

## Teachers and Students' Perception of difficult topics in Senior Secondary Schools Economics in Lagos State, Nigeria

**Lukmon A. Amao-Adeleke and Dr Serifat F. Akorede**  
Institute of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

### Abstract

The study investigated teachers and students' perception of difficult topics in senior secondary schools Economics in Lagos State. It adopted a descriptive survey research design. Four research questions guided the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) senior schools across three educational Districts in Lagos. The sample population consisted SS3 Economics students 1,200 (462 Male and 738 Female respondents) and 30 (12 males and 18 females) Economics teachers. Three (3) different instruments guided the study. Face and content validities were adopted and Test retest was used to establish the reliabilities of the instruments. Students' Perception of Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (SPDTEQ) has a reliability coefficient of 0.75. Teachers' Perception of Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (TPDTEQ) has a reliability coefficient of 0.80 and Students' Reasons of Perception for Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (SRPDTEQ) has a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Research questions were analysed using simple frequency counts and percentages. Result shows that Concept of demand, Supply, Cost, Revenue, Elasticities of demand, Supply, among other topics were perceived difficult for students to learn, while almost all the topics are easy to teach by the teachers. Based on these findings, it was recommended that regular seminars and workshops be organised by the Teaching Service Commission to keep teachers abreast of current teaching methods and practices.

**Keywords:** Perception, Difficult Topics, Economics, Teach, Learn

### Introduction

Economics, a social science subject in the Nigerian Senior School curriculum is a subject-though not compulsory- but mostly registered for at the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). The inclusion of Economics in the school curriculum was to equip students of senior secondary level with the necessary skills and knowledge that will make them to appreciate the nature of Economics as well as its relevance to today's economy (Ede and Oleabhiele 2016).

In appreciating the importance of Economics to nation building, Gbadamosi and Omosunlade (2020) affirm that, it is of great importance for everyone to acquire basic knowledge on Economics principles and concepts so as to utilise the benefit in economic activities on daily basis to maximize human desires, as well as improving the economic activities around them. Thus, making it possible for them to be able to solve many of the economic problems of the society. In the light of the above, Economics as a school subject: has the following objectives (Adeyemi-Adewoyin 2021):

- I. to develop practical skills in appreciating the basis for making rational decision;
  - II. to understand basic economic principles, concepts and the economics tools for data analysis;
  - III. to solve economic problems of what to produce, how to produce and for whom to produce;
  - IV. to know how to make rational use of scarce resources and satisfy human desires;
  - V. to participate actively in national economic advancement of the nation through entrepreneurship, capital market and so on;
  - VI. to understand the structure and functionality of economic institutions in social development; and
  - VII. to understand the role and status of Nigeria and other African countries in international economic communities.
- In Nigeria, Economics is no longer a core subject in senior secondary school. It is now an optional subject for the sciences. The significance of Economics Education, as

reported by Gbadamosi and Omosunlade (2020), goes beyond acquiring basic knowledge and skills of Economics. It provides the foundation for students that desire to study Economics at tertiary level. The teaching and learning of Economics can be achieved through

the exposure of students to real life learning experiences. Also, the teaching and learning of Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should not make any aspect of Economics topics or lessons to be difficult to learn for students.

**Table 1.1: WAEC Enrolments and Performance in Lagos State Economics 2016-2021**

Year	Number of Entry for WAEC	Number of Entry For WAEC (Economics)	Percentage pass at credit level (A1-C6) in WAEC (Economics)	Percentage pass at ordinary and fail levels (D7 – F9) in Economics
2016	1,071,540	621,755	58.02	41.98
2017	1,067,385	691,282	63.17	36.83
2018	1,098,525	828,208	75.39	24.61
2019	1,088,918	740,394	67.99	32.01
2020	1,072,067	825,234	76.97	23.03
2021	1,064,668	756,424	71.04	28.96

*Source: WAEC, National Headquarters, Yaba Lagos (2023)*

The analysis of West African Examination Council SSCE May/June results between 2016 and 2021 reveals that the academic achievement of students in Economics is improving but inconsistent. Students need to be encouraged to make it impressive. During this period, the 2016 Economics SSCE May/June results showed (58.02%) improvement between A1 and C6, 2017 (63.16%), 2018 (75.39%) and 2020 (76.97%) but fluctuated in 2019 (67.99%) and 2021 (71.04%) (WAEC Report 2016-2021).

Economics is a practical subject. Ironically, this assertion does not seem to hold water. Mohammed and Jimoh (2022) report that most students perceived Economics to be difficult to learn. This report is as a result of some difficult topics inherent in Economics curriculum. Ede and Oleabhiele (2016) identify some causes, such as poor preparation on the part of teachers, unqualified teachers to teach Economics which may be due to inadequate qualified Economics teachers, and inadequate use of instructional materials to teach the subject. Arsaythamby and Julinamary (2015), Mohammed and Jimoh (2022) report that most students view Economics to be very difficult because of the fact that the curriculum of Economics encompasses the use of theoretical skills, calculation, drawing of tables and graphs, and application of Economics theories to answer

questions in Economics. This assertion corroborates the Chief Examiner's Report on Economics 2020, 2021 and 2022 where students demonstrated great deficiency in the application of graphs to interpret economic report analysis, as well as inability to further expatiate on the points, thereby resulting in poor academic performance.

The need for efficient and effective teaching and learning of Economics curriculum cannot be under played. Abd-El-Aziz, Nwokolo-Ojo, Hassan and Ann (2019) report that teachers are important and have vital responsibilities in the successful implementation of formal education (Bichi, Ibrahim and Ibrahim 2018). Teaching is not complete until learning has taken place and this is majorly the responsibility of teachers. It is presumed that for anyone to be a teacher, he or she must have obtained wide knowledge and skills, having right attitudes, patience and mastery of the subject content of the curriculum, with certification from approved authority. He or she must be tolerant, caring, a mind builder, diligent and can make students fall in love with studying. Gbadamosi and Omosunlade (2020) posit that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) affirmed that no nation can achieve economic, social and technological advancement without standardised educational system of learning to sustain its development

and this only possible when proper attention is given to the pilot (teachers) in the educational system.

For a teacher to have adequate knowledge on any topic, the teacher needs to have right knowledge and understanding on the topic before such lesson is impacted to students. (Hagan, Amoaddai, Lawer and Atteh 2020). Therefore, the mastery of the subject by teachers, as well as the approach in delivering the subject to the students are important (Abd-El-Aziz, Nwokolo-Ojo, Hassan and Ann 2019). Hence, the perceived difficulty of some of the topics may be as a result of the methodology and perspectives of the teacher in teaching such topics. When a topic seems difficult for a teacher, teaching such topic may be a challenge, hence to the teacher, adequate preparation, consultation and deep understanding of the topic at that point in time is required. Therefore, learning on the part of the student becomes difficult to grasp the topic subsequently, students' perceived such topic to be difficult when the teacher finds it difficult to make the topic simple before the students.

According to Adolphus and Agbesor (2008), perception is the way and manner an individual views life, including people and events which shape one's behaviour and feeling. Meiriza (2015), defined perception as the power of knowledge, feelings, awareness, views or observation of a person regarding a phenomenon. The point of view of an individual about the things near and far has a lot to do with how he behaves or relates to the environment. Ogunkola and Samuel (2011) regard teachers' perception of difficult topics as teachers' points of view of a topic, in terms of the ease or difficulty to teach. Olubukola (2015) reiterates that some teachers find it difficult to teach some topics as a result of the abstract nature of such topics, thereby making students not to find such topics easy to learn in classroom. At any point in time when a teacher sees a topic as difficult to teach, whether not too easy for the students based on the teacher's past experience or background, teachers' on-the-job training is necessary so as to deepen the knowledge of the teachers on all topics to achieve optimal performance (Abd-El-Aziz, Nwokolo-Ojo,

Hassan and Ann 2019).

Many teachers teaching Economics at the Senior Secondary level usually employ diverse methodologies and strategies in ensuring that students understand Economics concepts, principles and theories. The essence of this is to make learning interesting and real before the students (Rahmania, 2020). Also, some teachers find it difficult to improvise teaching resources to make teaching of some topics easy to learn (Chukwuemeka and Dorgu 2019). Ojo and Nkoyane (2016) report that teachers that are specialists in their fields of study should be employed to teach the subject so as to achieve outstanding performance. Therefore, teachers need to obtain and acquire adequate knowledge and skills so as to build confidence in the students to perceive Economics topics to be easy to learn. When teachers and students do not perceive some topics to be difficult, learning of Economics will be easy which will enable students to effectively participate in the social, economic and political advancement of the country (Gbadamosi and Omosunlade 2020).

To teach in a formal education, teacher needs to have obtained the necessary teaching qualification. Teachers' qualification refers to the highest level of educational attainment of teachers in a particular field of study. This includes NCE, B.Sc., B.Sc. (Ed), B.A, B.Ed. as well as PGDE to become a professional teachers (Aliyu, Yashe and Adeyeye, 2013; Musau and Abere (2015). Abd-El-Aziz, Nwokolo-Ojo, Hassan and Ann (2019) regard teachers' qualification to mean teachers' certification. It is only those who have completed their individual course of study in a particular field from accredited institution of learning that are qualified to teach. Ogunkola and Samuel (2011) identify and recognise the impact of teachers' qualification as paramount in relation to the teachers and students' perception of difficult topics. Uchegbu, Oguoma Elenwoke and Ogbuagu (2016) affirm that inadequate qualified teachers may make some lesson topics difficult for students to understand. Okadigwe and Iyegbu (2019) view that teachers employed to teach in senior secondary schools must be trained and qualified, for better performance of students' learning outcomes.

Teaching experience reveals the level of expertise of an individual. Teachers' teaching experience refers to the number of years a teacher has been impacting knowledge and skills to students. According to Abd-El-Aziz, Nwokolo-Ojo, Hassan and Ann (2019), teaching experience refers to experiences a teacher has gathered over a long period of time in the course of teaching and learning. Thus, this condition gives the expertise of a professional teacher. Rice (2010) is of the views that industries of employment recognises and appreciates the years of experiences of a worker which often determine the remuneration benefits, welfare package, and placement of positions at work places. Hence, the experiences acquired over the years influences the skills and knowledge of an individual in the course of doing one's job. Research evidence by Owolabi and Adebayo (2012) affirms that teaching experiences is vital and reveals a lot in the effectiveness and efficiency of the teachers. The classification of teaching into 0- 2years, 2- 5years, 5- 10years, 10 years and above are as a result of the importance of years of experience as being a critical factor to be considered in research when it comes to teaching and learning. It is presumed that teachers with long years of teachings experiences have expertise and knowledge to impact skills and knowledge to students, and may not have any challenge on any topic due to years of teaching. Therefore, teachers' teaching experiences may effect teachers and students' perception of difficult topics in senior secondary Economics.

The word 'gender' is often used to categorise people as male and female. In past works, there have been different views as regards the ability of male or female influencing a study. As a result of this, it would not be out of place to examine the level of influence gender may have on teachers and students' perception of difficult topics in Economics. Adolphus and Agbesor (2008) report that there is no significant effect of students' perception of difficult topics in Physics. The research study by Ogunkola and Samuel (2011) reports that gender, teachers' qualification and years of teaching are among factors that influence the perception level of difficult topics in a subject. Ede and Oleabehle (2016) posit that there is no significant

difference in the perception of students on difficult topics in Economics on gender level. Benjamin Etobro and Fabinu (2017) report that there is no significant difference in the perception of difficult topics in Biology between male and female students. In the past six years, Economics performance was improving and fluctuating above average. This calls for concern. According to literature, some students perceive some topics in Economics to be difficult to learn. It is against this background that the study investigates teachers and students' perception of difficult topics in senior secondary schools Economics in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study investigates teachers and students' perception of difficult topics in senior secondary schools Economics in Lagos state, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the characteristics of teachers in terms of gender, qualification and teaching experiences?
2. What are the students' perceived difficult topics?
3. What are the teachers' perceived difficult topics?
4. Why do students have challenges in learning some topics in Economics?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) Educational District out of the six (6) Educational District in Lagos, Nigeria and ten (10) schools.

The sample consisted of one thousand and two hundred (1200) respondents consisting 462 males and 738 females SS3 Economics students using simple random procedure, selected from thirty (30) senior secondary schools across three (3) Educational District of Lagos State and their teachers.

The data for the study was collected using three (3) different instruments: Students' Perception of Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (**SPDTEQ**), Teachers' Perception of Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (**TPDTEQ**) and Students' Reasons of Perception for

Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (SRPDTEQ) which were all developed by the researcher and all contained forty five (45) topics each. Face and content validity were conducted by some teachers that are currently teaching Economics. Test retest was used to establish the reliability of the items in Students' Perception of Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (SPDTEQ) with a reliability coefficient of **0.75**. Teachers' Perception of Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (TPDTEQ) having a reliability coefficient of **0.80** and Students' Reasons of Perception for Difficult Topics in Economics Questionnaire (SRPDTEQ) with a reliability coefficient of **0.78**. The instruments were administered to the respondents sampled (Students and Teachers). Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics- frequency and percentages.

### Results/Discussion

**Research Question One:** What are the characteristics of teachers in terms of gender, qualification and experiences?

**Table 1.1: Teachers Gender Distribution in Economics**

Gender	No Of Respondents (%)
Male	12 (40)
Female	18 (60)
Total	30

**Table 1.2 Teachers' Qualification Distribution in Economics**

Teachers Qualifications	Responses (%)
B.Sc.	2 (7)
B.Sc. Ed	16 (53)
PGDE	4 (13)
Masters	6 (20)
Ph.D.	2 (7)

**Source:** Field work 2024

Table 1.2 revealed that, all the teacher respondents are graduate with teaching qualification and higher teaching qualifications. This shows that 7% of the teacher's qualification are graduate in Economics but with no teaching qualification while 93% are graduates in Economics with teaching qualification and this makes them competent in influencing students' perception in Economics.

**Table 1.3 Teachers' Teaching Experiences Distribution in Economics**

Teachers Teaching Experiences	Responses (%)
2 – 5 Years	6 (20)
6 – 10 Years	16 (53)
11 Years And Above	8 (27)

**Source:** Field work 2024

Table 1.3 revealed that, 80% of teachers has more than six (6) years cognate teaching experience that can influence students' perception towards Economics. In the last ten years, the government of Lagos State employed graduates to teach in public secondary schools with or without teaching qualification and are given opportunity to acquire teaching qualifications within a specified time. Also, quality assurance officers visit schools to monitor teaching and learning.

**Research Question Two: What are the students' perceived difficult topics?**

**Table 2.1: Simple percentage of students' perception of difficult topics in senior secondary school Economics Curriculum.**

S/ N	Topics	Easy to learn	Difficult to learn
1	Meaning of Economics and Concepts	1162 (96.8)	38 (3.2)
2	Tools for Economic Analysis	946 (78.8)	254 (31.2)
3	Concept of Demand	<b>134 (11.2)</b>	<b>1066 (88.8)*</b>
4	Concept of Supply	<b>218 (18.2)</b>	<b>982 (81.8)*</b>
5	Production Possibility Curve (PPC)	942 (78.5)	258 (21.5)
6	Theory of Production	970 (80.8)	230 (19.2)
7	Basic Economic Problems of Society	1133 (94.4)	67 (5.6)
8	Business Organization	1169 (97.4)	31 (2.6)
9	Population	1136 (95)	64 (5)

10	Labour Market	1152 (96)	48 (4)
11	Agriculture	1164 (97)	36 (3)
12	Mining	1186 (98.8)	14 (1.2)
13	Financial Institution	1189 (99.1)	11 (0.9)
14	Money	1195 (99.5)	5 (0.5)
15	Distributive Trade	1197 (99.7)	3 (0.3)
16	Cost Concepts	<b>107 (8.9)</b>	<b>1093 (91.1)*</b>
17	Revenue Concepts	<b>142 (11.8)</b>	<b>1058 (88.2)*</b>
18	Economic System	1164 (97)	36 (3)
19	Wage Determination and Trade Unions	1109 (92.4)	91 (7.6)
20	Concept of Unemployment	1167 (97)	33 (3)
21	Theory of Utility	1171 (98)	29 (2)
22	Price Determination	1098 (92)	102 (8)
23	Elasticity of Demand	<b>161 (13)</b>	<b>1039 (87)*</b>
24	Elasticity of Supply	<b>174 (14.5)</b>	<b>1026 (85.5)*</b>
25	Price Legislation or Control	<b>134 (11.2)</b>	<b>1066 (88.8)*</b>
26	Market Structures	<b>76 (6.3)</b>	<b>1124 (93.7)*</b>
27	Industries in Nigeria	1164 (97)	36 (3)
28	Public Finance ( Taxation)	1066 (88.8)	134 (11.2)
29	Budget and Types	1126 (93.8)	74 (6.2)
30	National Income Accounting	1041 (86)	159 (14)
31	Demand and Supply for Money	956 (80)	244 (20)
32	Inflation and Deflation	1167 (97.3)	33 (2.7)
33	Economic Lesson from Asian Tigers	1066 (89)	134 (11)
34	Human Capita Development	1146 (96)	54 (4)
35	Economic Growth and Development	1137 (94.8)	63 (5.2)
36	Economic Development Planning	1144 (95.3)	56 (4.7)
37	Petroleum and Nigerian Economy	1159 (96.6)	41 (3.4)
38	Manufacturing and Construction	1182 (98.5)	18 (1.5)
39	Service Industries	1192 (99.3)	8 (0.6)
40	Agencies that Regulate Financial Markets	1164 (97)	36 (3)
41	International Trade	1179 (98.3)	21 (1.7)
42	Balance of Payment and Types	1079 (90)	121 (10)
43	International Economic Organizations	1136 (95)	64 (5)
44	Current Economic Plans( MDGs, NEEDS, Vision 2020)	1114 (93)	86 (7)
45	Economic Reform Programmes	1112 (93)	88 (7)

**Source:** *Field work 2024*

Table 2.1. revealed that thirty-seven (37) topics were easy to learn while eight (8) topics were perceived to be difficult to learn by the students. These are: *Concept of Demand, Supply, Cost, Revenue, Elasticities of Demand, Supply, Price control/Legislation and Market Structure*. Some of these topics involve the use of diagrams to explain them, such as demand, supply, cost and revenue concept, price control and market structure; while elasticity of demand and supply requires mathematical calculations using

appropriate formula in deriving the proportionate changes that occur in price, income and taste on demand and supply of goods and services. Many students atimes find themselves in commatoes, giving responses that do not correspond with the marking guide, rather than making use of correct terminologies and concepts that will attract full marks to the questions. The topics listed are the difficult topics to learn in Economics as perceived by the students.

**Research Question Three: What are the teachers' perceived difficult topics?****Table 3.1: Simple percentage of teachers' perception of difficult topics to teach in senior secondary school Economics Curriculum.**

S/ N	Topics	Easy to Teach	Difficult to Teach
1	Meaning of Economics and Concepts	30 (100)	0 (0)
2	Tools for Economic Analysis	30 (100)	0 (0)
3	Concept of Demand	30 (100)	0 (0)
4	Concept of Supply	30 (100)	0 (0)
5	Production Possibility Curve (PPC)	<b>29 (96.7)</b>	<b>1 (3.3)*</b>
6	Theory of Production	30 (100)	0 (0)
7	Basic Economic Problems of Society	30 (100)	0 (0)
8	Business Organization	30 (100)	0 (0)
9	Population	30 (100)	0 (0)
10	Labour Market	30 (100)	0 (0)
11	Agriculture	30 (100)	0 (0)
12	Mining	30 (100)	0 (0)
13	Financial Institution	30 (100)	0 (0)
14	Money	30 (100)	0 (0)
15	Distributive Trade	30 (100)	0 (0)
16	Cost Concepts	30 (100)	0 (0)
17	Revenue Concepts	30 (100)	0 (0)
18	Economic System	30 (100)	0 (0)
19	Wage Determination and Trade Unions	30 (100)	0 (0)
20	Concept of Unemployment	30 (100)	0 (0)
21	Theory of Utility	<b>29 (96.7)</b>	<b>1 (3.3)*</b>
22	Price Determination	<b>28 (93.3)</b>	<b>2 (6.7)*</b>
23	Elasticity of Demand	30 (100)	0 (0)
24	Elasticity of Supply	30 (100)	0 (0)
25	Price Legislation or Control	30 (100)	0 (0)
26	Market Structures	<b>25 (83.3)</b>	<b>5 (16.7)*</b>
27	Industries in Nigeria	30 (100)	0 (0)
28	Public Finance ( Taxation)	30 (100)	0 (0)
29	Budget and Types	30 (100)	0 (0)
30	National Income Accounting	<b>28 (93.3)</b>	<b>2 (6.7)*</b>
31	Demand and Supply for Money	<b>23 (76.7)</b>	<b>7 (23.3)*</b>
32	Inflation and Deflation	30 (100)	0 (0)
33	Economic Lesson from Asian Tigers	30 (100)	0 (0)
34	Human Capita Development	30 (100)	0 (0)
35	Economic Growth and Development	30 (100)	0 (0)
36	Economic Development Planning	30 (100)	0 (0)
37	Petroleum and Nigerian Economy	30 (100)	0 (0)
38	Manufacturing and Construction	30 (100)	0 (0)
39	Service Industries	30 (100)	0 (0)
40	Agencies that Regulate Financial Markets	30 (100)	0 (0)
41	International Trade	30 (100)	0 (0)
42	Balance of Payment and Types	<b>27 (90)</b>	<b>3 (10)*</b>
43	International Economic Organizations	30 (100)	0 (0)
44	Current Economic Plans( MDGs, NEEDS, Vision 2020)	30 (100)	0 (0)
45	Economic Reform Programmes	30 (100)	0 (0)

Source: *Field work 2024*

Table 3.1 revealed that few teachers perceived seven (7) topics to be difficult to teach while majority of teachers (respondents) perceived the topics to be easy to teach. The perceived difficult topics to teach are topics with mathematical calculation, and topics with diagrams. When a teacher does not understand concept(s), it becomes difficult to impart knowledge to the

students. Also, when a teacher does not have the right teaching qualification, it makes some topics difficult to teach. The perceived difficult topics includes *Production Possibility Curve, Theory of Utility, Price Determination, Market Structure, National Income Accounting, Demand and Supply for Money and Balance of Payment.*

**Table 3.2 Reasons Why Some Teachers Are Having Difficulties on the Perceived Topic Difficulties Encountered Solution Adopted**

1.Mathematical Calculations	Calls for collaborative teaching with colleagues.
2.Charts and Diagrams (Market Structure)	Students are given assignment to draw on a cardboard while the teacher uses it to teach and explain the concepts to the students.
3.Mastery of Content and Approaches to Measurement of National Income	Seminars are conducted at least once per term to refresh the knowledge of teachers.
4.Lack of Economics Textbooks to have detailed explanation to Market Structure	Source for further information online. Update on knowledge acquisition from colleagues to give clearer explanation to the topic.

Source: Field work 2024

Table 3.2 revealed the reasons why a few teacher perceived some topics difficult to teach in Economics. Solutions to curb the teachers'

perceived difficult topics were also provided in the table.

**Research Question Four: Why do students have challenges in learning some topics in Economics? Simple percentage on challenges students experience in learning Economics in senior secondary school Curriculum.**

**Table 4.1, Students Response on Reasons for the Difficulty of Topics in Economics**

S/N	Topics	Teachers Only Give Notes	Topic Never Taught	Teacher Does not Use Teaching Aids	Teachers showed No Interest in the Topic	I do Not Have Interest in the Topic	The Topic is Abstract and I Do Not Understand
1	Meaning of Economics and Concepts	714 (59.5)	46 (3.8)	350 (29.2)	12 (1.0)	4 (0.3)	74 (6.2)
2	Tools for Economic Analysis	532 (44.3)	138 (11.5)	374 (31.2)	24 (2.0)	12 (1.0)	120 (10.0)
3	Concept of Demand	656 (54.6)	124 (10.3)	252 (21.0)	52 (4.3)	26 (2.2)	90 (7.5)
4	Concept of Supply	672 (54.6)	86 (7.2)	234 (19.5)	64 (5.3)	42 (3.5)	102 (8.5)
5	Production Possibility Curve (PPC)	456 (38.0)	118 (9.8)	252 (21.0)	36 (3.0)	104 (8.7)	234 (19.5)
6	Theory of Production	566 (47.2)	126 (10.5)	226 (18.3)	56 (4.7)	66 (5.5)	160 (13.3)
7	Basic Economic Problems of Society	576 (43.7)	148 (12.3)	244 (20.3)	40 (3.3)	44 (3.7)	148 (12.3)
8	Business Organization	524 (43.7)	138 (11.5)	270 (22.5)	70 (5.8)	46 (3.8)	152 (12.7)

9	Population	616 (51.3)	122 (10.2)	250 (20.8)	48 (4.0)	70 (5.8)	94 (7.8)
10	Labour Market	626 (52.2)	150 (12.5)	244 (20.3)	30 (2.5)	62 (5.2)	88 (7.3)
11	Agriculture	614 (51.2)	162 (13.8)	216 (18.0)	62 (5.2)	68 (5.7)	78 (6.5)
12	Mining	508 (42.3)	184 (15.3)	252 (21.0)	64 (5.3)	56 (4.7)	136 (11.3)
13	Financial Institution	512 (42.6)	92 (7.6)	326 (27.2)	88 (7.3)	66 (5.5)	116 (9.7)
14	Money	656 (54.6)	62 (5.2)	290 (24.2)	34 (2.8)	48 (4.0)	110 (9.2)
15	Distributive Trade	552 (46.0)	130 (10.8)	250 (20.8)	60 (5.0)	66 (5.5)	142 (11.8)
16	Cost Concepts	544 (45.3)	108 (9.0)	242 (20.2)	52 (4.3)	50 (4.2)	204 (17.0)
17	Revenue Concepts	562 (46.8)	98 (8.2)	270 (22.5)	40 (3.3)	52 (4.3)	178 (14.8)
18	Economic System	524 (43.7)	164 (13.7)	208 (17.3)	44 (3.7)	72 (6.0)	188 (15.7)
19	Wage Determination and Trade Unions	370 (30.8)	266 (22.2)	206 (17.2)	54 (4.5)	66 (5.5)	238 (19.8)
20	Concept of Unemployment	484 (40.3)	188 (15.7)	228 (19.0)	54 (4.5)	66 (5.5)	180 (15.0)
21	Theory of Utility	490 (40.8)	150 (12.5)	256 (21.3)	48 (4.0)	52 (4.3)	204 (17.0)
22	Price Determination	534 (44.5)	150 (12.5)	274 (22.8)	46 (3.8)	36 (3.0)	160 (13.3)
23	Elasticity of Demand	514 (44.8)	146 (12.2)	290 (24.2)	36 (3.0)	30 (2.5)	184 (15.3)
24	Elasticity of Supply	504 (42.0)	126 (10.5)	272 (22.6)	38 (3.2)	42 (3.5)	218 (18.2)
25	Price Legislation or Control	404 (33.7)	246 (20.5)	216 (18.0)	72 (5.0)	48 (4.0)	214 (17.8)
26	Market Structures	506 (42.2)	160 (13.3)	274 (22.8)	56 (4.7)	42 (3.5)	162 (13.5)
27	Industries in Nigeria	510 (42.5)	198 (16.5)	202 (16.8)	48 (4.0)	80 (6.7)	162 (13.5)
28	Public Finance (Taxation)	554 (46.2)	168 (14.0)	234 (19.5)	54 (4.5)	50 (4.2)	140 (11.7)
29	Budget and Types	542 (45.2)	156 (13.0)	250 (20.8)	42 (3.5)	52 (4.3)	158 (13.2)
30	National Income Accounting	452 (37.7)	222 (18.5)	226 (18.8)	66 (5.5)	58 (4.8)	176 (14.7)
31	Demand and Supply for Money	582 (48.5)	118 (9.8)	214 (17.8)	88 (7.3)	68 (5.7)	130 (10.8)
32	Inflation and Deflation	532 (44.3)	166 (13.8)	212 (17.7)	88 (7.3)	62 (5.2)	140 (11.7)
33	Economic Lesson from Asian Tigers	426 (35.5)	202 (16.8)	272 (22.7)	72 (6.0)	52 (4.3)	176 (14.7)
34	Human Capital Development	536 (44.7)	136 (11.3)	270 (22.5)	76 (6.3)	42 (3.5)	140 (11.7)
35	Economic Growth and Development	522 (43.5)	162 (13.5)	236 (19.7)	112 (9.3)	18 (1.5)	150 (12.5)

Source: Field work 2024

Table 4.1 revealed reasons why some students have challenges in Economics topics. Among the reasons given by the respondents on perceived difficult topics, the result revealed that 44% of respondents affirmed that for most of the Economics topics, teachers only give note to the students to copy. In Lagos State, most public schools have one Economics teacher to teach Economics SS1 – SS3 with more than 26 lesson periods to teach per week compared to unity schools or private schools that usually have more than one Economics teacher. Invariably, such teachers usually device means of covering their scheme of work per term. Secondly, 14% of the students affirmed that some topics were never taught by some teachers while some teachers give note to students to write and a few students alluded that some topics in Economics are difficult to teach.

Thirdly, the result revealed that 20% of the respondents affirmed that some teachers do not use teaching aids to teach topics like *Production Possibility Curve*, *Price Determination*, *Elasticity of Demand and Supply*, *Price Control Legislation* etc. Fourthly, 5% of the respondents affirmed that some teachers do not have interest in some topics, thereby making students to perceive some topics as being difficult to learn.. Also, 4% of the student respondent alluded that, they show no interest in topics having mathematical calculations, diagrams or charts; therefore finding it difficult to comprehend or learn.

Furthermore, 13% of student respondents revealed that some Economics topics are abstract in nature and that they do not understand such topics. These include: *Cost Concepts*,

*Wage Determination, Concept of Utility, Elasticity of Demand and Supply, Price Control, Demand and Supply for money, Current Economic Plans and Economics Reforms Programmes* etc. Thus, abstract nature of some Economics topics makes it difficult for the students to understand, coupled with the inability of some teachers to use or improvise teaching aids to teach Economics in the classrooms.

### Discussion

The study revealed that the percentage change in the rate of enrolment in Economics for senior school certificate examination (WAEC) is between 2.52% - 0.69%. This enrolment rate is the total number of students who registered and sat for Economics (2017 – 2021). The teachers' gender revealed thirty (30) teachers (12 males and 18 females) who took part in the study. Teachers' teaching qualification revealed that all the teachers teaching Economics in senior secondary are specialists in Economics. This goes to show that every teacher employed to teach Economics at the senior schools are all graduates of Economics while some Economics teacher has PGDE, as well as second degrees and higher degrees to portray their professionalism in the teaching profession. Mores so, teachers' teaching experience revealed that majority of the teachers teaching Economics in public schools have more than six (6) years teaching experiences.

The study revealed that thirty-seven (37) topics were easy to learn while eight (8) topics were perceived to be difficult to learn by the students. *Concept of demand, supply, cost, revenue, elasticities of demand, supply, Price control/Legislation and Market structure* were perceived to be difficult to learn by the students. This corroborates the research findings of Arsaythamby and Julinamary (2015), Waec Report (2020, 2021 and 2022) that reported that Economics students finds it very difficult when it comes to problem-solving topics. It was suggested that problem-solving approach should be adopted when planning the lesson topic. This would prompt critical thinking on the part of the students to offer plausible solutions to economic problems that may be presented to them.

From the analysis of Economics topics, almost all the topics were easy to teach while seven (7) topics were perceived to be difficult to teach by a few teachers. The analysis revealed that the percentage of easy to teach topics were 90% higher than the percentage of topics perceived difficult to teach. This corroborates the findings of Abd-El-Aziz, Nwokolo-Ojo, Hassan and Ann (2019). It was suggested that regular seminars, trainings and workshops should be organised by the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) to keep teachers abreast of current teaching practices. Teachers should belong to professional associations so as to seek collaboration on teaching when the need arises.

Also, for the analysis of the results on the challenges students encountered in learning Economics, the result revealed that the respondents who alluded to the fact that teachers only give note out number other reasons for difficult topics in Economics. This corroborates the findings of Adolphus and Agbesor (2008) that stated that some topics were not taught, while some teachers teach Economics without the use of teaching aids. It was suggested that quality assurance and school support units should visit schools unannounced to ensure teachers do the right thing for the job assigned to them. Every professional teacher must change and adopt modern and different instructional strategies of teaching different topics; this will go a long way to ameliorate individual differences in learning among students. Every Economics teacher must complete their scheme of work or syllabus so as to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to the students on or before examination is administered to them.

### Conclusion

The performance analysis in Economics revealed that there is fluctuation in the academic performance between 2016 and 2021. The study revealed that teachers' gender was evenly distributed with female teachers having more respondents on the study. Teachers' qualification revealed that almost all the teachers in public secondary school major in Economics. In terms of teaching experiences, most of the teachers

have six (6) years experience and above in teaching Economics.

The study revealed that eight (8) topics were perceived to be difficult to learn by the students (concept of demand, concept of supply, cost concept, revenue concept, elasticity of demand, elasticity of supply, price control/legislation and market structure). The study also showed that some topics were perceived to be difficult by a few teachers to teach (production possibility curve, theory of utility, price determination, market structure, national income accounting, demand and supply for money and balance of payment). Reasons were given why some teachers had difficulties teaching the perceived topics. Equally, efforts made by the teachers to curb the difficulties were also stated in the study in ameliorating the challenges some teachers encounter while teaching the perceived topics.

Reasons for students having difficulty in learning the perceived topics were stated with comprehensive explanation for teachers to know how to solve the challenges students encounter in the process of studying Economics at the senior secondary schools.

### Recommendation

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

- ❖ It was suggested that problem-solving approach should be adopted to some topics when planning the lesson topic.
- ❖ Regular seminars, trainings and workshops should be organised by the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) to keep teachers abreast of current teaching practices.
- ❖ Teachers should belong to professional associations so as to seek collaborative teaching when the need arises.
- ❖ The quality assurance and school support units should visit schools unannounced to ensure teachers do the right thing for the job assigned to them.
- ❖ Every professional teacher must change and adopt modern and different instructional strategies of teaching different topics, this will go a long way

to ameliorate individual differences in learning among students.

- ❖ Every Economics teacher must complete their scheme of work or syllabus so as to equip the students before examination is administered to them.

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