TEACHERS' AGE AND EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Teachers' age and educational qualification as Correlates of Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State. The correlational research design was used in this study. The population of the study covered all the three hundred and ten (310) public senior secondary schools, three hundred and twenty-seven (327) English Language teachers and thirty-four thousand five hundred and thirty-four (34,534) Senior Secondary School students (SSS) in Edo State. A total sample of 27 public secondary schools, 27 English Language teachers and 270 students was used as sample for the study. The multi-stage sampling method was used to arrive at the sample size in this study. The instrument Students' English Language Achievement Test (SELAT) was used in the study. The Cronbach's alpha reliability was used in the study. Hypotheses 1 to 2 were tested with Simple Linear Regression. The entire hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that there was a relationship between teachers' age and educational qualification and students' academic achievement in English Language in secondary schools in Edo State. It was recommended amongst others that mentorship platform should be created in schools to enable young English Language teachers learn the required pedagogy skills from the older teachers and long serving teachers who have acquired skills over the years.

Keywords: Teachers, Age, Educational Qualification, Student Academic Achievement, English Language.

1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum for Senior Secondary School as stated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) emphasized the need for four compulsory cross-cutting subjects – English Language, General Mathematics, Trade and Entrepreneurship subjects and Civic Education at the senior secondary school level. English Language is a language of communication in the Nigerian society. It is a medium of instruction as a lingua-franca, useful in all facets of lives in Nigeria. English as a second language is useful between the encoder and decoders (Oribabor, 2014). English language is a language meant for a medium of communication by instructors (teachers) in the school.

English Language along with the other subjects like Mathematics is considered prerequisite for the study of other courses in higher institutions. For instance, students who want to offer courses like Law, Mass Communication and History must pass English Language with at least a credit level in the Senior Secondary School Examination to gain admission into any Nigerian tertiary institution. Unfortunately, Akinfe, Olofinniyi and Fashiku (2016) noted that the academic achievement of students in English Language in the past one decade has been on the decline. Buttressing this assertion, Olaosebikan and Kolawole (2023), submitted that the

Chief Examiner for 2022, May/June National Examination Council (NECO) reported a poor performance of students in English Language.

The report had it that students failed because of deficiencies such as weakness in skills of writing, construction of loose sentences, transliteration from the mother tongue and abuse of the basic rules of grammar. Many candidates scored zero under the mechanical accuracy aspect of the essay. Candidates' errors were listed to include wrong spellings, wrong usage of concord, tense usage and wrong construction of verb. Kuo, Klein, Browning, and Zaplatosch (2021) noted that this situation has remained the same as the 2018, 2019 and 2020 November/December NECO also recorded mass failures in English Language. In the 2017 June/July NECO results, there was a marginal decline in the achievement of candidates as 38.81 percent was recorded in 2016 and 36.57 percent in 2015. It was added that about 45.8percent that scored below 50percent in essay writing failed mainly because of poor content, organization and mechanical accuracy, hence, their achievement was low in English Language.

Academic achievement refers to the degree of a student's accomplishment on his or her academic task or studies. It is commonly measured by grades which reflect the student's "score" on a given subject or set of subjects after a period of instruction. Success is measured by academic achievement in most educational institutions. In this case, how well a student meets standards set out by an institution itself or an external examination body either set up by the government or an independent outfit signifies success or good achievement (Duruji, Azuh & Oviasogie, 2014).

On the other hand, poor academic achievement is a performance that is adjudged by the examiner/tester and some other significant as falling below an expected standard. The criteria for achievement or excellence can be from 40% to 100% depending on the subjective yardstick of the evaluator or assessor. For example, a 60% score for students is by all standards a very good achievement. However, a cursory look at the performance of the individual examined and the standards of the examination could reveal that the achievement is poor. On another hand, a Senior Secondary School One (SSS 1) student's performance of 38% in Mathematics in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) can be said to be a poor achievement when in actual sense, the achievement is by all standards encouraging (considering the level of the examinee). This showed that the concept of poor academic achievement is very relative and depends on some intervening variables. However, following the regular grading system, an achievement below a score of 40% represents a fail. On the other hand, teachers age and educational background are some examples of their personal or physical attributes.

Age generally refers to the length of time one has lived as measured in chronological terms of days, weeks, months or years. While some individuals regarded age as the state of the mind, implying that age has nothing to do with years, in the school context, age is sometimes attributed to capability, abilities and competencies of an individual such as a teacher. Various age categories such as those below 30years, 30-45year and 46years and above could perform differently in their duties based on increases in capabilities, exposures and experiences. Hence, their ability to resolve a learners' difficulty, address a disciplinary problem, skill in lesson planning, instructional lesson delivery, use of instructional materials and mastery of subject content among others could increase with their age and thereby affect the learning outcome or academic achievement of students in English Language. Eze, Ezenwafor and Obi (2015) noted that the assumption of increased knowledge, capability and exposure among older teachers is the reason many schools prefer to employ older teachers than the young ones who are considered to have little experience in the teaching field.

Educational qualification is one attribute of a teacher that can be described as the quality of skills, exposure, knowledge that has been achieved through formal academic training on a given field or discipline. For a teacher to be considered qualified to teach at the primary school level, a minimum qualification of the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is required as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004 revised 2013). On the other hand, English Language at the Senior Secondary School level, requires teachers with a minimum qualification of a Bachelor of Art in Education [BA(Ed)] or its equivalent as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004 revised 2013). This implies that teachers with National Certificate on Education (NCE), Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and Bachelor of Art in English Language without any specialization in Education cannot be considered as qualified to teach English Language at the senior secondary school level. Abe (2014) noted that teachers with low educational qualifications are not likely to understand the pedagogy and methods of imparting what they know or have learnt effectively.

From the foregoing, the terms - teachers' age and educational qualification have been coined as a nomenclature to describe a set of multivariate or component factors that could influence students' academic achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State. Teachers have a vital role to play as facilitator of knowledge. Hence, their personal attributes and quality could influence their skill and disposition in the delivery of their instruction and management of attendant activities in class for improved students' academic achievement. In order to examine the magnitude of relationship among the variables, this study seeks to determine teachers' age and educational qualification as correlates of students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State.

Teachers' age and students' academic achievement have been investigated by several researchers to determine if any relationship exists between them. Ugorji and Kagbaranen (2022) investigated the influence of teachers' age on academic achievement of business education student learning outcomes in Rivers State Universities. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study consist of 67 selected post-graduate students from the two state owned universities in Rivers State. The entire population was used for the study since it was manageable. A self-structured questionnaire tittle: "Questionnaire on Influence of Teachers' Age on Academic Achievement of Business Education Students' Learning Outcome (QITQAEBELO)". Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze the research questions while Z-test was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study at 0.05 level of significance. Findings in the study revealed that; teachers' age enhanced students' achievement among Business Education students' learning outcomes in Rivers State Universities.

In a related study, Nja, Cornelius-Ukpepi and Ihejiamaizu (2022) investigated the influence of teachers' age and student's academic achievement in the University of Calabar. Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The target population was sixty lecturers in Chemistry Education in the Department of Science Education, University of Calabar. A sample size of sixty-four (64) Chemistry Education students' of 2021/2022 academic Session was used for the study. Data were obtained from existing records for the research. These were 2021/2022 first semester result of secondary Chemistry content 1 and students' register that had their ages. The Independent t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in this study. Result obtained showed that there is a significant influence of teachers' age on students' academic achievement in the University of Calabar. The Independent t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that teachers' age predicted students' academic achievement.

Anakwue (2023) also examined teachers' age and academic achievement of secondary school students in Cross River State. One research question and one null hypothesis was used in the study. Literature was reviewed based on the variable under study. The ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 15,080 SS2 teachers, in all the 272 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A sample of 1, 029 teachers was used for the study. An instrument named "Teachers' Age and academic achievement questionnaire was` used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method at .79. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and One way Analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings from the results revealed that teachers' age had positive significant influence on students' academic achievement. It was therefore concluded that teachers' age influenced academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Cross River State.

Teachers' educational qualifications are among the resources that teachers bring with them to the classroom and are considered important in establishing who should be allowed to teach. Yakubu (2023) investigated the relationship between teachers' academic qualification and students' academic performance in Fine and Applied Arts at the Colleges of Education in Northeast Nigeria. The population of the study consist of all Lecturers and students of the Colleges of Education. The sample for the study was obtained using simple random sampling technique. The data was obtained by using a researcher developed structured questionnaire and students result for 2018/2019 Session. The data collected for the study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to answer the research questions. The research questions were answered using means, standard deviation and percentages. By establishing the link between teacher qualities and its effect on student's performance in Fine and Applied Arts, the research verified that teacher qualities specifically the independent variables such as teachers' qualification, teacher's experience, teachers' subject mastery, teachers' motivation and personality have impact on the dependent variable being students' academic performance as determined statistically. The important implications of the result which also have practical implications include guiding policies on hiring, teacher's retaliation strategy, and teacher distribution across schools. The result further showed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' educational qualification and academic achievement of students in Fine and Applied Arts at the Colleges of Education in Northeast Nigeria

In a related study, Owolahi and Adedayo (2022) studied teachers' qualification on the performance of Senior Secondary School students. Survey type of descriptive research design was adopted. The sample for the study consisted of 100 Senior Secondary Schools students in Ekiti State and the teachers that prepared and presented the students in each school for 2020//2021 West African School Certificate Examination. The year's result summary for each school was collated with the bio-data of their respective teachers. The data collated were analyzed using inferential statistics. The results revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. It also showed that students performed better when taught by professional teachers.

Agbor, Onnoghen and Obun (2023) investigated the relationship between teachers' qualification and students' academic performance in Environmental Education in University of Calabar. The research design adopted for the study was survey research design. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consisted of 672 undergraduate students from Department of Environmental Education. A sample of 134 students was used for the study, this constituted 20% of the population. A structured questionnaire tittle: Teachers' Qualification and Environmental Education Students'

Academic Performance Questionnaire (TQEESAPQ) was used for collection data. Pearson products moment correlation coefficient analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Findings in the study revealed that teachers with environmental education qualification positively relate with students' academic performance

In the past five years, there has been a remarkable surge in the number of candidates taking English language in external examinations. This is because students who failed the English language portion of the WASSCE in one sitting occasionally had to retake the examination with the National Examinations Council (NECO) in order to fulfil their requirements for advanced education (Ayodele, 2019). A cursory look at the percentage of students who achieved success in jEnglish Language in the WASSCE for the previous five years—2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 indicated 35.99%, 35.10%, 39.8%, 63%, and 60.39%, respectively. Even while the students' performance appears to have improved with time, the extent of their failure is disturbing for a nation like Nigeria, which uses education to achieve national development.

The necessary input variables are barely satisfied in Nigeria's educational system due to inflated student enrolment. Researchers have found that the situation of education in Edo State is appalling, with a dearth of competent, experienced, and specialised topic teachers due to the arbitrary implementation of teacher distribution exercises (Agbo-egwu, Adadu, Nwokolo-ojo & Enaboifo, 2022). Additionally, there have been sporadic concerns from administrators and teachers regarding their inability to carry out their jobs due to a shortage of fundamental school supplies and equipment. Students may be expected to bring tables, chairs, and other learning educational material resources from home to class in some instances. All of these might have effect on the system's graduate output quality since students might not perform up to par in external examinations because of inadequate preparation.

Researchers provided insight into a number of factors and variables that may be able to improve the low academic achievement in English language, including teachers' personal variables, school environmental variables, qualifications, school factors, and teachers' demographic variables, among others, in an effort to address the issue of the high failure rate in the subject. It's interesting to note that a large jnumber of studies on the variables influencing secondary school students' achievement have only focused on one or two aspects of teachers, such as their age, years of experience, and educational background (Owolahi & Adedayo, 2022; Raila & Sanders, 2022). Aside the strict focus on teacher factors, many of the studies focused on students' achievement using an average or aggregate score of a cross section of all subjects taken by the students. Hence, it has become difficult to isolate or identify the effect of some teacher factors on English Language among other core subjects. This jstudy seeks to fill this jgap.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:
1) There is no significant relationship between teachers' age and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State.
2) There is no significant relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State.

2. METHOD

The correlational research design was used in this study. The study covered 310 public Senior Secondary Schools. The population was made up of three hundred and twenty-

seven (327) English Language Teachers and thirty four thousand five hundred and thirty four (34,534) Senior Secondary School Students (SS II) in Edo State

A total sample of 27 public senior secondary schools, 27 English Language teachers and 270 students were drawn as sample for the study. The multistage sampling technique was adopted. First, Edo State is stratified into three Senatorial Districts (Edo Central, Edo North and Edo South) but made up of 18 local governments. Edo Central comprised five (5) local governments, Edo North comprised six (6) local governments while Edo South comprised seven (7) local governments. In each Senatorial district, three (3) local governments were deliberately selected for the study thereby making it nine (9) local governments selected for this study. From each local government, three (3) schools were deliberately selected which brought the number of schools to twenty-seven (27) schools. Similarly, the deliberate sampling technique was used to select an English language teacher from each selected school thereby making a sample size of twenty-seven (27) English language teachers selected for the study. In the same vain, ten (10) students (SSII) were selected from each of the selected schools thereby making it a total of 270 students. Hence, from the 27 schools selected, the researcher used the English Language teachers and ten (10) students each, making a total of 27 English Language teachers and 270 Senior Secondary School Students

The instrument was a Students' English Language Achievement Test (SELAT). The content of the instrument (SELAT) was adopted by drawing selected question items from past Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) questions in English Language (May/July 2018 and 2019). The instrument (SELAT) covered three aspects of English Language which include: Grammar, Test of Orals (Vowels/Consonant sounds) and Comprehension. SELAT contains a total of 40 questions which were carefully drawn by the researcher with the help of English Language Education specialists. The role of the English Language Education specialists was to support the researcher in being objective about selecting questions that assesses the three domains of learning – Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor skills. The score weight assigned to each question was 2points. Therefore, the maximum score attainable was eighty marks (that is, 2marks x 40questions). The overall score or grade of each student was rated as follows: 60-100%   (pass) – 4; 50-59% (Average) - 3; 40-49% (poor) -2; and 39% and below (Failed) -1. Table 1 showed the table of specification for Senior Secondary School (SSII) English Language Achievement Test.

The Kuder-Richardson formula (21) was used to examine the instrument. The sample of 20 students from two public senior high schools outside the research region (in Delta State) provided the accomplishment scores. After the testing a score of 0.73 was obtained. The acceptable internal consistency of the instruments was demonstrated by the reliability coefficients of both the TSVSQ and SELAT, which were greater than the decision-making threshold of 0.70, or 70% dependability index. During the administration of the instrument (SELAT), English Language teachers in each school were chosen to assist in the administration of the students' English Language Achievement Test (SELAT). Hypotheses 1 - 2 were tested using the Simple Linear Regression Analysis tested at 0.05 level of significance.

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3. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' age and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State.

Table 1: Analysis on Teachers' Age and Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State

R = .256*
R-square (R^2) = .066
Adjusted R-square =.062
$F_{(1,268)}$ = 18.844*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	β	Std. Error	Beta	t-val.	p-val.	Remark
(Constant)	2.034	.116		17.566	.000	Significant
Teachers' age	.247	.057	.256	4.341	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Academic Achievement in English Language
b. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers' Age
   t-values and f-value are statistically significant (p<0.05)

The result in Table 1 shows that the F-value of 18.44 which tested for the relationship of the predictor was significant (p<0.05). The researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers' age and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State. The r-value (R) of 0.256 showed that the strength and direction of the predictor (teachers' age) with the dependent variable (Students' Academic Achievement in English Language) was weak, positive but significant (0.00 ≥ R ≤ 0.39). The probability value of the t-value and β-coefficient (t= 4.341, β =.247, p<0.05) confirmed that teachers' age significantly correlated students' academic achievement in English Language.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State.

Table 2: Analysis on Teachers' Educational Qualification and Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State

| R = .376[a] |
| R-square (R^2) = .141 |
| Adjusted R-square =.138 |
| $F_{(1,268)}$ = 43.994* |

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-val.	p-val.	Remark
(Constant)	1.212	.198		6.108	.000	Significant
Teachers' Educational Qualification	.716	.108	.376	6.633	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Academic Achievement in English Language

b. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers' Educational Qualification

t-values and f-value are statistically significant (p<0.05)

The data in Table 2 shows that the F-value of 43.994 which tested for the relationship of the predictors was significant (p<0.05). The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State. The r-value (R) of 0.376 showed that the strength and direction of the correlate (teachers' educational qualification) with the other variable (students' academic achievement in English Language) was weak, positive but significant ($0.00 \geq R \leq 0.39$). The probability value of the t-value and β-coefficient (t= 6.633, β = .716, p<0.05) confirmed that teachers' educational qualification significantly correlated students' academic achievement in English Language.

4. DISCUSSION

The result showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' age and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State. The result is in line with that of Ugorji and Kagbaranen (2022) who found that; teachers' age enhanced students' achievement among Business Education students' learning outcomes in Rivers State Universities. The result agrees with that of Nja, Cornelius-Ukpepi and Ihejiamaizu (2022) who found that teachers' age predicted students' academic achievement. The result also corroborates with that of Anakwue (2023) who found that teachers' age influenced academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Cross River State.

The result showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' educational qualification and students' academic achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Edo State. The result agrees with that of Yakubu (2023) who found that that there is a signficnat relationship between teachers' educational qualification and academic achievement of students in Fine and Applied Arts at the Colleges of Education in Northeast Nigeria. The result is in line with that of Owolahi and Adedayo (2022) who found that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. It also showed that students performed better when taught by professional teachers. The result is in line with that of Agbor, Onnoghen and Obun (2023) who found that teachers with environmental education qualification positively relate with students' academic performance

5. CONCLUSION

From this study, it was concluded that there was a relationship between teachers' age and educational qualification and students' academic achievement in English Language in secondary schools in Edo State.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1) A mentorship platform should be created in the schools to enable young English Language teachers (below the age of 40years) learn the required pedagogy skills from the older teachers and long serving teachers who have acquired skills over the years.
2) Individuals with degree in English Language without qualification in education but have proceeded to build on their teaching skills and competences by taking further studies such as Post-graduate degree (PGDE) in education should be considered when recruiting teachers into the public secondary schools by the government
3) Principals should recognize the importance of school landscape and playground in schools and thereby endeavour to manage the ones available for improved learning of English language in schools.

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