



EDUCATION: A SOCIALIZING AGENT

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TEACHERS' AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION, QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at the relationship between the academic performance of students and teachers' qualification, areas of specialization and teaching experience. Four hundred (400) JSS11 social studies students and ten (10) social studies teachers were used for the study. Three questions were answered in the study. It was established that there exists a relationship between the academic achievement in social studies and teachers' qualification and areas of specialization. However, the relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement in the subject could not be established. Burnt-out effect was identified as the major reason for this. Consequently, it was recommended that regular in-service training programmes be organized for this group of teachers.

INTRODUCTION

That Social Studies is a value-laden school subject is no longer debatable. Similarly, its status as an important vehicle in the realization of the national educational goals is an accepted fact (Ezegbe 1994, Akinlaye 2002, Fagbemi 2000 and Akinlaye 2003). These National Education Objectives as stated by FME (1977, 1981 1998 and 2004) are:

- ❖ the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- ❖ the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- ❖ the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and

- ❖ the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

The realisation of these goals through social studies depends largely on the most important input into education - the teacher. This is probably the reason why the national policy on education observed that "since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development" (FME 1998, p.32). Furthermore Onukotun (2003) observed that the teacher is the pivot on which the wheel of education revolves. The teacher is the kernel of the educational tree. Consequently the role of the teacher as an all knowing, the flaming beacon of the society and a major determinant of the progress of the community must be properly focused. Ukeje (1998) had earlier noted this when he observed that the quality of a teacher is more directly related to the future of any nation. To the Japanese, the teacher is the wheel of education, to the Americans, he is the power of education while to the Asian tigers he is the secret of their present share of the moon. The importance of the teacher cannot really be overemphasized. Ukeje (1998) observed that a teacher's mistake is catastrophic when compared with the mistake of other professionals. To him the mistake of a doctor may lead at worst to the death of a patient, the accountant, the loss of money, an engineer, collapse of a bridge or building while the effects of a teacher's mistake leads to all of the above and more and they may be everlasting. Perhaps, this is why Komolafe (2002) observes that:

"the key to effective and productive teaching is classically linked with the ability of the teacher to create in the learner, a genuine interest and desire to learn, know and apply what has been learned towards the solution of problems facing the learner in his environment. Such learning situation can be brought about by the teacher who is expected to have acquired what can be described as the salient characteristics of a good teacher."

These characteristics of teachers that can lead to positive achievement by pupils include: personality, attitudes, qualification, experience and instructional strategies. Ajeegba (1969) observes that it is mainly lack of suitable trained teachers rather than lack of recognition of the importance of geographical knowledge, that prevents the few of our secondary schools and colleges from offering the subject. If so is the case of geography a relatively older subject in the school curriculum, it becomes pertinent to examine the implication of these teachers' characteristics on students' academic achievement in Social Studies, a subject that is relatively new in the

school curriculum. Akinbode's (1981) survey of social studies teachers shows that a majority of them would have history background next is the background in geography. A few would have their bias in political science and yet fewer would have sociology as minor with geography as their major. They were specialists in their rights, but definitely not in social studies.

The above finding indicates a gross deficiency in relation to Social Studies education. Efforts to reposition the subject so that the desired fruits can be harvested from it must aim at eliminating this anomaly. This is against the background that there is a universal agreement that a teacher must first have a good general education, proper grounding in some teaching subjects and an understanding of the learner and appreciate teaching techniques (Balogun 1987). The goals of teachers education according to FME (1998) aimed at providing teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and who are adaptable to changing situations.

In view of the above, this paper sets out to investigate whether students achievement in the subject is a correlate of (i) teachers' qualification (iii) teachers' experience and (iii) teachers' area of specialization

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study.

- Will students' academic performance be related to teachers' qualification in the subject?
- Is there any relationship between teachers' years of teaching experience and students academic achievement?
- Is there any significant difference in the academic achievement of students taught by specialist and non-specialist social studies teachers?

Methodology

Population: All the JSS II social studies students and teachers of public secondary schools in Amuwo Odofin Local Education District of Lagos State formed the population for the study.

Sample: Ten intact classes consisting of four hundred JSS II students taught by teachers with different qualifications, areas of specialization and experience were randomly selected in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Instrumentation: The Teachers Personal Questionnaire (TPQ) was administered to the teachers in order to identify their qualification, areas of specialization and years of experience as social studies teachers. Their various principals confirmed these.

A fifty-item Social Studies Multiple choice Objective Test (SSMOT) was administered on the students. This was based on the JSS II Social Studies syllabus.

For qualification, the teachers were grouped into four namely:

- NCE
- Degree
- PGDE
- M.Ed/MA/M.Sc for teachers' qualification

For areas of specialization, the teachers were grouped into six namely:

- NCE (Social Studies)
- NCE (Non-Social Studies)
- BA, B.Sc., B.Ed (Social Studies)
- BA/B.Sc./B.Ed (Non-Social Studies)
- Other higher degrees (social studies) and
- Other higher degrees (non-social studies).

For teaching experience, the teachers were grouped into four namely:

- 1 – 10 yrs.
- 10 – 20 yrs.
- 20 – 30 yrs.
- 30 yrs and above.

Data Analysis

- Research Question One:** Will students' academic performance in social studies be related to teachers' qualification in the subject? Table 1 below gives the summary of the performance of students in the social studies test taught by the different categories of teachers.

Table 1. Teachers Qualification and students' academic achievement.

Teachers' Qualification	Nos. of Students taught	Nos. of Teachers	Mean Score of Student
NCE	40	1	21.8
B.Sc/BA/B.Ed	200	6	50.3
PGDE	80	1	51.2
M.Ed/M.A/M.Sc.	80	2	51.6
Total	400	10	47.89

From table 1, one can observe that the students taught by degree and higher degree holders have higher mean performance than those taught by NCE holders.

The mean of students taught by NCE graduates had a mean score of 21.8. The mean score of degree holders' students was 50.3; PGDE holders' students had 51.2 and the master's degree holders' students mean score was 51.6. Consequently one can say that student's achievement in social studies was related to teachers' qualification. Therefore one can conclude that there is a relationship between teachers' qualification and students' academic achievement in social studies.

Research Question II: Is there any relationship between teachers' years of teaching experience and students' academic achievement in social studies? The analysis is presented in table II below.

Table II: Teachers' teaching experience and students' academic achievement in social studies.

Teaching Experience (in years)	Qualification	Nos. of Teachers	Means Score
10 (years)	NCE/B.A/ B.Sc./Ed. Social Studies	1	40.1
10 – 20		3	50.5
20 – 30		2	50.6
30 and above		2	49.5
Total		6	41.2

Table II summarizes the teaching experience and students' academic performance in social studies. Teachers with first degrees and higher degrees in social studies were used for the analysis. The table shows that the higher the experience of the teachers the higher the mean score of the students in social studies. Except the students that were taught by over thirty years experienced teachers. Hence there was no relationship between teaching experience and students' performance in social studies.

Research Question Three: Is there any significant difference in the academic achievement of students taught by specialist and non-specialist social studies teachers? The analysis is presented in table III below.

Table III: Difference in academic achievement of students taught by specialists and non-specialists social studies teachers.

Variable	Population		Students' Scores	Mean Score
	Teachers	Students		
Specialists	9	360	17796	49.43
Non-specialists	1	40	1400	35
Total	10	400	19196	47.99

Calculated "t" = 0.516; Table "t" = 1.65; Degree of freedom = 0.05

Table III summarizes teachers' areas of specialization and students' achievement in social studies. The performance of students taught by social studies specialists was higher, 49.43, while the mean score of students taught by non-social studies was 35. In view of this, the finding has shown that area of specialization was related to students' academic achievement in social studies. However when subjected to the "t" test statistic, the difference was discovered insignificant at 0.05 alpha level.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results of the study show that teachers' qualifications and areas of specialisation were related to students' academic achievement in social studies. The findings show that teachers who have in-depth knowledge of the subject as well as equipped with the right pedagogical techniques will teach the subject better. Relevant knowledge by teachers is necessary to place social studies firmly on the road map in order to actualise its envisaged objectives in particular and the national educational objectives in general.

However, the lack of relationship between students' academic achievement in social studies and teachers' teaching experience (30 years and above, table II) could be traced to burn-out effects. The more a teacher stay on the job the less the productivity due to disillusionment- a product of lack of job satisfaction in the teaching profession in Nigeria.

In view of the above it is hereby recommended that regular in-service training be organised for serving teachers. In addition, efforts must be made to improve the welfare package for teachers to reduce the burn-out effects on serving teachers.

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