

Problems Facing Economics Teachers in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools and The Way Forward

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ABSTRACT: Economics is one of the elective subject offer in the Nigerian public secondary schools. Economics is one of the social science subject meant to equip the students with economic skills and knowledge of economic analysis. To realize the objectives of teaching economics in Nigerian public Secondary Schools, professional economics teachers were employed in various public Secondary School across the country. This economics teachers are saddled with the responsibilities to implement Economics programme in the public schools. Recently, many of these economics teachers are facing many challenges in teaching the subject in their respective schools. This paper is aimed to discuss problems facing Economics teachers in Nigerian public secondary schools. To do this, the researchers, used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from print and online publication. Teaching of large classes, poor staff development programme, poor supervision, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of economics teachers association, inadequate instructional materials, poor motivation and insecurity were identified as problems facing economics teachers teaching in Nigerian public secondary schools. To solve these problems identified, the following were suggested: increase in the funding of Economics programme, employment of more professional economics teachers, provision of Economics instructional materials, provision of more infrastructural facilities for both Economics teachers and Students, ensure effective capacity development programme for Economics teachers, motivate the economics teachers, form Economics Teachers' Association and effective supervision of the Economics programme should be ensured in all public secondary school across the country.

KEYWORDS: Economics, Economics teachers, Education, Secondary school, Problems

1.0 Introduction

The place of professional Economics teachers in the realization of the objective of Economics programme in the Nigerian Secondary Schools cannot be underestimated. An Economics teachers is a professional who have undergone training in higher institutions and acquired every skills and methodologies of teaching Economics in the

Educational Institutions. An Economics teachers is an individual certified after graduation from higher institutions to teach Economics and have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to teach Economics programme in educational institutions. Degreefinders (2020) defined an Economics teacher as one who shares knowledge about finances, business, macroeconomics, microeconomics, technology and personal finance. These teachers prepare lesson plans, lecture, give exams, grade student work and assist students as needed. Economics teachers typically find employment in private or public high schools, and at colleges and universities. Many schools require that economics teachers also should have the ability to teach other areas of social studies as well.

Degreefinders (2020) observed that an Economics teachers spend a substantial amount of time reading and planning lessons based on curriculum content and student level. They lecture to share the information with students, give directions for completing assignments, evaluate student progress, develop tests and assign grades. Economics teachers also support students with challenging material or assignments when necessary. High school Economics teachers communicate with parents verbally or in writing to share student progress. Both high school and college Economics teachers interact with other educators to develop curriculum, problem solve and for continuous education learning. College Economics teachers may focus on a specific type of Economics including macroeconomics or microeconomics.

Degreefinders (2020) submitted that an Economics teachers may perform any or all of the following tasks: Develop lesson plans, Lecture and teach, Assign and evaluate student work, Administer and grade tests, Calculate and assign grades, Communicate with parents, Work cooperatively with other teachers and Participate in continued education training, as required. Williams (1990) mention the essential qualities of a teacher that can influence teaching and learning of economics. They include:

a) Teachers must have the knowledge of the subject matter. This means that teachers should be thoroughly justified on what he is called upon to teach. It also means that the Economics teacher should have an in-depth knowledge of the subject, Economics.

b) Teachers should have sincere interest in the teaching. This means that the love of the subject in teaching profession is an antidote to many difficult classroom situations. Due to the shortage in economics teacher in the secondary schools, the number of qualification seems to be enough. This shortfall continues because non professional teaching lead to poor understanding of this subject, which will make the students not to do well. This notion was supported by Nna (1963), when he says that the personality of teachers has significant influence on students as teaching and learning takes place. According to Sotonwa (1988), the real problem of maintaining standard of teaching and learning economics in the school is that competent and qualified teachers are more or less not available. In the secondary schools, competent teachers are not recruited enough to teach.

To be recognized as a professional Economics teacher in Nigeria, the individual must registered with teacher registration council of Nigeria. Secondly, the individual must have read B.sc (ed)

Asikhai (2010) observed that education at secondary school level is supposed to be the bedrock and the foundation towards higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. It is an investment as well as an instrument that can be used to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, technological, scientific and cultural development in a country. It is rather unfortunate that the secondary schools today are not measuring up to the standards expected of them as envisaged in their performance in external examinations. There have been public outcries over the persistently poor performance of secondary school students in public examinations. Nwokocha and Amadike (2005), submitted that one indicator for testing the educational prowess of a nation is the academic performance of students in schools. The performance of students in Economics for some years now have been reported by different researchers and even national dailies as below average in public examinations, Punch newspaper (September 27, 2008). Gbadamosi, and Jegede, (2015) also observed that many students largely record poor performance in the subject. For instance, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) results in Economics between 2000 and 2012 revealed that, less than 50% of the students that sat for the examination obtained the required credit pass except 2006 and 2012. Udekaigbo, Onionwu and Mbionwu (2009) observed that the teaching and learning of Economics programme in majorities of Nigerian public Secondary Schools have been seriously frustrated in recent time. This problems attributed to the fact that it is difficult to translate the ideas of some Economics concepts and theories into visual practical realities. Teachers are being accused of not teaching with the use of instructional materials which has led to poor academic performances of students especially in external examinations. The poor performance of students in Economics in external exams have been linked to the Economics teachers. Research has it that many Economics teachers in Nigerian public Secondary Schools are facing many problems that is hindering their performance in their respective schools. This paper is aimed to discuss the problems facing Economics teachers in Nigerian public Secondary Schools.

2.0 Concept of Economics as a Secondary School Subject

Economics was first taken in the West African School Certificate Examination as a school subject in Nigeria in 1967. Since school certificate was a two year course, it may be said that economics came into the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria in 1966, much later than most other secondary school subjects. Economics was, however, taken by private candidates in the General Certificate Examination before it became a secondary school subject. It was recognized that economics problems were at the heart of modern society. Ever since economics was first taken as a school subject in West African School Certificate Examination in 1967, the number of schools that teach it, and the number of candidates that take the examination have witnessed a phenomenal increase. For example in 1967, it was 0.07% of the total number of candidates that sat for the examination, in 1969 it was increased to 12.56%, in 1970, it was 17.16% and by 1976 exactly 10years of its inceptions, the population has risen to 76.95% (Noun,2006). Gbemisola (2016) submitted that the Nigerian Educational system constantly changes through consistent research and meaningful innovations. The concept and philosophy of the 6-3-3-4 is to cater for the “whole man” that is, to provide for the intellectual, social, material and spiritual needs of a student through its multi-purpose curriculum (NERC,

2000; FME, 1989). With this mind, the secondary school curriculum is divided into three parts namely: (i) Core subjects or vacation subjects (ii) Pre-vocational subjects and (iii) Elective subjects or non-vocational subjects. The core subjects such as Mathematics, English language, one Nigeria language among: Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa and others like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural Science, and Economics are basic intended to give students opportunity to offer Arts or Science subjects in higher education.

Noun (2006) submitted that Economics is concerned with human behaviour such as how people earn their living and make a choice between alternatives to satisfy their wants. It focuses on the study of firms and the government whose activities are geared to the production of goods and services for the satisfaction of human want since economics is concerned with human behaviour. So, Economics is a social science, and like any science subject, the reasoning

procedure in Economics is methodological, its analysis is systematic, and the validity of its various theories can be tested.

Adu, Galloway, & Olaoye, (2014) the teaching of Economics provides a learner with the opportunities to live meaningfully within the changing economic world. The following are the objectives or attainable outcomes of teaching Economics:

1. to equip students with the basic principles of Economics necessary for useful living and higher education;
2. to prepare and encourage students to be prudent and effective in the management of scarce resources;
3. to raise student respect for the dignity of labour and appreciation of economic, cultural and social values of our own society; and
4. to enable students to acquire knowledge for the practical solution of the economic problems of the society, such as Nigeria, developing countries and the world at large. Adu et al. (2009) also listed the following reasons why students study economics in senior secondary schools as follows:
 - a) the study of Economics enables a student to understand the nature of the complexity of the economic activities in which he is only a very small part.
 - b) It enables students to understand and appreciate various government policies where choices have to be made such as probably to spend more money on free education and therefore provide less employment opportunities.
 - c) the study of Economics provides the students with basic skills for analysing Economic problems thereby preparing them better for positions where economic decisions have to be made
 - d) The study of Economics helps a government to promote growth and development therefore improving the quality of life of the citizens.
 - e) Knowledge of Economics is useful to analyse fascinating patterns of socio-economic behaviour.
 - f) the study of Economics is useful to understand and alter the inequalities in the distribution of income and opportunities. (Adu, 2012)

3.0 Problems facing Economics Teachers in Nigerian Public Secondary School

There are many problems preventing Economics teachers from effectively teaching the subject in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools. Some of these problems include: teaching of large class, poor staff development programme, poor supervision, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of Economics Teachers' Association, inadequate instructional materials, poor motivation and insecurity.

3.1 Teaching of Large Classes

Teaching of large classes is one of the major problems facing Economics teachers teaching in public secondary schools across the Country. The National Policy on Education (2013) stipulated teacher-students ratio per class to be 1:30 for all senior secondary schools in Nigeria. The reality on ground is that majorities of Economics teachers teaching in public secondary schools across the country are teaching large number of students far above the National Policy on Education. Gbemisola (2016) did a study on factors affecting effecting teaching and learning of Economics in Senior Secondary Schools in Ogbomoso North Local government (ONLG) area of Oyo State were studied in the research work. The study revealed high number of Economics students (5,864) as against 26 teachers in nine (9) public schools under study. This gives a very high teacher – student ratio of 1:225. The findings also showed that there one lack of teaching aids, library facilities and where available, there is lack of textbooks of Economics. Gbemisola (2016) went furthered and disclosed that the number of Economics teachers being employed in these schools are not enough, for example, at Nurudeen Comprehensive High School, they have only one Economics teacher with a student population of about 686 (SS I, SS II and SS III). In conclusion, deriving from the response students and teachers, one can agree without hesitation that the above factors constitute a set back to the effective teaching and learning of Economics in our secondary schools, particularly Senior Secondary Schools This problem of teaching large classes is as a result of shortage of professional Economics teachers. According to Gbemisola (2016) 73.3% of the respondents (students) agreed that they have no adequate number of Economics teachers in their schools with Ogbomoso North Local Government area.

3.2 Poor Staff Development Programme

Noun (2006) observed that Ministries of Education in the country have not thought it necessary to organize or sponsor refresher courses or workshops or even conferences for secondary school teachers of Economics. If and when

Economics is sufficiently recognized as a secondary school subject, the various state Ministries of Education should sponsor or organize conferences, workshops and refresher courses for secondary school teachers of Economics as they have done for other Secondary School subjects such as Nigeria language, history and sciences. A subject which is taught by virtually all schools and offered in the examination by about 90% of all the candidates annually, should have been of special interest not only to principals of secondary schools but also to officers of the ministries. Gbemisola (2016) observed that the oral interview revealed that the school authorities were either not having the funds or not seriously bothered by sponsoring economics teachers and others to seminars, workshops and symposia update their skills and knowledge and also familiarizes themselves to the new development in the field. Noun (2006) Another evidence that the growth and importance of Economics in secondary schools in Nigeria has not been recognized is that the community of teacher trainers has not considered Economics important enough to give any serious thought to the training of teachers of Economics despite its popularity and large enrolment.

3.3 Poor Supervision

Kamindo (2006) viewed supervision as leadership for the improvement of instruction and ultimately student learning. This definitions suggest that the role of supervision is to improve teaching and learning through a deliberate emphasis on ways and means of instilling excellence in the quality of instruction. Supervision is a process which strives to stimulate others towards greater effectiveness or productivity. Supervision is very important for teacher' development. Supervisors helps teachers to grow professionally. School supervision is divided into two forms. External and internal supervision. External supervision occurs when supervisors come from the ministries and agencies of government to supervise the schools while internal refers to the supervision done by the school principals and the various head of department within the schools. Many economics teachers are facing the problems of effective supervision due to shortage of professional Economics supervisors in the various Ministries and Agencies of government saddled with the responsibilities of supervising Economics instruction in the secondary schools are inadequate. Many Economics teachers are not constantly been supervised and even when supervised, non -economics supervisors are used for the supervision which is not encouraging due to different in teaching methodologies and approaches. Noun (2006) observed that the Ministries of Education in Nigeria show no interest in the subject. There was a time when they appointed subject inspectors such as inspectors of Mathematics or English Language. A survey was undertaken to determine whether inspectors were appointed for Economics by the various state ministries of education. It was found that only three states, Bendel, Rivers and Kwara had inspectors for Economics. However, it was not certain whether they were appointed as inspectors of Economics or they were just economics graduates who were appointed as inspectors of schools. Paul (2015) carried out a study with the purpose of identifying the problems militating against effective inspection of schools in Nigeria. The study revealed that: inadequate number of inspectors, inadequate motivation of inspectors, lack of executive power to ensure implementation of inspection recommendation are problems militating against effective inspection of schools in Nigeria. Umar, Hauwa'u and Nura (2017) also carried a study that examined some problems or constraints of the supervision of education in secondary schools in Nigeria. The paper disclosed that: poor communication, unqualified and untrained supervisors, lack of materials resource, inadequate supply of personnel, financial constrains, poor human relation, administrative problems, political instability, low teachers morale, indifferent attitude of ministry of education officials to the supervision of instruction among others.

3.4 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Infrastructural facilities refers to resources that aids the delivering of educational services. Infrastructural facilities includes; classrooms, offices, libraries, laboratories, chairs, tables, desks, water, electricity, toilet facilities, ICT facilities, internet services. The availability of these facilities in right proportional will help in the delivering of quality education and the absent will frustrate the delivering of quality educational services. Gbemisola (2016) study revealed that about 91.1% of the students and staff responded that their schools have no well-equipped libraries with facilities like chairs, tables, books and conveniences. This factor has hindered them to effectively use their spare time for reading, even during the time of administering the questionnaire; students were sitting under school trees reading and sometimes receive lectures there, a situation not conducive to effective teaching and learning. Some schools have no library and there is thus nothing to equip and maintain.

3.5 Lack of Economics Teachers Association

Lack of Economics Teachers' Association is another problem facing the Economics teachers in Nigerian Secondary schools. There is no any formal association in charge of professional development for Economics teachers even though the few once coming up are not strong enough to meet up the various challenges facing the Economics teachers. Noun (2006) submitted that all secondary school subjects which are regarded as established and important have associations for example; there are associations for subjects like English language, History, Geography and Sciences. Even the teachers of French in Nigeria are known to have only a few secondary school students yet they have an association. The points highlighted above can be regarded as institutional/professional factors responsible for the low recognition of

Economics as a subject. The absent of a formidable organization of the Economics teachers is hampering the development of the Economics and the teachers.

3.6 Inadequate Instructional Materials

Inadequate Economics instructional materials is another major problems facing the Economics teachers in majorities of the public secondary schools in Nigeria. Things that help teaching and learning process to be more effective and efficient. Richardson, R. (2010), submitted that that economic teaching need concrete objects when teaching, for example if a topic like money is to be taught, the teacher needs to show the students the currency ,both notes and coins and their demonstration, in order to retain the topic in their memory. Furthermore, a set goal may not be reached by the teacher if he fails to choose and correctly use appropriate resources in teaching, because there are some students who learn better when they see and touch and others learn more when they combine all the senses of learning, sight, touch, and even tasting and smelling. Mark, (2017) observed that despite the fact that instructional materials are essential tools that can make learning practical and knowledgeable, they are not readily available in Nigeria secondary school leading to low level in academic performance of learners in government examination.

3.7 Poor Motivation

Economics teachers are poorly motivated. The allowances and treatment given teachers in other subjects like mathematics, English language and sciences subject teachers are not given to the Economics teachers. Gbemisola (2016) observed in his study that on the part of Economics teachers' motivation, that 88.9% of the respondent agreed with the Economics teachers' lack of motivation. Motivation in terms of provision of a conducive staff room or office, teaching aids, skill acquisition and re- training on the; part of government and school authority have hindered their performance, which also indirectly affects the teaching and learning of economics in the public schools. Idoko and Emmanuel (2015) did a study on teachers' effectiveness in teaching economics. He submitted that teachers, as the pillars of an education system are expected to be resourceful as a strategy for effecting teaching in Nigerian Schools and Colleges. He discovered that that teacher's strategies and methods of teaching Economics in the Secondary Schools in the study area was inadequate due to lack of motivation in terms of remuneration and fringe benefit, lower educational qualification, the lack of teacher's recognition and cognitive experience.

3.8 Insecurity

Insecurity is another serious problem facing teachers in Nigerian public Secondary Schools which include Economics teachers. Since 1999 Nigeria have been experiencing insecurity challenges. Public Secondary Schools have come under attacked from the insurgents and Bandits. Between December 2020 to June, 2021, about ten public secondary schools have been attacked, teachers killed, students killed while other were kidnapped by the bandits for reasons purposes. Many teachers have been killed. This insecurity problems is affecting the performance of teachers especially Economics teacher. According to the Cable (2019), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says Boko Haram has killed 2,300 teachers in Nigeria"s northeast since the start of the insurgency in 2009.

3.9 Negative Attitudes of Students towards the Studying Economics

Economics teachers are also facing the problem of attracting students to study Economics in their various schools now. Economics is an elective programme in the Nigerian secondary schools. Students have many options. This make the students to avoid Economics even when chosen demonstrates some negative attitudes that is not encouraging the Economics teachers. Many students see Economics as voluminous and bore to read and study. They have negative mentality about the concept of the subject. Noun (2006) opined that the kind of attitude a child has affect his school work and learning in general because, if he has a positive attitude about the teacher and the subject, success is inevitable. It is observed that student's attitudes to economics determines the degree to which they pass economics and negative attitude towards the subject and teachers will definitely have adverse effect on their academic achievement in the subject.

4.0 Way Forward

The forward for the effective administration of Economics programme administration include: increase in the funding of Economics programme, employment of more professional Economics teachers, provision of Economics instructional materials, provision of more infrastructural facilities for both Economics teachers and Students, ensure effective capacity development programme for Economics teachers, motivate the Economics teachers, form Economics teachers association and effective supervision of the Economics programme should be ensured in all public secondary school across the country.

1. The government should increase the funding of Economics programme in all the public secondary schools in Nigeria.

2. The government should employ more professional Economics teachers and deploy them to public secondary schools where their services are urgently needed.
3. More Economics instructional materials should be supply to all public secondary school across the country.
4. The government should be provide more infrastructural facilities in all the public secondary schools in the Country.
5. The government should ensure that Economics teachers are exposed to training and retraining programme to improve their knowledge and teaching methods.
6. Economics teachers should be motivated by increasing their salaries.
7. Economics teachers in Nigeria should form an association where issues concerning Economics programme can be discussed and ways of developing the programme suggested.
8. Economics programme should be supervised by the respective institutions in charge of Economics supervision

5.0 Conclusion

Economics teachers are professionals employed to teach economics in Nigerian public Secondary Schools. It has been discovered that many economics are facing with challenges while implementing the economics programme their various schools. The paper identified teaching of large classes, poor staff development programme, poor supervision, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of Economics Teachers' Association, inadequate instructional materials, poor motivation and insecurity were identified as problems facing Economics teachers teaching in Nigerian public secondary schools. In order to address this problems, the writers recommended that government should increase in the funding of Economics programme, employ more professional Economics teachers, provide more Economics instructional materials, provide more infrastructural facilities for both Economics teachers and students, ensure effective capacity development programme for economics teachers, motivate the Economics teachers, Economics teachers should form Economics Teachers' Association and effective supervision of the Economics teachers should be ensured in all public secondary school across the country.

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