

## Perceived Difficult Topics and Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement in Economics in Lagos State

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of perceived difficult topics by senior secondary school students and how this perception affects their academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State Education District V, in Nigeria. A total of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) students were selected for the study through simple random sampling technique. One research question and two hypotheses were raised and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that greatest percentage of the students chose calculations and statistics as the most difficult aspect of Economics with an overall highest 27.4% and the lowest in ranking of difficulty is explanation of terms 8.3%. Also, findings showed that perceived difficult topics in Economics has positively strong significant impact on academic achievement in Economics ( $\beta_1 = 0.65$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Among the recommendations made in line with the findings of this study is that students should be taught Economics with activity-based methods to improve their academic achievement in the subject.

**Keywords:** *Academic Achievement, Economics, Perceived Difficult Topics, Students*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The most important education indicator that is of interest to stakeholders is the degree of academic achievement of students, which is assessed through achievement tests, examinations, and observations. This explains why students' achievement is highly valued by almost all education stakeholders (Adio et al., 2021). The quality of students of Economics is one of the indices which makes the difference in the image of schools. It is a challenge of continuous improvement of the curricula, where students' learning and the development of their skills distinguish them, as a result of the quality of teaching and learning. The complex process of learning evaluation that seeks to obtain information about what the students learn, what the teacher teaches, and how much of the curriculum is implemented, is currently part of the important educational process that requires the teacher's deep

knowledge, evaluation of skills and central purpose of the curriculum. In addition, it is part of the teaching work; reflection, decision making, value judgment about achievements, changing the concept of evaluation as qualification, approval and promotion focusing on the evaluation of academic achievement as a priority, knowing how much and how students have learned to develop academic achievement in Economics (Edu, 2012).

Academic achievement in Economics (especially in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)), has been dwindling in the last two decades, which is often a fallout of the fact that most students often find themselves in a state of confusion, giving answers that lack authenticity, rather than writing the correct use of concepts and terminologies that would earn them full marks. Adio et al., (2021) averred that the percentage of senior secondary school leavers that are not eligible for admission into tertiary institutions each

year because of failure in Economics at the senior school certificate examination is very high. This assertion was also buttressed in a number of WAEC chief examiners' reports, where it was pointed out among others, that there is a drop in students' achievement in Economics when compared to previous years in Nigeria. Also, a good number of candidates failed to use the correct economic terminologies in providing answers to the questions they attempted, thereby making it difficult to put forward their points, which resulted in poor academic achievement in Economics for those years (Chief Examiner's Report, 2018; Report, 2015, 2019; West African Examination Council, 2013). Despite the fact that there are numerous other issues that may be attributable to teachers, schools, and society, these reports tilted towards attributing the blames of poor academic achievements in Economics to students. The other factors that might be responsible include, but are not limited to, unskilled Economics teachers in schools, poorly instituted curricula, a lack of relevant and important instructional materials, ineffective teaching methods, poor student assessment, and teachers' attitudes toward Economics (Adio et al., 2021; Adu, 2015).

The senior secondary school curriculum in Nigeria classifies Economics as a humanities topic. Nigerian languages, English-language literature, geography, government, Christian religious studies, Islamic studies, history, visual arts, music, French, and Arabic are additional topics in this area. Because Economics is a topic that deals with everyday business, secondary school Economics education has a substantial impact on the degree of economic activity, which in turn boosts corporate output and sales. Each student who completed senior secondary school should have been well prepared for higher education, as well as have acquired the relevant functional economic skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation, and wealth generation. This should have strengthened further the foundations for ethical, moral, and civic values acquired at the basic education level. The purpose of teaching Economics at the secondary school level includes, but is not

limited to: promoting students' understanding of some basic economic concepts in economics; developing economic reasoning; enabling learners to realize their role in country building; promoting knowledge about the impact of development on the environment; equip learners with the basic tools of economics and statistics to analyse economic issues (Dixit, 2015; NERDC, 2022). Also, in order to give a knowledge base for more informed perspectives and decision-making on important financial issues, higher education institutions incorporate Economics in financial qualifications. Given the relative importance of Economics, it is expected that every student should find the subject to be both interesting and practical. Ironically, this doesn't seem to be the case as most students often believe that economics is difficult, if not impossible, subject to learn. This impression is brought on by some of the difficult topics that are inherent in Economics, some of which are threshold concepts and act as entry points for understanding the subject (Yahya et al., 2019). Whenever students seem to be having trouble connecting the dots in any subject, memorization is often the recourse. Meanwhile, memorization might be enough in some subjects, but it is not the case in a subject like Economics, for which most economists would agree. According to Lazear (2000, p 99-100), "...the ascension of Economics results from the fact that our discipline has a rigorous language that allows complicated concepts to be written in relatively simple, abstract terms". Backhouse, (2012) also tagged Economics as a 'serious and difficult subject' and argued extensively that while using economic logic to solve simple economic problems, there are distractions from more difficult ones. Students of Economics at all levels, especially starting from their secondary schools, must be able to apply economics principles in particular contexts and comprehend the meaning of fundamental terminology and concepts. That is to say, they need to learn how to think like economists.

Whatever the case, there appears to be a long-standing misconception about Economics to students. While discussing strategies for teaching Economics to high

school and pre-college students more than three decades ago, Armento (1987) was of the opinion that students often perceive economics as a tedious, challenging, and uninteresting subject; after learning words and concepts, they conclude that the subject is sterile and unrelated to their daily lives. The result of this negative perception of students in economics is that they often have poor performance in economics examinations both in school examinations and SSCE/WASCE (Yahya et al., 2019). Economics as a subject taken at the senior secondary school level has posed a lot of challenges to students, due to the mathematical nature of some important topics such as demand and supply, production and cost functions, national income accounting, circular flow of income, etc (Edu, 2012).

Due to the fact that students perceived some topics to be difficult in economics, they often see the subject as a very difficult one, and hence often have poor academic achievement in the subject. Apart from this, a look into the teaching and learning of economics in secondary schools portrays that either teachers are not teaching effectively or students lack the motivation and resilience to read, students perceive Economics to be a difficult subject. In light of these, this study is carried out to investigate the perceived difficult topics in Economics by senior secondary school students and its influence on achievement in Economics as well as the relationship between teachers' effectiveness and students' mastery of the perceived difficult topics among senior secondary school in Ojo Local Government of Lagos State Education District V.

### 1.1 Statement of Problem

Senior secondary school students often display a common phobia for Economics. Meanwhile, topics included in the economics discipline are designed to enable students who offered them to cope with modern economic life. Several studies have been done and opinions expressed by great scholars in an attempt to analyse the perception of senior secondary school students of Economics as a subject.

Educational systems of numerous countries, Nigeria inclusive, have struggled for years with problems including low Economics performance, low enrolment in upper secondary and tertiary Economics courses, and low interest and attitudes toward Economics. However, these issues continued in spite of extensive investigations into these areas, which helped to generate countless proposals and recommendations from credible scholars and organizations on techniques and strategies to address them. It is on this premise that this study is carried out to analyse the senior secondary school students perceived difficult topics in Economics and how this affects their academic achievement in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- assess the senior secondary school students perceived difficult topics in Economics in Lagos State Education District V
- ascertain the influence of senior secondary school students perceived difficult topics on academic achievement in Economics among in Lagos State Education District V.
- determine the relationship between teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State Education District V.

### 1.3 Research Question

What are senior secondary school students perceived difficult topics in Economics in Lagos State Education District V?

### 1.4 Hypothesis

- H<sub>01</sub>:** Senior secondary school students perceived difficult topics does not have any significant influence on academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State Education District V.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State Education V.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, scholarly writings are reviewed under the following headings.

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the constructivist theories of perception by one of the most prominent theorists; Gregory (1990).

#### Constructivist Theory of Perception

According to constructivist theories, perceivers subconsciously construct perceptions by fusing data from a stimulus, like a retinal image, with additional data, including actual or expected distance and prior experience. Perception can be influenced by learning, memory, and expectancy rather than just being a passive recipient of these signals. Both these "top-down" impacts and the "bottom-up" sensory input processing are involved in perception. Low-level data is essentially utilised in "bottom-up" processing to create higher-level data while the top-down uses mental processing and the construction of images of existing reality to make perception feasible (Gepshtein, 2010).

Constructivist perception theory typically belongs to the top-down theories. According to Gregory, the sensory information that is stored on receptors is merely an energy sample and is not particularly significant within themselves. Perception has passage of time; they change and interact with one another. They have some unseen characteristics that only become apparent when impacted by diverse circumstances (Démuth, 2012). It may be observed that perceptions interact when economic agents do because topics in Economics such as price control, price determination, demand and supply, financial institution and host of others anchor on theory of interaction. As a result, just as every theory of decision making must address perception, every theory of interactions must address the level of individual perceptual variability that exists. The data and the critical thinking ability inherent these Economics topics give students who offer them the vantage point to construct

perceptions objectively and subjectively (Démuth, 2012; Gepshtein, 2010; Indriawan & Slamet, 2018).

### 2.2 Perceived Difficult Topics and Academic Achievement in Economics

There are 25 themes in the Nigerian Senior Secondary School (SSS) Economics curriculum (SSS 1 - nine, SSS 2 – eight and SSS 3 - 8). 48 topics are then created by further dividing the themes into 15 topics in SSS 1, 18 topics in SSS 2, and 15 topics in SSS 3. These teaching themes are spread over the three years based on the nature and complexity of the topics and the total teaching time available each year (Mohammed & Pitan, 2022). According to WAEC Chief Examiners' Reports, senior secondary school students face challenges in understanding some of these topics. These include:

#### Demand and Supply

This is a very important topic in economics which serves as a baseline to having in depth knowledge of Economics, but students still find aspects involving graphs, equilibrium and elasticities very difficult to understand (Yahya et al., 2019). The Chief Examiner of, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) 2015, reported that most candidates lost valuable marks in questions relating to demand and supply because of their inability to show their graphical illustration and their workings properly. Candidates who performed creditably were able to plot the demand and supply curves on a single graph and state the equilibrium quantity demanded and supplied. However, in the achievement test administered by the researchers, most of the students' attempted questions on demand and supply, but most of them performed below expectation, as the questions were not answered correctly (Students' achievement test, 2022).

#### Production and Cost function

These topics go hand in hand, the understanding of one leads to the

understanding of the other. However, for students to fully understand these topics they must have proper knowledge of the theory of the firm (Chief Examiners' Report, 2018). According to the report the same year, questions relating to these topics were not popular with the candidates as only a few attempted it; it was reported that the performance of the candidates on these topics was below average. The same situation persisted through the 2019 and 2020 Examiner's reports respectively, as a good number of candidates still avoided questions relating to the topics. Going by the achievement test administered by the researcher, none of the students attempted questions relating to these topics. This rightly shows their level of phobia of anything relating to cost and production (Students' achievement test, 2022).

### **National Income Accounting**

This topic is of great significance for students, as it enables them to understand how incomes are generated and how expenditures are carried out in their country. Some students are not able to distinguish between variables to be added such as; private investment and consumption, government expenditure etc, and variables to be subtracted such as taxes and imports (Chief Examiners' Report, 2019). None of the students attempted questions relating to this topic in the student achievement test administered by the researchers.

### **Fiscal and Monetary policy**

These are two instruments available to the government to regulate economic activities in the economy. It is an important topic in economics because; it helps students understand current issues in the economy and most especially, government regulation strategies. E.g., open market operation (OMO), bank rate, liquidity ratio, etc, for monetary policy, and tax, budget, government expenditure etc, for fiscal policy (Edu, 2012). According to the Chief Examiner's report (2019), the majority of the candidates did not

attempt to question this topic. The few candidates who attempted it performed poorly. This reveals the candidates' level of preparation. This result corroborates with the achievement test administered by the researcher, most students got themselves confused when it gets to aspects like calculation of taxation and division of taxes; some terms like progressive, regressive and proportional taxes are difficult for students to comprehend.

### **Economic System**

This is a straightforward topic that most students should consider most interesting. People frequently have a limited perspective on the importance of studying Economics. They consider the stock market and other related terms. They are unaware that Economics affects many aspects of life (Choi & Storr, 2022). As given by the Chief Examiner, West African Examination Council (WAEC) (2019), the overall performance of candidates on the question was below average, most candidates avoided the questions.

### **Price control**

This has to do with setting minimum prices (price floor) and maximum prices (price ceiling) by the government. Implementing such a restriction may be necessary to maintain the affordability of basic commodities and goods, to stop price gouging during times of shortage and to slow inflation, or to ensure that certain goods are available only to those who earn a minimum income. The knowledge of this topic is very important to students as it equips them with basic knowledge about how price control is used by the government to sustain the economy (Edu, 2012). The Chief Examiner's report (2019) reveals that question on this topic was avoided by students. He reported that it was evident that candidates demonstrated a high level of phobia for questions that revolved around price control. The diagrams and explanations required on the equilibrium price (both below and above) were not done by the candidates.

### Financial Institution

A financial institution is an organization that offers financial services to its customers or members. The primary function of financial institutions is to channel funds from lenders to borrowers. The Chief examiners report (2019), revealed that question on this topic was attempted by most candidates. But those who attempted it presented scanty answers.

### Circular flow of Income

This is the transfer of funds and receipts from factor services as well as currently created output between domestic businesses and households. At the secondary school level, discussions on the circular flow of income assume a two-sector economy which involves households and firms. This topic is very popular with students especially the aspect of calculating the multiplier effect and the arrangement of its diagram. Because most students cannot draw and label diagrams properly and they have a phobia of questions relating to calculation (Chief Examiner's Report, 2018); question on this topic was not attempted by students in the achievement test administered by the researcher.

### Privatisation and Commercialisation

Privatisation is the act or process of handing over control of a company, enterprise, agency, public service, or piece of property from the public sector (the state or government) to the private sector (a corporation that runs for a private profit) or to private non-profit organisations. While commercialisation is the process of introducing a new product or production into the market. These topics are equally important as their knowledge will enable students to understand the processes involved in transferring ownership from the government to private individuals and the process of making a new product known in the market (Edu, 2012). The chief examiner's report (2018), shows that most candidates who attempted questions on this topic gave definitions that were not appropriate. Candidates' overall responses to the questions

fell below expectations. The main problem students had with these topics is thinking that they are two closely related terms and often defining them wrongly.

### 2.3 Teachers' Effectiveness and Students' Academic Achievement

Every country's educational system depends on its teachers, who are the hubs around which it all revolves. As a result, it is believed that the effectiveness of the teachers has a critical role in how well the students perform in the classroom. A teacher is a professional who consciously and purposefully imparts knowledge to a student who has less experience by utilizing instructional materials, methods, and strategies along with a wealth of experience, training, skills, competences, attitudes, and content knowledge. Teachers have continued to get criticism for their poor attitudes and lack of requisite professional qualifications as a result of their poor performance and negative attitudes. In literature, low academic achievement among Nigerian students has been attributed to instructors' ineffectiveness in carrying out their duties, unfavourable attitudes toward their jobs, and unsatisfactory pedagogical skills (Adu, 2015; Aliyu et al., 2021).

According to studies, teachers' attitudes considerably influenced how attentive their students were in class, and students' attitudes also had an impact on how they approached their work. Significant correlation exists between the philosophy of an economist and the learning philosophy of the students. The students will learn more, their skills and competencies will improve, their level of confidence in the teacher will rise, and vice versa, if the teachers are displaying teaching effectiveness, positive attitude personality traits that support the students' learning, share knowledge in multiple ways, foster learning and cooperation, and encourage the students to come forward and show participation in the class activities. Adu, (2015) found that effectiveness in instructional processes which includes teachers' personality traits and attitudes have positive relationship with students' academic achievement.

Whereas Aliyu et al., (2021) found a weakly positive relationship between economic teachers' attitudes and students' academic achievement in economic in secondary school, Bauchi South, according to a study that examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward economics, students' attitudes toward learning it and their academic achievement in the subject.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive research design, which is considered appropriate because the study assessed the existing characteristics of student, that is, perceived difficult topics in Economics and how this affects their academic achievement in the subject. The working population of the study includes all the over 18,000 senior secondary school students offering Economics in Ojo Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria. At 5% margin of error, a sample size of 377 students of SSS 3 was selected from the population, using simple random sampling technique. SSS 3 students were considered appropriate for the because the perceived difficult topics in Economics cut across the SSS 1 - 3 curriculum content.

The instruments for the research are in threefold - Students' Perceived Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (SPDTEQ), Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire (TEQ) and Students' Achievement Test (SAT). The validity of the instruments were established by experts in the field of Economics Education and the reliability was determined using test retest method. All data collected were analysed using descriptive statistic and inferential statistics. Simple percentage was used to analysed items on the research question, Regression Analysis to test hypothesis one while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test hypothesis two at 0.05 level of significance, through statistical package for social sciences version 23.

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings resulting from the analysis of the data gathered are herein presented in order to

address the research question and hypothesis. Out of the 377 copies of Students Perceived Difficult Topics Questionnaire (SPDTEQ) and Students Achievement Test (SAT) distributed, 325 copies were returned and analysed. Below is a summary and discussion of the findings:

TABLE I  
Biodata of Respondents

Distribution of Schools		
Schools	Frequency	Percent
Awori College	65	20.0
Command Sec Sch	81	25.0
Govt. College, Ijanikin	57	17.5
Ajangbadi High School	68	20.9
Community Sec Sch	54	16.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100</b>
Age Distribution		
Age Range	Frequency	Percent
14-16	260	80.0
17 years and above	65	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender Distribution		
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	130	40.0
Female	187	57.5
Missing System	8	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field work 2022

According to the table above, 20% of the entire sample was conducted in Awori College, 25% was conducted in Command Secondary School, 17.5% was conducted in Government College, Ijanikin, and 20.9% was conducted in Ajangbadi High School while the remaining 16.6% was conducted in Community Secondary School. On Age distribution, 80% of the respondents are between the ages of 14-16years while 20% are above 17yrs of age. It can be seen also from the table that, 40% of the entire sample are male while the remaining 57.5% represent the proportion of female. 2.5% of the respondents did not fill this section in the questionnaire.

#### 4.1 Research Question

What are senior secondary school students' perceived difficult topics in Economics in Lagos State Education District V?

TABLE II  
Students' Perceived Difficult topics in Economics

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percent	Rank
A1	What aspects of Economics listed below do you consider most difficult? Pick one only			
	Definitions of Concepts and Terms	74	22.8	3rd
	Calculations and Statistics	89	27.4	1st
	Explanation of terms	27	8.3	5th
	Graphs and Tables	86	26.5	2nd
	History	30	9.2	4th
	Others, specify .....	--	--	--
	Missing System	19	5.8	6th
	<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100</b>	
A2	Which of these topics do you consider most difficult to comprehend? Pick one only			
	Demand and Supply	54	16.6	2nd
	Production and Cost function	43	13.2	4th
	National Income Accounting	48	14.8	3rd
	Fiscal and Monetary policy	16	4.9	9th
	Economic System	20	6.2	7th
	Price control	34	10.4	5th
	Financial Institution	22	6.8	6th
	Circular flow of Income	68	20.9	1st
	Privatization and Commercialization	20	6.2	7th
	Others, specify .....	--	--	--
	<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Field work 2022

It can be seen from Table II above that, 22.8% of the respondents considered aspects relating to definition of concepts and terms most difficult in Economics, 27.4% chose calculations and statistics as most difficult, 8.3% selected explanation of terms, 26.5% considered graphs and tables most difficult, 9.2% tilted towards history as most difficult in Economics, while 5.8% of the respondents did not fill any of the fields. Judging from the table, greatest percentage of the students chose calculations and statistics as most difficult aspect of Economics with overall highest 27.4% and the lowest in ranking of the difficulty is explanation of terms having 8.3%. Similarly, students of Economics in Ojo Local Government of Lagos State Education District V predominantly ascribed difficulty to Circular

flow of Income more than any other topic on the list. While Fiscal and monetary policy was least subscribed to as a difficult subject by the students.

#### 4.2 Test of Hypothesis One: $H_{01}$

Senior secondary school students perceived difficult topics does not have any significant influence on academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State Education District V. This hypothesis was tested using Regression Analysis with Perceived Difficult Topics in Economics (PDTE) as the independent variable and Academic Achievement in Economics (AAE) as the dependent variable, presented below:

TABLE IIIa  
Determination coefficient

Summary of Model				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.652a	.288	.251	.73405

a. Independent Variable: PDTE

TABLE IIIb  
ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.739	1	8.739	36.522	.000a
	Residual	68.059	324	.514		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>76.798</b>	<b>325</b>			

a. Independent Variable: PDTE

b. Dependent Variable: AAE

TABLE IIIc  
Coefficients of Regression  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.297	.318		12.581	.000
	PDTE	.404	.062	.652	3.095	.000

a. Dependent Variable: AAE

Source: Field work 2022

Table IIIa above presents the result of the regression estimate of PDTE on AAE. The intercept coefficient ( $\beta_0$ ) is 5.297 with standard error (0.318), t-stat (12.581). and p-value (0.000). The slope coefficient ( $\beta_1$ ) of Perceived Difficult Topics in Economics (PDTE) to Academic Achievement in Economics (AAE) is 0.404 with standard error (0.62), t-stat. (3.095) and p-value (0.000). The slope coefficient ( $\beta_1$ ) is positive. This implies that Perceived Difficult Topics in Economics has positive influence on Academic Achievement in Economics. With the p-value of the t-statistic of 0.000 (less than 5), PDTE is thus positively significant to improve AAE. Emphatically, this positive significance is also indicated by the F-statistic in Table IIIb with the P-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The R-square value (determination coefficient) in Table IIIa of 0.288 implies that

Perceived Difficult Topics in Economics (PDTE) account for 28.8% of the total variations in Academic Achievement in Economics (AAE). The remaining 71.2% are likely due to factors not included in the model as represented by the error term equation. This implies that Senior Secondary School Students' Perceived Difficult Topics in Economics has influence on their academic achievement in the subject.

#### 4.3 Test of Hypothesis Two: $H_{02}$

There is no significant relationship between teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievement in Economics in Lagos State Education V. This hypothesis was tested with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis.

TABLE IV  
Correlation between teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievement in Economics

		PDTE	AAE
Teachers' Effectiveness (TE)	Pearson Correlation	1	.573
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	325	325
Students' Academic Achievement in Economics (AAE)	Pearson Correlation	.573	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	325	325

Source: Field work 2022

Table IV above presents the correlation between teachers' effectiveness (TE) and students' academic achievement in Economics (SAAE). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) gave a value of 0.573 which is approximately 0.57. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between TE and SAAE. Since  $p < 0.05$ , then the correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Meaning that there is significant relationship between the Teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievement in Economics among senior secondary school students in Lagos State Education District V.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that a greater number of senior secondary school students considered topics in Economics relating to calculations and statistics as most difficult. It was found also that perceived difficult topics in Economics has significant relationship with students' academic achievement in the subject, because it was observed that most of the student who think Economics is a difficult subject in the questionnaire could not attempt any question in the achievement test. This result is in agreement with the findings of Adu et al., (2009) that quantitative ability of students have a positive influence on their academic achievement in Economics. Also, in agreement with findings of this study, is the report of Inayati et al., (2018) who submitted that the slow progress and learning difficulties experienced by students in mathematics affect

their academic achievement in Economics. However, the level of difficulty that students ascribe to the perceived difficult topics varies according to type. Generally, senior secondary school students consider topics or aspects of economics that revolve around illustrating with graphs and tables (especially labelling), calculation and statistics most difficult. The findings of this study also revealed that teachers' effectiveness has a positive relationship with students' academic achievement in Economics. This is in consonance with the findings of Adu (2015) and Aliyu et al (2021) whose researches found positive correlation between teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievements. The following recommendations are made in line with the findings of this study to improve students' academic achievement in Economics;

- It is suggested that Economics, especially the difficult topics, should be taught in the classrooms in secondary schools with more activity-oriented and less theory-based teaching methods.
- Students should be encouraged to take extra practice in areas relating to calculations such as demand and supply, and circular flow of income. This is because most of the perceived difficult topics in Economics relate to mathematics. More so, Economics is related to mathematics.
- Teachers' effectiveness should also be improved by means of adopting appropriate teaching methods, positive attitudes as well as wealth of training and professional development to upscale academic achievement in Economics.

## 5.1 Suggestions for Further Research

On the basis of methods, this study made use of the quantitative research methods. However, in subsequent studies, qualitative research methods can be used. This means that instruments such as interviews and focus group discussions instead of questionnaires can be used in further studies. Also, moderating variables especially with regards to the demographic characteristics of the students such as their gender and age can be used in subsequent studies.

In terms of study population and sector, this study made use of senior secondary school students. However, teachers can also be sampled in subsequent studies. Primary, junior secondary schools and tertiary school population/sector can be used for further researches. This study focused on a district in Lagos state. Other districts in the state and even other Southwest states could be used in subsequent studies so as to confirm and generalize the results across the Southwest region of Nigeria.

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