Teachers' Attributes as Correlates of Students' Academic Performance in Geography in the Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study was set to examine teachers' attributes as correlates of students' academic performance in Geography in the Secondary Schools in Ondo State. Descriptive method was adopted. Questionnaires were administered on Geography teachers' and Heads of Departments in order to obtain data about teachers' attributes while the performance of their students in Geography was obtain from 2008 SSCE result of the 30 randomly sampled schools. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed positive relationship between teachers' attributes and students academic performance in Geography. There were significant relationships between teachers attributes measured in term of knowledge of subject matter, communication ability, interest in the job and emotional stability and students' academic performance. Although, there was a weak but positive relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Geography, this relationship was not found to be significant. Recommendations for the employment of teachers with desirable attributes were made.

Key words: Teachers attributes, students performance, senior school, examination result, secondary schools, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, most educationists and the general public are becoming worried about poor academic performance of students in secondary schools internal and external examinations. Researches conducted by Bangbade (2004), Ogunyamodi (2001) and Elochukwu (2001) revealed that the school, parents, teacher and other factors are responsible for the poor academic performance of students.

The success of any teaching and learning process which invariably influences students' academic performance depend on how effective and efficient the teachers are. Teachers who are the personnel in-charge of teaching and implementing educational policies designed to attain educational goals cannot be neglected, if the educational goals and in fact, national development goals are to be attained. No matter how good an educational policy may be on paper, it may fail to accomplish its desired goals if not properly implemented by teachers who are educational policy implementers. Because of the central position teachers occupy in influencing academic performance of students, this study was embarked upon to prove empirically the likely students' impact of teachers' attributes on the secondary school student academic performance in Geography in Ondo State, Nigeria.

At this juncture, it is noted that the success of the students in any examination depends largely on qualified and dedicated teachers. Oshodi (1998), Duyilemi and Duyilemi (2002) rehiterated that students in any country cannot perform beyond the quality of the teachers. In his own contribution, Bangbade (2004) found out that teachers attributes have significant relationship with students' academic performance. According to him such attributes include: teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, communication ability, emotional stability, good human relationship and interest in the job.

He concluded that students whose teachers lack the knowledge of the subject matter, who have poor communication ability, poor emotional stability and lack interest in the job do not perform like others whose teachers possess these attributes. Adeyemo (1985), Oshodi (1998) and Oyebanji (1993), opined that apart from

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the basic entry qualifications teachers possess, other attributes greatly influence their efficiency and effectiveness which invariably influences students' academic performance. However, in his study, revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' attributes in the areas of interest in the job, knowledge of subject matter, ability to communicate effectively and students academic performance in the secondary schools in Oyo State. He however found out also that there was no significant relationship between teachers' attributes in the areas of human relationship, emotional stability and students' academic performance. He concluded that love for the job should be seen as the most important attribute of a good teacher followed by the knowledge of the subject matter. He explained further that by loving His/her job, he/she will strive for academic excellence.

At the secondary school level in particular, the teacher must love teaching for its own sake. The love for the job will influence him/her to do all that is right at the expected time which invariably enhances students' academic performance.

A teacher's knowledge of the subject matter, pupils and methodology and techniques of imparting knowledge are great attribute which have significant effects on the students' academic performance. Rena (2000) explained further that for students to perform well in any examination one of the prerequisites is that their teachers must know them and have profound knowledge of their state of physical, intellectual and psychological readiness. Teachers must be well versed in the content of the subject matter he/she is teaching. He must know the appropriate method to adopt in different situations.

In his study on teachers' attributes in secondary schools in Nigeria as hindrance to educational development, Elochukwu (2001) revealed that there was a significant relationship between teaches' ability to communicate effectively and students' academic performance in the secondary schools. He explained that teaching and learning processes deal with dissemination of ideas, skills, knowledge, values and attitude from the teachers to the students. He concluded that teachers' ability to communicate effectively determines how much the students acquire from him/her which invariably influences their performance each time they are tested in such aspects. One can observe from this that, to be able to teach effectively, a teacher must be able to communicate his/her ideas effectively and to achieve this; the message must be clear and precise.

Adaranijo found out that the attributes of teachers that have great influence on students' academic performance include adequate training in any of the teacher training institutions, knowledge of the subject matter, physically and mentally healthy, interest in the job, good sense of humour, emotional stability, ability to communicate effectively, open mindedness, good human relationship and good appearance. He explained that most teachers in the secondary schools today lack majority of these attributes or qualities. In a related development, the study of Afolabi (2001) on preparation of teachers for effective implementation of secondary school curriculum in Ondo State revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' attributes and their participation in school development programmes and curriculum implementation. He concluded, based on has findings that those to be appointed as teachers in the secondary schools should be thoroughly screened so that those who have relative ideal attributes required of a good teacher are employed so that the educational goals and that of the national development can be attained without much waste of time, fund and human labour.

Salau in his study, the Impact of Teachers' Attributes on Students; Academic Performance in Agricultural Science in Secondary Schools in Oyo State, revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter, interest in the job, ability to communicate effectively and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science in Secondary Schools in Oyo State. His study equally revealed that there was no significant relationship between teaches' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science in the Secondary Schools.

In his effort to find out factors responsible for poor students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kogi State, Babajide found out that the poor quality of teachers in the secondary schools in the state have a negative influence on the students' academic performance in both internal and external examinations. He explained further that the subject mater, communication ability, interest in the job and emotional stability have significant influence on the academic performance of students in secondary schools. He concluded that one of the measures to adopt in the state to improve students' academic performance was re-orientation of teachers, organizing in-service training for them and thorough and adequate screening of teachers to be recruited so that the best candidates are appointed.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to examine teachers' attributes as correlates of secondary school students' academic performance in Geography in Ondo state. The study would also ascertain the relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, interest in the job, emotional stability, communication ability, physical appearance and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State.

Research questions: The following general questions were raised in the study: Is there any relationship between teachers' attributes and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State? Based on the above research question, corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant relationship between teachers' attributes and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State
- There is no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State
- There is no significant relationship between teachers' interest in the job and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State
- There is no significant relationship between teachers' interest in the job and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State
- There is no significant relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State
- There is no significant relationship between teachers' emotional stability and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive survey method. This design was considered suitable for this study because it enables the researcher the opportunity of obtaining the opinion of sample of the population so as to infer the opinion of the entire population. The population compassed of Geography teachers and Geography students in the Senior Secondary Schools that sat for the 2008 Senior Secondary School Certificate examination in all public secondary schools in Ondo State.

The sample was make of 30 public secondary schools, 69 Geography teachers and 2,198 Senior Secondary School 3 (SSS 3) Geography Students that participated in Senior School Certificate Examination in 2008 in thirty selected secondary schools in Ondo State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 public secondary schools from each of the three senatorial districts in Ondo State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 Heads of the Department of Arts and social Sciences where Geography belongs, who are responsible for rating, the Geography teachers as contained in the questionnaire.

A questionnaire titled Teachers' Attributes and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (TASAPQ) was developed for this study. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; sections A and B. Section A was on the general information about the respondents such as name of school, sex, years of experience, teaching subject and qualifications. Section B was on the attribute of the teachers which the respondents will rate according to how they influence students' academic performance in Geography in their various schools. The attributes are knowledge of subject matter, communication ability, interest in the job, physical appearance, emotional stability, good sense of humour, open mindedness, good human relationship, mental and physical health. The instrument was validated by two experts in test and measurement to ascertain its face and content validity for use in data collection. The reliability co-efficient was done by comparing the response of the pilot sample (five respondents) in the administration of the instrument after two weeks of previous administration. The calculation was done using Pearson Product Moment. A correlation co-efficient (r) of 0.86 was obtain. The instrument was adjudged as reliable.

Data collection: Some of the questionnaires were administered personally while others were administered through the assistance of two of my colleagues. Thirty respondents completed the questionnaires properly. This amounts to 100% return rate. The scores of students in Geography was obtained personally from each school heads.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis for this study was done with reference to the research questions and hypotheses already formulated. Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient was used to answer the questions and test the hypotheses respectively. The null hypotheses was rejected or upheld at 0.05 level of significance. The data were presented thus:

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' attributes and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary schools in Ondo State.

From Table 1, r-calculated value is (0.368). This indicates that teachers attributes correlates positively with students performance in Geography. With the r-table of (0.323) which is smaller than the r-calculated value, the null hypotheses is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between teachers' attributes and secondary school students academic performance. In another words, students' performance is influenced by teachers' attributes.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary Schools in Ondo State.

Result from Table 2 shows the r-calculated value of (0.543), meaning that a moderate but positive relationship exists between knowledge of subject matter and students' performance in Geography. Furthermore, this r-calculated value exceeds the r-table value of (0.323) which implies that there is a significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance. In an ordinary language, students' performance is enhanced by teachers' knowledge of his subject matter.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between teachers' communication ability and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary in Ondo State. As shown in Table 3, r-calculated value is 0.748. This indicates that there is a high and positive relationship between teachers communication ability and students performance. However, the r-table is 0.323 which is smaller than the r-calculated value. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant relationship between teachers' communication ability and students' academic performance.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between teachers' interest in job and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary schools in Ondo State.

Table 4 shows the r-calculated value is 0.498. This shows a weak but positive relationship. With a r-table of 0.323, which is smaller than the r-calculated table, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between teachers' interest in the job and students' academic performance. Students' perform better when teachers have interest in their job.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary schools in Ondo State.

Table 1: Teachers' Attributes and students' academic performance in geography

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-table
Teachers' attributes	30	18.06	1.36	0.368	0.323
Students' academic performance	30	51.28	1.86		

Critical value 0.05 level of significance

Table 2: Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic performance in geography

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-table
Knowledge of subject matter	30	9.44	0.88	0.543	0.323
Academic performance	30	51.28	1.86		

Critical value 0.05 level of significance

Table 3: Teachers' communication ability and students' academic academic performance in geography

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-table
Communication ability	30	36.04	1.19	0.748	0.323
Academic performance	30	51.28	1.86		

Critical value 0.05 level of significance

Table 4: Teachers' interest in the job and students' academic performance in geography

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-table
Interest in the job	30	15.46	0.96	0.498	0.323
Academic performance	30	51.28	1.86		

Critical value 0.05 level of significance

Table 5: Teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in geography

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r-cal	r-table
Physical appearance	30	5.80	1.14	0.320	0.323
Academic performance	30	51.28	1.86		

Critical value 0.05 level of significance

Table 6: Teachers' emotional stability and students' academic performance in geography

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-table
Emotional stability	30	15.46	0.96	0.333	0.323
Academic performance	30	51.28	1.86		

Critical value 0.05 level of significance

Table 5 shows the r-calculated value of 0.320. This is a weak but positive relationship. Since the r-calculated value of 0.320 is less than the t-table value of 0.320 as shown in Table 5, the null hypothesis is upheld. Hence, there is no significant relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Geography. So a teacher dressing does not significantly influence teachers' performance.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant relationship between teachers' Emotional Stability and students' academic performance in Geography in Secondary schools in Ondo State. Table 6 shows the r-calculated value of 0.333. This is a weak but positive relationship. But since this value is grater than the r-table value of 0.323 the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between teachers' emotional stability and students' academic performance in the Geography in Secondary schools in Ondo State. In other words teachers' emotional stability influence students' performance in Geography.

The result shows that most of the teachers' attributes items correlates positively with students' performance in Geography in the Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. This agreed with the findings of Bangbade (2004), Rena (2000), Elochukwu (2001) that teachers' attributes and students' academic performance in Geography in the Secondary Schools are positively related. Teacher's attributes in the first instance influences his performance which in turn enhance his students' performance. There is a logical linkage between these variables.

The study also revealed that there is a weak but positive relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Geography. The relationship is however not significant. The finding supports by Salau who showed in his study that there was a relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science in Secondary School in Oyo State. The findings of Rena (2000) disagreed with this finding as they found out that there is a significant relationship between teachers' physical appearance and students' academic performance in Secondary Schools.

CONCLUSION

It is generally accepted that no country in the world can develop beyond the quality of teachers in her education sector. Therefore, the educational administrators should recruit teachers with desirable attributes. Paper qualification alone may not assist the system if standard must be maintained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are as follow:

- Appointment of only professionally trained teachers with relevant certificates at all levels of the educational institutions
- Teachers should be exposed to thorough examination and interview in the knowledge of the subject matter and communication ability to ensure that the best candidates are recruited to foster educational development
- Teachers should be well paid so that they can show more interest in the job rather than going to other sectors

- There should be periodic supervision of schools to ascertain the level of operation of the teachers so that professional advice can be rendered where and when necessary. Recommendations made by the supervisors should be implemented accordingly because experience has shown that such recommendations are left in the files
- Seminar, workshops and in-service-training should be organized for the teachers to keep them informed about the latest development in their discipline
- Appointment of principals should be based on merit rather than political, religious and tribal affiliations
- Teachers with excellent performance and attributes should be given national awards so as to boost their morale and that of others to put in their best in their noble job of teaching

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