

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS BUSINESS STUDIES STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Eunice N. Ajuluchukwu (Ph.D)
eunnyngo@yahoo.com

Patience U. Ushie (Mrs)
udidafabian@gmail.com

Department of Vocational Education
University of Calabar, Calabar



Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of teachers' characteristics on business studies students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Calabar south local government area of Cross River State. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of 867 JSS III students in public secondary schools Calabar-South. The sample for the study is 150 JSS111 students chosen from the eight schools selected for this study using the simple random sampling technique. The main instruments used for data collection were four point rating scale questionnaire titled 'Business Studies Teachers' characteristics questionnaire' and an achievement test on business studies. The questionnaire contained 20 items. While the achievement test contained 50 multiple choice questions with four options. The instruments were validated by three experts. The instruments had reliability coefficients of 0.77 and 0.80 for the questionnaire and business studies achievement test respectively. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. The result of the analysis showed among others that teacher professional qualifications and teachers teaching strategies influence business studies students' academic achievement. Based on the findings, the following recommendation was made among others; that teachers with professional qualifications should be employed to teach business studies in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area.

Keywords: Teachers' professional qualifications, teaching strategies, business studies, and academic achievement



Introduction

Quality education is needed for the development of any nation. Scholars have stressed the importance of education in all human endeavours. Education, as defined by Ajuluchukwu (2015) is a veritable instrument for change, growth and development; a societal tool for its survival, and the only means through which the elimination of illiteracy, ignorance, unemployment, poverty and

diseases can be facilitated among a people. Any programmed activity not focused on these is not education. Expectedly, educational attainments should produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable but who can also put knowledge into action for their own advantage as well as that of the society at large.

Ajuluchukwu. (2015) stated that the educative process will be incomplete if it fails to cover these three domains of knowledge: the

cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor domains. As such education offered in the school is expected to prepare individuals for lifelong experiences after schooling, since the school was primarily invented for educative purpose and its primary function is to educate. Borrowing from this statement from Somers, Cain and Jeffery cited in Ajuluchukwu, Elogbo, and Ettah (2021) there are ranges of circumstances or facts that contribute to the unique nature of large scale organizations so it is with teachers. Being a teacher is a very special gift, and those that have that gift make a positive, lasting impact on the lives of their students that can totally change the course of the students' lives.

Teachers possess a number of characteristics like professional qualifications, teaching strategies among others. Teachers' qualifications cover what qualifications teachers hold in their area of specialization and their ongoing professional development. According to Ochieng, Kiplagat, and Nyongesa, (2016) a qualified teacher is one who holds a teaching certificate earned from a reputable and accredited institution and is thus licensed to offer services in his/her area of specialization. Accordingly teacher qualification can be described in terms of the level of certification earned by the teachers including Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Professional Diploma in Education (PDE), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) among others. He/she should not only have knowledge, but also be able to teach what he/she knows. In the teaching of business studies in Nigeria there are levels of professional certifications like Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E.), Bachelor of Science (Education) B.Sc.(Ed.), Masters in Education (M.Ed.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Gardner (2019) observed that whether you're learning more about your subject area or exploring how to bring more technology into your classroom, continuing to expand your own knowledge is the key to expanding that of your students. That one of the key skills needed to be a good teacher is a dedication to continued education and a love for continued

learning. Teachers are therefore lifelong learners.

Hallinan (2011) posited that training and certification make a teacher more effective and active in the classroom. Accordingly Hallinan observed that trained teachers are the key demand in the education system as they give output to intelligent, knowledgeable and confident students who have capability to lead the country beyond the sky. Shuaibu, (2015) added that over time teachers, educators and researchers have deliberated on variables that influence academic performance of students in their studies at all levels of education. Shuaibu opined that the growing body of evidence for and against educational outputs suggested that a substantial portion of that difference is attributable to teachers' professional characteristics, specifically their academic qualification which is among the strongest determinant of differences in student's learning outcome, specifically their academic performance.

Akinsolu (2010) carried out a study in Nigeria using post-hoc dataset to examine the number of qualified teachers and its relationship to students' academic performance in public secondary schools. Findings of this study revealed that teachers' qualifications among others were significantly related to students' academic performance. Kasiisa and Tamale (2013) studied the impact of teacher's qualification on the performance of Primary pupils social studies in Eastern Uganda. The research findings revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications.

Abe (2014) studied the effect of teachers' qualification on students' performance in mathematics. Accordingly the result of the study showed that there is a significant difference in the performance of students taught by professional teachers and those taught by non-professional teachers.

Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013) study on teacher factors that influence students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya, revealed that

teacher professional qualifications was not significantly related to student academic achievement. The study concluded that teachers' professional qualifications did not have significant effect on academic performance of students in secondary schools in Nyandarua County. It is therefore not surprising that Ravkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) had stated that there was no evidence that a master's degree raises teacher effectiveness at secondary school level.

Teaching strategy as another characteristic of teachers studied in this research can be defined as the different available learning methods to enable teachers to develop the right plan to deal with the target group identified. Armstrong (2013) defined teaching strategy as methods used to help students learn the desired course contents and be able to develop achievable goals in the future.. Assessment of the learning capabilities of students provides a key pillar in developing a successful teaching strategy. Janssen (2014) posited that the purpose of an instructional strategy is to involve students, encourage, motivate and make them focus on learning. That wise selection and implementation of strategies make teachers' lesson more interesting, effective and comprehensible to students.

Rahaman (2010) opined that for teaching learning activities, to take place, teachers must adopt appropriate teaching strategies to achieve instructional objectives. That a professional teacher is versatile in nature and possesses variety of strategies and can effectively apply them according to required situations in his job and his students' show significant performance and progress in achievement tests. According to Smit (2014) every student has his own learning style, and he learns better in various circumstances with various styles and from various people. The teachers need to identify the students' learning styles and apply different teaching strategies according to their needs. The more teachers can involve all modalities and learning styles, the more chances they have of engaging learners in using their whole brain.

Abbott (2014) posited that teachers use differentiated instructional strategies in classroom for assisting the students of various abilities, so that they can better achieve educational objectives by taking all types of students side by side. Ijeh (2013) found out in a research that teachers who have used instructional skills and strategies enhance students critical thinking, stimulate new ideas and problem solving ability and are more successful teachers in terms of their students' academic achievement. Naz (2016) conducted a study and found out that teachers were competent in professional competence of instructional strategies. Naz concluded that teachers were competent in using different techniques in classroom for student's better comprehension and improved academic achievement. According to Terry (2019) an academic classroom is one where the primary goal is to promote proficiency of academic standards and academic achievement.

Academic achievement according to Steinmayr, Meibner, Weidinger and Wirthwein (2020) represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. Academic achievement or performance according to Ajuluchukwu and Olom (2022) is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. Academic achievement involves the students' classroom behavioural activities, classroom participation, attitude towards learning and teaching, learning capabilities, motivation, discipline and so on. This ability is evaluated by the marks and grades that the pupils attain in a test or examination which is done at the end of a topic, school term, and year or education cycle. The scores and grades that each pupil obtains measure the degree of the pupil's achievement. The quality of the grade and the number of candidates who pass in various grades determine the level of academic achievement in a given subject, business studies inclusive, class or institution in a given period in a

particular examination, be it internal or external.

Business studies as one of the subjects taught in junior secondary schools in Nigeria is defined by Ohaka (2017) as a subject that prepares and arms students with knowledge aimed at creating career awareness of saleable skills that will enable them to fit into the world of work with little or no difficulty. It is made up of five components units namely; Typewriting, Shorthand, Book-keeping, Commerce and Office practice. According to the Revised National Policy on Education (2004) in Ajuluchukwu (2015) Business studies is classified as practical subject. It combines both theory and practice which makes recipients later in life to act as both employees and employers of labour. Business studies serves as an introduction to the social science subjects in the senior secondary schools. It helps students to develop manipulative skills, inventiveness and respect for dignity of labour.

Despite all the initiatives undertaken by the government, non-governmental organizations and significant others to improve students' academic achievement in schools, poor or low level academic achievement by students still persist. The high failure rate in examinations such as West African School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) at both junior and senior levels, National Examination Council (NECO) and low quality students that are turned out are a thing of concern. What could be accountable for this ugly trend? Against this background, this study is conceived to determine the influence of teachers' characteristics on business studies students' academic achievement in secondary schools.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of teachers' characteristics on business studies students' academic achievement in the junior secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area. Specifically, the study is to find out how teachers'

1. Professional qualification influences business studies student's academic achievement.
2. Teaching strategy influences business studies students' academic achievement.

Hypotheses

To guide this study, were two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H01. There is no significant influence of teachers' professional qualifications on business studies students' academic achievement.

H02. There is no significant influence of teachers' teaching strategies on business studies students' academic achievement.

Method

The research design used in this study is the survey research design. This study was carried out in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. The population of the study comprised 867 JSS 111 students in the public secondary schools in Calabar-South. (Source: statistics unit of the State Secondary Education Board 2021). The sampling technique used for this study is the simple random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection are: a questionnaire and an achievement test on business studies constructed by the researchers. The questionnaire is titled 'business studies teachers' characteristics questionnaire'. The questionnaire comprised two sections A and B. Section A was design to collect demographic data. Section B has 20 items.

Section B was sub divided into two parts; Part I contains questions on how teachers' professional qualification influences students' academic performance. , Part II was used to collect information on how teachers' teaching strategy influences students' academic performance. Each item on the questionnaire required the respondents to express their opinion under Very great extent (VGE), Great extent (GE), Small extent (SE), and Very small extent (VSE). For the achievement test on business studies, this contained 50 multiple

choice questions with four options. On the four options given the students were to choose the correct answers.

The instruments were validated by three experts. The reliability of the instruments was established using test-retest method. The reliability coefficients were determined using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The instruments had reliability coefficients of 0.77 and 0.80 for the questionnaire and business studies achievement test respectively. The researchers personally visited the schools

and with the help of four research assistants personally selected and tutored by the researchers administered the instruments to the students. The data obtained from the administered instruments were analyzed using simple regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule for the test of hypotheses, was to reject a null hypothesis when the calculated-F value is greater than the critical- F value; otherwise the hypothesis was not rejected.

Result

HO 1: There is no significant influence of teachers' professional qualifications on business studies students' academic achievement

Table 3: Summary of Linear regression analysis on the influence of teachers' professional qualifications

Source of Variation	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	P-Level
Regression	361.533	1	361.533	65.472	.000 ^b
Residual	872.467	158	5.522		
Total	1234.000	159			

$R = .541^a$; $R^2 = .293$

The result displayed in Table 3 show that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an F-ratio of 65.472 which is statistically significant at 0.05 probability level. On the basis of this result the hypothesis is rejected. This means that teachers' professional qualification influences business studies students' academic achievement. The results also show a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .541 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .293. This implies that 29.3 % of the

variance in students' academic achievement was accounted for by the teachers' professional qualification. Thus 70.7 % of the variance in students' academic achievement may be attributed to the effect of other variables extraneous to the study.

H02: There is no significant influence of teachers' teaching strategies on business studies students' academic achievement.

Table 4: Summary of linear regression analysis on the influence of teachers' teaching strategies

Source of Variation	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	P-Level
Regression	388.571	1	388.571	72.619	000 ^b
Residual	845.429	158	5.351		
Total	1234.000	159			

R= .571^a; R²= .315

The result displayed in Table 4 show that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an F-ratio of 72.619 which is statistically significant at 0.05 probability level. On the basis of this result the hypothesis is rejected. This means that teachers' teaching strategies influence business studies students' academic achievement. The result also shows a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .571 and a coefficient of determination (R²) of .315. This implies that 31.5 % of the variance in students' academic achievement was accounted for by the teachers' teaching strategies. Thus 68.5 % of the variance in students' academic achievement may be attributed to the effect of other variables extraneous to the study.

Discussion of findings

Influence of teachers' professional qualifications on business studies students' academic achievement

The result of the first hypothesis tested revealed that there is a significant influence of teachers' professional qualification on business studies students' academic achievement. This finding is in line with the observation made by Gardner (2019). Gardner observed that one of the key skills needed to be a good teacher is a dedication to continued education and a love for continued learning. The finding finds relevance in what Hallinan (2011) posited that training and certification make a teacher more effective and active in the classroom. Accordingly Hallinan observed that trained teachers are the key demand in education system that give output to intelligent,

knowledgeable and confident students who have capability to lead the country beyond the sky.

Shuaibu, (2015) statement is important to the finding of this study. Shuaibu opined that the growing body of evidence for and against educational outputs suggests that schools can make a great difference in terms of students reading performance and a substantial portion of that difference is attributable to teachers' professional characteristics, specifically their academic qualification which is among the strongest determinant of differences in student's learning outcome, specifically their academic achievement. The statement by Ravkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) contradicts the finding of this study that there was no evidence that a master's degree raises teacher effectiveness at secondary school level.

This finding is in consonance with the finding of Akinsolu (2010) whose finding showed that teacher qualifications among others were significantly related to students' academic achievement. The finding of this study is in line with that of Kasiisa and Tamale (2013) that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. Also Abe (2014) study supports the finding of this study. Accordingly the result of the study showed that there is a significant difference in the performance of students taught by professional teachers and those taught by non-professional teachers.

Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013) study is at variance with the finding of this study. The

finding of their study revealed that teacher professional qualifications were not significantly related to students' academic achievement.

Influence of teachers' teaching strategies on business studies students' academic achievement

The finding of the second hypothesis tested revealed that there is a significant influence of teachers' teaching strategies on business studies students' academic achievement. This result is supported by what Janssen (2014) posited that the purpose of an instructional strategy is to involve students, encourage, motivate and make them focus on learning. That wise selection and implementation of strategies make teachers' lesson more interesting, effective and comprehensible to students. The statement by Rahaman (2010) gives relevance to the finding of this study. Rahaman opined that for teaching learning activities, to take place, teachers must adopt appropriate teaching strategies to achieve instructional objectives. That a professional teacher is versatile in nature and possesses variety of strategies and can effectively apply them according to required situations in his job and his students' show significant performance and progress in achievement tests.

What Abbott (2014) noted supports the finding of this study. Abbott posited that teachers use differentiated instructional strategies in classroom in assisting the students of various abilities, so that they can better achieve educational objectives by taking all types of students side by side. The finding of this study finds support in what Smit (2014) stated that every student has his own learning style, and learns better in various circumstances with various styles and from various people. The teachers need to identify the students' learning styles and apply different teaching strategies according to their needs. The more teachers can involve all modalities and learning styles, the more chances they have of engaging learners in using their whole brain.

The finding of this study is in accordance with that of Ijeh (2013). Ijeh found

out in a study that teachers who have used instructional skills and strategies enhance students critical thinking, stimulate new ideas and problem solving ability and are more successful teachers in terms of their students' academic achievement. Naz (2016) conducted a study and found out that teachers were competent in professional competence of instructional strategies. Naz concluded that teachers were competent in using different techniques in classroom for student's better comprehension.

Conclusion

Based on the finding from this study it is concluded that teachers' professional qualifications, and teachers' teaching strategies influence business studies students' academic achievement.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. Teachers with professional qualifications should be employed to teach in the secondary schools at all levels to promote students' academic achievement.
2. Holders of lesser qualifications such as Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) should be allowed to proceed in their education either through part-time or study leave.
3. Administrations of schools may take necessary steps to make it possible that all teachers have access to books and other helping materials to enhance their general knowledge about the subject and available teaching strategies. It will help teachers to enhance knowledge about their subject and teaching methods.

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