

Selected Factors of Teacher Experience as Correlates of Primary School Pupils' Performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of this research work was to investigate the selected factors of teacher experience as correlates of Pupils' performance in Ekiti State primary schools. This research was a descriptive research design of survey type. The population of this study was all teachers and students of the 909 public primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Fifteen (15) primary schools were selected from each of the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State making 45 schools. In each of the 45 school, four teachers were selected. These teachers were assessed by their heads of departments using purposive and random sampling technique totaling 180 teachers. Two instruments were used to collect data for this research. They are a questionnaire titled "Teacher Experience and Pupils Performance Questionnaire" (TEPAQ) and an inventory titled: "Pupils Performance Inventory" (PPI). The two instruments were validated by two experts in Text and Measurement who ensured face, construct and content validity of the instrument. Test-retest method was used to ensure reliability of Teacher Experience and Pupils Performance Questionnaire. The co-efficient value obtained was 0.68 at 0.05 level of significance. Two hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics and correlated Matrix at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there was significant relationship between pupils' performance and teacher experience and that there was significant relationship between student performance and all determinant factors of teacher experience. Based on the results of this research, the research therefore concluded that there was relationship between teacher experience and students' academic performance in primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that teachers should be motivated so that they could stay long in the teaching service and that there should be periodic training and re-training of primary school teachers so that they would be able to have more knowledge on how to manage class effectively and in the area of mastering of subject matter and other determinant factors of experience teachers.

Keywords: Teacher Experience, Students' Performance, teacher lesson planning, classroom management and individualized support.

Introduction

According to the National Policy on Education (2004), primary education is defined as instruction provided to students who fall between the age range of six and eleven plus. The remainder of the educational system is constructed around this level of instruction. As a result, it holds the key to whether the entire educational system succeeds or fails. The goal of primary education is to get an individual ready for later, greater-level coursework. According to Adepaju in Orimidu (2004), primary education is the education that children receive in a primary institution, where they learn the fundamental concepts, abilities, and mindsets that are thought to be essential for all citizens, irrespective of their social standing, occupation, or sexual orientation.

The role of primary school teachers has a significant impact on the performance and academic success of primary school pupils. Teachers serve as the guiding force in a child's educational journey, playing a crucial role in shaping their learning experiences, fostering their development, and influencing their overall performance. Through their expertise, dedication, and effective instructional strategies, teachers have the power to inspire, motivate, and empower pupils to reach their full potential. Teachers serve as academic instructors, delivering lessons and providing the necessary knowledge and skills in various subjects. They carefully plan and implement curriculum-based activities that cater to the diverse learning needs of their students. By employing engaging teaching methods, promoting critical thinking, and offering individualized support, teachers can enhance pupils' understanding, stimulate their intellectual curiosity, and facilitate academic growth.

Moreover, primary school teachers are responsible for creating a positive and structured classroom environment. They establish routines, set expectations, and manage classroom behavior, ensuring that pupils can focus on their studies and make the most of their learning opportunities. By fostering a safe and inclusive space, teachers promote a sense of belonging and encourage active participation, which can directly impact pupils' engagement and performance in the classroom.

Teachers also play a pivotal role in assessing pupils' progress and providing timely feedback. Through various assessment methods, including tests, quizzes, projects, and observations, teachers gain insights into pupils' strengths and areas for improvement. This information allows them to tailor their instruction, provide

targeted support, and address individual learning needs effectively. By consistently monitoring progress and offering constructive feedback, teachers can guide pupils on their learning journey and help them achieve academic success.

Additionally, primary school teachers contribute to the social and emotional development of their pupils. They create an environment that promotes positive relationships, empathy, and respect. By nurturing social skills, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem, teachers empower pupils to navigate interpersonal interactions, collaborate with peers, and develop a healthy sense of self. This, in turn, can positively influence their overall well-being and academic performance.

The correlation between teacher experience and student performance has been a topic of interest in the field of education for many years. Teacher experience refers to the number of years a teacher has spent in the classroom, gaining knowledge, skills, and expertise through his teaching practice. Rivkin and Kain (2003) reveal that understanding how teacher experience impacts student performance is of great importance to educators and policymakers striving to enhance educational outcomes. This qualitative research aims to explore the relationship between teacher experience and student performance, delving into the underlying factors that contribute to academic success or challenges.

Teacher experience plays a critical role in shaping instructional practices, classroom management, and student engagement. Bolarinwa (2014) reports that experienced teachers possess a wealth of knowledge on effective teaching strategies, lesson planning, and differentiated instruction. They have encountered a variety of teaching situations and have developed a repertoire of approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students. Additionally, experienced teachers often exhibit high levels of confidence, professionalism, and a deep understanding of curriculum standards.

The researcher observed that experience of teacher could have a profound impact on student performance. Teacher who brings a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience to the classroom is better equipped to effectively engage students, delivers high-quality instruction, and create an optimal learning environment. Oloyede (2006) reports that experienced teachers often have deep understandings of the subjects they teach. They possess a comprehensive knowledge base, mastery of curriculum content, and familiarity with effective instructional strategies. The same Oloyede (2006) is of the opinion that expertise enables teachers to provide clear explanations, answer students' questions confidently, and present complex concepts in a relatable manner, enhancing students' comprehension and learning outcomes. It is believed that experience teacher will have effective instructional practices. they are expected to be familiar with a wide range of teaching methods, techniques, and resources that can cater to diverse learning styles and needs. They know how to differentiate instruction, adapt materials, and employ innovative strategies to engage students and maximize their learning potential. Seasoned teachers have developed effective classroom management techniques through years of experience. They are skilled at establishing routines, setting clear expectations, and maintaining a positive and disciplined learning environment. By managing student behavior effectively, experienced teachers create an atmosphere conducive to learning, minimizing disruptions and maximizing instructional time. Experienced teachers understand the importance of creating a positive and inclusive classroom climate. Salau (2010) asserts that experience teachers know how to foster a sense of belonging, respect, and trust among students. This supportive environment encourages active student participation, collaboration, and risk-taking, all of which contribute to improved engagement and academic performance. Experienced teachers recognize the importance of involving parents and the community in the educational process. They establish strong partnerships with parents, keeping them informed about their child's progress, and seeking their input and support. By fostering positive home-school relationships, experienced teachers create a collaborative network that reinforces student learning and contributes to improved performance.

Numerous studies have explored the correlation between teachers' lesson planning and pupils' performance. While specific findings may vary, the overall consensus supports the idea that effective lesson planning positively influences student outcomes. A study by Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) titled "Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad" explored effective teaching practices and their impact on student achievement. Lesson planning emerged as a critical component of effective teaching, with well-structured lessons linked to higher levels of student success. In a meta-analysis conducted by Hattie (2009) titled "Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement," the author synthesized numerous studies to identify factors that influence student achievement. Lesson planning was found to have a moderate effect on student learning, indicating that thoughtful and intentional planning positively contributes to student outcomes.

Studies have found that experienced teachers are often more confident in their ability to establish clear expectations, enforce rules consistently, and maintain a positive classroom climate. They also demonstrate better classroom organization, time management, and effective use of instructional resources. This accumulated

experience allows them to anticipate and address potential challenges more efficiently, leading to improved classroom management. Rivkin and Kain (2003) revealed the experienced teachers tend to develop strong relationships with their students, which positively impacts classroom management. They are more adept at building rapport, understanding individual student needs, and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These positive relationships contribute to enhanced student engagement, motivation, and overall classroom behavior

Classroom management skills encompass a range of strategies and techniques used by teachers to create a well-managed and productive learning environment. Effective classroom management involves establishing rules and routines, managing student behavior, fostering a positive classroom climate, and maximizing instructional time (Adedeji, 1999). Research consistently shows that teachers with strong classroom management skills are more successful in creating a conducive learning environment. They are able to establish clear expectations, consistently enforce rules, and effectively address disruptions or off-task behavior. Additionally, teachers with strong classroom management skills are more likely to engage students in meaningful learning activities, promote active participation, and create a positive and respectful classroom culture. Furthermore, effective classroom management skills contribute to increased instructional time. Teachers who can efficiently manage transitions, distribute materials, and maintain a structured learning environment maximize the time available for instruction, leading to improved student learning outcomes. The literature indicates a strong relationship between teacher experience and classroom management skills. Experienced teachers often possess a better understanding of effective classroom management strategies due to their accumulated knowledge and expertise. They are more adept at establishing expectations, managing behavior, and creating a positive classroom climate. The combination of teacher experience and strong classroom management skills contributes to improved student engagement, behavior, and overall academic performance.

Statement of the problem

In Ekiti State, Nigeria, there is a growing concern regarding the performance of primary school students. Various variables contribute to pupils' performance, but the role of teacher proficiency is of particular interest. Teacher experience encompasses a range of variables, including subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Understanding the relationship between these selected variables of teacher experience and student performance is crucial for improving educational outcomes in Ekiti State primary schools. The problem this research aims to address is the lack of comprehensive knowledge regarding the specific variables of teacher experience that correlate with student performance in Ekiti State primary schools. While it is generally acknowledged that teacher experience is essential for pupils' success, there is a need to identify the specific aspects of teacher experience that have the most significant impact on student performance in this particular context. The researcher has the view that teacher experience was essential for student success, therefore, this research was set to identify the specific aspects of teacher experience that have the most significant relationship with pupils' performance in Ekiti state primary school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research work was to investigate the relationship that existed between teacher experience and students' academic performance in primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Specifically, other objectives of this study were to:

- I. investigate teacher experience and students' academic performance in Ekiti State primary schools.
- II. Is there any relationship between teacher experience determining factors (content mastery, teacher lesson planning, classroom management, individualized support, classroom climate and relationships, parent and community engagement) and pupils' performance in Ekiti State primary schools?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

H_{O1} : There is no significant relationship between teacher experience and students' academic performance.

H_{O2} : There is no significant relationship between teacher experience determining factors (content mastery, teacher lesson planning, classroom management, individualized support, classroom climate and relationships, parent and community engagement) and pupils' performance in Ekiti State primary schools.

Methodology

This research was a descriptive research design of survey type. The population of this study was all teachers and students of the 909 public primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Fifteen (15) primary schools were selected from each of the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State making 45 schools. In each of the 45 school,

four teachers were selected. These teachers were assessed by their heads of departments using purposive and random sampling technique totaling 180 teachers. The researcher made use of two instruments; a self-developed questionnaire and an inventory. The questionnaire was titled “Teacher Experience and Pupils Performance Questionnaire” (TEPAQ) was administered by the selected teachers’ heads of the departments. The TEPAQ has two parts: A and B. Part A elicited information based on the name of the school, the class, teacher teaching in the class and years of experience while part B has six sections thus; (1. Content Mastery 2. Teacher Lesson Planning 3. Classroom Management 4. Individualized Support 5. Classroom Climate and Relationships 6. Parent and Community Engagement) was structured along the four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (4) Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed (1). The second instrument was an inventory titled: “Pupils Performance Inventory” (PPI) used to collect data on pupils’ results from the school records. The two instruments were validated by two experts in Test and Measurement who ensured face, construct and content validity of the instrument. A pilot test was conducted to ascertain the reliability co-efficient of “Teacher Experience and Pupils Performance Questionnaire” (TEPAQ) by administering the questionnaire in five primary schools that were not part of the schools used for the study within an interval of two weeks. The co-efficient value obtained was 0.68 at 0.05 level of significance.

The instruments were administered by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants and all the 180 copies of both questionnaire and inventory were duly retrieved from the respondents and used for data analysis. The data were tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between teacher experience and students’ academic performance.

In testing this hypothesis, data on teacher experience were collected using the years of experience in the biodata section and data on the inventory titled while the data collected through the inventory were tested using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results are presented in table one.

Table 1: Test of Relationship between student performance and teacher experience

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	r tab
teacher experience	180	179	0.512	.195
Student Performance	180			

$p < 0.05$

Table 3 shows the relationship between teacher experience and student performance. The result obtained from the analysis shows that the calculated value of (0.512) is greater than r-critical or table value (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. As such, the null hypothesis is rejected; this shows that there is significant relationship between teacher experience and student performance.

Research Question Two: There is no significant relationship between teacher experience determining factors (content mastery, teacher lesson planning, classroom management, individualized support, classroom climate and relationships, parent and community engagement) and pupils’ performance in Ekiti State primary schools.

The hypothesis was tested using Correlation Matrix. Data on teacher experience were collected using responses to the inventory while data on determining factors were collected from the responses to the questionnaire. The findings are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Analysis on pupils’ performance and teacher experience determining factors

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Pupils’ Performance	1.00						
2	Content Mastery	0.711	1.00					
3	Teacher Lesson Planning	0.621	0.612	1.00				
4	Classroom Management	0.818	0.421	0.330	1.00			
5	Individualized Support	0.301	0.342	0.437	0.414	1.00		
6	Classroom Climate and Relationships	0.351	0.315	0.305	0.312	0.348	1.00	
7	Parent and Community Engagement	0.672	0.351	0.510	0.333	0.381	0.216	1.00

$P < 0.05$, R Table = 0.195

Table 3 shows the relationship between each pair of variables examined in this study. The result shows that there is relationship between teacher experience determining factors (content mastery, teacher lesson planning, classroom management, individualized support, classroom climate and relationships, parent and community engagement) and pupils' performance. The following pairs of variables indicated that there is significant relationship between pupils' performance and content mastery (0.711), pupils' performance and teacher lesson planning (0.621), pupils' performance and classroom management (0.818), pupils' performance and individualized support (0.301) pupils' performance and classroom climate relationships (0.351) and parent and community engagement (0.672)

Discussion

The result showed that there was significant relationship between pupils' performance and teacher experience. Findings from research question one showed a positive relationship between teachers' experience and students performance. This research is in line with Bolarinwa (2010) whose revealed that there was positive relationship between teachers' experience and students' performance level in Accounting. Also, it is consistent with the report of Salau (2010) that teacher experience is a good predictor of students' performance level in school subject. This finding is also in agreement with Fehintola (2014) that teacher years of experience are consistent predictor of higher test scores in school subjects.

The result also showed that there was significant relationship between student performance and all determinant factors of teacher experience. This implies that all factors of teacher experience have relationship with students' performance. Out of all factors discussed, classroom management has the highest relationship with students' performance followed by content mastery. This might be as a result of professional development gained by experience teachers which is in line with the report of Stigler and Hiebert (1999) who pointed out that lesson study is as in-service continuous professional development enable teachers to learn from their own teaching experiences and examine practices in their own school-context setting. Stigler and Hiebert (1999) stressed further that Lesson study capitalized context based, teacher led, student focused and collaborative professional development which enhance teachers' classroom practices and learning experience

Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, the research therefore concluded that there was relationship between teacher experience and students' academic performance in primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. All the factors of teacher experience (content mastery, teacher lesson planning, classroom management, individualized support, classroom climate and relationships, parent and community engagement) have relationship with students' academic performance. Out of all the factors, classroom management has the highest relationship with pupils' performance.

Recommendations

Since there was relationship between each of the variables of teacher experience, the following recommendations are made;

- I. Teachers should be motivated so that they can stay long in the teaching service.
- II. There should be periodic training and re-training of primary school teachers so that they would be able to have more knowledge on how to manage class effectively and develop in the area of mastering of subject matter and other determinant factors of experience teachers.

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