

Teachers' Educational Qualifications and Years of Experience in Relation to their Job Commitment and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Rivers State.

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience influence their job commitment and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State. A research questions and a hypothesis guided the study. The research design adopted was the descriptive survey design. The population size was one hundred and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and forty three (115,943) students, drawn from the twenty three local government areas in Rivers State. A sample size of three hundred and ninety nine (399) senior secondary students was drawn from the population. Data collected for this study was collected manually and fully analyzed using mean score and Pearson product moment correlation analyses. The mean score analysis was used to answer the research questions while the Pearson product moment correlation analysis was equally used in the testing of the hypothesis at a significance level of 0.05. The results and analysis of the study were presented in different tables. When Pearson product moment correlation, regarding teachers' educational qualification and years of experience and their academic achievement scores were correlated, significant differences were found. It was recommended that teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars symposia, workshops inter-alia to gain more knowledge and skills for effective teaching while the bill of such programmes be paid by the government.

Key words: *teachers' educational qualifications, years of experience, job commitment and academic achievement.*

Introduction

Public secondary schools in Nigeria have been performing poorly in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination with majority of the students scoring below Credit Grade. This is the minimum entry qualification to any Nigeria Universities. Secondary education is the basic requirements for selection into tertiary institutions and further skills training (Ministry of Education, MOE, 2005). Poor performance of secondary schools in Rivers State undermines students' chances of joining institutions of higher learning and jeopardizes opportunity for job placement, and in most cases reduces an individuals' active participation in national development. Like any other institution, the success of a school depends on good teachers. Linking this to the aforementioned discussion, the assessment of teachers' demographic variables and job commitment on students' academic achievement has been an issue of concern to all stake holders and researchers in education. This is crystal clear in the rate of mass failure of students in both internal and external examinations which can be narrowed down to the following demographic variables teachers' years of experience, teachers' educational qualification, teachers' competence, gender, age, inability to manipulate new technological devices in education to enhance effective teaching and learning. It is therefore, important that

schools are properly managed to determine the quality of graduates shun out. According to a document from a supervisor of education of November 2015, Nigerian, teachers are not committed in their job since they skip attending to their lectures. Others absent themselves with no apparent reason. Therefore, understanding the important factors affecting teacher job commitment is vital to attain the required information to support an educational system to succeed in its objectives. Among determinants of job commitment, teachers' characteristics are viewed as an important predictors and therefore play a central role. Students' academic achievement depends upon the commitment and characteristics of the teachers. Job commitment is the totality of teachers' social and psychological well-being relative to job performance (Lok & Crwawford, 2004). It leads to satisfactory interpersonal relation. Teachers' job commitment makes or influences the students to work hard for optimum productivity. In order to make any school system a better performing place, teachers' characteristic and commitment becomes paramount as they are the dynamics of change for the society in which they operate. According to Ravkin, Hanusheck and Kain in Kimani, Kara & Njagi (2013), there has never been consensus on the specific teachers' factor that influence students' academic achievement. Researchers have examined the influence of teachers' characteristics such as gender, educational qualification and teaching experience on students' academic achievement with varied findings. Akiri and Ugborngbo (2008) found that there was a significant relationship between teachers' gender, teachers' job commitment and students' academic achievement.

Yala and Wanjohi (2011) and Adeyemi (2010) found that teachers' experience and educational qualifications were the prime predictors of teachers' job commitment and students' academic achievement. However, Ravkin et al (2005) found that teachers' teaching experience and educational qualifications were not significantly related to teachers' job commitment and students' achievement. Etsy's (2005) study in Ghana showed that teacher factors that significantly affected job commitment and immensely contributed to low academic achievement were incidences of lateness to school, incidences of absenteeism, and inability to complete the syllabi. Oredein and Olayede (2007) concluded that teacher management of homework and assignments given to students have an impact on students' achievement especially when it is well explained, motivational, corrected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students. However, the researcher intends to review and examine the following demographic variables, teachers' age, gender, educational qualification, years of experience and other variables to ascertain teachers' commitment to teaching profession and how these variables influence.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience influence their job commitment and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question

To what extent do teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience influence their job commitment and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience in relation to their job commitment and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State. .

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may be used to identify the intervention strategies to undertake in preparing the would-be-teachers with the view of enhancing teachers' job commitment. The university might use these findings as reference point in identifying areas for further training of secondary school teachers. The secondary school board director may use the information in determining strategies of enhancing job commitment among secondary school teachers. The study findings may also influence further research by other students and scholars who may be interested in the field of teachers' education.

Delimitation of the Study

Teachers chronological age, gender, educational qualifications, years of experience on the job, teaching methods, inability to complete the syllabi, teachers' incessant absenteeism, lateness to class, teachers' administration of students' assignment and teachers' evaluation of students' Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs). Geographically, the study comprises one hundred, and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and forty three students and teachers covering the 23 Local Government Area in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Teachers' Characteristics

A teacher cannot enlighten his pupils if he himself is ignorant. He can lift them no higher than himself. If a teacher ceases to learn, his mind will become stagnant and this is the worst enemy of education. According to Farrant (1964) once a teacher is in a rut he has virtually closed his mind to other truths and other ways. Like the Pharisees he has forfeited his right to be a teacher and has become a blind leader of the blind. According to Iwundu (2005), the teaching profession like every other profession has its expected characteristics or qualities that every conscientious, dedicated motivated and hardworking teacher must possess. "Without good teachers, we cannot have qualitative education and without qualitative education we cannot meet successfully the challenges of the changing world and achieve satisfactory national development" (Ukeje, and Abubakar, 1999 in Iwundu, 2005). Since this is the case, the role of teachers in student life cannot be ignored. In view of this Farrant (1964) said that teachers are the only audio-visual aids that appear in every lesson and they are memorable because they are frequently associated with some emotional experience. Based on this assertion, teachers no doubt serve as real life models to students and whatever behavior or character they exhibit to a large extent goes to influence the moral, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development of the child. This is because, going to the theory of observational social learning of Bandura and Walters, children initiate admirable models easily often regarded as "vicarious reinforcements" in behavior therapy. The following personality traits or characteristics, which are indeed peculiar, according to Chanter and Wape (1929) in Ukeje, (1986) cited by Iwundu (2005) do influence children's personality, adaptability, breath of interest, carefulness, considerateness, co-operation, dependability, enthusiasm, fluency, scholarship, attractive personal appearance, forcefulness, good judgment, honest, industry, leadership, neatness, promptness, refinement and self-control and thrift. Some of these and others are explained below:

- **Physical energy:** The teacher who burns himself up in his own affairs will have no fire kept for his teaching. He will teach badly, go home frustrated and go from bad to worse. Healthy living is the secret of physical energy, it allows all your good intentions to be carried out, thus sparing you the shame of the charge "the spirit is willing but the flesh us weak" (Farrant, 1934).
- **Perseverance:** Teachers often have to face opposition from other teachers, headmasters (principals), parents, and others. Perseverance takes them along the course towards their

good despite opposition. Discouragements may come but should not turn the resolute teacher from his purpose.

- **Responsibility:** Much responsibility is placed on a teacher, for he is put in charge of growing children for nearly their working days. A sense of responsibility requires that he should be aware of what has been entrusted to him and that he should always work in the best interest of the children.
- **Initiative:** When a teacher gets into a routine which never changes, then he has lost his initiative. The teacher with initiative will never be a dull teacher. On the contrary, his lessons will be unusual and interesting because he is always thinking of fresh approaches. Progress in society comes through the action of men of initiative. The best teachers possess great initiatives.
- **Self- control:** If a teacher is unable to control himself, he is not likely to be a suitable person to control others. Many situations in your career as a teacher will irritate and anger you, but unless you can control your anger you will do more harm than good in your school. Some teachers allow themselves to develop a kind of habitual irritability and a tongue that speaks only harshly and sharply. Such teachers quickly lose real contact with their students; when this is lost, all is lost.
- **Decisiveness:** Much bad discipline in school is due to indecisiveness on the teacher's part. The root of indecisiveness is lack of trust in yourself and your own judgment. It shows itself a fear of making your own decision and in appeals for reassurance from others.
- **Sincerity:** For you as a teacher, sincerity may mean disagreeing with a senior when you believe you are right, instead of agreeing with him simply because he is your senior. It means doing a thorough job in the class room, not just to impress others, but to achieve sound result.
- **Humour:** Making fun of children is not humour, it is rudeness and bullying. Humour is not the opposite of being serious but is the force which restrains you from being too serious. Humour shows itself in pleasantness, cheerfulness, friendliness, a sympathetic understanding manner with children and a balanced attitude towards events, both good and bad. The relationship of approachableness between students and teacher is what every teacher should strive for because it is an ideal relationship for both teaching and learning.
- **Leadership:** The teacher by the nature of his job is a leader, whether you lead well or badly depends on yourself. Leadership requires that you have aims which you believe to be worthy of your children's effort and ideals and standards of behavior which you make the basis of your relations with them. Your followers must see you as an image worthy of their respect. In many ways leadership demands all the human qualities we have been talking about.

Teachers' Commitment

Kanter (1968) cited in Wanderi (2015) defined commitment as a process through which individual interests become attached to the carrying out of social organized pattern of behavior. Cohen, Lawrence & Keith (2007) identified three aspects of commitment: cathetic, control and continuous commitment. Cathetic commitment was defined as attachment to social relationships, without any moral imperative attached to it. Control commitment was attributed to norms, values, and inner convictions which morally obligate the individual. Continuous commitment was explained as commitment to social roles/position, with no affectivity or evaluation attached to the role. The role merely has positive valence, acting in terms of rewards and punishments; profits and costs. Commitment is a term that teachers frequently use in

describing themselves (Nias, 1981). It is a word they use to distinguish those who are caring, dedicated and take their job seriously than those who put their interest first. Some teachers see their commitment as part of their professional identity (Elliot and Crosswell, 2001). Lack of commitment by employees is behind much of the behavior blamed for high costs and poor services (Sherwin, 1972).

According to Steers and Porter (1979), organizational commitment reflects the extent to which employees identify themselves with organizational goals, value, organizational membership and intent to work hard to attain the overall organizational mission. Mbwiria (2010) argues that more dependable and psychological participative behavior on the part of teachers on one hand, and educational outcomes and the students' intellectual and personality development on the other depend largely on the commitment of the teachers. Mbwiria continues to note that committed teachers serve as a model on the value, attitude and behavior of pupil and others. Students learn more rapidly from the invisible curriculum - the lives of teachers, principals and institutions – than from the visible curriculum. The teacher is an example of perseverance, loyalty, integrity and other qualities which an all-round education should encourage in each pupil. It is commitment which fosters a combination of teaching, example an influence in the teacher (Mbwiria 2010). Organizational commitment reflects the extent to which employees identify themselves with organizational goals, value organizational membership and intent to work hard to attain the overall organizational mission. Organizational commitment is the adoption of organizational objectives, values, and goals by the followers, volunteer efforts, and desire for the continuous presence in the organization. Existing literature on education indicates a motion towards educational excellence (Wanderi, 2015). The author upholds the motion that commitment from the academic staff in the education sector to the overall organizational goal such as in the delivery of high service quality is a better strategy in the case of customer retention and satisfaction. She further argued that the employees' strong commitment to good service quality has a strong link to the organizational benefits such as low cost effectiveness and also in producing excellent graduates. One of the classifications related to the organizational commitment was realized by Allen and Meyer (1990), and it was determined that it had three elements as effective, continuous and normative.

Teachers' Educational Qualification, Years of Experience and Academic Achievement of Students.

A study by Lamble and Bones cited in Wanderi (2015) reported that attitudes of pre – service teachers towards the philosophy of inclusive education were generally positive, with more than 80% of participants believing that all teachers should experience teaching children with special education needs. However, there was a marked concern about training and preparation. Specifically, almost half of the participants felt that they did not have adequate experience to work effectively with students with special education needs, and more than half felt that they did not have the skills to teach in an inclusive setting. Viewing students' achievement as evidence of learning to the “effective” (Berliner, 1987; 2005) or “successful” (Fenster Macher and Richardson, 2005) teacher, is one way of defining quality teaching. This approach differs from that which identifies the quality with the so called “good teacher – one who upholds the standards and norms of the profession.

Cochran – smith, (2001) argues that in tracing teacher qualifications, three ways outcomes of teacher education are constructed: the long – term impact outcomes, teacher test scores and professional performance. Long – term outcomes refers to the relationship between teacher qualifications (their test score on licensure examination; level of degrees, years of experience, preparation in subject matter and pedagogy; certification in their expertise area, and their

ongoing professional development) and student learning (student gain scores on achievement tests). This relationship mistaken to be the percentage of variance in students scores accounted for by teacher qualifications when other variables are held constant or adjusted (Cochran – smith, 2001, p. 531). In many countries teacher qualification that are considered to be related to students learning have become desirable targets of teacher education reform. Some of these reforms call for the professionalization of teacher education by making it longer, approaching it to graduate programmes, and regulating it through mechanisms of licensure, certification, and promotion aligned with standards.

Teachers' Formal Education

Findings related to teachers' academic degrees (e.g. bachelors or masters, etc.) are inclusive. Some studies showed positive effects of advanced degrees (Betts, Zau, and Rice, 2003; Fergusson and Ladd, 1996; Wayne and Youngs, 2003), while others showed negative effects. Some argue that the requirement of a second degree raises the cost of in terms of teacher education and the time it involves and may prevent quality candidates from choosing this profession (Murnane, 1996).

Teachers Education in the subject Matter of Teaching (in – Field Preparation).

This characteristic is related to the subject – matter knowledge teachers acquire during their formal studies and pre-service teacher education courses. The evidence gained from different is contradictory. Several studies show a positive relationship between teachers' preparation in the subject matter the later teacher and student achievement (Darling – Hammond, 1999, 2000; Goldhaber and Brewer, 2000; Guyton and Farokhi, 1987), while others have less unequivocal results. Recent studies in the U.S.A on the widespread phenomenon of out – of field teaching, Ingersoll (2003) portrays a severe situation where almost 42% - 49% of public Grade 7 – 12 teachers teaching science and Mathematics actually lack a major or full certification in the field. (1990 – 2000 data).

Teacher Education in Pedagogical Studies.

Studies have found somewhat stronger, and more consistently positive, influence of education and pedagogical coursework on teacher effectiveness (Ashton and Crocker, 1987). Some studies compare the effect of courses in the pedagogical subject matter to that of courses in the subject matter itself and present evidence in favor of the pedagogical subject – matter courses (Monk, 1994) in Mathematics.

Certification and Licensing Status.

Certified teachers are usually those who graduated accredited teacher education programmes; some are also required to complete on induction programme or to pass a national teacher examination test in order obtain a license. There is a debate in the USA between those who demand full certification (Darling – Hammond, 1999; Darling – Hammond & Berry, & Thorenson, 2001 and others) (Goldhaber & Brewer 2000) who argue that pupils of teachers who hold certification achieves similarly to those who study under teachers with temporary, “emergency” credentials.

Teacher's Years of Experience.

Studies on the effect of teacher experience on student learning have found a positive relationship between teacher effectiveness and their years of experience, but not always a significant or an entirely linear one (Kitgaard & Hall, 1974; Murnane & Philips, 1981). Similarly, Wanderi (2015) pointed that there are conflicting findings. Some studies suggested that teachers with more experience show less positive attitudes towards inclusion, while others

found that teachers' experience with pupils with special education needs increased so did their confidence. Years' of teachers experience is found to be a significant contributing factor towards teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion. The evidence currently available suggests that while inexperienced teachers are less effective than more senior teachers, the benefits of experience appear to level off after a few years (Rivkin, Hanushell, 2000). The relationship between teacher experience and student achievement is difficult to interpret since this variable is highly affected by market conditions or motivation to work during child rearing period. Harris and Sass (2007) point to a selection bias that can affect the validity of drawing conclusions about the effects of teachers' years of experience. If less effective teachers are more likely to leave the profession, this may give the mistaken appearance that experience raises teacher effectiveness. Selection bias could, however, also work in the opposite direction as more able teachers with better opportunities to earn may be more likely to leave the profession.

Research Methodology

The research method used for this study is the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey method enables the researcher to collect data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions, concerning current status of subjects in a study. This type of research investigates differences and relationships between variables. The population for the study comprised 7619 teachers and 17493 students drawn from senior secondary schools from 3 Local Government Areas in Adoni, Tai, Khana, Source: Office of the Director Planning Research and Statistics Department , RSSSSB, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The sample size drawn from teachers consist of 380 representing 5% of the total population of teachers while students sample consists of 399 using Taro Yemene formula for the calculation from the large population. This sample is considered adequate for the study as it is representation of action teachers and students drawn from senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The main instruments for this study are the questionnaire. The questionnaire titled, "Teachers' Demographic Variables and Job Commitment Assessment Scale"(TDVJCAS) and "Students' Academic Assessment Scale" (SAAS) were developed by the researcher to elicit information from the respondents. TDVJCAS is divided into two sections A and B. Section A contains teachers' demographic data comprising of Age, gender, educational qualifications and teachers' years of experience while Section B contains 24 question items corresponding with the research questions, designed with a modified 4 point likert scale of strongly agree (4) – strongly disagree (1). "Students' Academic Assessment Scale" (SAAS) is want to elicit information on how teachers' variables affect their academic achievement. To sections, A and B are stated. Section A contain students' demographic variables of gender, and class while Section B contains 16 question items to elicit information in conjunction with the research questions on students' academic performance. Both instruments were designed by the researcher with a modified 4 point likert scale. The validity of this instrument, the researcher subjected the instrument to the scrutiny of her supervisor and other two experts of Test and Measurement whose contribution and adjustments made it useful before administration. The reliability of the instrument was established employing the test-retest method.

The instrument was administered to both teachers and students outside the sample at two different times. The period of interval between the first and the second test was two weeks. The scores were collated and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) statistical tool to find the relationship between the two scores. This gave a coefficient value of 'r' 0.81 which was accepted as high for utilization. Due to proximity and large population, the researcher employed the services of three assistant researchers to help

administer the instrument to respondents. The instrument was designed in a way that all information was elicited that very day for easy retrieval. Four hundred and twenty (420) copies of questionnaire were printed and administered out of which the target sample size was retrieved. The mean scores and standard deviation was used in answering research questions whereas Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Data Presentation and Statistical Analysis

Research question: To what extent do teacher's educational qualifications and years of experience influence the academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference teacher's educational qualification and years of experience and the academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State.

To test for the above null hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation was used. The results obtained were summarized and presented in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the Pearson product moment correlation analysis for the influence of teacher's educational qualification and years of experience on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Variables	N	Mean	Coefficient of correlation (r)	Significance	Accepted level of significance	Decision
Teachers' educational qualification and years of experience	399	62.1	0.723	0.041	0.05	Hypothesis rejected
Academic achievement of the secondary school students in Rivers State	399	85.60				

The results in table 4 show that when the teacher's educational qualification and years of experience were correlated with the students' academic achievement, the coefficient of correlation (r-value) obtained was 0.723 at a significant level of 0.041 (which is less than the accepted level of significance of 0.05). This shows a high positive relationship between the two variables, which is statistically significant. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. When students' incessant absenteeism and lateness to classes were correlated with the academic achievement of the students, they both indicated a high negative relationship was obtained, which was found to be statistically significant.
2. The joint influences of teachers' administration of students' assignment and teachers' teaching workload as well as teachers' evaluation of student's continuous assessment tests results and provision of individualized attention to weak students, on students'

academic achievement, both indicated a high positive, which was found to be statistically significant.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between the Teachers' Educational Qualification and Years of Experience and the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Rivers State.

To answer the research question, mean score analysis was used while the null hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation. The result obtained indicated a high positive relationship between the two variables, which was found to be statistically significant. This result revealed that higher educational qualification and years of experience have a great positive influence on the academic achievement of the secondary school students in Rivers State. Studies have found somewhat stronger, and more consistently positive, influence of education and pedagogical coursework on teacher effectiveness (Ashton and Crocker, 1987). Some studies compare the effect of courses in the pedagogical subject matter to that of courses in the subject matter itself and present evidence in favor of the pedagogical subject – matter courses (Monk, 1994) in Mathematics. Studies on the effect of teacher experience on student learning have found a positive relationship between teacher effectiveness and their years of experience, but not always a significant or an entirely linear one (Kitgaard & Hall, 1974; Murnane & Philips, 1981). Similarly, Wanderi (2015) pointed that there are conflicting findings. Some studies suggested that teachers with more experience show less positive attitudes towards inclusion, while others found that teachers' experience with pupils with special education needs increased so did their confidence. Years' of teachers experience is found to be a significant contributing factor towards teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion. The evidence currently available suggests that while inexperienced teachers are less effective than more senior teachers, the benefits of experience appear to level off after a few years (Rivkin, Hanushell, 2000). The relationship between teacher experience and student achievement is difficult to interpret since this variable is highly affected by market conditions or motivation to work during child rearing period. Harris and Sass (2007) point to a selection bias that can affect the validity of drawing conclusions about the effects of teachers' years of experience. If less effective teachers are more likely to leave the profession, this may give the mistaken appearance that experience raises teacher effectiveness. Selection bias could, however, also work in the opposite direction as more able teachers with better opportunities to earn may be more likely to leave the profession.

Summary

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience influence their job commitment and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State. Six research questions and six hypotheses guided the study. The findings from this study would be of great benefit to students and principals who can be equipped on how to enhance job commitment of teachers. The outcome of this study will also be helpful to stakeholders in the education sector such as parents to understand the effects of teachers' characteristics on students' academic achievement. The research design adopted was the descriptive survey design. The population size was one hundred and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and forty three (115,943) students, drawn from the twenty three local government areas in Rivers State. A sample size of three hundred and ninety nine (399) senior secondary students was drawn from the population. Data collected for this study was collected manually and fully analyzed using mean score and Pearson product moment correlation analyses. The mean score analysis was used to answer the research questions while the Pearson product moment correlation analysis was equally used in the testing of hypotheses at a

significance level of 0.05. The results of the study were presented in different tables. The analysis was also presented in tables based on the research questions posed.

Conclusion

When person product moment correlation, regarding teachers' educational qualification and years of experience and their academic achievement scores were correlated, significant differences were found.

Recommendation

Teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars symposia, workshops inter-alia to gain more knowledge and skills for effective teaching while the bill of such programmes be paid by the government.

Limitation of the Study

Teachers in the private schools, primary schools were not also included in the sample but our main focus was public secondary schools residents in Rivers State. Therefore the findings of the study cannot be the bases for generalization for all the teachers or trainee – Teachers in Rivers State.

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