

Professional Qualifications, Job Experience and Employability of Teachers in Private Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship among academic/professional qualifications, job experience and employability of teachers in private secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The non-compliance with the provision of the National Policy on Education of the possession of requisite qualifications in teaching by some of the graduates employed to teach in private schools has been worrisome. The study adopts a descriptive survey design. The sample size comprised 150 participants made up of proprietors and proprietresses of private secondary schools randomly selected from six local governments (3 representing sub-urban, and 3 representing urban). Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The one-way Analysis of Variance statistics was used for data analysis. The study reveals that there is a significant relationship between teachers' job experience and their employability in private secondary schools irrespective of the location. The findings also revealed that there is strong relationship between teachers' qualifications and their employability. It is therefore suggested among others that there is need for universities to expand their postgraduate programmes to accommodate more students for postgraduate studies so as to equip them for employment opportunities in the private secondary schools without hindrance.

Introduction

The general belief in Nigeria is that the standard of education has been falling compared with what it used to be some years (Akinsulire, 1996). This belief is brought about by the continuous poor performance of students, as evident in the failure rate in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and the General Certificate in Education (GCE) examinations. Only significant percentage of those presented for the examinations come out with grades that qualify them for entry into tertiary institutions. The question then arises, what are the human factors responsible for this poor performance?

One of the qualities of a good teacher is “knowledge”. A teacher's knowledge of his subject must not be questionable. This will boost the confidence which the students are expected to have in him. Experience is the hallmark of a potent mind. A blind man is not expected to lead another blind man; else they will crash into obstacles and pits. There are certain laid down rules and policies that guide entry into the profession of teaching in Nigeria today. For instance, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 204) stipulates that the minimum entry qualification required for one to be able to teach in elementary schools is the Nigerian Certificates in Education (NCE).

In the same vein, the minimum entry qualification for recruitment of teachers into the secondary schools is the possession of an NCE, for the junior secondary school, a first degree or plus a Postgraduate Diploma in Education for non-education university graduates or holders of Higher National Diploma for the senior secondary schools. These requirements as put in place are expected to enhance productivity as well as the development of learners' knowledge.

A cursory look at the academic qualifications and job experience of those employed to teach in the public schools shows that a greater percentage of them have appropriate professional academic qualifications which make them to be suitable for placement on the job.

Today many parents in Nigeria have embraced the private secondary school system, as they strive to have their wards in the schools at all costs, despite the relatively exorbitant fees charged by these schools. This is because qualitative and uninterrupted education is now associated distinctively with private schools.

The importance of adequate qualifications and job experience in the employment of teachers cannot be over-emphasized. This is because the two factors are germane to the effective teaching and learning in the school system.

Several studies have been conducted on the effects of job experience and qualifications on the effectiveness to teachers in their pedagogical activities. For example, Murnane and Phillip (in Darling-Hammond, 1999) found a relationship between teachers' effectiveness and their years of experience, though, not always a significant one or an entirely linear one.

In the same vein, Kennedy (2004) found that getting highly qualified teachers boosts students' performance. Therefore, in order to have better qualified teachers, there is the need to first raise standards. There is a lot of controversy right now as to whether or not teaching is considered a profession. This is because of their poor salaries, lack of requirements to be considered for teachers, as well as other points to attract more qualified teachers. There is therefore the need to put things that will attract people into teaching in place in our schools.

According to Aghenta (2001), the ultimate quality of education is determined by the teacher, as he transmits the value of education to learners. Adeyemi and Uko-Aviomah (2003) remarked that the teachers are the main stay of any institution and their number and quality affect the teaching-learning process. As observed by Okeke in Ehiametalor (1989), a qualified teacher, is one who has both professional and academic background to teach a particular subject. Abdul-Kareem (2004) states that the success or failure of any system of education depends largely upon the quality and caliber of its teachers. Teachers are therefore, the hinge which holds the door of education in shape and gives it poise and stability.

Adesina in Adeogun, Bello and \Osifila (2009) expressed that the qualification and experience of teacher are prerequisites to the quality of students' performance. Therefore, teachers' quality as measured by experience and qualification is related to achievement and more predictive of students' performance. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that a teacher is that person who because of rich or unusual experience or education in a given field is able to contribute to the growth and development of other persons who come in contact with him; therefore, teachers are the crucial input in the transformation of students into graduates.

Statement of the Problems

Teachers' qualification and job experience are two important factors towards the effectiveness of teachers in the performance of their duties as well as the enhancement of effective teaching-learning process. There is no gainsaying the fact that the establishment of private schools is partly profit-making, and this is evident in the exorbitant fees charged by some of the private school operators.

It has however been noted by the researchers that despite the provision of the National Policy on Education (2004) that all teachers in our educational institutions must be professionally qualified. Most private schools do not comply with this policy provision, as evident in their recruitment exercise of hiring graduates who do not possess professional qualification in teaching, especially in subjects like Mathematics, Sciences, English language and some commercial subjects.

Coupled with the above, the desire by the operators of these private schools to recover cost has also led to non-use of job experience in the recruitment process of teachers, because the more qualified teachers are, the more they are to be paid. This, according to Adekunle and Oke (2009) has contributed to the turnover rate and teachers instability in private schools.

Purpose of Study

This study is embarked upon to:

1. examine the influence of job experience on the employability of teachers in private secondary schools.
2. Investigate the relationship between professional/academic qualifications and the employability of teachers in private secondary schools

Research Questions

This study attempts to provide answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any relationship between teacher's job experience and their employability in private secondary schools?
- 2) Is there any relationship between teachers' qualification and their employability in private secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

HQ₁: There is no significant relationship between job experience and the employability of teachers in private secondary schools.

HQ₂: There is no significant relationship between professional/academic qualifications and the employability of teachers in private secondary schools.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample consisted of 150 participants made up of proprietors and proprietresses of private secondary schools randomly selected from Epe, Ibeju-Lekki and Badagry Local Government Areas (representing the suburban local government areas) on the one hand, and Ikeja, Lagos Island and Agege representing the urban local government areas on the other. In each of the Local Governments, 25 proprietors/proprietresses of private secondary schools were chosen.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher's constructed questionnaire titled "Professional Qualifications, Job Experience and Employability of Teachers' Questionnaire" (PQJEETQ). The questionnaire was divided into two parts: part A and part B. Part A sought information on the bio-data of the participants, while part B contained information eliciting responses from the participants on the variables of the study.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure that the designed questionnaire actually measured what it was intended to measure, experts in Educational Administration and Planning of the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos were asked to validate it. The experts agreed that the items were relevant, appropriate and comprehensive. As a result of their opinions, some items were restructured, while some were added and the inappropriate ones deleted.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by the use of test re-test technique. The final instruments were administered over three weeks to a sample of 30 proprietors and proprietresses different from those used for the study in the six local government areas under study. The correlation coefficients of two sets of scores were calculated to be 0.79, and this was found to be reliable.

Data analysis and Interpretation of Results

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between job experience and employability of teachers in private secondary schools. The hypothesis was tested using one way analysis of variance and the result is presented in the table 1:

Table 1: Job experience and employability of teachers

Job experience		Employability of teachers			
		N	Mean	SD	
5 years and below		23	26.31	7.18	
6 – 10 years		49	29.40	5.63	
10 years and above		78	35.06	9.88	
Source of variation	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	f-ratio	f-total
Between Groups	356.055	2	179.028	4.40	2.09
Within groups	5976.327	147	40.66		
Total	6334.382	149			

F < 0.05

Evidence from Table 1 shows that the f-calculated value of 4.40 is greater than the f-critical value of 2.09 given at 2/147 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It then means that there is a significant relationship between job experience and employability of teachers in private secondary schools in Lagos State.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between professional/academic qualifications and the employability of teachers in private secondary schools in Lagos State. This hypothesis was tested using one way Analysis of variance. The result is presented in the table 2:

Table 2: Professional/Academic qualifications and the employability of teachers

Professional/Academic Qualifications		Employability of teachers			
		N	Mean	SD	
1 st degree and above (Professional)		60	20.80	6.75	
1 st degree and above (Non -professional)		47	18.51	5.91	
NCE		53	22.29	7.03	
Source of variation	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	f-ratio	f-total
Between Groups	258.021	2	129.011	3.81	2.09
Within groups	4976.106	147	33.851		
Total	6334.382	149			

P < 0.05

Evidence from Table 2 shows that the f-calculated value of 3.81 is greater than the f-critical value of 2.09 given at /2/147 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It then means that the academic/professional qualifications have significant relationship with employability of teachers in private secondary schools in Lagos state.

Discussion of Results

The results of this study had shown that there is significant relationship between teachers' job experience and their employability in private secondary schools irrespective of whether such schools are in suburban areas or urban areas. This study has also revealed that there is strong relationship between teachers' qualifications and their employability in private secondary schools with the two contrasting areas studied. It was observed that proprietors and proprietresses of private secondary schools in Lagos State of Nigeria prefer to employ teachers with long years of teaching experience and those with higher qualifications (either in terms of higher class of degree or in terms of the possession of postgraduate qualifications). These situations represent the general trend irrespective of where the private secondary schools are located. These trends are based on the perception and belief that the higher the qualifications, the higher the performance of teachers and that the higher the number of years of teaching experience of teacher, the higher the quality of their teaching, hence the higher the academic performance of the students in return.

The result in this study was in agreement with the work of Isichei and Ubangha (2005) and Adetoro (1999 and 2001) where it was observed that teachers' qualifications and years of teaching experience have significant influence on academic performance of students. The results of this study therefore buttress the belief of the proprietors and proprietresses of private secondary schools that employing highly qualified and experienced teachers will enable them achieve high academic success and still continue to maintain the high standard. This therefore implies that if qualified and experienced teachers are employed to teach in private secondary schools in Lagos State, student's performance in examinations can be improved. It also implies that people with high academic qualifications and long years of teaching experience stand a better chance of employment opportunities in the schools in Lagos.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The study has revealed a strong relationship between teachers' job experience and their employability in private secondary schools whether in the suburban areas or in the urban areas of Lagos State. It has also shown that teachers with higher and better qualifications had a better chance of being employed by private secondary schools in the Lagos State irrespective of school location.

The findings of this study implied that individuals seeking employment into private secondary schools can stand a better or higher chance of employment

opportunities if they possess a higher qualifications or have good first degree such as First Class (Hons) or Second Class (Hons) Upper Division. People with many years of teaching experience have also been found to be capable of being employed in private secondary schools in Lagos State of Nigeria. For this reason therefore, there is need for our universities to expand their postgraduate studies so that they will be equipped for employment opportunities in the schools without any hindrance. The study has also shown that experienced teachers now have the potential to get employed in other institutions where better pay is derivable.

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