

Students' Perception of Teachers and Parents' Accountability in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study investigated students' perceptions of teachers' and parents' accountability among senior secondary school students in Ibandan, Nigeria. The study adopted an ex-post facto survey research design on a sample of three hundred and twenty-three participants. The study was guided by two research questions; what is the students' perception of teacher accountability? what is the students' perception of parent accountability? Students' perception of Teachers' Accountability Scale (SPTAS) and Students' Perception of Parents' Accountability Scale (SPPAS) were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics namely; frequency counts, percentages and means, were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that students' perception of teacher accountability was significantly low, but students'

perception of their parents' accountability was significantly high. This implies that teachers are not achieving the optimal learning of their students and not taking care of the students' progress according to their capacity while parents are carrying out their responsibilities accordingly. It is recommended that teachers should attend workshops, seminars and in-service training to upgrade their teaching activities. Teachers should encourage students to improve their attainments and develop their personalities. Teachers should make themselves available to students and help them to understand topics that are difficult to learn. Parents should assist their children that have challenges of coping with academics by employing the service of private home tutors. Parents should endeavor to encourage and give their children adequate time to read and do their home works at home rather than engaging them with domestic work and watching of non-educational movies most of the time.

Key words: Students' perception, Teachers, Parents, Parents' Accountability

Introduction

The need for highly responsible parents and effective teachers in our schools and classrooms cannot be overlooked. An educational system that is healthy and dynamic will produce parties that are accountable to each other, and the relationship that exists among them will enable both parties to succeed. Accountability is an essential prerequisite of any sustained human relationship. Accountability is not about allocating blame; it is about accepting responsibility for the part played in delivering quality education to every student in schools. Mastop (2010) defines accountability as being called upon to account or answer for the omission or commission of something which may result in one suffering the consequences. In the same vein, the accountability system is described as publishing outcome information on standardized tests for each school, along with providing a way to aggregate and interpret school performance (Education Week, 2001).

Accountability is equally considered as ‘responsibility’, ‘explicability’, ‘answerability,’ and ‘responsiveness’ (Babatunde, 1992). It, therefore, connotes concern for furthering the educational effectiveness and efficiency of the school system.

Accountability at the school level is viewed by Ladd (2001) as promoting collaboration among teachers. As the most significant resource in schools, teachers are critical to raising education standards. A teacher is one who teaches. The teacher acts as a pivot of any educational system for the transmission of intellectual and technical skills from one generation to next (Omodan and Tsotetsi, 2019). The teacher is the key person on whom the future of children and humankind depends. This is to say that teachers play an important role in shaping and molding the personality of the individual not only in schools but in society at large (Ekundao, Omodan & Omodan, 2019). From the above perspectives, we argue that a successful teacher is one who is able to foster creative thinking, develop skills and instills a desire for lifelong learning among students. Moreover, that, in any society, a teacher has a very important and respectable place because teaching is a noble profession. Teaching as a profession is different from other professions because of its attitudinal dimensions. That is, teachers are the largest professional group engaged in human development activities (Kanika, 2016).

Therefore a teacher has to be realistic and to forgo the transmission model of teaching, and be reflective, committed and accountable to the profession. Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that teachers are highly skilled, well resourced, and motivated to perform at their best. Raising teaching performance is perhaps the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gains in student learning (OECD, 2005). In turn, the effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching are central to the continuous improvement of the effectiveness of teaching in a school. It is essential to know the strengths of teachers, how students perceived their activities, and those aspects of their practice, which could be further developed (Day 2011, Maughan, Teeman and Wilson 2012, Ko, Sammons & Bakkum 2016). From this perspective, the institution of teachers’ accountability is a vital step in the drive to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and raising educational standards.

In our view, highly effective teachers should be responsible and answerable to how they enrich the daily lives of students, their lifelong educational and career aspirations. Based on experience, it is known that effective teachers also have a direct influence on enhancing student

learning. Years of research on teachers' quality support the fact that responsible teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning but also that their work results in increased student achievement (Stronge, 2002). Study such as Krishna (2011) has confirmed that a whole range of personal and professional qualities are associated with higher levels of student achievement. For instance, we know that verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, certification status, ability to use a range of teaching strategies skillfully and interestingly for the subject characterize more successful teachers (Darling-Hammond 2000; Babafemi & Adewumi, 2019).

Teacher accountability towards the learners is a situation where the teacher has to concern himself or herself with the total development of children's personalities. This is because the teacher spends more active time with the students at school during teaching/learning activities than the school head and even the parents (Moswela, 2010). In this regard, the teacher is in a position to have a better knowledge of the student. He is almost entirely responsible for what kind of knowledge, content, and skills to be imparted to learners (Smith, 2002). Teachers decide on the methodology when delivering content or subject matter because they have pedagogy which most education officers and school leaders do not have. Education officers and school leaders may have pedagogy, but they do not practice it. Teachers and not these others have direct access to the syllabus, and therefore they stand in a good position to design students' learning activities that progressively engage students in the active production and performance of knowledge (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002). That is why teachers' performance is measured through students' performance (Wideen and Grimmett, 1995) and students' failure is generally blamed on teachers.

However, the academic life of the student cannot be disconnected from the student's home environment. It takes the school and the home to raise a child. Home conditions and not genes are the first and most important influences of school a child will ever have (Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper, 1998). The home provides structure, support, care, guidance, love, discipline, and comfort before the child's school-going age. Such support helps the student to focus on schooling and guards against social ills; hence, parents' accountability (Moswela 2014). Parent's accountability is the responsibility of no one but the parent. It focuses on the participation of parents in decision making and how well each decision meets the needs of the children. The academic life of the student cannot be disconnected from the student's home environment. All things being equal, the kind of care shown to a child at home can be more effective than that shown to the child at school

because it is more personalised. Gannan (2012) was of the opinion that the most significant determining factor in the academic success of students is parental participation and parental support. That is, parents are the most knowledgeable people about their children and have specialists' skills, knowledge, and experiences which can be made available to children through their involvement in both classrooms and outside to enhance school learning processes (Topping, 1986; Kindred, Bagin and Gallagher, 1984).

Figlio and Kenny (2009) indicated that parents and community members withhold financial support from schools that central governments identify as performing poorly and offer more financial support to those that central governments identify as performing well. This financial pressure, coupled with the other informal pressure that inevitably accompanies it, strongly suggests that even absent formal consequences of accountability and accountability systems, may be effective in influencing educator behavior. This study, therefore, examined students' perceptions of teachers' and parents' accountability among senior secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the infinite importance of teachers and parents to academic achievement of students, some students still experience difficulties in one or more aspects of their life especially in their academic pursuit. Observations showed that most of the teachers and parents could not give a proper account of their responsibilities towards their students and children. This is evidenced in the increasing consensus among researchers such as (Kanika 2016 and Krishna, 2011) that there is a need for teachers and parents to be responsible and answerable to students' academic achievement to all the stakeholders in education. Several studies such as (Benard 2011, Carnoy and Loeb, 2002) have been carried out on accountability, but very few have been carried out to know the perception of the students towards their teachers and parents. Therefore this study was carried out to establish perceptions of students about teachers' and parents' accountability. In order to respond to these challenges, the below questions were raised to pilot the study.

Research Questions

1. What is the students' perception of teacher accountability?
2. What is the students' perception of parent accountability?

Methodology

This study adopted an ex-post facto survey research design to examine the students' perception of teachers' and parents' accountability among senior secondary school students in Ibadan. This design was appropriate because the researchers did not have control over the variables as their manipulation had already occurred. The target population for this study comprised all public senior secondary school students in Ibadan. Simple random sampling was used to select four Local Government areas from eleven local government areas in Ibadan. From each of the selected four local government areas, three schools were selected making a total of twelve schools using the same technique. From the twelve schools, an intact class of SS II commercial students was used. The total sample size was three hundred and twenty-three students. The study used the Students Perception of Teachers' Accountability Scale (SPTAS) and Students' Perception of Parents' Accountability Scale (SPPAS). The instruments were given to the two experts in research instrument construction for proper vetting and face validity. It was further validated by the researchers on a similar sample of eight (80) respondents that did not form part of the study; the reliability of this instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha, and the resulting reliability co-efficient was 0.72 and 0.75 respectively. The data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics, namely; frequency count, percentages and mean.

Results

The result from data was presented below, following the order of the raised research questions. The questions were answered descriptively below in table 1 and table 2 using frequency count, percentages and means.

Research Question 1: What is the students' perception of teachers' accountability?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students' perception of teacher accountability

SN	ITEM	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Mean
1	Explains concepts to the students in simple terms	49 (15.2%)	104 (32.2%)	76 (23.5%)	94 (29.1%)	2.33
2	Speaks fluent English	50 (15.5%)	89 (27.9%)	76 (23.5%)	108 (33.4%)	2.25
3	Confident in himself while teaching	38 (11.8%)	98 (30.3%)	88 (27.2%)	99 (30.7%)	2.23

4	Willing to listen to students complaints	66 (20.4%)	107 (33.1%)	91 (28.2)	59 (18.3%)	2.56
5	Uses words of encouragement for the students	67 (20.7%)	101 (31.3%)	86 (26.6%)	69 (21.4%)	2.51
6	Know virtually every students in the class by their names	72 (22.3%)	103 (31.9%)	83 (25.7%)	65 (20.1%)	2.56
7	Works well with the students in the class	69 (21.4%)	107 (33.1%)	90 (27.9%)	57 (17.6%)	2.58
8	Assists students who are having problem in understanding easily	57 (17.6%)	96 (29.7%)	86 (26.6%)	84 (26.0%)	2.39
9	Students relates well with the teacher	51 (15.8%)	192 (59.4%)	65 (20.1%)	15 (4.6%)	2.28
10	Take personal interest in some students	49 (15.2%)	133 (41.2%)	79 (24.5%)	62 (19.2%)	2.52
11	Allows students to discuss ideas in class	86 (26.6%)	127 (39.3%)	82 (25.4%)	28 (8.7%)	2.84
12	Ask questions often	69 (21.3%)	116 (19.8%)	72 (22.3%)	66 (20.4%)	2.60
13	Uses students ideas and suggestions during classroom discussion	41 (12.7%)	110 (34.1%)	96 (34.1%)	76 (23.5%)	2.37
14	Ask students to answer questions raised by other class mates	43 (13.3%)	59 (18.3%)	132 (40.9%)	89 (27.6%)	2.18
15	Spends sufficient time presenting, demonstrating and explaining new content to the class	52 (16.1%)	132 (40.9%)	96 (29.7%)	43 (13.3%)	2.60
16	Monitors students' performance and provide constructive feedback	40 (12.4%)	112 (34.7%)	85 (26.3%)	86 (26.6%)	2.33
17	Reduce distraction from student	45 (13.9%)	120 (37.2%)	92 (28.5%)	66 (20.4%)	2.45
18	Reduce distraction from self	47 (14.5%)	105 (32.5%)	96 (29.7%)	75 (23.2%)	2.39
19	Reduce distraction from outsider	52 (16.1%)	101 (31.3%)	97 (30.0%)	73 (22.6%)	2.41
20	Gives class work to know if the students will demonstrate understanding of the concept taught	75 (23.2%)	87 (26.9%)	84 (26.0%)	77 (23.8%)	2.50
21	Gives corrective feedback	88 (27.2%)	168 (52.0%)	47 (14.6%)	20 (6.2%)	3.00
Average Weighted Mean						2.47

The result in Table 1 revealed the perception of the students about teacher accountability. The responses were analysed and the findings are as follows: Item no.1: Explains concepts to the students in simple terms (mean = 2.33). Item no 2: Speaks fluent English (mean = 2.25). Item no

3: Confident in himself while teaching (mean = 2.23). Item no 4: Willing to listen to students' complaints (mean = 2.56). Item no 5: Uses words of encouragement for the students (mean = 2.51). Item no 6: Know virtually every student in the class by their names (mean = 2.56). Item no 7: Works well with the students in the class (mean = 2.58). Item no 8: Assists students who are having a problem in understanding easily (mean = 2.39). Item no 9: Students relate well with the teacher (mean = 2.28). Item no 10: Take a personal interest in some students (mean = 2.52). Item no 11: Allows students to discuss ideas in class (mean = 2.84). Item no 12: Ask questions often (mean = 2.60). Item no 13: Uses students' ideas and suggestions during classroom discussion (mean = 2.37). Item no 14: Ask students to answer questions raised by other classmates (mean = 2.18). Item no 15: Spends sufficient time presenting, demonstrating and explaining new content to the class (mean = 2.60). Item no 16: Monitors students' performance and provide constructive feedback (mean = 2.33). Item no 17: Reduce distraction from student (mean = 2.45). Item no 18: Reduce distraction from self (mean = 2.39). Item no 19: Reduce distraction from outsider (mean = 2.41). Item no 20: Gives class work to know if the students will demonstrate an understanding of the concept taught (mean = 2.50). Item no 21: Gives corrective feedback (mean = 3.00).

Item no. 21 has the highest mean of 3.00 and item no. 14 has the lowest mean of 2.18. Finally, the overall Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of the students' perception of teachers' accountability is 2.47 which shows a low level of students' perception of their teachers' accountability.

Research Question 2: What is the students' perception of parent accountability?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perception of Parent Accountability

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	mean
1	My parents provide me all relevant textbooks for my studies	131 (40.6%)	132 (40.9%)	43 (13.3%)	17 (5.3%)	3.17
2	My parent do not support me on the purchase of necessary textbook for my studies	115 (35.6%)	54 (16.7%)	96 (29.7%)	58 (18.0%)	2.70
3	My parent guides me during my study time	29 (9.0%)	197 (61.0%)	47 (14.6%)	50 (15.0%)	2.63
4	My parent enforced study time on me	35 (10.8%)	176 (54.5%)	72 (22.3%)	40 (12.4%)	2.64
5	I have a private lesson teacher at home	38 (11.8%)	156 (48.3%)	72 (22.3%)	57 (17.6%)	2.55

6	My parent pay my school fees in time	120 (37.2%)	106 (32.8%)	54 (16.7%)	43 (13.3%)	2.94
7	I miss so many lesson as a result of my parent nonpayment of my school fees	25 (7.7%)	151 (46.7%)	75 (23.2%)	72 (22.3%)	2.40
8	My parents ensure that I do all assignments before going to bed	30 (9.3%)	147 (45.5%)	79 (24.5%)	67 (20.7%)	2.43
9	My parent provide a conducive learning environment for me at home	32 (9.9%)	138 (42.7%)	66 (20.4%)	87 (26.9%)	2.36
10	My parents attend parent teacher association of my school	61 (18.9%)	182 (56.3%)	54 (16.7%)	26 (8.0%)	2.86
11	My parents attend open day in my school	47 (14.6%)	116 (35.9%)	50 (15.5%)	110 (34.1%)	2.31
12	My parents hardly stay at home to guide me	53 (16.4%)	102 (31.6%)	137 (42.4%)	33 (9.6%)	2.56
13	My parents maintains effective communication with my teachers	106 (32.8%)	111 (34.4%)	102 (31.6%)	4 (1.2%)	2.99
14	My parents express their views to the school on my performance	196 (60.7%)	82 (25.4%)	29 (9.0%)	16 (5.0%)	3.42
15	My parents encourage me to participate in the school extra-curricular activities	87 (26.9%)	66 (20.4%)	77 (23.8%)	93 (28.8%)	2.46
16	My parents encourage me to read leisure materials or newspaper during leisure time	34 (10.5%)	165 (51.1%)	72 (22.3%)	52 (16.1%)	2.56
17	My parents usually call my teacher to know how I am performing in school	25 (7.7%)	129 (39.9%)	73 (22.6%)	96 (29.7%)	2.26
Average Weighted Mean						2.68

The result in Table 2 revealed the perception of the students about teacher accountability. The responses were analysed, and the findings are as follows: Item No.1: My parents provide me all relevant textbooks for my studies (mean = 3.17). Item no 2: My parents do not support me on the purchase of the necessary textbook for my studies (mean = 2.70). Item No 3: My parent guides me during my study time (mean = 2.63). Item no 4: My parents enforced study time on me (mean = 2.64). Item No 5: I have a private lesson teacher at home (mean = 2.55). Item no 6: My parents pay my school fees in time (mean = 2.94). Item No 7: I miss so many lessons as a result of my parents' nonpayment of my school fees (mean = 2.40). Item no 8: My parent ensures that I do all assignments before going to bed (mean = 2.43). Item No 9: My parents provide a conducive learning environment for me at home (mean = 2.36). Item no 10: My parent attends parent-teacher association of my school (mean = 2.86). Item no 11: My parent attends open-day in my school (mean = 2.31). Item no 12: My parents hardly stay at home to guide me (mean = 2.56). Item No 13: My parent maintains effective communication with my teachers (mean = 2.99). Item No 14:

My parents express their views to the school on my performance (mean = 3.42). Item No 15: My parents encouraged me to participate in the school extra-curricular activities (mean = 2.46). Item no 16: My parents encouraged me to read leisure materials or newspapers during leisure time (mean = 2.56). Item no 17: My parents usually call my teacher to know how I am performing in school (mean = 2.26).

Item No. 14 has the highest mean of 3.42 and item no. 17 has the lowest mean of 2.26. Finally, the overall Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of the students' perception of parents' accountability is 2.68 which shows a high level of students' perception of their parents' accountability.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that students' perception of their teachers' accountability was low. This implies that teachers take care of the students' progress according to their capacity but not to the fullest. This could result from the low motivation being given to teachers by the government such as insufficient salary and lateness in the payment of the salary. It could also be as a result of teachers not being engaged in necessary training that can boost their teaching activities in the classroom. The study agrees with the findings of (General Teaching Council for England 2009) who found that teachers' experience of accountability in practice was largely negative due to the pressures they encounter under the current system. Most of the participating teachers associated the word accountability with greater sanctions, extra burdens and a lack of trust in teachers from the central government and the wider public. The study negates the opinions of Ajogbeje (2012) and Kanika (2016) that teacher accountability encompasses personal qualities that make the teacher enthusiastic, energetic, approachable, openness, imaginative, and create a sense of humor in their interaction with the students in the teaching-learning context.

The study revealed that students' perception of their parent accountability is good. This was because most parents monitored their children's performance in school, assisted in homework, encourage participation in extracurricular activities, participated actively in parent-teacher associations, and helped children to develop plans for their future. The study is in line with the findings of Gabathuse (2010) who found that parent has an unquestionable role to play in helping students attain excellence in academic performance. Also, the study supports the findings of Cotton and Wiklund (2005), who covered it by declaring that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. This result is also in

agreement with Sheldon and Epstein (2001) who found that from their research that that family involvement improves facets of children's education such as daily attendance and Begum (2007) who found out that parent's school involvement includes taking part in activities to support, encourage, assist, help, recognize, and contribute towards the child's cognitive development.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study surveyed the perception of students on teachers' accountability and parents' accountability. In teaching as a profession, there are numerous guidelines, principles, norms of morality, accountability which a teacher has to follow in the teaching profession while dealing with students. Every teacher needs to follow these principles and should be accountable for his profession, likewise the parents in dealing with their children, but most times, the situation is not so. Based on the findings and discussions of the study, it could be concluded that; students' perception of teacher accountability is low while students' perception of parent accountability is high. This implies that teachers are not achieving the optimal learning of their students and not taking care of the students' progress according to their capacity.

The following recommendations were proffered based on the findings of the study;

1. Teachers should attend workshops, seminars and in-service training to upgrade their teaching activities, encourage students to improve their attainments and develop their personalities and make themselves available to students and guide them on difficult-to-learn topics.
2. Parents should assist their children that have challenges coping with academics by employing the service of a private home tutor, endeavor to encourage and give their children/wards adequate time to read and do their home works at home rather than engaging them with domestic works and watching of non-educational movies most of the time.

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