



Relative Importance of Indicators of Teachers' Professional Skills as Perceived by Senior High School Economics Teachers in Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined differences in perception among Senior High School Economics teachers on the relative importance of indicators of teachers' professional skills, based on teaching experience. The study employed the descriptive survey method and comprised a sample of 115 professional Economics teachers drawn from the Central Region of Ghana. A self-designed questionnaire was administered on the respondents. The data were analysed using the t-test. The findings of the study showed that highly experienced Economics teachers perceive indicators of teachers' skills of instructional planning as more important, relative to the experienced Economics teachers. Again, the finding showed a significant difference in perception between the highly experienced and experienced Economics teachers about the relative importance of the skills of instructional assessment. The study recommends the organisation of in-service workshops for sensitisation as well as the creation of a community of learners among SHS Economics teachers for the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Keywords: Economics teacher, professional skills, instructional planning, delivery, assessment

1. Introduction

According to Hull (1992), skills are seen as manual dexterity acquired through the repetitive performance of an operation. In the opinion of Hornby (1980), skills are the ability to do something expertly. In other words, skills can be regarded as the possession of expertise needed to perform a particular job or series of jobs and of essence; it must consist of habits that ensure adaptation (Aderogba, 2011). Skills are also described as "the mechanism of carrying out a task and constitute vital factors in the effectiveness of the practitioner (Ijaiya, 1995, p.26). For an individual to be self-reliant or self-employed, he must have acquired the right habits, attitudes and saleable skills, with which he can explore his environment, as well as means of surviving in the face of unemployment. Effective skills acquisition in education is an indispensable tool towards producing a self-reliant nation with a buoyant economy. The acquisition of skills involves formation of relevant habits, which is usually preceded with relevant knowledge, which facilitates correct thinking, leading to correct way of doing things (Aderogba, 2011).

Teaching is a complex and demanding task and teachers are often expected to handle multiple roles both in the classroom and beyond (Chong & Cheah, 2009). They must develop analytical skills that allow them to make sound decisions, investigate problems and understand students' needs (Darling-Hammond & Barnett, 2001). It is, therefore, necessary to prepare new teachers to not only just demonstrate newly learned teaching skills in practicum or student teaching, but retain these skills and apply them in their own classrooms as they transition from student teacher to professional teacher without the support of cooperating teachers and university supervisors (Scheeler, 2008).

The professional identity of a teacher is partly derived from the uniqueness of his or her skills that are used to perform assigned roles. Professional skills, in this context, refer to teachers' demonstration of expert instructional practices and behaviour that are consistent with acceptable professional standards. Teachers' professional skills, as a domain of their identity, comprise the skills of instructional planning, skills of instructional delivery, and skills of instructional assessment (Lawal, 2006; Yidana, 2014). Teachers' skills of effective classroom management (Emmer & Stough, 2001) and skills of communication (Saunders & Mills, 1999) permeate each of the three phases alluded to by Lawal and Yidana. Oakley (2011) posits that people assume that one does not need any special skill to be a teacher, yet few realise that it takes a great deal of effort and ability to handle a class full of students. She opines that apart from being knowledgeable in the subject that is taught, the teacher requires skills to be able to control and maintain discipline in the class. According to Darling-Hammond, Wise and Klein (1995), effective teacher education requires teachers to integrate multiple kinds of knowledge and skills as they are used in the classrooms to handle students of heterogeneous backgrounds.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Experience

The definition of what constitutes teacher experience varies across the extant literature. Novice teachers are relatively easily defined as those with little or no classroom experience. They are often student-teachers or teachers who have less than 2 years of teaching experience (Gatbonton, 2008). Experienced teachers are those who have taught for many years, are able to motivate students and hold their attention, know how to manage their classrooms effectively, and can change course in the middle of a lesson to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities in order to enhance student teaching (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010). Schuler (1984) groups teachers into three levels of teaching experience (3-6 novice; 7-10 years experienced; 10 years and above; highly experienced). Other studies identify experienced teachers as those who have approximately 5 years or more of classroom experience (Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Tsui, 2005).

The totality of experience that teachers have in education may affect their sense of professional identity (Carinus, Helms-Loreng, Beijaard, Buitink & Hofman, 2011). Carinus *et al* opine that the extent to which individuals know who they are and what they want professionally in terms of their career, increases with experience. The longer teachers work in a professional context, the more experience they gain and the more they are influenced by contextual features (Huberman, 1989). In terms of experience as a factor that influences teachers' perception, Waters (2006) reports that highly experienced teachers differ from experienced teachers in the area of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and professional development needs. They differ in perception with respect to these variables. That the highly experienced teachers place a higher level of importance to these rubrics as compared with their experienced counterparts. On their part, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) opine that the highly experienced teachers hold positive perceptions about their teaching roles and responsibilities and that these perceptions influence their reactions to issues that relate to teaching. The highly experienced teachers' ability to interpret, recognise important patterns and make sense of multiple classroom events is attributed to their better developed schemata for classroom events than the experienced teachers (Peterson & Clark, 1978). In contrast, Eksi and Aydin (2013) claim that newly recruited teachers who are less experienced often exhibit zealotry and enthusiasm in the performance of their professional roles as teachers. Such teachers in their opinion have the urge to always test new ideas or techniques of teaching due to the apparently relaxed freedom given to them by the system.

In a comparative study of characteristics of experienced and highly experienced teachers, Tsui (2005) reveals that highly experienced teachers draw on a wide range of knowledge when planning their lessons. However, experienced teachers have a relatively less sophisticated knowledge base from which to draw. Highly experienced teachers differ from the experienced teachers in how they organize and use their content knowledge. Highly experienced teachers possess knowledge that is more integrated, in that they combine new subject matter with prior

knowledge (Hattie & Jaeger, 2003). In addition, McCutcheon (1980) admits that highly experienced teachers hold positive perceptions about their teaching roles and responsibilities. In support of these assertions, Ralph (2014) observes that highly experienced teachers have a well-developed ability to regulate the appropriate sequencing of classroom delivery. On his part, Kyriacou (2007) opines that due to the prolonged teaching of any subject, experienced teachers develop working knowledge in respect of learning difficulties students encounter in certain topics. In his view, such experienced teachers devise strategies that enable their students to overcome those difficulties.

In a study to ascertain the perception of teachers about their skills of instructional assessment, Alkharusi (2011) concludes that there was no statistically significant difference between teachers with 1 to 5 years of teaching and teachers with 6 to 10 years of teaching experience. However, Day (1999) points out that for teachers who have more than 10 years of teaching experience, it is possible they might have gone through monotony and disenchantment in their profession. That such teachers no longer attach any importance to prescribed professional practices due to the burnout syndrome.

The skill of classroom management is generic in the sense that it permeates all the three phases of the instructional process. Classroom management is a skill that can be gained through training and many years of experience in the field (Bosh, 2006). Beginning teachers cite poor classroom management skills as the most significant barrier to professional success (Fideler & Haskelhorn, 1999). Experienced teachers are believed to have combined years of service and a repertoire of classroom skills. They typically have the ability to prioritize tasks and to attend selectively to a number of key classroom matters (Hagger & McIntyre, 2000).

2.2 Skills of Instructional Planning

Instructional planning, according to Sardo-Brown (1996), refers to the instructional decisions made prior to the execution of plans during teaching. Even though it is widely believed that instructional planning skills are necessary for instructional effectiveness in the classrooms (Clark & Dunn, 1991), there is scanty empirical evidence that suggest teachers actually use these processes (Young, Reisner & Dick, 1998). Teachers hardly write down their plans, except when they are required for supervisory purposes or for administrators (McCutcheon, 1980).

The first logical step in the instructional planning process of any subject is an assessment of the learning needs of the students. Professional teachers are supposed to possess and practise the skills of assessing the needs of their students. Needs assessment is the process of identifying deficiencies or gaps in the knowledge and competencies of students. This practice facilitates the formulation of realistic instructional objectives (Tamakloe, Amedahe & Atta, 1996; Adentwi, 2005; Kolb, 1984). The skills and practice of designing a scheme of work is yet another indicator of teachers' professional skills. The scheme of work is the answer to the teachers' question; *what am I going to do?* It is the teacher's equivalent of the builder's plan and the engineer's blueprint (Atherton, 2011). In respect of its relevance to the teaching of Economics, Heard (2009) claims that the scheme of work provides suggestions for organising and supporting students' learning activities. Closely associated with the scheme of work is the lesson plan. Skills of designing lesson plans are critical and important attributes of all professional teachers. Just as teachers expect their students to come to class prepared to learn, students also come to class expecting their teachers to be prepared to teach. A lesson plan is part of that preparation (Jensan, 2011). Lesson planning makes teaching more conscious and purposeful (Choy, Wong, Lim & Chong, 2013). The extent to which the lesson plan serves these purposes will depend on the skills of the teacher (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

A professional teacher is expected to apply the requisite skills in the selection and improvisation of instructional materials that facilitate the attainment of instructional objectives. Maruff, Gbolagade, Amos and Olawale (2011) are of the view that the ability of the teacher to improvise instructional materials or make use of 'local' materials in place of 'standard' ready-made materials make lessons more effective and improves student' achievement. They claim that this will, however, depend on the skills of the teacher. In support of this assertion, Cuevas (2012) opines that the quality and kind of instructional material improvised will largely depend on the skill of

the teacher.

2.3 Skills of Instructional Delivery and Implementation

The delivery of lessons in class should not be done haphazardly, but in a professional manner. Effective teaching requires two basic grouping of skills and competencies. The first is the process of teaching which consists of a group of skills for organising the content of a lesson and attaining instructional objectives (Lefrancoi, 1986). Skills for organizing the content of a lesson are a prerequisite for the professional practice of teaching (Yuksel, 2012). The syllabus gives a description of what content is to be taught. The sequence of topics and teaching strategy would have to be decided by the teacher. Nacino-Brown, Oke and Brown (1982) suggest that the sequence should be orderly, systematic, and logical. Generally, the easier topics should be treated earlier. Educational psychologists and instructional specialists agree on the importance of involving students actively in the teaching process. Active learning should be a particularly important aspect of Economics education where the over-arching goal is to help students "think like the Economist" (Siegfried, Bartlett, Hansen, Kelly, McCloskey & Tietenberg, 1991). To ensure active student participation, teachers must become highly skilled questioners (Duron, Limbach & Waugh, 2006). Such skills of questioning could stimulate students' active involvement and participation throughout the entire instructional session. The art of asking questions is one of the basic skills of good teaching (Khan & Inamullah, 2011).

2.4 Skills of Instructional Assessment

An ideal professional teacher employs assessment skills of harmonizing evaluation questions with instructional objectives. There must be a perfect congruence between evaluation questions and instructional objectives. A mismatch between evaluation questions and instructional objectives will result in poor assessment of students' learning outcomes (Adentwi, 2005; Tamakloe *et al*, 1996). The skills of composing essay and multiple-choice test items to gauge students' learning outcomes are important attributes of a professional teacher. Economics instructors spend a substantial amount of time evaluating students' Economic understanding through classroom tests, quizzes, homework papers, and projects. Assessment, however, goes well beyond testing and grading. Instructors can use a variety of classroom assessment techniques to obtain feedback from students to identify learning problems and guide their teaching efforts (Angello & Cross, 1993).

Assessment, in general, accounts for supporting learning (formative), certifying the achievement or potential of students (summative), and evaluating the quality of educational institutions or programmes (evaluative), (William & Thompson, 2008). Conducting assessment of any nature requires that the teacher displays the requisite skills in order to make the exercise very purposeful. Ideally, a competent professional teacher should equally be skillful in administering alternative assessment techniques such as portfolios, peer assessment, interview-based assessment, dialogue, journals and scaffold essays, to meet the needs of cultural and linguistic diverse students (Herrera, Murry, & Cabral, 2007).

Conducting classroom assessment is no simple task as it entails a broad spectrum of skills and activities which include constructing paper-and-pencil test, performance measures, grading, interpreting test scores, communicating assessment results, and using such results in decision-making (Suah & Ong, 2012). The teacher should as well be skillful in providing formative feedback to students since feedback is an essential component of assessment. The American Federation of Teachers (1990) of the National Council on Measurement in Education has enumerated seven different reasons why the professional skills of teachers are necessary. They are as follows:

- i. Teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
- ii. Teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
- iii. Teachers should be skilled in administering, scoring, and interpreting the results of both externally-produced and teacher-produced assessment methods.

- iv. Teachers should be skilled in using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and school improvement.
- v. Teachers should be skilled in developing valid pupil grading procedures which use pupil assessment.
- vi. Teachers should be skilled in communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators.
- vii. Teachers should be skilled in recognising unethical, illegal, and otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses of assessment information (American Federation of Teachers, 1990).

This aspect of the literature has highlighted the need for teachers to possess the requisite skills for assessing students' learning. Essentially, the overarching importance or aims of possessing such skills as suggested in the literature include enabling teachers to make valid decisions in respect of appropriate methods of assessment and instruction. Again, poor skills of assessment could result in misleading measurement of student performance and consequently, inappropriate decision-making by the teacher.

2.5 Generic Instructional Skills

Generic instructional skills, in this context refers, to those skills that are not phase-specific, such skills are often employed in all the three phases of teaching (*planning, delivery and assessment*). Questions are posed by teachers at the introductory, delivery and evaluation stages of their lessons. Questioning is at the heart of the teaching and learning processes. Skills of questioning are, therefore, not phase-specific, and for which reason are worthy of possession by all professional teachers. Lower-order and higher-order questions have their respective roles to play. As a result, a competent professional teacher is supposed to alternate them during the teaching and learning discourse. For example, one of the main reasons for teaching Economics is to foster and promote critical thinking in students (Siriopoulos & Pamaris, 2011). Skills of periodically posing higher-order questions are therefore implied by this objective when teaching Economics.

Teacher communicative skills employed appropriately during instructional sessions are indicative of the teachers' professional skills of communication. Knowing how and what to say to whom is a cornerstone of communicative competence. Communicative competence is the ability to communicate successfully in a wide variety of circumstances. Research suggests that nonverbal behaviour plays an important role in the overall communication process (Gregersen, 2006).

Teaching is generally considered as only fifty percent knowledge and fifty percent interpersonal or communication skills. Communicative skills for teachers are thus as important as their in-depth knowledge of the particular subject which they teach (Admin, 2010). Economists use a language peculiar to it, and to make matters worse, it employs unique Economic jargon (Munanga, 2013). He further claims that the students, particularly those who are less proficient in English, usually find the language of Economics as a stumbling block to understanding Economics concepts. The Economics teacher should not allow a situation where language becomes a barrier to students' understanding. Oliver (1973) accordingly suggests the need for the Economics teacher to tone down his/her language to suit the cognitive abilities of the students. This requires a high level skill of communication from the teacher.

Speakers' gestures facilitate listeners' comprehension of the accompanying speech particularly when the verbal message is ambiguous (Thompson & Massaro, 1994), highly complex (Graham & Heywood, 1976; McNeil, Alibali & Evans, 2000), or degraded in some way (Riseborough, 1981). A gesture is a body movement fulfilling a communication function (Sfard, 2008). Gestures may be particularly important in classroom settings because students' comprehension is often challenged by instructional discourse that presents new concepts and uses unfamiliar terms. Under such circumstances, gestures play a particularly important role in comprehension (Alibali & Nathan, 2010).

Moderate pacing of verbal interaction with students during instructional sessions is an important skill worth practicing by all professional teachers. Opportunity to learn is much dependent on pacing (Hoadley, 2003). Pacing may be broadly defined as 'the rate at which new instructional

material is introduced to students' (Barr & Dreeben, 1983, p.33). Similarly, Bernstein (1990) considers pacing as the expected rate of acquisition, that is, the rate at which learning is expected to occur. Gifted students acquire information at faster rates, and acceleration is linked to greater achievement (Colangelo, Assouline & Gross, 2004), while average students internalize information at a relatively lower rate. Goldsmith (2009) posits that less experienced teachers do not pay any attention to the pacing of their instructional delivery. He claims that in their attempt to showcase mastery of the subject matter, they unnecessarily rush in their delivery. Such practices do not favour slow learners in the class. Teachers are, therefore, expected to moderate the pacing of instructional delivery so as to cater for variations in students' rate of learning. Generally, students perceive Economics as a difficult subject (Marangos, 2006; Webber & Mearman, 2012). On the basis of these popular perceptions, Economics teachers are encouraged to moderate the pacing of their instructional delivery. This instructional technique enables both slow and average learners to 'follow' the lesson to its logical conclusion.

3. Statement of the Problem

The requirements of the teaching profession demand both extensive acquisition of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. In the opinion of Shulman (1986), pedagogical content knowledge refers to teachers' interpretations and transformations of subject-matter knowledge in the context of facilitating students' learning. The Economics teacher, will therefore require a broad array of professional skills to be able to facilitate students' learning of the subject-matter of Economics. Skills acquired through training distinguish a professional worker from a non-professional worker.

Extant literature suggests that teaching is becoming increasingly complex and that highly competent teachers continue to learn, are highly adaptive, build up a sophisticated pedagogical repertoire, and are able to apply a range of practices for varying purposes that incorporate and integrate different kinds of knowledge used in various combinations flexibly and fluently (Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005; Turner-Bisset, 2001). Even though it is widely believed that instructional planning skills are critical for instructional effectiveness, there is little evidence that points to fact that teachers employ the relevant processes or indicators (Martin, 1990; Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998). Again, although there is consensus that instructional planning is important, there is no widespread agreement on how it should be done (Tolman & Hardy, 1999). This could be due to deficiencies in the relevant professional skills possessed and practised by teachers. Accomplished professional teachers are identified by the requisite professional skills they demonstrate (Lawal, 2006; Yidana, 2014). For example, the planning of instruction is one of the essential skills needed for professional teaching (Koni & Krull; 2015).

Most of the studies that seek to highlight the relevant professional skills required of teachers, either under study the indicators or completely misclassify them. For instance, Adediwura and Tayo (2007) investigated the perception of teachers' knowledge, attitude and teaching skills as predictors of academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. The concept of 'teaching skills' in their study was insufficiently explored. They only looked at a few of the indicators of teachers' professional skills such as communication, organizational, focus, questioning, evaluation and closure skills. These indicators are disorganized and repetitive. Similarly, Rubio (2009) investigated some of the main qualities needed to be an effective teacher, with emphasis on the professional and personal skills. They identified content knowledge, good planning, classroom management, classroom behaviour, motivation for learning, respect, fairness and equity, assessment and evaluation, and others. The lapses and inadequacies associated with these indicators are equally conspicuous. Conventionally, content knowledge is often classified under teachers' professional knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Liakopoulou, 2011; Turner-Bisset, 1999; Grossman, 1990), while respect, fairness and equity, professional commitment, attitudes and emotions belong to the professional values paradigm (Sunley & Locke, 2010; Carr, 2011).

This study departs from previous ones in the sense that it exclusively verifies Economics teachers' perception about the importance they attach to the various indicators of teachers' professional skills. A teacher's perception of an instructional practice strongly predicts the teacher's

likelihood of practicing it (Wang & Marsh, 2002). Again, literature indicates that teachers' perceptions of effective use of certain instructional skills is related to or influenced by their knowledge about and experiences with those instructional skills and strategies (Gagnon & MacCini, 2007).

4. Purpose of the Study

The broad aim of this study was to ascertain the perception of Economics teachers about the relative importance of indicators of teachers' professional skills based on their teaching experience. In specific terms, the study sought to investigate the differences in perception between experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on the relative importance they place on indicators of teachers' skills of instructional planning, delivery, assessment and generic skills of instruction.

5. Research Hypotheses

- 1 There is no significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional planning
- 2 No significant difference exists in the perception of experienced and less experienced Economics teachers regarding the importance they attach to aspects of teachers' skills of instructional delivery
- 3 There is no significant difference in perception among experienced and less experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment.
- 4 No significant difference exists in the perception of experienced and less experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' generic skills of instruction

6. Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey method. Such research designs often consider individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields of inquiry (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Since I sought to compare and analyse the perception of Senior High School Economics teachers, on the basis of experience, the importance they attach to the various indicators of teachers' professional skills, this research design was found as most appropriate. In addition, the descriptive research design was because, as Polit and Beck (2004) rightly put it, its high degree of representativeness and the ease with which the researcher can obtain the opinions of participants, make it a preferred choice.

7. Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedure

The target population of this study comprised all Senior High School Economics teachers in the Central Region of Ghana. However, the accessible population was made up of only professionally trained Senior High School Economics teachers in the region. Since the focus of this study was on professional issues that related to Economics teachers, the purposive sampling technique was employed to select 115 professional Economics teachers from 57 Senior High Schools in the region. Informed by the recommendation of Fraenkael and Wallen (2000) that a minimum sample size of 100 is essential for descriptive research, a sample size of 115 was equally considered reasonable for this study.

8. Instrumentation

The research instrument for this study was the questionnaire which was made up of two sections;

'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' looked at the background data of the respondents. These were; age, sex, location of school, school proprietorship, academic and professional qualification, as well as teaching experience. Section 'B', which focused on the various indicators of teachers' professional skills, was categorised into four different themes: skills of instructional *planning*, *delivery*, *assessment* and *generic* skills of instruction. These four rubrics had a total of 17 indicators which were sourced and adapted from the studies of (Lawal, 2006; Napier & Klingensmith, 1977; Kukk & Talts, 2007). These items, which were mainly on the various indicators of teachers' professional skills, were put on a four-point Likert scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

9. Procedure for Data Collection

Fifty-seven (57) Economics teacher trainees of the University of Cape Coast were recruited and deployed into the various Districts of the region to collect data for this study. Each research assistant was issued with a Letter of Introduction, and for each school they visited, the Headmaster's permission was sought before engaging the respondents in the exercise. Respondents were given one day to fill and return the research instruments. Out of 150 copies of the research instrument that were issued, 120 were returned to the researcher. A thorough check on the answered questionnaire revealed that five of them were incompletely filled, as such were discarded. Finally, I had to work on 115 copies.

10. Data Analysis Techniques

The independent t-test was the main statistical technique employed for the analysis of the data. First, the Levene's Test of Equality was employed to identify whether to use equal variances or unequal variances. This was then followed by comparing the p-value to the level of significance to certify whether the differences in the means were significant or not.

11. Presentation of Results

11.1 Research Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional planning.*

In response to hypothesis 1, an independent t-test analysis was conducted to test this null hypothesis. As shown in Table 1, it can be deduced that the mean value of experienced Economics teachers (M = 3.104, SD = .28) is higher than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers (M = 2.927, SD = .27).

Table 1: Independent t-test on Differences in Perception on Importance Attached to Indicators of Instructional Planning Based on Teaching Experience

Level of Experience	M	SD	t	df	p
Highly Experienced	2.927	.27	3.111	95	.002*
Experienced	3.104	.28			

*Significance level .05

In other words, the experienced Economics teachers perceived indicators of teachers' skills of instructional planning as more important relative to the highly experienced teachers judging from the descriptive statistics in Table 1. There is, therefore, a difference of .177. A further analysis was carried out to establish the significance or otherwise of the differences in the mean values. The Levene's Test for Equality of variances was therefore used to determine whether the difference in the mean value was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups were equal (F = .666, $p > .05$), and therefore, a test for equal variances was used. The mean value of

experienced Economics teachers ($M = 3.104$, $SD = .28$) is significantly higher ($t = 3.111$, $df = 95$, two-tailed probability $< .05$) than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.927$, $SD = .27$). Thus, there is a significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional planning.

11.2 Research Hypothesis 2: No significant difference existed in the perception of experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers regarding the importance they attached to aspects of teachers' skills of instructional delivery.

In response to research hypothesis 2, an independent t-test analysis was carried out to ascertain if there was a significant difference in the level of importance attached to the aspects of teachers' skills of instructional delivery with reference to the level of experience of Economics teachers. Table 2 provides data analysis on this research question. As shown in this table, the mean value of experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.989$, $SD = .318$) is slightly higher than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.846$, $SD = .425$).

Table 2: Independent t-test on Differences in Perception on Importance of Teachers' Skills of Instructional Delivery

Level of Experience	M	SD	t	df	p
Highly Experienced	2.846	.425	1.804	68.329	.076
Experienced	2.989	.318			

*Significance level .05

From the table above, the experienced Economics teachers seem to attach a higher level of importance to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional delivery as compared to the highly experienced teachers, resulting in a mean difference of .143. Therefore, the Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in the mean value was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups were equal ($F = 7.450$, $p < .05$), and therefore, a test for unequal variances was used. The mean value of experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.989$, $SD = .318$) is not significantly higher ($t = 1.804$, $df = 68.329$, two-tailed probability $> .05$) than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.846$, $SD = .425$). Thus, there is no significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on the importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional delivery.

11.3 Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in perception among experienced and less experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment.

Research hypothesis 3 sought to establish the fact that there is no significant difference among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment. A summary of the results is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent t-test for Level of Experience and Teachers' Skills of Instructional Assessment

Level of Experience	M	SD	t	df	p
Highly Experienced	3.106	.291	1.298	95	.197
Experienced	3.185	.298			

*Significance level .05

The mean values of the two groups of Economics teachers seem to suggest that there is a

difference with regards to the level of importance they attach to the skills of instructional assessment. That is, the mean value of experienced Economics teachers ($M = 3.185$, $SD = .291$) is slightly higher than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 3.106$, $SD = .298$). This implies that experienced Economics teachers attached a relatively higher level of importance to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment as compared to highly experienced teachers. To ascertain the significance of the differences in the mean values, the Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups were equal ($F = .154$, $p > .05$), and therefore, a test for equal variances was used. The mean value of experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.989$, $SD = .318$) is not significantly higher ($t = 1.298$, $df = 95$, two-tailed probability $> .05$) than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.846$, $SD = .425$). Thus, there is no significant difference among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on the importance they attach to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

11.4 Research Hypothesis 4: No significant difference existed in the perception of experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on importance attached to indicators of teachers' generic skills of instruction.

The fourth hypothesis sought to establish a no significant relationship between the perception of experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on the importance attached to indicators of teachers' generic skills of instruction. From Table 4, it can be observed that the mean value of experienced Economics teachers ($M = 3.068$, $SD = .299$) is higher than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.979$, $SD = .312$).

Table 4: Independent t-test for Level of Experience and Teachers' Generic Skills of Instruction.

Level of Experience	M	SD	t	df	p
Highly Experienced	2.979	.312	1.432	95	.156
Experienced	3.068	.299			

*Significance level .05

The analyses point to the fact that the experienced Economics teachers attach a slightly higher level of importance to indicators of teachers' generic skills of instruction relative to the highly experienced teachers. There is a mean difference of .089. Hence, the Levene's test for equality of variance was used to determine whether the difference in the mean value was significant. The test indicates that the variances for the two groups were equal ($F = 2.645$, $p > .05$), and therefore, a test for equal variances were used. The mean value of experienced Economics teachers ($M = 3.068$, $SD = .299$) was not significantly higher ($t = 1.432$, $df = 95$, two-tailed probability $> .05$) than the mean value of highly experienced Economics teachers ($M = 2.979$, $SD = .299$). The implication of this result is that there is no significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers on the importance they attach to indicators of teachers' generic skills of instruction.

12. Discussion of Results

The finding emanating from hypothesis 1 to the effect that there is a significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers, clearly support the opinion of Waters (2006) that highly experienced teachers differ from experienced teachers in terms of their knowledge, skills, beliefs, and professional development needs. The finding suggest that the highly experienced Economics teachers perceived the indicators of skills of instructional planning as more important relative to the experienced Economics teachers. Perhaps, plausible explanations to the apparently low rating of these indicators by the experienced teachers are given by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) who posit that experienced teachers hold implicit beliefs about their teaching roles and responsibilities, and that these identities influence their reactions to issues that

relate to the instructional process. Another possible explanation of this revelation could be found in the study of Peterson and Clark (1978) who report that the highly experienced teachers' ability to interpret, recognise important patterns, and make sense of multiple classroom events is attributed to their better developed schemata for classroom events. In this context, the highly experienced Economics teachers might have established permanent mental blueprints in respect of all the skills of instructional planning due to their several years of teaching the subject.

Results of hypothesis 2 reveal that there is no significant difference in perception among experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers regarding the importance they place on indicators of teachers' skills of instructional delivery. Again, it is not so difficult to offer plausible explanation about the apparent consensus in opinion regarding the perception of these teachers. In the first place, as opined by Tsui (2005), highly experienced teachers often have a rich and integrated knowledge base, and as rightly posited by Hattie (2003), can easily identify essential representations of their subjects. The finding seems to support the claims of McCutcheon (1980) that highly experienced teachers hold positive perceptions about their teaching roles and responsibilities. It is also consistent with the observation of Ralph (2014) that highly experienced teachers have a well-developed ability to regulate the appropriate sequencing of classroom delivery. Having taught a topic several times, experienced teachers become very much aware of the difficulties involved in teaching such topics, and areas where the students' understanding may need to be developed and strengthened (Kyriacou, 2007). Experienced teachers also become aware of what constitutes the key elements which need to be grasped, and how much time needs to be devoted to doing so.

The findings in respect of hypothesis 3 point to the direction that the experienced Economics teachers placed a higher level of importance on indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment relative to the highly experienced teachers. This implies that there is a significant difference in their perceptions concerning the importance they attach to the various indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment. This outcome does not seem to support the findings of Alkharusi (2011) who could not establish any statistically significant difference between teachers with 1 to 5 years of teaching experience and teachers with 6 to 10 years of teaching experience in the self-perceived assessment skills. The finding rather appears to be in harmony with the assertion of Day (1999) that for teachers who have more than 10 years of teaching experience, it is possible they might have gone through monotony and disenchantment in their profession. This assertion can be associated with the highly experienced Economics teachers' perception of the relatively low level of importance they attached to indicators of the skills of instructional assessment. Probably, the burnout syndrome might have also influenced their perception and rating of these indicators. Conversely, as Eksi and Aydin (2013) rightly pointed out, young teachers are rather enthusiastic about the freedom to test new ideas or techniques. They are full of courage when compared to relatively older ones.

Results emanating from hypothesis 4 clearly show that there is no significant difference in the perception of experienced Economics teachers and their highly experienced counterparts in respect of indicators of generic skills of instruction. Some of the generic skills of instruction, highlighted in this study, are skills of: *classroom management*, *instructional pacing*, *communication* and *questioning*. The experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers presumably, attach similar levels of importance to these indicators. Contrary to this finding, in terms of the skills of classroom management, there appears to be differences in the competency levels between experienced and highly experienced teachers as revealed in the studies of (Bosh, 2006; Fideler & Haskelhorn, 1999; Hagger & McIntyre, 2000). In much the same way, as posited by Goldsmith (2009), unlike the highly experienced teachers who moderate their instructional pacing, the less experienced ones do not pay any serious attention to this indicator. The apparent unanimity in the perception of experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers in respect of the importance they place on the generic skills of instruction, could be explained in terms of the notion that as the teachers graduate from novice status to experienced and highly experienced status, they are able to smoothen the rough edges associated with such generic skills. They also appreciate the importance of such skills since they permeate the three phases of instructional process.

13. Conclusion

The study found a significant difference in the perception of experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers with respect to the importance they place on indicators of skills of instructional planning. The two categories of Economics teachers place different values on skills such as: needs assessment, scheme of work, lesson plans, and the improvisation of instructional materials. In much the same way, experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers differed in perception with respect to the importance they attach to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment.

Conversely, the Economics teachers seem to demonstrate identical perception with respect to the importance they attach to indicators of teachers' skills of instructional assessment. Some of these indicators include the skills of organizing content, stimulating student participation, as well as sequential, and logical delivery of content. The respondents did not also differ in their perception regarding the importance they place on indicators of teachers' generic skills of instruction such as pacing, classroom management, communication, and questioning.

14. Recommendations

On the basis of these findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

- Periodic in-service workshops should be organised to train and sensitize experienced Economics teachers on the importance associated with each of the indicators of teachers' skills of instruction planning as well as skills of instructional assessment.
- Considering the growing demands for effective teaching in general, and teaching Economics in particular, professional learning communities could be created among Senior High School Economics teachers. This could provide a platform for the experienced and highly experienced Economics teachers to share knowledge and experiences regarding indicators of teachers' professional skills.
- On-campus teaching practice of pre-service teachers in tertiary educational institutions should begin in the initial years of training instead of waiting till the final years of the students. This will ensure that the teacher trainee acquires all the relevant professional skills which may eventually become a part and parcel of his professional practice after leaving school.
- Tracer studies could also be conducted by Teacher Education Institutions to ascertain the extent to which their teachers apply their professional skills in the classrooms. This may inform a revision of certain aspects of Teacher Education Curriculum with respect to skills development.

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