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TEACHER'S WORK EXPERIENCE AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT INENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between teaching methods and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State. One research questions guided the study and one corresponding null hypotheses was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlational research design. The target population comprised 23,040 SS II students across 267 public secondary schools in the 2024/2025 academic session. A sample of 600 students was selected using Stratified and Simple Random Sampling Techniques. The research instrument, Teacher's Work Experience and Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (TWEAQ), were developed by the researcher and validated by three experts in English studies and Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha, yielding an overall coefficient of 0.78, indicating high internal consistency. A total of 571 questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for research questions and test of significance of Pearson r for hypothesis testing. Findings showed a significant relationship between teachers' work experience and student sperformance. Based on these findings, the study recommended that teacher recruitment and promotion policies should value not only years of experience but also evidence of pedagogical effectiveness and innovation in classroom practice. This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence linking teacher experience to students' academic achievement in English language within the Nigerian context. It adds a context-specific understanding of how instructional strategies can influence language learning outcomes in Anambra State, thus supporting data-driven decision-making in curriculum and teacher development.

Keywords: Teacher's Work Experience, Students' Academic Achievement and English Language.

Introduction

In any educational system, the learners are considered as the main element in educational design and all goals and educational programs are designed with the aim of making desirable changes in them. Development in any society stems from the efficient and correct education system. Learning is one of the most important topics in the field of educational systems that has been the subject of many researches. Education as a tool for building a united independent, wealthy and egalitarian society that can maintain its tradition and values is a social process facilitated through the instrumentality of the school (Kaerner et al., 2020). The Nigerian educational system is categorized into pre-primary schools, primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary education. Secondary school education is a form of education students attain after primary education and before tertiary education. The goal of secondary school education is to prepare students for useful living within the society and higher education National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013) and make sure that students' academic achievement improves in every internal and external examinations. Academic achievement of public secondary school students always remains a matter of great concern for the school and family. Parents and teachers are essential source in developing suitable learning attitude among students. In Nigeria, Popoola et al (2021) maintained that the low academic achievement of students in the secondary education has been of concern to many parents, teachers, counsellors, and educational administrators. Poor academic achievement has been attributed to lack of adequate teaching facilities, unqualified teachers, psychological adjustment problems such as anxiety, stress, and depression, and students' lack of financial support such as scholarships, bursary awards, and loans (Popoola el at., 2021).

Academic achievement is defined as the measurement of students' success across the subjects taught which displays the learning outcomes accessed through performance, classroom test, assignment, output reports, research and major examinations. Achievement refers to the completion and attainment of a certain level that a student can achieve after a series of education or training, while performance refers to the result of an examination in a subject or a whole course (Jega & bashir, 2018). However, some scholars consider achievement to be equivalent to grades, and it is on the basis of the different understandings of achievement and grades that scholars have differed in their definitions of academic achievement (Brookhart et al., 2016). Academic achievement refers to a student's success in meeting short or long-term goals in education. Liu et al., (2019) defined academic achievement as a definition of a learner's the performance of teaching and learning assessments, such as final examination results, achieved by the person in school. Okegbile in Nsini and Emeya (2017), stated that academic achievement is terminology used while determining learner's success in formal education, which is measured through factors exerting influence essentially. Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important (Jega &bashir, 2018). The specified standard is usually called pass mark, and the pass mark is a score above average in which students are considered having passed and below which students are considered having failed.

Academic achievement 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 (Liu et al., 2019). It is the knowledge attained or skills developed in school. It is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. The field of academic achievement covers a wide variety of educational outcomes that depends on the indicators used to measure it. Liu et al ,stated that there are very general indicators of academic achievement such as procedural and declarative knowledge acquired in an educational system, more curricular-based criteria such as grades or performance on an educational achievement test, and cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as educational degrees and certificates. In almost all societies, either developed, or developmental, academic achievement plays a vital role in every person's life. In Anambra state, academic achievement for all educational systems is going through a general measure, that is, grades or performance (e.g. Grade Point Average) performed on several test or examinations.

Achievement in English language may inextricably linked to future career opportunities, plays an important role in the level of the students general learning acquisitions, as well as a reliable criterion to divide students into scientific or literary streams. Achievement in English language can be a gate way to well rewarded and high-status positions; the functional role of English language to Science and Technology is so multifaceted and multifarious that no area of science, technology and business enterprise escapes its application (Jega & bashir, 2018). The researcher sees academic achievement as student's or individual's success in meeting academic goals, standards, and expectations. Erik et al., (2019), posited that academic achievement can be influenced by factors that come from within students and teachers such as student engagement, school pant, conducive environment, teaching method of the teacher, teachers' competence, teachers' interpersonal skills and teacher work experience etc. The research tends to investigate teaching experience and students' academic achievement.

Teacher work experience is imperative in teaching. Experience is a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing through something. Paula (2017) stated that work experience is an event or series of events participated in or lived through. Akpan (2016) defined work experience as a process of gaining knowledge or skill. Therefore, work experience is the professional growth that takes place in an individual as a result of continued stay, training and retraining on the job and other related processes. Furthermore, work experience is regarded as the number of years a teacher has stayed in the job. Some teachers are highly experienced while others are averagely experienced. The less experienced teachers are likely to have difficulty exploring English language concepts than highly experienced ones. This may be because these teachers might be very young and may not possess enough knowledge about English concepts. Sometimes they are faced with social, economic, cultural and political problems (Krueger, 2019). It may be because the older on the work, the better a teacher improves on their teaching skills and the ability to know how to manage challenges in the classroom for effective teaching of English Language.

Learners not only respond by giving useful information, but they also actively use what they know to explore, negotiate, interpret. Recent observations have shown that the state of school and teaching methods in our various schools are poor and quite insignificant that if nothing is done to rectify and improve the situation, Nigeria education system may pose a more threat ahead and may collapse in the near future with the gradual increasing demand not being met by supply of higher education. It also becomes paramount to update and intensify an academic research that could showcase the method; the various forms of teaching methods; and to show their influence to properly call for improvement or provision of the most viable teaching method for better teaching. It is in pursuant of this that this research is exhumed to assess teaching methods used by English language teachers in teaching of English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It is against this backdrop that this study tends to fulfill.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, observations and studies have shown that students' academic achievement in English Language in internal and external examinations such as WASSCE and NECO (SSCE) in Nigeria generally which Anambra State is not an exemption have been persistently low. Low academic achievement in English Language in particular among secondary school students in Anambra State has posed concern to parents, teachers, educational administrators and government for years. One suspects that this low academic achievement in English Language may be attributed to inadequate of teachers to employ good teaching methods among others. It may be that teachers are not properly using teaching methods in their classroom as expected which might be the cause of students' poor academic achievement in both internal and external examination in mathematics. This trend has been on the increase on daily basis. Its prevalence has attracted the concern of many researchers has it has become worrisome.

It is unfortunate however that many teachers do not realize that their methods and approach coupled with their relationship or interaction with students in the classroom have a far reaching implication on the academic achievements of their students. The end result of this if not given attention could be half-baked secondary school graduates that may not be able to further their educational pursuit, or even be employable because they could lack the requisite knowledge and skill to function in the labor market. Therefore, because of the low academic achievement of learners most especially in external examinations in English Language, many scholars tend to shift the problem to inadequate finance from the government. However, these may not be the major reasons why students fail both internal and external examinations in English Language. Students' poor achievement might be an indication of teachers' inadequacy of effective teaching methods for which they require development training. It is generally believed that if English language students are properly taught the requisite skills before leaving schools, they should certainly acquire the desired job skills necessary for paid or self- employment.

Moreover, unemployment and poverty will be eradicated in our society. The problem of this study therefore, is to assess teachers' work experience as correlates of students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between work experience as correlates of students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specially the study sought to;

1. verify the relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English Language.

Research Question

One research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design for this study. The area of the study is Anambra state. There six educational zone in Anambra State which are Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha. The population of the study comprised 23,040 Senior Secondary SS 1I students as respondents. The sample size is 600 SS11 students drawn using Stratified and Simple random sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a self-structured questionnaire, titled ""Teachers Work Experience Questionnaire (TWEQ) and Academic Achievement of SSII students in English Language". The instrument has two section A-C. Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents, while section B is has one clusters with 10 items, section C is Academic Achievement of SSII students in English Language collected from the classes of the sampled teachers. The instrument has four point scale response options with response format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) and numerical value of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts two from English studies and one from Educational Measurement and Evaluation, all from Department of Educational Foundations,

Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents with the help of five research assistants. A total number of 571were retrieved which represented (94%) return rate and (6%) loss. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula and average coefficient values of 0.74 for teachers work experience are considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze Teaching Methods and Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. In answering the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship were interpreted using the interpretation of correlation coefficient by Downie and Heath cited in Nworgu (2015) as shown: 0.80 and above for very high, 0.80 to below 0.60 for high, 0.40 to 0..60 for medium, 0.20 to 0.40 for low and 0.00 to 0.02 for very low respectively. The null hypotheses was tested using simple regression at 0.05 level of significance and the decision rule was rejection of null hypothesis wherever P value was less than or equals 0.05 (P≤.05) and non-rejection of P value wherever P value is greater than 0.05 (P>.05).

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis on the Relationship between Teachers' Work Experience and Students' Academic Achievement in English Language

Variable		**Teachers' Work Experience**	**Students' Academic Achievement**	**Remark**
Teachers' Work Experience	Pearson Correlation	1.00	0.46**	Moderate Positive relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	–	0.010	
	N	571	571	
Students' Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.46**	1.00	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.010	–	

N	571	571

****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

The result of the test of significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 9 above showed a significant relationship between discussion method and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State. With r = 0.52, n = 571, and p-value = 0.00. Since p-value (0.00) is less than 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis and does not reject the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between discussion method and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: H_0=There is no significant relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: Test of significance of correlation between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language.

Variable		**Teachers' Work Experience**	**Students' Academic Achievement**	**Remark/ Decision**
Teachers' Work Experience	Pearson Correlation	1.00	0.46**	Significant/ Reject H_0
	Sig. (2-tailed)	–	0.010	
	N	571	571	
Students' Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	0.46**	1.00	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.010	–	
	N	571	571	

****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

The result of the test of significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 2 above showed a significant relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State. With r = 0.46, n = 571, and p-value = 0.010. Since p-value (0.010) is less than 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis and does not reject the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion

The findings on the relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of r = 0.46 and p < 0.05. This indicates that students taught by more experienced teachers tend to perform better academically in English, suggesting that teaching experience contributes meaningfully to learning outcomes. Teaching experience typically enhances teachers' subject mastery, classroom management skills, and ability to respond to diverse student needs. With time, teachers also develop pedagogical intuition the ability to adjust instructional strategies in real-time, scaffold learning effectively, and manage classroom dynamicsall of which are essential for success in language instruction. These findings align with the teacher effectiveness theory, which emphasizes that teacher quality particularly as shaped by years of professional practice is a key determinant of student achievement. Students' responses from Cluster F supported this interpretation. Many described experienced teachers as more organized, confident, and skilled in presenting difficult content clearly. Students also noted that experienced teachers were better able to identify when they were struggling, offer relevant examples, and maintain classroom discipline attributes that directly influence academic success.

This result is consistent with the findings of Ifeakor and Akinmade (2017), who reported that students taught by teachers with over ten years of experience achieved significantly higher scores in English comprehension and writing tasks. Similarly, Okonkwo (2021) found that experienced teachers demonstrated greater flexibility and deeper content mastery, allowing them to adjust teaching methods to better meet the needs of their students. Both studies reported statistically significant results ($p < 0.05$), reinforcing the relevance of experience in shaping academic outcomes just as observed in the current study.However, the literature also offers a cautionary note. Olatunji (2015) argued that experience alone is not a guarantee of effectiveness. In his study, teachers who failed to update their instructional methods or resisted new pedagogical innovations sometimes underperformed, even when they had many years in the classroom. In contrast, less experienced teachers who embraced reflective practice and continuous learning often achieved stronger student results. This suggests that the impact of experience is shaped not only by duration, but by quality and

adaptability. In the context of public secondary schools in Anambra State, the findings of this study confirm that teacher experience remains an important and statistically significant predictor of student success in English language. However, it also underscores the need to pair experience with ongoing professional development to ensure that long-serving teachers continue to apply effective, up-to-date instructional strategies. Such an approach would maximize the potential of experienced educators to drive student achievement in the evolving landscape of English language education.

Conclusion

Based the findings, the study concluded that teachers work experience play a vital role in determining students' academic achievement, especially in language-based subjects such as English. The findings of the study indicate that there exist a moderate positive and significant relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic achievement in English language. This means that experienced teachers tend to achieve better students' academic outcomes because they have acquired better knowledge of the subject, classroom management skills, instructional strategies and understanding of students' learning needs over the years.

Recommendations

The study, among others, recommends that:

1. Teacher recruitment and promotion policies should be based value not only on years of experience but also evidence of pedagogical effectiveness and innovation in classroom practice.

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