TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH CENTRAL GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract: *This study examined the teachers' professional competence and their impact on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. Seven (7) research questions and four (4) hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. Related literatures as well as empirical studies were also reviewed. The ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The Population of the study was 27,221 and 5,496 Teachers, Principals' and Students representing 20.2% of the total Population were sampled from 216 Senior Secondary Schools using tetrachoric random sampling. A 8-item instrument was developed for data collection titled "Teacher Competence and Students' Performance Questionnaire (TCSPQ). The instrument used for the study was a modified four point-Likert type questionnaire of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations were used to answer the seven research questions, while chi-square (X^2) test of goodness of fit was used to test the three hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and multiple correlations (R) was used to test hypothesis four. The findings revealed that Teacher professional competence below average (2.43) on students' academic performance in senior secondary Schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that stakeholders in education should encourage teachers' through attending conference, workshops, seminars and in-training service or sandwich programmes to develop professionally in senior secondary schools.*

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Keyword: Teacher, Professional Competence, Students, Academics Performance and Secondary School.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional competence are vital in educational objectives for the improvement of teaching and learning which is the sole responsibility of head of the school. Providing qualitative education for students rests merely with the principal and teachers who professionally interact in planning and organizing instruction for the process of school goals performance. Teachers' professional competence encompasses professional knowledge and skills in the teaching subject, pedagogy and the ability of the teachers to perform professional roles such as methods of teaching, subject mastery, creating materials for teaching and learning, techniques of teaching, supporting and guiding students to acquire knowledge and skills. Teachers' professional competence lies in principals' role performance in these areas. Teachers' competence is a professional development of teachers toward attainment of attitudes, skills, values and knowledge desirable to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the needs of a given society at any point in time. This includes training of teachers on the job. The effectiveness of any educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers. This is because no system of education can be qualitatively higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers. It is important to identify effective professional development programmes and models for teachers' training using rigorous standards of doing work to enhance the practitioners so that they can give out their best in classroom practices to improve students' performance in the core academic areas. This would reflect on the students as professional developments translate into games in students' performance poses tremendous challenges despite an intuitive and logical correction between them (Boroko, 2014; Loucks; Horseley and Matsumoto; Supovitz, 2012). To substantiate the empirical link between professional development and students' performance, studies established two points:

1. There are links among professional development teachers learning and practice, and students learning
2. The other is that the empirical evidence is of high quality that study proved what its claim to proved, students performance are mediated by teachers knowledge and teaching in the classroom.

In the North Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria, Senior Secondary Schools have inadequate teachers to teach .Others issues include infrastructural decay, insufficient instructional materials, poor climate, look worm attitudes of the teachers, and poor mastery of the subject matter. The act of teaching is fundamentally concerned with passing ideas, skills and attitudes from the teachers to the learners. In the north central geo-political zone Nigeria, experience has shown that spoken words alone in the communication of ideas are grossly ineffective and inefficient in producing desired learning outcomes in core subjects. Every year when results of National Examination Council are released, there is always a mass failure. The reason for this could be ascribed to the fact that there are some topics in the core subjects that may pose problem of comprehension to the students. These subjects cannot be taught effectively without the use of relevant instructional materials to make the learning practical. The fact remains that teaching and learning depend on teachers as there cannot be any meaningful socio-economic and political development in any country without teachers. The efficiency of teachers' training should be the main determining factor in the success of education to meet the country's needs. Training is the policy and procedure designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills required to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. If teachers are not well supervised, effectiveness in instruction will be adversely affected and the instructional purpose may not be realized.

This may also lead to low quality of instruction and invariably students' poor performance. For teachers to be competent, the principals must always check their lesson notes to ascertain that the content was effectively covered. Principals' supervision of teachers' lesson notes regularly enhance teachers' competence to improve students' performance in the classroom. The development of lesson notes serves as gate way to teachers' competence. Teachers' development is the sole function of principals through the checking of lesson notes, schemes of work, pupils' notes, teachers' punctuality to school and regularity to class, classroom observation, demonstration, conferencing, workshop, micro-teaching, moderation of examination question papers and marking schemes. The dwindling performance in National Examination Council of students at senior secondary schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria which is

made up of Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau, Niger, Kogi, Kwara and FCT has been a major concern to stake holders in education. Over the years, government has spent huge amount of money in funding senior secondary school education with the expectation of better academic performance and high quality education; still there persist poor performance of students in the National Examination Council (NECO Chief Examiner Report 2005 (20%), 2008 (21%) and 2014 (22%). Principals' supervisory roles include professional interaction with teachers for planning and organizing instruction, monitoring continuous assessments, supervision of lesson notes and plans, ensuring teachers' professional growth, effectiveness, and sourcing instructional materials to improve teaching. According to Nwangwu, 2007; Ezeocha 2012; Adeyemi, 2006; Omoregie, 2006; Obioma, 2005; Ogbodo, 2002; Aghenta 2001; Nwandiani, 1998) poor academic performance especially in Mathematics, English Language, Economics Biology and Agricultural sciences among senior secondary school students has become a worrisome nightmare to education stakeholders. Teachers' professional competence and Students' academic performance lies on principals' performance through monitoring methods of teaching , subject mastery, sourcing materials for teaching and learning , teacher expertise in subject matter , techniques of teaching , pedagogy, supporting and guiding students to acquire knowledge and skills as stated in the guideline for academic inspection.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho_1 There is no significant positive relationship between Teachers competence and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population of this study consisted of six (6) states in the North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria, namely: Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue, Kogi, Kwara and Niger. 1,325 senior secondary schools in the six states ministry of education has staff strength of 27,221 including the principals'. The target population comprised all principals, teachers and students from two hundred and sixteen (216) out of one thousand three hundred and twenty five (1,325) senior secondary schools randomly selected from North Central

Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. Two hundred and sixteen (216) principals and five thousand (5000) teachers and two hundred and eighty (280) students, totaling up to five thousand four hundred and ninety six (5,496) were the respondents to the questionaire.

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection was titled. "Teachers Competence and Students' Performance Questionnaire (TCSPQ) constructed by the researcher. It is made up of 16 items. The questionnaire has only one section. This was designed to find out respondents' views on the impact of teachers professional competence to students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. Modified Likert rating scale with response mode of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were used to provide responses to 2 clusters of the study.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were coded and analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). Chi- Square (x^2) test of goodness of fit and multiple correlations were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Tetrachoric random sampling was considered suitable in this study (Anikweze, 2014). A mean cut-off point of 2.50 was accepted as positive response while any response with a mean score of below 2.50 was being rejected as negative.

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Teachers Professional Competence.

Item No	Item Description Teachers Professional Competence	State	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
12	Teachers' are given orientation when employed newly.	Benue	2789	1968	530	209	2.42	0.97	Belo w
		Nasarawa	1968	2789	530	209	2.38	0.96	Belo w
		Kogi	2789	19 68	530	209	2.29	0.92	Belo w
		Kwara	2799	1978	510	209	2.43	0.93	Belo w
		Niger	2786	1970	530	210	2.30	0.93	Belo w
		Plateau	2789	1960	538	209	2.45	0.94	Belo w
		Cluster							

							mean		
							2.38	0.94	Belo w
13	Teachers go for induction course to know their status.	Benue	2897	2331	239	29	2.42	0.96	Belo w
		Nasarawa	2897	2331	239	29	2.45	0.98	Belo w
		Kogi	2897	2331	239	29	2.30	0.95	Belo w
		Kwara	2897	2331	239	29	2.36	0.93	Belo w
		Niger	2897	2331	239	29	2.31	0.92	Belo w
		Plateau	2897	2331	239	29	2.41	0.93	Belo w
		Cluster mean					2.38	0.95	Belo w
14	Teachers' conferencing improve their instructional objectives.	Benue	2897	2331	239	29	2.48	0.93	Belo w
		Nasarawa	2887	2341	239	29	2.39	0.91	Belo w
		Kogi	2890	2331	246	29	2.41	0.63	Belo w
		Kwara	2892	2336	239	29	2.45	0.64	Belo w
		Niger	2897	2331	239	29	2.29	0.96	Belo w
		Plateau	2877	2351	239	29	2.46	0.99	Belo w
		Cluster mean					2.41	0.74	Belo w
15	Teachers' involvement in the design and implementation of important decisions enhances their professional competence.	Benue	1986	1799	1283	428	2.50	1.06	Belo w
		Nasarawa	1986	1799	1283	428	2.22	1.01	Belo w
		Kogi	1986	1799	1283	428	2.32	1.02	Belo w
		Kwara	1986	1799	1283	428	2.40	0.92	Belo w
		Niger	1986	1799	1283	428	2.40	0.99	Belo w
		Plateau	1986	1799	1283	428	2.30	1.00	Belo w
		Cluster mean					2.34	1.00	Belo w
16	Teachers' keep proper records on their students for academic growth.	Benue	2998	1687	613	198	2.40	0.97	Belo w
		Nasarawa	2990	1687	620	198	2.39	0.93	Belo w
		Kogi	3000	1680	618	198	2.15	0.91	Belo w
		Kwara	2995	1690	613	198	2.30	0.96	Belo w
		Niger	1687	2998	613	198	2.46	0.76	Belo w
		Plateau	2990	1695	613	198	2.26	0.95	Belo w
		Cluster mean					2.33	0.91	Belo w
17	They reports accurately to parents.	Benue	2785	1594	613	198	2.42	1.00	Belo w
		Nasarawa	2780	1599	610	201	2.42	1.01	Belo w
		Kogi	2685	1694	613	198	2.42	0.99	Belo w
		Kwara	2705	1598	693	194	2.41	0.98	Belo w
		Niger	1594	2785	618	190	2.39	0.96	Belo w
		Plateau	1590	2789	610	201	2.40	0.95	Belo w
		Cluster mean					2.41	0.98	Belo w
18	They handle disciplinary problems of students.	Benue	2632	1898	689	178	2.46	1.03	Belo w
		Nasarawa	2532	1998	680	187	2.44	1.03	Belo w
		Kogi	2400	1910	889	178	2.45	0.98	Belo w
		Kwara	2602	1928	686	181	2.46	1.01	Belo w

		State							
		Niger	1898	2632	689	178	2.46	0.92	Below
		Plateau	2630	1810	689	178	2.44	0.91	Below
		Cluster mean					2.45	0.98	Below
19	They relate parents to school work through students.	Benue	2461	1498	911	626	2.43	0.97	Below
		Nasarawa	2461	1498	911	626	2.42	0.99	Below
		Kogi	2461	1498	911	626	2.41	094	Below
		Kwara	2461	1498	911	626	2.43	0.96	Below
		Niger	2461	1498	911	626	2.43	0.97	Below
		Plateau	2461	1498	911	626	2.43	0.98	Below
		Cluster mean					2.43	0.97	Below

Scale mean 2.50   Source: Field work 2015

Table 1 shows the mean performance score of teachers' professional competence. The mean performance scores are 2.38, 2.38, 2.41, 2.34, 2.33, 2.41, 2.45 and 2.43 with a standard deviation of 0.94, 0.95, 1.00, 0.91, 0.98, 0.98 and 0.97 respectively from the six states under study with the cluster mean of 2.43 which is below the scale mean of 2.50. This means that the mean performance scores of teachers professional competence is below average in Senior Secondary Schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. The respondents rated items 14-21 indicate that there is reluctance in teachers orientation when employed newly', teachers go for induction course to know their status, teachers' conferencing improve their instructional objectives, teachers involvement in the design and implementation of important decisions enhance their professional competence, teachers' keep proper records on their students for academic growth. The respondents also disagreed that there is no reports accurately to parents, they handle disciplinary problems of students and they do not relate parents to school work through students.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test of the Teachers' Professional Competence and Students' Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria.

	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	Level of Sign	X^{2-cal}	X^{2-tab}	Decision
	58 (8.9%)	594 (91.1%)	2	0.05	14.854^a	.052	Ho
	252(5.2%)	4591(94.8%)	2				Rejected Null.
Total	310 (5.6%)	5185 (94.3%)	1				

N=5,496, df=5   Source: SPSS 4, May 2015.

Table 2 showed that the descriptive statistics of percentages and the inferential statistics of chi-square were used to test the relationship of teachers' professional competence and students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria.

The chi-square calculated value of 14.854^a was greater than the chi-square table value of .052 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. It means there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION
The findings revealed that teacher professional competence is below average (2.43) on students' academic performance in Senior Secondary School in North Central Geographical zone, Nigeria

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Stakeholders should encourage teachers through attending conferences, workshops and seminars to develop professionally.
2. Teachers should regards their job as daily duty to improve students academic performance.

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