

Teachers' Qualification, Attitude and Mastery of Content as Correlates of Students' Academic Achievement in Economics in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Over the years, achievement in Senior Secondary School Economics has been a major concern to stakeholders in education because with its popularity, one would expect students taking the subject to do well and have distinctions. But this is not the case as many students performed below credit pass in the subject. Thus, this study investigated how teachers' qualification, attitude and mastery of content correlates with students' achievement in Senior Secondary Economic in Lagos State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Multistage sampling technique was used to select a total of 30 public senior secondary schools and 600 students from three out of the five local government areas in Lagos East Senatorial District. Five research hypotheses were tested and answered using three instruments: Economics Achievement Test; ($r = 0.76$), Teachers' Questionnaire - (Perceived Teachers' Mastery of Content Scale; ($r = 0.86$), and Teachers' Attitude Questionnaire; ($r = 0.78$), and Students' Perceived Teachers' Subject Mastery Questionnaire; ($r = 0.88$). Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression analyses. The results of the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' mastery of content and students' achievement in Economics ($r = 0.507$, $P < 0.05$) as well as between teachers' attitude and achievement ($r = .362$, $P < 0.05$). However, no significant relationship was established between qualification and achievement ($r = 0.77$, $P > 0.05$). Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that teachers should equip themselves pedagogically through in-service training to enhance students' academic achievement in Economics.

Keywords: Teacher mastery of Content, Teacher Attitude, Teacher Qualification, Academic Achievement, Economics

1. Background to the study

Economics is one of the social science subjects that is popular and studied by students in order to solve the economic problems of a nation. It is concerned with how people earn their living and make a choice between alternatives to satisfy their wants. It is also a social science subject that enables the citizen to understand the basic concept and principles needed to improve the economic situation for their own social good. Thus, it focuses on the study of firms and government whose activities are geared to the production of goods and services for the satisfaction of human wants. This implies that the understanding of Economics is a pre-requisite for good citizenship, as it helps in taking rational decisions on important economic issues with good basis for doing so (Okafor, 2009). With this, one would expect the students taking the subject to do well and have distinctions. Rather, their performances in various examinations enrolled for fall below credit pass in the subject. This is of great concern to the government, parents and well-meaning Nigerians. Abdu-Raheem (2011), observed that the objectives of Economics is yet to be achieved due to persistent poor performance of students in Economics. This statement was supported by the WAEC statistical report table showing trend of performance of students in Economics in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State from year 2012 to 2015.

Table 1: WAEC (SSCE) Results of May/June 2012 – 2015 for Lagos State

Year	Total Entry	Credits A1-C6	Percentage A1-C6	Failure F9	Percentage Failed
2012	40265	8890	22.08 %	31375	77.92 %
2013	45309	10768	23.77 %	34541	76.23 %
2014	42710	13691	32.06 %	29019	67.94 %
2015	72624	30530	42.04 %	42094	57.96 %

Source: Lagos State Ministry of Education (2016).

From Table 1, it is evident that there was poor performance of students in Economics from 2012 to 2015 as the percentage pass was not up to 45%. This situation calls for more inquiry at identifying problems hindering students’ achievement in Economics particularly in Lagos State. Many researchers have identified the factors that might be responsible for these poor results. For example, lack of qualified and dedicated teachers (Ibrahim, 2000; Ademulegun, 2001; Usman, 2003), students’ factors (Salako, 2013; Alao, 2014), teachers’ methodology (Gbore & Daramola, 2013), lack of instructional aids (Adeyemi, 2010; Smith, 2013), teachers’ subject mastery (Kimberly, 2009; Mullen, 2013), attitude towards the subject by both the teachers and the students (Ibukun, 2009) among others. Thus, the concern of the researchers is to investigate the extent to which teachers’ professional qualification, attitude and subject mastery predict students’ academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State.

Ayodele (2011) noted that despite the variation on who takes the blame, the consensus is that high quality teachers are the best resources and assets of an educational system. Darling- Hammond (2007) defined a well qualified teacher as one who is fully certified and holds certificate in the field being taught. As pointed out by Usman (2003), the worrisome deficiency of qualified teachers could be responsible for the poor performance of the students. Ademulegun (2001) observed that the students taught by teachers who are more qualified and experienced performed better than those taught by less qualified teachers. According to Nigeria National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy – NEEDS (2015), over 50% of the teachers in Nigeria secondary schools are unqualified.

Mullen (2013), opined that the non-recognition of professionalism exists only in the education sector in Nigeria. Other professions like the legal, medical and engineering professions to mention a few, have a well-organised and strong professional body that co-ordinate and oversee the activities of their members and would not allow non-members to infiltrate their professions. Thus, we hear of terms like “fake lawyers”, “quack doctors”, and “fake engineers” whenever non-qualified, non-certificated and non-

recognised person(s) are apprehended practising a profession unauthorised and illegally. Even professionals like the so-called road mechanics, sign writers, shoe makers, ”fashion” designers and masons, who are rated lower than teachers in status do not allow quacks in their practices. At present, teacher education programme in Nigeria is categorized into three levels on the basis of their training and certificates - Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Bachelor Degree in Education (B.Ed, B.Sc.(Ed), & B.A.(Ed)) and Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). Based on this, Uya (2011), submitted that teacher’s qualifications were measured in terms of years of schooling and the possession of professional credentials. This implies that certain basic requirements are needed by someone before he/she can gainfully be certified as a qualified teacher.

Lassa (2010) and Guga (2015) claimed that “education cannot be provided by just anybody”, it requires a teacher who plans and delivers the lessons or instruction in such a way that objectives can be achieved. Bello (2016), submitted that an uncertified teacher cannot prepare students for WASCE or NECO because it is unlikely that the students would pass. This is one of the reasons why the Nigerian government introduced the Teachers’ Registration Council (TRC) in 2004 to certify the teachers in the classroom. Thus, Okebukola (2006) affirmed that the quality of teachers is a key factor ascribed to the basis of students’ constant poor academic performance in learning. This was supported by Oredein & Oloyede (2007), Adesoji & Olatunbosun (2008), Osokoya (2008), and Adodo & Oyeniyi (2013). Oredein & Oloyede (2007) observed a positive significant relationship between the performances of students taught by professionally trained and non-professionally trained teachers in Economics while Adodo & Oyeniyi (2013) reported that teachers’ qualification contributed marginally to students’ academic achievement.

Apart from the teacher’s qualification, attitude is another variable affecting students’ academic performance in Economics. For a teacher, being able to interact with the students and display positive behavior such as asking questions, understanding

students' thoughts, giving feedback for students' work, complimenting, wanting to listen to students, smiling, using various gestures and facial expression, showing interest and appreciation increases the students' motivation and success (Hopkins, 2014). This implies that teaching is much more than saying and explaining. According to Adodo & Oyeniyi (2013), one of the most basic principles of teaching abilities is the positive behaviour of the teacher towards their students and teaching. They concluded that teachers need to be highly interested in the subjects and topics they teach so as to assist the students to do well in such a subject. For instance, a Christian teacher who teaches Islamic studies can never be interested in the subject because the subject is only being taught to earn his or her livelihood. This will in turn take a toll on the students that are to be taught.

Eshiwani (2013), opined that students find it difficult asking teacher with negative attitude towards the subject any questions on the grey areas of the subject he/she teaches. In the same vein, Gbore & Daramola (2013) concurred that teachers need to be highly interested in the subjects and topics they teach. Duyilemi (2007) opined that some teachers have showed positive attitude towards the teaching of Economics while some exhibited negative attitude towards teaching the subject. Therefore, one could infer that students' academic achievement in Economics may be reliant upon attitude displayed by the teachers in the teaching and learning process. Other studies on teachers' attitude revealed significant relationship between teachers' attitude and students' academic performance in the subject.

Yara (2009) reported that teachers' attitude towards science has strong relationship with students' science achievement as well as the students' attitude towards science. Onocha (2005) showed that teachers' attitude towards science is a potent predictor of students' academic achievement in science and attitude towards science learning while Igwe (2015) reported that the effect of students' attitude on achievement in mathematics is not as strong as the effect of teachers' attitude on students' achievement in mathematics. In a similar vein, Odunsi (2008) revealed that teachers' attitude towards Integrated Science teaching influence students' attitude toward learning Integrated Science and achievement in the subject. Also, Ogunwuyi (2000) reported a significant relationship between teachers' attitude and students' achievement in Integrated Science. Also, in a study by Guthric (2010), it was noted that while the group with the highest achievement scores had an instructor with positive attitudes toward students and

toward course material, the group with the lowest scores had an instructor with positive attitudes toward students and negative attitudes toward the course material. This suggests that the attitude exhibited by the teacher toward the material he is teaching exerts more influence on students' achievement as it is typically measured than his attitude toward students as individuals.

Apart from teachers' qualification and attitude, teacher's subject mastery can also affect the academic achievement in Economics. Ball & Bass (2000), explained that teacher's mastery of the subject matter is a variable that influences teacher's quality and also affects students' performance. Students understand lesson more and with keen interest when lesson was taught by a teacher who mastered his subject matter very well (Majason, 2015). According to him, a teacher that masters his subject matter teaches very well. He is able to perform his duty efficiently and effectively. He is capable of developing and implementing curriculum. He therefore concluded that the mastery of relevant knowledge is one of the most important attributes of a teacher. Bello (2016) opines that the teacher today must have a good grasp of the subject matter if he is to command respect of his pupils. Muijs & Reynolds (2002) posited that the teaching effectiveness of the teacher is hampered if he/she is not well versed in the contents to be taught. A teacher who has a deep understanding of the concept to be taught is more likely to use unambiguous language; their presentation is likely to be more coherent and they would offer clearer explanation than those with a weaker background (Uya, 2011).

Similarly, Okoye (2011) affirmed that there is a significant correlation between the subject matter knowledge of the teacher and the learning outcomes. Also, Druva & Anderson (2013) found students' science achievement was positively related to the teachers' course taking background in both education and in science. The relationship between teachers' training in science and student achievement was greater in higher level science courses.

2. Statement of the Problem

Over the years, reports from the examining bodies revealed the persistent trend of poor academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students in Economics in WASSCE in Lagos State. It has led to negative publicity of the subject which in turn has discouraged many students offering the subject. The reports have persistently pointed out the causes of poor students' performance in the subject to include

both the students' and the teachers' weaknesses. For example, teachers are said to fail covering the syllabus and yet all topics are examinable. It is in view of these facts that this study was designed and conducted. Hence, this study sought to examine teachers' qualification, attitude and mastery of content as correlates of students' academic achievement in Economic in Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos East Senatorial District of Lagos state, Nigeria.

3. Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' mastery of content and students' academic achievement in Economics

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards Economics and students' academic achievement in Economics.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between teachers' professional qualification and students' academic achievement in Economics

H₀₄: There is no significant relative contribution of teachers' mastery of content, attitude and qualification to the prediction of academic achievement in Economics.

H₀₅: There are no significant joint contributions of teachers' mastery of content, attitude and qualification to the prediction of academic achievement in Economics.

4. Methodology

Research Design: The design of this study is a descriptive survey research. This design was adopted because it involves administering standardized questions to the respondents, for the purpose of describing respondent's opinions and view regarding the subject of investigation.

Population of the Study: The target population for this study comprised of all SS 2 students and Economics teachers in Lagos East Senatorial District of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique: Multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. At first, simple random sampling technique was used to select three out of the five local government areas (Epe, Ibeju-Lekki and Ikorodu) in Senatorial District under the study. In the three local government areas selected, there are 26, 10 and 29 public senior secondary schools respectively. Proportional sampling technique was used to select 30 public

senior secondary schools for the study. Lastly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 SS II Economics Students and one Economics teacher from the 30 selected schools. Altogether, three local government areas, 30 public senior secondary schools, 30 Economics teachers and 600 SS II Economics students were involved in the study.

Research Instruments: In order to collect data and provide answers to the research hypotheses raised, three research instruments were developed and employed by the researchers. These are - Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ); Students' Perceived of Teachers' Subject Mastery Questionnaire (SPTSMQ) and Economics Achievement Test (EAT).

Teachers' Questionnaire: Here, the researchers created three sections for measuring variables that are related to the teachers. That is, Demographic Data (DD); Perceived Teachers' Mastery of Content Scale (PTMCS) and Teachers' Attitude Questionnaire (TAQ)

Demographic Data (DD): The demographic data area of the Teachers' Questionnaire was designed to collect information from the teachers on the following items: School name; type of school; school location; gender; working experience; class taught and highest qualification attained.

Perceived Teachers' Mastery of Content Scale (PTMCS): The PTMCS is the section B of teachers' questionnaire instrument. It was designed to elicit information on teachers' mastery of content and content delivery. The section contained 15 items with three options ranging from Always- 1; Occasionally- 2 and Not at all-3

Teachers' Attitude Questionnaire (TAQ): This section obtained information from the teachers on their attitude towards effective teaching of Economics. It is a ten -item questionnaire with a Likert scale options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) which emphasized favourability or unfavourability response from the teachers. The response format was numeric and items were arranged on a scale with equal intervals. The more favourably respondents judged the items, the higher the numerical value. The total score for the items constituted the index for teachers' attitude.

Students' Perceived of Teachers' Subject Mastery Questionnaire (SPTSMQ)

The instrument was also designed by the researchers to obtain information about students' general perception of their teachers' subject mastery towards Economics. The questionnaire comprised of two

sections A and B. Section A consisted of demographic data of the respondents such as school name, location, sex, age, class and type of school while Section B contained 15 items with Likert type scale of four options to pick from; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The 15 items indicated positive perception of students towards their Economics teachers such as my Economics teacher shows deep interest in teaching. Since The more favourably respondents judged the items, the higher the numerical value. The items were scored using ascending scores and the total score for the items constituted the index for students' perceived of teachers' subject mastery questionnaire.

Economics Achievement Test (EAT)

The 'Economics Achievement Test' (EAT) was developed by the researchers. It was designed to be used for SS II students. 100 items were taken from the second term topics of SS II syllabus which are assumed to have been covered by the entire population. A table of specification was used to generate the 100 items for students' Economics tasks. On the table of specifications, many questions were asked under the lower-ordered cognitive skills (i.e. knowledge, comprehension and application) than the upper-cognitive areas. The distribution of items was designed to minimize the level of frustration on the part of the testees. The EAT is a multiple-choice objective test with four options A, B, C and D. The items were subjected to expert opinion of two school teachers with Economics background. Their comments led to the modification of the test items and 30 out of the original 100 items were retained. Each item has one correct option (the key) and three distracters. The correct option attracts 1 mark and the total mark obtainable is 30. Kuder Richards on formula 20 was used to estimate the internal consistency of the instrument

5. Results of Findings

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between teacher mastery of content and students' academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics.

Table 2: Summary showing relationship between teachers' content mastery and academic achievement of students in Economics

Variable	Number	Mean	Std dev.	R	Sig	Remark
Teacher Mastery of Content	30	24.27	2.612			
Eco. Achievement	593	20.04	5.304	.507**	.004	Significant

**P < 0.01

Result of analysis shows that the correlation coefficient(r) is significant at P < 0.05 (r = .507, P < .05). This implies that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected indicating a significant relationship between teacher mastery of content and academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics.

Validity of the Instruments

For the purpose of this study, the researchers adopted both the face and content validity of the instruments. The face and content validity of the instruments were enhanced by suggestions from four experts in questionnaire construction at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. Based on the suggestions and comments of these experts, the necessary corrections were made and the final version of the instruments was trial tested on a sample of 50 students and 20 teachers who were not part of the real study sample. The data collected showed that the students and the teachers did not have problems responding to the items in the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instruments

To ensure the reliability of the instruments, the three instruments were encoded in SPSS software and the Cronbach alpha reliability of the instruments was established as: (TQ - PTMCS = 0.86; TAQ = 0.78); SPTSMQ = 0.88. The Kuder Richardson formula 20 was used to estimate the EAT internal consistency. The reliability of the test was estimated as 0.76. This implies that the construct, content and criterion related validities were found to be adequate.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers obtained approval from the principals of the selected schools. After granting the permission, the researchers distributed the instruments to the randomly selected teachers and SS II Economics students in the selected schools and collected them on completion.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards Economics and students’ academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics.

Table 3: Summary showing relationship between teachers’ attitude and academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics

Variable	Number	Mean	Std dev.	R	Sig	Remark
Teacher Mastery of Content	30	17.90	2.26			
Eco. Achievement	593	20.04	5.304	.362**	.049	Significant

**P < 0.01

Result of analysis shows that the correlation (r) is significant at P < 0.05 (r = .362, P < 0.05). This implies that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected indicating a significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards English language and academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ professional qualification and students’ academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics.

Table 4: Summary showing relationship between teachers’ professional qualification and academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics

Variable	Number	Mean	Std dev.	R	Sig	Remark
Teacher Mastery of Content	30	2.10	.481			
Eco. Achievement	593	20.04	5.304	.077**	.685	Not Significant

**P < 0.01

Result of analysis shows that the correlation (r) is not significant at P > 0.05 (r = .077, P > 0.05). This implies that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between teachers’ professional qualification and students’ academic achievement in Senior Secondary School Economics is hereby retained.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relative contribution of teachers’ mastery of content, attitude and qualification to the prediction of academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics.

Table 5: The beta (β) coefficients showing relative contributions of parental involvement and School factors to academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	10.438	4.465		2.338	.027
Teachers’ Mastery of Content	.423	.194	.458	2.186	.038
Teachers’ Attitude	.102	.224	.095	.454	.654
Highest Qualification Attained	.606	.841	.121	.720	.478

a. Dependent Variable: ECONS ACHIEVEMENT

From Table 5; the Beta (β) weightings of the three predictor variables are given in the standardized coefficient columns. The constant is 10.438. Relative to each other, Teacher mastery of Content has a positive contribution on achievement (β = .458) and this is statistically significant at (0.038, P < 0.05), Teachers Attitude have positive effect on achievement (β = .095) and this is not statistically significant at (0.654, P > 0.05), while teachers professional qualification also made a positive contribution to achievement. (β = .121) and this is also not statistically significant at (0.478, P > 0.05) From the result presented, it can be observed and concluded that of the three independent variables studied, Teachers mastery of content had a relative positive contribution of 45.8%, Teachers attitude contributed 9.5%, while teachers professional qualification contributed 12.1%. Therefore Teachers mastery of content predicted achievement more than the other two independent variables.

Hypothesis Five: There are no significant joint contributions of teachers’ mastery of content, attitude and qualification to the prediction of academic achievement of students in Senior Secondary School Economics. This

hypothesis was tested with Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis and the results are presented in the following tables.

Table 6: Model Summary of the R, R Square and Adjusted R Square in the Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.525 ^a	.276	.193	2.168

a. Predictors: (Constant), highest qualification attained; Teachers' Mastery of Content; Teachers' Attitude

From Table 6 above, R^2 is .276, which indicates that 27.6 percent of the variance in the dependent variable (achievement) is explained by the independent variables as listed in Table 5. This means that the independent variables positively influenced achievement to the tune of 27.6%. The remaining unexplained 72.4% could be attributed to the effects of several other variables not covered by this study.

Table 7: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.601	3	15.534	3.305	.036 ^a
	Residual	122.199	26	4.700		
	Total	168.800	29			

a. Predictors: (Constant), highest qualification attained; Teachers' Mastery of Content; Teachers' Attitude

b. Dependent Variable: ECONS ACHIEVEMENT

Though the R^2 is below average (Table 6), the Analysis of Variance is significant ($F_{(3, 29)} = 3.305, P < 0.05$). This indicates that there is a statistically significant composite contribution of teachers' mastery of content, attitude and professional qualification to achievements in Economics. Therefore it can be assumed that the independent variables could reasonably predict achievement in Economics. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

6. Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis one was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The finding is consisted with the findings of Egungun (2012) who submitted that there is a strong correlation between teacher mastery of the content knowledge and the learning outcomes. Another finding of the study indicates that there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitude and students' academic achievement in Economics. The finding corroborates the work of Yara (2009) who reported that teacher's attitude towards science has strong relationship with students' science achievement as well as the students' attitude towards science. Also, Odunsi (2008) revealed that teachers' attitude towards Integrated Science teaching influence students' attitude toward learning Integrated Science and achievement in the subject. Part of the findings of this study shows that there is no significant correlation between teachers' professional qualification and students' academic

achievement in Economics. The finding is in line with the findings of Igwe (2010) found no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at senior secondary school certificate level. In contrast to the above empirical findings, Adepoju (2002), reported that a significant relationship exists between teachers' variables such as gender, area of specialization, possession of academic qualification in education and the learning outcomes of secondary school students.

Also from the finding, it was established that the three independent variables studied (teacher mastery of content, attitude and professional qualification) have a composite contribution of 27.6% to achievement which was found to be significant at ($F_{(3,29)} = 3.305, P < 0.5$). This finding is well supported with the findings of Adu (2012), who affirmed that teacher's content mastery can lead to better achievement by the students and provide a positive attitude.

Finally, the findings revealed that the three independent variables made positive relative contribution to achievement in Economics. Teachers mastery of content made contribution to academic achievement in Economics to the tune of 45.8% ($\beta=.458$), Teachers attitude made 9.5% ($\beta=.095$) to achievement, while professional qualification made a contribution of 12.1% ($\beta= .121$). Supporting the

above findings, Okebukola (2006) pointed attention to the quality teachers as the prime factor attributed to the cause of students' consistent poor academic achievement in examinations while Oloyede (2016) concurred that a significant difference exists in the achievement of the students taught by professionally trained and non-professionally trained teachers in the art of teaching Biology.

7. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that there is a great level of interaction between the determinants (Teachers' professional qualification, attitude and mastery of contents). They have a greater influence on the academic achievement of students in Secondary School Economics. Conclusively, good teachers who possess mastery of content, good pedagogical qualification and positive attitude towards teaching, play a significant role to educational attainment of students in senior secondary schools. In view of the forgoing, it therefore becomes necessary that the recommendations provided in this research should be critically adopted by government, stakeholders in education and teachers themselves, so as to foster students' academic achievements in Economics and other subjects.

8. Recommendations

Governments should intensify efforts to recruit competent teachers in secondary schools so as to help foster effective learning of Economics among students. Again, government to organized regular in-service training for teachers and motivates them through promotion, incentives and prompt payment of salaries so as to help foster positive attitude of teachers during instruction delivery.

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