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TEACHERS' QUALITY AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ST LOUIS GRAMMAR SCHOOL, AKURE, ONDO STATE

Dare Ezekiel Arowolo, Ph.D

Department of Public Administration
Faculty of Administration and Management Sciences
Adekunle Ajasin University
Akungba Akoko, Ondo State
Nigeria

dare.arowolo@aaua.edu.ng/[+2348035774375](tel:+2348035774375)

Abstract

The quality of teachers is a fundamental component of authentic educational development, significantly influencing educational standards and student potential. In Nigeria, particularly in Akure, Ondo State, the academic performance of students has become a significant concern and topic of discussion among researchers and stakeholders. This concern stems from the recognition that the quality of teaching directly influences student outcomes. Consequently, this study investigates the impact of teachers' quality on students' academic performance in the region. Utilizing both primary and secondary data collection methods, information was gathered through questionnaires and interviews conducted in the study area. Data analysis was performed using simple percentage and chi-square techniques to determine the relationship between teacher quality and student performance. The findings underscore the necessity for the state government to prioritize the continuous training and professional development of teachers to enhance their quality, thereby improving student academic outcomes.

Keywords: Academic performance, Education, Nigeria, Students, Teachers' quality.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental requirement for the sustainable development of any nation. Both developed and developing societies allocate a significant portion of their budgets to the education sector annually, recognizing that improvements in education are essential for fostering the qualitative skills, knowledge, and manpower needed to drive national development. Education, whether at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level, is regarded as a powerful instrument for effecting societal change. Therefore, it is imperative that education is not only embraced but also maintained at a high quality to produce competent and skilled individuals who can contribute significantly to the growth of the nation's economy (Amie-ogan & Omunakwe, 2020).

Secondary education, in particular, has been identified as a critical stage within any education system (Usman & Abubakar, 2020). This level of education serves as the foundation upon which higher education is built, laying the groundwork for the academic and professional futures of students. Consequently, the quality of education at the secondary level is heavily dependent on the qualifications and competencies of the teachers responsible for imparting knowledge. Abe and Ada (2013) argue that the enhancement of students' academic performance in schools can be achieved by employing well-qualified and experienced teachers. In today's context, parents are keen to enroll their children in schools with strong academic records, universities prioritize admitting students with high

examination scores, and politicians and governments use academic performance as a metric to evaluate educational programs and outputs.

The significance of secondary education as the nerve center of progress and future development is evident. However, the issue of declining academic performance among students in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in public secondary schools in Ondo State, has raised considerable concern among stakeholders in the education sector. Ayeni and Jajua (2021) describe the dwindling academic performance in Ondo State as alarming, noting that many students are now unable to secure admission into higher institutions to pursue their desired courses. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), one of the primary goals of secondary education is to prepare students for higher education. Despite the substantial investments made by the Ondo State government in secondary education, which include the regular payment of teachers' salaries, funding for the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) fees, and the training and development of teachers, the academic performance of students remains disappointingly low, particularly in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics.

This troubling trend, and its potential implications for the overall development of the education sector, underscores the necessity of this study. The focus is on the impact of teachers' quality on ensuring high academic performance, using St. Louis Grammar School in Akure as a case study. To achieve this objective, the study aims to address the following questions: does the quality of teachers impact students' academic performance? Can teachers' roles ensure qualitative performance among students?

In order to complement these questions, the study will test the following hypotheses:

- i. Teachers' quality has no significant effect on students' academic performance.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the role of teachers and the qualitative academic performance of students.

The study covers the period from 2015 to 2023. Following this introductory section, the next section will review relevant literature. Section three will outline the research methodology, while section four will present and analyze the research results. The study will conclude in section five, offering viable recommendations.

Review of Literature

This section delves into various opinions and perspectives presented in the literature regarding the impact of teachers' quality on students' academic performance. Numerous studies have explored this relationship, highlighting the significant role that teachers' quality plays in shaping educational outcomes.

Musau and Muola (2013) define teachers' quality as a comprehensive set of teacher-related characteristics that yield favorable educational outcomes. These characteristics include students' performance on standardized tests and supervisor ratings. Essentially, a teacher's quality encompasses their qualifications, experience, teaching methods, and their ability to engage and motivate students. According to Amie-ogan and Omunakwe (2020), teachers hold a pivotal role in the educational attainment of students. They are ultimately responsible for translating educational policies and principles into practical implementation modules that achieve school goals. This transformation process is crucial as it determines the effectiveness of educational systems and the attainment of desired student outcomes. They emphasize that the way a teacher presents themselves—through their demeanor, professionalism, and enthusiasm—creates lasting impressions on administrators, colleagues, parents, and students. Often, a student's interest and performance in a particular subject are closely linked to the teacher's personality, values, and teaching methods. Enthusiastic teachers who demonstrate deep competence in their subject areas can transfer these positive attributes to their students, thereby significantly enhancing their classroom experiences and academic achievements.

Ayeni and Jajua (2021) assert that teachers' quality is derived from several key factors, including their levels of qualification, teaching experience, curriculum delivery, and ongoing professional development. They argue that efforts by school principals to enhance teaching quality are rooted in the expectation of continuous improvement in instructional delivery. This continuous improvement is necessary to adapt to evolving educational standards and student needs. They underscore the value of teachers' quality as a core factor warranting focused attention from both the government and school principals. They highlight that failure to prioritize teachers' quality can lead to undesirable outcomes such as poor academic performance, inadequate teacher capacity development, and insufficient teaching and learning in secondary schools. These adverse effects underscore the importance of investing in teachers' quality to achieve educational excellence.

From these insights, it is clear that teachers' quality is integral to students' academic performance. Effective performance of traditional teaching roles makes this quality evident. Ayeni and Jajua (2021) further argue that the quality of teaching is directly proportional to teachers' quality, which includes professional qualifications and an up-to-date understanding of educational principles and practices. This comprehensive knowledge enables teachers to teach effectively, support students, and produce the desired learning outcomes. Teachers' ability to understand what to teach, how to teach, and how to measure students' educational achievements enhances classroom instruction quality. This leads to satisfactory outputs for parents, who see tangible improvements in their children's academic performance and overall development.

Eguonour (2018) posits that there is a significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' academic performance. This indicates that academic qualifications are central to teachers' quality. High academic qualifications provide teachers with the necessary knowledge base and pedagogical skills to deliver effective instruction. Afolakemi and David (2007) similarly argue that higher quality teaching personnel result in better academic performance for students. They advocate for ensuring teachers' quality through effective recruitment and continuous training. This approach ensures that teachers remain well-equipped to address the evolving needs of students and the educational system, ultimately leading to desirable student outcomes, particularly in academic areas.

Usman and Abubakar (2020) describe teachers' quality as a potent tool for determining students' academic performance and a key factor in effective curriculum implementation in secondary schools. They explain that educational goals can only be realized through high-quality teachers, who play central roles in the educative process. Teachers are responsible for shaping students into better individuals, serving as managers of knowledge. This role is crucial as it involves not only the transfer of academic knowledge but also the development of critical thinking skills, moral values, and social competencies. Therefore, teachers' education in Nigeria should be the foundation of quality and relevance in education at all levels. They view teachers as trained individuals who use their knowledge, skills, and expertise to bring about behavioral changes in students, thereby contributing to their holistic development.

Daso (2013) defines teachers' quality as encompassing various dimensions, including their training, attributes, student outcomes, the working environment, learning resources, school management and leadership, remuneration, and continuous professional development. He suggests that quality teachers have a greater influence on students' academic performance. Effective training and professional development ensure that teachers remain updated with the latest educational practices and technologies, enabling them to deliver high-quality instruction. He argues that how nations educate their teachers will largely determine their success in the 21st-century knowledge-driven economy. This statement underscores the importance of investing in teacher education as a strategic priority for national development. McLeod (2003) adds that effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is crucial for enhancing the quality of teaching. He suggests that gestures, such as glances, smiles, and winks, can significantly impact students' behavior and performance. These non-verbal cues can complement verbal communication, helping to create a positive and engaging classroom environment.

Kamayubonye and Mutarutinya (2023) assert that student academic performance is a function of teachers' quality. They argue that the quality of education is reflected through students' academic performance, which is intrinsically linked to teachers' quality. Zagyvane (2017) identifies key attributes of teachers' quality, including qualifications, certification, education, experience, and evaluation scores, all of which play vital roles in improving educational quality. These attributes collectively contribute to a teacher's ability to deliver effective instruction and support student learning. Barber (2007) emphasizes the critical role of teachers in students' academic performance, stating that teachers who perform their traditional roles effectively make students more serious and studious. This statement highlights the importance of teachers' dedication and commitment to their profession. Zagyvane concurs, arguing that even teachers with high quality who fail to perform their roles effectively cannot positively impact students' academic performance. This implies that teachers' quality and their active engagement in teaching must go hand in hand to achieve the desired educational outcomes.

Usman and Abubakar (2020) identify inadequate professional development and motivation as fundamental issues affecting teachers' quality in Nigeria. Continuous professional development is essential to keep teachers updated with the latest teaching methods and educational technologies. Additionally, motivation through adequate remuneration and recognition of teachers' efforts plays a crucial role in maintaining high teaching standards. Abe and Ada (2013) trace the challenge of teachers' quality to the misplacement of teachers, where teachers are assigned to subjects they did not study in higher education. This misalignment results in inadequate teaching capacity, as teachers may lack the necessary subject-specific knowledge and skills to deliver effective instruction.

In summary, the literature underscores the crucial role of teachers' quality in determining students' academic performance. It highlights the need for continuous professional development, proper recruitment, and effective teaching practices to enhance the overall quality of education. The existing body of research provides ample evidence that high-quality teachers are instrumental in fostering better academic outcomes for students. Numerous studies have explored various facets of this relationship, including the impact of teachers' qualifications, experience, ongoing training, and the educational environment on student achievement.

Despite the extensive research on this topic, there remains a significant gap in the literature: the specific examination of the relationship between teachers' quality and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. While general conclusions about the importance of teacher quality can be drawn from existing studies, there is a lack of focused scholarly investigation into how these factors play out in the unique context of Akure's secondary schools. This study aims to address this gap by providing a detailed analysis of how teachers' quality influences student performance in this specific setting. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of educational dynamics in Nigeria and offer targeted recommendations for policy and practice to enhance educational outcomes in Akure and similar contexts.

Research Methodology

Types and Sources of Data Collection

This study was conducted at St Louis Grammar School, Akure, in Ondo State. To gather comprehensive and reliable data, both primary and secondary sources were utilized. The study adopted a sample survey methodology, focusing on the school's staff and students. The target population included the Principal, Vice Principals, Teachers, and Students from various departments and units within the school.

A combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was employed to select participants. Simple random sampling ensured that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby providing a representative sample. Purposive sampling was used to specifically include key stakeholders, such as administrative staff and teachers, whose insights

were deemed crucial for the study. This dual approach was designed to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives and ensure adequate representation of the entire school population.

The sample size for this study was 180 participants, chosen to reflect the diversity and size of the school's population. Participants were selected both purposively and randomly to achieve a balanced and representative sample. Data collection involved administering questionnaires and conducting interviews. Out of the 180 questionnaires distributed, 165 were completed and returned, yielding a high response rate that added robustness to the data. Additionally, oral interviews were conducted with selected respondents to supplement the questionnaire data and provide deeper insights.

The primary data collection tools included structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires were designed to elicit quantitative data on teachers' quality and students' academic performance, while the interviews provided qualitative insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. The combination of these methods enabled a comprehensive analysis of the research questions.

For data analysis, simple percentage and chi-square statistical tools were employed. The use of simple percentage helped in summarizing the data and presenting it in an easily understandable format. Chi-square tests were used to examine the relationships between variables and to test the study's hypotheses. Additionally, a descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a detailed narrative of the findings, highlighting patterns and trends observed in the data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1

Question 1

Does teachers' quality has impact on students' academic performance?

Respondent/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	86%
No	23	14%
Total	165	100%

Source: Field work, 2023

The above table (1) shows that eighty-six percent (86%) of the respondents agreed that teachers' quality impacts students' academic performance, while fourteen percent (14%) disagreed. Thus, a larger proportion of the respondents agreed that teachers' quality impacts students' academic performance. Therefore, teachers' quality is accepted as a key factor in students' better academic performance.

Table 2

Question 2

Can teachers' role ensure qualitative performance of the students?

Respondent/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	134	81%
No	31	19%
Total	165	100%

Source: Field work, 2023

As shown in the table, eighty-one percent (81%) of the respondents affirmed that the role of teachers in ensuring qualitative performance of students has a positive effect, while nineteen percent (19%) disagreed. Thus, a greater percentage of respondents agreed that teachers' roles can positively affect students' qualitative performance.

Table 3

Respondent	O	E	O - E	(O - E) ₂	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
Yes	142	82.5	59.5	3540.25	42.9
No	23	82.5	-59.5	3540.25	42.9
Total	165	165	0	7080.50	85.8

Source: Field work, 2023

O = Observed value

E = Expected value

$$X^2 \text{ Cal} = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

$$X^2 = \frac{7080.50}{82.5}$$

$$X^2 = \frac{7080.50}{82.5}$$

$$X^2 = 85.8$$

Hypothesis Testing

Ho: Teachers' quality has no significant effect on student's academic Performance.

Level of significance difference = 5% = 0.05

Degree of Freedom = K1 = 2-1 = 1

X² Calculated = 85.8

X² tabulated at 0.05 and d.f = 3.841

X² calculated 85.8 > X² tabulated 3.841

Decision Rule: Null hypothesis is rejected because calculated value of 85.8 is greater than tabulated value of 3.841 and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Therefore, it is concluded that teachers' quality has significant impact on students' academic performance in St. Louis Grammar School, Akure.

Table 4

Respondent	O	E	O - E	(O - E) ₂	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
Yes	134	82.5	59.5	2652.25	32.1
No	31	82.5	-51 -5	2652.25	32.1
Total	165	165	0	5304.50	64.2

Source: Field work, 2023

O = Observed value

E = Expected value

$$X^2 \text{ Cal} = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

$$X^2 = \frac{5304.50}{82.5}$$

$$X^2 = 64.2$$

Hypothesis Testing

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the role of teachers and qualitative students' academic performance.

Level of significance difference = 5% = 0.05

Degree of Freedom = K1 = 2-1 = 1

X² Calculated = 64.2

χ^2 tabulated at 0.05 and d.f = 3.841
 χ^2 calculated 64.2 > χ^2 tabulated = 3.841

Decision Rule: It is observed from the table above that the calculated chi-square (χ^2) value of 64.2 exceeds the tabulated chi-square (χ^2) value of 3.841. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between the role of teachers and qualitative students' academic performance.

During the interviews conducted, questions were raised regarding the impact of teachers' quality on students' academic performance. A large number of respondents asserted that teachers' quality significantly influences students' success rates in both internal and external examinations. Key factors highlighted by respondents included communication skills or styles, experience, qualifications, and professional certifications of teachers, all of which play crucial roles in students' academic achievements. Respondents expressed concerns over the inadequate training and development of teachers by the state government, emphasizing that this shortfall could diminish teachers' quality and subsequently affect student academic performance negatively.

Another question addressed how the role of teachers can positively impact students' qualitative performance. Many respondents agreed that teachers' roles exert a profound influence on the quality of students' academic performance. They argued that the government should ensure each teacher diligently fulfills their duties. One respondent pointed out that when teachers are proactive, they have the potential to positively influence students by imparting good character, morals, discipline, and a strong work ethic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study investigated the impact of teachers' quality on students' academic performance, revealing significant insights into the educational landscape of St Louis Grammar School, Akure, Ondo State. Analysis of the data clearly indicates that teachers' quality plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic achievements, as evidenced by both simple percentage analysis and chi-square test results. It was evident that effective teachers positively influence students' performance in both internal assessments and external examinations.

The interviews conducted with respondents highlighted a concerning trend: teachers in Ondo State have not received regular training and development opportunities from the state government in recent times. This neglect has the potential to diminish the overall quality of teaching and consequently affect students' academic outcomes adversely.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are put forth:

1. **Enhanced Training and Development:** The Ondo State government should prioritize regular and comprehensive training and development programs for teachers, particularly those in secondary schools. Continuous professional development is crucial not only for enhancing teaching skills but also for keeping educators abreast of new educational methodologies and technologies.
2. **Monitoring and Accountability:** School management should implement robust mechanisms to monitor and evaluate teachers' performance regularly. This will ensure that teachers fulfill their roles diligently and effectively. Monitoring should include classroom observations, student feedback mechanisms, and periodic performance evaluations.
3. **Investment in Educational Resources:** Adequate provision of educational resources, including teaching aids, learning materials, and infrastructure, should be ensured. These resources are essential for creating conducive learning environments that support effective teaching and learning processes.

4. **Promotion of Teacher Motivation:** Measures to enhance teacher motivation, such as competitive salaries, performance-based incentives, and recognition programs, should be implemented. Motivated teachers are more likely to demonstrate commitment and dedication to their teaching responsibilities, thereby positively impacting student outcomes.
5. **Strengthening Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration among teachers, educational administrators, parents, and stakeholders can foster a supportive educational environment. Collaborative efforts can lead to innovative teaching strategies, shared best practices, and improved overall educational outcomes.
6. **Curriculum Review and Adaptation:** Regular review and adaptation of the curriculum to align with current educational standards and societal needs should be prioritized. A relevant and dynamic curriculum enhances the relevance and quality of education provided to students.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges highlighted and implementing the recommended strategies will not only improve teachers' quality but also enhance students' academic performance at St Louis Grammar School and similar educational institutions in Ondo State. These efforts are crucial for fostering a conducive learning environment and preparing students effectively for future academic and professional endeavors.

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