

Original Research Article

Teacher's Competencies and Students' Academic Performance at One of the National Teachers' Colleges in Uganda

Musana J* . and Bakkabulindi F. E. K.

Abstract

East African School of Higher Education
Studies and Development, College of
Education and External Studies, Makerere
University, Kampala Uganda

Email: musana.james@yahoo.com/
fekbakkabulindi@isae.mak.ac.ug

This study aimed at establishing the relationship between teacher's competencies and students' academic performance at one of the National Teachers' Colleges (NTC) in Uganda. Communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment as teacher's competencies were studied and their relationship with students' academic performance was established. The study employed the quantitative paradigm and a correlational, cross-sectional survey design. Self-determination and achievement goal theories provided the theoretical framework of the study. Students' academic performance was conceptualized as student's grade points scored as reflected in examination results in one of the cross-cutting subjects in professional studies. A total of 438 students participated in the study by filling a self-administered questionnaire (SAQ). Using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), collected data were analyzed at descriptive and inferential levels. Research hypotheses were tested at both bivariate and multivariate levels using Pearson's linear correlation co-efficiency and multiple regressions respectively. The study established an insignificant relationship between teacher's communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment with students' academic performance. The study concluded that teacher's competencies studied were inconsequential in improving students' academic performance. Therefore, recommended that further research should be carried out on both the variables studied and other factors affecting students' academic performance at the National Teachers' College studied to find out what is really causing poor students' academic performance.

Keywords: National Teachers' College, Students' academic performance, Teacher's competencies

INTRODUCTION

The performance of students is very instrumental for the success of any academic institution, (Adedeji, 2009; Suki, Thania and Mira, 2011) especially at the National Teachers' College that has a mission of providing quality teacher education and a vision of enhancing the nurturing of teaching acumen, good character, skills acuity, and positive attitudes. Students' academic performance is the fundamental premium by which all teaching-learning activities are measured. While poor academic perfor-

mance leads to bad reputation of an academic institution (Koroma, 2014). However, National Teachers' Collage studied has faced a challenge of poor students' academic performance as portrayed by the recent past academic records of student. For instance, according to the academic results of students in the academic year 2011/2012 and 2013/2014 some students performed very poorly that made them come back for retakes. Therefore, examining the relationship between students' academic

performance at the College and the factors that affect students' performance was very crucial in this study. For the purpose of this study, four teacher's competencies (teacher's communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment) were isolated among other factors that have a relationships with students' academic performance (e.g. teacher's experience, motivation, intellectual ability, level of qualification, attitude to teaching, and attendance, study environment etc) as very crucial. European Commission (2013) defined teacher's competencies as teacher's ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity, and adapt to the needs of individual learners as well as groups. The four teacher's competencies were related to students' academic performance to find out if there was a significant relationship between the variables.

It is upon this background that the study being reported on in this paper, sought to look into the relationship between teacher's competencies and students' academic performance in National Teacher's College. The study used the majority constituency in the College, the first-year students in one of the cross cutting subjects in professional studies, as the units of analysis. The National Teachers' College studied is a public tertiary institution established in 1985 to address the increasing demand for teachers in the country, (College Magazine, 2013). The College runs three programmes; a Diploma in Education Secondary (DES) which is a two years course, a Diploma in Education Primary (DEP) which is a three years course and an advanced certificate in the teaching of English language (ACTEL) which is a one year course. The College has four academic departments (Arts, Science, Vocational Training, and Professional Studies), teaching a total of 16 subjects. In the past, various studies have examined the concept of academic performance among students in many places of the world (e.g. Muzenda, 2013; Melrose, 2011; Wamala and Sseruwagi, 2013). However, all the three studies mentioned left the problem of poor students' academic performance not addressed. For instance, two studies were carried outside Uganda and the one carried out in Uganda focused on primary level of education, yet this study was at a tertiary level of education. Furthermore, these studies used a small sample size which might have affected their study findings.

Problem of Research

The importance of good students' academic performance can never be disputed because it is the fundamental premium by which all teaching-learning activities are measured (Adedeji, 2009). It is an important determinant of any academic institutions' success (Suki et al., 2011). However, the poor students' academic performance at College had been noticed. For example, according to the academic results of students in the academic year

2011/2012 and 2013/2014 some students performed very poorly that made them come back for retakes. In the academic year 2011/2012 out of the 500 students in year one who sat for end of year exams many students close to 100 students got below average mark of 50 which was equivalent to 20% of students who scored below average mark (source: end of year one examination results obtained from the college). Furthermore, according to the examination results obtained at the College, in 2013 end of second semester examinations students from science and vocational training departments scored between 30-80 marks, whereas scores of students from arts department ranged between 26-70 marks. This shows that on average students from science and vocational training performed better than students from arts departments. Therefore, the issue of students' academic performance at the National Teachers' College needed to be addressed because poor students' academic performance could lead to poor education standards, education wastage such as dropping out of school, poor college reputation and eventually it could lead to its closure, while good academic performance leads to academic excellence, good reputation and low education wastage, (Muzenda, 2013; Akiri and Ugborugbo, 2009). The purpose of the study therefore, was to establish the relationship between teacher's competencies (communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment) and students' academic performance among students at the National Teachers College. The specific objectives were to find out the relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Theoretical Base

This study was underpinned on two theories, self-determination theory and Achievement goal theory. Both theories were used to relate teacher's competencies, that is to say, communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment to teaching (independent variables IVs) with students' academic performance (dependent variable DV). Self-determination theory (SDT) was developed by Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci in 1985. The theory postulates that people are active organisms with inherent and deeply evolved tendencies toward psychological growth and development. Within self-determination theory there are three basic psychological needs, namely those for autonomy, relatedness and competence. When these three needs are supported and satisfied within a social context people experience more vitality, self-motivation, high performance and well-being. Conversely, the thwarting or frustration of these basic needs leads to diminished self-motivation and greater ill-being, (Ryan et al. 2006). This theory was chosen for this study because it identifies the inner motivational resources that all

students possess, and it offers recommendations as to how teachers can involve, nurture, and vitalize these resources during the flow of instruction to improve students' academic performance, (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009). It should be noted that just as self-determination is important to student motivation, so are students' goals. Thus, in addition to self-determination theory, achievement goal theory was used in this study as an alternative and complementary view of individual's motivation and behaviour in educational settings. This theory was developed in an independent and collaborative work by Carol Ames, Carol Dweck, Marty Maehr and John Nicholls in 1980. According to Urda, T.C and Midgley, C. (2003) achievement goals refer to purposes or reasons for a person's pursuit in an achievement situation. The achievement goal theory postulates that people can have two predominant dispositional goal orientations in achievement contexts, such as the academic context, which are created by a social influence. This theory was chosen for this study because it can help teachers to enhance their competencies and students to improve on their academic performance by mastering their study content and aim at academic excellence.

Review of Related Literature

Teacher's Communication Ability and Students' Academic Performance. Brisbane (2004) defined communication ability as the skill that includes the mix of verbal and non-verbal interpersonal and physical strategies needed to interact confidently and effectively with a range of audiences. Meanwhile, Natalie, Donelson, Jeni and Baumeister (2004) defined academic performance as how well a student does in school as measured by grade point average. Several studies were conducted relating teacher's communication ability to students' academic performance. Some of them were; Nurzal and Khairu (2009), Malissa (2014), Palos and Merima (2014) and Burris (2015). For example, Nurzal and Khairu (2009) studied the effects of classroom communication on students' academic performance at the International Islamic University Malaysia. The study never found a correlation between the two variables. While Malissa (2014) studied how oral communication influences the academic performance of a group of transfer students at the tertiary stage in the American Degree Transfer Program in Sunway University. The results of the study found a correlation between oral communication and students' academic performance. Meanwhile, Palos and Merima (2014) conducted a study on perceived importance of communication skills and their predictive value for academic performance among first-year students from the West University of Timioara. The study found a correlation between variables. Furthermore, Burris (2015)

conducted a study on determining whether a link exists between the academic performance of Mississippi public school districts and school administrators' use of persuasive communication techniques and self-efficacy in communication. The study found no correlation between the frequency of using persuasive communication and the academic performance. However, none of these studies was carried out in Uganda and this made it necessary for a similar study to be carried out in Uganda especially at the NTC to examine the relationship between the two variables. Secondly, three studies found a positive correlation between variables and two did not, hence a need to examine the relationship further.

H1: That Teacher's communication ability is positively related to students' academic performance.

Teacher's Command of Subject Matter and Students' Academic Performance

British Council (2011) defined command of subject matter as the ability to communicate the content knowledge of a subject effectively and in ways that are appropriate to the learners. Some studies were carried out relating teacher's command of subject matter and students' academic performance such as Metzler and Ludger (2010), Ogonnaya (2007), Olatunji and Babatunde (2010), Olatundun and Adu (2007) and Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013). For example, Metzler and Ludger (2010) carried out a study on the impact of teacher subject knowledge on student achievement: evidence from within-teacher within-student variation exploiting a unique Peruvian 6th-grade dataset that tested both students and their teachers in two subjects in Peru. The study found a significant effect of teacher subject knowledge on student achievement. Meanwhile, Ogonnaya (2007) conducted a study on the influence of teachers' background, professional development and teaching practices on students' achievement in mathematics in Lesotho. The results of the study showed that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between students' achievement in mathematics and the variables of teachers' background (namely teachers' qualifications, subject majors and years of experience).

Olatunji and Babatunde (2010) studied teachers' attributes as correlates of students' academic performance in Geography in the secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The results showed positive relationship between teachers' attributes measured in term of knowledge of subject matter, communication ability, interest in the job and emotional stability and students' academic performance. While, Olatundun and Adu (2007) conducted a study on teachers' perception of teaching as correlates of students' academic performance in Oyo State, Nigeria and revealed that teacher's command of subject matter has no significant effect on students' performance. Whilst his study funding

agreed with Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013) who carried out a study on teacher factors influencing students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya. The study found out that teachers' factors such as teachers' age, gender, command of subject matter, professional qualifications and teaching experience were not significantly related to academic achievement. All the studies mentioned above unfortunately were carried out outside Uganda and this left a gap to examine the relationship between teacher's command of subject matter and students' academic performance at the NTC. Furthermore, five of the seven studies found a significant relationship between teacher's command of subject matter and students' academic performance while the two did not and some of the studies were carried at a pre-tertiary level of education.

H2: That teacher's command of subject matter is positively related to students' academic performance.

Teacher's Social Support and Students' Academic Performance

Roth (2004) defined social support as those resources perceived to be available that provide emotional support, feelings of esteem and being loved, whether from family, partner, friends, care providers, or peers. Some researchers such as Safree and Dzulkifli (2011), Hanem, Reem and Awany (2012), Guadalupe, Beatriz and Liporace (2014), Mazyari (2012) and Sivandani, Koohbanani, and Taghi, (2013) studied the relationship between the two variables. For instance, Safree et al. (2011) conducted a study that examined the relationship between social support and academic achievement. The finding of this study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between social support and academic achievement. Meanwhile, Hanem, Reem and Awany (2012) studied the moderating effect of social support on stress and academic performance among nursing students of Medical Surgical Nursing Department, College of Nursing, Tanta University, Egypt. The study demonstrated the likelihood that social support plays a protective role with academic performance through moderating the perceived stress level.

Furthermore, Guadalupe, Beatriz and Liporace (2014) conducted a study on perceived social support and academic achievement among Argentinean College students. The findings of the study showed that a higher perception of social support was associated with better academic achievement but only for females. While, Mazyari (2012) studied students' lack of motivation in Physical Education activities and teachers' social support among students of the College of Physical Education and Sport Science, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran. The study showed that there was a significant correlation between students' motivation in physical education, academic performance and teachers' support. Sivandani,

Koohbanani, and Taghi, (2013) conducted a study on the relation between social support and self-efficacy with academic achievement and school satisfaction among female junior high school students in Birjand, Iran. The study found out that social support was not significantly related to students' academic performance. The study context and research samples left a gap of teacher's social support and students' academic performance at the NTC not addressed, thus, there was a need for the study to be carried out. Whilst, out of the five studies studied, four found out a relationship between the two variables and one did not find a relationship.

H3: Teacher's social support is positively related to students' academic performance.

Teacher's Commitment and Students' Academic Performance

Mart (2013) defined teacher commitment as the emotional bond between the teacher and the school. Some researchers such as Ndifon and Ukpepi (2014), Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009), Tengku, Ghani and Elham (2012), Mart (2013), Medallon (2013), Ling (2013) studied the relationship between the two variables. For instance, Ndifon and Ukpepi (2014) investigated the relationship between primary school teacher's attitude to work and pupils' academic performance in cross river state, Nigeria. The findings of this study showed that attitude to work in terms of teachers' level of commitment had a significant relationship with pupils' academic performance. Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009) studied teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The results showed that effective teachers produced better performing students. Mart (2013) carried out a study on teacher's commitment to school and students among university students of Ishik University, Erbil, Iraq. The study found out that committed teachers make a difference to the success of the school and the learning of the students. Medallon (2013) carried out a study on faculty performance as a function of teaching goals and organizational commitment. The study found out that there was no relationship between the faculty's level of commitment and students' academic performance. Similarly Ling (2013) carried out a study on transformational leadership and teacher commitment in secondary schools of Sarawak and also found an insignificant relationship between teacher's commitment and students' academic performance. Furthermore, Tengku et al. (2012) conducted a study on lecturers' commitment and students' academic achievement: viewed from teaching evaluation result in Malaysia. The study found an insignificant correlation between the commitment of the lecturers and the performance of the students. However, all the six studies except two found a significant relationship between the two variables. Whilst,

all of the studies mentioned above none of them was conducted in Uganda, hence leaving a gap to carry out a similar study in Uganda at the NTC.

H4: Teacher's commitment to work is positively related to students' academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

Using a quantitative approach, and a correlational survey design, data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire with items on the four independent variables, all adapted from Makerere University instrument for evaluation of teaching effectiveness of staff (1998), namely characteristics of, or related to, teacher's competencies, of relevance in this paper, namely teacher's communication ability, CA (seven items: $\alpha = 0.774$); command of subject matter, CSM (four items: $\alpha = 0.666$); social support, SS (four items: $\alpha = 0.608$); and commitment C (ten items: $\alpha = 0.814$). Thus, the instrument was reliable for the study as all alpha coefficients were above 0.5 (Cronbach, 1971; Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Also the validity was taken for granted basing on the observation that an instrument that is reliable is also likely to be valid (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Therefore, it can suffice to point out that all the independent variables were reliable and valid. Data on dependent variable, students' academic performance were the examination results in one of the cross-cutting subjects in professional studies obtained from the respective lecturer whose competencies were assessed by the students who participated in the study. Consequently, marks that had been obtained in the end of academic year test (academic year 2014/2015) by the respective students in that subject were used to assess academic performance of the responding students. This instrument (end of academic year 2014/2015 test), that was used for measuring academic performance by a responding student was expected to contain items for measuring good or bad grades as obtained by a responding student. Using the said questionnaire, data were collected from available students basing on their halls of residence and a sample of 438 first year students of the National Teachers' College participated in the study. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to correlate the respective DV with IVs to test hypotheses both at bivariate and multivariate levels.

FINDINGS

Background of respondents

The details about the 438 respondents who participated in this study were as follows: in terms of the distribution of respondents by academic department, the majority (54.1%) were from Arts department, followed by (32.0%)

from Science Department and the last but not least (13.9%) were from Vocational Training Department. According to sex, 65.5% were male, while the rest 34.5% were female. Regarding age, the mean age of the respondents was 22.97 with a confidence interval of 22.70 to 23.23 at 95% level. This was close to 23.00 which was the median age. This shows that majority of the respondents were 23 years old or slightly younger or older than that. Furthermore, the difference between the minimum age (19.00) and maximum age (30.00) was very big as shown by a very wide range of 11.00. This suggests variation in the respondents' age in that there were some students who were younger than the mean age 22.97 which is the same as 23 years old and some who were older. With respect to marital status, single students were (84.0%) and the rest (13.2%) were married. Regarding the academic year of study all the 438 respondents were from first year (100.0%). In terms of teaching subjects, the respondents whose teaching subjects were History/Geography constituted the simple majority of 18.9%, followed by History/Religious Studies with 18.5%, Physics/Mathematics with 11.9%, English Double Main (DM) with 10.0%, Agriculture (DM) with 9.1%, Art/Design (DM) with 7.3%, Religious Studies/Geography with 6.2%, Mathematics/Chemistry with 5.0%, Biology/Chemistry with 3.7%, Mathematics/Geography with 3.4%, Biology/Sports Science with 3.2%, Technological Studies (DM) with 1.4%, Physics/Chemistry with 0.7% and Music (DM) with 0.2% in that respective order. The information on the background variables was collected with an intention to focus the study to the target group of study participants. This situated the participants' academic departments, sex, age, marital status, academic year of study and teaching subjects.

The Dependent Variable: Students' Academic Performance

The dependent variable academic performance was conceptualized as obtaining good or bad grades in school as portrayed by examination results in one of the cross-cutting subjects in professional studies. Consequently, marks that had been obtained in the end of academic year test (academic year 2014/2015) by the respective students in that subject were used to assess academic performance of the responding students. This instrument (end of academic year 2014/2015 test), that was used for measuring academic performance by a responding student was expected to contain items for measuring good or bad grades as obtained by a responding student. The academic performance of the responding students according to the descriptive statistics, the mean score was 63.23 with a confidence interval of 62.45 to 64.0 at 95% level. This translated to good performance since the mean mark was above the average mark of 50. The mean mark (63.23) was slightly less than the median

Table 1. Statistics on the IVs

	Mean	Remark	Overall
(a) Indicators of the communication ability (CA) of teacher's competence			
To what extent did the lecturer appear to have been prepared for teaching?	3.70	Good	Mean = 3.79
How clear was the lecturer in his/her presentation of the subject matter?	3.69	Good	(Good)
To what degree and how well did the lecturer use teaching illustrations or aids such as maps, projector, chalkboard, charts?	3.59	Good	
How do you rate the presentation by the lecturer?	3.94	Good	
Presents subject matter with clear explanation during the lecture	3.81	Good	
Communicates with ease by expressing himself/herself clearly	4.08	Good	
The lecturer is always loud and clear	3.73	Good	
(b) Indicator of the Command of Subject Matter (CSM) of Teacher's Competence			
Demonstrates experience by reviewing what he/she had taught in previous lectures	3.90	Good	Mean = 3.83
Demonstrates a good command of the subject matter by giving a variety of examples	3.87	Good	(Good)
Explains clearly by giving examples that are easy to understand	3.84	Good	
How do you rate the amount of subject matter given by this lecturer during the lectures in terms of relevance?	3.72	Good	
(c) Indicator of the social support (SS) of Teacher's Competence			
How much participation by the students was allowed during the lectures?	4.03	Good	Mean = 3.79
The lecturer encourages class discussion, class participation and is open to questions	3.76	Good	(Good)
The lecturer helps with social problems by giving advice to students	3.79	Good	
The lecturer gives guidance on career opportunities and references	3.57	Good	
(d) Indicator of the commitment (C) of Teacher's Competence			
Provides course outlines	3.97	Often	Mean = 3.65
Attends lectures/seminars as scheduled on the timetable regularly	3.92	Often	(Often)
Reschedules lectures/seminars/tutorials	3.64	Often	
Gives assignments	3.76	Often	
Marks assignments/tests on time	3.71	Often	
Grades assignments/tests/examinations objectively	3.76	Often	
Does not show bias in attitude and grading	2.15	Rarely	
Takes his/her work seriously and shows interest in it	3.99	Often	
Begins and ends lectures on time	3.89	Often	
Complete the syllabus	3.70	Often	

(64.0). The difference between the minimum (38.0) and maximum (86.0) score was very large as indicated by a very wide range of 48.0 and a big standard deviation of 8.26. This postulated discrepancy in the students' academic performance in such that there were some students whose academic performance was very poor and others whose academic performance was good.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in the study, were four characteristics of teacher's competencies, namely teacher's communication ability (7 items: $\alpha = 0.774$); command of subject matter (4 items: $\alpha = 0.666$); social

support (4 items: $\alpha = 0.608$); and commitment to teaching (10 items: $\alpha = 0.814$). All the items were Likert-scaled in such a way that 1 = Very poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Fair, 4 = Good, 5 = Very good. The items of IV3 commitment to teaching were Likert-scaled in such a way that 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always. Table 1 gives the pertinent statistics.

From Table 1, overall aggregates (CA, CSM, SS & C) were computed from the respective item clusters and found to have means that suggested that respondents rated their respective teacher best in terms of CSM (Mean = 3.83); followed by both CA and SS (Mean = 3.79) and lastly the C (Mean = 3.65) on teacher's competencies. All the four aggregates corresponded to "Good" suggesting that the teacher was good at all competencies studied.

Testing Hypotheses: Multivariate Level

In order to test the hypotheses at a multivariate level, the dependent variable (DV) was regressed on the independent variables (IVs) that is communication ability (CA), command of subject matter (CSM), social support (SS) and commitment (C) using SPSS. A mathematical expression was developed as follows;

$$\text{Test100} = -0.131\text{CA} + 0.107\text{CSM} + 0.069\text{SS} + 0.078\text{C} \dots\dots\dots (5.1)$$

(0.118) (0.167) (0.307) (0.308),

with $F = 2.104$, $p = 0.079$ and Adjusted R square = 0.010. The figures below the respective coefficients in Expression (5.1) were the pertinent p values. The model in Expression 5.1 suggested that the four IVs considered, were collectively not very good explanatory variables ($F = 2.104$, $p = 0.079$) of students' academic performance at the five percent level of significance ($p < 0.01$), accounting for the variation in the aggregate Test100 index (Adjusted R square = 0.010). Expression (5.1) further suggested that none of the four IVs significantly correlated with students' academic performance, leading to rejection of all the four research hypotheses.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The four hypotheses (H1 to H4) to the effect that, communication ability (CA), command of subject matter (CSM), social support (SS) and commitment (C) were positively related to students' academic performance, were not support. Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression revealed that the relationship was not significant at the five percent level. In the case of H1, this finding was contrary to several studies, (e.g. Malissa, 2014; Palos and Merima, 2014) which have positively related CA to students' academic performance. In case of H2, the current finding was also in disagreement with several studies in which teacher's command of subject matter has been positively related to students' academic performance by several researchers (e.g. Metzler and Ludger, 2010; Ogbonnaya, 2007; Olatunji and Babatunde, 2010) in different study contexts. The findings on H3 also were contrary to that of several other studies (e.g. Safree and Dzulkipli, 2011; Hanem et al., 2012; Guadalupe et al., 2014; Mazyari, 2012). In the case of H4, this finding was also at variance with several studies (e.g. Ndifon and Ukpepi, 2014; Akiri and Ugborugbo, 2009; Mart, 2013; Medallon, 2013) which have positively related teacher's commitment to students' academic performance. What might have contributed to such findings was may be because the study employed a cross-sectional survey method in which research data was gathered from all respondents at a particular time in order to minimize time and costs. The study therefore

depended on the respondents' rating of their lecturer's competencies as regards communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment and for the dependent variable relied on students' academic results obtained in the end of year test from the responsible subject teacher. Furthermore, may be these unexpected results were due to differentiation in study context. The finding on H1 in the current study joins the category of earlier studies (e.g. Nurzal and Khairu, 2009; Burris, 2015) that did not find teacher's communication ability to be related to students' academic performance. Similarly, finding on H2 in the current study joins the category of earlier studies (e.g. Olatundun and Adu, 2007; Kimani et al., 2013) that did not find teacher's command of subject matter to be a correlate of students' academic performance. Further-more, the finding on H3 in the current study joins the category of earlier studies (e.g. Mackinnon, 2011; Sivandani, Koohbanani and Taghi, 2013) that did not find teacher's social support to be a correlate of students' academic performance. Whilst, the finding on H4 in the current study joins the category of earlier studies (e.g. Tengku et al., 2012; Ling, 2013; Medallon, 2013) that did not find teacher's commitment to be a correlate of students' academic performance. This implies that since the study found an insignificant relationship between communication ability, command of subject matter, social support, commitment and students' academic performance, more research should be carried out to examine the relationship further between these variables both at the NTC studied and elsewhere may be a positive relationship will be established to help relevant change agents to develop teacher's competencies and thus improve students' academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The study was undertaken to examine the relationship between teacher's competencies (communication ability, command of subject matter, social support and commitment) and students' academic performance. The study found that teacher's competencies studied had an insignificant relationship with students' academic performance. In this respect, it can be deduced that the teacher's competencies studied were inconsequential in improving students' academic performance at the NTC. However, despite the findings that have revealed insignificant relationships between variables, the study has contributed something on which future researchers on teacher's competencies and students' academic performance will build. Thus, more studies in the area of teacher's competencies both examined in this study and those which were not examined are needed. This can be done both at the college and elsewhere, with specific focus on ways to improve students' academic performance. Possibly, a significant correlation will be established.

REFERENCES

- Adedeji T, Adeyinka T, Olufemi A (2009). Locus of control, interest in schooling, self-efficacy and academic achievement. *Cypriot J. Edu. Sci.* (4), 168-182. Retrieved from: www.world-education-center.org/index.php/cjes.
- Akiri AA, Ugborugbo NM (2009). Teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. *Stud Home Comm Sci*, 3(2), 107-113.
- Brisbane B (2004). *Oral Communication Toolkit*. Australia, Griffith Institute for Higher Education, Griffith University.
- British Council. (2011) *Teaching Skills: Inspiring Teaching Excellence*. Retrieved from: www.britishcouncil.org
- Burris DA (2015). Determining whether a link exists between the academic performance of Mississippi public school districts and school administrators' use of persuasive communication techniques and self-efficacy in communication. *The University of Southern Mississippi, The Aquila Digital Community*. Retrieved from: <http://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>
- Cronbach LJ (1971). Test validation, in R. L. Thorndike (Ed). *Educational measurement* (pp. 443-5 97). Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Deci EL, Ryan RM (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum Press.
- European Commission (2013). Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes. Education and Training. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/teacher-cluster_en.htm.
- Guadalupe I, Beatriz JS, Liporace MF (2014). Perceived social support and academic achievement in Argentinean college students. *Europe's journal of psychology*, 10(4), 637-649. doi:10.5964/ejop.v10i4.777.
- Hanem FM, Reem K, Awany Z (2012). The Moderating Effect of Social Support on Stress and Academic Performance among Nursing Students. *J. Ame. Sci.* 8(12), 716-720. Retrieved from: <http://www.jofamericanscience.org>
- Kimani GN, Kara AM, Njagi LW (2013). Teacher factors influencing students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya. *Int. J. Edu. Res.* 1(3), 1.14
- Koroma JM, Gegbe B (2014). Students and teachers' perception of the causes of poor academic performance in general and further mathematics in Sierra Leone: A case study of BO District Southern Province. *Int. J. Eng. Res. General Sci.* 2(5), 240-253
- Ling MS (2013). Transformational leadership and teacher commitment in secondary schools of Sarawak. *Int. J. Independent Res. Stud.* 2(2) 51-65
- Makerere University (1998). *Evaluation of teaching effectiveness of staff*. Kampala: Academic Registrar
- Malissa M (2014). Communication aptitude and academic success. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* Vol. 134 (5), 125 - 133.
- Mart CT (2013). Commitment to School and Students. *Int. J. Acad. Res. Bus. Soc. Sci.* 3, (1), 336-340.
- Mazyari M, Kashef M, Ameri HS, Araghi M (2012). Students' amotivation in physical education activities and teachers' social support. *World Appl. Sci. J.* 20 (11), 1570-1573. doi: 10.5829/idosi.wasj.2012.20.11.1716.
- Medallon MC (2013). Faculty performance as a function of teaching goals and organizational commitment. *Int. J. Sci. Technol. Res.* 2(11), 66-72
- Melrose AS (2011). Competencies of instructors: its correlation to the factors affecting the academic performance of students. *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6, 31-51.
- Metzler J, Ludger W (2010). *The impact of teacher subject knowledge on student achievement: evidence from within-teacher within-student variation*. Institute for Economic Research, University of Munich, Germany, IZA Discussion Paper No. 4999.
- Muzenda A (2013). Lecturers' competences and students' academic performance. *Int. J. Humanit. Soc. Sci. Invention*, 3 (1), 6-13.
- Natalie KL, Donelson RF, Jeni LB, Baumeister RF (2004). Attempting to improve the academic performance of struggling college students by bolstering their self-esteem: an intervention that backfired. *J. Soc. Clin. Psychol.* 26, (4), 447-459.
- Ndifon AR, Ukpepi CUB (2014). The Relationship between Primary School Teacher's Attitude to Work and Pupils' Academic Performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. *Brit. J. Arts and Soc. Sci.* 17 (I), 192-2001. Retrieved from: <http://www.bjournal.co.uk/BJASS.aspx>
- Niemiec CP, Ryan RM, Deci EL (2009). The path taken: Consequences of attaining intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations in post college life. *J. Res. Personality*, 43, 291 306.
- Nurzali S, Khairu NI (2009). The effects of classroom communication on students' academic performance at the International Islamic Malaysia. *Unitar E-Journal* 5, (1) P. 37-49.
- Ogbonnaya UI (2007). *The influence of teachers' background, professional development and teaching practices on students' achievement in mathematics in Lesotho*. Research paper submitted to the University of South Africa.
- Olatundun SO, Adu EO (2007). Teachers' perception of teaching as correlates of students' academic performance in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Essays in Education*, 20, 57-64
- Olatunji AS, Babatunde BN (2010). Teachers' attributes as correlates of students' academic performance in Geography in the secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 7 (5), 388-392.
- Palos R, Merima CP (2014). *Perceived importance of communication skills and their predictive value for academic performance*. *Revista de cercetare si interventii sociale* vol. 46, 85-98. Retrieved from: www.rcis.ro, www.doaj.org and www.scopus.com
- Roth CA (2004). *A survey of perceived social support among pregnant women in the intermountain region*. Bozeman, Montana State University.
- Ryan RM, Deci EL, Grolnick WS, LaGuardia JG (2006). The significance of autonomy and autonomy support in psychological development and psychopathology. In D. Cicchetti and D. Cohen (Eds.) *Developmental Psychopathology: Volume 1, Theory and Methods* (2nd Edition, pp. 295- 849). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Safree AY, Dzulkifli AM (2011). The relationship between social support and academic achievement. *Int. J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.* 1 (5). 277-281
- Sivandani A, Koohbanani SE, Taghi V (2013). The relation between social support and self-efficacy with academic achievement and school satisfaction among female junior high school students in Birjand, Iran. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84, 668 -673. Retrieved from: www.sciencedirect.com
- Suki G, Thania J, Mira K (2011). An investigation of the relationship between students' motivation and academic performance as mediated by effort. *South Afr. J. Psychol.* 4 (1), 376. Retrieved from: http://www.sabinet.co.za/abstracts/sapsyc/sapsyc_n3_all.html
- Tavakol M, Dennick R (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *Int. J. Med. Edu.* 2, 53-55. Doi: 10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd
- Tengku SN, Ghani MFA, Elham F (2012). Lecturers' commitment and students' academic achievement: viewed from teaching evaluation result. *J. Edu. Learn.* 6 (4), 207-214.
- The College Magazine (2013). *The diven*. Magazine.

Urduan TC, Midgley C (2003). Changes in the perceived classroom goal structure and patterns of adaptive learning during early adolescence. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 28, 524-551.

Wamala R, Sseruwagi G (2013). Teacher competence and the academic achievement of sixth-grade students in Uganda. *J. Int. Educ. Res.* 9 (1), 83-90.