

# Teacher Competence and Students' Academic Achievement in Public Senior Secondary Schools of the FCT, Abuja

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## Abstract

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between teacher competency and academic achievement of public senior secondary school students of the FCT, Abuja. Two research questions, two objectives, and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised of 51,890 SS2 students in public senior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja. A sample of 380 students were selected using Krejcie and Morgan table for selecting sample size. Data was collected using a self-developed questionnaires tagged Teacher Competency Questionnaire (TECOQ). In addition, Mathematics Achievement Test and well English Language Achievement Test were developed for the study for the purpose assessing students' academic achievement. To ensure validity of the instrument used, they were given to two experts in educational research and measurement and evaluation for face and content validity. The experts subjected them to critical appraisal. Scores from the appraisal of experts were used to obtain consensus logical validity indices of 0.80, 0.77 and 0.72 respectively. The instruments were pilot tested on 30 students; the respondents were part of the population but not part of the sample for this study. Even though the instruments were standardized, they were still subjected to reliability in order to ascertain their degree of consistency. The data obtained from the pilot test was used to compute the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method. The analyses of the responses yielded reliability indices of 0.75, 0.73 and 0.71. Calculated r-values of Pearson's product moment correlation was used to

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answer the research questions developed for the study while the p-values (probability) of Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that: there is a significant relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja and there is a significant relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which among others include: conducting workshops and seminars in schools in order to help teachers improve their communication skills and encouraging teachers to embark on in-service training for the purpose of ensuring they update and improve their knowledge and experience of classroom management.

**Keywords:** Teacher competency, Academic achievement, Communication skills, Teacher classroom, Management skills.

## Introduction

Education improves the development of any society and the youths who occupy significant positions in that country should be properly educated in order to improve their society. Education, in the present day context, is possibly the only most significant means for individuals to develop his potentials and personal endowments, build capability levels, overcome constraints and, in the process, enlarge their available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement and well-being. It is not only a way to enhance human capital and efficiency but it is equally vital for enabling the process of acquisition, assimilation and communication of information and knowledge, all of which augments a person's quality of life. Thus, it is a serious invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion and a durable integration of people. It therefore plays a crucial role in shaping the citizens of tomorrow, citizens who are responsible, accountable, honest, healthy, emotionally strong and irrepensible. Over the years there have been reports of low achievement in secondary school students as shown by poor performances in WAEC results which have been confirmed by the standard measurement of academic achievement. Despite the claimed huge government investments towards enhancing the quality of education in the Federal Capital Territory, students' academic achievement has continued to decline at an alarming rate. According to WAEC report (2018), students' academic achievement has not been encouraging. In 2017, 38.81 representing 61.19% failed examination. In the vein, in 2018, 64.26 representing 35.74 % failed and in 2019 30% representing 70% failed. Effective credits simply mean that the subjects' combinations include English Language and Mathematics, which are compulsory for admission into the universities in Nigeria. The results show a marginal one per cent lower than recent year's result. It should be recalled that in the May/June

2017 examination, only 356,981 candidates representing 26 per cent of the 1,373,009 students who sat for the examination obtained five effective credits. Also, the November/ December examination meant for private candidates in recent years recorded a similar poor performance. Out of the 342,433 candidates who took the examination, only 106,413 or 31 per cent had five effective credits, even though the number of candidates is significantly lower. The worst result so far was recorded in the May/June examination of 2018. The truth is that once a candidate fails to obtain the required five credits in the first attempt, he or she is bound to retake the examination to make up the deficient subjects. Failure to make up those subjects effectively shuts the candidate out of university admission. This situation has unpleasant implications for the youths and the future of the country. These results have shown a steady drop in achievement and this trend has continued despite efforts by educationists and all concerned to effect change. This development has raised concerns among stakeholders within the education system. Educationists have suggested that the competency of a teacher goes a long way in determining the learning outcomes of the school system in terms of academic achievement. Teacher competence refers to the overall ability and authority of teachers in carrying out their profession, including responsibilities in educating students with knowledge and skills.

Teacher competency refers to the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities that educators must possess to effectively navigate various professional and personal situations. This competence is crucial for teachers' success in educational settings and impacts their values, behaviors, communication, aims, and practices in schools. The concept of competences in teaching has gained significance in higher education (Selvi, 2010). Teacher competency can be measured or assessed based on teachers' communication skills and classroom management skills.

Teacher communication skills refers to the manner which the teacher transmits knowledge to the learners in the classroom. Communication skills comprise the teachers' fluency in communication, voice modulation and mannerism (Esezi, 2020). Kravit (2013) further buttressed that the teachers' communication is an essential component of teachers' classroom behavior that is used to ascertain the competency of a teacher within the classroom. Communication skills include many things-effective use of language, the way we articulate pitch/tone of voice, kinesics, interpersonal skills etc. Teaching is all about communication - listening, speaking, reading, presenting and writing. Teachers who build their communication skills are prepared to instruct, advice and mentor students entrusted in their care (Esezi, 2020). Adu and Olatundun (2017) posited that teachers' communication skills relates significantly to students' performance in secondary schools.

Classroom management is the process of leading, directing, ordering or restraining of students in a class in a way that will lead to effective learning (Mbah,2019). Hence, students will perform best in a controlled atmosphere that is conducive to academic and social needs of the students Murray, (Murray & Waas, 2018).

Classroom management skills may involve gaining students' attention by identifying them by their names, dividing the class into activity groups, non-verbal communication. The desire of every academic institution to attain improved learning outcomes in terms of student academic achievement. This may however be unattainable if teachers do not possess the competency required to achieve this. It is based on this realization that the study is geared towards examining the relationship between teacher competency and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja.

The task of attaining improved academic achievement in public senior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja has become an issue of concern to stakeholders in the school system. Despite huge investments by the government in terms of financial and human resources, the desired outcomes in terms quality of students' academic achievement have not been attained. Some stakeholders have attributed this unfortunate trend to the non-conducive learning environment in public senior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja while others have attributed to the inadequacy of learning resources in schools. It is however important to note that learning can only be enchanting to learners if teachers are they taught by teachers who are well equipped in terms of communication and classroom management skills. Hence, possessing the required competency in terms of communication and classroom management is very crucial. It is however important to note that most schools within the FCT, Abuja do not possess adequate classroom instructors who are capable of communicating and managing classroom in such a way that will ensure improved academic achievement of students. The aim of teaching in any school system is to ensure a permanent change in behavior but this may not be possible except demonstrate a considerable level of competency in school. The thrust or focus of the study therefore is to examine the relationship between teacher competency and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja.

## **Materials and Method**

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja?
2. What is the relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja?

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided this study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja

2. There is no significant relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja

### **Method**

Correlation research design was used in this study. Correlation research describes the degree to which two or more quantitative variables are related and it does so by use of a correlation coefficient (Anikweze, 2014). Correlation research design was used in this study because the study seeks to determine the relationship between teacher competency and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja. The population of the study comprises 51,890 SS2 students in public senior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja. A Sample size of 380 SS2 students were selected for the study through Krejcie and Morgan sampling procedure. The instruments used for the study were Teacher Competency Questionnaire (TECOQ), Mathematics Achievement Test, English language Achievement. To ensure validity of the instruments used, they were given to two experts in educational research and Measurement and Evaluation for face and content validity. The experts subjected them to critical appraisal. Scores from the appraisal of experts were used to obtain consensus logical validity indices of 0.80, 0.77 and 0.72 respectively. The instruments were pilot tested on 30 students; the respondents were part of the population but not part of the sample for this study. Even though the instruments were standardized, they were still subjected to reliability in order to ascertain their degree of consistency. The data obtained from the pilot test was used to compute the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method.

### **Results and Discussion**

The analyses of the responses yielded reliability indices of 0.75, 0.73 and 0.71 respectively. Calculated r-values of Pearson's product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions developed for the study while the p-values (probability) of Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Questions 1:** What is the relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja?

Table 1: Calculated r-values of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja

Variables	N	r	Decision
Teacher Communication Skills	380	0.64	Positively strong relationship
Academic Achievement	380		

From Table 1 it is observed that at the sample size of 380 respondents, the calculated value of r (coefficient of person's product moment correlation) was given as 0. 64. This coefficient value is higher than the average coefficient value of 0.50. It implies therefore that there is a positively strong relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja.

**Research Questions 2:** What is the relationship between teacher Classroom Management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja?

Table 2: Calculated r-values of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between Teacher Classroom Management Skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja

Variables	N	r	Decision
Teacher Communication Skills	380	0.71	Positively strong relationship
Academic Achievement	380		

From Table 2 it is observed that at the sample size of 380 respondents, the calculated value of  $r$  (coefficient of person's product moment correlation) was given as 0.71. This coefficient value is higher than the average coefficient value of 0.50. It implies therefore that there is a positively strong relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja.

Table 3. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the significance of relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Teacher Communication Skills	380	0.64	0.000	Significant Relationship
Academic Achievement	380			

Table 3 above shows the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics on the relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja. The p-value of 0.000 was found to be less than 0.05. Hence, the result reveals that there is a significant relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the significance of relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Teacher Communication Skills	380	0.71	0.022	Significant Relationship
Academic Achievement	380			

Table 4 above shows the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics on the relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja. The p-value of 0.022 was found to be less than 0.05. Hence, the result reveals that there is a significant relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja

### Discussion of Results

Findings from the study on hypothesis one reveal there is a significant relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja. This finding is in agreement with the findings from the study of Ezezi (2020) which indicated the influence of teachers' communication skills on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Findings from the study on hypothesis two reveal there was a significant relationship between classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary schools of the FCT, Abuja. This finding is in agreement with the findings from the study of Mbah (2019) which indicated there was a significant relationship between classroom management abilities of teachers and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi state of Nigeria.



## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

1. There is a significant relationship between teacher communication skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja.
2. There is a significant relationship between teacher classroom management skills and academic achievement in public senior secondary school of the FCT, Abuja.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusion, the following recommended were made:

1. Intensive counselling programmes should be carried out in schools in order to help learners discover and develop their self-interest.
2. Counselling departments should be revived in unity schools for the purpose of enhancing the self-empathy of learners.

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