

**INFLUENCE OF ECONOMICS TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION INTEREST
AND EXPERIENCE ON SENIOR SECONDARY ECONOMICS STUDENTS
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ONUKE EDUCATION ZONE, EBONYI
STATE**

Sylvester N. Ogbueghu (Ph.D, FCAI, FNISM)
Department of Social Science Education,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
08037464339

Sylvester.Ogbueghu@unn.edu.ng

And

Daniel Munachiso Eze
Social Sciences Education Department,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka,
Email: munachiso.eze@unn.edu.ng
08179047121, 08064469291

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of economics teachers qualification, interest and experiences on senior secondary school economics students' academic achievement in Onueke education zone of Ebonyi State. This is a survey research in which questionnaire was used to illicit information from the respondents. The population of this consisted of 126 economics teachers and 4,330 economics students from 63 public secondary schools in Onueke education zone. A sample of 270 Economics teachers and students of Economics selected through simple random technique was used. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data collected for research questions. It was found that teacher's interest, qualification and experiences were necessary and have great influence on students achievement in economics. It was recommended that teachers of all subjects at all levels of education should be prepared well in order to teach effectively. Government should employ only qualified economics teachers while unqualified economics teacher in the service/classroom already should go for in-service training courses. Also teachers need to be motivated in order to increase their interest on the job, because it influences students academic achievement, greatly.

Key words: Economics, Teacher, Qualification, Interest, Experience, Academic Achievement, and Secondary School.

Introduction

Few educators, economics, or politicians would argue with the contention that, all other things being equal, highly qualified teachers produce greater student achievement than comparatively less qualified teachers. What makes a teacher qualified one, are professional qualifications, level of interest, experience on the job and motivational abilities. High level of the teachers attributes mentioned above may help in academic achievement of Economics students in senior secondary schools to increase. Economics as defined by Lionel Robbins in Ogbueghu (2016) is a social science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses. Economics aims to explain how economic work, and how economic agents interact. Economic analyses are applied in all aspects of the society; business, education, government, family, politics, health, law, religion, and so on.

Qualification according to Encarta English dictionary is an essential attribute, skill, quality that makes one suitable for a job activities or task. Based on this, therefore, teachers' qualification is the skills, quality or attribute that makes a teacher suitable to teach subjects in his area of specialization. In this contest, it is teachers qualification to teach economics in the senior secondary school level. Indeed, Abe and Adu (2013) defined teaching qualification or teachers' qualification as one of a number of academic and professional degrees that enables a person to become a registered teacher in primary or secondary schools. Such certificates are TC II, PGDE, B.Ed, M.Ed, N.C.E. and so on. A good teachers have distinguishable impacts on students examination scores. Professionally qualified teachers are those who got professional training that gave them expert knowledge, skills, technique, aptitudes different from the general education (Edu and Kalu, 2012). Teachers therefore, are the main actors in the implementation process of any education programme. Lassa (2007) viewed the teacher as the key element for proper development of the child and consequently they are needed in great number in all the secondary schools. Teachers are the pillars of any educational system. In support of this growing consensus that highly skilled teachers are the key to improving student academic achievement and the realization that a substantial number of teachers appear to be under qualified in their current teaching position, that made education experts to call for constant training and retraining of teachers.

Teachers have been referred to by Oyedeji in Usulor (2014) as an agent of innovation, and for meaningful innovations to take place, teachers' academic qualification(s) are very important. This is because teacher education is a very complex

enterprise. The complexity arise as a result of several factors which include determination of what effective teachers are, and teachers' expected a variety of roles, which some are common to all teachers, while others are uniquely related to certain kinds of environment of students or subject matter. Despite the complexity in the field of teacher education, one cannot over-emphasize the importance of academic training of teachers of all categories. This is because efficiency of any institution depends on academic competence of the teaching staff since no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (FGN, 2013).

A number of studies carried out had indicated the need for improvement in teachers' interests and academic qualification(s) in their various teaching subject. Such studies include those of Usulor (2014) and Ogbueghu (2017). Their findings all supported that teachers should receive appropriate training in the subject matter area and, their interest to be stimulated so that their classroom instruction could be above board. These studies indicated that teachers have needs and interest according to the subject or discipline taught, and point to the key dimensions of teachers' quality, context knowledge, teaching experience, professional certification, interest and overall academic ability. A theory of interest was propounded by Hidi and Reginnger in (2006). This theory states that interest is an outcome of motivated behaviour because it develops and deepens with engagement. Interest is a mediator of engagement. It's important to note that there are individual teachers who are highly effective although they lack one or more of these qualities, just as there are ineffective teachers who have all of them. But on average, the presence rather than absence of these qualities are more likely to produce effective teaching. Ukeje (2006) stated that teachers are pivots of any educational system, and upon their number, their quality and devotion lies the success of any educational system. He agreed that teachers' content knowledge influence students academic achievement and supported the notion that teachers who teach subjects that they have interest and in-depth knowledge tends to perform better in the classroom.

Qualification of teacher play an important role in teaching but professional education training is more important in teaching, because a trained teacher can teach better than an untrained teacher. Generally, it is claimed that trained teacher knows well how to teach effectively. It is a very common fact that if a trained and satisfied teacher teaches the students', the performance of the students tends to be better because in the process of teaching and learning, the teacher not only varies his methodology but consider some crucial element like classroom management pattern, choice of evaluation strategies, instructional materials and so on. There could be a direct relationship between the qualification of teachers and the performance of the students besides other factors like job satisfaction, interests, motivation and experience, as supported by Ogbueghu and Okeke (2017).

Economics teachers require adequate motivation and interest to teach well, and this enables their students to perform well on economics in the senior secondary school's examinations. Onyebuchi and Uzochukwu, cited in Iyala, Eze and Igbokwe (2013) noted that teacher's motivation and interest play a very significant impact on student's choice and achievement in any subject including economics. In the same vein, Iyala, Eze & Igbokwe (2013) asserted that motivation is a psychological construct that arouses certain goal-directed behaviours (interest) towards something. This study therefore probed to determine whether teachers' qualification, interest and experiences influence students' achievement in economics. The issue of poor academic achievement of students' in Nigeria has been of much concern to all and sundry. Overtime students' academic achievement in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teachers and their teaching (Ajao, 2001). Teachers have been seen to have an important influence on students' academic achievement. They also play a crucial role in educational attainment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles during interactions with student (Afe, 2001). Experiences of a teacher are measured by the number of years served and the amount of training and retraining received. Darling and Hammond as cited in Usulor (2014) stated that, there is a positive correlation between years of teaching experiences and higher students academic achievement. He stressed that teachers with more than five years teaching experiences tend to be most effective and vice versa. This can only happened under normal circumstances, because abnormal situation do exist.

Both teaching and learning depends on teacher; no wonder competent teacher has been conceptualized as one who produces desired results in course of his duty as a teacher (Uchefuna, 2001). Competent teaching which resulted from right qualification, experiences and interest of the teacher has been accepted as a multidimensional construct, since it measures a variety of different competencies as in communication, lesson preparation and presentation (Usulor, 2014). Achievement in the classroom could be defined as the knowledge and skills attained by a student in the school subject. This is the successful result or outcome of an interaction between the teacher and students with respect to school subject. Good teachers are vital to raising student achievement and in closing the achievement/performance gaps (poor achievement). The challenge for the education sector is to ensure that every classroom is staffed with skilled, qualified, willingly and experienced teacher. Teacher's competence involves how teachers are effective in the areas of subject mastery, lesson preparation and presentation, punctuality and attendance to class, clear communication, and adequate use of instructional materials, creativity, resourcefulness, and adequacy of evaluation of students based on his qualifications, experiences and interest. This is why professionalism based on training and certificates obtained is necessary in Education sector. Quality of a teacher are enhanced by academic qualifications, interest and

experiences. These factors may affect the students' academic achievement hence this study is meant to find out that.

Statement of the Problem

It has become obvious that unqualified teachers have found their ways into the classrooms today in Nigeria. People who have not undergone any teachers' training or do not have any specialized training in relation to the subject of Economics are teaching Economics in our schools due to inadequate of qualified Economics teachers. They are not professionally qualified. A qualified, experienced and willing teachers of Economics at the senior secondary level ought to have at least a Bachelors degree and above in Education Economics and with some years of practice. It may be as a result of the presence of non professionally qualified Economics teachers in our classrooms that cause low academic achievement of students they teach in secondary schools as evidenced from the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) chief examiner's reports of 2014, 2015 and 2016, where only 42%, 44% and 47% respectively of the total candidates that registered Economics in their examinations obtained grades A1 to C6 in the area of this study. Subjects of Economics which has a major role to play in policy making, forecasting of the future, allocation of scarce resource etc. should not be left in the hands of quack teachers. For every sector of the economy to work well, there is therefore need to give attention to those who teach economics, in terms of training, retraining, and improve their job satisfaction in our senior secondary schools.

Therefore, this study is based on the influence of teacher's qualification, interest and experiences on the academic achievement of senior secondary students in Economics. Put in question form. What are the influences of teachers: qualifications, interest and experiences on students' academic achievement in Economics at the secondary school level in Onueke Education Zone, Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose which this study seeks to achieve is to ascertain the influence of Economics teachers qualifications', interest and experiences on students' economics achievement.

Specifically, the study sets out to:

1. determine whether economics teachers' qualifications have influence on students' academic achievement on Economics;
2. determine whether Economics teachers' interest influence students' academic achievement in Economics.
3. determine if the teachers experience influence students academic achievement in Economics;

Research Question

1. To what extent do economics teachers' qualifications enhance students' academic achievement in economics at the Senior Secondary School level?
2. To what extent do teachers interest influence students' academic achievement in Economics at the Senior Secondary School level?
3. To what extent do teachers experiences influence students academic achievement in economics at the Senior Secondary School level.

Method

This section describes the design of the study, the area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

This study is a descriptive survey research designed. It enables the study of a sub-set of a group upon which data was collected, analyzed and the result generalized on the entire population (Nworgu, 2006). The design is therefore, considered appropriate for use in this study.

The area of this study is Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The zone is made up of four Local Government Areas namely: Ishielu, Ezza North, Ezza South and Ikwo. The zone has boundary with Cross River State in the East and Enugu State in West. It is the central senatorial zone of Ebonyi State. The zone was thus chosen for the study because of its central location in the state, availability of many senior secondary schools, tertiary institutions and states commercial and agricultural nerve centre.

The population of this study consisted of 126 Economics teachers and 4,330 Senior Secondary Schools Students from 63 Public Senior Secondary Schools in Onueke Education Zone.

Out of the 63 Senior Secondary Schools in Onueke Education Zone Twelve (12) senior secondary schools were selected for the study. simple random sampling technique was used to choose three (3) secondary schools each per local government area. All the thirty-six (36) economics teachers in the twelve (12) selected schools were used in the study, while twenty students (20) were randomly selected from the senior secondary classes of each school given a total of 240 students. This makes up a total of 276 respondents for the study.

Four points likert type scale instrument titled: Influence of Economics Teachers, Qualification, Interest and Experience on Academic Achievement Test Questionnaire. (IETQIEAAQ), made up of 23 items was used for the study. The items have a response scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE), respectively. The instrument was validated by experts in social science Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument was also subjected to test retest method of reliability using product-moment reliability statistics after being administered to 30 Economics teachers and students in Onicha and IVO Local government areas, all in Afikpo Education Zone of Ebonyi State. A reliability

Coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. Copies of the questionnaire were administered by hand with the help of two research assistants to the respondents and 270 copies were retrieved back. Data for the study was analyzed with statistical mean and standard deviation. In the case of mean, 2.50 is the critical benchmark for acceptance and rejection of the respondents' opinion on particular questionnaire item.

Result

Research Question One

To what extent do economic teachers' qualification enhance students academic achievement on Economics at the Senior Secondary School Level?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the extent Economics teachers' qualification influences students academic achievement on Economics.

SN	Item Statement	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Economics teachers who possessed B.Sc. Economics Education do illustrate their lesson more than those who have B.Sc. Economics.	270	2.65	1.8	High Extent
2.	M.Ed. Economics Education holders do teacher better in secondary schools than Ph.D holders.	270	2.71	1.9	High Extent
3.	Economics teachers with NCE Economics bias may teach better than their B.Sc. Education Economics counterpart.	270	1.55	1.6	Low Extent
4.	Economics teachers teach better with professional certificate and accepts Economics as a vocation.	270	2.67	0.73	High Extent
5.	Higher Degree certificates is a prerequisite for proper teaching of Economics for easy understanding	270	2.74	0.73	High Extent
6.	Professionalism in Education is necessary for Economics teachers to teach well and for high academic achievement by students.	270	2.54	0.65	High Extent

From table 1 above, it was observed based on the responses that only one item out of the 6 items was of Low Extent. This implies that the respondents were of the opinion that teachers' qualification to a great/high Extent influences students academic achievement on Economics at secondary school level.

Research Question Two:

To What Extent do Economics teachers' interest influence students' academic achievement in Economics at the secondary school level?

Table 2: Mean Rating of the responses from the respondents on the influence of Economics teachers interest on student's academic achievement on secondary school Economics.

SN	Item Statement	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
7.	The interest of an Economics teacher influences the way he prepares the lessons before the actual lesson.	270	3.3	2.1	High Extent
8.	Economics teacher love the subject and ensure adequate lesson planning for his class.	270	3.3	2.1	High Extent
9.	Interest enables an Economics teachers to state his objectives of a lesson clearly and comprehensively.	270	3.2	2.0	High Extent
10.	An interested Economic teacher organizes his lesson very well and adopts different instruction strategies.	270	2.7	1.4	High Extent
11.	Interest makes Economics teacher select relevant instruction material(s) for his lessons.	270	2.9	1.6	High Extent
12.	An interested Economics teacher always improves instruction resources of interacting with his class.	270	3.2	2.0	High Extent
13.	Economic teacher who is interested does not miss his class.	270	2.8	1.6	High Extent
14.	Interest makes Economics teacher have deep knowledge of his subject matter.	270	3.0	1.8	High Extent
15.	An interested Economics teacher fluent and communicates effective with his class members during instructions.	270	3.4	2.2	High Extent
16.	An Economics teacher's interest positively influences student perception and performance in Economics.	270	3.5	2.9	High Extent

Data analysis in the above table 2 has shown that interest of a teacher is vital to the academic achievement of students in economics. It is an addition to Economics teacher's qualification(s) in order to teach well, and enable students to perform well in Economics examinations at the Senior Secondary School Level. This assertion was based on the fact that all the questionnaire items were of high extent based on the responses of the respondents, hence interest is both a critical and necessary condition for teacher to teach very well and for students to perform well academically. This position is based on the fact that questionnaire items 7 to 16 had to respective mean of between 2.8 to 3.5. Each of their mean was above the 2.5 critical benchmark. Hence, the high extent responses on all the questionnaire items have significantly answered the research question, that Economics teachers interest to a great extent influences students academic achievement.

Research Question Three:

To what extent do economics teacher's experiences influence students' academic achievement in economics at the senior secondary school level?

Table 2: Mean Rating of the Responses from the Respondents on the extent of influence of the Economics Teacher's experiences, on students academic achievement.

SN	Item Statement	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
17.	An Economics teacher not interest will teach very well as his students perform well in examinations.	270	3.2	1.6	High Extent
18.	Long served teacher will always improve instructional resources for class/instructions.	270	3.5	2.2	High Extent
19.	An experienced Economics teacher will always aspire to self-actualize in that subject area.	270	3.2	1.6	High Extent
20.	Qualified and long served Economics teacher will always relate well and help students learn better and perform well academically.	270	3.2	1.6	High Extent
21.	An experienced Economics teacher will always devote his time and energy to his teaching job.	270	3.3	1.8	High Extent
22.	A well experienced teacher is always regular and punctual to class lessons.	270	3.0	1.5	High Extent
23.	Adequate experience in addition to qualification(s) enables a teacher to teach well and students to perform well academically.	270	2.6	1.4	High Extent

Data analysis in table 3 indicates that all the questionnaire items 17 to 23 were rated high extent by the respondents which shows that an Economics teacher's

experience which is mainly determined by the teacher's training re-training and long period of service, significantly influence students' academic achievement in Economics subject. This decision was based on the fact that each of the questionnaire items 17 – 23 had a respective mean above the critical benchmark of 2.5.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of data collected based on Research questions one, two and three have yielded some results for the study. Some of these results were summarized below:

1. An economics teacher's qualification(s) significantly increases the teacher's proficiency and through that influences students' academic achievement in economics at the senior secondary school level.
2. An economics teachers' interest which is usually derived from his job satisfaction enhances the teacher's instructional delivery expertise and consequently influences students' academic achievement in the subject.
3. In addition to an economics teacher' qualifications, and interest is his experience, which enhances his ability and effectiveness thereby influences students' academic achievement in Economics at the senior secondary school level.

Discussion of Findings

This section deals with the discussion of findings, implications, recommendations, limitations, suggestions for further studies and conclusion. The discussion was done according to the research questions.

Based on research question one, it was discovered that an Economics teachers' qualification(s) have significant influence on both his teaching and student's academic achievement in Economics. This was based on the high extent rating of the respondents in 5 out of 6 items in the questionnaire. Thus a teacher's qualification(s) is a significant factor in determining students' academic achievement. In the same vein, a number of researchers have noted that teacher qualification is a powerful predictor of student's achievement. Darling-Hammond as cited in Usulor (2014), concludes that the effects of well prepared teachers on student academic achievement can outweigh students' background factors including poverty, language background and minority status. Further he contends that measures of teacher quality based on qualification are more strongly related to student's academic achievement than other kinds of investments, including reduced class sizes, overall spending on education, and teacher's salaries.

Furthermore, Croninger (2003) noted that a number of researchers have argued that teacher quality is a powerful predictor of students' academic achievement. In the same vein, the National Policy on Education (FRN 1998-2013) stated that it is a fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, interest, skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching and learning process. Similarly, Ekpunoh (2012) stated that poor achievements of

educational goals are as a result of lack of mastery of the subject matters and low qualification of teachers.

The second finding of this study was that a teacher's interest, especially in Economics, enhances the teacher's instructional delivery expertise and consequently influences students achievement in the subject. This finding is in line with the assertion of Koledoye (2011) that the availability of competent and interested teachers is central in the reconstruction of quality educational system. The finding is further authenticated by the National Policy on Education (FRN 2008) as cited in Omoseno (2011) that the efficiency of any institution depends on the academic interest of the teaching staff, since no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

The third finding of this study was that teacher's teaching experience is essential and enable their students to perform well in Economics at the Senior Secondary school Level. This finding is in line with the finding of Onyebuchi and Uzoamaka cited in Iyala, Eze and Igbokwe (2013) that teachers' experience play a very significant role on students' choice and achievement in any subject including Economics.

Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Only professionally qualified economics teachers should be employed and posted to the secondary schools by the government to enhance teaching and learning.
2. Economics teachers with high qualifications like first degree and masters in education economics who are working in places other than classroom if indicated interest should be absorbed in secondary schools to practice their instructional delivery expertise which invariably will increase students' academic achievement.
3. Regular workshops, seminars and conferences should be organized by government and professional bodies for serving teachers on contemporary issues in the teaching of economics. This will expose them to up-to-date knowledge in content, teaching methodology, use of instructional materials, classroom management and evaluation of aspects of economics.
4. Professional bodies like curriculum organization of Nigeria (CON), Nigeria Vocational Association, and government agencies like the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should initiate researches in pedagogical approaches in different secondary school subjects.
5. Economics teachers should be properly and adequately motivated in order to stimulate their interest, through incentives.

Conclusion

This study concluded that teachers' qualification, interest and experiences to a high extent influence students' academic achievement on Economics in the senior secondary schools. The Education administrators in the study area should only employ qualified Economics teachers, to teach, retrain the serving ones, and always motivate them to stimulate their interest to teach effectively.

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