

# Influence of Teachers Biographic Attributes on Their Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Edo State of Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The study was undertaken to examine the influence of teacher's biographic attributes on their job performance in public secondary schools in Edo State. Various theories concerning some concepts such as gender and marital status, qualification, experience as it relates to the job performance levels of teachers. Teachers were orally interviewed on these various variables as it affects their levels of job performance. The result showed that there was moderate level of teachers job performance in Edo State. It was recommended that qualified teachers should be employed and that Government should encourage teachers to attend conferences and seminars in order to improve on their job performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a means of empowering the individual through the acquisition of knowledge and skills in order to become useful to himself and the community. Education is acclaimed to be the magic wand for the solution to all problems that plague mankind. Education therefore is a means through which man can learn certain ethics, values, beliefs and principles of life which will further enlighten the human mind, character and personality (Nwadiani, 2011).

In Nigeria, efforts are made by the government to ensure that those people who missed their earlier opportunities to obtain formal education when they were young now have a second chance in adult education. In pursuance of this laudable objective, various governments in Nigeria, either states or federal have over the years allocated a substantial part of their annual budget to education. This is in realization of the adoption of education as an instrument par excellence for national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Education is one of the greatest services provided by the teacher. The teacher being the giver of instruction, an evaluator and model for students is a dominant force in the learning outcome of the students. The role of the teacher in the realization of the objectives in any educational system cannot be overemphasized. Teachers are vital links in the integration of effective education into the curriculum and they are the first line helpers in the school programme as well as the referral sources for students in need of additional assistance. For any student, education and character are the basic foundations and it is laid by the teacher. They tend to instill values, attitudes and behaviours in students. The school

system is as good as the teacher who operates it. Teachers are the most important features in any educational system (Adelabu, 2008).

Job performance has been understood in different schools of thoughts in different ways. Job performance is described by Adeyemi (2008) as the ability to combine skillfully the right behaviour towards the realization of goals and objectives of any organization. In the same vein, it is the ability of teachers to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. Job performance is also perceived to be when a teacher carries out those duties attached to his office at a particular period in the school system in realizing the goals of the school.

Teachers' job performance is the ability of the teacher to combine relevant educational inputs for the enhancement of learning processes. Teachers' job performance is mostly measured by effective teaching, lesson note preparation, use of scheme of work, supervision, monitoring of students' work and disciplinary ability of the teacher. In this regard, teachers' performance could be measured through Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) of teachers' activities in terms of performance in teaching, lesson preparation and presentation, mastery of subject matter, competence, teachers' commitment to job and extra-curricular activities (Gordon, Kane and Staiger, 2006).

The quality of any educational process and its product, to a large extent is influenced by the job performance of teachers. The entire edifice of education may become shaky if teachers are not effective in their job performance (Ekwesili, 2006). This is because the teachers are the ones saddled with the responsibility of bringing about the desired change in the behaviour of the learner. For any educational system to be able to achieve its goals, the teachers must be seen to be effective in the performance of their job. What constitutes effective job performance of teachers may not be easily defined. It is easier to itemize guidelines for effective job performance of teachers than measuring actual performance.

There are certain variables that may affect the job performance of teachers. These variables could be categorized into demographic and biographic variables. The demographic

variables are school location, school ownership, school type and sex of teachers. The biographic variables are qualification of teachers, job experience, sex of teachers, marital status and age of teachers. This study is concerned with the biographic variables. The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. Teacher quality summed up in academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence cum skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher has impact on the teaching-learning process. The teachers cannot perform the roles expected of them unless they are properly trained. Teaching is a human endeavor refined by training and practice. The availability of qualified teachers is central in the reconstruction of the educational system because a teacher who is not qualified will likely be ineffective in the discharge of his teaching function.

As enshrined in the handbook of the Teachers' Registration Council, the institutions in Nigeria that offer approved professional training in Education include, National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education in Universities, Facilities of Education in Universities and other recognized foreign centers with recognized educational training (TRCN). The Council went further to state the categories of qualification which a teacher should acquire include Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) or its equivalent, First Degree in Education or its equivalent and Masters in Education or its equivalent.

Experience on the job is another biographic attribute that may influence teachers' job performance. Some have been in the teaching profession longer than others. An less experienced teacher is unlikely to apply the appropriate instructional techniques needed for the impartation of the subject matter (Ukpebor, 2008). It will also be seen in our secondary schools that there are young intelligent professionals in various fields who are employed but do not have the experience that would enable them cope effectively in their job. And some of those experienced teachers on ground in the schools do not possess the latest academic content and disposition required to handle the very complex technological content of their subject areas. How can it then be said that teachers' experience can have influence on their job performance?

People who are academically inclined are willing to study, acquire knowledge and skills irrespective of their age and sex. Also, no report has shown that knowledge of a particular sex is either the best with regard to acquisition of knowledge and skills or best in retaining knowledge and skills. Consequently, establishments should not be biased in giving job opportunities to workers of a particular age or sex in trying out the stuff they are made of. It is the view of Adebule (2004) that job opportunities irrespective of age and sex should be given to all.

### *Concept of Job Performance*

Job performance is also described as an act of accomplishing or executing a given task. Bealiner (1996) describes job performance as the ability to combine skillfully the right behaviour towards the realization of goals and objectives of any organization. In the same vein, Ejikhian (2008) and Ezengbo (2008), view it as the ability of teachers to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. For Ekeji (2001), he says job performance is perceived to be when a teacher carries out those duties attached to his office at a particular period in the school system in realizing the goals of the school.

With these in mind, job performance has been understood in different schools of thought in different ways. It could be interpreted to be an individual's identification and involvement with a particular organization. According to Hart and Gordon, Kane and Staige (2006), job performance is symbolized by (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. Goe (2007) cited in Hoffman (2002) defines commitment (performance) as "A partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of an organization, to one's role in relation to goals and values of an organization and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth".

Organizational performance/commitment is also perceived as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in the organization (Crainer, 2009). Kupermintz (2003) made a clear cut distinction between organizational performance/commitment and job satisfaction. Organizational performance/commitment they say is "An effective response to the whole organization, while job satisfaction is an effective response to specific aspects of the job." It is also perceived as an exchange of behaviour in order to get something valuable by the person exhibiting the behaviour. Hence, Milken (2002) opine that organizational performance/commitment is the outcome of a matching process between the individual's job-related and vocational needs on the one hand and the organization's ability to satisfy these needs on the other.

### *Levels of Job Performance*

The levels of job performance go to describe an employer's abilities to maintain his performance in different strata. These strata show or tell something on the quality and quantity of an employee's work. The performance levels are high, medium and low levels. His job level is said to be high because the employee consistently exceeds the requirements of the job. The employee who achieves this height would have excelled in the accomplishment of all tasks, objectives and responsibilities given to him in a sustained manner. According to the research carried out by Milken (2002) in Rustenburg involving 150 teachers and 15 principals on "motivation and its effects on teachers' and students' performance, "their

findings reveal that those teachers who are on this level of job performance show an uncommon understanding of their job, carry out their jobs with unusual exceptional knowledge and authority which make them achieve many innovative and valuable objectives for their schools. In other words, such employees frequently exceed expectations. Their jobs are performed with competence and thoroughness which keeps them pushing until what is to be achieved is realized bouncing back each time there are setbacks in their jobs. The employee usually shows initiative and accomplishes worthwhile objectives for his organization.

According to Milken (2002) teachers who are on this level of job performance set high personal performance expectations for themselves and they tirelessly pursue these excellent goals remaining undaunted in the face of challenges. Corroborating this, Bogler and Somech (2005) in their research carried out in Ports-Elizabeth on “Teachers’ participation in decision making and their job satisfaction and performance: pre-colonial and post-colonial day” found that teachers who achieve this level of job performance do not settle for status – quo job performance and having nothing to do with mediocrity. Instead, from their findings, such teachers put up the “can-do” attitude and jump- start any stalled projects.

The other level of job performance is the medium level. An employee on this level though does not exceed the requirements of the job but he is a consistently competent performance who from the findings of Milken (2002) can be counted on for meaningful performance. Teachers who attain this level of job performance carry out their jobs in a consistently reliable manner and their jobs are accomplished with minimum supervision because they focus on the jobs and not time and channel their energies on the jobs. Teachers on this level of job performance according to Clark (2006) are on this level because they take feedback seriously and make every effort to improve. They are interested in these feedbacks so as to build up performance.

Another level of job performance is the low level. The employee’s performance neither meets nor exceeds job requirements. Employees on this level of performance occasionally fail to meet expectations of their employers. These categories of workers are very comfortable and satisfied with their current performance regardless of the fact that their performance is below expectation and not satisfactory. Clark (2006) found that marginal level performing teachers are very relaxed and comfortable slipping under bar rather than make effort to leap over it and that is why they are easily defeated and disoriented by little obstacles and challenges. This set of workers are very often interested in things that have little to do with jobs and so come up short on projects. For such workers as noted by Clark (2006) consistent prodding and a lot of reminder are necessary for teachers on this level to improve. Although the employee’s performance is not considered unacceptable, there is room to improve work performance. The respondents in the research carried out by Clark (2004) laid it bare that extra training is strongly required

to aid the necessary improvement required by this set of teachers to meet and perhaps exceed job requirements.

#### *Concept of Teachers’ Job Performance*

The quality of educational process with its product is undeniably influenced by job performance of teachers. The entire edifice of education could be said to be shaky if the job performance of teachers is weak and ineffective. Consequent upon this is the fact that effective job performance of teachers is a must for educational improvement. Defining what may constitute effective performance of teachers is much more dicey and complex than a simple itemizing of set goals. It is easier to itemize guidelines of achieving a goal than to coach someone to excel in performance.

There are many factors which contribute to a teacher’s performance. An effective teacher teaches effectively in the class and his teaching style(s) and quality ought to be satisfactory. He has to manage time for teaching and other duties assigned by principals and school management board. No one assignment of his should suffer at the expense of others as a result of poor time management. An effective teacher who would want to have a high level of job performance should manage class discipline, disruptive students, students’ motivation and achievement levels. He has to be regular and punctual. There must be good level of interaction with his students, their parents and his colleagues because his interpersonal skills also determines his job performance rather directly or indirectly. That is to say, his communication skills must be well above board. We can say that factors contributing to the good job performance of school teachers are many and diverse.

Student’s academic performance can be measured through teacher’s job performance. The process of evaluating the job performance of teachers on the job has changed over time along with the definition of what effective teaching is, due to increasing state and federal attention to school level and classroom level accountability for student learning. The term “Effective teaching” has been defined in many ways throughout the years (McColskey, Strange, Ward, Tucker, Howard and Lewis (2005) and methods for measuring teachers have changed as definitions and beliefs about what is important to measure have involved. Although there is a general consensus that good teaching matters and that it may be the single most important school based factor in improving students’ achievement (Darling-Hammond 2000; Wright, Horn and Sanders 1997).

Owing to array of definitions and meaning of the concept, teacher job performance and consequent upon the seeming hazy indices that becloud the concept, there is a persistent critique of the dominant teacher job performance definition which centers on outcomes of student achievement scores. One critique concerns the problem of the assumption of causality that underlie this approach. The approach requires the establishment of what part of an effectiveness scores is attributable solely to the teacher. Making this determination is

problematic not just for practical reasons but for logical reasons assumptions are required that may be unreasonable.

Although is it theoretically possible to identify indicators of all the components in the definition and the concept of effective teaching so that they can be measured and scored, there is a dearth of research in many of these areas. Most measures of teacher job performance focus on either student achievement gains attributed to the teacher or on classroom performance as measured with observation protocols. Teacher observations take many forms, measure different aspects of teaching and vary greatly in their implementation. Some researchers suggest that observation scores have been related to important outcome measures such as student achievement (Gallagher, 2004; Kimball White, Milansowski and Borman 2004; Milanowski 2004). When measuring teacher job performance through classroom observations, valid and appropriate instruments are crucial as well as trained raters to utilize those instruments in standard ways so that results will be comparable across classrooms.

#### *Teachers' Qualifications and their job Performance*

Every educational systems in any known society requires highly skilled teaching personnel to sustain it. This explains why teachers are regarded as most important element in the school system (Igwe, 2002). It is generally believed that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Hence, qualification is necessary to upgrade and update teachers' knowledge and skills.

Teaching as a profession has suffered greatly from the simplistic view with which is has been regarded for a long time and because of this attitude, teaching becomes a job for all comers, the unqualified or untrained as well as poorly trained teachers (Okeki, 2005). This phenomenon has adversely affected both the quality of teaching and students' learning. However,, as teaching is being given the attention it deserves, it has become increasingly accepted as a complex activity. Ijaiya (2000) discovered that teachers teach with many skills as teaching involves a lot of covert and overt actions to produce the desired effect on the students. He also identified several of such skills as technical skills, concept skills, problem solving skills, psychomotor teaching skills, reflective skills, concept skills, problem solving skills, psychomotor teaching skills, reflective skills and so forth. All these skills therefore need to be taught in teaching education in order to improve the teachers' competence and promote good quality teaching.

According to Ijaiya, the poor handling of concept of teaching by teachers have created more problems in the teaching learning situation in schools. The inability of students to transfer knowledge across subject areas and poor problem solving skills can be traced to lack of understanding of relevant concepts by the learner. In Berret (2005) opinion, teaching concepts involve teaching facts, principles and generalization in various fields of knowledge. He insisted that most times, teachers teach words that symbolize the concept

and not the concepts themselves. He believed that concept teaching is a key concept that supports other skills like problem solving skills. According to him, if a student does not grasp the meaning of a given field, it would be difficult for him to succeed in solving problems in such a field.

Teaching is an art. It can be refined by training and practice. The availability of competent teachers is central in the reconstruction of the educational system. The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. Quality improvement in education depends upon proper training of teachers. The teachers cannot play any of the roles unless properly and professionally trained (Wayne and Younges, 2003). Describing the importance of classroom assessment after a session of quality instruction by a qualified teacher, Mujis (2006) stated that "What is needed is an understanding of how assessment and instruction are interwoven with new conceptions about what assessment is and how is affects learning. He further stated that teachers make decisions about classroom management based upon the achievement gains.

Omoifo and Okaka (2010) said that knowledge of the subject matter is the most essential trait, factor and characteristic which the teacher must posses in order to effectively perform his responsibility as a teacher. They posited that this professional quality is based on the professional qualification of the teacher. They added that for a teacher to be effective is delivering his lesson, he must have good command of the subject matter which means, he must have an adequate understanding of the basic principles and concepts of the subject to be taught.

Marneau (2006) posited that teachers have significant impact on students' academic achievements. Teachers directly affect how students learn, what they learn, how much they learn, the ways they interact with one another and the world around them. The effect the classroom teacher can have on students' achievements is clear because students' achievement begin and end with the quality of teacher. Martneau concluded that the professionally qualified teacher produces a gain of about 53 percent points in students' achievements over one year, whereas the unqualified teacher produced achievement gains of about 14 percent points over one year.

Bruce (2005) and Byrne (2003) indicated in their research that teachers who are professionally trained demonstrated a sound understanding of instructional materials and concepts, use production tools to enhance professional tasks such as correspondent, assessment, classroom materials presentations etc. qualified teachers demonstrate introductory knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts related to the use of materials needed for instructional process and the continuous growth in technology, knowledge and skills to stay abreast of current and emerging technologies and informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of students' learning.

Oladunjoye (2005) asserted that qualified teachers have a closer understanding of activities within the school and even of its potential activities and strive to promote the stability of the academic achievement of the students. He also suggested that non-qualified teachers should be made to undergo the basic qualifying courses for teachers in order to be exposed to the pedagogical skills in teaching to ensure competencies and functional specialization just as qualified teachers.

#### *Teachers' experience and their job performance*

Teaching experience refers to the knowledge, skill or wisdom gained through the practice of teaching. Experience can be linked with the number of years spent in doing something. It is a general believe that when you do a thing regularly especially for a long time, you will improve your skill and become good at it i.e practice makes perfect. The teacher plays a crucial role increasing the achievement of the students. Learning outcomes not only depend upon the pleasant atmosphere of the school but the quality and years of experience of the teacher (Fowler, William & Monk, 2001).

According to Charles (2002) a person may be exposed to courses, but does mere exposure to this qualify him for teaching? He may pass certain required test but does the passing of them give him the knowledge and competence needed to teacher the students? A person is certified and the state says he can teacher, but does that mean he has the capabilities for doing the job effectively? To buttress this view, Fafunwa (1997) attributed the falling standard of education to the presence of auxiliary teachers in the field. He affirmed that of all the educational problems that beset the African country today, none is as persistence or compelling as the one relating to the training of the one relating to the training of competent teachers and their years of experience on the job.

An experienced teacher looks more confident in the class, hence according to Roverson (2005), if the teacher feels confident, the students are noticeable more responsive and this in turn reinforces his own assurance. If the teacher lacks confidence, the process can begin in reverse and he can quickly become demoralized. According to Chikere (2008) an experienced teacher recognizes in the first place that the students must be responsive to the given task of learning in order to be able to learn the lesson by heart after having full understanding of it. Also Wayne, Andrew & Youngs (2003) agreed when he said that the experienced teacher helps the students learning from the beginning to the end systematically. The language of teaching is considered to be consistent with agreement of students mental levels, the system of sentences used in the lesson are arranged in organized grammatical structures. The sense of the structure should be common with fixed form and sense. The experienced teacher according to Adelabu (2008) is likely to be able to see through the individual differences carefully among the students of various intellectual capabilities. An

experienced teacher can easily convince the mischievous and stubborn students.

A teacher's years of experience, the knowledge and the personality of the teacher are very important factors in determining his/her students' academic achievements (Darling-hammond, 2000; Wenlinsky, 2002). Akudilo (2001) stated that for a teacher to be effective, he/she must have good mastery of the substantive syntactic structures of the subject. Also the teacher needs to be able to unpack the subject content in a way it would be understood and retained by the students. In other words, the teacher needs the ability to understand a subject well enough to teach the students effectively. The goal of teaching is to establish a foundation of knowledge that allows the students to build on as they are exposed to different life experiences. Regardless of the level of preparation students bring into the classroom qualitative research asserts that decisions teachers take about classroom practices can either greatly facilitate student learning or serve as an obstacle to it (Wenglinsky, 2002).

Teachers are like banks and the students are like surging tide of fresh and crystal clear water; where this heavenly water sear, the nourishing of teaching learning atmosphere takes place. It is no doubt that the destiny of a nation is shaped in the classroom. It is the teacher's tongue that opens the secrets of nation. There is a direct link between the achievement of the students and the teacher (Waiching, 1994). Quality education for all is our most desired goal. The realization of this goal depends on the quality of teachers working in the school system. Sial (2005) quoted Ejimofor (2001) to determine the exact position of teacher in any system of education. It is said that no system of education can be better than its teacher. The teacher is the king pin in the education set up. Qualification and experience of teacher plays an important role in teaching because a trained and experienced teacher can teach better than an untrained and less experienced teacher. Generally according to him, a trained and experienced teacher knows well how to teach effectively.

## II. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that:

1. Teachers' qualification influences their job performance in Edo State
2. Teachers' experience influences their job performance in Edo State
3. Teachers sex influence their job performance in Edo State
4. Teacher's age does not influence their job performance in Edo State
5. Teachers' marital status does not influence their job performance in Edo State.

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the findings, the following recommendations were made with a view to enhancing

teachers' job performance which would result in improved students' academic performance.

1. The Post Primary Education Board should recruit graduate teachers to teach in public secondary schools in Edo State
2. Government should put up a scheme to encourage teachers to improve on their qualifications for example study leave with pay.
3. Teachers who have stayed in the teaching profession for a long time should be given some form of motivation to stay longer in the teaching profession.
4. Government and other stakeholders in education should partner together to organize seminars, workshops and conferences regularly for teachers, so as to be equipped with modern trends in education and consequently enhance their job performance.
5. Those on whom the responsibility of employing teachers rest on should carry out such exercise of employing teachers without putting emphasis or premium on age

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