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SCHOOL QUALITY AND TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOME IN HISTORY IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

Students' performances in senior secondary school history in recent time have not been impressive based on the reports from public examiners. The subject is not offered by many students and is almost going into extinct as important as it is to individual citizen and the country as a whole. The extent to which school quality and teachers' characteristics correlate with students learning outcome in history in Rivers State was investigated. The study is a descriptive design of survey type. Multistage sampling technique was employed and data were collected from 30 history teachers and 200 SSS II history students from 20 SSS schools in Rivers State. Five research questions and four validated instruments guided the study with reliability coefficients of 0.78 for SQQ; 0.67 for TCCRS; 0.72 for CIS and 0.56 for HAT respectively. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results indicated a significant relationship between school quality and students' learning outcome in history ($r = .494$); revealed a significant relationship between teacher characteristics and students' learning outcome in history ($r = .415$); both variables jointly explain 25% of the variance observed in students' learning outcome in history and it was statistically significant at $F(df=2, 228) = 5.712, p < 0.05$. It was observed that there were positive relationships among school quality, teacher characteristics and students' learning outcome in history. Government should provide trainings for teachers through seminars/workshops in order to develop their knowledge, practices and attitude that are needed for maximum students' learning outcome in history.

Key words: School Quality, Teacher characteristics, Learning outcome, History.

Introduction

Education is widely regarded as a basic human right, a key to enlightenment, and source of wealth and power. Education is critical to industrial and technological development, with the history of developed nations bearing records of this and developing nations aspiring to realize the same status through workable educational policies to liberate their citizen to become a

productive member of the society. The school environment should be conducive enough so as to enhance favourable students' learning. For instance, a school environment may indicate a great deal of cooperation among the various groups in the school setting while another may reveal a climate of tension and friction among the various groups that make up the school

system. In fact, the environment a child is exposed to will definitely affect the performance of the child either positively or negatively as the case may be. Ojeritude (1991) postulated that for formal education to be properly provided, schools should be built with necessary facilities to ensure enriched and enabling environment for teaching and learning. Falodun (2003), also asserted that school environment affects students' education, their conduct. Inadequacy of space and facilities in schools can easily inhibit the productivity of both the teacher and the learner while a conducive learning environment would enhance the sustenance of interest, stimulate learning and ensure satisfactory development and academic performance. In the light of the foregoing, many parents and guardians often want their children or wards to attend schools, which are believed to be adequately equipped. They prefer certain schools to others not minding the cost. Parents look for schools that are well staffed with teachers who have a sense of commitment. On the availability and adequacy of school resources, it is obvious that, private schools are more favoured than public ones. Considering the relationship between educational resources and students' academic performance, teacher's qualification and adequate facilities may be determinants of assessing academic performance of students. Hence, the availability or non-availability of facilities and their adequacy in schools have an effect on students' learning outcome.

In addition, the school climate is determined by the resources, especially classrooms under which the teachers and students operate which influence attitude in teaching and learning. Un-conducive classroom creates stress on teachers and students resulting in negative attitude toward school and learning by students. The

human resources are teachers and the non-teaching staff, and physical resources mean facilities including classrooms, desks, toilets, offices, books and teaching aids; all these resources cannot be acquired without financial resources (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). Salawu and Adedapo (2001), listed four important factors including the acute scarcity of instructional resources which they said constrained educational systems from responding more fully to new demands. They claimed that, in order for government to do their part in meeting the crisis in education, educational systems will need real resources that money can buy, they will need a fuller share of the nations' manpower, not merely to carry on the present work of education, but to raise its quality, efficiency and productivity. They will need buildings, equipment and more learning materials.

Teacher quality involves the level of qualification and research on the value of a teacher's advanced degree is mixed. Some studies show that while additional teacher education has a positive correlation with student achievement in some cases, others find that it negatively affects achievement (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). Goldhaber and Brewer (1997) found that a teacher's advanced degree is not generally associated with increased student learning from the eighth to the tenth grade, but having an advanced degree in mathematics and science for math and science teachers appears to influence students' achievement. The same results were not found to be true for teachers of English or history. In the same way, Goldhaber and Brewer (1997) suggest that the findings of other studies about the impact on student achievement of teachers' advanced degrees are inconclusive because they considered only the level of the degree and not the subject of the

degree, which may affect student achievement in different ways than the degree level.

Various educators for example, Ukeje (1970) and Fafunwa (1969) have written extensively on the prime importance of teachers to the educational development of any nation albeit simple, complex, developed or developing. There is a wide range of findings on the relationship between years of teaching experience and student outcomes. (Afolabi, 2011) found that fewer than half of the previous studies on the estimated effects of teachers' experience showed that teachers' experience had any statistically significant effect on student achievement; of those, thirty three studies found that additional years of experience had a significant positive effect, but seven found that more experience actually had a negative impact on student achievement. Other studies show a stronger positive relationship between teacher experience and student learning outcomes.

Many research reports have shown that physical facilities influence teachers' classroom management. Asiyai (2006) defined physical facilities as the entire school plant or educational facilities such as classrooms, staffroom, laboratories, library, audio-visual aids, electricity, water, desks, chairs, tables, storage space and others which school administrators, teachers and students may need and utilize for the smooth and efficient classroom management. Ogunleye (2002) in his studies pointed out that teachers who were poorly motivated, had less concern for effective classroom management and consequently, the school goals and objectives would not be wholly achieved and this will affect students' learning outcome. In like manner, Ofoegu (2004) discovered the problems and delays, inconsistencies in paying teachers' salaries and other remuneration have serious conflicted

impact with teacher classroom activities. According to Adegun (2002) most of the persistent problems and complications that bedevilled classroom management arises from either lack of information resources and poor capacity for information management.

The teaching of history in our schools should be taken as an investment of knowledge and acquisition of ability to think and express oneself intelligently about human past. History develops the skill of critical thinking and ability to make sound judgements about human situations. It also involves the comprehension and analysis about people in the past or even present. Through historical research, learners develop skill of analysis and synthesis, ability to select and organise information, pose and test hypothesis, ask appropriate questions, constructive, narrations, recall information, use chronological conversion and put events in remembrance. Osokoya in 1996 stresses on the relevancies of history as a subject where he asserted that history as a subject entails handling of varied and sometimes conflicting sources of evidence about past human actions with the subsequent development of cognitive skills of comprehension, analysis and evaluation. History will make the young ones understand our social background in an intellectual atmosphere. The teaching of history is, however, beset with serious problems in the Nigeria secondary schools, because of lack of understanding and importance of the subject, low academic achievement in history and inadequate motivational, shortage of instructional materials, reduction in the number of history students due to poor performance of previous students, inadequate supply of professional teachers and too heavy a syllabus for the prescribed duration.

Statement of the Problem

Students' performances in secondary schools in recent times have not been impressive based on the results from public examiners. Particularly, it was observed that History as a subject is not offered by many students despite the importance of the subject to individual citizen and the country as a whole. More often time, teachers are blamed for students' poor learning outcome which suggests that there are some teacher characteristics that may be influencing the students' learning outcome. Several studies had researched into some aspects of teachers' characteristics and its implication on students' learning outcome, but it seems only a few had attempted to investigate the relationship between students' learning outcome, school quality and teachers' characteristics. The study, therefore, investigated school quality and teacher characteristics as correlates of students learning outcome in History in Rivers state.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between school quality and students' learning outcomes in history in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between teacher characteristics and students' learning outcomes in history in Rivers state?
3. What is the profile of history teachers in terms of classroom interaction?
4. To what extent do school quality and teacher characteristic variables combine to predict students' learning outcomes in history in Rivers state?
5. What are the relative contributions of the components of school quality and teacher characteristics on students' learning outcomes in History in Rivers

state?

Methodology

The study used descriptive design of survey type. Multi stage sampling procedure was used for the study. First, Rivers state has been stratified along three senatorial district (Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East) respectively. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select one senatorial district out of the three that exist in the state. From the selected senatorial district which has been sub-divided into eight local governments, interval random sampling technique was employed to select four out of the eight local government areas. Moreover, from each of the selected local government, simple random sampling technique was adopted to select five schools each, making a total of twenty schools in all. Purposive sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) History teachers and ten (10) SSII students each from the selected schools. The total sample therefore was 230 participants of thirty (30) teachers and two hundred (200) students. Five research questions and four validated instruments guided the study with reliability coefficients of 0.78 for SQQ; 0.67 for TCCRS; 0.72 for CIS and 0.56 for HAT respectively. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

Research question one: *What is the relationship between school quality and students' learning outcome in History in Rivers state?*

Table 1: Correlation between school quality and students' learning outcome in History

Variables	School Quality	Students' History Learning Outcome
School Quality		
Pearson Correlation	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)		
Students' History Learning Outcome	.494	1
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 1 presents the Pearson product moment correlation result of the relationships between school quality and students' learning outcome in history. The table reveals positive moderate significant relationship between the variables at ($R = .494, p < .05$). This is an indication that school quality relates with students' learning outcome in history.

the positive significant relationship result of school quality and students' learning outcome in history is in consonance with the assertion of Agina-Obu, (2005) who said that private schools because of the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources do perform better than public schools in school subjects. Likewise, the present finding buttresses the assertion of Akande (1985), who declared that learning can occur through one's interaction with one's environment. Environment here refers to facilities that are available to facilitate

students learning outcome. It includes books, audio-visual, software and hardware of educational technology; so also, size of classroom, sitting position and arrangement, availability of tables, chairs, chalkboards, shelves on which instruments for practical are arranged. Other researchers like Ojeritude (1991) support the present result where they asserted that when school facilities are provided to meet relative needs of a school system, students will not only have access to the reference materials mentioned by the teacher, but individual students will also learn at their own paces.

Research Question Two: *What is the relationship between teacher characteristics and students' learning outcome in History in Rivers state?*

Table 2: Correlation between Teacher Characteristics and Students' Learning Outcome in History

Variables	Teacher Characteristics	Students' History Learning Outcome
Teacher Characteristics		
Pearson Correlation	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)		
Students' History Learning Outcome	.415	1
Pearson Correlation	.023	

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 2 presents the Pearson product moment correlation result of the relationships between teacher characteristics and students' learning outcome in history. The table reveals positive moderate significant relationship between the variables at ($R = .415, p < .05$). This is an indication that teacher characteristics relate with students' learning outcome in history. In other words, there is a significant relationship between teachers' characteristics and students' learning outcome in history.

It was observed that teacher characteristics relate positively with students' learning outcome in history and the result was in line with the finding of Gabriel (2009) who reviewed studies on teacher characteristics and stated that higher qualification of the teachers was important for teaching at the secondary school level; in particular for science subjects; teacher training and qualification have a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

Moreover, the current finding supports the finding of Manson (1981) where he emphasized that teacher qualification is an important input in teaching-learning situation and students' learning outcome. Since, quality outputs demand quality inputs. He further argued that teacher qualification has implication on the way a teacher plans his or her lesson, interprets aims, objectives and delivers the lesson; thus making it possible for teachers' academic qualification to affect their students' academic learning outcome. Onocha and Okpala (1985) corroborate the above researchers when they asserted that the teacher's qualification is a significant predictor of students' learning outcome in science. This directly implies that teacher's qualification has something to do with their students' achievement as both are interdependent.

Research Question Three: *What is the profile of History teachers in term of classroom interaction?*

Table 3: Profile of Teachers' Classroom Interaction Pattern.

Teacher category	Individual student work	Student group activity	Teacher prompting learning	Mono-Logue	Teacher not facilitating learning	Confusion	Others	Total
Total %	362.3	396.1	1766.85	64	213.97	131.7	58.9	100%
% Mean	12.1%	13.2%	59.1%	2.1%	7.1%	4.4%	2%	100%

Considering the result from the overall history teachers' interaction pattern, the teachers observed used only 25.3% of the period for Students' activities which is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the subject period, 59.1% was used by the teachers to facilitate learning and 15.6% goes to other activities that do not facilitate learning. This implies that 25% of the teaching-learning process was given for students' participation and

75% occupied with teachers facilitating learning and other activities which are not facilitating learning. This may be resulting from necessities of detailed explanation required in history class.

Research Question Four: *To what extent do school quality and teacher characteristics variables combine to predict students' learning outcome in History in Rivers state?*

Table 4: Model Summary and ANOVA on School Quality, Teacher Characteristics and Students' Learning Outcome in History

R = .545^a
 R square = .297
 Adjusted R square = .245
 Standard error of the estimate = 4.008

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	183545	2	91.773	5.712	.009
Residual	433.822	228	16.067		
Total	617.367	230			

Significant at $p < 0.05$

From table 4, the combination of the two independent variables, (school quality and teacher characteristics) jointly relate with students' learning outcome in history, with positive moderate correlation at $R = .545$, a multiple R square of .297 with Adjusted R square of .245. The multiple correlation of .545 indicates a moderate relationship among the two independent variables and students' learning

outcome in history. Moreover, as shown in table 4.1.4a the combination of the two independent variables explains 24.5% or 25% of the variance observed in students' learning outcome in history. The observed R value was statistically significant at $F(2, 228) = 5.712, p < 0.05$. This implies that the two variables actually predict students' learning outcome in history.

Table 5: Relative Contribution of School Quality, Teacher Characteristics on Students' Learning Outcome in History

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Rank	Sig
(Constant)	27.874	2.483		11.225		.000
School Quality	1.808	.714	.426	2.534	1st	.017
Teacher Characteristics	1.433	1.003	.240	1.429	2nd	.164

Significant at $p < 0.05$

From the table 5, it is evident that this variable contributed significantly in the prediction of students' learning outcome. School Quality with this feature ($\beta = .426, t = 2.534, p < 0.05$). However, this variable contributed positively but insignificantly in the prediction of students' learning outcome in history. Teachers' characteristics with this feature ($\beta = .240, t = 1.429, p > 0.05$). This is an indication that school quality actually determines the learning outcome of history students.

The significant result of the relationship between school quality and teachers' characteristics buttresses Ojeritide (1991) postulation that for formal education to be properly provided, schools should be built with necessary facilities to ensure enriched and enabling environment for teaching and learning. The finding also supports the assertion of Falodun (2003) that school environment affects students' education achievement, their conduct and inadequacy of space and facilities

in schools can easily inhibit the productivity of both the teacher and the learner.

contributions of the component of school quality and teacher characteristics on students' learning outcome in History in Rivers state?

Research Question Five: *What are the relative*

Table 6: Model summary and ANOVA on Components of School Quality, Teacher Characteristics and Students' Learning Outcome in History

R = .648 ^a					
R square = .419					
Adjusted R square = .326					
Standard error of the estimate = 3.787					
Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	258.899	2	64.725	4.514	.007
Residual	358.468	228	14.339		
Total	617.367	230			

Significant at $p < 0.05$

From table 6 the combination of the two independent variable, that is: **School Environment, Facilities, Instructional Materials** and teacher characteristics jointly related with students' learning outcome in history, with positive moderate correlation at $R = .648$, a multiple R square of .419 with Adjusted R square of .326. The multiple correlation of .648 indicates a moderate relationship among the two independent

variables and students' learning outcome in history. Moreover, as shown in table 5b, the combination of the three components of school quality and teacher characteristics explains 32.6% or 33% of the variance observed in students' learning outcome in history. The observed R value was statistically significant at $F(2, 228) = 4.514$, $p < 0.05$. This implies that the four variables actually predict students' learning outcome in history.

Table 7: Relative Contribution of School Quality, Teacher Characteristics on Students' Learning Outcome in History

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Rank	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	19.556	3.950		4.951		.000
School Environment	2.271	1.069	.350	2.124	2 nd	.044
Facilities	.552	1.103	.089	.501		.621
Instructional Materials	2.284	.967	.379	2.361	1 st	.026
Teacher Characteristics	1.301	.885	.252	1.470		.154

Significant at $p < 0.05$

From the above table, it is evident that these variables contributed significantly in the prediction of students' learning outcome in history. School Environment with this feature ($\beta=.350$, $t_{2.124}$, $p < 0.05$). Instructional Materials with this feature ($\beta=.379$, $t_{2.361}$, $p < 0.05$). However, these variables contributed positively but insignificant in the prediction of students' learning outcome in history. Facilities with this feature ($\beta = .089$, $t_{.501}$, $p>0.05$). Teacher characteristics with this feature ($\beta = .252$, $t_{1.470}$, $p>0.05$). The result implies that instructional materials are the most influential in the prediction followed by school environment respectively.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was observed that there are positive relationships among school quality (facilities, instructional materials, and environment), Teacher characteristics (subject mastery, classroom management, teaching experience, teaching method), and students' learning outcome in history. Therefore, when teachers improve on their skills (in terms of teaching method and allow substantial time for students' individual work in their various classes e.t.c), and Government increases the supply of teachers and infrastructural facilities to improve school quality' these will increase the students' level of performance in secondary school history.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made.

- ❖ Government should provide trainings for teachers to develop their knowledge, practices and attitude that are needed for maximum students' learning outcome in history.
- ❖ Teachers who have stayed long in the school and the newly employed ones should still be encouraged to attend

seminars/workshops in order to update their knowledge so as to be more effective in their teaching.

- ❖ Teachers should be assigned to teach the subjects of their specialization or subjects in which they profess to have the skill, ability and interest so that their efforts may yield desirable students' learning outcome.
- ❖ Government and schools' proprietors should improve on the provision of adequate infrastructural facilities in order to enhance maximum students' learning outcome in history.
- ❖ Government should improve in the supply of history teachers in various secondary schools, since the experience of the past is indispensable to shape the future.

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