

**ECONOMICS STUDENTS' RATING OF ECONOMICS TEACHERS'  
EFFECTIVENESS: A SURVEY OF SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN  
THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA.**

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***Abstract***

*The thrust of this study was to ascertain the influence of certain factors on Economics students' rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness. A total of 781 Economics students, randomly selected, were involved in the study. A questionnaire, (which was a students' rating form) was used for data collection. Data obtained on students' background information as well as other data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the characteristics of respondents.*

*An independent samples t-test suggested that students' rating was dependent on location of school and class size. The test however indicated that students' rating was independent of students' gender, students' level, students' intention towards further studies of the subject, as well as students' perceived difficulty of Economics. It was recommended that students' ratings should not be employed as a sole criterion for assessing teacher effectiveness, but should be combined with other assessment measures such as teaching portfolios and classroom observation.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Economics is one of the school subjects which have gradually gained roots in both second and tertiary educational institutions the world over, especially, in Ghana. This is because it has been acknowledged that knowledge in Economics and ability to apply it to significant problems and issues are essential elements of responsible citizenship in a democratic society.

Seiter (1988) however, believes that merely strengthening the place of Economics in the curriculum, does not guarantee effective teaching that yields high levels of economic literacy among students. This is because in the view of Miller (1988), both the quantity and quality of classroom instruction are critically important in the teaching and learning of Economics in schools. Again, as Seiter (1988) rightly puts it, the quality of instruction depends upon the knowledge of teachers and that there is a positive relationship between teachers' knowledge of Economics and levels of economic literacy achieved by their students. This point is further reiterated by Tamakloe, Amedahe, and Atta (2005) who argue that the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter is as important as his knowledge of the child. They explain; "a mastery of the subject matter and its methodology instill confidence in the teacher and this reflects on the learner" (p. 8).

It is therefore very important to note that, the need for competent Economics teachers is a pertinent issue because the subject is structured along the subject pattern of curriculum organization and as Smith, Stanley and Shores (1957) clearly point out, well trained teachers is one of the requirements for the effective operation of the subject curriculum. As Marsh and Willis (2003) posit, "whenever policies and programmes have originated from above, teachers must plan their activities around them for periods of time, ranging from a full-year course to a daily lesson of a few minutes" (p. 197). The implication of this is that, a case of teacher ineffectiveness in the presentation of Economics lessons is likely to have a debilitating effect on students' performance as well as on the acquisition of the basic skills and knowledge required of them. There is therefore the need to find out from Economics students whether their Economics teachers

are able to translate their pedagogical content knowledge into effective teaching of the subject in the classroom.

There are various ways of assessing teacher effectiveness, among which is students' rating of teacher effectiveness. This measure is used from time to time both as formative and summative evaluation of teaching. Its use has been justified on many grounds, among which is the notion that raters from the student body have closely and recently observed a number of teachers and are therefore in a better position to give a fair assessment of their teachers' effectiveness. The emphasis of the study was to find out whether in the case of the teaching and learning of Economics, the presence of certain peculiar student characteristics influence the ratings Economics students give when they are rating Economics teachers' effectiveness.

The first of these factors to be considered is the location of the school (i.e. Rural or Urban). Studies have shown that, the rating of teacher effectiveness by students in different locations tend to differ significantly. A study conducted by Bail and Mina (1981) on how Filipino and American undergraduate students rated college instructor characteristics according to their perceived importance for effective teaching came out with the finding that, ratings were significantly different.

Secondly, another factor which may influence students' rating of teacher effectiveness is the gender of the student. Many major reviews of students' evaluations conclude that gender does not have a significant effect on the rating which students give to their teachers, whereas others also conclude that the subject of gender should not be hurriedly dismissed because it could as well influence, to some extent, the ratings which students give to the effectiveness of their teachers. For example, Oluwatimilehin (2009), after conducting a study which investigated teacher-trainees' ranking of teachers' effectiveness characteristics, came out with the finding that there was no significant difference in the perception of the characteristics of good teachers by male and female students. Other studies, such as those conducted by Marsh and Dunkin (1992) as well as Seldin (1993), came out with findings that really supported this assertion. Feldman (1993) also supports this view that gender is not related to the rankings which students give teachers. However, he believes that when the majority of students are the same sex as the teacher they tend to give higher ratings to the teacher.

Again, the level at which a course is taken may also influence students' rating of teacher effectiveness. According to Doolittle and Camp (1999), students actively construct meaning through experiences. Thus more interactions of students, taking a course at a higher level in school, with the teaching and learning environment equips such students with more experience to rate their teachers differently from those taking the course at a lower level. This assertion has been found to hold by a number of studies that have revealed that the level of the course has a marginal impact on ratings with higher level courses tending to have better course ratings than lower level courses (Aleamoni & Graham, 1974; Bausell & Bausall, 1979). Romney (1976), also reports of other studies which came out with the finding that teachers of upper level courses were rated more highly than teachers of low level courses.

Furthermore, class size is another variable which has the potential of influencing students' rating of teacher effectiveness. According to Umble (1980), instructors of smaller classes have higher ratings than their counterparts in relatively larger classes. Other studies, however, refute the above assertion by maintaining that, there is no significant difference between class size and rating of teacher effectiveness by students. For example, based on the analysis of 52 studies of students' rating of teacher effectiveness, Feldman (1984) concluded that class size was no serious source of bias in students' rating of teacher effectiveness. In another study conducted by Fernandez, Mateo and Muniz (1998), which sought to investigate the relationship between class size and students' evaluation of university teaching quality, data from 2,915 university classrooms were collected in classes ranging from 1 to 234 students. Results indicated that there was a weak relationship between class size and students' rating of teaching quality.

More so, students' intention toward a subject is another variable that could possibly influence the rating of teacher effectiveness by students. A number of studies have come out with findings on variables which can be directly linked to students' attitudes towards a subject and their rating of teacher effectiveness. Independent studies conducted by Marsh and Cooper (1981) as well as Ory (1980) revealed that students with prior interest in a course gave somewhat higher ratings to the teacher than those who did not indicate any prior interest in the subject.

Finally, the level of difficulty which students' associate with a particular subject may also have an influence on students' rating of teacher effectiveness. According to Theall and Franklin (2001) academic rigor is often associated with low ratings or is offered as a reason for low rating of teacher effectiveness. Again, Chang (2000), after a thorough analysis of variables in a study which investigated the effect of course, class, student, and instructor characteristics on student ratings of instruction, came out with the finding that course difficulty is negatively correlated with all evaluation scores. This implies that the higher the difficulty of the subject, the lower the ratings students assigned to the effectiveness of their teachers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

One school of thought believes that knowledge of one's subject is all that is needed to be an effective teacher. Such a conception of teacher effectiveness makes it difficult to use student rating to assess teacher effectiveness. This is because a teacher may be competent in content knowledge, but poor classroom practices, as a result of incompetence in the use of pedagogical skills, may render him or her ineffective from the view point of the learner.

Grossman, (as cited in Ornstein, Thomas, & Lasley, 2000, p. 508) argues; "if teachers are to be successful, they must wrestle simultaneously with issues of pedagogical content (or knowledge) as well as general pedagogy (or generic teaching principles)". This assertion is also supported by Neumann (1994) who opines that good teaching involves more than generic skills and involves the specific contexts in which teaching occurs. To him, it is necessary to examine the special blending of content and pedagogical knowledge.

For this reason, the study focused more on the pedagogical content knowledge of Economics teachers. It therefore adapted the New South Wales Quality Teaching (NSWQT) model, which is based on the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP) model of pedagogy, for thinking about teaching effectiveness. This quality teaching model, according to Yeigh (2008), connects student learning to the quality of pedagogy the teacher brings to the teaching/learning process by positing that student learning outcomes are largely the product of the instruction they receive. This

assertion links desired educational outcomes to the quality of the learning tasks and activities in terms of their presentation and suitability. Thus the underlying assumption of this model is that the nature and quality of pedagogy represent the pit and core of the teaching business. The Quality Teaching in New South Wales Public Schools model has identified three pedagogical dimensions as the central pillars of the model. These dimensions are: Intellectual Quality (IQ), Quality Learning Environment (QLE), and Significance (SIG).

As explained by Yeigh (2008), the IQ dimension basically relates to pedagogical elements that promote deeply cognitive, challenging, reflective student learning. The emphasis is on producing deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas. Here knowledge is perceived as something that requires active construction and requires learners to engage in higher-order thinking and to communicate substantively about what they are learning.

The QLE dimension emphasizes supportive classroom structures and positive expectations as a means to more productive learning outcomes, thus promoting positive classroom relationships and more equitable student outcomes (Yeigh, 2008). Such pedagogy sets high and explicit expectations and develops positive relations between teachers and learners and among learners.

The SIG dimension connects the learning to ownership, and to the students' growing sense of identity, by way of elements that seek to link classroom learning to the students' own background as well as to the larger, more diverse world outside the school. In effect, this dimension focuses on pedagogy that helps make learning meaningful and important to the learners.

### **The Problem**

The Chief Examiner's Reports on Economics students' performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) over the years clearly indicate that there are serious problems with regard to students' understanding of economic issues. For example, the chief examiner's report for (2003) clearly indicated that many candidates gave unsatisfactory answers to questions because: they were unable to apply economic principles to explain situations or solve economic problems well; they

were unable to use economic principles to produce acceptable answers; and also some candidates were completely ignorant about the meanings of economic terms and therefore gave completely irrelevant answers.

Usually, people are quick to identify inadequate teacher motivation and lack of teaching and learning resources as some of the causes of students' low performance in the subject. The issue of teacher effectiveness has not been given much attention in trying to resolve the myriad of problems confronting the teaching of Economics in Ghanaian senior high schools. It is therefore, imperative to ascertain whether this problem or difficulty in understanding Economics on the part of the learner, is as a result of the quality of instruction in the classroom.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to find out how Economics students rate their Economics teachers in terms of their perceived teaching effectiveness. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether:

1. There was a difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by rural and urban Economics students.
2. There was a difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by male and female Economics students.
3. There was a difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by form two and form three Economics students
4. There was a difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by students in different class sizes
5. There was a difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by students who intended to pursue Economics after senior high school and those who did not intend to.
6. There was a difference in the ratings of teacher effectiveness by students who perceived Economics to be difficult and those who perceived the subject not to be difficult.

### **The Method**

## Participants

Out of the total number of senior high school students reading Economics in the Central Region, a representative sample was drawn for the study. In the view of Cohen and Manion (1989), in the situation where the population size is too large, the researcher collects information from a smaller group or subset of the population in such a way that knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study. For this study, the researcher employed multistage sampling, which is a combination of different sampling procedures

First of all, the researcher employed stratified random sampling procedure to select eight schools for the study. The main aim of this sampling procedure was to produce a sample that reflected a population in terms of the relative proportions of people in different categories, such as region of residence (Bryman, 2004). All senior high schools in the Central Region were therefore grouped into urban and rural schools. A simple random sampling procedure was then used to select four schools from each group. Again since most schools had students from different programmes reading Economics (e.g. Business, Arts, Home Economics etc), the simple random sampling procedure was employed to select one class from each level (i.e. form two and form three). In all, sixteen classes in the eight selected schools were used for the study.

With the selection of students, a simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that each student stood an equal chance of being selected for the study. The number of students selected depended on the size of the class. According to Franklin and Theall (1991), a minimum percentage of students depending upon the size of the class must be present to do the ratings for the information to be considered representative and reliable. They have therefore given the following class sizes and their corresponding percentages, which has been presented in Table 1

Table 1

### Class sizes and Corresponding Percentages

Class size	Recommended response
5-20	80%
20-30	75%

30-50	66%-75%
50-more	60%-75
100-more	50%-75%

The sample size and characteristics have been summarized in Table

Table 2

**Distribution of Students by Gender and School location**

School	Location	Gender		Total	%
		Male	Female		
Aggrey Memorial SHS	Urban	43	40	83	10.63
Bisease Technical SHS	Rural	65	67	132	16.9
Denkyira Technical SHS	Rural	42	34	76	9.73
Mando Technical SHS	Rural	88	75	163	20.87
Nsuta Agricultural SHS	Rural	53	24	77	9.86
Obiri Yeboah SHS	Urban	59	36	95	12.16
Swedru SHS	Urban	45	29	74	9.48
University Practice SHS	Urban	25	56	81	10.37
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>420</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>100</b>

A total number of 16 teachers from eight schools (i.e. four rural and four urban) were rated by 781 students.

**Instrument**

The instrument for the study, which is a questionnaire, was a student rating form which was designed by the researcher using two standard student rating forms used for assessing university lecturers as a guide. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections (A, B and C). Section “A” contained items that collected demographic data on the respondents. Section “B”, dealt with how Economics students rate Economics teachers’ effectiveness, while section C sought to find out students’ reasons for the rating they gave to their teachers. The questionnaire contained only structured or closed ended items, with the exception of item 29 which was designed to find out the reasons that

informed the ratings which students gave to their teachers' effectiveness. Economics teachers' effectiveness was measured on the Likert-scale. To each statement on the instrument, students' responses ranged from "not sure", "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "agree" to "strongly agree".

### **Analysis of Data**

Data obtained on students' background information as well as other data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the characteristics of respondents. The mean, standard deviation and mean differences were obtained and discussed. Items 7 to 27 on the questionnaire sought to find out teaching effectiveness of Economics teachers (see appendix B). Responses ranged from "strongly disagree", "not sure" to "strongly agree" and were measured on a five-point likert-scale. The weight for each item was computed and the score obtained denoted the level of teacher effectiveness. The scale used is presented as follows: 0-----Strongly Disagree, 1-----Disagree, 2-----Not Sure, 3-----Agree, 4-----Strongly Agree.

A two-tailed independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in students' rating and certain factors that are believed to influence students' rating of teacher effectiveness. Factors considered include: school location, gender of students, students' level, class size, students' intention towards further studies in Economics as well as students' perceived difficulty of Economics. Differences were considered significant at the .05 level.

### **Procedure**

The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher. A discussion was held with teachers of the various schools selected for the study to agree on a convenient time to administer the instrument. Then a sample of students was selected based on the size of the class by means of simple random sampling. The respondents were then guided by the researcher to complete the instrument. Out of the 781 questionnaires administered, there was a 100 percent return rate.

## Results

Table 3

Summary of results in response to hypothesis 1: Rural and urban Economics students do not rate the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers differently.

Location	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
Rural	4.29	2.41			
Urban	2.88	2.16	8.57	755.14	.05

Significance level 0.05

From Table 3, M is the mean and SD is the standard deviation. Because the variances for the two groups – rural and urban Economics students were unequal ( $F = 16.084$ ,  $\rho < 0.05$ ) a t-test for unequal variances was used. Economics students in rural schools rated the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers significantly higher than those in urban schools. This is because, as indicated in Table 3, the mean rating of Economics students in rural schools ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 2.41$ ) is significantly higher ( $t = 8.57$ ,  $df = 755.14$ , Two – tailed probability  $< 0.05$ ) than that of Economics students in urban schools. This implies that there was a significant difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by Economics students in rural and urban schools.

Table 4

Summary of results in response to hypothesis 2: Male and female Economics students do not rate the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers differently

Gender	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
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Male	3.60	2.384			
Female	3.80	2.439	-1.171	779	0.05
Significance level 0.05					

From Table 4, The Levene's Test for Equality of variances indicated that the variances for the two groups – male and female Economics students were equal ( $F = 0.258, p > 0.05$ ), hence a test for equal variances was used. The mean rating of female Economics students ( $M = 3.80, SD = 2.493$ ) is not significantly higher ( $t = -1.171, df = 779, 2 - \text{tailed probability} > 0.05$ ) than the mean rating of male Economics students. This implies that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by male and female Economics students.

Table 5

Summary of results in response to hypothesis 3: Form three and form two Economics students do not rate the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers differently

Students' Level	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
Form two	3.74	2.432	0.669	779	0.05
Form three	3.63	2.389			
Significance level 0.05					

From Table 5, The Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in rating was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups – form two and form three Economics students were equal ( $F = 0.526, p > 0.05$ ), hence a test for equal variances was used. The mean rating of form two Economics students ( $M = 3.74, SD = 2.432$ ) is not significantly higher ( $t = 0.669, df = 779, \text{two} - \text{tailed probability} > 0.05$ ) than the mean rating of form three Economics students. This implies that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by Economics students at different levels.

Table 6

Summary of results in response to hypothesis 4: Economics students in large classes do not rate the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers differently from those in smaller classes.

Class Size	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
1 – 50	3.19	2.306			
50+	3.93	2.425	- 4.064	779	0.05

Significance level 0.05

From Table 6, The Levene’s Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in rating was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups – larger class size and smaller class size were equal ( $F = 1.678, \rho > 0.05$ ), hence a test for equal variances was used. The mean rating of Economics students in larger classes ( $M = 3.93, SD = 2.425$ ) is significantly higher ( $t = - 4.064, df = 779$ , Two – tailed probability  $< 0.05$ ) than the mean rating of Economics students in smaller classes. This implies that there was a significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers’ effectiveness by Economics students in different class sizes.

Table 7

Summary of results in response to hypothesis 5: Economics students who intend to pursue Economics at a higher level of education do not rate the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers differently from those who do not intend to.

Intention of further studies	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
Yes	3.60	2.350			
No	3.85	2.505	- 1.413	779	0.05

Significance level 0.05

From Table 7, The Levene’s Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in rating was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups – students who intend to study Economics at a high level and those who intend to drop the subject after senior high school were equal ( $F = 3.732, \rho > 0.05$ ), hence a test for equal variances was used. The mean rating of Economics students who do not

intend to study Economics at a higher level ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 2.505$ ) is not significantly higher ( $t = -1.413$ ,  $df = 779$ , Two – tailed probability  $> 0.05$ ) than the mean rating of Economics students who intend to read the subject at a higher level. This implies that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers’ effectiveness by Economics students who intend to have further studies in Economics and those students who do not.

Table 8

Summary of results in response to hypothesis 6: Economics students who perceive Economics to be difficult do not rate the teaching effectiveness of their Economics teachers differently from those who do not perceive the subject to be difficult.

Difficulty of Economics	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
Yes	3.60	2.224			
No	3.71	2.456	0.556	260.271	0.05

Significance level 0.05

From Table 8, The Levene’s Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in rating was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups – students who do not perceive Economics to be difficult to study and those who perceive the subject to be difficult were unequal ( $F = 5.578$ ,  $\rho < 0.05$ ), hence a test for unequal variances was used. The mean rating of students who perceive Economics not to be difficult to study ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 2.456$ ) is not significantly higher ( $t = 0.556$ ,  $df = 260.271$ , Two – tailed probability  $> 0.05$ ) than the mean rating of students who perceive Economics to be difficult to study. This implies that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers’ effectiveness by students who perceive Economics to be difficult and those who do not perceive the subject to be difficult.

## Discussion

This study found out that there was a significant difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by Economics students in rural and urban schools. This difference in students' rating could be attributed to certain differences in situational factors. For instance students in urban schools may be more exposed to different teachers (through extra classes with teachers from different schools) and may have therefore had the opportunity of experiencing different teaching styles and other techniques of teaching. Again, students in urban schools may have access to other learning resources other than the ones being used by their teachers in the classroom. Some of these resources include library facilities, good textbooks and the internet. Students therefore have the opportunity to acquire some content knowledge of Economics on their own. This exposure to the content knowledge of Economics places them in a good stead to rate their teachers differently from their counterparts in rural schools who may not have access to the appropriate learning resources, and therefore lack the competence to rate their teachers in terms of content knowledge of Economics. The difference in students' rating is supported by findings by Bail and Mina (1981) that students in different locations rate the teaching effectiveness of their teachers differently.

It is also found in the study that, even though the differences in mean rating seemed to indicate a difference in the rating of teacher effectiveness by male and female Economics students, the result of the t-test for two independent samples showed that the difference was not significant. The seemingly difference in rating could be attributed to the fact that females usually perceive Economics to be difficult as compared to males. This is because of the academic rigor associated with the course. And as Theall and Franklin (2001) assert, academic rigor is often associated with low ratings or is offered as a reason for low ratings. It is therefore not surprising that male students, who perceive Economics not to be difficult, seemed to give a relatively higher rating to Economics teachers' effectiveness than female Economics students, who perceive the subject to be difficult. However, the finding makes it clear that the difference is not significant enough to influence Economics students' rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness. This finding corroborates the assertions made by Oluwatimeilehin (2009), Marsh and Dunkin (1992) as well as Seldin (1993) that gender did not influence significantly, the rating of teacher effectiveness by students.

Furthermore, the study found out that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by Economics students at different levels. It is generally believed that form three students have been exposed to more content of Economics than form two students. Again, form three students might have experienced different Economics teachers and may therefore be more conversant with different teaching styles as compared to form two students. However, these differences did not account for any significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by form two and form three Economics students. This finding is at variance with findings made by other studies that the level of the course has a marginal impact on ratings with higher level courses tending to have better course ratings than lower level courses (Aleamoni & Graham, 1974; Bausell & Bausall, 1979; Romney 1976).

The study also found out that there was a significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by Economics students in different class sizes. This difference in students' rating could be attributed to the possibility that, in large classes, the Economics teacher may not be able to explain Economics concepts adequately to the understanding of all students in the class because of the large class size, coupled with inadequate teaching and learning resources. The teacher therefore, may not be able to cater for individual needs (such as remediation for slow learners), unlike in a relatively smaller class size where the teacher may be able to handle the needs of all or most students in the class. The difference could also be attributed to the possibility that in large classes, teachers are compelled to use more teacher-centred techniques of teaching, such as the lecture method which limits teacher-student interactions.

The needs of individual students may, again, not be catered for. In relatively smaller classes, however, the teacher could employ different learner-centred techniques such as the discussion method, role play and others. These different techniques do not only help students to understand what the teacher teaches in the classroom, but also expose them to different styles of teaching and therefore place them in a better position to rate their Economics teachers better in terms of their knowledge of pedagogy. This finding is in agreement with some research findings and also refuted by findings from other studies. For instance, it agrees with the findings that students in different class sizes rate their teachers differently (Umble 1980). Other studies, however, have come out with

the finding that students' rating of teacher effectiveness is independent of class size (Feldman, 1980; Centra, 1993; Fernandez, Mateo and Muniz 1998).

The study also found out that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by Economics students who intend to pursue the subject at the higher level and those who do not. This finding contradicts the assumption made by the researcher that there would be a difference in the rating of students who intended to pursue Economics at a higher level of education and those who did not. The underlying assumption was that students who had the aspiration of majoring or reading a subject at a higher level of education would have prior interest in the subject and therefore put more effort and time into the study of the subject than their counterparts who intended to minor or drop the subject. Students, as a result of their good disposition and interest for the subject, may rate their teachers more favourably than their counterparts who did not intend to pursue the subject at a higher level and therefore did not show any marked interest in the study of the subject. Again, the finding also contradicts findings from studies conducted by Marsh and Cooper (1981) as well as Ory (1980), which revealed that students with prior interest in a course give somewhat higher ratings to the teacher than those who do not indicate any prior interest in the subject.

Finally, the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by students who perceive Economics to be difficult and those who do not perceive the subject to be difficult. This finding does not agree with the belief that the level of difficulty students' associate with a particular subject could have an influence on the rating they give to the teaching effectiveness of their teachers. It is generally believed that most students who perceive a subject to be difficult tend to be discouraged with the subject and might not be comfortable with the academic rigor associated with the learning of the subject. This, it was believed could influence the rating they give to the teaching effectiveness of their teachers. The finding also contradicts the findings of Chang (2000), who after a thorough analysis of variables in a study which investigated the effect of course, class, student, and instructor characteristics on student ratings of instruction, came out with the finding that course difficulty is negatively correlated with all evaluation scores. That is, the higher the difficulty of the subject, the lower the ratings which students assigned to the effectiveness of their

teachers. This study has however, revealed that students' perception of the difficulty of Economics does not significantly, influence the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

The study sought to establish whether the presence of certain peculiar student characteristics influence the ratings which Economics students give when they are rating Economics teachers' effectiveness. The independent sample t-test was used to test for differences in students' rating. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by Economics students in rural and urban schools. This implies that Economics students' rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness is not independent of school location. The same can be said of the ratings of Economics students in different class sizes, for which the test indicated a statistically significant difference in ratings of students in large and small class sizes.

Again, the test indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by male and female Economics students. The implication of this is that Economics students' rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness was independent of students' gender.

There were also no statistically significant differences in the rating of Economics teachers' effectiveness by Economics students at different levels; Economics students who intended to study Economics at a higher level and those who did not; as well as Economics students who perceived Economics to be difficult and those who did not. Again, all these imply that Economics students' rating was independent of students' gender, students' level, students' intention towards further studies of the subject, as well as students' perceived difficulty of Economics.

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