



**STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN COMMERCE:
EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
CHARACTERISTICS IN CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

The objective of the study is to examine the relationship between teacher's characteristics and academic performance in Commerce among Senior Secondary School Students. The study specifically examine the relationship between teachers qualification, teachers' year of experience and academic performance in Commerce among Senior Secondary School Students. Two null hypotheses were raised from the objectives. Literature was reviewed according to the variables of the study. The study adopted the ex-post facto design. The sample of the study comprised of 280 Senior Secondary School senior student randomly selected from 14 secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis. Data for the study was gathered using structured questionnaire Data collected from the field were collated, coded and the appropriate statistical tools were applied. Data analysis was done using frequency, simple percentages while mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment correlation test were used to analyse the hypotheses at a significant level of 0.05. Results revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher's qualification, teachers' years of experience and student academic performance in Commerce among Senior Secondary School Students. The study recommends among others that in hiring effective teachers, school management should not look only at qualifications of the teachers. There are various factors that can be considered, such as the experience, age, gender, attitudes and social behavior of teachers that may holistically contribute to students' academic achievement.

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1. Introduction

Education is a very important human activity. It helps any society fashion and model individuals to function well in their environment. According to Boit, Njoki and Chang'ach (2012), the purpose of education is to equip the citizenry to reshape their society and eliminate inequality. It is widely regarded as a basic human right, a key to enlightenment, and a source of wealth and power (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Education is critical to industrial and technological development, with the history of developed nations bearing records of this and developing nations aspiring to realize the same status have to put a premium on it. Education is a cooperative teaching-learning process of preparing an individual from birth and all through his/her life for happy useful living in the society within the culture and resources (Oyekan, 2000). It then follows that education is a social service which ensures refinement of human behavior in terms of his/her processes of reasoning, feeling and doing things in a happy expectancy.

Teachers at all levels of education play the decisive role in pivoting the growth and the direction of education. It is an acceptable fact that teacher is the most important cog in the educational machine and that teachers are highly instrumental to the success of any educational programme embarked upon by any government. This is because apart from being at the implementation level of any educational policy, the realization of these programmes also depends greatly on teacher's dedication and commitment to their work (Adeniji, 1999; Ukwayi, Angioha, & Ojong-Ejoh, 2018). Secondary Education is an important sector in national and individual development. It plays a vital role in creating a country's human resource base at a level higher than primary education (Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo & Mualuko, 2007; Awhen, Abunimye & Ipuole, 2014; Enu, Unimna & Odidi, 2017). Provision of quality secondary education is therefore important in generating the opportunities and benefits of social and economic development (Onsumu, Muthaka, Ngware & Kosembei, 2006). One of the indicators of quality of education being provided is cognitive achievement of learners (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO], 2005).

Sadly enough, in recent time the products of Nigeria's secondary school can no longer compete favourable with their counterparts from other parts of the world. The reason for this is not far-fetched. It is simple that the quality of education has fallen. To buttress this point, Esu (2006) opined that there is a near national outcry on the poor quality of Education in Nigeria. Also, commenting on this, Ige (1997) noted that the scripts of some of our secondary school were unreadable and far beyond comprehension. According to Rivkin, Hanusheck and Kain (2005), there has never been consensus on the specific teacher factors that influence students' academic achievement. Researchers have examined the influence of various teacher characteristics and how they affect students' academic performance. They include teachers' qualification and academic performance.

Teachers' years of experience and student academic performance, teachers' gender and student academic performance and teachers age and student academic performance in Calabar, Cross River state, Nigeria. This study will empirically investigate the relationship between these teachers' academic characteristics and student performance in Commerce.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the poor academic performance of students has become a worrisome phenomenon among stakeholders in Education, especially when it comes to commerce. For instance, poor performance of students in their Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) commerce -has been of immense concern to both the parents and educators. According to the results from the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) of 2000 on commerce, the failure rate was 44.07, in 2001 it was 43.02%, and in 2002 it was 42.61%, while in 2003 the failure rate was 33%. In 2014 the statistics revealed that only 29.27% of students, who sat for WAEC passed commerce; while the most recently released WAEC results of 2018, showed that only 38.68% of students passed (Fapohunda, 2018; Ukwayi, Angioha & Aniah, 2019).

The above trend shows that failure rate in each succeeding year is on the increase and did not indicate any improvement. This is certainly disturbing and calls for urgent action to remediate the situation in order to enhance academic performance of students, thus salvaging the education sector out of nagging problem. Though factors responsible for the continuous poor performance of students in commerce have to some extent been dealt with in literature, but yet the students' poor performance in commerce still needs remediation and since, the teacher occupies a central position in the educational sector, there is a general belief that no education system can rise above the quality of teachers in the system. Hence, this study seeks to examine the relationship between teachers' characteristics and students' academic performance in Commerce in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between teachers' characteristics and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically seeks to;

- 1) Examine the relationship between teachers' qualification and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.
- 2) Determine the relationship between teachers' year of experience and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School students.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to articulate this study, the following questions were raised for the study;

- 1) What is the extent of the relationship between teachers' qualification and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria?
- 2) Is there any relationship between teachers' years of experience and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students?

1.4 Statement of Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between teachers' characteristics and students' academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary Schools Students in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically examine the relationship between teachers' characteristic variables such as teachers' qualification, teachers' year of experience, teachers' gender and student academic performance in commerce. The institutional scope of the study is secondary schools. The geographical scope of the study is limited to Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The time scope of the study is limited to 8 months.

1.6 Study Area

The study was carried out in Calabar Metropolis, Cross river state, Nigeria. Calabar Metropolis is made up of two local Government Area, namely, Calabar South and Calabar Municipal council. It is the capital of Cross River State of Nigeria. It is located in the South South geo-political Zone of the country between longitude 04° .57" North and 08° .21" East, South of the equator (Charles & Charles, 2004). It has a heterogeneous landscape with undulating surface spanning 427.05 sq. km, which terminates in Qua River at the eastern flank, Calabar River at the Western and Southern flanks, and at the evergreen forest belt of Ikot Omin dominated by rubber plantation in the Northern flank. According to the National Population Commission (2006), the population of Calabar is estimated at 328,877 with a density of 980 persons per square kilometer (Agba, Nkpoyen & Ushie, 2010; Angioha, Nwagboso, Ironbar & Ishie, 2018). Thus making it the most populous single city in the state owing largely to rural–urban and urban–urban migration. National population commission (2007) also revealed that there are about 74,580 households in the metropolis.

The Metropolis lies within a tropical region with well-marked rainy and dry seasons. The wet season starts from May and spans to October while the dry season starts from November to April (Ekiji, Nwosu & Agba, 2011) Calabar Metropolis is a large urban center in Cross River State and for administrative convenience. Historically, Calabar is the settlement of the Efiks, Quas and Efuts (Effiong – Fuller, 1996); but because of

migration occasioned by socio-economic activities, Calabar metropolis is today a cosmopolitan society with mixed bag of people from different cultural backgrounds. Economically, Calabar is a seaport, an airport town, a market for agro-produce from the hinterlands and home of many industrial outlets. Calabar is home to two tertiary institutions and a host of both government and private secondary schools scattered around the metropolis.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Teachers Qualification and Students Academic Performance

The quality of education of a nation could be determined by the quality of her teachers. The most important factor in improving students' achievement in mathematics is by employing seasoned qualified teachers in all schools (Abe & Adu, 2013; Unimna, Odey & Ekuri, 2019 Attah & Angioha 2019). Okuruwa (1999) and Ukwayi, Uko and Udida (2013) found that policy investment on quality of teachers is related to improvement in students' performance. Specifically, the measurement of teacher's preparation and certification are correlates of students' achievement in science and mathematics.

Unanma, Abugu, Dike, and Umeobika, (2013) examined the relationship between Teacher's academic qualifications and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Chemistry. The area for the study was Owerri West LGA. A case study of four secondary schools formed the research design. Teacher's academic qualifications and the SS I student's third term result formed the data which was analyzed using simple percentage and Pearson Correlation. Three research questions were answered and the findings of the research revealed that there is a positive relationship between the teacher's academic qualifications and student's academic achievement.

Abe (2014) study examined the effect of teachers' qualification on students' performance in mathematics. Three hundred students were randomly selected from ten schools that were purposively selected from sixteen secondary schools in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State and used as sampled for the study. The qualification of the teachers was used as the criteria for selection of mathematics teachers. The three hypotheses in the study were tested using t-test statistic. The results showed that a significant difference existed in the performances of students taught by professional teachers and nonprofessional teachers. Musau and Abere (2015) study was to look into the extent to which teacher qualification influenced students' academic performance in SMT subjects. The findings of the study further revealed that majority of the teachers of SMT subjects were trained graduates, most of them had attended in-service or refresher courses which resulted in slight improvement in the students' performance in SMT subjects.

Jega and Julius (2018) examined the effects of teachers' academic qualification and experience on students' achievement and interest in mathematics. The sample was made up of two hundred and twenty (220) senior secondary students and fifty (50) mathematics

teachers from two (2) secondary schools in Jega education zone of Kebbi State. One hundred and ten (110) students and five (5) mathematics teachers were selected from each school, using random sampling technique. The findings from the study revealed that all teachers' academic qualification and experience when taken together made significant effects on students' achievement in mathematics.

Ojera, (2016) study was to determine the impact of teacher qualification on the performance by Migori County public primary pupils in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. The objective of the study was to determine the extent to which Teacher qualification affects pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Migori County. The study's finding was that students taught by teacher with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teacher with low qualifications.

2.1.2 Teachers Years of Experience and Student Academic Performance

Abu and Fabunmi (2005) discovered that there is a significant and positive relationship between teacher's qualifications, age, years of experience, teacher-learners ratio, and adult learners' academic performance. Chhinh and Tabata (2003) in their study on the effects of selected teacher factors on the Mathematics achievement of urban primary school pupils in the state of Cambodia, used questionnaires and achievement test to construct an index of academic performance. The results of the stepwise regression analysis revealed that teachers' economic status, their years of teaching experience and job satisfaction have statistically significant relationships with the achievement of the pupils whose economic status had been held constant. Adeyemi (2008) examined teachers' teaching experience and students learning outcomes in the secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria, using questionnaire. The result of the chi-square test, correlation analysis, and t-test statistic revealed that teachers' teaching experience was significantly related to students' learning outcomes.

Ewetan and Ewetan (2015) study findings on the influence of teachers' teaching experience on the academic performance of public Secondary School Students in Mathematics and English Language in Ado-Odo/Ota and Ifo Local Government Areas in Ogun State, reveal that teachers' teaching experience has significantly influenced students' academic performance in Mathematics and English Language as measured by their performance in the SSC examinations and as perceived by the respondents. Schools having more teachers with above 10 years teaching experience achieved better results than schools having more teachers with 10 years and below teaching experience.

Agbo-Egwu, Adadu, Nwokolo-Ojo and Enaboifo (2017) study investigates the effect of teacher's teaching experience on the academic performance of Secondary School Students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in the three senatorial zones of Benue State, Nigeria. Findings reveal that teachers teaching experience significantly influenced students academic performance in SSCE examinations and as perceived by the respondents. Schools having more teachers with above 10 years teaching experience achieved better results than schools having more teachers with 10 years and below teaching experience. The result also shows that

perception rather than skills is the major impediment on the side of students and teachers in improving the study of STEM related subjects.

Yusuf and Dada (2016) study examined the impact of teachers' qualification and experience on students' performance in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Two Colleges of Education in Kaduna state were used for the study. The results revealed that a significant difference existed in the performance of students taught English language by professional and experienced teachers.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Bean Psychological theory of student performance. Bean (1980) developed the psychological theory of student performance by asserting that the school characteristics of students must be taken into consideration in order to understand their integration and performance in school. According to this theory, Bean (1980) further contends that the ability of students to perform well in school are influenced by their school environment such as teacher's behaviors. These behavior might affect the degree to which the student is satisfied with the institution. The level of satisfaction might increase the level of academic performance.

In 1985, Bean and Metzner developed a theory on nontraditional students. According to Bean and Metzner (1985), these are older, part-time and commuter students. The attrition of these students is mostly affected by the internal environment such as school environment, teacher's characteristics, and classroom ergonometic rather than social integration variables such as friends which tend to affect traditional students. In applying this theory to the study, teacher's characteristics such as qualification, years of experience etc. has an impact on student's academic performance.

4. Materials and Methods

The study adopted the ex-post facto design. Ex-post facto design is defined as an empirically based investigation which does not involve the researcher's direct control over the independent variables because they have already led to effects which can no more be manipulated. The ex-post facto design was used because the researcher was not able to manipulate the variable of the study (Ojong, Iji, & Angioha, 2019). The population of the study comprises of all the Senior Secondary School class three students in all the 23 government secondary schools in both Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Area offering Commerce as at 2018/2019 academic session totaling 3656 (2329 from Calabar Municipality and 1,327 from Calabar South) out of which 1516 are boys and 2140 are girls (Secondary Education Board, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria). The study adopted the stratified random and purposive sampling techniques In selecting 20 commerce student from 14 secondary schools class that offered Commerce, making the sample 280.

Data for the study was gathered using a structured questionnaire titled: “Teachers Characteristics and Student Performance Scale” (TCSPS) comprising three sections. Section A of the instrument sought information about the personal data of the teachers. Section B of the instrument comprised questions on the independent variable, while Section comprise of question on the dependent variable. Data collection was done in the selected schools. The researcher visited the selected school to familiarize with the school authority and secondly, the school teachers helped with the instrument after given the students number. The instrument was then distributed to the students after which their teachers helped with the collection of the instrument. Data collected from the field were collated, coded and the appropriate statistical tools were applied. Data analysis was done using frequency and simple percentages while mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation test was used to analyse the hypothesis at a significant level of 0.05. Results were presented in charts and Tables.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Senior Secondary School
 Three Students in Calabar Metropolis

S/N	LGA	No of Schools	Male	Female	Total
1.	Calabar Municipality	16	1408	1880	3288
2	Calabar South	7	983	1220	2203
	Total	23	2391	3100	5491

5. Findings

5.1 Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between teachers qualification and student academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is teacher’s qualification while the dependent variable is student academic performance in commerce. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Teachers’ Qualification and
 Student Academic Performance in Commerce

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Teachers Qualification	280	6.63	1.22	0.811**	.000
Student Academic Performance in Commerce	280	15.00	2.55		

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 278; critical r value = 0.098.

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The result in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r – value of 0.811* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 278 degrees of freedom. By this result, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between teachers qualification and student academic performance in commerce among Senior

Secondary School Students. While the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. The squared correlation $(0.811)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 65.7% of the variance in academic performance in commerce is accounted for teachers' qualification. The magnitude of effect is high; therefore, we can conclude that, the there is a statistical significant relationship between teachers qualification and student academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.

5.2 Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and student academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is teachers' years of experience while the dependent variable is student academic performance in commerce. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Teachers' Years of Experience and Student Academic Performance in Commerce

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Teachers' Years Of Experience	280	6.19	1.69	0.754**	.000
Student Academic Performance in Commerce	280	15.00	2.55		

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 278; critical r value = 0.098.

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The result in Table 3 revealed that the calculated r – value of 0.754* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 278 degrees of freedom. By this result, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and student academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students is rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. The squared correlation $(0.754)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 56.8% of the variance in student academic performance in commerce is accounted for by teachers' years of experience. The magnitude of effect is high; Therefore, we can conclude that, the there is a significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and student academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings, it was concluded that students thought there is a statistical significant relationship between teachers qualification and student academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students. Implying that the kind of academic qualification that a teacher has most time determines the academic performance of students in Secondary School. It was also concluded that there is a significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and students' academic performance in commerce among Senior Secondary School Students, implying that the number of years that a teacher has spent teacher commerce will determine the impact he or she will have in impacting the knowledge of commerce into her student.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- 1) Hiring effective teachers, school management should not look only at qualifications of the teachers. There are various factors that can be considered, such as the experience, age, gender, attitudes and social behavior of teachers that may holistically contribute to students' academic achievement.
- 2) Government should encourage experienced teachers to stay on the job by providing them with more incentives and fringe benefits. The promotional prospect of the teachers should also be improved.
- 3) More male teachers should be employed to teach commerce in the secondary schools than females.

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