



**ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ON-
THE-JOB TRAINING AND PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN AKPABUYO
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the effect of teachers' involvement in in-service training on pupils' performance in English Language in Akpabuyo LGA, River State. To achieve the study's objectives, two hypotheses were formulated. One hundred and twenty-five English Language teachers from 12 public primary schools in the location were selected through a simple random sampling procedure for the study. Two research instruments were used for data collection: the Teachers' On-the-Job Training Participation Questionnaire (TOTJTPO) and English Language Academic Test (ELAT). Analyses were tested at .05 alpha. The findings of the data analysis revealed that teachers' in-service training and attending workshops significantly predicted pupils' achievement in English Language. It was recommended that school administrators should provide room for teachers to undergo on-the-job professional development training through a mentorship programme. There should be frequent seminars, both locally and internationally, to enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student performance.

Keywords: Enhancing, Teachers, Professional, Development, On-The-Job Training, Primary School, Pupils, Academic Achievement, English Language.

Introduction

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2015), quality education is vital as it transforms the lives of people. Its natural end is, of course, the perfect development of the individual; and happiness is all in all in that complete self-realisation of everyone, in that perfect obedience to divine laws for everyone's good. There are various United Nations (UN e.g.), e.g., Right to Education, Education for All, and Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA, 2015), (Fareo, 2017). Consequently, the government of Nigeria has also implemented programs such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE, 1999) to improve

the educational status of Nigerian children. English is one of the key subjects in this regard, and this has been highly reflected in the school system, as it has been made a core subject at every educational level (Bamgbose, 2016).

The importance of learning English as a base towards proficiency in other disciplines is undeniable. Its place in the school is largely based on its utilitarian value in a multilingual Nigeria. This explains why educationists have been emphasising the need to improve spoken and written English in relation to school pupils' communication. However, an alarmingly large number of students continue to fail to achieve the credit necessary for public English language exams.

The percentages of failure in BECE (English language skills) in CRS from 2011 to 2015 are 34.5%, 45.16%, 37.45%, 42.18%, and 21.69%, respectively (See Appendix D). Furthermore, between 2004 and 2011 and 2012-2018, only about 22% of students obtained credit in at least five subjects, including English Language, as reported in the Chief Examiners' Report (CER) of the West African Examination Council (WAEC). According to the WAEC (2012-2018) report, 38.81%, 36.57%, 31.28%, 38.68%, 52.97%, 59.22%, and 49.98% of candidates obtained credit passes in five subjects, including English Language, for ultra-micro cover candidates. Those overtly reveal that students' English oral presentation skills have not been encouraging for the last 15 years. Most of our underlings lack the necessary semantics to pass the O-level English Language. (Kolawole, 2015).

Ukeje (2019) initially reported the findings of a study that investigated the performance of Nigerian students in the May/June WAEC/SSCE examination, as well as that of students from Ghana, Liberia, and the Gambia, three other English-speaking West African countries, in the 1990s. Nigeria had the lowest scores in six of the 11 valid subjects, including English Language. Academic achievement: The extent to which a learner, an educator, or an institution has reached its short- and long-term educational goals. It might also be described as the student's visible and measurable actions within a specific context. That is, teachers designed tests.

It is believed that if students' performance could rise, this is attainable under able teachers, since the role of a teacher as the engine house of success in any educational system is overwhelming. According to Isangidighi (2007), the teacher is considered a leader of the class and one who determines the direction of the learning process. The literature abounds with evidence of the effects of teachers' roles in leading students towards the desired improvement in knowledge, skills and behaviour on their performance and achievements. What educators do conditions what they do, and what educators do in turn conditions what and how students learn. Significant advancements can be made in the best structures, hardware, atmosphere, and administration; however, the prospects for improvement should be guided by professional teachers (cf. Fareo, 2017).

Suppose teaching is considered a process that can be analysed and improved rather than a stereotype or static. In that case, we posit that most Nigerian teachers still use obsolete methods in their approaches because they are unaware of current trends in

pedagogy. These weaknesses are a reflection of the circumstance that most undergraduates in Nigeria are not deemed as readers and most are also ineffective on exercises that are based on the reading of extensive text (Kolawale, 2015; Olaoton & Oguleye, 2013); the need of teaching reading perception ability as the tilting point scholastic language skill was essential and efficient. Students are expected to perform better in the subject at the end of the term if language teachers can learn how to organise learning content, objectives, and use late tactics in language teaching and learning.

Such a platform can be provided via professional development courses to educators. In this way, the NPE assumes that, among other things, teacher education should aim to stimulate teachers' curiosity and inventiveness, provide them with a scientific and professional basis reciprocal to their work, and facilitate good adaptation to changing conditions. What do you call training to acquire knowledge and skills on the job in an organisation?

A possible on-the-job training is available for teachers of all qualifications (trained or untrained, with a certificate or without a certificate), and it can assume different shapes (Maclear, 2018). These encompass university FE courses, workshops, seminars, school-based teacher continuous professional development, and conferences. Oris (2016) further consolidates this assertion, as the study reveals a robust positive relationship between teachers' educational backgrounds and learners' academic performance, highlighting the need for ongoing teacher professional development.

In Cross River State, Essien, Akpan and Obot (2016) observed that there was no significant relationship between teachers' attendance at seminars and workshops and students' academic achievement. The researchers found that their findings contradicted those of other studies, which have shown that the use of this training tool is a driver of teaching mastery and students' progress. Musa (2016) and Kobori (2017) have found that seminars help motivate teachers to achieve the desired standard and improve students' academic performance. Thus, it can be concluded that a training method shown to improve students' performance in other aspects is not the main reason for the insignificance, but rather the lack in the area that has been studied.

Statement of the problem

The poor academic performance of primary school pupils in English Language in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, is a recurring educational challenge. Contrary to its paramount role in Nigeria's educational system as a medium of instruction and a crucial subject, pupil performance in English Language is still below average. One of the central contributors to this problem is a lack of professional development for teachers, which renders them incapable of providing the high-quality instruction that students deserve.

Teachers are the foundation for the improvement of the education system, and require continuous professional development to enhance their teaching quality and remain current in pedagogical innovation. Regrettably, in Akpabuyo, ensuring access to formal on-the-job training (a key component of teacher development) remains a

challenge at best, non-existent at worst. That void has serious consequences, including wasted efforts to teach in ineffective ways, persistent sub-par student performance, and diminished long-term odds for the students for whom school is a place of failure. Additionally, educational provision is weak in Akpabuyo as a whole, characterised by substandard facilities, a lack of funding, and high teacher turnover. The shortage of access to good-quality teaching resources and limited avenues for professional development for teachers exacerbate these systemic problems. That is why many teachers are not prepared to deliver practical English language lessons, which leads to low attainment in pupils.

In this context, where English Language holds the key to the academic pursuits and achievements of students, it is necessary to ensure that the ground-level problems confronting those with learning needs are addressed. Enhancing teachers' in-service professional development – including systematically and continuously training them on the job – is essential for enhancing instructional quality and therefore pupils' academic achievement. The need to address this challenge forms the basis of this study, which is to examine the influence of on-the-job training on teacher professional development and the academic performance of pupils in English Language, in Akpabuyo LGA. This study aims to address a significant gap in the literature by investigating the potential of targeted teacher development interventions to enhance teaching quality, thereby advancing student learning.

Theoretical Background

Self-efficacy theory (Albert Bandura, 1986)

Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, first published in 1986, is a viable framework for understanding motivation and behaviour in various settings, including the classroom. Its central tenet is that a person's confidence in their ability to accomplish a particular task exerts considerable influence on motivation, effort, decision-making, and ultimately, performance. It is essential to recognise that self-efficacy is not merely a transient state or experience, but rather an enduring motivational process that can be influenced by the use of personal experiences and situational supports to manage behavioural performances (e.g., effort and achievement).

Gallagher (2012) purports that self-efficacy theory emphasises the importance of how an individual's perceptions of their capabilities influence successful outcomes. Within Bandura's overarching Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy represents the mutual and reciprocal relationship between individual conduct, cognitive operations, and environmental factors. According to Bandura, self-reflection —the capacity to reflect on one's own experiences and beliefs —is a uniquely human characteristic that plays a direct role in motivation and learning.

Critical to this discussion is Bandura's expansion of self-efficacy from the individual level to that of the collective (known as collective efficacy), thus creating the condition where a group believes they can work together to share in common goals successfully. In education, this encompasses a collective belief in the ability of schools

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to promote student learning, support effective teaching, and advocate for appropriate policies. The more teachers believe in what they can accomplish together, in the shared task of improving student outcomes, the more they will collaborate, innovate, and support one another in meeting instructional aims. For instance, if teachers believe they have the necessary knowledge of collaborative practices, they are more likely to use them.

In the context of the current research, Self-Efficacy Theory is pertinent in teacher professional development and its impact on student academic performance, particularly in English Language. According to the theory, teachers with high personal efficacy, who have a greater belief in their ability to influence student learning in positive directions, encourage interaction effects to occur. These are the factors that will help students to achieve better.

Also, the implications of the theory for on-the-job training are significant. Well-designed teacher professional development programs, in general, those that address deficiencies in teacher knowledge/knowledge base, can indeed increase individual and collective teacher self-efficacy. Such training not only builds teachers' confidence in their capacity to teach more effectively but also encourages teacher growth and the use of more effective teaching strategies. Furthermore, they can instil a strong sense of collective teacher responsibility, thus bolstering a common understanding and reshaping the spirit of teachers' commitment to enhancing pupil learning achievements.

In the current study, the investigation of the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and pupil attainment in English Language therefore sheds important light on the processes involved in successful teaching. Exploring the relationship between on-the-job training and self-efficacy may inform the development of targeted professional development opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Through the lens of Self-Efficacy Theory, the study provides an in-depth examination of teacher beliefs and collaborative practices that foster effective teaching and student learning. Ultimately, the model facilitates the formulation of evidence-based interventions to enhance teaching quality and promote the academic achievement of young learners in primary education.

Research objectives

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the impact of teachers' participation in on-the-job training on pupils' English Language performance in the Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State. In specific terms, this research seeks to discover the influence of:

1. Teacher participation in further education on pupils' performance in English Language
2. Teachers' participation in seminars on pupils' English Language performance in English Language

Research Questions

1. How does teacher participation in further education influence pupils' performance in English?
2. To what extent does teachers' participation in seminars influence pupils' performance in English Language?

Research Hypotheses

2. There is no significant influence of teacher participation in further education on pupils' performance in English Language.
3. There is no significant influence of teachers' participation in seminars on pupils' performance in English Language.

Methodology

Research design

This research followed the survey design. The study used simple random sampling to select 125 English Language teachers from 12 public primary schools within the reach area. Two research instruments were used in the data generation: Teachers' On-The-Job Training Participation Questionnaire (TOTJTPQ) and English Language Achievement Test (ELAT). The questionnaire (TOTJTPQ) to be filled by teachers has two parts; A & B. Part A dealt on the very biodata of the teacher i.e., gender, HND or B.Sc grade, years of teaching and LCA, respectively, while part B section has twenty-five items. The Job Training Participation Questionnaire (TOTJTPQ) The instrument was developed to assess the extent of participation in refresher course and seminars, it contain the following levels: to a great extent, to some extent, to a little extent/hardly and not at all, Coded 4, 3, 2, & 1 as showing in the appendix 1. The second instrument, ELAT, was a test of English Language. The tests consisted of 40 questions. Respondents were to select the correct answer to each question by ticking the appropriate option with letters A-D and True/False. Tested areas included Vocabulary Development, Grammar Structure, Oral English, comprehension and summary, and Writing. Upon examining the data, each variable hypothesis was also found, along with the statistical instrument used. Both Hypotheses were examined through simple linear regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Analyses and Results

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of teacher participation in further education on pupils' performance in English Language. The analysis findings is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Simple regression analysis of the influence of teacher participation in further education on pupils' performance in English Language

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	51.115	1	51.115	14.221*	.000 ^b
Residual	2370.906	123	6.155		
Total	2422.021	124			

*significant at .05 level, Adj. R^2 =.108

To analyse the data in Table 1, simple linear regression analysis was used. The analysis in Table 1 indicated that the Adj R^2 is 0.108. This implies that 10.8% of the variance in the pupils' performance in English Language could be accounted for by teacher participation in further education. Although the percentage contribution is small, a cursory look at the table shows that $F = 14.221$ ($p < .05$) is significant. Furthermore, since p (.000) was smaller than p (.05), this means that there is a significant influence of teacher participation in further education on pupils' performance in English Language. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is adopted forthwith.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of teachers' participation in seminars on pupils' performance in English Language.. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 1: Simple regression analysis of the influence of teachers' participation in seminars on pupils' performance in English Language

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	77.223	1	77.223	16.028*	.000 ^b
Residual	2344.798	123	6.441		
Total	2422.021	124			

*significant at .05 level, Adj. R^2 =.121

To analyse the data in Table 1, simple linear regression analysis was used. The analysis in Table 1 indicated that the Adj R^2 is 0.121. This implies that 12.1% of the variance in the pupils' performance in English Language could be accounted for by teachers' participation in seminars. Although the percentage contribution is small, a cursory look at the table shows that $F = 16.028$ ($p < .05$) is significant. Moreover, since p (.000) was smaller than p (.05), this therefore means that there is a significant influence of teachers' participation in seminars on pupils' performance in English Language. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the

alternative hypothesis is adopted forthwith.

Discussion of findings

The results in Table 1 show that there is a statistically significant influence of teachers' participation in additional training on the pupils' performance in English Language. This result is consistent with Joffress, Hauckels, and Hughey (2006), who found that student achievement on standardised tests is positively related to high levels of teacher commitment. In the same vein, Ololube (2006) reported that teachers with higher academic qualifications tend to have greater teaching effectiveness, which in turn contributes to the overall academic achievement of students. This view is lent credence by the works of Adeyemi (2010), Ronke (2010), and Oris (2016), who all found teachers' qualifications to be critical predictors of learners' academic accomplishments. These researchers found a significant relationship between the professional training of teachers and the academic achievement of students, which indicated a positive impact of teacher development on classroom effectiveness and learning outcomes.

On the other hand, the analysis presented in Table 2 reveals that teachers' attendance at seminars does not have a statistically significant impact on pupils' performance in English Language. This outcome is contrary to the second hypothesis of a similar study, which found that entrepreneurship education had a significant effect on the attitude of undergraduate students in the University of Calabar, Cross River State, to learning automobile repair. Although Ayeni (2011) recognised the organisation of seminars for teachers' professional development, he was, however, not charitable about their effectiveness, which he attributed, among other things, to poor teacher involvement and inadequate planning. As a result, provision of a few seminar contributions leaves a student's learning experience affected to a great extent or possibly unimpaired.

This discovery contradicts Essien, Akpan, and Obot (2016), who found that attendance at seminars and workshops by teachers had no moderate effect on the academic performance of secondary school students in Cross River State. This is in contrast to other studies, which support that seminars are found to be an aid for improving pedagogical skills and student performance. Notably, Judkins et al. (2014), Musa (2016), and Kabori (2017) emphasised the motivational impact of seminars on enhancing teacher effectiveness and academic performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Following the findings in this study, the researcher concluded that the teachers' participation influence performance in English Language in primary schools in Akpabuyo L.G.A in Cross River State and that there were also a significant influence of teachers' participation in seminar on pupils' of English Language in the research area.

Following the research findings, the researcher presented these recommendations.

1. School administrators should allow teachers to participate in on-the-job professional development through mentorship programmes.
2. There should be regular seminars both internally and externally, to boost teacher

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effectiveness and student success.

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