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TEACHERS' QUALITY AS DETERMINANT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined teachers' quality as determinant of academic achievement among secondary school students in Delta State, Nigeria. It specifically ascertained the relationship between teachers' educational qualification, teaching experience, knowledge of subject matter and students' academic achievement. It also ascertained the relationship between teachers' communication skills and teachers' teaching methods on students' academic achievement. The population of the study comprised 8,681 SS2 students in 18 public secondary schools in nine Local Government Areas of Delta State. A sample size of 434 SS2 students was drawn for the study using multistage sampling procedure. A well-structured questionnaire tagged 'Teachers' Quality Questionnaire (TQQ)' was used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts while construct validation of the instrument was determined using factor analysis. The internal consistencies of the instrument were determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded overall reliability indices of 0.791. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed among others that there is high positive relationship between teachers' educational qualification/experience and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The study among others recommends that Delta State government through the State Ministry of Education should provide study grant and leave with pay for teachers to enable them enroll into educational institutions to upgrade their qualification and knowledge that will improve the academic achievement of students.

Keywords: Teachers' quality, Cronbach Alpha, Determinant, Academic achievement

Introduction

Academic Achievement is the level of assimilation of knowledge and skills by the student imparted through the teacher, people or materials around them which is mostly measured by administering test or examination to students. Academic Achievement also refers to a specified level of attainment or proficiency in academic work as evaluated by the teachers, standardized tests or by a combination of both (Steinmayr *et al*., 2014). Academic

achievement is a students' academic standing at any given time (Adeyemi and Bolariwa, 2013). The result of the test or examination according to Katherine (2016) will show their level of achievement academically and it will be a yardstick for decision making by the principal, teachers, parents and even the government.

The problem of poor academic achievement among Secondary School students in both internal and external examinations in Delta State is worrisome. The unhappiness of the public about this poor achievement becomes more prominent following the annual release of the external examinations. The students' result does not match the government and parental investment. Hence Ayeni (2017) reported a decline in students' academic performance in public examinations in Nigeria.

There has been little consensus among educational scholars on the precise definition of 'Teachers Quality'. However, quality is the nucleus of what every individual is looking for in education. Ijaiya (2012) defined quality as the degree or level of excellence in the standard or goodness of something compared with others. She added that quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Winters (2013) defined teacher quality as being good teachers who receive the largest gains in student achievement whereas bad teachers are just the opposite. Teachers' quality refers to all teacher educational outcomes such as students' performance on standardized tests or supervisor rating (Musau & Muola, 2013).

Teachers' quality plays a key role in enhancing students learning outcome (Wallace *et al*., 2016). Previous studies have consistently shown that what teachers do in the classroom meaningfully influence students learning, and having effective teachers helps students to reach their full potential (Maulana *et al*., 2015). Teachers are seen by the society as the second parents to students. Large number of students take whatever piece of information and knowledge imparted on them by teachers, and for this reason, we need to have competent and reliable teachers in secondary schools in Delta State. The idea that 'better teachers lead to better test scores has resulted in a range of policy actions aimed at lifting the performance of teachers, thus throwing the concept of teachers' quality into the limelight (Berkovich & Bendiel, 2018).

For the purpose of this research, five components of teacher quality were examined. They are: Educational Qualification, Teaching Experience, Knowledge of subject matter, Teaching methods and Communication skills. The presence of highly qualified teachers in every classroom cannot be overemphasized.

Teachers' educational qualification is very important because it seems to directly affect students' teaching and learning. Well-qualified teacher needs to acquire recognized certificate that is pertinent to the subject they

teach. Education cannot be provided by just anybody. It requires a teacher who plans and delivers the lesson in such a way that objectives can be achieved. A teacher who is not qualified and experienced cannot prepare students for external examinations such as West African Secondary School certificate Examination (WASSCE) because it is unlikely that they will pass.

Teaching experience tends to increase teacher effectiveness and students' academic achievement. The years invested by a teacher in the teaching career which produces a positive or negative influence on the students' academic performance is known as teacher's experience. Experienced teachers are expected to do better in teaching than the less experienced ones. Tera and Podolsky (2016) observed that teachers who have taught for more than ten (10) years are good in teaching as years of experience is considered by scholars to influence students' academic Achievement. Students' result seems to be the main indicators of the experience and effectiveness of teachers. Experience and productivity tend to be interrelated. Many people not only believe in the qualification and experience of a teacher but also on the ability of the teacher to defend the certificate by having good knowledge of subject matter.

The capability of teachers to choose, coordinate and present their subject has attracted the interest of numerous researchers in the field of education. Teachers are expected to thoroughly understand the contents of what they teach because teachers who master the material will pass the message clearer and provide better explanations than those with weaker backgrounds. To this end, professional teachers with good knowledge of subject matter are needed in Secondary schools in Delta state, Nigeria. A teacher cannot succeed if the teacher cannot convey knowledge to students, no matter how competent that teacher is in the subject matter. Therefore, the teacher needs to have good teaching methods.

Students' academic success and learning motivation, to an extent depends on the teachers' ability to engage student's interest through choice of teaching methods. Teaching method comprises the principles and methods used by teachers to enable student learning (Wikipedia, 2021). These teaching methods help students to master the content of the subject and learn how to apply the content in particular contexts. The methods most frequently applied by teachers are: Lecture, explanation, demonstration and discussion. A teacher chooses the teaching method most suitable to the topic being studied considering students differences and learning needs. Amusan (2016) opined that, pedagogical skills of the teacher are powerful force that influences students' academic performance. A teacher who has good knowledge of subject matter, combine different teaching methods but lack communication skills cannot carry out effective teaching.

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Nations spend much of their resources to enhance their education process and improve on learner's achievement which in turn leads to National development. The higher the educated people in a particular society, the higher the level of civilization and discipline (UNESCO, 2015). This cannot be achieved if teachers lack a communications skill which seems to be a prerequisite in teaching. Communication skills is the language that teachers use to translate expectations of students, elicit relevant knowledge from students to respond to things that students say and to describe the classroom experience that they share with students. As a teacher, communications skill is an important requirement, if not, students will not be able to understand the lesson. A teacher should be proficient in all four (4) modes of communication, namely; listening, speaking, reading, writing and should be able to utilize all effectively. Adaji (2018) asserted that someone with great communication skill has the potential to influence others, as effective communication strategies lead to success. A teacher with poor communication skill may hinder students' academic achievement.

However, with the increasing demand on students' accountability, students' performance is considered an accurate measure and a basis for value-added teacher assessment system (Adaramola & Obomamu, 2014). This implies that improving teacher quality has been regarded as a successful way to improving students' performance (Piaro, 2018). Several studies have been carried out by researchers on improving teacher quality for quality instruction but none has been done on Teachers' Quality as Determinant of Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Delta State, Nigeria, hence this study.

The study specifically sought to:

i. ascertain the relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement
ii. determine the relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement
iii. determine the relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic achievement
iv. ascertain the relationship between teachers' communication skills and students' academic achievement
v. determine the relationship between teachers' teaching methods and students' academic achievement

Methodology

The population of the study consisted of 8,681 SS2 students from 18 public secondary schools in nine local government areas of Delta State, Nigeria. The sample for this study was 434 senior secondary students selected from 18 public secondary schools across the 25 Local Government areas of Delta State, Nigeria, using multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select nine local government areas out of the

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25 local government areas of the state namely: Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Oshimili North, Oshimili South, Ethiope West, Okpe, Warri North, Bomadi, Isoko North.

In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select two secondary schools each from the nine local government areas selected for the study. This gave a total of 18 secondary schools selected for the study. The third stage was the selection of 5% of the total population of SS2 students from each of the 18 secondary schools using simple random sampling technique. In all, a total of 434 SS2 students were utilized for the study.

The Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire developed by the researcher which was titled Teacher Quality Questionnaire (TQQ) and Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ).

A 4-point rating scale for the respondents was employed thus:
Very Great Extent (VGE) – 4 points
Great Extent (GE) - 3 points
Low Extent (LE) - 2 points
Very Low Extent (VLE) - 1 point

Students' academic achievement was assessed in this study using the mathematics examination results administered to students in SS2 by the Ministry of Education, 2022/2023 academic session in public Secondary Schools in Delta State.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher with the help of five research assistants who are teachers in secondary schools in the study area administered 434 copies of the questionnaires directly to respondents, though section A of the questionnaire were collected from the schools' record. The research assistants were briefed on the nature and purpose of the study to help them answer questions and provide clarifications. The copies of the questionnaires were administered to students in their various schools. On the spot method of completion and retrieval was adopted but follow up visits were made where the respondents could not complete it on the spot. The administration of the Questionnaires lasted for three weeks. A total of 434 copies of questionnaire were administered to students and 421 were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 97% return. At the end of the exercise, 421 copies of the questionnaire retrieved were used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient for the research questions and T-test for the hypotheses. The justification for Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was to ascertain the direction of association that exists between the variables of the study. The basis for the T-test was to determine whether there is significant difference between the means of the variables (to

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determine whether a process or treatment actually has an effect on the population (students), or whether the two groups (independent variables) are different from one another. For the research questions, the coefficient r and the size of the relationship were interpreted using the interpretation of a correlation coefficient by Downie and Heath cited in Nworgu (2015) as shown: 0.80 and above for high, above 0.30 and below 0.80 for moderate and 0.30 and below for low respectively. For decision on the hypotheses, if P – value is equal to or less than level of significant value of 0.05, the null hypotheses will be rejected, but if P – value is greater than level of significant value at 0.05, the null hypotheses will not be rejected. The SPSS version 27 (v27) was used in data analysis.

Results and Discussion

The relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The Pearson r was calculated to determine the relationship.

Table 1: Pearson (r) on Relationship Teachers' Educational Qualification and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	N	Teachers' Educational Qualification	Students' Academic Achievement	Remarks
Teachers' Educational Qualification	421	1.00	.817	High Positive Relationship
Students' Academic Achievement	421	.817	1.00	

As shown in Table 1, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of .817 was obtained. This showed that there is high positive the relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This indicated that the higher teachers' educational qualification will increase the students' academic achievement. This agreed with the finding of Adamu and Mai'anguwa (2020) which revealed that teachers' educational qualification has high positive relationship with students' academic achievement. Similarly, it also supported the finding of Agbor, Onnoghen and Etan (2023) as well as Bolarinwa and Kolawole (2020) which collectively revealed that there is a significant relationship between lecturers' education qualifications and students' academic achievement.

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(ii) The relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. In a similar way the Pearson r was calculated to determine the relationship.

Table 2: Pearson (r) on Relationship Teachers' Experience and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	N	Teachers' Experience	Students' Academic Achievement	Remarks
Teachers' Experience	421	1.00	.861	High Positive Relationship
Students' Academic Achievement	421	.861	1.00	

Table 2 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of .659 was obtained. This showed that there is high positive relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This revealed that the teachers with higher experience will improve the students' academic achievement. This is in consonance with the finding of Adamu and Mai'anguwa (2020) which revealed that teachers' experience has high positive relationship with students' academic achievement. This upheld the finding of Ewetan and Ewetan (2015) which revealed that there was high relationship between teachers' years of experience and students' academic performance in the selected senior secondary schools. The similarity in level of education and participants of the studies could account for the agreement in the findings. Also, it agrees with the finding of Okoye and Tanimowo (2022) which showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Delta State.

The relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This objective was achieved through the use of Pearson r.

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Table 3: Pearson (r) on Relationship Teachers' Knowledge of Subject Matter and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	N	Teachers' Knowledge of Subject Matter	Students' Academic Achievement	Remarks
Teachers' Knowledge of Subject Matter	421	1.00	.869	High Positive Relationship
Students' Academic Achievement	421	.869	1.00	

Result presented in table 3 indicated that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of .869 was obtained. This showed that there is high positive relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This indicated that the teachers who possess high knowledge of subject matter will improve the academic achievement of students. This affirmed the finding of Ahmed (2019) which indicated that there was a high relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic achievement in secondary schools. Further, this is in conformity with the finding of Olasehinde-Williams, Yahaya and Owolabi (2018) which indicated that subject content knowledge of teachers was a significant predictor of students' academic achievement. This also supported the finding of Ntibi, Neji and Agube (2020) which revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' perception of teachers' mastery of the subject matter and their academic achievement in public secondary schools.

The relationship between teachers' communication skill and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This was also determined through the use of Pearson r.

Table 4: Pearson (r) on Relationship Teachers' Communication Skill and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	N	Teachers' Communication Skill	Students' Academic Achievement	Remarks
Teachers' Communication Skill	421	1.00	.776	Moderate Positive Relationship

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Students' Achievement	Academic	421	.776	1.00

Table 4 indicated that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of .659 was recorded. This showed that there is moderate positive relationship between teachers' communication skill and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This showed that teachers' communication skill will moderately improve the students' academic achievement. This finding is however at variance with that of Nwune, Okigbo, Oguezue and Christian-Ike (2022) which revealed that there was low positive relationship between teachers' communication skill (behaviour) and students' academic achievement. This disparity could be explained by the difference in the maturity levels of the participants of the different studies. This finding however agreed with that of Nyarks and Enang (2018) which showed that there was a significant relationship between communication skills and student performance in tertiary institution. Teachers use communication skills to present subject matters to students so as to make lesson clear, easy to learn and encourage them to participate in classroom activities which could be connected to significant relationship with their academic achievement in secondary schools in Delta State.

The relationship between teachers' teaching methods and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This objective was also achieved through the use of Pearson r.

Table 5: Pearson (r) on Relationship Teachers' Teaching Methods and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables		N	Teachers' Teaching Methods	Students' Academic Achievement	Remarks
Teachers' Methods	Teaching	421	1.00	.882	High Positive Relationship
Students' Achievement	Academic	421	.882	1.00	

Result in table 5 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of .882 was obtained. This showed that there is high positive relationship between teachers'

teaching methods and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This indicated that the teachers' teaching methods will lead to higher academic achievement of students. This supported the finding of Muema, Mulwa and Maliu (2018) which revealed that there was a high positive correlation between teaching methods and academic achievement of students. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the fact that teaching methods of teachers could influence the engagement of students in learning activities which has high relationship with their academic achievement.

Conclusion

It is the conclusion of this study that teachers' quality has positive and significant relationship with academic achievement among secondary school students in Delta State, Nigeria. Teachers who acquire more educational qualifications, experience, higher knowledge of the subject matter, better teaching methods and good communication skills can utilize them to improve the academic achievement of students in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Delta State government through the State Ministry of Education should provide study grant and leave with pay for teachers to enable them enroll into educational institutions to upgrade their qualification and knowledge that will improve the academic achievement of students.
2. The State Post Primary Education Board should lay more emphasis on higher job experience as basis for promotion and pay rise to encourage the retention of teachers that lead to accumulation of work experience and increase in academic achievement of students.
3. Ministry of Education should organize annual remedial classes, seminars and group tutorials for teachers to continuously update and upgrade their knowledge of their subject matter to improve academic achievement of students.
4. Principals should invite communication experts to schools to enlighten and share ideas that will help teachers to enhance the core components of communication skills such as speaking, non-vernal, listening, reading and feedback to bring about positive improvement on the academic achievement of students.
5. Teachers should be flexible and keen to adjust their teaching methods to suit the interest and needs of students to bring about improvement on their academic achievement.

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