

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND MORALE AS DETERMINANTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS' STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract.

This study looked into how teachers' attitudes and morale affected the academic achievement of students in public secondary schools, Delta State, Nigeria's. The study used descriptive design. The population for the study consisted of every teacher in the public secondary schools. A multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure was used and 375 teachers were selected. Data were gathered using a questionnaire called the Teachers Attitude and Morale and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (TAMSAPQ). Two specialists from the University of Delta, Agbor's Department of Educational Administration and Measurement verified the questionnaire. The instrument's reliability was evaluated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, a reliability value of 0.81 was found, indicating that the instrument was trustworthy. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The Z-test was performed at a significance level of 0.05 to test the null hypotheses while the mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research questions. The outcome showed that pupils' academic performance in Delta State's public secondary schools is influenced by the attitude and morale of the teachers. Based on its findings, the study proposed, among other things, that school administrators host a number of conferences and seminars on work ethics.

Key Words: Teachers, Attitude, Morale, Academic Performance, Secondary School

Introduction

In Nigeria and other countries, education is a powerful weapon for socio-economic and political development. Education is a vertical instrument of change in the intellectual and social orientation of any society (Valentine, 2003). This is also supported by the National Policy on Education (FGN 2004), which argued that education would continue to hold a prominent place in the country's National Development Plans.

However, in order to achieve excellent education and good student performance, teachers and students must be aware of their duties as those who teach and study in the school system. Teachers, play a crucial part in the whims and caprices of the educational system since they are the pivot on which it is built. Because they control the caliber of instruction delivery, teachers have a favorable or negative impact on the teaching outcome. They must be taken into account when discussing topics like quality assurance and quality delivery (instruction, context, and learning outcome). According to Obadara (2005), teachers are crucial to the efficient operation of the educational system and are crucial to the progress of education.

One important indicator of the efficacy and success of any educational system is the academic performance of the pupils (Adedeji, 1998, as cited by Olubukola, 2018). There is a drop in

students' academic performance in public exams like the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) of Nigeria, according to many education experts, opinion leaders, and observers. Some attribute this apparent fall in academic performance on the students. Most people hold teachers responsible for the issues in our schools, and teachers hold parents and students accountable. Additionally, the government bears some responsibility for the lack of appealing service conditions and a favorable work environment. It should be noted that a lot of factors, including the teachers' attitudes and feelings about their jobs, affect the academic success of the students.

As a notion, attitude is concerned with a person's way of living, acting, and behaving (Tamukong 2017). An attitude is the preparedness to react in a way that gives behavior specific instructions. The ability to teach as a profession depends on the teachers' mental health, subjectmatter expertise, personality, social skills, and most crucially attitude (Adeyemi, 2019). In this regard, the learners draw from the teachers' disposition to build their own attitude, which may affect their learning outcome. A teacher who has a positive attitude towards his or her job can easily induce the desired adjustments in his or her students. Classroom practices are significantly shaped by teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning a subject (Tamukong 2017). According to Gezahegne and Yineboh (2010), this suggests that people with a positive attitude will work to invest their efforts based on how much they positively value the program and how they believe it will function. A teacher with the correct attitude would always look for ways to improve the self-image of these kids so they can grow up with a keen interest in learning.

Morale is the whole feeling of assurance that an individual has toward a group of individuals, particularly if it has an impact on willingness and discipline (Seroka, 2009). Haddock (2010) also posited that morale is an abstract idea that describes how a group feels toward the organization to which it belongs. According to Raja and Kumar (2015), a teacher's overall job happiness, the climate in the classroom, and the elements that seem to support his personal prosperity all contribute to his or her morale. The effectiveness of a teacher's instruction is influenced by their morale (Nuzhot and Mahmood, 2015). The morale of the teacher plays a key role in generating a positive work environment and the tone of the school. Low teachers' morale may result in a decline in production, whereas high morale is defined by interest and excitement for the profession (Govindarayan 2012). Since teachers interact with children frequently, their basic attitudes, behaviors, tastes, and mannerisms are likely to have an impact on their students. As a result, the teacher sets the emotional tone in the classroom by remaining composed and cordial. In reality, teachers' attitudes and morale can have a favorable or bad impact on pupils' attitudes toward learning. Unfortunately, it is still unclear to what extent male and female; and experienced and less experienced teachers' attitudes and morale affect their students' academic achievement in Delta State's public secondary schools. This study was created to bridge this knowledge gap.

Theoretical foundation

The following theory is addressed in this theoretical background:

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1991)

Bandura's social learning theory, which demonstrates that behaviors are learned by observing another person practice them, is focused with the interaction approval to learning. According to the theory, since behavior is a learnt process, personality may be investigated in terms of the

cumulative impacts of a number of learning events. The most fundamental and important principle of social learning, according to Bandura, is reinforcement. After seeing a model of a behavioral sequence in action, we want to replicate it, depending on the kind of reward the behavior receives.

As a result, what teachers like or dislike, appreciate, and how they feel about their learning or studies may have a big impact on their students. Teachers are always role models for students, and this study suggests that this is true. More important than what they teach can be how they conduct and engage with the students. The way a person feels, acts, and is committed to their professional work is reflected in their attitude toward their vocation. It is certain that a teacher's performances would improve and his efforts will be fruitful if he or she is dedicated and optimistic.

Review of the Context and Literature

A person's manner of thinking, acting, or behaving is what is meant by their attitude (Tamukong, 2017). An attitude is the readiness to act in a way that directs behavior. A career in teaching offers highly specialized intellectual services. Students' academic performance is always improved by changing classroom procedures and reflecting teachers' attitudes and views about a subject. This seems to be the case mainly because individuals with a positive outlook are more likely to spend their time and effort if they have a favourable opinion of the program and believe it will work as intended (Gezahagne and Yinebeb).

The teachers attitude towards the subject and students is significant in creating a desire to learn. Also gender and the type of training are the paramount factor influencing the attitude of teachers.

According to a 2013 study by Ranjha, Tayyab, and Alam, there was no discernible difference between the participants' attitudes toward the teaching profession. According to Babalola and Fayombo (2009), male and female instructors have similar views on how teachers' attitudes affect students' academic achievement. Additionally, according to Fredrick (2008), there was no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of male and female teachers and students' academic achievement. Ibiri (2012) discovered that gender alone has little bearing on academic achievement, but when combined with other factors like teachers' attitudes and morale, it does.

According to Wirth and Perkins' (2013) research, teachers' attitudes had a big impact on their students' academic achievement. Additionally, Mucella, Melis, and Ahu (2011) looked into how students' personalities and academic performance were impacted by teachers' attitudes in Istanbul, Turkey. The results of their study demonstrated that both students' personalities and academic performance are favourably impacted by teachers' upbeat attitudes.

According to Seroka (2009), morale is the overall feeling of optimism or confidence that a person or group of people has, particularly if it has an impact on their willingness and discipline. According to Haddock (2010), morale is an abstract idea that describes how a group or individual feels about the organization to which they belong. According to Raja and Kumar (2015), a teacher's overall job satisfaction, the environment in which he works, and the elements

that appeal to his particular preferences all contribute to his or her morale. When it comes to the execution of the curriculum and educational policies, teachers have a significant impact on the quality of education. They also determine the instructional delivery quality. Teachers must have strong morale in order to be efficient and functioning in this regard. Particularly in a school context, the environment of the school and the management's attitude toward employee welfare are linked to workers' morale in achieving the organization's goals. It is a common belief that low teacher morale will result in consistently subpar student performance in all educational settings.

Ibukun (2001) proposed that teachers' needs, goals, derived values, experience, and expectations shape their sense of morale. Teachers are likely to lack dedication to their jobs if these demands are not addressed. Teachers' incapacity to cover the important topics on the syllabus is due to their lack of commitment. These teachers merely give homework to mask their incompetence. All of these could have a detrimental effect on students' academic achievement. It is obvious from observation that teachers' attitudes may have an impact on students' academic achievement. Omotosho (2006) asserted that one of the most important variables affecting students' academic success is their teachers' morale. According to him, teachers' morale has the power to improve students' academic achievement.

Additionally, Suja (2007) supported the idea that both more and less experienced teachers' professional commitments are influenced by their morale. In reality, it has long been believed that a secondary school's successful student performance is influenced by the morale of both experienced and less experienced teachers. According to Harris and Sass (2008), both more and less experienced teachers' morale significantly affects students' academic performance. Additionally, Wayne and Young (2003) proposed that both experienced and less experienced teachers in the actual classroom produce superior student performances when they have a good or high morale.

The discussion so far suggests that students' attitudes toward learning are somewhat influenced by the morale and attitude of their teachers. This study was created to bridge the knowledge gap about the extent to which the attitude of male and female teachers; and the morale of experienced and less experienced teachers affect students' academic performance in Delta State's public secondary schools.

Problem Statement

Any nation's development and the health of its society depend heavily on education. The effectiveness of the education system is therefore vital. While Nigeria is improving its educational quality, particularly secondary education, its performance in that sector has been declining. It goes without mentioning that students' academic performance in the National Examination Council Secondary School Certificate Examination (NECO SSCE) and West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) has been extremely subpar. Along with this, there is the specific center for external exams and the steadily rising rate of examination fraud. Concern among parents, teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the education system is still high due to this subpar performance. Numerous problems have been recognized as the main causes of the low performance status, including a lack of teachers and books, the selection of pupils with low entry scores, inadequate teacher monitoring, and

unfavorable working conditions for teachers. Few studies, meanwhile, have looked at teachers' attitudes and morale as equally significant variables that can affect students' academic success. The teaching efficiency that improves student learning and their overall higher performance depends on the attitude and morale of the teachers. The attitude and morale of the teachers are reflected in their choice of pedagogical practices, instructional tactics and behavior in the classroom. A teacher that is passionate about their job will go above and beyond to make sure their students comprehend the material. Additionally, a teacher with strong morale would be eager to show up to class frequently, whereas the opposite is true if the teacher has low morale. It is important to look into male and female teachers' attitudes; and morale of experienced and less experienced teachers as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, given the significant influence that teachers have on students and how they affect the classroom learning process.

Objectives of the Study

This study's main goal is to investigate how teachers' attitudes and morale affect students' academic achievement in Delta State's public secondary schools. The specific goals of this research are to:

1. Ascertain the impact of male and female teachers' attitudes toward teaching and learning on the academic achievement of students in Delta State, Nigeria's public secondary schools.
2. Investigate the impact of experienced and less experienced teachers' morale on students' academic achievement in Delta State, Nigeria's public secondary schools.

Research Questions:

To direct the investigation, the following research questions were posed.

1. How does student academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, relate to male and female teachers' attitudes toward teaching?
2. How does the academic success of students in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, depend on the morale of experienced and less experienced teachers?

Hypotheses

The investigation was guided by the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of how teachers' attitudes affect students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers in terms of how much their morale affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria

Methodology

The research was conducted as a descriptive survey using a correlations research design. All of the teachers in Delta State, Nigeria's public secondary schools made up the study's population. Respondents' selection from the population was done using the multi-stage random sampling technique. Five Local Government Areas were chosen at random from each of the three Senatorial Districts for the first stage. In the second stage, five schools from each local government region were randomly chosen. In the end, there were 75 schools from the State and

25 from each Local Government. The selection of 5 teachers from each of the chosen schools is the last step. 375 teachers made up the entire sample. The Teacher Attitude and Morale and Student Academic Performance Questionnaire (TAMSAPQ) was the research tool employed in the data gathering for the study. When administered to 25 teachers who were not involved in the study, the instrument's internal consistency was assessed using the Cronbach alpha statistics, and a coefficient of 0.75 was found. The instrument had been validated by experts in educational administration and measurement. The researchers, along with three research assistants, administered the instrument. With a criteria mean of 2.50, mean and standard deviation were employed to respond to the study questions. The hypotheses were tested using the Z-test with a significance threshold of 0.05.

Presentation of Findings.

Research Question 1

How does students academic achievement in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, relate to male and female teachers attitude towards teaching.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation for male and female teachers on attitude of teachers and students academic achievements.

| S/N | Items | Male Teachers No:225 | | | Female Teachers No:150 | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|------|----------|------------------------|------|----------|
| | | \bar{X} | Std | Decision | \bar{X} | Std | Decision |
| 1 | Teachers attend classes with regularity with adequate instructional materials | 3.21 | 0.20 | Agree | 3.21 | 0.24 | Agree |
| 2 | Teachers often teach from known to unknown | 3.22 | 0.20 | Agree | 3.17 | 0.24 | Agree |
| 3 | Teachers display a thorough knowledge of the subject matter | 3.30 | 0.20 | Agree | 3.21 | 0.24 | Agree |
| 4 | Teachers use students activities as template | 3.45 | 0.22 | Agree | 3.07 | 0.24 | Agree |
| 5 | Teachers always discipline students for attending classes late | 3.29 | 0.20 | Agree | 3.04 | 0.24 | Agree |
| | Grand mean & Std | 3.29 | 0.20 | | 3.14 | 0.24 | |

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of male and female teachers on how the attitude of teachers toward teaching influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Delta State. The grand mean of 3.29 and 3.14 for male and female teachers respectively. This shows that both male and female teachers agree that the attitude of teachers has influence on the academic performance of students.

Research Question Two

How does the academic success of students in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, depends on the morale of experienced and less experienced teachers?

Table Two: Showing mean and standard deviation of responses for experienced and less experienced teachers on morale and students' academic performance.

| S/ N | Items | Experience Teachers No. 180 | | | Less Exp. Teachers No. 195 | | |
|---------|---|--------------------------------|------|----------|-------------------------------|------|----------|
| | | \bar{X} | Std | Decision | \bar{X} | Std | Decision |
| 1. | Morale of teachers are high when delivering lesson in the class. | 3.32 | 0.24 | Agree | 3.28 | 0.22 | Agree |
| 2. | The use of instructional materials improve morale of teachers towards teaching | 3.23 | 0.22 | Agree | 3.21 | 0.22 | Agree |
| 3. | Engaging students in the field trips help boost teachers' morale and improved students academic performance | 3.17 | 0.22 | Agree | 2.91 | 0.20 | Agree |
| 4. | Participating in decision making improved teachers morale on the job and contribute academic performance | 3.24 | 0.22 | Agree | 3.36 | 0.22 | Agree |
| 5. | Evaluating students learning helps to boost teachers moral and improves students academic performance | 3.12 | 0.22 | Agree | 3.17 | 0.22 | Agree |
| | Grand mean &Std | 3.21 | 0.22 | Agree | 3.18 | 0.21 | Agree |

In classifying into experienced and less experienced categories, the mode, median and mean were calculated for their reported years of teaching experience. The mode was 10 years, the median was 10 years and the mean was 11 years. Consequently, 10 years was taken as the dividing line. Those who have taught for more than 10 years were classified experienced teachers while those who have teaching experience of 10 or less years were considered as less experienced. Table two shows the grand mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.22 for experienced teachers, and mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.21 for less experienced teacher. Both the experienced and the less experienced teacher agreed on all items with average mean sector above the standard criterion value of 2.50. This implies that the level of teachers' morale influence the academic performance of students in public secondary.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of how teachers attitudes affect students academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Z- test of significant difference between male and female teachers on teachers attitude and students academic performance. Significant at 0.05.

| Respondents | N | \bar{X} | Std | Z-Cal | Z-Critical | Decision |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------------|----------|
| Male teachers | 225 | 3.29 | 0.20 | 1.07 | 1.96 | Accept |
| Female teachers | 150 | 3.14 | 0.24 | | | |
| Total | 375 | | | | | |

Table 3 shows the Z-test analysis of the significant difference between male and female teachers on how teachers attitude to work influence the academic performance of students in public secondary school. The result revealed that at 0.05 level of significant, the calculated Zscore value of 1.07 was lower than the Z-critical value of 1.96. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female teacher on how teachers attitude influence the academic performance of students in public secondary school in Delta State, is hereby accepted.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers in terms of how much their morale affects students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Z-test analysis on teachers’ morale and academic performance of students Significant at 0.05

| Respondents | N | \bar{X} | Std | Z-Cal | Z-Critical | Decision |
|----------------------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------------|----------|
| Experienced teachers | 180 | 3.21 | 0.22 | 0.30 | 1.96 | Accept |
| Less- Experienced teachers | 195 | 3.18 | 0.21 | | | |
| Total | 375 | | | | | |

In classifying teachers into experience and less experience, the mode, median and mean were calculated for their reported years of teaching experience. The mode was 10years , the median 10years and mean was 11years consequently, 10years was taken as the dividing line. Those who have taught for more than 10years were classified experienced teachers while those who have teaching experience of 10 or less were considered as less experienced.

Table 4 shows the Z-test analysis of teachers’ moral and students’ academic performance. The data denotes that the Z-calculated value of 0.30 is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers on how the level of teachers morale influence the academic performance of student in public secondary school in Delta State, is hereby accepted.

Discussion of the Results

The researchers discussed the study's findings in accordance with the order in which the data were evaluated, referencing pertinent literature to support the conclusions. According to the first research question, both male and female teachers agreed that students' academic performance is influenced by the attitudes of their teachers. Additionally, hypothesis one showed that there are no differences between male and female teachers' perspectives on how teachers' attitudes affect students' academic achievement in Delta State's public secondary schools. The results showed that teachers' attitudes positively affect pupils' academic achievement. This supports the claim

made by Wirth and Perkins (2013) that teachers' attitudes greatly influenced their students' academic achievement. The study also support the assertion of Babalola and Fayombo (2009) that male and female teachers do not differ in their opinions as regards the impact of their attitude and the academic performance of students. As a result, teachers have a duty to model good attitudes in the classroom and select teaching methods that will improve students' academic achievement.

The results of research question two also indicated that in Delta State's public secondary schools, teacher morale had an impact on students' academic achievement. The second hypothesis also showed that there is no difference in the judgments of experienced and less experienced teachers regarding how teacher morale influences students' academic achievement. This result concurs with Omotosho's (2006) contention that one of the most important elements affecting students' academic success is teacher morale. Additionally, according to Nuzhat and Mahmood (2005), teacher morale is a reliable measure of how productive a school is. It is also in line with Harris and Sass (2008), observation that the morale of experienced and less experienced teachers is a great determinant of the academic achievement of students. In actuality, teachers' morale determines how well they can teach and has the power to improve students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

The study looked at how much teachers' attitudes and morale affect public secondary school students' academic achievement in Delta State. According to the study, teachers' attitudes and morale have an impact on their students' academic achievement. As a result, a teacher's attitude and morale (which are related to how they feel about their working environment) are essential factors that control their attitude and, as a result, can predict how effectively they will deliver content, which in turn affects students' academic performance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in light of the findings and study's conclusion. In order to improve students' academic performance, the government should:

1. Ensure that teachers attend regular seminars and workshops to keep their expertise current.
2. Ensure that teachers' wages and benefits are paid when due in order to enable them to live comfortably and support students' top academic achievement.
3. Make sure that teachers and the community where they teach get along so they can give the students of the community the greatest education possible.
4. Ensure that all instructional resources and school facilities required to facilitate teaching and learning are made available to improve teachers' attitudes, mindset and morale of teachers toward their work.
5. Whenever they are in the classroom, teachers should make sure they have the correct attitude.
6. To improve kids' academic performance, make sure the learning and teaching environment at the school is conducive.

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