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Teacher Factors as Predictors of Students' Achievement in English Language in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract – English Language is a compulsory subject at all levels of education and a prerequisite for admission into higher institutions in Nigeria. However, students' achievement in the subject is poor. This underachievement has been attributed to some teacher factors (attitude towards English teaching, teaching experience, teacher's content knowledge and text utilization). Previous studies focused largely on univariate influence of these factors without consideration of their composite and relative contribution to students' achievement. This study adopted a descriptive research survey design. Four research questions were raised and ten randomly selected public senior secondary school two students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area and two instruments were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant relationship between teacher factors and students' achievement in English Language (R^2 = 0.616, $F_{(4, 19)}$ = 0.431, p0.037). There were relative effects of the factors on students' achievement- teacher attitude (R^2 = 0.808, $F_{(4, 19)}$ =0.242, p0.002), teaching experience (R^2=0.536, $F_{(4, 19)}$ = 1.492, p0.031), teacher's content knowledge (R^2 = 0.801, $F_{(4, 19)}$ = 1.335, p 0.041) and text utilization (R^2 = 0.594, $F_{(4, 19)}$ = 0.209, p0.023) Teacher attitude was considered the factor that predicts students' achievement in English most. It is recommended that instructional materials should be provided for English Language teachers, they should be sponsored to workshops, seminars and conferences and their salaries should be paid promptly in order to improve on their attitude, content knowledge and text utilization.

Keywords: Teacher factors, teacher attitude, teaching experience, content knowledge, text utilization, students' achievement.

1. Introduction

English language in Nigeria is a product of trans-Atlantic slave trade, missionary activities and the most influential of all, colonization and it is still maintained after independence. The reason for the adoption of English as the official language of the country was because it is multilingual and heterogeneous. Lewis, Gary and Charles (2015) report that there are 527 indigenous languages in Nigeria. Out of this, 520 are said to be living and seven are extinct. However, Kolawole (2016) explains how this figure was arrived at by Lewis et al. that 20 of the living languages are institutional, 77 are developing, 353 are vigorous, 27 are in trouble and 43 are dying. This complex nature of language situation in Nigeria probably led the government to adopt a neutral language, English, as her official

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language.

English is taught to ensure an attainment of native-like competence necessary for national and international intelligible communication. The most important of the functions of English is educational enhancement. It is taught at all levels of educational system in Nigeria, and a pre-requisite for admission into any tertiary institution. With reference to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), English is the medium of instruction right from the upper primary to tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. This is based on the general belief of people that knowledge of English helps in understanding other school subjects since it is used to teach all other subjects. Some might even equate the knowledge of English to the level of intellectual ability and literacy which could be seen as a way to success in life.

The above assumption being the case, it was discovered that there is a decline in the achievement of students in English in certificate examinations and this reflects in their performance in "The Use of English" which is a compulsory university course for all undergraduate students. To buttress this statement. Many studies have been conducted by scholars on the likely problems or factors responsible for this poor achievement. This is because most prospective candidates find it difficult to gain admission into tertiary institutions and it is not so encouraging considering the investment made in the educational sector by the government, parents and other stakeholders in education.

Onukaogu (2002) in his study, reported that various factors such as absence of vigorous and robust language policy, inadequate materials and infrastructure for teaching the language, and unequipped teachers, among other factors, are responsible for this ugly trend. It is assumed by the public that the bulk of the blame is on the teacher because he is the social agent that brings about a change in the behavior of the learner. The study into the teacher-related factors as predictors of students' achievement in English language is necessitated by the loud cry that the standard of performance in English is falling. It is quite fundamental to note that teachers' attitude to work, content knowledge, working experience and text utilization go a long way in influencing their effective performance as well as the outcome in students' performance. Teachers are known to be nation builders and this they do by imparting relevant knowledge in the learners.

Attitude towards a subject denotes a positive or negative predisposition towards the subject. Most students come to school ready and willing to learn. How the teachers can best foster and strengthen their predisposition to ensure that they leave school with the right motivation and capacity to continue learning

throughout life remain a matter of great concern. Without development of the right attitude, teachers may not be well prepared to impart the new and relevant knowledge and skills necessary for the students to achieve excellence in their academic pursuit. Teachers' commitment towards work becomes visible in promoting and maintaining their positive behavior. This is also very important to encourage the students to learn.

It takes a competent teacher to be able to teach the language skills effectively and to make his learners competent users of the English language (Fakeye, 2012). In the submission of Anderson (1991), educators have to realize that any meaningful improvement in education that students require is highly dependent on the quality of the instruction that the teacher provides while Kimberly (2005) stated that teachers must be knowledgeable in their area of study. Effective teaching could be measured by the level of the teachers' content knowledge which Mullens (1993) had earlier regarded as a prone predictor of students' learning and performance.

The teachers' teaching experience has direct causal effect on students' achievement in English language. If a teacher is inexperienced and ineffective, students will achieve less or no progress academically. Many studies have established that inexperienced teachers (those with less than three years of experience) are typically less effective than experienced ones. The benefit of experience appears after about five years, especially in non-collegial work settings. (Donna, 2007). However, Raw (2003) affirmed that teachers with experience in the profession turned out students with higher academic performance. This may be due to the fact that these teachers are able to harmonize the minds and emotions of their students in the classroom and in the end, produce better academic achievement in their students.

Another factor that can predict students' achievement in English is text utilization. Many teachers use old notes in teaching the students while little or no effort is made in updating their knowledge in the content area. English language being a living subject, is not static as it accommodates new phenomena in its morphology, syntax and semantic as time and occasion permit. Many teachers would not consult relevant textbooks for additional information while some would not even use the prescribed text for the students. No meaningful work would be done if the content knowledge is not updated or inadequate. All these will make the students' achievement in the subject poor.

Studies have been carried out on the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of English language. For instance, Wilhelm (2006), submits that the attitudes of

teachers towards their work determine their productivity. Achieving a meaningful result or increasing the students' standard of performance in English language largely depends on teachers' attitude towards teaching. Teachers' attitudes are considered as a major predictor of achieving a good performance in English language. Teachers' attitude or commitment towards work is very important to encourage the students to learn.

Research findings on teachers' attitudes (Brunning, Schraw and Ronning, 1999), established the following facts: Teachers' characteristics such as personal teaching efficacy, modeling and enthusiasm, caring and high expectation promote students' motivation and performance. The characteristics are also associated with increase in the students' academic performance. Teachers' attitude can be defined as the degree of positive or negative effect of their teaching on the subject at hand. The teacher should be a friend, philosopher and guide.

The mastery of subject matter is an essential component of teacher characteristics. If anything is to be regarded as a specific preparation for teaching, priority must be given to a thorough grounding in what to teach. Boscardin (2003) found a significant positive relationship between teachers' expertise and students' performance in English language. To uphold teaching skills, there is a need for continuous updating of knowledge and development of competence. Most teachers have been found to possess a generally low level of grammatical and phonological knowledge of English language (even those that claim to be graduates of English studies) as well as inadequate skills in the content area. The teachers' lack of content knowledge in the subject would lead to inability to deliver effective English language instruction in classroom setting. Subject matter knowledge or competence is a strong variable indicating students' performance. Adediwura and Bada (2007) stated in their study that nobody could teach what he or she does not understand or know.

The importance of experienced teachers in schools has been highlighted by many researchers (Akinleye, 2001; Ogundare, 2001; Commeyra, 2003). They submit that experience improves teaching skills while students or pupils learn better at the hand of teachers who have taught them continuously over a period or for years. Although effective teaching demands lengthy training and practice, Barley and Monk (1994) believed that many ESL teachers in public schools have gained experience without much formal training. On the other hand, young teachers just entering the profession may leave their university training with limited practical experience, in spite of strong theoretical preparation. Derwing (1991), Pica and Long (1986) found some quantifiable differences between experienced and

inexperienced teachers. They found experienced teachers to be more fluent and used more relatively WH questions than inexperienced ones while, Yala and Wanjohi (2001) and Adeyemi (2007) in their studies, found that teaching experience is one of the prime predictors of students' academic performance. Experience is one of the very few observable teacher characteristics that is consistently correlated with achievement, and its effect is among the strongest, especially for some subjects such as Elementary Science, Mathematics and English.

Text availability and utilization of textbooks play an important role in the achievement of educational goals, objectives and students' performance in all subjects. Quality education cannot be achieved without educational resources (textbooks) which play an important role in students' performance. They facilitate teachers' work and accelerate learning on the part of the students.

Ngala (1997) noted that utilization of materials is more important than its possession or acquisition. This is supported by Cohen (2003) who points out that it is not making materials available or acquiring them that matters, but getting those materials utilized by teachers and students to get academic content learned. He also noted that central to the education process are the educational resources which play an important role in the achievement of educational objectives and goals by enhancing effective teaching and learning. Akinsanya (2010) commented that educational resources are important because the goal of any school depends on adequate utilization of prescribed material resources and other relevant textbooks among others as they enhance teaching and learning. A study by Altbach (1993) noted that nothing has ever replaced the printed word as the key element in the educational process and as a result, textbooks are central to teaching and schooling at all levels. The text that teachers use differs and this is determined by their perception of the grammatical, structural and phonological relevance of the content of the text, both to them and their learners. It is believed that most teachers depend solely on their old textbooks without any attempt to update their knowledge and the content already in use over time. It is also believed that for effective and productive teaching-learning exercise to take place, teachers must access necessary information materials and resources.

2. Theoretical Framework: Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation

Maslow propounded this theory in 1972. The theory states that man's behaviour is controlled by both internal and external factors; and that they are hierarchal in nature, meaning that some needs are more powerful than others, and as these needs are satisfied, other higher needs emerge. We all know that the most

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important educational goal is for students to learn. Another goal is to make this newly gained knowledge and information purposeful and meaningful to the students so that it may be retained and useful throughout their lives. An essential factor in meeting this goal is motivation. This theory has a great impact on performance. Teachers' attitudes often times are influenced by motivation, because if they are motivated, they will exhibit a positive attitude towards their work. It is the motivators that will make them love to remain in the profession, and over time, they gain more experience in their content knowledge and text utilization. This theory is related to this study because teacher attitude would determine how well he or she acquires knowledge and this would spur him or her to acquire relevant texts in his or her content area. The aggregate of these constructs determines the experience the teacher has.

3. Research Questions

- What is the relationship between the teacher factors and students' achievement in English language?
- What are the composite effects of the teacher factors on students' achievement in English language?
- What are the relative effects of the teacher factors on students' achievement in English language?
- Which of the teacher factors will predict students' achievement the most?

4. Significance of the study

This study aimed at seeing the existing relationship among the teacher-related factors in the teaching-learning exercise that can affect students' achievement in English language. It also aims at examining the English teachers' attitudes towards teaching English, their content knowledge, teaching experience and text utilization as they affect students' achievement in English language. It is believed that at the end of this research, every stakeholder concerned in the realization of educational aims and goals of teaching and learning English language, will benefit a great deal from the findings and recommendations of this research.

5. Scope of the study

This study was carried out in selected secondary schools in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria while English Language teachers in Senior Secondary schools and their students served as respondents.

6. Methodology

6.1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design examines opinion with the aim of providing accurate and objective information about the phenomena being studied.

6.2. Population

The population of this study comprises Senior Secondary (SS) Students from public secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area of Oyo State.

6.3. Sampling and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique adopted for the purpose of this research is random sampling. in which only Senior Secondary students were selected for treatment and data collection. The sample consists of respondents who were Senior Secondary 2 students from ten selected public secondary schools. The students were purposivelyselected because they were the ones available at the point of data collection since the Senior Secondary 3 students were writing their certificate examination while Senior Secondary 1 students have not been fully introduced to the main topics in English language. The sampling ensured that there was equal representation of students in each school by using an intact class. This was done to avoid distraction of learning activities; moreover most of the classes did not have equal number of students. Altogether, 30 English Language teachers and 421 Senior Secondary 2 students were used in this study.

6.4. Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data in this study. The first was a self-designed questionnaire, "Teacher Factors Questionnaire" which has four sections. Each section contained ten items and structured along the modified Likert-scale format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Positively-worded items were scored like this: Strongly Agree – 4, Agree – 3, Disagree – 2, Strongly Disagree – 1 while the negatively-worded items were scored in the reverse order. The second instrument was an achievement test, self-designed and based on the school curriculum for the term. It was a multiple choice test of thirty items at the initial stage. Table of specification was used to structure the questions along the six domains of Bloom's taxonomy. Face and content validity was done

and 25 items were found suitable for the study.

6.5. Validation of Questionnaire

The items under the questionnaires were self-designed and submitted to specialists in English Language and Language Education for face and content validity. Necessary modifications were made and the instrument was thereafter administered on ten English teachers in another local government outside the area of study. Cronbach alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and the coefficient values of 0.76 (attitude), 0.73 (content knowledge), 0.81 (teaching experience) and 0.76 (text utilization) were obtained respectively.

6.6. Validation of Students' Achievement Test

The test questions were designed based on the topics in the scheme of work and the curriculum. The instrument was shown to experts in English Language and Language Education for face and content validity. Modifications were made and instrument was administered on twenty students in another school outside the study area. Cronbach alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient value of 0.85 was obtained.

6.7. Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher and a research assistant visited the schools with an introduction letter and an identity card to administer the instruments for data collection. The researcher presented the letter to the principal of the schools and was given a go ahead to administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to the English language teachers and the achievement test to the students in their various schools, and they were collected immediately.

6.8. Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of linear and multiple regression analysis to find out the relative and combined contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

7. Results

The findings of this research are presented based on the research questions posed earlier in this paper. The findings are presented in tables with corresponding interpretations following them, under each research question.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the teacher factors and students' achievement in English language?

The answer to this question is provided in the table below:

Table 1. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis showing the composite effect of teacher factors on students' achievement in English language

Dependent Variable	Predictors	Beta Value	T-Value	Sig	R	R²	F	P
Student Achievement	Teacher Attitude	0.797	0.585	0.022	0.785	0.616	0.431	0.037
	Content Knowledge	0.678	0.166	0.050				
	Teaching Experience	0.547	0.469	0.036				
	Text Utilization	0.642	0.383	0.041				

From Table 1, the Beta (coefficient) is the b-slope in our regression equation. Teachers' attitude, content knowledge, teaching experience and text utilization indicate positive relationships on students' achievement.

Research Question 2: What are the composite effects of the teacher factors on students' achievement in English language?

Table 1 above is also used to answer research question 2. Since the F-test in the table above is significant, there is a significant positive effects of the variables in our model, i.e. teacher attitude, content knowledge, teaching experience and text utilization on students' achievement in English language (R^2= 0.616, F (4, 19) = 0.431, p<0.037).

Also, the adjusted R^2 for this model is 0.785 with R^2 0.616 which means that the multiple regression explains 61.6% of the variance in the data. This suggests that all the predictor variables, teacher attitude, content knowledge, teaching experience ant text utilization accounted for the 61.6% variation of the change observed in the students' achievement in English language. The result also revealed that teacher-related factors examined were statistically significant predictors of students' achievement in English language, considering their P-Values respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the relative effects of the teacher factors on students' achievement in English language?

This question was answered using the linear regression analysis and the result presented in the tables below.

Table 2. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis showing the relative effect of Teachers' Attitude on students' achievement in English language

Dependent Variable	Predictors	Beta Value	T-Value	Sig	R	R^2	F	P
Student Achievement	Teacher Attitude	0.660	0.492	0.002	0.899	0.808	0.242	0.002

Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables in this model i.e. between teacher attitude and students' achievement ($R^2 = 0.808$, F (4, 19) = 0.242, P < 0.002). This shows that there is a relative effect of teachers' attitude on students' achievement in English language.

Table 3. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis showing the relative effect of Content Knowledge on students' achievement in English language

Dependent Variable	Predictors	Beta Value	T-Value	Sig	R	R^2	F	P
Student Achievement	Content Knowledge	0.863	1.155	0.041	0.895	0.801	1.335	0.041

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables in this model i.e. between content knowledge and students' achievement ($R^2 = 0.801$, F (4, 19) = 1.355, P < 0.041). This shows that there is a relative effect of teachers' content knowledge on students' achievement in English language.

Table 4. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis showing the relative effect of Teaching Experience on students' achievement in English language

Dependent Variable	Predictors	Beta Value	T-Value	Sig	R	R^2	F	P
Student Achievement Teaching Experience 0.605 t	e		1.221	0.031	0.732	0.536	1.492	0.031

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables in this model i.e. between content knowledge and students' achievement ($R^2 = 0.536$, F (4, 19) =1.492, P < 0.031). This shows that there is a relative effect of teachers' attitude on students' achievement in English language.

Table 5. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis showing the relative effect of Text Utilization on students' achievement in English language

Dependent Variable	Predictors	Beta Value	T-Value	Sig	R	R^2	F	P
Student Achievement	Text Utilization	0.607	0.457	0.023	0.771	0.594	0.209	0.023

Table 5 shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables in this model i.e. between text utilization and students' achievement ($R^2 = 0.594$, F (4, 19) =0.209, P < 0.023). This shows that there is a relative effect of teachers' text utilization on students' achievement in English language.

Research Question 4: What teacher factor predicts students' achievement in English most?

From Table 2 above, it can be inferred that teacher attitude has the highest R-square value of 80.8%. This shows its very strong effect on students' achievement compared to other variables.

8. Discussion of Findings

This study examined the teacher factors that predict students' achievement in English language. From this study, it has been realized that the teacher factors examined have composite and relative effects on students' achievement in English language. All the combined independent variables have positive effect on students' achievement. They are therefore independent significant predictors of achievement because of their significant relationship with the students' achievement. This result supports the findings of most of the previous researches. According to Wilhelm (2006), teachers' attitudes are considered as a major predictor of achieving well in English language. Boscardin (2003) in his study, found a significant relationship between teachers' expertise and students' achievement in English language. Onukaogu (1994) confirmed that most students fail English language as a subject because they fall in the hands of inexperienced teachers. Ngala (1997) noted that text utilization is also very important for an excellent academic performance to be achieved.

9. Summary of Findings

It can be deduced from the study that the examination of the teacher factors combined have significant joint and independent effects on students' achievement in English language. The study also found a relative effect of teacher factors on students' achievement in English language. It also revealed that teachers' attitude amongst all the teacher factors will predict students' achievement in English language the most.

10. Recommendations

Teachers, being significant contributors to students' achievement in English language should get themselves well equipped for the teaching of the subject, especially in the content knowledge area, attitude and text utilization. They should consult various useful textbooks for adequate information on the topics of the subject. They should not see teaching as just a means to an end, but an end itself, because with this, they can develop a right and positive attitude towards the teaching of the subject.

In addition, young teachers of English and those on probation should be motivated by government by supplying them with necessary instructional materials like textbooks, teacher's manuals and instructional materials to enhance their efficiency. They should also be sponsored to seminars, workshops and conferences organized by different English professional bodies. More importantly is the fact that their remuneration should be paid promptly. When these are put in place, it would be easy for government to assess teachers' performance through monitoring, supervision and other means.

Finally, government should endeavour to employ and maintain experienced teachers in handling the students, as it has been revealed that teaching experience has a significant effect on students' achievement in English language. Also, for the effectiveness and ultimate success in the teaching and learning of the subject, expertise should be the basis for distributing the aspects to be taught by individuals. English language is a complex subject which will not be ideal for a teacher to teach, so for this reason, at least three English language teachers should handle different aspects of English in any class at the senior secondary level. This would motivate teachers and allow for expertise on the job. It would equally curb seeking for greener pastures elsewhere.

11. Conclusion

The findings of this study, among other things, showed that teacher factors predict students' achievement in English language. This is due to the fact that the variables, when collectively and independently examined, revealed a significant effect and relationship with students' achievement. Hence, there cannot be an excellent achievement of students in English language if these factors are not taken into consideration. The effectiveness of a teacher is hinged on many factors some of which were considered in this study. English Language teachers should be adequately taken care of by all stake holders in education because it is a prerequisite to admission to admission into higher institutions in Nigeria and because it is the present official language in the country, a good knowledge of its use is needed by anyone who wants to work in government establishments.

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