

Effective Teaching of Economics in the Universities: The Role of Christian Scholars in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to examine the role of Christian Scholars in the effective teaching of economics in the universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study employed the survey research design and primary method of data collection using structured questionnaires with three sections which include the bio-data, questions on the knowledge of the subject matter, and questions on the scholar's professionalism. The population of the study is the economics students of the private and public universities in Nasarawa State and the sample size was determined using the mean value simple technique which allows the researcher to arrive at a given sample when the total population is unknown, thus the mean value simple technique is stated as $n = \frac{Z^2 \sigma^2}{e^2}$. Where Z = the z-statistic (or value) corresponding to the desired confidence level (2.58), σ = a pre-determined value of the population standard deviation (0.8), and e = the maximum acceptable margin of error (0.1). Therefore, the sample size was estimated at 420, and however, the total of well-filled questionnaires through google forms is 270. The study applied the one-way T-test approach to analyse the responses from the questionnaires and from the findings it was revealed that Christian scholars play a great role in the effective teaching of economics and that the professionalism of the Christian scholar is high and it enhances the effective teaching of economics in the universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommended that Christian bodies like ECWA should encourage more Christians to teach and lecture to improve the quality of economic policies and economic development in Nigeria.

Background to the Study

Economics is a course that is being taught by Christian and Non-Christian scholars in different institutions of learning in the world. In the United Kingdom, there is the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Department of Economics in some educational institutions in Africa. The principle of economics evolves around two major branches namely microeconomics and macroeconomics. Nonetheless, many economists have recently emphasized micro issues more than macro (Alston, Kearn & Vaughan, 1992). At the higher level of study, there are different fields of economics namely labour economics, energy economics, development economics, monetary economics etcetera. problems and solutions of economic phenomena are usually considered in economics; hence the study of economics is important because it improves the comprehension of economic phenomena. Understanding economic phenomena is important because it will aid in effective policy formulation for the economic development of any nation. According to Becker (2000), the teaching of Economics at both colleges and universities should aim at enhancing the application and appreciation of economic analysis. It also makes students at the undergraduate level think like economists (Siege & Round, 2001). Although Ojo and Nkoyane (2016) have a different view, they believe that Economic education goes far beyond understanding the rudiments of the economic phenomenon, that it should produce future responsible citizens, effective decision-makers and voters of change.

In Nigeria, economics is one of the subjects offered in secondary schools and also a course that can be studied at a higher level of education such as the colleges of education and universities. National Universities Commission (NUC) regulates these universities by conducting routine checks to maintain a high standard of education through effective teaching. This regulatory body has over time given full or interim accreditation to some universities in Nigeria including those in Nasarawa State. Scholars from different religious backgrounds are usually employed to teach the course in these universities, hence Christian scholars are among those teaching Economics in the universities (Stapleford, 2000). Diligence at work is encouraged by the Christian faith, therefore there are high expectations from Christian scholars teaching in both private and public universities. Christian scholars are to ensure that the contents of the course are being taught well. Aside from being diligent, sound moral values are expected to be inculcated in the lives of the students by Christian scholars. This will go a long way in making the students contribute their quota toward nation-building. This means that ineffective teaching of Economics by scholars can affect the performance of students generally. It is to that end this work examined the effective teaching of Economics by Christian scholars in some universities in Universities in Nasarawa state, Nigeria.

Hypotheses to be Tested

- H₀₁:** Effective teaching of Economics by Christian scholars has no significant effect on Students' comprehension of the course in Nasarawa State.
- H₀₂:** Teaching Economics by Christian scholars has no significant effect on the professionalism and effective delivery in Nasarawa

Literature Review

Concept of Effective Teaching

Jiang and Cheng (2016), have described effective teaching as not teaching below the required standard, or below the average which aligns with positive value existing at a particular period and the individual concern. This implies that certain standards of learning should be considered in evaluating or measuring effective teaching. Teaching in whatever form should not be below the expected standard which is the minimum standard. Effective teaching has also been defined as when a student learns well after being taught by a teacher (Cobbinah & Bayaga, 2017). In this case, student comprehension is key; understanding the fundamentals of what is being taught. Teaching effectively does not depend on the content being taught by the teacher but on the learning result of the students that the teacher needs to reflect on (Kwon & Block, 2017). In essence, effective teaching has to do with the progress or development of students after teaching. This student development and progress is a major indicator of effective teaching theory.

Effective teaching of Economics has been encouraged by some scholars. According to Becker (2000), Irving Fisher who is a renowned economist has suggested teaching Economics in words, graphs and tables that is, in a simple format. Fisher further suggested that mathematical expressions of Economics should be placed under the appendix in economics textbooks. Becker (2000) is also of the opinion that teaching Economics in the 21st century at different levels of studies should be simplified. Becker further reiterated the need to evaluate the educational outcomes of teaching Economics at colleges and universities. Hultberge and Colonge (2017) considered constrained optimization problems focusing on how student learning can be maximized given limited resources. These limited resources according to the work are either familiar or unfamiliar and are beyond the control of the instructors. Examples of familiar resources are time, class size and access to technology, while the unfamiliar ones are students, with limited cognitive processing capacity.

Theories of Effective Teaching

The effective teaching theory particularly in higher education has four indicators namely student development and progress, teaching income, reflective teaching and innovation thinking (Chen, 2017). For effective teaching to take place, the highlighted indicators should be considered by the teacher. Gardner (1983) has also propounded the theory of multiple intelligences. According to the theory, humans can possess different types of intelligence. These multiple intelligences include: verbal-linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic. In this case, it is expected that teachers take into cognizance the different intelligences embedded in an individual when designing lesson notes.

Methodology

Research Design and Method of Data Collection

The study adopted the survey research design and the means of data collection that was

employed is the primary method in which the study designed structural questionnaires with three sections which are the bio-data of the respondents, the effective understanding of the course and professionalism of the Christian lecturers when delivering their lectures.

Population and Sample Size of the Study

The population of the study is the economics students of the private and public universities in Nasarawa State and the sample size was determined using the mean value simple technique which allows the researcher to arrive at a given sample when the population is unknown, thus the mean value simple technique is stated as $n = \frac{Z^2\sigma^2}{e^2}$. Where Z = the Z-statistic (or value) corresponding to the desired confidence level, σ = a pre-determined value of the population standard Deviation and e = the maximum acceptable margin of error. Therefore, the sample size was estimated at 420 and however, and the well-filled questionnaires through google forms are 270.

Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis adopted in this paper is a descriptive analysis using tables and a simple percentage of the primary data. Also, using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) the frequency distributions of the various response categories will be calculated to arrive at the mean. To obtain the item and section mean ratings, frequencies were weighed in the following manner: strongly disagree-1, disagree-2, neutral-3, agree-4, and strongly agree-5. the mean ratings of the various responses were calculated and used to answer the research questions. The expected mean of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 is 3.0 for this study; a mean rating of 3.0 or above was regarded as significant while a mean rating less than 3.0 was regarded as insignificant in explaining the changes in the variables under study and the calculated mean value will be compared with the table mean value. However, the study applied the one-way T-test approach to analyze the responses from the questionnaires.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Respondents according to School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
School	Private University	192	48.0	48.0	48.0
	Public University	208	52.0	52.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 1 shows the respondents according to schools and the responses revealed that 48 percent of the total respondents are students from private universities in Nasarawa State while 52 percent of the total respondents are students from public universities in Nasarawa State.

Table 2: Respondents according to Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	216	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Male	184	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 2 shows the respondents according to gender and the responses revealed that 54 percent of the total respondents are female from both private and public universities in Nasarawa State while 46 percent of the total respondents are male from both private and public universities in Nasarawa State.

Table 3: Respondents according to Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	Less than 20	168	42.0	42.0	42.0
	20-30 years	145	36.3	36.3	78.3
	Above 30	87	21.8	21.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 3 shows the respondents according to age and the responses revealed that 42 percent of the total respondents are students who are less than 20 years of age, 36 percent of the total respondents are students between 20 to 30 years of age while 21 percent of the total respondents are students who are above 30 years.

Table 4: Respondents According to Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Level	100	48	12.0	12.0	12.0
	200	93	23.3	23.3	35.3
	300	113	28.3	28.3	63.5
	400	146	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 4 shows respondents according to level and the responses revealed that 12 percent of the total respondents are 100-level students of both private and public universities in Nasarawa State, 23 percent of the total respondents are 200-level students of both private and public universities in Nasarawa State, 28 percent of the total respondents are 300

level students of both private and public universities in Nasarawa State and 36 percent of the total respondents are 400 level students of both private and public universities in Nasarawa State. This implies that the paper has more than 400 level students who have been in the university for almost four years.

Table 5: Respondents According to Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	Less 1.5	112	28.0	28.0	28.0
	1.5 - 2.5	149	37.3	37.3	65.3
	2.6 - 3.5	93	23.3	23.3	88.5
	Above 3.5	46	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 5 shows respondents according to Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and the responses revealed that 28 percent of the total respondents are students with less than 1.5 CGPA, 37.3 percent of the total respondents are students with 1.5 to 2.5 CGPA, 23.3 percent of the total respondents are students with 2.6 to 3.5 CGPA and 11.5 percent of the total respondents are students with above 3.5 CGPA.

Discussion of Result and Hypotheses Testing

Table 6: One-Sample Statistics on the Effect of the effective teaching of Economics by Christian Scholars on Students' Comprehension of the Course.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has improved my knowledge of Economics.	400	3.9350	1.26284	.06314
The effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has helped my easy application of concepts of Economics	400	3.8950	1.29931	.06497
The effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has made Economics lectures always interesting.	400	3.6350	1.36618	.06831
The effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has helped my participation actively during Economics classes.	400	3.9150	1.16239	.05812
The effective teaching of economics Christian scholars has helped me as a student of Economics to write tests easily after each class.	400	3.4150	1.51609	.07580
Average Mean		3.759		

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 6 shows the indicators of the effect of the effective teaching of Economics by Christian scholars on students' comprehension of the course in Nasarawa State. The results revealed that the effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has improved my knowledge of Economics given the mean value of 3.94 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0, and the effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has helped my easy application of concepts of Economics given the mean value of 3.89 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0. Also, the effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has made Economics lectures always interesting given the mean value of 3.64 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0 while the effective teaching of economics by Christian Scholars has helped my participation actively during Economics classes given the mean value of 3.92 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0. Finally, effective teaching of economics by Christian scholars has helped me as a student of Economics to write tests easily after each class given the mean value of 3.42 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0. Therefore, the H_{01} : which stated that effective teaching of Economics by Christian Scholars has no significant effect on Students' comprehension of the course in Nasarawa State is **rejected**.

Table 7: One-Sample Statistics on the effect of the teaching of Economics by Christian Scholars on the professionalism and effective delivery in Nasarawa State

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The Christian Economics lecturers attend classes frequently	400	3.4250	1.51331	.07567
The Christian Economics lecturers in my department are punctual for lectures	400	3.4150	1.51609	.07580
The Christian Economics lecturer's lecture notes are comprehensible	400	3.8850	1.14676	.05734
Relevant study materials are used by the Christian Economics lecturers in my department.	400	3.6350	1.36618	.06831
Questions asked during lectures are adequately answered by the Christian Economics lecturers in my department.	400	3.9350	1.26284	.06314
Average Mean		3.6590		

Source: Administered Questionnaires, 2022.

Table 7 shows the indicators of the effect of the teaching of Economics by Christian scholars on the professionalism and effective delivery in Nasarawa State. The results revealed that the Christian Economics lecturers attend classes frequently given the mean value of 3.4 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0, and the Christian Economics lecturers in my department are punctual for lectures given the mean value of 3.42 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0. Also, the Christian Economics lecturers' lecture notes are comprehensible given the mean value of 3.89 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0 while the relevant study materials are used by the

Christian Economics lecturers in my department given the mean value of 3.64 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0. Finally, questions asked during lectures are adequately answered by the Christian Economics lecturers in my department given the mean value of 3.94 which is greater than the expected mean value of 3.0. Therefore, the H_{02} : which stated that teaching Economics by Christian scholars has no significant effect on the professionalism and effective delivery in Nasarawa State is rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the paper revealed that effective teaching of Economics by Christian Scholars has a positive effect on Students' comprehension of the course in Nasarawa State and this implies that the more Christian scholars we have in the teaching of economics the more effective the student's comprehension on the course. Also, the paper revealed that the teaching of Economics by Christian Scholars has a significant effect on the professionalism and effective delivery in Nasarawa State. Therefore, the paper recommended the following.:

- i. The church should encourage its members, to join lecturing to increase the effective teaching of economics, especially in the high institutions in Nasarawa State.
- ii. Christian scholars should be encouraged to increase their effort in the teaching of economics for professionalism and effective delivery in Nasarawa State

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire for Economics Undergraduate Students

INSTRUCTION

Please, read the questions carefully and tick them appropriately.

SECTION A: BIODATA OF RESPONDENTS

1. School: (a) Bingham University () (b) Federal University Lafia () (c) Nasarawa State University ()
2. Gender: (a) Male () (b) Female ()
3. Age: (a) Less than 20 years (b) 20-30 years (c) Above 30 ()
4. Level: (a) 100 () (b) 200 () (c) 300 (d) 400
5. Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA): (a) Less than 1.5 () (b) 1.5- Less than 2.5 () (c) 2.5- Less than 3.5 () (d) 3.5 and above ()

SECTION B: STUDENT COMPREHENSION OF THE COURSE

1. Your knowledge of Economics has improved.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
2. The concepts of Economics are easily applicable.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
3. Economics lectures are always interesting.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()

4. You participate actively during Economics classes.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
5. As a student of Economics, you can write a test after each class.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()

SECTION C: DILIGENCE OF CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS LECTURERS/ LECTURE DELIVERY BY CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS LECTURERS

1. Economics lecturers attend classes frequently.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
2. The lecturers of your department are punctual for lectures.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
3. Lecture notes are comprehensible.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - © Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
4. Relevant study materials are used by lecturers in your department.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()
5. Questions asked during lectures are adequately answered by lecturers in your department.
 - (a) Strongly agree ()
 - (b) Agree ()
 - (c) Neutral ()
 - (d) Disagree ()
 - (e) Strongly disagree ()