

Influence of Teachers Qualification on Students' Achievement in English language at the Upper Basic Education Level in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examined the influence of teacher's qualification on students' achievement in English language at the upper basic education level in Ebonyi state, Nigeria. Students' achievement in English language was examined. Most secondary schools in Nigeria have recorded mass failure in English language in the West African School Certificate examination. The study utilized the co-relational design. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study consisted 1600 teachers of English language and 28000 students. Through the simple random sampling technique, a sample size of 540 respondents was selected for the study. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while regression was used to test the hypothesis. Result of the findings showed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' qualification and students achievement in English language. Based on this, one of the recommendations is that the government should employ only professionally trained English language teachers to teach English language at the upper basic level of education.*

KEYWORDS: teacher's qualification, determinant, achievement, professional teachers, unprofessional

INTRODUCTION

Teacher's qualification refers to the kind of professional education for teaching that the teacher has received while qualification relates to the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, competence and creativity needed for quality productive engagement in the teaching profession, (Agbor, Onnoghien, & Etan, 2023). A qualified teacher has a good classroom control, effective

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communication skills and adequate knowledge of the subject matter and can utilize varieties of teaching strategies in order to enhance students' performance, (Agwu, 2009). English language occupies a very important position in Nigeria. It is not only the official language but the language of education, and serves as the medium of instruction at all levels of education in the country. A credit pass in it guarantees one's admission into any of the universities or higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Unfortunately, in most Nigeria schools, teachers who are not qualified or competent enough to teach English are employed to do so resulting in mass failure among the students at external examinations such as West African Examination Council (WAEC) or the National Examination Council (NECO) and even the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations. Adeynka (2017) notes that teacher's lack of content knowledge in the subject would lead to inability to deliver the English language instruction effectively in a classroom setting.

In Nigeria, there are full time, part time, pre-service and in-service programmes in various tertiary education institutions that provide teacher education programmes. Teachers with educational background such as Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc.Ed), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed), and Masters in Education (M.Ed) are regarded as skilled and professionally qualified teachers while those with Higher National Diploma (HND), and university degrees are regarded as being academically qualified teachers. A teacher academic certification is a combined set of qualifications which include general academic and verbal ability, subject matter knowledge and teacher education, (Yakubu, 2023). He also observes that teachers with a higher degree impact positively on students academic performance than those who taught with a lower degree. The National Policy on Education (FGN 2004) stipulates that the minimum qualification for entering the teaching profession in Nigeria is Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE). In 1993, the government set up the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) to control and regulate the teaching profession.. Other degrees acceptable by TRCN are B.Sc.Ed, B.Ed, M.Ed and Ph.D in Education. Also anyone with a degree or diploma aside from the aforementioned must possess a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or Technical Teachers Certificate (TTC), (Kola & Sunday 2015). According to Mustapha (2023) a professional teacher should have a deep knowledge of the content of the subject they teach as well as skills and know-how. On a more complex level, a professional teacher may mean one who has an exceptional comprehension of the subject matter and students' interest at heart. They exemplify the best and set exceptional standards for best practices. On the other hand, non-professional teachers, do not have formal training in instruction, though they may have other academic qualifications. notes that the important cog in the educational machine and highly instrumental to the success of any educational programme. The professional teachers' background training in Education is the bane behind this clear cut difference. Similarly, Owolabi & Adedayo (2012) study on teachers' qualification revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualification performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications.

The rate of academic development and the increasing demand with regards to knowledge require a constantly and regularly updated teaching workforce, that is, teachers that are professionally trained and have acquired skills with regard to their professional qualification, (Adebile, 2009). Most importantly, an effective and functional curriculum implementation involves professionally trained teachers because they constitute the vital force as part of the implementers of the curriculum at every stage of the educational programme. Ichazu & Omoregie (2020) state that all teachers need breadth and depth in the subject they teach, including the understanding of the new knowledge and this calls for high professional qualification. It is in recognition of the vital role a teacher plays in the attainment of educational goals and objectives that the Federal Government of Nigeria states in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) that since no education can rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. Thus, proper teaching and learning of English language requires educated and trained teachers.. Filgona & Sakiyo (2020) states that one key overriding factor for the success of students is the teacher. Similarly, Yasin (2021) observes that teachers qualification plays a pertinent role in boosting the academic performance of students. Even though the National Policy on Education states that government is to provide qualified teachers and provide training for them, it is sad to note that professional English teachers who teach the subject are lacking.

According to Onotere (2006), many of them who teach the language in school are not trained English teachers but are asked to teach it because there is a common notion that any graduate can teach English in school. In some other cases, the qualified English teachers are over-loaded with too many classes resulting in ineffective handling of the subject. Onyeachu (2008) notes that in most secondary schools, very few teachers are in existence to the extent that in most cases, teachers are compelled to teach subjects that are not in their areas of specialization. The erroneous practice of making anyone who speaks a language to teach it does not help learners but may contribute to poor achievement. If a language teacher is not trained and qualified, he cannot teach English language effectively. His incompetence may likely bring about poor achievement in English language examinations among the learners. It is obvious that lack of qualified English language teachers in secondary schools has serious consequences on the achievement of the students in the language. Also, the National Policy on Education (2004) notes the fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching and learning process. This means that when teachers are not qualified or competent enough to teach English efficiently, it results in poor achievement in the English language among the students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study conducted by Jega & Julius (2018) showed that all teachers' qualifications and experience when taken together made significant effects on students' achievement in mathematics. In a similar

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study, Yusuf & Dada (2016) found that students taught by teachers with professional teaching qualification in Education such as B.Ed, M.Ed, M.AEd, M.Sc Ed Ph.D in Education performed better than those taught by non-professional teachers without teaching qualification. Ojera(2016) also found that teachers qualification has influence on students academic performance. On the contrary, Musau & Abere (2016) found no significant relationship in the performance of students taught by professionally qualified teachers.

Agbor, Onnoghien & Etan (2023) investigated the relationship between teachers qualification and students academic performance in Environmental Education in the University of Calabar. Findings revealed that teachers with environmental education qualification positively relate with students' academic performance.

In a related study carried out by Casian, Mugo, & Claire (2021) on the impact of teachers' qualification on students academic performance in public secondary schools in Rwanda. Findings showed a significant relationship between teacher qualification and students academic performance. Kingsley & Omoregie (2020) carried out a study on the influence of teachers qualifications on academic performance of secondary school students in Delta state. Results revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers qualification and students academic performance in secondary schools. Secondary schools students taught by qualified teachers performed significantly better than those taught by unqualified teachers.

Foyewa(2021) carried out a study on teachers qualification as a determinant of students academic achievement in O' level English in Oyo metropolis. Result showed that there was a difference in the achievement of students in O' level English with students taught by holders of degree certificate performing better. Adeyinka (2017) in a study on teacher factors as predictors of students achievement in English language in Ibadan southwest local government area, Oyo state, Nigeria. Findings revealed a significant relationship between teacher factors and students achievement in English language. Ichazu & Omoregie (2020) carried out a study on the influence of teacher's qualifications on academic performance of secondary school students in Delta state. Result revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers qualification and students' academic performance in secondary schools. Also, students taught by experienced teachers performed significantly better than those taught by inexperienced teachers.

Statement of the Problem

A critical problem in the teaching and learning of the English language is that of inadequate qualified English language instructors. In some cases where there are qualified teachers, they are usually overloaded with too many classes resulting in poor handling of the subject. Moreover, the classrooms are usually overcrowded making it difficult for teachers to move around. Little wonder, there has been a steady decline in students' performance in English language in Nigeria. A credit pass in the subject guarantees ones admission into any of the universities in the country. Most of

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the students are delayed from advancing to higher institutions of learning because of inability to obtain a credit pass in the English language.

Moreover, the trend is to allow teachers who did not major in English language to teach the subject with the belief that anybody can teach it. It is not unusual to find teachers of Economics teaching English to senior secondary school students. With the performance of students in English language declining steadily in the senior secondary schools in Nigeria, the researcher is worried whether teachers' qualification affects students' achievement in English language and their attitude towards the subject. Therefore, the problem of this study is to investigate the issue of teachers' qualification as determinant of students' achievement and attitude to English language.

Purpose of the study: Specifically, the study sought to find out the following

1. How does teachers' qualification affect students' achievement in English Language.

Research questions: The following hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

- i.) There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and students' achievement in English Language

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the correlation research design. The study sought to find out whether relationship exists between the variables of study. The study was carried out in all the upper basic level of education in Ebonyi state. The population of the study constituted all the 1600 English language teachers and 28000 students in the upper basic level. A sample size of 280 students and 260 teachers were selected for the study through the simple random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection was a structured questionnaire. They were validated by two experts in the Language department and two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. The instruments were further subjected to reliability tests. The instrument on Teacher qualification yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.76 using Cronbach Alpha approach. Two separate scores on the achievement test were correlated in a test retest using Pearson Moment Correlation and yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.78. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research question. and regression was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below in accordance with the research question and hypothesis:

Research question 1: How does teachers' qualification affect students' achievement in English language

Table 1: Mean Results of how Teachers Qualification affects Students’ Achievement in English Language

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	—	SD	Interpret
1.	Professionally qualified teachers do teach English language well.	129	29	80	22	3.019	1.071	Accepted
2.	Students taught by professionally qualified teachers have better academic achievement in English language.	119	35	68	38	2.904	1.140	Accepted
3.	Professionally qualified teachers do insist on a more suitable learning environment for learning.	115	47	87	11	3.023	.974	Accepted
4.	Professionally trained teachers use instructional materials to enhance their teaching.	136	76	29	19	3.265	.927	Accepted
5.	Professional teachers do not encourage better social interaction between students and teachers in their classes.	112	52	84	12	3.015	.970	Accepted
6.	Teachers with professional qualification demonstrate a more cordial relationship with students.	97	123	7	33	3.092	.950	Accepted
7.	Professional trained teachers are more result oriented.	80	129	8	43	2.946	1.000	Accepted
8.	Trained teachers have a more propensity to effectively deliver their lessons.	40	71	53	96	2.212	1.103	Not Accepted
9.	Professionally qualified teachers do not use rewards wisely to enhance learning.	138	75	16	31	3.231	1.010	Accepted
10.	Professionally qualified teachers encourage learning by active participation in their students.	51	161	45	3	3.000	.646	Accepted
11.	Professionally qualified teachers do not have better class-control than their counterparts.	106	111	36	7	3.215	.781	Accepted
12.	Professionally qualified teachers do not use learning strategies that facilitate positive attitude towards English language among students	129	53	68	10	3.158	.943	Accepted
	Grand mean					3.006		Accepted

Results from table 1 indicated that teachers’ qualification affects students’ achievement in English language. The grand mean of 3.006 supports this view.

From the correlation of teacher qualification and students achievement contribution as seen in table 2, there is a positive effect of teachers’ qualification on students’ achievement as shown by T = 22.179.

Table 2: Nature of Contribution to the Result

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient		Sig
	B	SE of B	T		Significance
Constants teachers qualification	0.648	0.039	22.179		0.0000
Vs students achievement	-0.028	0.07	-0.082	-2.760	0.015

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers qualification and students achievement in English language.

Table 4: Regression Summary on Teachers’ Qualification as it affects Students’ Achievement
 (a)

Multiple R - 0.18423
R – squares (R ²) – 0.07124
Adjusted R squares – 0.06341
Standard error – 10.10511

F (1,538) = 23.791: P<0.054

(b) ANOVA Results on Teacher Qualification as it affects Students’ Achievement

Variable	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	7214.2170	1	7214.2170	23.791	0.0002
Residual	126534.102	538	135.328		
Total	133748.319	539			

The results in table 4(a) show that multiple correlation was 0.18 with respect to students’ achievement based on teacher qualification. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.071$) tends to contribute 7.1% to the variation in students’ achievement in English language. The value of the F – ratio at the base of table 4(a) reveals that the multiple correlation did not occur by chance; meaning that there is a significant relationship between teacher qualification and students achievement.

DISCUSSION

Research question 1: How does teachers’ qualification affect students’ achievement in English language?

Table 1 show that teachers’ qualification affects students’ achievement in the English language. Mean result on analysis of data collected on teachers’ qualification showed a grand mean of 3.006. Findings shown in table 2 revealed that there is a positive correlation between teachers’ qualification and students’ achievement in English language. The calculated value of 22.17 is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance; therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Similarly, table 4(a) reveals a multiple correlation of 0.18 with respect to students achievement based on teacher qualification. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.071$) tends to contribute to the variation in students achievement. The value of the F ratio at the base of table 4(a) reveals that multiple correlation did not occur by chance. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected depicting that teachers qualification has a significant positive effect on students achievement in English language

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The results of this study corroborate with the findings of Ololube (2005), Ojera (2016), Yusuf & Dada (2016), Jega & Julius (2018) that students taught by teachers with professional qualification in Education such as B.Ed, B.A (Ed), M.A(Ed),M.Ed, Ph.D in Education performed better than those taught by non professional teachers without qualification. The findings of this study also agree with that of Fakeye (2012) whose study showed that teachers teaching qualification has a significant relationship with students' academic achievement in English language. The findings of this study corroborates with Akinsolu (2010) Owolabi, Olabode, Adedayo & Julius (2012) and Fakeye (2012) observe a significant joint contribution between teachers qualification and subject teachers mastery on student achievement in English. Students taught by teachers with higher qualification performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualification. Similarly, studies carried out by Mahmood, Khan & Umarudin (2010), Owolabi & Adedayo (2012) also revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that teachers are the pivot on which the education of any country revolves. They are the interpreters of the English language curriculum. Drastic problems evolve when teachers who do not even have a degree in the subject are employed to teach the subject with untold havoc on students' achievement. Professionally trained English language teachers are seen to have a better mastery of the subject in the classroom. Therefore, this study has buttressed the fact that teachers' qualifications affect students' achievement in English language. The study has also shown that teacher's qualification has a significant between teachers' qualification and

Recommendations:

- 1.) Government should ensure that only professionally qualified teachers should be employed to teach English language in the upper basic schools.
- 2.) Government should provide the fund for continuous professional development programmes for English language teacher to upgrade their skills so as to become more competent in the delivery of their jobs.
- 3.) Teachers should evolve effective and more innovative strategies for teaching the subject so that students' will perform better in English language.

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