AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.5 No1, January – April, 2022 https://ajemates.org

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, ADAMAWA STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated relationship between teacher Pedagogical and Planning of instruction competency with students' academic achievement in English language in senior secondary schools, Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study was thus based on two purpose statements, two research questions and two null hypotheses. A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of study was Gombi and Yola education zones of Adamawa state, where English language teachers constitute the accessible population for the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. A sample of 232 teachers of English language in the 115 senior secondary schools in the two education zones were used for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection in the study. The first one is a proforma for collecting Students' achievement in English language in WASSCE. The second one was 'English Language Teacher Professional Competency Questionnaire (ELTPCQ)', a 40-item questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of ELTPCQ was calculated using Cronbach Alpha and 0.76was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation in answering the research questions while regression analysis was used in testing the null hypotheses. Findings of the study indicated high level of relationship between teacher professional competency and students' academic achievement in English language. Results showed strong relationships between English language teacher pedagogical competence (P-value = 0.000, $F_{(1, 231)} = 2359.373$*), and planning of instruction (p-value 0.000,* $F_{(1, 231)} = 1346.941$*, r = .924) with students' academic achievement. The study recommended among others that the state ministry of education and Post Primary Schools Boards should mount workshops and seminars on competency skills in English; encourage re-training of teachers in Universities and school principals should encourage mentoring of newly recruited English language teachers by more experienced ones.*

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Planning of instruction, competency, achievement.*

Introduction

Over the years, what may contribute to curriculum knowledge has changed considerably in Nigeria. The most recent is the National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) curriculum, introduced by the Federal Government in 2009. The new curriculum defines what is to be learnt and set out how teachers should teach. Curriculum knowledge is knowledge of what should be taught to a particular group of students. A change in the curriculum means that Teacher knowledge may be influenced through change in their experiences. It requires understanding of children's learning potential, national syllabuses, school planning documents and year group plans. In addition, any examination or testing syllabuses should also takes into account any local or contextual requirements. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) were of the view that teachers need an understanding of how to teach specific subject matter (pedagogical content knowledge) to be more effective and that they should possess a general understanding of learners.

Teacher's pedagogical style is a central issue in learner's perception of a teacher's competence in subject matter and subsequent interest in learning. Smith (2012) define pedagogy as any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance the learning of another. Ugbe (2000) opined that a competent teacher is one who abandons the educational "chain" of depositing, receiving, memorizing, and repeating knowledge on the student's behalf but rather promotes consciousness to the students and helps them become conscious beings who adopt a concept of consciousness upon the world. Bovina, (2002) emphasis the basic areas of teachers competence to include pedagogy and planning of instruction.

Pedagogical content knowledge is different from knowledge of general teaching methods. English language teachers should understand the structure of their discipline and this knowledge provides them with cognitive roadmaps that guide the assignments they give students, the assessments they use to gauge students' progress, and the questions they ask in the give and take of classroom life. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking state that pedagogical content knowledge allows a teacher to understand the aspects of the subject matter that can be grasped easily or may prove more challenging for the learner. Without pedagogical content knowledge, teachers rely on others for information related to how to organize the curriculum. Thus, according to Bransford et al. (2000), pedagogical content knowledge is an "extremely important part of what teachers need to learn".

Besides pedagogy, the English language teacher's success in the classroom depends very much on his preparedness for the instruction process (i.e. planning of instruction). Effective learning in schools would require effective teaching to accompany the efforts of the learners. Teacher competence needs to be very high in order for meaningful teaching learning to take place (Jacobson, 2012). For teachers to ensure effective learning they need to be prepared (Markley, 2004). English teachers in Adamawa state generally need to be competent in planning of instruction in order to perform their teaching job satisfactorily. Jadie, Sonya, Laura and Natasha (2012) averred that low proficiency in English language is a barrier to learning and academic success at the post-secondary level and this is because English learners often lack the language proficiency necessary to understand the text content and academic work.

Teachers have a fundamental role in their learners' academic achievement and their quality can highly influence their job performance outcomes (Rockoff, 2004). According to Anselmus, (2011) teacher's competence refers to the right way of conveying units of knowledge, application and skills to students. The right way includes knowledge of content, process, methods, and means of conveying content. Teacher's competence also refers to the ability of the teacher to help guide and counsel his or her student to achieve high grades. Gutek, (2004) and Noddings, (2007) defines a competent teacher as one who promotes cultural transmission and perpetuates civilizations by passing on as heritage, essential basic skills and subjects from one generation to another. This is because it is necessary for the student to know about their culture and the world they live in, about other cultures that existed before them, to know about the important and historical persons who made great discoveries or contributed in a major degree to the shaping of the society.

Achievement is defined as measurable behaviour in a standardized series of tests (Mosha, 2014). Achievement test is usually constructed and standardized to measure proficiency in school subjects. In most cases, according to them, "Accomplishment" is sometimes used in place of "achievement". According to Ali et al (2013) educational achievement is measured by standardized achievement test developed for school subjects. What this means is that academic achievement is measured in relation to what is attained at the end of a course, since it is the accomplishment of medium or long-term objective of education. What is important is that the test should

be a standardized test to meet national norm. For a test to be standardized, it must be valid for over a period.

Poor academic achievement is a performance that is adjudged by the examiner and some significant others as falling below an expected standard (Aryana, 2010). Factors that influence students' academic achievement at the senior secondary school could be multivariate in nature. They might include teachers' professional competence, students' attitude towards school, interest in learning, study habit, attribution, self-efficacy, intelligence, motivation and other teacher related factors. Udoh (2005) maintained that academic performance of students is phenomenon that has educational, psychological and sociological connotation.

Professional teachers are educated and trained, and have a rich experience in the field. Cogillin Wiwi (2016), identifies seven areas of teacher's knowledge (pedagogical knowledge or competence) which include content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge, e.g. classroom control, using group work; pedagogical content knowledge; curriculum knowledge; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts e.g. schools and the wider community and knowledge of educational ends purposes and values. This knowledge forms the building blocks of many theoretical modules and of course, those aspects of training which culminate in the teacher being competent and to effectively perform at his job. Wiwi (2016) considers that the way in which teachers adopt an understanding of children's minds is a prerequisite to any change in pedagogical practice. His view is that there are four dominant models of learners' minds, which includes viewing children as imitative learners, children as learning from didactic exposure, viewing children as thinkers and children as managers of their own knowledge.

Itsuokor (2012) reported that competency in English significantly determines performances in intelligence or academic tests. This revelation seems to suggest that mastery of English language is very important even in students' academic performances in intelligence tests, especially when it comes to the issues of science and technical education that involve many laboratory and workshop practical in the acquisition of skills. In determining the characteristics of good language teachers, Kimberly (2009) found desirable characteristics of an effective language teacher. These characteristics according to Kimberly includes having knowledge and

command of the target language and being able to organize, explain, and clarify. This requires good pedagogy and planning. It also include being able to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students; being fair to students by showing neither favouritism nor prejudice; and being available to students (all these relates to the teachers pedagogical style). Kimberly further observed that there exists strong relationship between competency and student's academic achievement.

A number of factors determine the level of performance in the school system especially the quality of the input (teacher competence) and school process variables (Ochuba, 2008). Kimberly (2009) reported that teachers must be knowledgeable in the area of how to teach a particular subject content (pedagogy). Effective teaching could be measured not only by the level of a teachers' subject matter competence which Fakeye (2012) regarded as a prime predictor of students' learning but also on how he/she plans his instruction. Planning is one of the main concerns of English teachers and remains an essential competency to guarantee that effective learning takes place (Bubb & Earley, 2004). It is part of the English teachers' roles to design and plan lessons and learning programs, to identify the requirements for a specific content, then select, and prepare textual and visual resources for effective learning.

Problem Statement

Secondary education is a very critical level of any educational system because it is the bedrock of higher education foundation. Whatever a child wants to become in life academically is rooted here. A look at the 2010 to 2014 Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) shows that the percentage of candidates that had five credits and above including English and mathematics ranges from 6.9% to 18.7% (WAEC, 2014). It is common that students allegedly look for crooked means of passing their examinations. What we often hear of this day is "miracle centers" where parents even encourage their children to be enrolled because they want them to pass. This is because of the fact that success in examination serves as a good motivator to students, teachers, administrators and employers of labour. On the other hand, failure to perform successfully in examination demoralizes all and sundry, especially students. The craving to succeed and avoid the frustration and embarrassment associated with failure makes students engage in examination malpractices. This has threatened the very foundation of our educational system. There is however sudden surge in students' performance in2017 and 2018 in Adamawa state which are 88.97

and 83.57 respectively for the period under review. This indicates good performance of students in English language in public examinations. Can this be attributable to competency of the teachers in pedagogy and planning of instruction? Is there any relationship between competency and students' academic achievement? This study was thus conducted with a view to finding whether relationship exist between the two.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives were to determine:

1. The level of relationship between teacher pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state.
2. The level of relationship between teacher planning of instruction competency and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of pedagogical competency of English Language teachers in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state?
2. What is the level of planning of instruction competency of English Language teachers in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state?

Hypotheses

HO1. There is no significant relationship between teacher pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state.

HO2. There is no significant relationship between teacher planning of instruction competency and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state.

Research Method

The study adopted co-relational research design. This is in line with the fact that the purposes of the study was to determine the level of relationship between English language teachers' competence and students' academic achievement in English language in senior secondary schools in Adamawa state, Nigeria. The area of study

is Gombi and Yola education zones of Adamawa state. The state is located in the north eastern part of Nigeria. It lies between latitude 7° 11″N and longitude 11° 14″E.The target population of the study was 550 English language teachers teaching in 115 senior secondary schools in the two education zones (Post Primary School Management Board, 2019). Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select Yola and Gombi zones that turned to be the zones with highest number of English language teachers in the state. Random sampling by ballot was adopted in selecting 232 English language teachers from the 550 teachers in the zones. Taro Yamane formula was used in determining the 232 sample. The teachers must have taught in the two zones for the periods under review. One instrument and a Proforma were used in collecting data for this study. The instrument for the data collection was a structured questionnaire named English Language Teachers Professional Competency Questionnaire (ELTPCQ) designed by the researcher. The questionnaire has two parts: part one was on demographic information covering schools' name, location and years of teaching in the school. Part 2 has two sections A and B covering subject matter mastery and planning of instruction, the independent variable of the study. The questionnaire has a five-point response options structure. The response categories were: VHL=Very high Level (5), HL= High Level (4) ML= Moderate Level (3), LL= low Level (2) and VLL= Very Low Level (1). The proforma was used in collecting a summary of students' performances in WAEC for the period 2017 to 2019 sessions.

The instrument was validated by three lecturers from the Department of Physical Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, Modibbo Adama University, Yola. The instrument was trial tested as a single test on 20 English language teachers teaching in selected senior secondary schools in Ganye Education Zone. Cronbach alpha was used in determining the internal consistency of the instrument, which gave a coefficient value of 0.76. The collection of data for the study was through administration of the questionnaire by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were trained by the researcher in the two education zones of Adamawa state. The data collected was analyzed using Mean and standard deviation in answering the research question while Regression analysis was used in testing the null hypotheses. In answering the research questions, real limits of numbers was used. Therefore, a mean of 4.5 – 5.0 = VHL, 3.5 – 4.49 = HL, 2.5 – 3.49 =ML, 1.5 -2.49= LL, 0.5 – 1.45 = VLL. The decision rule for the null hypotheses is that if p –

value (p – calculated) is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis should be rejected otherwise the null hypothesis should be retained.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of pedagogical competency of the English Language teachers in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state?

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Pedagogical Competency of the English Language Teachers in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state

S/N	ITEM	N	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	To understand learners characteristics	232	4.06	0.69	High Level
2	To develop instructional material	232	4.17	0.64	High Level
3	To manage question or answer session	232	4.47	0.61	High Level
4	To use group work	232	2.76	1.06	Moderate Level
5	To relate learning to real life	232	4.30	0.76	High Level
6	To evaluate learning.	232	4.48	0.50	High Level
7	To tailor instruction based on learner needs	232	4.19	0.72	High Level
8	To diagnose learning problems using reinforcement	232	3.44	1.00	High Level
9	To develop personal matured relationship with student	232	2.36	0.82	Low Level
10	To plan diligently for teaching	232	4.25	.54	High Level
	GRAND MEAN		**3.85**		

Table 1 shows means and standard deviations of level of pedagogical competency of the English Language teachers. The grand mean of 3.85 indicates high level of pedagogical competency of the English Language teachers.

Research Question 2: What is the level of Planning of Instruction competency of the English Language teachers in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state?

Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Planning of Instruction Competency of the English Language Teachers in senior secondary schools of Adamawa state

S/N	ITEM	N	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	Identify the topic to be taught during instruction	232	4.43	.74	High Level
2	Determine the objective of the topic of instruction	232	4.34	.74	High Level
3	Identify the materials to be used in the instruction	232	4.50	.53	High Level
4	Select relevant materials for instruction	232	4.25	.66	High Level
5	Determine the method of instruction	232	4.37	.53	High Level
6	Determine instructional evaluation strategies	232	4.30	.57	High Level
7	Develop appropriate instructional objectives	232	4.45	.55	High Level
8	Organize lessons interactively on the topics to reflect sequencing of instruction	232	4.34	.58	High Level
9	Plan the summary of lessons	232	3.91	.63	Moderate
10	To plan instruction based on the needs and interest of students in English language class	232	3.11	.51	Moderate
	GRAND MEAN		**4.20**		

Table 2 shows means and standard deviations of level of Planning of Instruction needs of the English Language teachers. The grand mean of 4.20 indicates high level of Planning of Instruction needs of the English Language teachers.

Hypotheses

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement in English Language.

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA of Linear Regression of Relationship Pedagogical Competency and Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools of Adamawa State

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	270.709	1	270.709	2359.373	.000[b]	Significant
	Residual	26.390	230	.115			
	Total	297.099	231				

a. Dependent Variable: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCIES

Results of Analysis in Table 3 shows summary of ANOVA used to test whether significant relationship exists between pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement in English Language. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement in English Language, $F_{(1, 231)} = 2359.373$, $p < 0.05$. Since the p – value (0.000) is less than 0.05 alpha level, we can conclude that the null hypothesis should be rejected. This means that significant relationship exists between pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement in English Language.

Ho2. There is no significant relationship between Planning of Instruction competency and students' academic achievement in English Language.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA of Linear Regression of Relationship between Planning of Instruction Competency and Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools of Adamawa State

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	253.767	1	253.767	1346.941	.000[b]	Significant
	Residual	43.332	230	.188			
	Total	297.099	231				

a. Dependent Variable: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
b. Predictors: (Constant), PLANNING OF INSTRUCTION COMPETENCIES

Results of Analysis in Table 4 shows summary of ANOVA used to test whether significant relationship exists between planning of instruction competency and students' academic achievement in English Language. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between planning of instruction competency needs and students' academic achievement in English Language, $F_{(1, 231)} = 1346.941$, $p = 0.000$. Since the p – value (0.000) is less than 0.05 alpha level, we can conclude that the null hypothesis should be rejected. This means that significant relationship exists between planning of instruction competency and students' academic achievement in English Language.

Findings of the Study

Based on research questions raised and the hypotheses tested, the following were the major findings of the study:

1. There is high level of pedagogical competency of the English Language teachers (grand mean of 3.8).
2. There is high level of teachers' Planning of Instruction competencies (grand mean of 4.2).
3. There is significant relationship between Teacher pedagogical competency and students' academic achievement ((represented by P value of 0.000, $F_{(1, 231)} = 2359.373$, r = .955.)) thus rejecting null Ho1.

4. There is significant relationship between Planning of Instruction competency and students' academic achievement (represented by P value of 0.000, $F_{(1, 231)}$ = 1346.941, r = .924) thus rejecting null Ho2.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that most of the English language teachers who participated in this study perceived that there are high levels of relationship between pedagogical and planning of instruction competencies with students' academic performance.

The result of the study in Table 1 shows that English language teachers' mean ratings in the factors listed under pedagogical have high level of relationship with students' academic performance. Pedagogical competence of importance to students' academic performance includes understanding learners' characteristics, managing question or answer session, developing instructional material, tailoring instruction based on learner needs and evaluating learners etc. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Roberts, Dooley, Harlin and Murphrey (2007) which revealed that instructional theory (pedagogy), leadership theory and broad knowledge of content area specialization are necessary for the success of teaching- learning. The findings on research question two is also in agreement with the finding of Agbi (1997) who found that it is only when the teachers have adequate preparation in the area of pedagogy that a better performance can be expected from the students.

The findings which are also in agreement with Robert and Dyer (2004) report on strategic planning of instruction for teachers' ability to plan for the next lesson, develop effective ways of communication and evaluate the effectiveness of the entire teaching process. The findings also hinges on Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) reports that teachers need an understanding of how to teach specific subject matter (pedagogical content knowledge) to be more effective and that they should possess a general understanding of learners in order to perform their job. This includes creation of relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere and retention of control in the classroom. It also includes presentation of work in a way that interests and motivates and providing conditions so that pupils understand the work among others. The findings is also supported by the work of Carlous (2006) reports on competency based approach to English language teaching and that of Ayeni (2012) works on the relationship between teacher's performance of instructional task, and students' academic performance in the teaching learning process of secondary schools. The findings also relies on research work of that of WiwiRif'atulQodriyah (2016) who reported that various actions are conducted by the teacher to manage several things, such as classroom layout, classroom interaction and dealing with diversity while performing their jobs.

The finding regarding the test of Ho2 indicates that there is a strong, positive correlation between pedagogical competency and students' academic performance, F (1, 231) = 2359.373, p = 0.000. Pedagogical Competency explained 91.1% of the variance in students' academic performance. This means that significance relationship existed between pedagogical competencies and students' academic performance. The findings is in agreement with Adler (2009) who

suggested that wide range of knowledge is required for teaching to be effective and meaningful. The finding from this hypothesis is in agreement with Bransford, Brown and Cocking (2000) who posit that teachers need an understanding of how to teach a specific subject matter i.e. pedagogical content knowledge to be more effective and that they should possess a general understanding of learners. Lovat (2003) also posits that good pedagogy requires a sustained attention to what produces students learning in a specific content domain with given group of students and a particular teacher. The findings are also in agreement with the work of Chapuis (2003) who revealed that pedagogy is a combination of knowledge and skills required for effective teaching, which in turn determines students' academic performance.

The findings from Table 2 regarding research question two of this study is that strong relationship exist between planning of instruction competence and students' academic performance. Planning of instruction competence, which is highly related to students' academic performance, includes identifying the topic to be taught during instruction, Determining the objective of the topic of instruction and identifying the materials to be used in the instruction. It also includes determining instructional evaluation strategies, organizing lessons interactively on the topics to reflect sequencing of instruction and to plan instruction based on the needs and interest of students in English language class etc .

The finding from research question two is in agreement with the findings of Bubb and Earley (2004) on English teachers' roles to design and plan lessons and learning programs, to identify the requirements for a specific content and then select and prepare textual and visual resources for effective learning. The finding also hinges on Bates (2005) who opined that "the ability to assess learners work on a daily basis" indicates that it is important for an English teacher to assess learners daily because the outcome will influence future planning. The finding relies on Du Plessis, Conley & Du Plessis (2007) who found that achieving quality and effective planning of English language instruction requires competency. It also relies on Robert, Dooley, Harlin and Murphrey (2006) who observed that planning is one of the teaching innovation evolved to improve the quality of instruction by designing the content of a lesson, determining students' needs and interests, and planning the summary of a lesson. Furthermore, Agwagah (2009) observed that planning of instruction involves planning learning experiences that will foster exploration and investigation. This will ultimately determine the outcome of the students' academic performance. The findings also relies on the views of Umar and Adedokun (2006) who noted that teachers need to update their professional capacity development, commitment, creativity, mechanical skills, resourcefulness and initiative for planning of instruction.

The findings regarding Ho2 indicate that there is a strong, positive correlation between Planning of Instruction competency and students' academic performance, $F(1, 231) = 1346.941$, $p = 0.000$. Planning of instruction competency explained 85.4% of the variance in students' academic performance. The result of test of the null hypothesis indicates strong rejection. Bubb and Earley (2004) who reported that planning is an essential competency, which guarantee effective learning and that it is part of the English teachers' roles to design and plan lessons and

learning programs support the finding. Members of any profession have the responsibility to identify, develop and maintain high standards of competence (Usayl, 2012) which requires planning. Foster (2002) stated that the secret behind a success for any programme is highly dependent on competent employees who deliver both high quality work and optimum output through effective planning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended the following:

1. Organizing retraining programmes in form of seminars, workshop or long vacation courses in the four professional competency areas for teachers of English language in senior secondary schools in the state to strengthen and retain the improved students' academic achievement as found in the study area.
2. Principals should encourage mentoring of newly recruited English language teachers by more experienced ones as professional competency was found to have relationship with students' academic achievement.

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