

A model of effective teaching of economics in higher education: the integral role of classroom learning environment, instructional practices, and teacher characteristics

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Abstract

This study explores university students' perceptions of how the classroom learning environment and Economics teachers' instructional practices promote learning in higher education (HE). The purpose of the study was to develop and empirically test a framework that characterises quality Economics instruction. Based on a literature review, a conceptual framework was built consisting of 75 attributes related to quality teaching and learning of Economics. To test the validity of the framework, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted to collect the data on students' evaluation of teachers' effectiveness in promoting students learning. The study respondents comprise 403 students sampled from four public universities in Ghana. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis suggests that the conceptual framework is valid and reliable and can effectively be used to evaluate quality Economics instruction in higher education. The results indicate key areas that are beneficial concerning student perceptions of teacher effectiveness in promoting student learning. These include planning and preparation, scaffolding of instruction, classroom communication, classroom management, classroom learning environment, and teacher characteristics. We argue that these factors are significant predictors of quality Economics instruction in HE and suggest a model that can be used as an effective evaluation tool or training toolkit for ensuring high-quality teaching involving Economics. HE authorities need to constantly evaluate Economics teaching in the key domain areas based on students' feedback to improve upon quality teaching and learning.

Keywords: Economics; instructional practices; student feedback; conceptual model; classroom.

Introduction

Economics education contributes significantly to the socioeconomic development of countries all over the world (Ehiedu and Ogbogbro, 2006; Bosshardt, van der Klaauw and Watts, 2011; Wyk, 2015). The discipline instils creativity, decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills in individuals, which are crucial for the long-term development of countries (Wyk, 2015).

As a discipline, Economics makes use of mathematical principles to illustrate human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce resources which have alternative uses. As a social science discipline, the teaching of Economics must be real and practical since it emphasises human behaviour (Wyk, 2015). Thus, Economics instruction should emphasise collaboration between the teacher and students in creating new knowledge. Allan and Clarke (2007) suggest that in a contemporary higher education context, classroom instruction must aim at helping students to develop meta-cognitive skills and become independent and self-directed learners.

Despite its contribution to national development, empirical research shows that teaching and learning of the subject is difficult (Ongeri, 2009; Yussif, 2015). In most cases the subject is taught in the abstract at undergraduate level and this makes it difficult for students to grasp the fundamental principles in terms of their practical application to real-world scenarios (Wyk, 2015). In HE, the most popular method used in teaching Economics is the lecture method (Becker, 2004). In this type of teaching, popularly called the banking model of teaching, 'teachers "deposit" knowledge into students' minds like they are piggy banks' (Gomes, reviewing Paulo Freire, 2022, p.73). Teachers teach while students observe and take notes. Students are seen as passive learners. As a result of this method, many Economics students report feeling bored and disinterested in the subject matter (Ongeri, 2009). Becker and Watts (2014) argue that the significant reduction in Economics enrolments in the early 1990s up to the late 2000s was a result of the use of the banking model of teaching. They asserted that economists were less likely to employ non-lecture teaching techniques than other instructors and that students gave Economics teachers a lower rating than other teachers. Yet still, economists pay little attention to developing more engaging teaching approaches and tactics to boost student learning in the classroom (Ongeri, 2009).

The adoption of inappropriate approaches for teaching Economics has led to students' dissatisfaction with Economics instruction (Ongeri, 2009) and in some cases poor academic performance. In a study to determine the academic achievement of Economics students at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Yussif (2015) observed that in the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 academic years respectively, 36.1% and 31.4% of the 238 and 307 students were unable to complete their education owing to poor academic performance.

Since students' learning outcomes can be linked to teachers' ability to engage students in interactive teaching (Acquah and Lumadi, 2014; Wyk, 2015), the first step in solving these learning difficulties could be to understand the extent to which Economics teachers engage students in active teaching and learning in the higher education classroom. Do the classroom learning environment and other instructional practices other than the lecture method significantly influence Economics teaching quality and students' learning outcomes? It seems as though research on Economics instruction (Acquah and Lumadi, 2014; Amartey and Yalley, 2020) has not produced a comprehensive model that would aid our understanding of the level of these classroom instructional practices and how they contribute to Economics teachers' instructional quality. Our inability to understand the research on effective models stem from a number of factors or limitations.

The first limitation concerns the design of research that highlights causal relationships (Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor 2006; Rothstein, 2010; Blazar, 2017). Historically, studies concerning the teaching of Economics in higher education institutions have concentrated on a limited number of classroom instructional activities (for example, methods of teaching and use of teaching learning materials). However, substantial empirical evidence (Dees, 2007; Danielson, 2013; Blazar, 2017; Walli, Abulfathi and Mustapha, 2019) suggests that Economics instruction is complex, requiring consideration of various elements other than the few classroom instructional activities. When these elements are not controlled for in regression analysis, it becomes difficult to ascertain the real contribution of the different classroom instructional practices to teaching effectiveness or quality. The influence of those uncontrolled elements frequently confounds the role of the classroom practices under examination.

The role of Economics teachers in contributing to student learning in Economics has been contentious. The bone of contention here has to do with the conceptualisation of students' learning outcomes. Most of the studies (for example, Acquah and Lumadi, 2014) used students' learning outcomes as a benchmark to judge the quality of teaching and thereby also, the teachers. In all these studies, student learning outcomes are often narrowly defined and limited to classroom test/examination achievement (Campbell and Cabrera, 2011). Research (Quinn and Tsukayama, 2012; Blazar, 2017) shows that students' learning attainment is multifaceted (consisting of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning achievements). Campbell et al. (2004) contend that within the context of contemporary higher education, various additional modes of learning, such as learning independently, metacognitive skills development and problem-solving techniques also matter. Blazar (2017) asserts that these skills, as well as students' attitudes and behaviours, rather than exam scores, are more predictive of specific long-term outcomes. As a result, Economics teachers are required to foster psychologically inclusive environments that nurture students' affective domains in addition to their cognitive talents (Lampert, 2001; Pianta and Hamre, 2009; Cohen, 2011).

Thus, this study seeks to build and empirically test an integrated model of quality Economics instruction based on students' ratings. It makes a significant contribution as not many studies specifically address the issue of students' evaluation of Economics teachers' quality planning and preparation, instructional scaffolding, classroom learning environment management, communication effectiveness, teacher attributes, and their overall impact on Economics teaching quality and students learning outcomes in higher education. Since students are the main consumers of teachers' work in the classroom, they are arguably best placed to assess their teacher's teaching quality (Follman, 1992; Ampadu, 2012) especially as it depends on their level of satisfaction with the teaching.

Literature review

Teaching Economics in higher education

Economics education answers the question of how to satisfy human wants with limited resources. Poverty and people's low standard of living in many developing countries are due to poor resources, little production, and lack of technology. Knowledge of economics is essential to eradicate poverty of a nation and to raise their living standards. Effective

application of Economic theories, concepts, and generalisations in Economic decision making contribute passively to Economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve people's standards of living.

Economics theories, principles, and generalisations are acquired through the use of the scientific method (Mankiw, 1994; Becker, 2004). The scientific method of Economic analysis is the application of logic and evidence to understanding how economies function. This takes place through methods such as the statistical analysis of different economic systems, and the charting of data on prices and quantities of goods exchanged within an economy. The teaching of Economics must be in tandem with how knowledge is acquired using the scientific method. In principle and in keeping with the scientific method and constructivist notion of how knowledge is acquired, the teaching of Economics must emphasise collaboration between the teacher and students in creating new knowledge.

Thus, Economics may be taught through creating new information and exposing students to real-world learning situations and experiences (Ongeri, 2009). Teachers must employ effective teaching approaches to help students become independent learners and productive adults, to achieve cross-critical cognitive and educational objectives and alter students' attitudes, behaviours, and motivations. Economics, however, appears to be plagued with difficulties when it comes to its teaching and learning. Lecturers' 'chalk and talk' methods have long been used to teach Economics (Becker, 2004, p.12): resultantly many Economics students appear bored and disinterested in the subject matter.

Researchers (Becker and Watts, 2014) try to highlight several gaps in today's Economics education. They claim that the Economic abstractions covered in many micro- and macro-Economics courses have obscure beginnings. Many Economics textbooks fail to explore the settings of discovery and actual relationships to other fundamental discourses. This has impacted on the teaching and learning of the subject.

Although Economics is indeed a complex subject to teach, teachers must approach it in a way that students find engaging, relevant, and applicable to actual life. This is especially true in circumstances where, for example, Economics is taught as part of a Business programme and is a requirement for a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. The student is required to assume the role of a fictitious business owner and, as the course advances, examine the impact of economic policy on their business operations.

Collaborative problem-solving, service learning, interactive role-play and simulations, an inverted classroom, experiments/demonstrations/dramatisations, technology-based teaching strategies, and lecturing accompanied by student-centred activities are all suggested as strategies for actively engaging students in the content. Teachers must employ various instructional methods rather than focusing on only one (Goffe and Sosin, 2005). It will allow them to cater to the diverse groups of learners and create a learning atmosphere that will keep their students constantly engaged, rather than following the same everyday routine.

While the recommended teaching strategies are crucial for conducting practical Economics instruction in HE, they appear insufficient when considering teachers' and students' contexts and learning approaches. In introductory courses, a small percentage of teachers used classroom experiments, but they were rarely used in other courses (Bartlett, 2006). Additionally, in recent decades, Bartlett (2006) argues that there have been indications of a constructivist approach to Economics teaching. Economics teachers have utilised this approach through the use of classroom experiments (Dickie, 2006; Van der Merwe, 2007), appropriate peer review (Lomas and Nicholls, 2005; Kell and Annetts, 2009), real-world examples (Quddus and Bussing-Burks, 1997; Caviglia-Harris, 2003; Van der Merwe, 2007), and the selection of appropriate textbooks (Pyne, 2007). Despite several changes in Economics education aimed at improving the subject's teaching, many Economics students still struggle with the multiplicity and diversity of ideas, concepts, diagrams, and theories involved in the discipline.

Moosavian (2007) examined the importance of visual 'big pictures' in Economics instruction to overcome this problem. The author conducted a literature review on the value of visual 'big pictures' in teaching Economics and proposed that providing learners with a visual big picture that demonstrates how those different concepts interact is beneficial and may be an efficient way to alleviate the confusion in the minds of learners. For instance, he presents a 'big picture' that may be utilised in intermediate Macroeconomics classes. Using the virtual 'big picture' as an instructional scaffolding measure within the context of a conducive learning environment and effective communication will go a long way to improve student learning outcomes in Economics. The virtual big picture in the intermediate Macroeconomics course includes 27 fully explored Macroeconomic diagrams to assist students in visualising the entire image on a

piece of paper. This big Macroeconomics picture focuses on the paths common Macroeconomic diagrams take to connect and then shows the generic Macroeconomic equilibrium that emerges from those connections. Moosavian's (2007) efforts offer a logical, step-by-step, and chronological organisation of economic issues that would make it easier for students to understand and learn the subject. It also entails using pertinent images to make economic training realistic, authentic, and down-to-earth while keeping in mind adult learning principles.

Using the big picture to teach Economics, on the other hand, should be done in context. Teacher planning and preparation, communication effectiveness, classroom management skills and teachers' teaching attributes matter when it comes to instructional effectiveness. All in all, it will appear that whichever pedagogy is used to teach Economics, the unique approaches of both teachers and students of Economics, the teacher's level of readiness and planning, and the classroom learning environment must all be considered. Considering a teaching framework that includes all the elements related to the teaching and learning of Economics is necessary.

The conceptual model

The study of the literature and the models therein uncovered a number of aspects of effective teaching in higher education. Following their assessments, the researcher developed a conceptual model to guide the study. The model is seen in Figure 1.

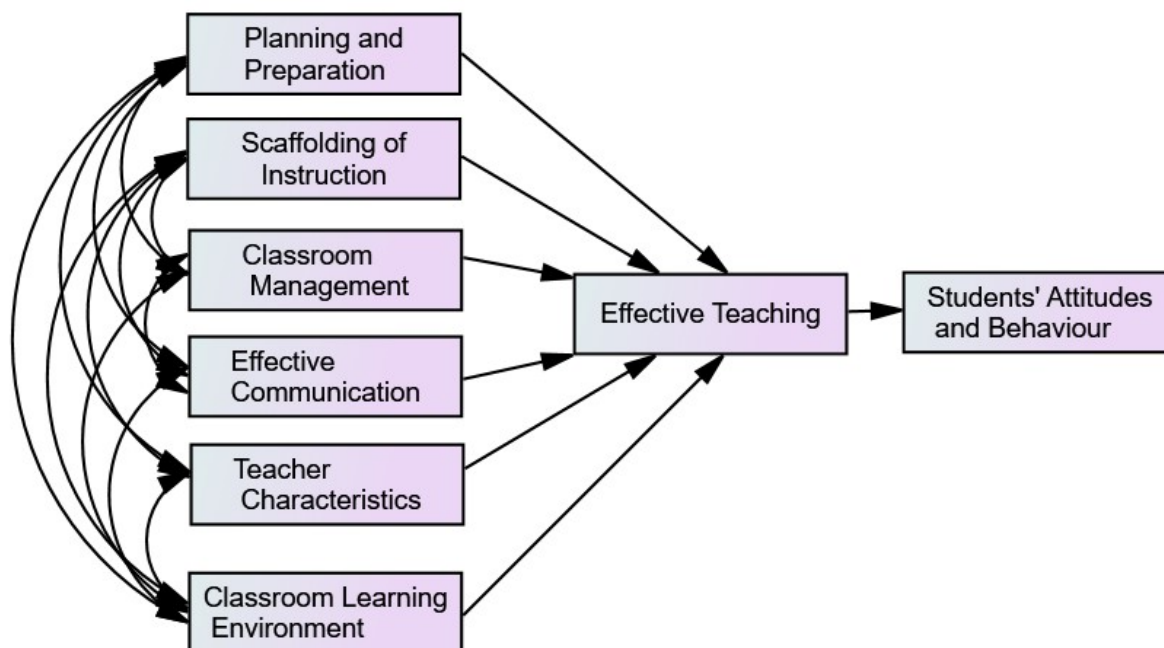
Figure 1. Conceptual model of Economics teachers' effectiveness.

Figure 1 represents a summary of what has been accomplished in the area of teacher effectiveness during the last 30 years. Elements of the model are discussed below.

Planning and preparation is an important element of effective teaching and learning. It entails research to update teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge and preparing students for lessons through the provision of course outlines and reading lists. A teacher's capacity to plan is positively correlated with the classroom learning environment (Phillips, McNaught and Kennedy, 2010), classroom management (Oliver and Reschly, 2007), and instructional scaffolding (Moosavian, 2016). Effective planning and preparation in turn explains quality and engaging Economics instruction (Saroyan et al., 2004; Dees, 2007) as shown in Figure 1.

The instructional scaffolding component of the model encompasses processes and procedures adopted by Economics teachers to structure and systematise Economics lessons to make it easier for students to learn. Instructional scaffolding is positively correlated with the classroom learning environment (Moosavian, 2016), classroom management (Oliver and Reschly, 2007), planning and preparation (Papa-Gusho and Biçaku-Çekrezi, 2015). Instructional scaffolding also positively predicts effective teaching (Moosavian, 2016) as demonstrated in Figure 1.

The classroom learning environment consists of the climate created in the classroom as a result of the various relationships and interactions that take place. Research (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Phillips, McNaught and Kennedy, 2010; Hughes and Chen, 2011) shows a positive correlation between the classroom learning environment and teacher attributes, classroom management, instructional scaffolding and communication, as well as effective teaching of Economics. A positive classroom learning environment also contributes significantly to teacher effectiveness (Hughes and Chen 2011).

Classroom management, according to Sterling (2019), is the process of creating and executing effective classroom routines, policies, and procedures for participating in class debates, organising cooperative learning groups, completing class work, and other classroom activities and interactions. Classroom management is positively correlated with the classroom learning environment (Oliver and Reschly, 2007), classroom communication (Winters, 2014), and classroom instructional flow (Nguyen, 2021). Teacher effectiveness is also predicted by the effectiveness of classroom management (Sterling, 2019).

Communication skills are fundamental and form an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Economics teachers' ability to express themselves in a language that students understand seems to go a long way in helping students grasp Economics concepts, principles, generalisations, and theories. There have been a large number of studies (Anderman, Freeman and Jensen, 2007; Frisby and Martin, 2010; Winters, 2014) that recognise the significance of communication between students and teachers in the classroom. The Economics teachers' role requires them to comprehend and break down complex information for students to understand. Classroom communication is positively correlated with classroom learning environment, instructional flow, and classroom management and teacher characteristics.

Teacher attributes and values have a significant role in the teaching-learning process. The teacher characteristics include the teacher's personal history, attitude, values, motivations, expectations, and beliefs, experience, and level of education. Teacher attributes and values otherwise called teacher characteristics are hypothesised to correlate positively with classroom learning environment, classroom communication, classroom management and instructional scaffolding, and positively predict effective teaching.

Students attitudes and behaviour

An attitude is a predisposed feeling toward people, things, or places. Behaviour on the other hand is a kind of action or reaction resulting from stimuli. Instructional practices, teachers' attributes, and the classroom's social environment have a significant impact on how students develop their attitudes, values, motivations, behaviours, and habits (Blazar et al., 2015).

Hypothesis

On the basis of the conceptual framework, the following hypothesis was set to guide the study.

- H_1 . Planning and preparation competences of Economics teachers positively and significantly predict their engaging and interactive lesson delivery.
- H_2 . Instructional scaffolding positively and significantly influences Economics teachers' engaging and interactive lessons.
- H_3 . Management of the classroom learning environment has a positive and significant effect on effective teaching of Economics.
- H_4 : Communication in the classroom has a positive and significant effect on effective teaching.
- H_5 : Teacher characteristics have a significant effect on effective teaching of Economics.
- H_6 : Effective teaching has significant and positive impact on students' attitudes and behaviour.

Methodology

Research design

The researcher employed the descriptive cross-sectional survey design for the study because the purpose was to present a valid and reliable model of effective teaching of Economics in HE. This purpose made it suitable to use the descriptive survey design because as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) indicate, 'such studies look at individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields

of inquiry' (p.33). The researcher was only interested in determining relationship among the various elements that contribute to effective teaching of Economics without any manipulation of the variables. That is to say that in using the cross-sectional research design, the interest of the researcher was not to manipulate the variables but to determine and describe the relationship that exists among them.

Population, sample and data collection

The population for the study were all final year students in public universities in Ghana during the 2020/2021 academic year. The population of final year students in the 16 public universities was estimated at 25,871. This population was targeted for the study because the students had been in the universities for well over three years and had experienced more of university life than the rest of the undergraduate students. Thus, they stood a better chance of giving a valid description of Economics teachers' effectiveness than the rest of the students. To guarantee that each student had an equal chance of being chosen for the research, probability sampling procedures namely, the stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed in sampling the students. In all, a total of 403 students made up of 213 males and 190 female students from four public universities were sampled to take part in the study. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample size determination.

The researcher employed a questionnaire to collect the data. To provide a simple and rapid answer to the questionnaire items, each section's items were composed entirely of closed-ended statements using the Likert Scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) formats.

The instrument was developed based on Churchill's recommendation (1979). The first step as recommended by the author was review of the literature. Literature related to previous models of HE teaching was reviewed and questionnaire items covering the various domains of effective teaching were developed. A review of best practices for measuring students' attitudes and behaviour (Lovelace and Brickman, 2003) was also undertaken to obtain items to measure students' attitudes and behaviour. Further, focus group discussions were held with students to solicit from them what their expectation or views of effective teaching of Economics under each of the domains were. A 75-item questionnaire

which incorporated the output of the literature review and the focus group discussions was then developed.

The next step was expert validation of the instrument. Four experts in the field of quality assurance at the C. K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Sciences were contacted to go through and validate the instrument. Each of these experts worked independently after which the four came together to discuss and finalise the instrument. 11 questionnaire items were removed because they were either ambiguous or contained duplication. Items that were not clear were also reworded. The final set of questionnaire items after this stage was a 64-item questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of six sections. Section A dealt with students' demographic details such as age, religious affiliation, and gender. Section B to E dealt with classroom instructional practices, section F dealt with teacher characteristics, and section G dealt with students' behaviour and levels of satisfaction with teaching.

A total of 306 students were used in the pilot testing of the instrument. The sample was taken from the C. K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Science. These students (third and final year students) were admitted to the university to study Mathematics with an emphasis on Economics. The sample averaged 17 years of age and had a standard deviation of 0.50 years. The pilot test's objective was to establish if the questionnaire's items accurately represented the constructs they were supposed to measure. To this end, exploratory factor analysis, validity, and reliability tests were carried out to determine the suitability of the data for confirming the hypothetical model of Economics teachers' effectiveness. The purpose of the factor analysis was to reduce the large number of variables that describe a complex concept teaching Economics in the classroom to a few interpretable latent variables (factors). In other words, the researcher sought to find a smaller number of interpretable factors that explain the maximum amount of variability in the data. The analysis produced a 7-factor model of effective teaching of Economics.

Following the proposal of Hair et al. (2006), confirmatory factor analysis was employed to assess the fitness of both the measurement model and the structured model. The model fit indices were all within specifications (Hair, et al., 2006). CMIN/DF was 1.773; $p = 0.093$ (spec. < 3.0), GFI = 0.873 (spec. > 0.90), NFI = 0.932 (spec. > 0.90), CFI = .961 (spec. >

0.90), and RMSEA = 0.054 (spec. < 0.05). Overall, the results suggest that the model was a 'good fit model'.

Data collection and analysis

After the initial pilot test and exploratory factor analysis, the researcher went ahead to collect the main data from the sample's universities. An introductory letter was obtained from the Registrar of CKT-UTAS to introduce the study to the various universities. The data was collected by the researcher with assistance from trained research assistants in a classroom setting. It was purely voluntary and any respondent who did not want to take part opted out. The questionnaires were edited/screened and inputted into SPSS AMOS (Version 13) for further analysis.

Results and discussion

The hypothesis test results are shown in Table 1. The findings indicate that five hypotheses were statistically significant and positive. The levels of significance are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of research hypothesis.

Hypothesis	Indigenous Variable	Direction of Relationship	Exogenous Variable	B	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Effectiveness	<---	Preparation	.314	.289	4.542	***
H2	Effectiveness	<---	Scaffolding	.731	.235	3.116	.002
H3	Effectiveness	<---	Management	.117	.186	6.009	***
H4	Effectiveness	<---	Communication	.762	.212	4.724	***
H5	Effectiveness	<---	Teacher Characteristics	.255	.106	11.862	***
H6	Behaviour	<---	Effectiveness	.120	.013	9.260	***

Hypothesis 1

Planning and preparation competences of Economics teachers positively and significantly predicts their engaging and interactive lesson delivery. The hypothesis sought to determine whether Economics teachers' planning and preparation quality as perceived by students have a positive and significant effect on their ability to deliver interactive and engaging classroom instruction. The results as presented in Table 1 show that planning and preparation significantly influences Economics teachers' overall effectiveness ($\beta = .314, p = .0001$) in delivering engaging and interactive lessons. The implication is that as Economics teachers improve their planning and preparation competencies by 1 standard deviation unit, their engaging and interactive classroom instruction improves positively by .314. Saroyan et al. (2004) similarly found that teacher preparation, organisation, clarity, and ability to demonstrate content knowledge and stimulate student interest are all behaviours that provided evidence of good effective teaching and thus explain teacher effectiveness. It means that quality Economics instruction requires quality planning. Proper planning entails thorough research, lesson or lecture planning, and thorough reading which invariably contributes to making the teacher effective and efficient in delivering engaging and interactive lessons.

Economics teachers' evaluation policies must therefore pay particular attention to dimensions of classroom practices such as effective planning and preparation. This is crucial because the kinds of decisions Economics teachers take inform their level of planning and preparation for classroom instruction which ultimately affects their instructional delivery. Economics teachers' lesson planning and preparation conveys their teaching actions related to a given subject-matter. Lesson plans created by Economics teachers must include student learning objectives, instructional processes, the necessary resources, and a written description of how students will be evaluated since teachers teach with the goal of facilitating students' learning. Instructional delivery techniques contained in teachers' lesson plans must be students centred to make Economics teaching real and not abstract.

Hypothesis 2

Instructional scaffolding positively and significantly influences Economics teachers' engaging and interactive lessons. This hypothesis sought to determine whether

Economics teachers' ability to scaffold lessons (as perceived by students) positively influences engaging and interactive classroom lesson delivery. The results suggest that scaffolding of instruction significantly influences Economics teachers' engaging and interactive lesson delivery ($\beta = .731$, $p < 0.05$). This means that 1 standard deviation unit increase in Economics teachers' instructional scaffolding abilities improves engaging or interactive lesson delivery abilities by .731. Tahir et. al. (2017) similarly found evidence that classroom instructional scaffolding techniques such as individualised consideration, student-professor engagement in learning, and deep learning were significant predictors of effective teaching. Allan, Clarke and Jopling (2009) similarly found that the notions of effectiveness are predicated less on university teachers having high academic expectations and more on the provision of a supportive environment in which teachers scaffold learning effectively and promote effective interaction with their students. On the basis of this, Economics teachers in higher education must take instructional scaffolding techniques seriously since Economics concepts and generalisations appear to be abstract. They must provide carefully crafted scaffolds that allow Economics students to expand their knowledge and capacities beyond their current abilities. In other words, Economics teachers must add supports to students' learning in order to help them master abstract Economics concepts and theories. Teachers can accomplish this by building on the students' prior experiences and knowledge as they learn new concepts. Moosavian (2016) recommends the use of the virtual big picture as a scaffolding technique to teach Economics to undergraduate students. He argues that giving students a visual 'big picture' that displays the ways through which those numerous, distinct Economics concepts are connected to each other could be an effective option to clear up the described mental confusion associated with most Economics concepts.

Hypothesis 3

Management of classroom learning environment has a positive and significant effect on effective teaching of Economics. The hypothesis sought to determine whether the teachers' ability to manage the classroom learning environment as perceived by students has any significant beneficial influence on classroom lesson delivery. The results suggest that Economics teachers' ability to effectively manage the classroom learning environment positively significantly influences engaging and interactive lesson delivery ($\beta = .117$, $p < 0.05$). The implication is that as Economics teachers' management of the classroom

learning environment improves by 1 standard deviation unit, their engaging and interactive lessons improve by .117. This means that as Economics teachers create and manage a classroom learning environment that fosters personal interaction conducive to learning, providing opportunities for students' minds and imaginations to be engaged (Walli, Abulfathi and Mustapha, 2019), students' learning experiences improves. Phillips, McNaught and Kennedy (2010) similarly found that teachers' quality instructional practices are strongly influenced by the learning environment in the classroom. Economics teachers are therefore encouraged to improve upon their classroom learning environment management techniques to improve upon students' learning experience. In higher education environments, students from different cultural, social, and political backgrounds can be found. These students have different values and beliefs that need to be managed properly in the classroom setting for effective teaching and learning to take place. Teachers' ability to organise classrooms and manage divergent students' behaviour is critical for achieving positive educational outcomes.

Hypothesis 4

Effective communication has a positive and significant impact engaging and beneficial classroom instruction. This hypothesis sought to test whether Economics teachers' communication effectiveness as perceived by students positively and significantly influences their ability to deliver engaging and interactive classroom lessons. The results suggest that Economics teachers' communication abilities as perceived by students significantly influences their lesson delivery ($\beta = .762$, $p < 0.05$). By implication, an improvement in Economics teachers' communication abilities by 1 standard deviation unit improves their engaging and interactive competence by .762. Teven and Gorham (1998) similarly found that teachers' communication habits of initiating discussions, clarity of expression, correct use of vocabulary, addressing students by their first names, and exhibiting respect and empathy all serve to improve their competence in delivering interactive and engaging lessons. Economics teachers must create supportive classrooms that will enable students to express themselves openly and honestly in a non-judgmental manner, allowing for the formation of lasting relationships. This, in effect will promote collaborative teaching and learning. The building of interpersonal relationships through communication is not limited to students, since this sharing of knowledge and connections

occurs between instructors and students as well, which is one of the essential components of quality teaching and learning.

Hypothesis 5

Teacher characteristics have a significant effect on effective teaching of Economics. This hypothesis sought to determine whether Economics teachers' attributes have a significant positive effect on their ability to deliver quality and interactive lessons. The results suggest that Economics teachers' characteristics positively predicts engaging and interactive classroom instruction ($\beta = .255, p < 0.05$). The implication is that positive improvement in Economics teachers' positive attributes by 1 standard deviation unit improves their ability to deliver quality and interactive lessons by .255. Toraman (2019) similarly undertook a qualitative study to ascertain the characteristics of effective instructors from the viewpoints of teachers, students, teacher candidates, and teacher education professionals. His study findings were consistent with the current findings and participants identified successful teacher traits such as competence in subject matter knowledge, teaching skills, personal characteristics, and professional growth as attributes that significantly influence their ability to deliver interactive lessons. Thus, emphasis must be placed on Economics teachers' attributes and how they impact the classroom in teacher evaluation policies.

Hypothesis 6

Economics teachers' ability to deliver engaging and interactive lessons has significant and positive impact on students' attitudes and behaviour. The study further sought to determine whether Economics teachers' competence in classroom lesson delivery positively predicts the development of positive attitudes and behaviour among students. The results suggest a positive predictive power of Economics teachers' instructional competence on student's attitudes and behaviour ($\beta = .120, p < 0.05$). This means that an improvement in Economics teachers' instructional competence by 1 standard deviation unit improves students' attitudes and behaviour by .120. The results are expected because according to Pianta and Hamre (2009) teachers play a key role in supporting students' improvement in areas other than cognitive skills. According to the authors, students become more self-reliant when teachers provide emotional support and a predictable, consistent, and safe environment. Thus, Economics teachers should focus not only on the

cognitive aspects of students' learning outcomes but the affective aspect as well since positive attitudes and behaviour are needed by students to enable them to function effectively in society.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to develop and empirically test a framework that characterises quality Economics instruction. Thus it can be concluded that the framework which comprises Economics teachers planning and preparation quality, the classroom learning environment, instructional scaffolding, communication skills, and classroom management effectiveness is valid and reliable. Key areas that are beneficial in relation to student perceptions of teacher effectiveness in promoting students learning include planning and preparation, scaffolding of instruction, classroom communication, classroom management, classroom learning environment, and teacher characteristics. These factors are, therefore, significant predictors of quality Economics instruction in higher education institutions.

As a result of the relationships discovered, higher education authorities need to constantly evaluate Economics teaching based on students' feedback. Such evaluations will allow for Economics teachers to improve upon their effectiveness in these domains. In addition, to make Economics teaching as practical as possible, teachers must continuously push to improve upon their effectiveness in the management of the classroom learning environment and instructional practices as well as bringing their positive teaching attributes to bear in classroom teaching and learning. In order to build upon this research further, it would be prudent to bring the influence of the classroom learning environment and experiential and cooperative learning techniques on the acquisition of meta-cognitive skills among Economics students into consideration.

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