

INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JOS NORTH LGA, PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of teacher characteristics on students' attitudes toward Economics in secondary schools in Jos North LGA, Plateau State. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 250 Senior Secondary students using a structured questionnaire (TCSAQ), which was validated by experts and found to be reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74-0.87$). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. Findings revealed that all three teacher characteristic variables—content knowledge and communication skills ($\beta = 0.1824$, $p = 0.008$), personality traits ($\beta = 0.1607$, $p = 0.026$), and teaching methods and experience ($\beta = 0.5545$, $p = 0.000$)—had statistically significant positive effects on students' attitudes. Teaching methods and experience emerged as the strongest predictors. Demographic variables (sex, class) had no significant influence, while age approached significance ($p = 0.078$). The regression model explained 44.1% of the variance in students' attitudes [$F(6, 243) = 32.00$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.441$]. The study concluded that instructional quality, teacher subject mastery, interpersonal disposition, and pedagogical experience collectively shape students' attitudes toward Economics. Recommendations include sustained professional development, mentoring programmes, and differentiated instruction strategies for Economics teachers in Jos North LGA.

Keywords: Teacher Characteristics, Student Attitude, Economics Education, Secondary Schools, Jos North, Multiple Regression

Introduction

Education is widely regarded as a character-building process that develops students into rational, responsible, and capable individuals. As Nwala and Nwala (2025) posited,

educational institutions serve as seedbeds of culture in which young individuals are groomed to become patriots and nation-builders. Teachers leave lasting imprints through the training and guidance they provide; thus, teachers' instructional competence plays a crucial role in the dissemination of knowledge (Bala & Aliyu, 2021).

In Nigeria's secondary school curriculum, Economics holds a significant place, designed to develop students' critical thinking and equip them to address real-world economic challenges. According to Akarowhe (2018), economic knowledge is indispensable for sustainable national development. Despite these objectives, a persistent gap exists between the intended goals of Economics education and students' academic performance, prompting investigations into classroom-related factors that influence learning outcomes.

Students' attitudes toward a subject often correspond with their academic performance. Economics is frequently perceived as abstract and technically demanding due to its reliance on graphs, equations, and specialised terminology. Monotonous teaching approaches can discourage learners, while engaging instructional strategies can stimulate interest (Malacapay, 2024). A negative attitude toward Economics reduces classroom participation, lowers academic achievement, and limits students' interest in Economics-related careers.

Several studies have examined the influence of teacher variables on students' academic outcomes. Akinola, Nudgebesi, and Badmus (2025) found that learner-centred teaching methods significantly influenced Economics students' learning outcomes in Benue State. Olofin, Adesola, and Ajimuse (2024) identified lecturer quality and availability of instructional materials as significant predictors of students' positive attitudes toward Economics in Oyo-Ekiti.

Yidana and Yidana (2023), using structural equation modelling in Ghana, found that teacher personality traits and communication skills were the strongest predictors of positive student outcomes, while traditional teaching methods had no significant effect. Folorunsho, Olorisade, Bakare, and Afolab (2024) reported a strong positive relationship between teacher characteristics and students' SSCE performance in Kwara State. Gbadamosi and Jegede (2015) established, using multiple regression, a significant positive relationship between teacher competence, teaching methods, personality traits and students' achievement in Economics in Ekiti State.

Filade, Omozokpia, Uwannah, Amanze, Ajibola and Omotosho (2020) found a significant positive influence of students' attitudes on academic performance at the University of Lagos. These studies collectively underscore the importance of teacher characteristics, though most are conducted outside Jos North LGA, justifying the present study.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine the influence of teacher characteristics on secondary school students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA, Plateau State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the effect of teachers' content knowledge and communication skills on students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.

2. Assess how teachers' personality traits influence students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.
3. Investigate the impact of teachers' teaching methods and experience on students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of teachers' content knowledge and communication skills on students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA?
2. To what extent do teachers' personality traits influence students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA?
3. To what extent do teachers' teaching methods and experience influence students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA?

Hypotheses

1. Teachers' content knowledge and communication skills have no significant effect on students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.
2. Teachers' personality traits have no significant effect on students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.
3. Teachers' teaching methods and experience have no significant influence on students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design (Creswell, 2014). The target population was all SS1–SS3 Economics students in 22 public secondary schools in Jos North, Plateau State. A multi-stage sample of 250 students was drawn: five schools were purposively selected for geographical spread, then 50 students were randomly chosen per school (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Data were collected via the Teacher Characteristics and Student Attitude Questionnaire (TCSAQ), with Section A for demographics and Section B containing 24 Likert-type items (five-point scale) across four subscales: Content Knowledge & Communication Skills (6 items), Personality Traits (6 items), Teaching Methods & Experience (6 items), and Student Attitude (6 items). Content validity was confirmed by experts; reliability (Cronbach's alpha) ranged: Content Knowledge (0.81), Personality (0.77), Teaching Methods (0.64), Attitude (0.87), exceeding the 0.60 threshold (Nunnally, 1978). Permission was obtained, questionnaires were administered during class and retrieved immediately (100% response rate). Data were analysed using SPSS 25.0 via descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression ($\alpha = 0.05$), and VIF for multicollinearity. The decision rule for item means: ≥ 3.50 = Strongly Agree; 2.50–3.49 = Agree/Undecided; 1.50–2.49 = Disagree; < 1.50 = Strongly Disagree.

Results

Research Question 1: Effect of Teacher Content Knowledge and Communication Skills on Students' Attitude

Table 1: Item Means for Teacher Content Knowledge and Communication Skills

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
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Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
My teacher has an in-depth understanding of Economic concepts	2.28	1.32	Disagree
My teacher answers questions accurately without hesitation	2.28	1.29	Disagree
My teacher explains complex Economic theories in a simple way	2.41	1.33	Disagree
My teacher uses real-life examples to clarify lessons	2.41	1.40	Disagree
My teacher is always well-prepared and organised for class	2.34	1.38	Disagree
My teacher speaks clearly and is easy to understand	2.38	1.41	Disagree
Grand Mean	2.35	1.36	Disagree

Source: Field Survey, 2026. Scale: 4.50–5.00 = Strongly Agree; 3.50–4.49 = Agree; 2.50–3.49 = Undecided; 1.50–2.49 = Disagree; 1.00–1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 shows that the grand mean for teacher content knowledge and communication skills is 2.35 (SD = 1.36), which falls within the “Disagree” range on the five-point scale. This indicates that a considerable proportion of students do not strongly affirm their teachers’ content mastery and communication effectiveness. The highest-rated items were those relating to the use of real-life examples (M = 2.41) and explaining complex theories simply (M = 2.41), while in-depth conceptual understanding (M = 2.28) and answering without hesitation (M = 2.28) received the lowest scores. This finding suggests perceived gaps in teachers’ subject mastery that may warrant targeted intervention.

Research Question 2: Effect of Teacher Personality Traits on Students’ Attitude

Table 2: Item Means for Teacher Personality Traits

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
My teacher is approachable and easy to talk to	2.39	1.33	Disagree
My teacher shows enthusiasm and passion when teaching	2.34	1.35	Disagree
My teacher is patient when students do not understand immediately	2.23	1.25	Disagree
My teacher has a good sense of humour in class	2.31	1.37	Disagree
My teacher is fair and treats all students equally	2.54	1.33	Undecided
My teacher encourages students to ask questions	2.25	1.33	Disagree
Grand Mean	2.34	1.33	Disagree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The grand mean for teacher personality traits stands at 2.34 (SD = 1.33), indicating that students generally disagreed that their Economics teachers exhibit strong positive personality characteristics. The item on teacher fairness and equal treatment of students

recorded the highest mean score ($M = 2.54$), falling within the undecided range, while teacher patience recorded the lowest score ($M = 2.23$). These results suggest that students perceive a need for improvement in teachers' interpersonal dispositions.

Research Question 3: Effect of Teacher Teaching Methods and Experience on Students' Attitude

Table 3: Item Means for Teacher Teaching Methods and Experience

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
My teacher uses a variety of teaching methods (group work, quizzes, projects)	2.70	1.30	Undecided
My teacher connects current events to the topic	2.58	1.25	Undecided
My teacher provides timely and helpful feedback on assignments	2.48	1.34	Disagree
My teacher manages the classroom well, minimising disruptions	2.61	1.26	Undecided
My teacher integrates technology (videos, PPT, online tools) in lessons	2.84	1.26	Undecided
My teacher's years of experience make lessons richer and more credible	2.44	1.20	Disagree
Grand Mean	2.61	1.27	Undecided

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 reveals that the grand mean for teaching methods and experience is 2.61 ($SD = 1.27$), which falls within the "Undecided" range, the highest among the three teacher characteristic subscales. Integration of technology recorded the highest item mean ($M = 2.84$), suggesting students are most aware of, though not fully convinced by, technology use in their Economics classes. Provision of timely feedback ($M = 2.48$) and recognition of experience ($M = 2.44$) received relatively lower scores. These descriptive findings suggest that while teaching methods are the most prominent teacher characteristic in students' perceptions, there remains room for improvement.

Inferential Statistics

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1. Student Attitude	2. Content Knowledge	3. Personality Traits	4. Teaching Methods
1. Students' Attitude	1.000			
2. Content	0.523**	1.000		

Variable	1. Student Attitude	2. Content Knowledge	3. Personality Traits	4. Teaching Methods
Knowledge				
3. Personality Traits	0.494**	0.499**	1.000	
4. Teaching Methods	0.611**	0.527**	0.468**	1.000

** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed). $N = 250$. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation results. All three teacher characteristic variables showed statistically significant positive correlations with students' attitudes toward Economics (all $p < 0.001$). Teacher content knowledge and communication skills had a moderate positive correlation with students' attitudes ($r = 0.523$), indicating that as teachers demonstrate better content mastery and communication, students develop more favourable attitudes toward Economics. Teacher personality traits showed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.494$), indicating that interpersonal dispositions positively relate to student attitudes, though somewhat less strongly. The strongest correlation was observed between teaching methods and experience and students' attitudes ($r = 0.611$), confirming that effective instructional strategies and accumulated experience are most closely associated with positive student attitudes. Notably, the inter-correlations among predictor variables (ranging from 0.468 to 0.527) are moderate, suggesting acceptable levels of multicollinearity, which was further verified through VIF analysis.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results (Dependent Variable: Students' Attitude toward Economics)

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	2.640	1.012	2.608	.010	0.656	4.623
Sex	-0.171	0.211	-0.810	.419	-0.584	0.242
Class Level	-0.414	0.234	-1.766	.079	-0.873	0.046
Age Range	0.205	0.211	0.972	.332	-0.208	0.617
Content Knowledge	0.182*	0.068	2.666	.008	0.048	0.316
Personality Traits	0.161*	0.072	2.243	.026	0.020	0.301
Teaching Methods	0.555**	0.075	7.421	.000	0.408	0.703
$R^2 = 0.441$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.428$; $F(6, 243) = 32.00$; $p < .001$						

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis. The overall model was statistically significant [$F(6, 243) = 32.00$; $p < 0.001$], with an R^2 of 0.441, indicating that the

predictor variables collectively explained 44.1% of the variance in students' attitudes toward Economics. The adjusted R^2 of 0.428 confirms the model's practical significance.

Regarding demographic variables, sex ($\beta = -0.171$, $p = 0.419$) and age range ($\beta = 0.205$, $p = 0.332$) had no statistically significant effect on students' attitudes. Class level approached but did not reach conventional significance ($\beta = -0.414$, $p = 0.079$), suggesting a marginal tendency for higher-class students to report slightly lower attitudes, though this was not confirmed statistically.

All three teacher characteristic variables were statistically significant predictors of students' attitudes. Teacher content knowledge and communication skills had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.008$), indicating that improved teacher subject mastery and clarity of communication are associated with more positive student attitudes toward Economics. Teacher personality traits also had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.026$), suggesting that interpersonal qualities such as patience, fairness, and enthusiasm independently contribute to students' positive dispositions toward the subject. Teacher teaching methods and experience were the strongest and most significant predictors ($\beta = 0.555$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that effective and varied instructional strategies are the most critical teacher-related determinants of student attitudes.

Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Table 6: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Test

Variable	VIF	Tolerance	Verdict
Sex	1.298	0.770	No issue
Class Level	1.193	0.838	No issue
Age Range	1.342	0.745	No issue
Content Knowledge	2.238	0.447	No issue
Personality Traits	2.227	0.449	No issue
Teaching Methods	1.609	0.621	No issue
Mean VIF	1.651		

Source: Field Survey, 2026. VIF < 10 indicates no multicollinearity (Field, 2026).

All VIF values are well below the commonly accepted threshold of 10 (Field, 2026), with the highest value being 2.238 for content knowledge and a mean VIF of 1.651. Tolerance values are all above 0.40, further confirming the absence of problematic multicollinearity. These results validate the reliability of the regression coefficients and confirm that each predictor contributes independently to explaining students' attitudes.

Test of Hypotheses

H_{01} stated that teachers' content knowledge and communication skills have no significant effect on students' attitudes toward Economics. The regression result shows a statistically significant positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.008$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null

hypothesis is rejected. Teachers' content knowledge and communication skills significantly predict students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.

H₀₂ stated that teachers' personality traits have no significant effect on students' attitudes. The regression result shows a significant positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.026$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Teachers' personality traits significantly predict students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.

H₀₃ stated that teachers' teaching methods and experience have no significant influence on students' attitudes. The regression result shows the strongest positive coefficient in the model ($\beta = 0.555$, $p < 0.001$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Teachers' teaching methods and experience significantly and most powerfully influence students' attitudes toward Economics in Jos North LGA.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveals that all three-teacher characteristics dimensions content knowledge and communication skills, personality traits, and teaching methods and experience are significant positive predictors of students' attitudes toward Economics in secondary schools in Jos North LGA. This represents a more nuanced and comprehensive finding than earlier analyses suggested and aligns with a growing body of literature on teacher effectiveness.

Teaching methods and experience were the strongest predictors of students' attitudes ($\beta = 0.555$), aligning with prior research by Akinola et al. (2025), Gbadamosi & Jegede (2015), and Dorgu (2015), all of which emphasize the critical role of learner-centred, diverse, and adaptive teaching methods in Economics achievement and curriculum delivery. Additionally, the finding that technology integration had the highest item mean within this subscale points to the increasing relevance of digital pedagogy in modern Economics classrooms.

The finding shows that teachers' content knowledge and communication skills significantly influence student outcomes ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.008$). This supports Çatma and Corlu (2016), who emphasized the importance of pedagogical and subject knowledge for educational success, and Nwala and Nwala (2025), who found that perceived teacher knowledge predicts academic performance. Clear, real-life explanations of economic concepts help students link abstract principles to personal experiences, fostering more positive attitudes.

Teacher personality traits significantly affect student outcomes ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.026$), aligning with Yidana and Yidana (2023) and Walker (2022). Approachability, fairness, and enthusiasm create a psychologically safe environment that encourages participation and reduces anxiety (Wentzel & Miele, 2016). Fairness received the highest rating ($M = 2.54$), indicating students value equitable treatment most. Sex, class level, and age range did not significantly affect student attitudes toward Economics, suggesting attitudes are largely independent of demographics. This partly aligns with Filade et al. (2020) on no gender difference and supports Folorunsho, Olorisade, Bakare, and Afolabi (2024), who emphasize teacher factors over demographics. The near-significant class level effect ($p = 0.079$) may merit further study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Education authorities and school administrators in Jos North LGA should prioritise continuous professional development programmes focusing on pedagogical skills, instructional diversity, and the integration of digital technologies in Economics instruction. Such programmes should be conducted as structured in-service training, workshops, and peer-teaching sessions.
2. Given the significant role of teacher content knowledge, the Plateau State Ministry of Education should implement periodic curriculum-based training and subject-matter updates to ensure that Economics teachers remain current with evolving economic realities, enabling them to connect lessons to real-life economic events effectively.
3. Given that teaching methods emerged as the strongest predictor, teacher training institutions in Plateau State should strengthen their pedagogical curriculum to place greater emphasis on learner-centred, activity-based, and technology-enhanced instructional approaches, specifically for Economics and social science subjects.

Conclusion

This study of 250 secondary students in Jos North LGA, Nigeria, found that teacher characteristics, specifically content knowledge & communication skills, personality traits, and teaching methods and experience, all have a statistically significant positive effect on students' attitudes toward Economics. Teaching methods and experience were the strongest predictors, followed by content knowledge, then personality traits. Demographic variables had no significant influence. The model explained 44.1% of the variance in student attitudes. The findings highlight that instructional quality is key to fostering positive attitudes, suggesting that teacher professional development is a strategic investment for improving Economics education.

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