

TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between teachers' qualification and students' academic performance in Environmental Education in University of Calabar. The research design adopted for the study was survey research design. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide to study. The population of the study consisted of 672 undergraduate students from Department of Environmental Education. A sample of 134 students was used for the study, this constituted 20% of the population. A structured questionnaire title: Teachers' Qualification and Environmental Education Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (TQEESAPQ). Pearson products moment correlation coefficient analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Findings in the study revealed that teachers with environmental education qualification positively relate with students' academic performance. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that the lecturers without Environmental Education qualifications should teach only elective courses and not core Environmental Education courses.

Keyword: Qualification, academic performance, environmental education, teachers, students

Introduction

Teachers' primary role of transmission of knowledge and skills cannot be over emphasized. In this case teacher's qualification plays a vital role in teaching. Teacher's qualification refers to the kind of professional education for teaching that the teacher has received. Qualification relates to the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, competence and creativity needed for quality productive engagement in the teaching profession. Teachers' certification status and degree in area of specialization are very significant and positively correlated with students learning. The extent and quality of the professional preparation a teacher receives will influence both the quality and styles of the teacher's teaching. A teacher's academic qualification is the educational attainments of the teacher. A teacher academic certification is a combined set of qualifications which include general academic and verbal ability, subject matter knowledge and teacher education (Yakubu, 2023). The author added that students taught by teachers with a higher degree impact positively on students' academic performance than those who taught with a lower degree.

The teacher plays a crucial role in the educational attainment of students and is ultimately responsible for translating policies and principles to implementation modules for achieving school goals (Musau & Muola, 2013). This can be possible if the teacher has attended a required qualification. The difference in students learning outcome according to (Dada E. M, 2015) could be traced to a lot of factors in which teachers' qualification is part of it. The qualification obtained will help the teacher in terms of pedagogical skill and communication skill in promoting quality education and efficient understanding of concepts taught in a particular subject or course (Ugorji & Kagbaranen, 2022).

Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effective national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2013). This is recognition of the reality that no meaningful socio-economic, political and technological transformation can take place if the citizens are not given quality education and not quality education can be attained without teachers' qualification. According to Agbor (2013), teachers' qualification has generated grave concern among educationists and other individuals. People are alarmed at the deplorable level of academic

performance of students in our universities in Nigeria today, basically because students' performance appear to be dwindling, thereby causing lots of doubts in the teachers and summarily on their qualification (Agbor, 2013). Teachers are seen as the hub of the quality of education which may emerge. Education, being a necessary instrument for the transmission of knowledge, is largely dependent on the teachers who are saddled with the task of the delivery of the contents of education. The teachers' quality is largely dependent on their professional development (quality) which is either not available or not adequate to raise teachers' performance to an optimal level that would ensure quality instructional delivery. If the teaching manpower is weak, there are likely to be weak graduates (Agbor, 2013).

Emphasize on teachers' qualification is paramount to ensure the quality and quantity that are produced through the various agencies that are saddled with the responsibility of training students. That is why the National Policy on Education (2013) emphasized that Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) shall be the minimum qualification for teachers in the country since is the lowest level of education. A qualified teacher has a good classroom control, effective communication skills, and adequate knowledge of the subject matter and can utilize varieties of teaching strategies in order to enhance students' performance. This is in line with the work of Ichazu & Omoregie (2020) that all teachers need breadth and depth in the subject they will teach, including the understanding of the new knowledge and this calls for high professional qualification. Teacher qualification is widely thought of as an essential determinants of academic performance.

The professional university teacher (lecturer) is expected to possess certain qualifications both professional and personal (status). Professional qualifications are both academic and pedagogical. Academic qualifications are the teacher's knowledge of his subject (Akpan, 2015).

Poor academic performance can be traced to teachers' qualification. This can be seen when teachers (lecturers) who are teaching in Environmental Education do not possess the required qualification to teach in the programme. In terms of qualification, lecturers are classified into two namely professionally qualified and personal (status) lecturers. Professionally qualified lecturers possess Masters in education (M.Ed) and Ph.D in Environmental Education while non- professional are those who do not possess qualification in Environmental Education.

Teacher qualifications have been linked to academic performance (Yasin, 2021). Teachers with high qualifications had strong positive effect on the academic performance of students. The quality of any education system is a function of the teacher quality within the system.

Academic performance according to Goshi (2020) is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. The author added that these goals are measured by using continuous assessment or examinations results.

Academic performance is the consequence of teaching and learning. Students' academic performance is seen as a student scholastic standing at a given moment.

Boabeng (2014) opined that the quality of the teachers implementing a curriculum has a greater effect on the academic performance of students. Regardless of how well-resourced the school is or how extensive the curriculum is, teaching methods also have a significant impact on students' academic progress as well as how easier for a misconception is to be dispelled. When the finest teaching strategies are employed, Environmental Education teachers can have a significant positive impact on students' knowledge that can lead to good performance.

In a research carried out by Adedayo and Owolabi (2021) on the relationship between teacher qualification and physics students' performance at the secondary school level in Nigeria. The author found out that there was a significant difference in the performance of secondary school physics students taught by teachers with high qualifications compared to those taught by teachers with low qualifications. According to the research, students who were taught by qualified instructors had a cut-off point value (t-cal) of 12.86, which was higher than students who were taught by the unqualified teachers, who had a cut-off point value (t-cal) of 1.98. According to Korur and Eryilmaz (2012) teacher's qualification is the first determinant of students' performance.

Philip, Wik and Kyun (2017) affirmed that teaching methods are crucial factors that affect the academic achievement of students, and no matter how well developed a curriculum is, the success of any curriculum depends on the quality of the teachers implementing it.

Teacher qualification is seen as requirement for the teaching profession. A qualified teacher has the capacity to teach and improve on

students' learning thereby leading to high academic performance. Segun (2016) confirmed that for any meaningful teaching and learning to take place, teacher qualifications needs to be very high. Macaulay (2016) affirmed the above assertion by Segun (2016) qualifications must relate to academic and professional preparation, professional growth, classroom interaction and evaluation. This is true because a lecturer who is not trained in a particular discipline will not perform as much as if he trained in that particular field. In this case the lecturer relies on 'reading and teaching' because the indepth knowledge is lacking for effective instructional delivery.

Statement of the problem

Pedagogy is very important and a sensitive part of education. For effective academic performance to be achieved, the learners have to be properly taught by trained personnel's (qualified teachers). In recent times it has be observed by stakeholders and even the lecturers in Environmental Education Department that the academic performance of the students is dwindling. This can be seen by their performance mostly in their final examinations.

The researchers are worried about the situation, despite the effort put by the lecturers in the department by having some extra classes, teaching the students as at when due, exposing the students to e-learning, etc. the performance of the students is still worrisome. Could it be because of the fact that lecturers from other disciplines teach in Environmental Education, since Environmental Education is inter-disciplinary in approach? The questions all Environmental Education lecturers should ask themselves is; do I have the academic and professional qualifications to enable me teach in Environmental Education? This forms the basis for this study.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of teachers' qualification on students' academic performance in Environmental Education. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Find out the relationship between lecturers with Environmental Education qualifications and students' academic performance; and
2. Examine the relationship between lecturers without Environmental Education qualifications and students' academic performance.

Research question

Two research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the relationship between lecturers with Environmental Education qualifications and students' academic performance?
2. Is there any relationship between lecturers without Environmental Education qualifications and students' academic performance?

Statement of hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between lecturers with environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between lecturers without environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey design. The study was carried out in the University of Calabar. University of Calabar is one of the federal universities in Nigeria. It located in the Etta Agbor Road, Calabar Metropolis. University of Calabar was founded in 1975. The Department of Environmental Education is a department under the Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education. Environmental Education programme started in the University of Calabar in 1991 under the Institute of Education. The programme was domiciled in Department of Curriculum and Teaching as a Unit in 2007. It established as a department of its own in 2015.

The Department runs both undergraduate and post graduate programme.

The population of this study consisted of all Environmental Education students (both NUC and CES) in the University of Calabar which is 672 students as at 2022/2023 academic session.

A sample of 134 students was used for the study. This sample constituted 20% of the total population. The study used simple random sampling technique.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, titled Teachers' qualification and environmental education students' academic performance questionnaire (TQEESAPQ) designed by the researchers to collect data or information from the respondents. A total

of 134 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to respondents (students) in Environmental Education.

The data collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of mean standard deviation and simple percentage.

Result

Each of the hypotheses was first stated in the null form, then a brief description of the data analysis procedure. The results are interpreted and presented to test the stated null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant relationship between lecturers with environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used to analyze the hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of the relationship between lecturers with environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance N = 134

Variable	X	SD	r
Teachers with environmental education qualification	14.65	5.17	0.15*
Students' academic performance	33.50	10.98	

* $p < 0.05$, $df = 132$, critical 0.115

The result in table 1 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.15 was greater than the critical value of 0.115 at 132 degree of freedom. This therefore means that there is a significant relationship between lecturers with Environmental Education qualifications and students' academic performance. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis retained.

Hypotheses 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant relationship between lecturers without environmental education qualifications and students'

academic performance. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of the relationship between lecturers without environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance N = 134

Variable	X	SD	R
Teachers with environmental education qualification	25.41	4.87	0.110*
Students' academic performance	33.50	10.98	

* $p < 0.05$, $df = 132$, critical 0.115

The result in table 1 showed a calculated r-value of 0.110 which is lower than the critical value of 0.115 at 132 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between lecturers without Environmental Education qualification was retained while the alternate hypothesis was rejected. This means that lecturers without Environmental Education qualifications does not influence Environmental Education Students' Academic Performance.

Discussion of findings

Hypothesis 1

The result of finding from hypothesis 1 showed a significant relationship between lecturers with environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Macaulay (2016) who observed that qualifications relate to academic and professional preparation, professional growth, classroom interaction and evaluation, which in turn result in high academic performance.

The result also corroborated the finding of Adedayo and Owolabi (2021) who find out that there is a significant relationship between teacher qualification and physics students' performance at the secondary school level in Nigeria. The author found out that there was a significant difference in the performance of secondary school physics students

taught by teachers with high qualifications compared to those taught by teachers with low qualifications.

Hypothesis 2

The result of the analysis from hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant relationship between lecturers without environmental education and students' academic performance. This study is in line with Adedayo and Owolabi (2021) who from their study found out that there was a significant difference in the performance of secondary school physics students taught by teachers with high qualifications compared to those taught by teachers with low qualifications. The study disagreed with the finding from the study conducted by Yasin (2021) which showed that teacher qualifications have been linked to academic performance. Teachers with high qualifications had strong positive effect on the academic performance of students.

Summary and conclusion

The study was carried out to examine the relationship between Teachers' Qualification and Students' Academic Performance In Environmental Education. Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between lecturers with environmental education qualifications and students' academic performance. The finding also showed that there is no significant relationship between lecturers without Environmental Education Qualifications and Students' Academic Performance.

Recommendations

- 1, Lecturers teaching environmental education should be trained in the field of environmental education.
2. The lecturers without environmental education qualifications should teach only elective courses and not core environmental education courses.
3. All environmental education lecturers must possess at least B.Ed and M.Ed in environmental education.

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