

Teachers' Competence in Using Cooperative Learning Strategy in Teaching Economics in Secondary Schools in Anambra State Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the Economics teachers' competence in using cooperative learning strategy in teaching economics in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Out of the six education zones in Anambra state namely; Onitsha, Aguata, Nnewi, Otuocha, Ogidi and Awka, three education zones which are Awka, Aguata and Ogidi were randomly selected for the study. 150 Economics teachers' in the three zones were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling for the study. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The design for the study was a descriptive survey and a questionnaire titled Economics teachers' competence in the use of cooperative learning, structured by the researchers was used to gather data from the respondent. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Result from the study show that the Economics teachers' are competent but not very competent in planning and preparing students for, conducting and assessing cooperative learning tasks considering the standard deviations that are far from the mean. The findings from the test of hypotheses revealed that teachers qualification and years of teaching experience are significant factors in the competence possessed by economics teachers in using cooperative learning strategy. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which include that government should re-train teacher's on cooperative learning strategy through seminars and workshops and that Economics teachers should always employ learner centered approach to teaching like; cooperative learning strategy so that students will become accountable for their learning as they all make contributions to the learning process and thereby make the study of economics more interesting.

Key words: Cooperative learning, Teacher Competence, Years of teaching experiences, Economics.

1. Introduction

In order to teach effectively, the teacher must have sufficient knowledge about the students in addition to the appropriate method of teaching. Modern researchers indicate that if proper and suitable methods and techniques are used, even the students of less intelligence can easily learn (Mahmood, 2011). These modern techniques includes; direct instruction, cooperative learning, Mastering learning and project based instruction (Mahmood, 2011). Teachers have the option of structuring lessons competitively, individualistically, or cooperatively. The decision teachers make in structuring lessons can influence students' interaction with others knowledge and attitude (Carson, 1990; Johnson and Johnson, 1991). In a competitively structured classroom, students engage in a win-lose struggle in an effort to determine who is best (Johnson and Johnson, 1991). In competitive classroom, students perceive that they can obtain their goals only if the other students in the class fail to obtain their own goals (Johnson , Johnson and Halubec, 2002). Students in independently structured classrooms work by themselves to accomplish goals unrelated to those of the other students (Johnson and Johnson, 1991). In a cooperative learning classroom students work together to obtain group goals that cannot be obtained by working alone or competitively. In this classroom structure, students discuss subject matter, help each other learn, and provide encouragement for member of the group (Johnson, Johnson and Halubec, 2002).

The effectiveness of the use of cooperative learning in teaching depends so much on the teacher who is the facilitator. Although Cooperative learning has many advantages, it also has many limitations which could cause the process to be more complicated (Sharan, 2010). These limitations include; controlling the class, grouping of the students, assessing task and so on. Teachers who wish to use cooperative learning in their instructional delivery must be competent; they must consider the students, their different learning skills, their cultural background, personality and even their gender when dealing with cooperative method of instruction. A competent teacher connects with his or her students in a personal and targeted way. Most importantly the teacher has a responsibility to make the teaching experience enjoyable for students (Mayer, 2011). Despite the importance of cooperative learning, it has been observed that many teachers lack the knowledge and skills to make learning interactive, the knowledge of cooperative learning and how it works (Johnson, 1990). Most teachers experience challenges when they place students in a group and expect them to cooperate. The

challenges include, specifying instructional objective, determining group size, classroom arrangement, assigning groups, assigning task, explaining criteria for success, structuring positive interdependence and accountability and specifying desired behaviour. (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1999). In all of these, there is need for a competent teacher.

Teachers' qualification and years of teaching experience are factors that might influence teacher competence in the use of cooperative learning which this study tried to ascertain. A qualified teacher diversifies his method of instruction and uses more student-centered approach in teaching and experienced teachers are more effective in teaching than the less experienced teachers' (Schwad, 2005).

In this paper, the researchers investigated teacher competence in the use of cooperative learning and also whether qualification and years of teaching experience has any influence on competence possess by economics teachers in Anambra state, Nigeria.

2. Definition of Cooperative Learning strategy.

Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small group so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Dishon, 1994). Cooperative learning as an instructional methodology provides opportunity for students to develop skills in group interactions and in working with others that are needed in today's world (Carol, 1999; Imel, 1999; and Kerka, 1990). According to Johnson and Johnson (1999) cooperative learning experience promote more positive attitude towards the instructional experience than competitive or individualistic method. In addition, cooperative learning should result in positive effects on students achievement and retention of information (Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Slavin, 2000; Dishon & O'Leary, 2004). Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small team, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of lecturing activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning achievement but also for group success. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it. Keachie, (2000), opined that students are more likely to acquire critical thinking skills and meta-cognitive learning strategies, such as learning how to learn in small group cooperative setting as opposed by listening to lectures. Cooperative learning is a relationship between a group of student that requires positive interdependence (a sense of sink or swim together), individual accountability (each of us has to contribute and learn), interpersonal skills (communication, trust, leadership, decision making and conflict resolution) face-to-face interaction, and processing (reflecting on how well the team is functioning and how to function even better) (Johnson and Johnson, 2001). For practical purposes, cooperative learning can be viewed as a learning method where students work together in small groups to learn and are responsible for their team mates' learning as well as their own.

2.2. Teacher Competence and Cooperative Learning strategy.

There are two sets of qualities that characterize a successful professional teacher; teacher effectiveness and teacher competence (Medley and Shannon, 1994). Consideration will be on the teacher competence which is the basis of this study. Teacher competence is the extent to which a teacher has the knowledge and skills (Feryal, 2010). Cooperative learning activities involve carefully structured learning activities in which students are held accountable for their contribution, participation and learning. Students are also provided incentives to work as team in teaching others and learning from others (Slavin, 2000).

The effectiveness of the use of cooperative learning depends so much on the teacher who is the facilitator. Although Cooperative learning has many advantages, it also has many limitations which could cause the process to be more complicated (Sharan, 2010). These limitations include; controlling the class, grouping of the students, assessing task and so on. Teachers who wish to use cooperative learning in their instructional delivery must be competent, they must consider the students, their different learning skills, their cultural background, personality and even their gender when dealing with cooperative method of instruction. A competent teacher connects with his or her students in a personal and targeted way. Malm (2006) emphasized the teacher competence as a tool to promote learning. The teachers competence should include; skills in classroom methodology, classroom management, assessment and recording (Malm, 2006). However, a competent teacher should possess the following quality according to (Medley, 2002; Medley and Shannon, 2002): teacher effectiveness (the degree to which a teacher achieves desired effects upon students) secondly is teacher content competence (the extent to which a teacher has the knowledge and skills) and finally, teacher performance (how a teacher behaves in the process of teaching). These qualities promote learning and they cannot work independently of the other. However, because of the difficulty in organizing students in groups, teachers overlook and avoid using cooperative method of instruction. It has been observed that 70% of teachers do not use this cooperative learning method of instruction (David, 2001). McIntyre, (2009) posits that most teachers lack the competence needed to

conduct cooperative learning in terms of explaining to students what will occur, the rules which include; contributing to the team effort; listening to teammates, helping other team members; and asking the teacher for help only if it is a question of everyone in the group. In terms of competence to assess cooperative learning, teachers who use cooperative learning and are competent generally have three main assessment in mind according to the North American Division Office of Education (NADOE) (2004), how to assess teamwork within a group, how to assess group project, how to assess individual work within the group. Therefore, teachers are important figures in any leaning strategy. They play important role in cooperative learning process. Without the teacher, cooperative learning cannot be structured. This is because they serve as the facilitators, resource and the observer during all the cooperative learning activities. The teacher is expected to be competent in order to use this strategy effectively.

2.3 The Challenges Faced by Teachers in using Cooperative Learning

Many teachers experience challenges when they place students in a group and expect them to cooperate. Johnson and Johnson (1990) points out, “simply placing students in groups and telling them to work together does not, in and of itself, produce cooperation”. Trying to get students to work cooperatively is one of the most frustrating aspects of cooperative learning (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

A popular reaction to cooperative learning is that it creates discipline problems and renders the teacher helpless in controlling the noise level and appropriate conversations in the classroom. Another problem that occurs when selecting groups is that, some students might have problems with working with others when the groups are teacher selected. However, if the teacher allows the students to form their own group the results can be just as adverse. Group of all low or high achievers could form a group because of distinct ethnic groups or color. Students selection can also bring about feeling of hostility or hurt when students are the last to be selected and placed in a group. It could be extremely difficult to effectively use cooperative learning by teachers in the classroom if it is the class first experience. It is a strange transition from a transitional and competitive way of leaning to a more innovative and collaborative style of learning for the student. Sharan (2010) pointed out that cooperative learning could be more challenging and with limitation that could cause the teacher to avoid use or make the process more complicated. Sharan opined that due to the fact that cooperative learning is constantly changing, it is possible that the teacher may become confused and lack complete understanding of the method. It is also possible that the teachers who implement the cooperative learning strategy may be challenged with resistance and hostility from students who believe that they are being held back by their slower teammates or by students who are less confident and feel that they are being ignored or demeaned by their team.

2.4 Cooperative Learning strategy and Economics as a Subject

Cooperative learning method is cross curricular as has been stated earlier which means that it can be used for all subject including Economics. Since Economics contains abstract concepts, lots of collaborative work is needed not only to make student understand it, but to teach it in a way that the students will develop other skills in the process like, social skill, communication skills, creative thinking skills, etc. Also cooperative learning if used to teach Economics can allow learners create meaning for themselves while in the group through the teachers support. This is why the researcher intends to examine the Economic teachers’ competence in the use of cooperative learning method in terms of planning for it, preparing student for it, conducting and assessing cooperative learning task. Also other factors that might influence teachers’ competence will equally be tested like qualification and years of teaching experience.

Qualification of a teacher which is a factor that might influence teacher competence has been widely reported as having considerable influence on the level of achievement in school subjects (Uzoagulu, 2000). However, experienced teachers are more effective in teaching than the less experienced teachers’ (Schwad, 2005). According to the above author, experienced teachers diversify method of instruction. This is not the same for less experienced teachers.

3. Statement of the Problem

Teachers have historically focused on the delivery of a curriculum on one level of academic ability to students of varying abilities. Students have traditionally been isolated communicatively and physically since they are meant to work alone, work quietly and stop talking. Teachers and the textbooks have been the sources of knowledge and authority in the classroom. This traditional system has failed to motivate students in their academic pursuit. Therefore, Differentiated instruction, accelerated pacing and advanced level material that go beyond arbitrary grade level cutoffs are essential, like cooperative learning. In cooperative learning, students’ are engaged in the learning process instead of passively listening to the teacher. The problem has been that teachers who are the

instructor, facilitator and the major figure in teaching and learning may not be competent to use innovative strategies to make teaching effective. Economics which contains a lot of abstract concepts require a lot of collaborative work among learners but Economics teachers' do not use this cooperative learning method to teach these abstract concepts in economics and so, the question to be asked is, is it lack of competence to use cooperative learning as a method of instruction in economics or is it due to other challenges that limit the use of cooperative learning among Economics teachers in secondary that hinder the use of cooperative learning method for Economics instruction?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine Economics teachers' competence in the use of cooperative learning strategy in teaching Economics in secondary schools. Specifically, the study seeks to assess;

1. Economics teachers' competence in planning for cooperative learning instruction.
2. Economics teachers' competence in preparing student for cooperative learning.
3. Economics teachers' competence in conducting of cooperative learning tasks.
4. Economics teachers' competence in assessing cooperative learning tasks.

This study will also test if qualification and years of teaching experience are significant factors in competence possessed by Economics teachers' in using cooperative learning.

5. Significance of the Study

This study will benefit teachers of Economics, students, other researchers, and the curriculum developers. Theoretically, this study will be a vehicle for more knowledge since cooperative learning which it promotes encourages social interaction whereby people come together to share their expertise with others. This social interaction helps to promote student self esteem and group affiliation.

The findings of this study will establish the need if any, for retraining of teachers', through workshops and seminar to improve their knowledge of cooperative learning process, the strategies to use, the procedures and the skill needed for good academic performance in Economics.

The student will benefit from the findings of this study if only the teacher uses the method. Teachers use of cooperative learning strategy, will improve student – student interaction, self esteem, academic performance, group affiliation, accommodation among students since they have to work in groups, tolerating each other mistakes so that success is achieved.

The findings of this study will encourage curriculum planners, to emphasis the use of cooperative learning strategy. By so doing, the student's will take major responsibility in their accomplishment of curriculum learning task. This will also make the curriculum task easier to accomplish since the students and the teacher will have to be involved.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study;

1. How competent are Economics teachers' in planning for cooperative learning instruction?
2. How competent are Economics teachers' in preparing students for cooperative learning?
3. How competent are Economics teachers' in conducting cooperative learning task?
4. How competent are Economics teachers' in the assessment of cooperative learning task?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level significance

H₀₁: Qualification is not a significant factor in the competence possessed by Economics teachers' in using cooperative learning strategy in teaching.

H₀₂: Years of teaching experience is not a significant factor in the competence possessed by Economics teachers' in using cooperative learning strategy in teaching.

Methodology

The design of the study is a descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in three education zones in Anambra State of Nigeria, namely; Awka, Aguata, and Ogidi. The population of the study is 294 Economics teachers' in 258 senior secondary school in the six education zones in Anambra state, Nigeria. Three education zones out of the six education zones in Anambra State were sampled using random sampling (slip of paper) and 150 Economics teachers from the three education zones were sampled using proportionate stratified

random sampling technique. 51 from Awka, 27 from Aguata and 39 from Ogidi. A structured questionnaire was used to carry out the study. The instrument was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire is titled Economics Teachers' Competence in the use of Cooperative Learning Questionnaire (ETCCLQ). It contains two sections A and B. Section A deals with personal bio data of the teachers while Section B consists of items on competences of Economics teachers in using cooperative learning in their instruction. The items were grouped into four categories on competence which include; planning cooperative learning task, preparing students for cooperative learning task, conducting cooperative learning task and Evaluating cooperative learning task. Highly competent ---4, Competent--3, Fairly competent---2, Not competent---1, was used for cluster 1, 2, 3, and 5

The ETCCLQ was trail tested by administering it to 15 senior secondary school Economics teachers in Nsukka Education zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The reliability of internal consistency was established using the Cronbach's Alpha method. A reliability indices of 0.775, 0.782, 0.803, and 0.86 for cluster1, 2, 3, and 4 were established. Also a reliability of 0.805 was established for all the clusters. This shows that the instrument is reliable and therefore appropriate to be used for the study. The data was collected using three research assistants. Statistical mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. In analyzing ETCCLQ which is based on 4 point rating scale, the decision depended on the item with mean score; 3.50- 4.49 = Highly Competent (HC) , 2.50-3.49 =Competent (C), 1.50-2.49 =Fairly Competent (FC) 0.50-1.49 =No Competence (NC)

Result

Research Question 1: How competent are Economics teachers in planning for cooperative learning? **Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Economics Teachers Competence in Planning for Cooperative Learning.**

S/N	NO=150	TOTAL	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
	How competent are you in planning for cooperative learning task				
1	Setting cooperative goal structure	412	2.7400	.86257	Competent
2	Selecting lesson for cooperative learning interaction	468	3.1200	.71344	Competent
3	Determining group composition	478	3.1867	.60631	Competent
4	Selecting group size that is most appropriate (in terms of number makeup)	455	3.0333	.71809	Competent
5	Using sticker to divide students for assignment into group	448	2.9800	.79824	Competent
6	Providing materials appropriate for the task e.g, reading materials, answer sheet; depending on the type of task	433	2.8867	.82362	Competent
7	Stating the amount of time available	424	2.8267	.87275	Competent
8	Describing the nature of the task	445	2.9600	.85828	Competent
9	Arranging the learning environment	442	2.9467	.85755	Competent
10	Choosing the evaluation system	432	2.8800	.82673	Competent
11	Selecting a consistent reward structure	432	2.8800	.85859	Competent
12	Setting up a system of monitoring the group as they work	430	2.8667	.79145	Competent
13	Determining assessment tools	424	2.8200	.89044	Competent
14	Determining ways in which the assessment tools will be used	432	2.8800	.89683	Competent

Table 1 above shows the mean response and the standard deviation of the Economics teachers' on their competence in planning for cooperative learning task. From the above data, items 1-14 with mean scores 2.74, 3.12, 3.18, 3.03, 2.98, 2.88, 2.82, 2.96, 2.94, 2.88, 2.88, 2.86, 2.82, and 2.88 show that the Economics teachers are competent in planning for cooperative learning task since their mean is above the mean benchmark of 2.50. Based on the standard deviation of the items from item 1-14, it shows that the teachers are competent but not very competent in planning for cooperative learning task since their standard deviations are far from the mean scores.

Research Question 2: How competent are Economics teachers' in preparing students' for cooperative learning task?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Economics Teachers' Competence in Preparing Students' for Cooperative Learning Task.

NO=150

S/NO	ITEMS	TOTAL	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
	How competent are you in preparing students for cooperative learning				
15	Introducing the lesson topic	452	3.0133	.88981	Competent
16	Selecting objectives for the lesson	480	3.2067	.70755	Competent
17	Stating behavioural objectives	476	3.1733	.67303	Competent
18	Explaining the background knowledge required for the topic	459	3.0600	.65774	Competent
19	Structuring the cooperative aspect of the lesson	464	3.0933	.67899	Competent
20	Listing concepts and principles needed to be understood by the student	438	2.9267	.76935	Competent
21	Explaining the academic task to the student	425	2.8333	.81444	Competent
22	Describing the specific procedure to be followed in the cooperative activity	419	2.7933	.82979	Competent
23	Grouping the students heterogeneously	434	2.8933	.84462	Competent
24	Assigning roles to group members like the presenter, elaborator, secretary/recorder, reflector e.t.c.	436	2.9133	.79374	Competent
25	Stating the functional procedures of the group	449	2.9933	.82329	Competent
26	Explaining the criteria for success in the class work	436	2.9133	.78524	Competent
27	Giving students time to develop the interpersonal skills needed to make an effective cooperative learning.	445	2.9667	.79779	Competent
28	Creating positive interdependence by explaining to student that they are not only responsible for their own learning but for each other's learning.	454	3.0467	.78009	Competent
29	Ensuring that each student feels responsible for learning the materials provided for instruction	451	3.0067	.83140	Competent
30	Describing to the students method that can be used to get to a decision (group processing)	445	2.9600	.81000	Competent
31	Describing the cooperative skills you expect them to employ	434	2.8933	.80391	Competent
32	Setting the time limit for the activity	439	2.9267	.85213	Competent
33	Answering the students questions prior to the cooperative learning activity commences	430	2.8600	.80293	Competent

Table 2 above shows the mean responses and standard deviations of Economics teachers' competence in preparing students for cooperative learning. Items 15-33 with mean scores 3.01, 3.20, 3.20, 3.17, 3.06, 3.09, 2.92, 2.83, 2.79, 2.89, 2.91, 2.96, 3.04, 3.00, 2.96, 2.89, and 2.86 shows that the Economics teachers' are competent in preparing students for cooperative learning task since their mean scores are above the mean benchmark of 2.50. Considering the standard deviations of the items from 15-33, they are all far from the mean scores which imply that although the Economics teacher's are competent, they are not very competent in preparing students for cooperative learning task.

Research Question 3: How competent are Economics teachers' in conducting cooperative learning task?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of the Economics Teachers' Competence in Conducting Cooperative Learning Task.

NO=150

S/NO	ITEMS	TOTAL	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
	How competent are you in conducting cooperative learning task				Competent
34	Determining the final grouping of the students	466	3.1067	.73409	Competent
35	Observing the students during cooperative learning task	465	3.1000	.73958	Competent
36	Playing the role of a facilitator	452	3.0133	.74173	Competent
37	Being resourceful to the student during the task	439	2.9267	.75170	Competent
38	Pacing among the group during the cooperative activity	422	2.8133	.81419	Competent
39	Scaffolding when necessary	426	2.8456	.79462	Competent
40	Controlling noise level	431	2.8733	.85371	Competent
41	Keeping activity short and simple	443	2.9533	.86960	competent
42	Time management during the task	437	2.9133	.86650	competent
43	Responding to questions from the groups	436	2.9067	.83824	Competent
44	Summarizing the lesson and allowing time for reflection	451	3.0067	.79001	Competent

Table 3 above reveals the mean response and standard deviation of the Economics teachers' competence in conducting cooperative learning task. Based on the data, items 34-44 with mean scores 3.10, 3.10, 3.01, 2.92, 2.81, 2.87, 2.95, 2.90 and 3.00 shows that Economics teacher's are competent in conducting cooperative learning tasks. From the deviations of item 34-44, it shows that the Economics teachers' are not very competent in conducting cooperative learning task because the deviations which are supposed to compliment the mean are far from the mean scores.

Research Question 4: How competent are Economics teachers' in assessing cooperative learning task?

Table 4: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Economics Teachers' Competence in Assessing Cooperative Learning Task.

NO=150

	ITEMS	TOTAL	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
	How competent are you in assessing cooperative learning task				
45	Developing an assessment strategy for cooperative learning	471	3.1400	.70502	Competent
46	Using formative assessment for cooperative learning	463	3.0867	.73216	Competent
47	Using summative assessment for cooperative learning	466	3.1067	.70613	Competent
48	Proper Timing of assessment activities	452	3.0133	.79416	Competent
49	Assessment at group level	518	3.4533	4.68553	Very Competent
50	Assessment at individual level	437	2.9133	.85872	Competent
51	Requesting student report or oral exam during task	428	2.8533	.84652	Competent
52	Providing detailed description of grading, Checklist and Rubrics	440	2.9333	.81650	Competent
53	Grading group products	432	2.8867	.85559	Competent
54	Assessing individual self accountability	430	2.8600	.75999	Competent
55	Allowing an opportunity for groups to assess the work of their peers (peer assessment)	431	2.8667	.87214	Competent
56	Providing feedback on the relative merits of contribution	427	2.8467	.84135	Competent
57	Collecting observation data	430	2.8667	.86441	Competent

Table 4 above reveals the mean response and standard deviation of the Economics teachers' competence in assessing cooperative learning task. Based on the above data, items 42-57 with mean scores 3.14, 3.08, 3.10, 3.01, 3.45, 2.85, 2.93, 2.88, 2.86, 2.86, 2.84, and 2.86, which are above the mean bench mark 2.50, show that Economics teachers are competent in assessing cooperative learning. But based on the deviations, they are not very competent except item 49 with standard deviation 4.68. This implies that Economics teachers are very competent in assessing cooperative learning task at group level. This is so because the deviation 4.68 is close to the mean score 3.45.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Qualification is not a significant factor in the competence possessed by Economics teachers' in using cooperative learning strategy in teaching.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Mean Responses of Economics Teachers on their Competence in Cooperative Learning Based on Qualification.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	4.685	6	.781	4.244	.001	Reject
Within Groups	26.312	143	.184			
Total	30.998	149				

Qualification is significant at 0.05 probability level

From table 5 above, it is revealed that significant value is less than the level of significance on which the decision is based (0.05). That is 0.001 < 0.05. The difference observed is significant and hence, the null hypotheses which says that Economics teachers' qualification is not a significant factor in the mean rating of competence possessed by Economics teachers in cooperative learning is rejected.

Hypotheses 2: Years of teaching experience is not a significant factor in the competence possessed by Economics teachers' in using cooperative learning strategy in teaching.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Mean Responses of Economics Teachers on their Competence in Cooperative Learning Based on Years of Teaching Experience

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	1.847	3	.616	3.083	.029	Reject
Within Groups	29.151	146	.200			
Total	30.998	149				

Year of service is significant at 0.05 probability level

From table 6 above, it is observed that the significant value is less than the 0.05 level of significance in which the study is based. That is 0.29 < 0.05. the difference shows significance and hence the null hypotheses which says that Economics teachers years of teaching experience is a significant factor in the mean rating of competence possessed in cooperative learning is rejected.

Summary of findings

The following were the findings;

1. Though the Economics teachers are competent in planning, preparing students for, conducting and assessing cooperative learning task they are not very competent.
2. That qualification and years of teaching experience are significant factors in the competence possessed by Economics teachers in cooperative learning.

Discussion of findings

On how competent Economics teacher's are in planning for cooperative learning method, findings reveal that though Economics teachers are competent but they are not very competent in planning for cooperative learning task considering the standard deviation values which are far from the mean scores. The competence they possess are in setting cooperative goals and lesson, determining group composition and size, providing materials for the task and describing the nature of the task, stating time limit, choosing evaluation system and criteria for success. This finding is in contrast with the view of Johnson and Smith (1991), who opined that most teachers lack the ability to plan for cooperative learning method. According to Rogers and Johnson (1997), planning for cooperative learning needs a teacher who is competent for it to be effectively done.

The study also reveal that though Economics teachers are competent but they are not very competent in preparing for cooperative learning. Result shows that they are competent in introducing the lessons for cooperative learning, selecting cooperative learning objectives, explaining the background knowledge and academic task to the students, assigning role and stating functional procedures of the group. Also in explaining criteria for success, setting the time limit for students to develop interpersonal skills and create positive

interdependence, describing methods and skills which students can use to accomplish their tasks and finally answering their questions while on the task. Although they are competent but the level of competence is low. In preparing students for cooperative learning, Kagan and Kagan (2009) stated that trying to get students' to work cooperatively is one of the frustrating aspect of cooperative learning. The findings of this study contradicted the view of Dehley (1978) who pointed out that most teachers lack the competence in organizing the class for cooperative learning and also selecting groups which are part of the preparation of cooperative learning. It is true that teachers are not very competent but they are not totally incompetent.

The study reveals that Economics teachers possess competence needed in conducting cooperative learning task in terms of determining the final grouping, observing the students while on the task and being resourceful to them. Also the teachers are competent in scaffolding when necessary and controlling the noise level in the classroom, keeping activity short and simple and managing time effectively for reflections. This finding contracted the view of McIntyre (2009) who posited that most teachers lack the competence needed in explaining to the students what will occur and rules which include, contributing to the teams effort. Teachers completely do not lack the competence needed in conducting cooperative learning as McIntyre pointed out.

In assessing cooperative learning, findings revealed that Economics teachers' are very competent in assessing at group level. They are not very competent in summative and formative assessment. Also they are not very competent in grading individuals in the group, their self accountability and allowing opportunity for students to assess themselves. Findings also reveal that in collecting observation data, proper timing and giving details of the assessment tools like the checklist and rubrics, Economics teachers are not very competent. This is in contrast with Dehley (1994) who is of the view that one of the challenges of cooperative learning faced by the teachers is their inability to assess cooperative learning.

With regard to the gender, qualification, and years of teaching experience, findings revealed that qualification and years of teaching experience are significant factors in the competence the Economics teachers' possess of cooperative learning while gender is not a significant factor that determines competence in cooperative learning. There is no literature to support the findings of the test of hypotheses since no study has been carried out on the influence of gender, qualification and years of teaching experience on cooperative learning in this area of the study.

Educational Implications

The educational implications of the findings of this are that;

1. Since cooperative learning promotes learning, enhances student-student interaction, boosts self esteem in students and promotes personal and promotive interdependence; incompetence among teachers in cooperative learning will not allow the students' benefit from the method of learning.
2. Also, incompetence among teachers can mar the essence of cooperative learning which is to make learning more interactive and more effective for better academic performance.

Conclusion

Competence is needed of any teacher who wishes to employ this strategy in teaching and learning process. From the findings, Economics teachers' are competent but not very competent in planning for cooperative task, most especially in determining group composition. This conclusion was drawn from the fact that the deviations are very far from the mean scores. In preparing students' for cooperative learning, Economics teachers are also not very competent considering the deviations in the analysis. In terms of assessing cooperative learning task, Economics teachers' are not very competent, although they can conduct and assess cooperative learning task but not effectively since their competency level is not high. They are only very competent in assessing cooperative learning task at group level.

Based on the hypotheses, Economics teachers' qualification and year of teaching experience are significant factors in the competence they possess in cooperative learning. Gender on the other hand is not a significant factor in the competence possessed by Economics teachers in cooperative learning. However, incompetence among teachers can mar the essence of cooperative learning which is to make learning more interactive and more effective for better academic performance. Therefore, there is need for retraining of teachers through workshops and seminars on more innovative techniques of teaching such as cooperative learning. This will make learning more interesting and there by motivate learners to learn.

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