

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS AND SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between English Language teachers' qualifications and senior secondary students' performance in composition writing in Jos North Local Government area of Plateau State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted all the SS2 students in the 21 public schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. These were 740 female students and 694 male students giving a total of 1434 SS2 students from which a sample of 105 students was selected using simple random sampling technique. The sample comprised 100 students and 5 teachers. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire tagged Questionnaire on Teachers' Qualification and Students' Achievement in Writing (QTQSAW). The data collected were analysed using simple percentage to answer the research questions and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that students' performance in composition writing was generally poor. The results also revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and the performance of SS2 students in writing, and that female students performed better in writing than male students. It was, therefore, recommended among others that teachers of English should patronise necessary material resources, such as textbooks, technology, and writing software, to support effective composition teaching and learning; Government should ensure that teachers hired to teach composition writing have the necessary qualifications, such as degree in English or a related field; and Federal and State Ministries of Education should offer regular professional development opportunities for teachers of English to improve their skills and knowledge in teaching composition writing.

Keywords: Teachers' qualification, students' performance, writing skills.

Introduction

Globally, the quality of education is influenced by various factors, including the qualification of teachers. Teacher qualification is a critical component of educational quality and effectiveness. Teacher qualification encompasses aspects such as educational background, training, experience, and certification. Despite the current trend in the use of technologies in education, teachers are hardly replaceable by any scientific technological devices. Hence, their qualification is imperative (Goshe, 2015). The prominence teachers occupy in the training of young minds is a justification of the popular saying that no education system can rise above the level of its teachers. This means that the system of education being operated through pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels would not be qualitative and standardized to serve its purpose of fulfilling its stipulated goals to the Nigerian society without qualified or quality teachers. It goes to say that teachers' qualification plays a pivotal role in all levels of societal development.

Teachers' qualification, including academic degrees, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy studies, and professional development, are positively correlated with students' academic achievement (Adewale&Ojo, 2018). This is evident in countries such as India and Pakistan, where disparities in teacher qualifications exist, with a significant proportion of educators lacking formal training. Kumar (2019) states that the diversity in teacher qualifications correlates with variations in student performance across such countries. In the Americas, teachers' qualifications vary widely between countries. For instance, in the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that over 50% of public school teachers hold a master's degree or higher (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2017). This higher level of qualification is associated with better student outcomes compared to countries like Brazil, where teacher training programs face challenges in maintaining quality and consistency (Fernández&Székely, 2020).

Furthermore, Europe exhibits a relatively high standard of teacher qualifications overall. According to Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, the majority of teachers in European countries possess tertiary education qualifications (Sahlberg, 2011). This trend contributes to comparatively strong student performance across the continent, although variations exist between Eastern and Western European countries. Besides, according to UNESCO, in countries like Japan and South Korea, a high percentage of teachers hold advanced degrees, contributing to strong educational outcomes (Lee & Lee, 2018).

In Nigeria, teacher qualifications play a crucial role in shaping students' performance. According to recent statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)(2022), only 67% of primary school teachers across the country possess the minimum qualification of a National Certificate in Education (NCE) or its equivalent (Adeyemi, 2019). This highlights a significant gap in teacher qualifications, which can potentially affect the quality of instruction and students' academic performance. Adewale and Ojo (2018) add that inadequate teacher qualification is associated with lower academic performance among students. Over the years, the state of writing skills among secondary school students in Nigeria has been a matter of concern to scholars and stakeholders in education (Akoko, 2024). Thus, it was of interest to this study to find out whether or not students' performance is related to the qualification of English language teachers. This is imperative as studies have shown that the teaching of writing skill is a complex process that requires effective instruction of a teacher who is informed by subject matter and methods (Adesanya, 2020).

It is important to note that writing proficiency is not only a fundamental academic requirement but also a critical skill in communication and professional success. However, writing is considered the most difficult language skill, as it builds on the other three skills of listening, speaking, and reading (Akoko, 2024). The Nigerian secondary school curriculum mandates the teaching of writing skills by English Language teachers, with students required to obtain at least a credit pass in English Language at the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) to gain admission into tertiary institutions. However, reports (Adesanya, 2020; Akoko, 2024) have consistently revealed that students' writing skills are predominantly deficient, with poor

performance in essay writing at the senior secondary school level.

Efforts directed at improving students' achievement in composition writing have not yielded the desired result. These efforts include deployment of innovative methods for teaching writing, use of debates, public speaking, dialogue classes, speeches and talks in and outside the class, narrative activities, and telling of interesting stories or favorite movies (Adewale&Ojo, 2018). Consequent upon the impasse, it is important to shift attention to other factors which could be responsible for the problem. This is as the challenge could lie in the effectiveness of teachers due to their qualification level, which in turn could affect the quality of writing instruction received by students. This necessitated an investigation into the relationship between English Language teachers' qualifications and the performance of senior secondary students in composition writing, hence this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the qualification of English language teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State?
2. What is the level of performance of SS2 students in composition writing in Jos North LGA?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' qualification and the performance of SS2 students in composition writing in Jos North LGA?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and the performance of SS2 students in writing skills in Jos North LGA.
2. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in writing skills in Jos North LGA.

Methodology

The population of this study consisted of all the SS2 students in the 21 public schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. These were 740 female students and 694 male students giving a total of 1434 SS2 students from which a sample size of 105 was selected using simple random sampling technique. The sample comprised 100 students and 5 teachers. This was done using "fishbowl" method. In the fishbowl method, the total population of the study is captured. The researcher tagged all the schools on a piece of paper by assigning each school with alphabets. This is to say, the 21 schools that make up the population were tagged "A – U", each school representing a specific alphabet. This is gathered uniformly in the researcher's sampling list on pieces of paper for each school. The papers were then rolled up and shuffled randomly, and two papers containing letters were picked. The researcher, therefore, picked letters "J", "K", "O" and "P", which represented four schools selected for the study.

The research design adopted for the study was the survey design. The survey method allows the researcher to gather data based on opinions, observation and little experienced of the researcher on the topic. Survey design using questionnaire and interview presents the best way to get data accurately because it allows for generalisation of the research result on the entire population of the sample used in the study. This informed its choice for the study.

The instrument for data collection in this study was a questionnaire tagged Questionnaire on Teachers' Qualification and Students' Achievement in Writing (QTQSAW). The QTQSAW was developed by the researcher and all items emanated from the research questions and hypotheses of the study. Each question had a list of options and respondents were required to tick only the correct space according to their opinions. The questionnaire had two sections: A and B. Section A comprised demographic characteristics of the respondents such as Age, Sex, Class, and School; while section B contained enquiries based on the aim or content of the study. The study

adopted the closed-ended questionnaire using the 5-point Likert with responses such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

To ascertain the validity of QETASCS, the instrument was submitted to one expert in the English Unit of the Department of Arts Education, University of Jos; and one expert in Research, Measurement and Evaluation of the Department of Education Foundation, University of Jos. This process is to enable the validator ascertain the face and content validity of the instrument. This was done to ensure that the relevance and appropriateness of the instrument for data collection is determined. On the other hand, the reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient and reliability test of 0.82.

Afterwards, two research assistants were recruited and trained for one day (24 hours) to help in the collection of data. The focus of the training was on the purpose and content of the study and how to guide the respondents to fill out the questionnaire. The researcher visited the schools for the study and obtained permission from the various principals to conduct the study. The instrument was administered using two research assistants. The respondents in the schools independently filled out the questionnaire. The researcher and assistants, therefore waited and collected the questionnaire. This was to ensure proper filling and maximum return of the questionnaire and to avoid external influence on the respondents' responses to the items. The checklist was completed by the researcher.

The data generated through the questionnaire were collated and computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v. 25) and subsequently presented using frequency tables to present the data and interpret it as well. The tool for answering the research questions was the simple percentage method presented in Frequency Tables and Charts processed through SPSS. Meanwhile, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results here are based on the three research questions raised and two null hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The data were presented in tables for better and easier understanding of the results obtained.

Research Question One

What is the qualification of English language teachers in Jos North LGA?

Table 1: Demographic Data of Teachers Containing Academic Qualification

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gender:			
Male	2	40.0	40.0
Female	3	60.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	
Marital Status:			
Single	2	40.0	40.0
Married	3	60.0	100.0
Separated	0	0.0	0.00
Divorced	0	0.0	0.00
Academic Qualification:			
SSCE	1	20.0	20.0
NCE	1	20.0	40.0
B.Ed	2	40.0	80.0
M.Ed	1	20.0	100.0
Other	0	0.00	0.0
Years of Teaching:			
0-5 Years	1	20.0	20.0
6-10 Years	2	40.0	60.0
11 – 15 Years	1	20.0	80.0
16 years and above	1	20.0	100.0
Total	119	100.0	

Table 1 above shows the personal characteristics of the respondents/teachers in public schools in Jos North LGA, Plateau State. From the table, there were teachers from both gender (male and female) with different marital status, academic qualification and years of experience. However, majority of the respondents are female who had B.Ed. and 6-10 years of teaching experience in English Language.

Research Question Two

What is the level of performance of SS2 students in writing skills in Jos North LGA?

Table 2: Level of performance of SS2 Students in Writing Skills

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Decision
6	My students generally demonstrate a strong understanding of grammar and punctuation in their English compositions	1	1	0	2	1	2.8	Rejected
7	The majority of my students can effectively organize their ideas in a clear and logical manner in their writing	1	1	0	1	2	2.6	Rejected
8	Most of my students are able to use evidence and examples to support their arguments in English composition	1	0	1	2	1	2.6	Rejected
9	My students show significant improvement in their writing skills over the course of the academic year	0	1	1	1	2	2.00	Rejected
10	The overall quality of my students' writing skills meets or exceeds gradelevel expectations	0	1	1	2	1	2.4	Rejected

Cumulative Mean = 2.50

From table 2, the calculated mean score for Item 1 (2.8) is lower than the mean criterion (3.00), therefore the statement, “my students generally demonstrate a strong understanding of grammar and punctuation in their English compositions,” is rejected. The calculated mean score of Item 2 (2.6) is lower than the mean criterion (3.00) which shows the assertion, “the majority of my students can effectively organize their ideas in a clear and logical manner in their writing,” is rejected. Item 3 has a mean score of 2.6 which is lower than the mean criterion of 3.00, indicating that the notion stating “most of my students are able to use evidence and examples to support their arguments in English composition” is rejected. Item 4 shows a mean score of 2.00 which is lower than the mean criterion of 3.00 indicates the notion that “my students show significant improvement in their writing skills over the course of the academic year” is rejected. In addition,

item 5 has a mean score of 2.40 which is below the mean criterion of 3.00, indicating that the statement stating “the overall quality of my students' writing skills meets or exceeds grade-level expectations” is rejected.

Research Question Three

What is the relationship between teachers' qualifications and the performance of SS2 students in composition writing in Jos North LGA?

Table 3: Relationship Between Teachers' Qualifications and the Performance of SS2 Students in Composition Writing

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Decision
1	My advanced degrees and certifications in English positively impact my students' performance in English composition.	2	2	0	1	1	4.2	Accepted
2	My professional development experiences enhance my ability to teach English composition effectively	1	2	1	1	1	3.8	Accepted
3	My years of teaching experience contribute to my students' improved writing skills	3	1	0	0	1	4.0	Accepted
4	The subject-specific training I have received helps me better support my students in their writing skills	1	1	0	1	2	2.60	Rejected
5	My knowledge and expertise in English composition enable me to provide high-quality lessons that improves my students' writing performance	1	1	0	1	2	2.60	Rejected

Cumulative Mean = 3.44

From table 3, the calculated mean score for item one (4.2) is greater than the mean criterion (3.00), therefore the statement indicating that “my advanced degrees and certifications in English positively impact my students' performance in English composition” is accepted. The calculated mean score of item two (3.8) is greater than the mean criterion (3.00) which shows the assertion that “my professional development experiences enhance my ability to teach English composition effectively” is accepted. Item 3 has a mean score of 4.0 which is greater than the mean criterion of 3.00, indicating that the notion stating “my years of teaching experience contribute to my students' improved writing skills” is accepted. Item 4 shows a mean score of 2.60 which is lower than the mean criterion of 3.00 indicates the notion that “the subject-specific training I have received helps me better support my students in their writing skills” is rejected. And Item 5 has a mean score of 2.60 which is above the mean criterion of 3.00, indicating that the statement stating that “my knowledge and expertise in English composition enable me to provide

high-quality lessons that improves my students' writing performance” is rejected.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and the performance of SS2 students in writing skills in Jos North LGA

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Table of Relationship Between Teachers' Qualification and the Performance of SS2 Students in Writing

		Teachers' Qualification	Students ' Performance
Teachers' Qualification	Pearson Correlation	-0.02	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.071
	N	105	105
Students' Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.003	-0.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	
	N	105	105

* Denotes correlation significant at 0.05 leve

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Table 4 indicates the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient results for the relationship between teachers' qualifications and the performance of students in composition writing. From the analysis it is clear that there is a statistical significant relationship, ($r = -0.02$, $P < 0.05$). This means that teachers' qualification variable has a significant relationship with performance of students. The implication is, since the person value (r) is 0.02 which is less than the p value of 0.05, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and the performance of SS2 students in writing skills in Jos North LGA and accept the alternate hypothesis stating that there is a significant relationship between teachers' qualification and the performance of SS2 students in writing skills in Jos North LGA.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in writing skills in Jos North LGA.

Table 5: ANOVA of Difference in Performance of Male and Female Students in Composition Writing in Jos North LGA

Group	Mean	S.D	N	Sig.
Male	41.09	19.21	105	0.000 ^a
Female	78.15	41.15	105	

* Denotes significant level at 0.05 level

The results obtained in table 5 shows a difference in the performance of male and female students in writing skills in Jos North LGA. Since the mean score of male students is 41.09 while that of

female students is 78.15. The difference between the means is high (37.06). This is also true from the standard deviation. The difference was low (21.94). According to the results, these mean differences were found to be significant, ($P=0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in writing skills in Jos North LGA is rejected. Thus, is a significant difference in the performance of male and female students in writing skills in Jos North LGA.

Discussion

Findings of the study showed that students could not clearly express their ideas and arguments in writing. They also find it hard to properly use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling in their written assignments. They do not organize their writing logically, with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. They do not effectively use examples to support their points in essays and reports and they do not revise and edit their writing to improve clarity before submitting assignments. The study also discovered that students generally do not demonstrate a strong understanding of grammar and punctuation in their English compositions which affects their level of performance. This corroborates Ajayi (2010) who observed that the level of performance of students is low. It means that conscious effort should be made by relevant stakeholders in education to improve students' achievement in composition writing.

The results further revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' qualification and the performance of SS2 students in writing skills. The study discovered that the writing skills of students are affected by inability of the teacher to explain difficult concepts clearly to increase the performance of students, but teachers do not always explain everything clearly about writing for the students to understand. Also, teachers' experience and qualifications make students feel more confident in their ability to succeed in writing. Students do not believe that teachers' knowledge and expertise in writing help them to have good writing skills and as such, the students often score below average in writing in test and examination. This is in agreement with Ogunlade (2017) who maintained that students' level of performance cannot go beyond the level of qualification and years of experience of the teacher.

Conclusion

As evident in the findings of this paper, the writing ability of students could be traced largely to the teacher factor. Precisely, students' writing skills are greatly determined by students' advanced qualifications, professional development experiences, and their years of teaching experience. Without a doubt, teachers with advanced qualifications, professional development experiences and more years of teaching experience possess enhanced instructional skills and subject knowledge, enabling them to effectively impart writing techniques and foster a deeper understanding of written expression. Their skills directly impart the skills of students in writing. Consequently, students' proficiency translates into improved academic performance among students, as they employ pedagogical strategies tailored to cultivate writing skills comprehensively. Therefore, this study concludes that qualified teachers inspire a genuine interest in writing by creating engaging learning environments and providing meaningful task and feedback. In fact, the impact of teachers' qualifications extends beyond mere academic instruction and encompasses fostering enthusiasm for writing, enhancing writing proficiency, and promoting equitable outcomes across diverse students. As such, it is crucial to lay emphasis on teachers' qualification in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers of English should patronise necessary material resources, such as textbooks, technology, and writing software, to support effective composition teaching and learning.
2. Government should ensure that teachers hired to teach composition writing have the necessary qualifications, such as degree in English or a related field.
3. Federal and State Ministries of Education should offer regular professional development opportunities for teachers of English to improve their skills and knowledge in teaching composition writing.
4. Curriculum planners should establish a well-structured writing curriculum that outlines clear learning objectives, instructional strategies and assessment support.
5. School administrators like Principals should pair experienced teachers with less experienced ones to provide guidance and support in teaching composition writing.

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