



A Critical Analysis of the Influence of Teachers' Quality on the Achievement of English Language Learners in Akwa Ibom State

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out how teachers' quality influence the academic achievement of the students in English language. Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in selected public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study comprised senior secondary two students in Uyo Local Government Area. There are 14 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area and the estimated population of SS2 students was 3162. Simple random sampling technique was used to select eight public secondary schools where 303 SS 2 students were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Students Factors Questionnaire (SFQ)". The instrument was vetted and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two lecturers who are experts in language education in the University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.97, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The data were analyzed using t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. From the findings and discussions of this study, it could be concluded that the higher the quality of a teacher (in respect of training, qualification, character and teaching method); the higher the academic achievement of a student. Also that teaching of English Language requires a competent, trained and qualified English teacher. Finally, by implication, a good professional teacher in English Language will produce sound and reliable students in English Language. But an unqualified and non-professional teacher in English will mar academic excellence in students of English Language. Therefore, one of the recommendations was to revise the existing teachers training programs with respect to admission criteria, curriculum, teaching practice and measurement and evaluation process. Proper training of teacher may strengthen the causal-relationship between the various qualities of teachers and academic achievement.

Keywords:

Teachers' quality, Students' Academic Achievement, English Language, Public Secondary Schools and Uyo Local Government Area.

Introduction

Many populous schools are poorly staffed. Some teaching staff are not trained and qualified to teach. This is a bane to academic achievement by students. Where the teacher lacks the teaching method to impart his lessons,

the students would not understand him. This will adversely affect the performance of students academically. Okoro (2002) submits that the methods that the teacher uses to make his students learn determine the amount of learning acquired at school by the students.

Etuk (1993) confirms that students in schools that are properly equipped in terms of classroom, library, laboratory and adequate staffing stand to benefit much more than those in schools that are ill or poorly equipped. Therefore, a child who achieves much in any subject such as English Language requires conducive and stimulating environment to match with his inborn trait to elicit the expected result in academic achievement.

Teachers clearly play an important role in shaping the future of individuals as well as of entire generations and in recent years, new research has demonstrated the dramatic effect that teachers can have on the outcomes of students from all academic and social backgrounds. If a teacher gets a suitable salary, the more efficiently he may teach his students by using his abilities, competencies and skills. Therefore, teacher salary may predetermine student achievement. In many developing countries, salary levels do not cover the basic living costs while this is a main factor in the teacher motivation crisis (UNESCO, 2008). Teacher salary is the most important predictor of student achievement. It has a particular importance in uplifting the other aspects of teacher quality. Additionally, academic qualification is also a very important quality of a teacher. Academically qualified teachers have more authentic knowledge about the relevant subject than the academically less qualified teacher has.

Statement of the Problem

Concern over the poor quality output of the English language student seems to be widespread in Nigeria. There appears to be a public outrage regarding the subpar English language student production. This poor performance has been accredited to quality teachers in many aspects. The West African School Certificate English Language Examination report is where the aforementioned data is taken from. Unfortunately, society spreads the virus of low student performance to teachers. The student himself may be the actual cause for his poor proficiency in the English language. But factually, the low performance of senior

secondary school pupils in Nigeria, and specifically Akwa Ibom State, is absolutely not impressing. In this case, this study is carried out to conclude if quality of teachers really affects the performance of students in English language.

Objectives of The Study

1. To investigate the influence of teachers' quality on the achievement of a learner in English.

Research Questions

1. Is there any relationship between the quality of teaching staff and the academic achievement of a student in English Language?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between the quality of teaching staff and academic achievement of students in English Language.

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on the students' factors and academic achievement in English. The theory of achievement motivation is employed in pursuance of the study. The theory was formulated by David McClelland in 1965. A student is faced with innate and external factors in his academic performance.

Achievement motivation is otherwise called affective arousal theory. The theory is based on the belief that motives develop as a result of affective arousal. That implies that emotion motivates behavior or accompanies it. The proponents of the theory maintain that emotional consequences are inherent traits of motivated behavior.

David McClelland (1965) postulates that motives are learned through the pairing of cues and affective experiences. The motive to achieve success varies from individual to individual. The associates of McClelland described it to be a persistent attempt to achieve what is thought to be success (Gibson, 1976).

Achievement motive results in the actual achievement as a reward. It is the opinion of McClelland that an individual could be encouraged to understand that a high level motivation to achieve results leads to a high

sense of self-satisfaction as the goal is attained. The scholar reiterates that the most important determinant of achievement motivation is realized in childrearing practices. This notion is based on Freudian proposition that the unconscious is greatly influenced by parents-child interactions especially during the early psycho-sexual development. The study concludes that if children are assessed as having high achievement motivation, they are strongly rewarded by praises for their good performance.

John Atkinson (1964) exposes further on McClelland's theory of motivation. He specifies mathematical relationship between various determinants of achievement behaviour. He also classifies human beings into achievement oriented and failure-oriented individuals. Achievement oriented people prefer moderately difficult tasks whereas failure oriented people prefer easier tasks as more appropriate motivators.

According to Atkinson, to achieve a goal is based on the need for achievement or the motive for success. The need for achievement implies a pattern of standard set out to attain excellence. The value of motive of success is constant in a person and across situations. This is prevalent when the condition makes the person feel responsible for the result experienced rather than environmental factors. But incentive value of success refers to the joy a person receives in achieving a goal.

The incentive value of success depends on an individual level of aspiration. That individual level of aspiration equally depends on an individual's expectation of future success or failure. This idea is based on a person's past performance and decision to perform better in future task. Individuals with high levels of aspiration possess a strong desire for achievement. They strive to perform better than their present level of performance. But those who have low level of aspiration tend to recount stories of failures.

The implication of the theory of motivation is that it stimulates incentive on students. It also spurs up their aspiration for a better performance. But a student with low level

of aspiration and motivation performs below expectation and is bound to fail.

Conceptual Review

Quality of teaching staff and academic achievement of a student

The quality of a teacher determines the academic performance of a student in English Language. An English teacher is very important in teaching and learning activity. A teacher guides and stimulates the learning exercise. He translates the curriculum through his learning experience to his students. Therefore, teaching of English Language requires a competent, trained and qualified English teacher. Jegede (1984) notes that, poor teaching by unqualified teachers leads to poor achievement in any subject in school at any level. But where there are trained and qualified English teachers they would be able to impart effectively to their students. Onwioduokit (1998) shows in his findings that, a significant relationship exists between the availability of qualified teacher and students' achievement. The relationship could be attributed to the fact that with available facilities, qualified teachers in English Language could teach well and successfully. Affah (2005) observes that where an English teacher is trained and qualified, he/she will deliver his/her instructional materials remarkably well. The students will love him/her and as a result it will spur up positive academic performance in students. But if the teacher is untrained and non-professional, he/she cannot create worthwhile impact on students.

By implication, a good professional teacher in English Language will produce sound and reliable students in English Language. But an unqualified and non-professional teacher in English will mar academic excellence in students of English Language. That is why training is very important in teaching English. Only qualified teachers of English Language should be allowed to handle English classes. Teaching is not a lazy man's job. It requires knowledge and skills. Fagbamiye (1987) comments that qualified teachers do make a difference to students' learning compared to less qualified teachers. Okoro (2002) confirms the above submission by Fagbamiye that

normally, the teacher's level of knowledge depends on his possession of the relevant qualification. All things being equal, a teacher who is more qualified and knowledgeable in a subject area will help his students/pupils to learn better than the teacher who is less qualified and knowledgeable in the subject. The intellectual competence of the teacher is, therefore, a primary asset in the quality of learning the students can acquire at school. A teacher's interest, attitude, value and character can influence a students' performance. When a teacher is interested in and committed to his duty, a student's potentials and interests would be stimulated. This type of cordiality, seriousness and concern will bring about rewarding academic achievement in a student. Okoro (2002) explains that if a teacher has no interest in teaching or in his students, he can hardly put in his best in his job.

Affah (2005) explains that the teachers' trait and attitudes towards students and teaching always influence students' academic performance. A teacher who is approachable, mild and considerate will win students' admiration and closeness. Such sound rapport between a teacher and students will enhance students' academic performance. He comments further that when a teacher is arrogant, high handed, inconsiderate and indifferent to students' academic progress, such behaviours will deter students' closeness to him. The result will be poor academic achievements by students. Ajayi (1987) claims that, the teacher's interests, attitudes and values, to a very great extent, determines his teaching effectiveness.

Teaching method employed by a teacher can influence students' academic achievement. Appropriate method used in a given situation will enhance students' understanding of lesson. But wrong approach to the subject matter can mar effective teaching-learning activity. Okoro (2002) explains that there may be variations in the ages of the learners, and/or differences in the nature of the topics to be learned. When a teacher applies the teaching method appropriate to a given situation, his students learn better than when he applies the one that is inappropriate. A sound relationship between the teacher and the students make teaching

learning activity exciting, interesting and rewarding. Ikpe (2005) states that, student see their teachers as a friend, guide, counselor, knowledgeable and their superior. Without force, they pay attention and participate in the activities of the class. It is therefore good for a classroom teacher to know the names of the students, and call them by their names to answer already posed questions in the class. By so doing the ego of the students is boosted and they have a sense of belonging and security.

Methodology

Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in selected public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study comprised senior secondary two students in Uyo Local Government Area. There are 14 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area and the estimated population of SS2 students was 3162. Simple random sampling technique was used to select eight public secondary schools where 303 SS 2 students were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Students Factors Questionnaire (SFQ)". The instrument was vetted and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two lecturers who are experts in language education in the University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.97, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The data were analyzed using t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between quality of teaching staff and students' academic achievement in English Language.

Pearson product correlation was used to test the hypothesis, and summary data shown in table 1.

Table 1: Data for computing r for relationship between the quality of teaching staff and academic achievement.

V ariables	Σ	Σ^2	Σxy	df	r	Sig of r
Quality of teaching staff (X)	60 97	105 174 5				Signif icant
			221 331	3 0	.84 27	
Academi c achieve ment (Y)	10 01 8	317 622 1				

***Significant P** < **0.88**
Critical r = **0.88**
df = **301**

Since the computed r (.8472) was greater than the critical r (.088) at df of 301 and .05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, quality of teaching staff significantly relates to academic achievement.

Discussion of the Findings

Hypothesis one is indicated on table 1. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the quality of teaching staff and academic achievement of a student in English Language. The result is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings prove that there is significant relationship between the quality of teaching staff and academic achievement of a student in English Language. The result confirms earlier researches on the quality of teachers and the academic achievement of students. Fagbamiye (1987) states that qualified teachers do make a difference on students’ learning compared to less qualified teachers. Okoro (2002) equally reiterates that a teacher who is more qualified and knowledgeable in a subject area will help his students/pupils to learn better than the teacher who is less qualified and knowledgeable in the subject. The intellectual competence of the teacher is, therefore, a primary asset in the

quality of learning the students can acquire at school.

Conclusion

From the findings and discussions of this study, it could be concluded that the higher the quality of a teacher (in respect of training, qualification, character and teaching method); the higher the academic achievement of a student. Also that teaching of English Language requires a competent, trained and qualified English teacher. The relationship could be attributed to the fact that with available facilities, qualified teachers in English Language could teach well and successfully. Finally, by implication, a good professional teacher in English Language will produce sound and reliable students in English Language. But an unqualified and non-professional teacher in English will mar academic excellence in students of English Language.

Recommendations

1. Therefore it is strongly recommended to revise the existing teachers training programs with respect to admission criteria, curriculum, teaching practice and measurement and evaluation process. Proper training of teacher may strengthen the causal-relationship between the various qualities of teachers and academic achievement.
2. Sufficiently trained, qualified, well-behaved and God fearing English teachers should be allowed to teach English language to enhance excellent performance of students in the subject.

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