

THE ENGLISH TEACHER'S PROFILE AND HIS STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8285161>

Abstract

This is a position paper on the effect of the teacher's profile on the interest, learning and performance of his students in English Language. By teacher's profile here, we look at the teacher's certificate, experience and attitude towards the teaching of English Language. Secondary sources of data were considered and logical conclusions were made based on the literature of notable educators in the field of English. It was discovered that there is a high relationship between the teacher's profile and the students' interest and performance in the subject, the higher the teachers' profile, the higher the interest rate and performance of the students. Variables looked out for under profile include the teacher's qualification, experience, mastery of subject matter and attitudes towards work, students and their parents. Based on the findings, it was recommended that competent and qualified teachers should be employed to teach English Language and that continuous in-service training, seminars and workshops should be organized to update the teachers' knowledge periodically. Welfare packages should also be put in place to encourage teachers on the field.

Keywords: English Language, Interest, Qualification, Student's Performance, Teacher's Profile.

Introduction

It is not an overstatement to say that teachers occupy a very sensitive position in schools. Without the teacher, effective teaching and learning cannot take place. Qualified and dedicated teachers with a high mastery of the teaching of English Language are indispensable tools to students' excellent performance in the school. The continuous decline in students' performance in English Language in Secondary Schools has been attributed to many factors such as teachers' qualification and lack of commitment. Many people who teach English Language have no business in the noble profession, either that they are not interested in teaching the subject or they don't have much knowledge about the subject.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study include;

- i. ascertaining if there is any relationship between the teachers' profile and the performance of his students in English Language.
- ii. investigating the criteria involved in producing qualified English teachers.
- iii. determining variables involved in improving the academic performance of students in English Language at various examinations.
- iv. identifying the factors responsible for the improvement of the academic performance of secondary school students in external examinations in English Language and by extension, other subjects.

Research Questions

- i. What are the effects of teacher's profile on the performance of Secondary school students in external examinations?
- ii. What are the criteria for producing qualified teachers?
- iii. Is there any relationship between the general low performance of students and teacher's qualification?
- iv. What are the factors that can improve the academic performance of secondary school students in external examinations in English Language and by extension, other subjects.

Methodology

The main objective of this paper is to ascertain if there is any relationship between the teachers' profile and the performance of his students in English Language. To do this, different relevant literatures will be reviewed on the subject and conclusion be subsequently made.

Literature review

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Who is a teacher?

A teacher is that person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competence or value via the practice of teaching. He could also be seen as a person who builds up, instructs, trains and guides his students for healthy growth and stable adult life. A teacher's job transcends that of teaching to that of moulding young lives, guiding youths, motivating students and the general character training (Majasan 1995, Ofojebe and Ezugoh 2010). The role of a teacher is often formal ongoing, and carried out in a school or other places of learning. Aromolaran (2019) defined an effective teacher as an individual who has undergone training and is certified to impart knowledge, skills and positive attitude in the learner. He is expected to have possessed adequate experience in pedagogy and esoteric knowledge to guide the learner to attain achievable goals. He is believed to have been certified by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). Usman (2012) asserts that a qualified teacher is one who holds a teaching certificate and/or is licensed by the state, owns at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution and well qualified in his/her area of specialization.

The teacher occupies an important place in any classroom context if the desired learning outcome is to be attained. There is no doubt that the personality of the teacher affects his students, overtly or covertly. The teacher's ideology, carriage and other special traits are all being monitored by the students. And being a role model, the likely hood of the students following his footsteps abound. Farrant (1980) believed that the good teacher should possess some characteristics that are worthy of emulation. He should be humorous, energetic, humble, kind and friendly.

Onwuegbu (1979), in analyzing the qualities of a good teacher states that a good teacher is not necessarily one who is fluent with words or one who dishes out knowledge. Rather, a good teacher, according to him, must possess the following qualities;

- i. He must know his subject.
- ii. He must possess a registered certificate to teach.
- iii. He must express himself fluently with the official language of instruction – English.

A certified teacher is one who has earned credentials from an authoritative source such as the government, a higher institution or a private source. This teacher qualification gives the teacher authorization to teach and grade in pre-school, primary or secondary schools. Ogho (2011) said that a teaching qualification is one of a number of academic and professional degrees that enables a person to become a registered teacher. Such teaching qualifications include the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PDE), Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) and Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE).

A study by Adeogun (2011) found that the quality of any education system depends on the quality of the teachers as no system can rise above the quality of its teachers (you cannot give what you don't have.)

Some of the objectives of an effective teacher are:

- to encourage students achieve success by building a virile teacher-student relationship.
- to help students acquire skills, knowledge and attitude
- to instill valuable learning such as skills, competence and positive attitudes to students.
- to ensure effective communication takes place during teaching/learning process
- to create a conducive classroom environment devoid of hostility and fear.
- to teach students from simple to complex, known to unknown and from concrete to abstract.
- to help students make discovery and solve their social and academic problems.
- to act as a parent to the students in and outside the school
- to identify individual differences in students and help them overcome peculiar challenges

Duties of an effective teacher

- He prepares for his lectures as assigned (prepares his notes of lesson and teaching aids ahead of class)
- He evaluates his teachings to know of problem areas that he may need to re-teach.
- He directs students learning activities and helps the students to satisfy their peculiar needs
- He imparts knowledge, skills and right attitude on the learner. For him to do this, he himself must have knowledge, skill and experience in the subject matter.
- He must ensure that the appropriate instructional materials and methods are applied in his teaching.
- He must teach according to the syllabus and his guided materials.
- He enforces discipline among the students.

The teacher education covers teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

Teaching Skills include providing training and practice in the different techniques, approaches and strategies that would help the teacher to plan and impart instruction, provide appropriate instruction and reinforcement and conduct effective assessment. It includes effective classroom management skills, preparation and use of instructional materials and a good communication skill.

Pedagogical theory has to do with the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that enable the teacher to have a sound basis of practicing teaching skills in the classroom. This theory is stage-specific and it is based on the needs and requirements that characterize a particular stage.

Professional skills encompass the techniques, strategies and approaches that would help teachers to grow in the teaching profession and also work towards its growth. This includes soft skills, counselling skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills, information retrieval and management skills and above all, life-long learning skills.

An amalgamation of teacher skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills would serve to create the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting wholistic development.

The teacher of English as a Second Language

The teacher of English as a second language in Nigeria is one who is specially trained in all the ways discussed earlier and also has a high knowledge of English Language and its teaching (that is, the appropriate teaching methods to be used for different topics).

The study of English in the Secondary School

The teacher of English as a second Language in the Secondary School is expected to have an in-depth knowledge of the teaching of the following aspects of English as taught in the Secondary school;

- Reading Comprehension
- Essay Writing
- Grammar
- Summary Writing

The teacher must have a mastery of the four language skills thus, listening, speaking, reading and writing and how to incorporate these in his everyday lesson. That means that, during every lesson, students must listen to the teacher and classmates. They must answer the teacher's questions and also speak to their classmates using Standard English (Adebanjo 2020). The students must also read and write during the lesson; this is the best way to help students develop their communication skills in English Language.

English teachers have long lasting impacts on the lives of their students and the greatest teachers inspire their students towards greatness. Obaigbena (2017) asserts that within a school, if an English teacher is well educated, intellectually alive and takes keen interest in the performance of his job, it reflects in the academic performance of his students in English Language examinations. The qualification of the teacher therefore must be given a pride of place as the teacher cannot give what he does not have.

A number of studies carried out indicated the need for qualified and standard teachers' academic qualification in English language. Such studies assert that English teachers should receive appropriate training in his subject area so that his classroom instruction could be above board. This will bring positive academic performance of English students especially those preparing for their final examinations. Rubba (2015) indicated that teachers of English language have special needs

which can only be met by undergoing trainings that can certify him fit to handle the special needs of his students, that of effective communication in and outside the school.

For a teacher to be effective, he has to be able to perform the following tasks effectively:

- Organize his/her students to learn through activities
- Use good questioning techniques to recall facts from comprehension and application of principles.
- Utilize audio-visual aids whenever appropriate to generate and sustain the interest of learners.
- Organize and hold meaningful discussions with the students.

Desirable Work Habits of a Teacher

Aromolaran (2014) posited some of the desirable work habits and social behaviors that promote team spirit in the school environment as:

- being punctual at school and classes.
- avoidance of gossip, petitions, bickering, backbiting and unnecessary jealousy.
- possession of good conduct and loyalty to the management
- friendliness with parents, guardians, students, super-ordinates, contemporaries and subordinates
- dressing properly to the school and other school activities.
- ensuring that criticisms are constructive, genuine and concise.
- readiness to work extra hours.

The effective teacher of English must endeavour to do the above and more as directed by the higher authority.

English language, generally speaking, is encompassing programmes that equip recipients with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitude that will enable him to succeed in whatever business endeavour he may engage in, and invariably, enhancing economic development.

For teaching and learning to be effective, relevant methods and strategies must be adopted by the teacher who is the distributor of knowledge in order to capture and sustain learners' interest in the subject being taught and learnt. Variable teaching and learning conditions as well as teacher quality are quite imperative for the achievement of teaching and learning objective in English Language.

Teaching, according to Overbaugh (2013) is the science and art of assisting a person to learn. To him, teaching entails the use of acquired knowledge from natural and behavioural science in order to help appreciate the circumstances and personality of the learner while the art of teaching involves the use of creative and demonstrate skills in aiding the delivery of instruction. For Ogwu

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and Oranu (2010), teaching is a partnership between the teacher and the student which ultimately leads to permanent change in the behaviour of the student. The nature of teaching art is so complex and integrated that its dimension scope and outcome need to be planned carefully and systematically even before teaching commences.

Considering all that has been mentioned, this paper therefore recommends that teacher's profile and his teaching experience affect the level of students' performance, having a degree in English language will help the language teacher in the delivery of the subject. Workshops, seminars and continuous in-service training are necessary for the English teacher in order to avail him with recent teaching methods in the Language. The English Language teacher should be conversant with the Language laboratory and should use it often with his students especially when dealing with oral drills. An individual who is fluent in English is not necessarily a good teacher of the language and may not be able to impart effectively to the students.

Most English teachers get so relaxed once they obtain their degree. The same method of teaching employed several decades ago when they were employed as teachers by their employer remains intact. They have not bothered to improve on their skills, neither are they informed of the latest in the teaching of English Language. This should be discouraged as the government and school owners train and retrain the teachers. The government, school owners and organisations such as the British Council and have been of huge support in the training and re-training of the teachers of English Language in Nigeria. Teachers of English should avail themselves of this great opportunity.

Several English Language Associations are also out there to help connect teachers to seminars and workshops by English Language. An Association such as ELTAN is a good example. English Language teachers are enjoined to exploit the opportunity by registering as members.

It has also been noticed that teachers generally find it difficult to spend their 'hard earned' salaries on such things as subscription to Associations, Journals etc. English teachers should look beyond the paltry sum to the value such training adds to them. It goes a long way and is invaluable.

Employers of English teachers also could be of help by inviting experts to their schools to train their teachers as a group without them necessarily going out of their comfort zone. By so doing, both sides would have benefited immensely.

In addition to the very good degree a teacher of English possesses, there is need for him to be IT compliant. We have English teachers who do not know how to handle android phones, how much more, computer. Conscious, concerted efforts should be made to learn. The world has become a global village indeed.

Conclusion

According to Olanrewaju (2014) students' low performance in any subject is as a result of the teachers' ignorance and lackadaisical attitude. Ferguson and Ladd (2011) also opined that teachers' qualification does not only matter in students' achievement but are also major variables in improving the students' learning and achievement. Qualification and experience are important variables in the efficiency of the teacher. Teachers with long years of teaching experience impact more on the students' performance than teachers with short years of teaching experience. This is due to the fact that a professionally skilled teacher is skilled in the rudiments of teaching, has mastered his subject area and can relate well with students, parents and even colleagues on the field.

The following shortfalls were noticed in the study carried out:

1. Most English teachers do not organize practical lessons. English teachers often often than not, use their native language in the class sometimes to explain certain facts.
2. Some teachers teaching English language do not possess the necessary qualifications to teach the language. This was prevalent in the private schools where teachers who read Mass Communication and other Arts subjects were seen teaching the language, probably because they speak good English.
3. Fluency in English does not necessarily make an effective English teacher.
4. A qualification in English Language is a necessary prerequisite for teaching the language at the senior secondary school level.
5. There were no English Language laboratories in most of the schools visited.

Recommendations

For teachers to live up to expectation, the government and school owners must ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to motivate the teachers. Some of these measures are;

- Further training and in-service training should be encouraged
- There should be regular promotion and commendation for the teachers
- Materials needed for effective teaching should be supplied.
- Job security will encourage teachers to put in their best.
- Good working environment will encourage teachers to do their best.
- Medical\ Welfare packages should be made available to teachers and their wards\ families
- Recreational facilities will boost the teachers' morale.
- The education of teachers' children should free to the university level
- Fringe benefits will go a long way in retaining teachers and increase productivity.

These and so many others will enable teachers put in their best so as to be more effective and this inevitably will affect the performance of the students in English language.

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