gathering instrument for this study was a researcher - developed questionnaire titled: "Students' Perception of Effective Teacher's Questionnaire" (SPETQ). The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section (A) sought information on gender, Section (B) sought information on teacher qualities (pedagogical attributes - knowledge of subject matter, effective communication, personal qualities/teacher behaviour, student/teacher relationship). On the whole there were 36 items that cover these attributes. A 4 - point Likert Scale of, strongly disagree (1 point), disagree (2 points), agree (3 points), strongly agree (4 points) was provided for the respondents to make their responses.

The instrument constructed and designated as "Students' perception of an effective teacher in Delta State University secondary school" (SPETQ) was face validated by experts in the discipline. It was pilot tested using 20 students not included in the sample among research questions size for the reliability using the split halve method was employed, and the Spearman Brown formula was used in computing the reliability co-efficient which yielded 0.76 coefficient of reliability. The instrument was administered to the respondents and collection was made on the spot with over 90% return attained. The collected data was subjected to the t-test statistic and the results were systematically tabulated and analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Students' Perception of Teacher Qualities that relate to teacher applying Effectiveness

Knowledge of subject matter	X	SD
Shows sound knowledge of the subject matter	2.96	1.19
Leads students to see relationship between various topics taught.	2.83	1.21
Does not copy textbook verbatim.	2.69	1.30
Dictates notes with little or no explanation.	1.96	1.02
Stresses major points while teaching.	3.14	0.87
Explains facts and ideas satisfactorily.	3.24	0.87

Pedagogical Attributes		
Uses methods that awaken desire, direct thought and action towards objective	2.48	1.24
Makes the students understand the bearing the lesson has on their interest.	2.74	1.12
Encourages students to ask questions and to express their thought.	2.88	1.13
Dominate the lesson	1.93	1.11
Speaks at the level students understand	2.74	1.19
Rushes his lesson 1.	68	0.94
Gives immediate reinforcement.	2.81	1.02
Relates his lesson to contemporary events.	2.74	1.12
Makes free use of the chalkboard and frequent illustration	3.01	1.03
Engages student in meaningful discussion	3.17	0.93
Tells stories to while away time	1.76	1.10
Encourages worthwhile debate in the class	2.45	1.10
Provides feedback on assignment promptly	2.89	1.09
Effective Communication		
Has good command of spoken and written English	3.09	1.07
Communicate what is relevant	3.01	1.02
Communicate in the right time, mood and tone	2.95	1.09
Reacts positively to students verbal and non verbal cues	2.56	1.23
Elicits desirable response that enhances teaching - learning experiences	2.84	1.15
Involves every student in lesson through fair distribution of questions	2.69	1.19
Personal Qualities/Teacher Behaviour		
Self - respect through upright and worthy life	2.89	1.16
Modesty in dressing	2.73	1.22
Approachable	2.76	1.16
Sense of humour	2.87	1.18
Trustworthy, committed to his job by being regular	2.71	1.31
Relationship with Students		
Attends to students' needs	2.99	0.93
Establishes happy personal contact with students	3.08	0.87
Fairness to all in the award of grades	2.53	1.29
Does not meddle with opposite sex	2.1	1.2
Sees each student as individual with worth	2.82	1.22
Fairness to all in treating students' cases	2.8	1.22

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teacher Qualities that relates to teacher Effectiveness according to gender

Knowledge of Student matter	Male		Female	
	X	SD	X	SD
Shows sound knowledge of the subject matter	2.68	1.28	3.21	1.05
Leads students to see relationship between various topics taught.	2.66	1.47	3	1.09
Does not copy textbook verbatim.	2.60	1.45	2.76	1.28
Dictates notes with little or no explanation.	1.86	1.11	1.76	1.10
Stresses major points while teaching.	3.01	1.01	3.25	0.70
Explains facts and ideas satisfactorily.	3.21	0.92	3.27	0.81
Pedagogical Attributes				
Uses methods that awaken desire, direct thought and action towards some objective	2.89	1.02	2.09	1.31
Makes the students understand the bearing the lesson has on their interest.	2.63	1.30	2.83	0.91

Encourages students to ask questions and to express their thought.	2.71	1.25	3.05	0.97
Dominate the lesson	1.86	1.18	2.00	1.04
Speaks at the level students understand	2.73	1.22	2.76	1.16
Rushes his lesson 1.	70	0.90	1.66	0.98
Gives immediate reinforcement.	2.95	0.88	2.68	1.12
Relates his lesson to contemporary events.	2.95	0.96	2.54	1.20
Makes free use of the chalkboard and frequent illustration	2.95	0.96	3.06	1.10
Engages student in meaningful discussion	3.18	0.92	3.15	0.95
Tells stories to while away time	1.77	1.13	1.74	1.08
Encourages worthwhile debate in the class	2.48	1.01	2.41	1.17
Provides feedback on assignment promptly	2.91	1.02	2.85	1.14
Effective Communication				
Has good command of spoken and written English	3.05	1.05	3.18	1.07
Communicate what is relevant	2.99	0.96	3.03	1.08
Communicate in the right time, mood and tone	2.90	1.08	3.00	1.10
Reacts positively to students verbal and non verbal cues	2.33	1.19	2.77	1.24
Elicits desirable response that enhances teaching - learning experiences	2.70	1.24	2.96	1.05
Involves every student in lesson through fair distribution of questions	2.95	0.95	2.45	1.33
Personal Qualities/Teacher Behaviour				
Self - respect through upright and worthy life	2.97	1.14	2.80	1.17
Modesty in dressing	2.58	1.23	2.87	1.19
Approachable	2.6	1.23	2.80	1.31
Sense of humour 2.99	1.01	2.76	1.31	
Trustworthy, committed to his job by being regular	2.57	1.37	2.84	1.26
Relationship with Students				
Attends to students' needs	2.91	1.03	3.07	0.82
Establishes happy personal contact with students	2.91	1.03	3.24	0.66
Fairness to all in the award of grades	2.37	1.25	2.67	1.32
Does not meddle with opposite sex	2.06	1.25	2.13	1.17
Sees each student as individual with worth	2.85	1.13	2.8	1.08
Fairness to all in treating students' cases	2.82	1.18	2.77	1.27

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students with Regards to Teacher Qualities that Account for Effectiveness.

	X	SD	N	DF	t-cal	t-critical
Male	2.65	1.12	145	280	0.83	1.96
Female	2.75	1.09	155			

As shown in table 3, the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value at 280 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on qualities of teachers that account for their effectiveness is therefore accepted. Table 1 shows that students have correct perception of teacher qualities that account for effectiveness. This is indicated by high rating of those qualities that promote learning. Very outstanding among these factors are: stressing major points

while teaching; explaining facts and ideas satisfactorily; making free use of the chalkboard and frequent illustration; engaging students in meaningful discussion; communicating what is relevant; and establishing happy personal contact with students. Since these students know what they want, there is no point in any teacher trying to deceive them. Any teacher who for whatever reason decides to cheat the students by adopting any of the non - rewarding approaches to teaching, does so at the detriment of his own image and career. Students generally don't hide their feelings, even when they don't express them overtly, their covert behavior should be an indicator for the teacher to know when he is derailing and call himself to order. Derailing could take the form of the teacher leaving undone what he ought to have done, doing what he ought not to have done, or not doing what he ought to do very well. If teachers are sensitive to the feelings and needs of the students with regards to their academics, the outcome of teaching will be maximized.

Table 2 reveals that male and female students do not differ in their perception of an effective teacher. This is also indicated by high ratings of those factors that account for effectiveness and low ratings of the factors that do not promote learning by both sexes. In other words gender is not a factor influencing students' perception of an effective teacher. The findings revealed that gender influences teachers' effectiveness in the teaching process in schools; that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students in their perceptions on qualities of teachers that account for their effectiveness.

It is recommended based on the results of the study were made that: teachers should stress major points while teaching; they should explain facts and ideas satisfactorily; they should make free use of the chalkboard and frequent illustration. Teachers should engaging students in meaningful discussion and communicate what is relevant; teachers should try personal contact with students from time to time; and finally, whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. There is joy in getting one's job well done.

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