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A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, COMPETENCE AND LECTURER PERFORMANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The fallen standard of education in Nigeria over the past two decades shows that lecturers lack the required teaching qualification, characteristics and competence required to effectively do their job. Given this submission, this paper proposes a conceptual framework to enhance lecturers' performance based on an examination of three key factors and their interrelationship. It argues that lecturers who demonstrate higher level of teaching qualifications, characteristics and competence would perform better than those who do not. The current paper contributes to literature by discussing teaching qualifications, characteristics and competence in the university context which previous studies have neglected.

Keywords: Lecturers, Higher education, Teaching qualification, Characteristics, Competence, Performance.



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INTRODUCTION

Generally, teaching has been considered as one of the most interesting and challenging professions in human endeavor (Yusuf, 2007). People need to teach others in order for them to learn and be educated (Fah & Osman, 2011). Those who teach others must possess the right characteristics, competence and teaching qualifications to enable them impart knowledge that will have a durable effect on the lives of the people they teach (Bagley, 1938). Teaching qualifications, lecturers' characteristics and competence may be directly related to the quality of instruction in the classrooms as well as to the overall academic performance of the lecturer (Fah & Osman, 2011; Ogbonnaya & Osiki, 2007). This view is equally reflected in the Nigerian National Education Policy of 1998 to 2010.

Investigations by Oseni (2011) on the falling standard of education in Nigerian universities over the last two decades reveals that lecturers contribute to the problem because they do not possess the required characteristics and competence necessary to effectively perform their duties. In Nigeria, attaining a qualitative reform of the educational sector requires highly qualified and competent teachers at all levels of education system (The Development of Education National Report of Nigeria, 2008).

In recent time the Development of Education National Report of Nigeria (2008) has noted that some of the Nigerian teachers are not competent and there is a need for more competent ones who will assist in actualizing the visions and goals of education for individual, community and national development. Universities in Nigeria have acknowledged that most graduates employed to teach all various levels (Nursery, Basic, Senior Secondary & Tertiary) of the Nigerian education are not professionals. They lack the necessary teaching qualifications, traits, skills and competence. Therefore, it is argued that there is a need to produce teachers who could achieve specified curriculum goals (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2010).

Government and other stakeholders in the education sector have tried to improve the performance of teachers and lecturers and remedy the situation by creating policy that mandates them to be professionals. This involves obtaining the necessary teaching qualifications, and possessing the right characteristic that will make them competent to function effectively. Still, lecturers and teachers' performances remain very low in Nigeria and have become a contested issue (Yusuf, 2007; The Development of Education National Report of Nigeria, 2008).

One major weakness of the previous studies in this area has to do with their scope. These studies only covered primary and secondary school levels in their examination of both student and teacher's performance. For instance, studies by Koledoye (2000), Gerodias (2003), Khurshid (2008) and Lai, Sadoulet and Janvry (2009) were conducted at the primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, Beijing, Pikit Municipality (Thailand) and Burewala city (Pakistan) respectively. Pam Tatlow, chief executive of the Million+Group of new universities, argued that the differing qualification levels such as professional qualifications in one's domain would improve performance (Morgan, 2011). She contended that university staff should be rated on the account of their professional qualification. She further noted that doctoral qualification may not provide any indication as to how well anyone performs in teaching. Hence, only teaching qualification does it well (Morgan, 2011). In view of this, there is a need to extend the scope of this study to the institutions of higher learning as they also play a crucial role in the business of educating people. Therefore, the current study investigates the relationship between teaching qualifications, lecturer's characteristics, competence and performance in the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Fah and



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Osman (2011) have suggested the need to investigate lecturers' performance in order to improve it within different university settings since every educational institution differs and has a specific objective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the relevant literatures that help us to understand the influence of teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence on the lecturer's performance. It should be noted that there is no distinction between teacher and lecturer in the context of this paper as both terms are used interchangeably to mean the same thing. According to the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria Act 31 of 1993, the term teacher is used to connote anybody who is doing the work of teaching irrespective of whether the person concerned is teaching in nursery, primary, secondary or any higher institution such as the university, polytechnics, college of education etc. (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2010).

Teaching Qualifications

A teaching qualification or teacher qualification can simply be defined as those academic and professional degrees that enable a person to become a registered, professional and qualified teacher in primary or secondary school or in higher institutions particularly in the faculty of education. Such qualifications include, but are not limited to, the Masters in Education, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and the Bachelor of Education (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2010).

Furthermore, empirical documentation has shown that teaching qualifications play a critical role in teaching as well as imparting knowledge on the students (Khurshid, 2008). Indeed, both teaching and academic qualifications are crucial for effective teaching performance. Also, a common reason would indicate that the trained teacher would effectively teach better than an un-trained teacher. For example, a trained teacher knows all the suitable methods to teach and deliver his/her lectures or lessons successfully. Ruhela and Singh (1990) in the examination of the significant role of qualifications affirmed that no institute of educational learning can succeed without trained teachers. Hence, there is a need for teacher' education as well as teaching qualification. If a trained teacher with the essential qualification imparts knowledge on the student, there is likelihood that the students' performance pretty well due to the fact that teachers are viewed as the most important factor in the education process (Khurshid, 2008). He noted that the methodology of effective teaching is subject to the number of factors that are capable of affecting it. These factors, for example, include teaching standards, what teacher likes to teach, what he want the students to know, availability of time, and what method of teaching. Funny enough, all these variables are obtained during the process of acquiring the essential teaching qualifications. The rudiments and nitty-gritty of teaching is part of them.

Idris et al., (2006) investigated how Malaysian teachers prepare professionally. The study focused on the teaching implementation, learning mathematics and science in English with the major aim of surveying the perception of Malaysian. The study found that the pre-service and in-service training are crucial for teacher professional. It further revealed that although, teachers are professionally prepared to teach, however, they still need more preparation, and this preparation perhaps would be achieved by ensuring that teachers possess the essential teaching qualifications.



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Kingdon (2006) investigated how teacher's attributes affect the performance of the students in all subjects through variation approach in India. The study revealed among others that teachers possessing educational qualification in Master's Degree and also having pre-service training probably in education will affect student achievement. Hence, educational qualifications play major role in student's academic performance and achievement. One important study to this research is the study conducted by Khurshid (2008) to find out the effect of teachers' professional qualifications on the academic performance of the students within the secondary school level. Based on the quantitative data and a total sample of 167 participants comprising of eighty (80) students and eighty-seven (87) teachers drawn from five schools, the study revealed uncertified teachers with B. A. /B. Such qualifications influence the students more than the certified teachers with professional qualifications like B.Ed and M.Ed.

The most recent study by Lai, Sadoulet and Janvry (2009) provided clear evidence on the effect of teaching qualifications and students' performance. The study examined the influence of school quality and teacher's qualifications on student's performance from Beijing middle schools via a natural experimental approach with an administrative data from lottery-based open enrollment system in those schools. Finding indicates that teaching qualifications predict student's performance as shown in the student's test scores. Thus, the teacher's qualifications have a strong predictive power in the student's performance. Koledoye (2000) examined how teachers' academic qualification would affect the performance of the students in the secondary level. The study found that the students instructed by the English Language Tests Teacher in the final examinations perform better than the students who were not instructed by the English Language Tests Teacher in the final examinations. Based on the findings, the author suggested that teachers should be properly trained. This implies that teacher should possess the essential teaching qualification in order to positively affect the student performance.

Accordingly, the study by Ogonnaya and Osiki (2007) investigated the relationship between the students' achievements in mathematics and teacher's qualifications, by making use of a self-reporting instrument and 40 respondents with a stratified sampling technique to collect data from form C (Grade 10) mathematics teachers in the Maseru District in Lesotho, South Africa. The study found that there was a significant relationship between students' achievement in mathematics and teachers' qualifications. Furthermore, the theory of traits in particular demographic view has stressed on the important role of individual demography such as educational qualifications, age, gender, race etc. in individual achievement (Kheng, 2011; Hurley, 1999).

The demographic view of personality theory posits that demographic factors bring changes that will affect achievement. Therefore, lecturer's performance can be associated with these factors. The Psychology Theory assumes that there are some distinguished psychology and demographic characteristics that teachers or lecturer should possess for effective performance (Kurako & Hodgetts, 2004; Hurley, 1999). However, the studies highlighted above are limited only to the qualifications and its effects on the student's academic performance without referring to the teacher's performance. Based on the above theory, it is observed that teaching qualifications also affect teachers' performance. For example, a teacher who does not possess the essential teaching qualification might perform below expectation due to the absence of some teaching rudiments, rules and practices that would assist him/her in preparing the lecture notes and handling the students in the class.



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Lecturers Characteristics

Generally, authors have categorized individual characteristics into three major groups (Kheng, 2011; Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004). These include personal/psychological, sociological and demographic characteristics (Kheng, 2011; Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004). The current study opts for psychological perspective of the lecturers.

The empirical study conducted by Amin and Khan (2009) on the best method of evaluating teachers' performance through a survey questionnaire approach revealed that teachers' characteristics affect performance. It further noted that personal characteristics played a major role in determining teacher's performance. The study further provided a list of personal characteristics such as maturity, creativity, integrity, self-confidence, intellectual ability, intelligence etc. Another recent study conducted by Fah and Osman (2011) also found that lecturer's characteristics was highly correlated with lecturer's overall performance. They argued that performance will be high when the lecturer possesses relevant traits that could metamorphose them into effective teachers and lecturer's low traits could reflect poor performance which is traceable to both students' and lecturer's achievements.

The theory of traits in particular psychological view has stressed on the importance of individual characteristics or attributes for an effective teachers' performance (Cherry, 2012). Individual characteristics can be described as those unique characteristics, qualities, features and personalities that tend to differentiate one individual from another (Lucky, 2011). Hashim, (2005) also described individual characteristics as those special traits possessed by people which can help them to do their jobs. It is concerned with the characteristics and personalities of an individual that assist him/her to effectively do his/her work (Hashim, 2005). Therefore, Lecturer's characteristic is defined as those personal attributes, qualities, and traits that would assist the lecturer to achieve a better teaching performance.

These individual personalities or characteristics arise from within the individual and remain fairly consistent throughout life. Thus, personality theory posits that individual performs as a result of the internal characteristics that are genetically based and are sometimes viewed as hereditary. Therefore, lecturer's performance is as a result of personal characteristics or traits they possess. The Psychology Theory that assumes that there are some distinguished psychological and demographic characteristics that teachers or lecturer should possess for effective performance (McClelland, 1961; Schumpeter, 1934; Hurley, 1999). Building on the above, we argue that certain qualities, traits and characteristics such as self-confident, positive mental attitude, patience, being approachable etc. are very crucial for effective lecturers' performance.

Lecturers Competence

According to the professional standards of teaching profession in Thailand (2005) as reported by José Passos (2009), competence assists in setting and determining the professional guideline in about nine major dimensions. These comprise language and technology for teachers, curriculum development, and psychology for teachers, educational measurement and evaluation, classroom management, educational research, educational innovation and information technology, and teacher ship.



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The theoretical literature by Sahan (2009) argues that competence is a prerequisite to competence based teacher education which may include knowledge, skills and values. He argues that professional teachers must demonstrate these competencies for effective teacher education completion program and effective performance. The study provides the following competence characteristics knowledge, skill and attitude. The author noted that competencies are observable and demonstrable, and because competencies are observable, they are also measurable and assessable from the teachers' performance.

Many empirical studies (Passos, 2009; Achwarin, 2007) have been conducted with respect to teacher competence and performance. For instance, the empirical study by José Passos (2009) which utilised a quantitative approach at the secondary school level revealed that teachers' effectiveness was significantly related to teacher classroom and this in turn was subject to teachers' competence. The finding further showed a significant association between teachers' competence and performance in Mozambique as well as in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) countries. The competence model provided by Westera (2001) demonstrated that a teacher's performance depends on the teachers' knowledge, (comprised of subject matter and general pedagogy), which is directly linked to the teachers' competencies, characteristics and attitudes. Also the study by Achwarin (2007) on the competency of the teacher in the three major provinces in southern Thailand showed a significant correlation between teacher competence and teacher performance while a negative correlation was found with teacher competence area in language and technology for teachers, educational innovation, and information technology.

Due to the fact that competence is often related to high professional performance, there is a direct association between teacher' professional competence and pupil performance in the academic domain. One of the recent studies conducted by Hamdan, Ghafar and Li (2010) which collected data from different secondary/primary schools in Johor Baru found that teacher's competence was significantly associated with academic achievement or performance. The study suggested that teachers should have competence in their domains for effective performance. They further listed some areas of teacher competencies such as subject knowledge, teaching prowess, classroom management, instrumental planning, collegiality etc. In line with all these studies, the Competency-Based Education Theory which is very popular in the education domain emphasizes more on the need for teachers to possess the right attributes and characteristics for better performance (Schilling & Koetting, 2010). The theory argued on the importance of individual characteristics that will aid teacher's performance. Utilising this theory, Schilling and Koetting (2010) argued that activities of teachers as well as their attributes will be more helpful in training teachers than individual opinion information. Therefore, they contended that teachers' characteristics play indispensable role in the teachers' effectiveness and performance. Sahan (2009) noted that teachers' competencies are based on competency based teacher education theory which are connected to all areas of performance where performance can be assessed

Furthermore, José Passos (2009) concurs that there is a close association between teaching effectiveness or teaching ineffectiveness and teachers' competence. Adding to those teachers who are competent will provide conducive environments and climate as well as the enabling classroom conditions for effective students' learning. Teodorescu (2006) argues that performance is a function of competence and therefore, teachers must be competent for better performance. In summary, competent teachers are those who have the ability to provide valuable outcomes without excessive costly behavior (Gilbert, 1996). It is the teaching skill and ability possess by



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the lecturers. Because the competencies are observable, they are also measurable. It is possible to assess a competency from the performance of a teacher. In the actual sense, all teachers' competencies may not have the same extent of knowledge, skill and attitude. There may be some competencies of a teacher which have the same extent of knowledge, skill and attitude. On the other hand, some competencies may possess higher degrees of knowledge than skill and attitude while the same competence may be well loaded with skill/performance.

Lecturer Performance

With respect to lecturer's performance, it can be defined as the ability in planning, implementing, and evaluating the teaching-learning process (Mundarti, 2007). It involves lecturer's efficacy in doing or completing a job. On like other aspects of performance, lecturer's performance has been measured using different dimensions. For instance, the study by Fah and Osman (2011) in assessing the overall performance rating of the lecturer by using two dimensions: effective and best educator. Similarly, Halim (2009) in measuring the performance of the lecturers in the university adopted an objective approach. He notes that lecturer's performance in the universities is often based on the three key objectivity of their professional responsibility which are education and teaching duties, research duty, and community service duty. He affirms that education and teaching duties performance dimension include achievement in teaching duties, from preparation to conducting the evaluation. He further notes that to effectively examine lecturers' performance in education and teaching, students should be utilized as the respondents since they are the only people who can effectively evaluate their lecturers.

Miller's study (as cited in Halim, 2009) note that there are proofs that university students can fairly assess lecturers' teaching performance. By doing so, the results will be more objective than if the dean or rector or Vice Chancellor does. Finally, the author conceptualized lecturer's performance as: teaching plan, teaching activity, material mastering, class management, communication skill with students, discipline and students grading. There seems to be no end to what performance measure should be among authors and researchers. However, whatever the performance measurement, a researcher should be able to justify which performance measure he or she adopts in the course of his/her research (Lucky, 2011). Based on the insight derived above, this study operationalized lecturer's performance as effectiveness, professionalism and overall performance

Although most literature reviewed above focused more on the primary and secondary levels, however, teachers at all levels of education must possess teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence for effective performance. The literature failed to distinguish which teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence is required by the teachers in primary/secondary and teachers in the higher institutions. This paper therefore argues that lecturers may not need a different set of teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence rather they need to possess a higher level of teaching qualification, characteristic and competence since they are dealing with more matured, understanding and intelligent students who are also knowledgeable to a certain level. This implies that lecturers demonstrate a higher teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence that would distinguish them from their counterparts in the primary and secondary levels. Lecturers who fails to demonstrate higher teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence may be considered as either primary or secondary school teachers, and such lecturers may not be able to perform well. Hence, it is assumed in this context that lecturers who exhibit higher level of teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence would achieve better and positive performance.

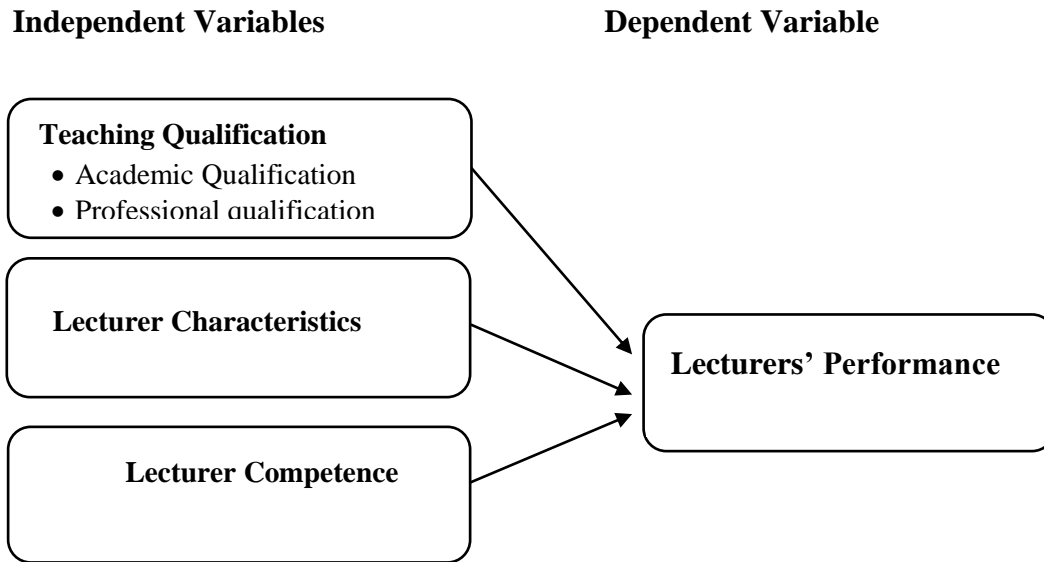


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The framework in figure 1 depicts four key variables consisting of three independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables are teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence while the dependent variable is lecturer's performance. The framework demonstrates the influence of these independent variables on the dependent variable. It shows that the better the teaching qualifications, characteristics and competence of a lecturer, the greater the performance the lecturer. It further implies that if lecturers possess the right teaching qualifications, required characteristics with enough competence, they are more likely to perform better in the higher institutions. This explanation is in line with assertion of previous studies by Kingdom (2006), Sadoulet and Janvry (2009) and Koledoye (2000) that teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence influence teachers' performance.

THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

To adequately understand the relationship between the four key variables: teaching qualification, lecturer characteristic, lecturer competence and lecturer performance, two major theories: the competency-based education theory (CBET) and personality or trait theory. These theories are very popular in the education domain and are widely applied in this area of studies (Schilling & Koetting, 2010). The competency-based education theory emphasizes on the importance of characteristics and competence on the teacher's performance and effectiveness in their professions (Schilling & Koetting, 2010). Adopting the competency based-theory, the theoretical paper by



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Sahan (2009) reports that competence is a prerequisite to competency-based-teacher education theory. He argues that teachers' competencies are linked to all areas of performance in which performance can be assessed (Sahan, 2009). He further notes that due to the fact that competencies are observable constructs, they can be measured and assessed from the performance of a teacher.

Concerning the trait theory, the theory is used to underpin the research framework. It is required to guide in the explanation of the need for teachers to possess the required teaching qualifications and characteristics needed to effectively perform their jobs. The personality theory posits that individual performs well due to their internal traits which are viewed as hereditary. Therefore, lecturer performance is as a result of their personal characteristics or traits. . The Psychology Theory assumes that there are some distinguished psychological and demographic characteristics that teachers or lecturer should possess for effective performance (Cherry, 2012). Towing on this line, Hurley, (1999) noted that these characteristics have been correlated with performance in predicting those who become successful teachers.

Among the characteristics being associated with teachers within the context of this study are: integrity, creativity, maturity and self-confidence (Cherry, 2012). Based on this theory, it is assumed that lecturer's qualifications and characteristics will predict lecturers' performance. Hence, a lecturer with the required qualifications and right characteristics is assumed to achieve a better performance (Khurshid, 2008). According to Kheng (2011), individual quality, trait, or attributes contribute to the performance. For instance, McClelland (1961) emphasizes on the characteristics possessed by individuals for better performance. These characteristics as argued would aid and assist individuals to achieve great success. Empirical studies conducted by Kheng (2011) affirmed that both psychological and demographic factors affected individual performance. Similarly, Lucky (2011) adopted this theory in his study and noted that individual attributes played a major role in his/her performance. Adopting this theory into the leadership domain, Robbins and Judge (2007) argue that trait theory differentiates leaders from non-leaders by focusing on their personal characteristics, qualities or attributes. Therefore, the theory tends to differentiate between teachers and non-teachers by looking at their personal or individual characteristics.

CONCLUSION

This theoretical paper examines the relationship between the teaching qualification, lecturer's characteristic, lecturer's competence and lecturer's performance. As posited by the competency-based education theory (CBET) and personality theory, teacher's characteristics and competence affect lecturer's performance. Thus, within the context of these theories, it is argued here that lecturer's activities and their characteristics would effectively affect lecturer's performance. It is observed that teacher's activities such as qualification, characteristics and competence make them excellent. This paper argues that qualification, characteristics and competence are better predictors of those who become successful teachers. This implies that, a lecturer with the required qualifications, right characteristics and adequate competence can perform better than a teacher without these three factors. It is suggested that university lecturers should endeavour to demonstrate higher level of teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence in order to perform better than their counterparts in the primary/secondary levels.



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This argument is in line with Sahan's (2009) claim that teachers' competencies are linked to all areas of performance upon which their performance can be assessed. However, this was examined at the primary and secondary levels. The current study departs from these to contribute to literature by discussing teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence in the university context which previous studies have neglected. This paper will welcome further inquiry and discussion on the distinction between teachers and lecturers within those contexts that tend to demarcate between the two concepts. It is assumed that the arguments presented in this paper will spring up further inquiry in this domain and provides empirical evidence on the influence of these three key factors on lecturer's performance.

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