TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE AS PREDICTOR OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract
The study examines the relationship between teachers’ perception of knowledge of subject matter. Communicative skills and experience as predictor of junior secondary school students’ performance in English language. The population was made up of all junior secondary schools in Zaria and Giwa educational zone, Kaduna state. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 43 English teachers and 355 Junior Secondary School Students were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a 4 point rating scale questionnaire on knowledge of subject matter. Communicative skills and experience. The instrument was validated and using test retest the instrument was pilot tested, using KuderRichardson (KR - 20) the reliability index was calculated to be 0.88. While examination result spread sheet from the secondary schools were used to collect student scores. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that, there is a significant relationship between teachers’ perception of knowledge of subject matter and students’ academic achievement (df=396 r=0.99 p<0.05), there is a significant relationship between teachers’ Communicative skills and students’ academic achievement (df=396 r=0.97 p<0.05) as well as there is a significant relationship between teacher experience and students’ academic achievement. (df=396 r=0.99 p<0.05) Based on this finding it was recommended that there should be training and retraining of teachers to update their knowledge of subject matter and communicative skills.

Keywords: Teachers Perception, Communicative Skills, Experience, English Language

Introduction
Education is the bedrock for survival, growth and development of any society. As a concept, it has generated a lot of controversies over the years. However, its relevance to individual and societal growth shows its significance to the economic, social, political and cultural development of human society world-wide. Lack of functional education in a nation will undermine economic and technological growth, competitiveness, social cohesion and the ability to compete favourably in the global market. Hence, the importance of education to a nation like Nigeria cannot be over emphasized, for Nigeria to achieved accelerated development, its education must succeed. So those driving the sector must be made to realize that the nation stands to lose a lot, if we do not drive our education to the level that will make us proud as a nation in which the teacher is an important component. Hence, it can be observed that the characteristics of a teacher, his experiences and behaviours in the
classrooms will contribute to the learning environment of their students, which will in turn have a positive impact on their performance (Yara, 2009). English language is an important component of the process of education because in Nigeria it is adopted as the medium of communication in the teaching and learning process. It is in recognition of the tremendous role of this subject that is was recommended as one of the subjects a student must pass at a credit level before he can gained admission into the tertiary institution to study any course in Nigeria. But despite the significance and the role of English to the socio economic development of individuals and the nation, the performance of the students in the subject at secondary schools is not encouraging. Adeyemi (2005) observed that the performance of students in English Language, was low and there was no year where the performance level was up to fifty percent in any Junior Secondary Certificate examinations. This problem is being transfer into the senior secondary school, as shown in figure 1

![Chart Title](image)

**Figure 1: Percentage Performance of Students in MAY/JUNE WASSCE, 2005-2009 in English and Mathematics.**

**Source:** WAEC, Lagos, Nigeria

From figure 1 above it can be clearly seen that the performance of senior secondary school students in English in SSCE was very low, the highest performance was in 2009 which was 41.52. It sad to note that the average number of students that score credit and above was 33.00 while in mathematics it is 46.08. This ugly trend can partly be blame on the quality of JSCE graduates that are admitted into the senior secondary school one (SSS1)

It is obvious that there is a problem between the teaching and learning process and the observed educational outcome. From research evidences, educators see the pressing need to consider and address the challenges responsible for this poor performance. Some of the reasons adduced for this state of affairs include the declining competence and commitment of teachers; inadequate provision of facilities; non maintenance of available facilities; Lack of experience teachers just to mention a few. This research tend to focus on some qualities
and characteristics of teachers (Knowledge of subject matter, communicative competence and experience)

Teaching entails helping others to learn, so understanding what is to be taught is a central requirement. The mastery of relevant knowledge is one of the most important attributes of the teacher, according to Majason (1995) the teacher today must have a good grasp of the subject matter if he is to command respect of his pupils. Since the frontiers of knowledge keep expanding every day and the level of the pupils generally keep rising too, an English language teacher therefore. He who wants to keep abreast in the area of specialization should not cease to learn.

Findings on the relationship between teachers’ knowledge of subject matter and students performance by Wayne and Young (2003); Hanushek, Kain, O’Brien, and Rivkin, (2005) found a positive relationship between teachers’ knowledge of subject matter and students performance. Carnoy and Arends (2012), also found that teachers’ knowledge of subject matter has a statistically significant effect on students’ academic achievement.

Teacher communicative competence is knowledge, skills, abilities and motivational disposition in order to stimulate educational and social interactions Spitzberg and Cuparch, (1989) cited in Bjekie, Zlatic and Capric (2008). Hence, the student can sense encouragement and approval even from the teacher’s body language. The teacher’s expressiveness may generate interest and enhance the students understanding of information. The teacher who is a competent communicator uses rhetoric which does not cause stress or fear but rather inspires the student. Bailey (2006), Bjekie, Zlatic and Capric (2008) in their separate studies found that there is a relationship between teachers communicative skill and students performance in educational task

Experience is also another criteria often used to measure teacher quality. Learning by experience in education has been the subject of investigation in most subjects, an interview conducted by Ben-Peretz (2000), retired teachers was asked “what role experience was in the development of their professional knowledge”. Their response was that learning from experience is a process that take time and that one has to experience failure. This statement highlights two important aspects of learning from experience. It is a process that takes time and requires openness to learning from failure

Findings on the relationship between years of teaching experience and students’ performance by Haris and Sas (2007), Aos, Miller and Panucci (2007) found a positive relationship between teachers experience and students performance. On the contrary Wayne and Young (2003) found no relationship between teaching experience and students’ performance

**Statement of the Problem**
The importance of teachers in the teaching and learning process at all levels of education is reflected in the National Policy on Education (2004) as it declares that no educational system will rise above the quality of its teachers. This clearly shown that the teacher is an
important factor in the learning process. Hence, the qualities and attitudes that our teachers display at work may greatly affect the attitude of students towards learning generally and in particular the learning of English and hence their poor performance in the subject. This declining outlook calls for immediate diagnosis and treatment.

A common hypothesis with respect to the relationship between teachers’ experience, knowledge of subject matter is that students taught by more experienced teachers who are also knowledgeable in the subject matter perform better. (Slavin, 1987 & Evans, 1992;) in Yara (2009). It can be inferred that, more experienced teachers will be able to teach to influence students’ performance positively. Hence, the present study seek to investigate the relationship between teachers’ perception of knowledge of subject matter. Communicative skills and experience as predictor of junior secondary school students’ performance in English language with a view to confirming or annulling the above several claims.

Purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which teacher's quality that is knowledge of subject matter, communicative competence, and Length of service/experience affect students’ performance in JSS 3 examination. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between teachers’ knowledge of subject matter and the performance of students’ in JSS 3 final year examination
2. Determine the relationship between teachers’ communicative competence and the performance of students’ in JSS 3 final year examination
3. Determine the relationship between teachers’ length of service/experience and the performance of students in JSS3 final year examination?

**Research Questions**

In order to carry out this investigations, the following research questions will serve to guide the designs:

1. What is the relationship between teachers’ knowledge of subject matters and the performance of students in JSS 3 final year examination
2. What is the relationships of teachers’ communicative competence and the performance of students’ in JSS 3 final year examination
3. What is the relationship between teachers’ length of service/experience and the performance of students in JSS3 final year examination?

**Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide and direct the conduct of the study

1. There is no significant relationships between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and the performance of students in JSS3 examination.
2. There is no significant relationships between teachers' communicative competence and the performance of students in JSS3 examination.
3. There is no significant relationships between teachers' length of service/experience and the students’ in JSS 3 examination.
Research Methodology

The survey type of educational research designs was employed, since the study set out to gather factual information about the target population (i.e. teachers and students). The population for the study comprises the entire English language teachers and students of Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) within Giwa and Zaria Educational Inspectorate Division of Kaduna state. The total number of JSS is estimated to be 68. Giwa Division has 33, while Zaria division has 35 J.S.S. 99 English Language teachers from Giwa Division and 105 English Language teachers from Zaria Divisions, thus, total number of 204 English language teacher were used.

The sample used for this study was drawn from the total population of English Language teachers and J.S.S Student from Giwa and Zaria Education Inspectorate Division of Kaduna state. Twenty percent (20%) of the English language teachers and 5% five percent of J.S.S students were used, according to Krejice, and Morgan (1970) stated that out of 15,000 population, 375 sample should be used, thus 43 English language teachers and 350 J.S.S student were drawn from the selected Junior Secondary Schools using purposeful sampling techniques. The data for this study was generated through questionnaire and J.S.C.E past examination results. The questionnaire consisted of 39 items, which were divided into section A, respondents' bio data and personal information. Section B, sought the teachers' opinion on the knowledge of subject matter, section C communicative competence while Section D was designed to assess teaching experience / length of service. The questionnaire was a four point rating scale: S.A - Strongly Agree = 4, A- Agreed = 3, D- Disagree = 2, S.D - Strongly Disagree = 1. J.S.C.E past result in the year 2010 were collected from selected schools. The questionnaires were subjected to validation by experts in English language of the department of education A.B.U. Zaria. A pilot test was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire, teachers of two public junior secondary schools in Giwa Educational Division who were part of the population but not part of the sample. The data collected were statistically analyzed for reliability by using kuder Richardson (KR - 20) and the reliability coefficients was 0.88 which was considered adequate to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers of English in selected schools Giwa and Zaria Educational Divisions to fill and return. The student past J.S.C.E results in 2010 were extracted from the students’ files by the help of the school administrators.

The data generated via questionnaire and students’ past examination results were analyzed; Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer the research question. An item mean of 2.49 and below is rejected while a mean of 2.50 and above is accepted. Pearson's product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses.
**Question 1:**

**Table 1: Opinion of respondents on the relationship of teachers' knowledge of subjects matter on the performance of students in JSS 3 exams**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/D</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher’s knowledge on the content they teach affect students’ performance.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Respect and Honor is given to English teachers that have a good grasp of his subject matter</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teachers that keep abreast in the area of specialization affect the teaching on English positively</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher’s knowledge, reason and judgment is better than teaches behavior.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: indicates that all respondents agreed with the items that teachers’ knowledge of subjects matter affects students’ performance in English language, this implies that all the items were accepted because the mean of all the item were above 2.50 based on the decision rule. Higher mean scores of 3.74 and 3.51 can be seen in item 4 and 1 respectively indicating that most respondents strongly agreed with these items.

**Question 2:**

**Table 2: Opinion of respondents on the relationship of teacher’s communicative competence and the performance of students in JSSCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>S.A</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S/D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Essay aspect of the English is easier to teach</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comprehension aspect of English is easier to teach</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spoken English is easier to teach than teaching vocabulary</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I prefer teaching comprehension than teaching vocabulary</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Using elective, or collaboration methods to teach an aspect of English language improves students’ performance</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Talk and chalk is the best method in teaching English Language</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: indicates that all respondents agreed with the items that teacher's communicative competence affects students’ performance in English language, this implies that all the items were accepted because the mean of all the item were above 2.50 based on the decision rule. Higher mean scores of 3.49 (SA =31, A=5, D=4 & SD= 5) in item 4 where respondents
prefer teaching comprehension than teaching vocabulary which confirms that teachers’ communicative skills may have effects on students’ performance in English.

**Question 3:**

**Table 3:** Opinion of respondents on the relationship of length of service/experience of teachers and the student’s performance in English in JSS 3 Certificate Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher teaching experience is a strong indication of teacher performance in English</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher with long teaching experience teaches better than teachers with little or no experience</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students perform better in English when taught by well experienced teacher.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teaching a particular arm or class for years improve English teachers effectiveness</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 revealed the opinion of respondents on the relationship of teachers’ length of service/experience and student’s performance. The respondents agreed with all the items because the mean of all the items are greater than 2.50. The highest mean response of 3.79 and 3.86 that teachers with long years of teaching experience teach better than teachers with little or no teaching experience as well as students perform better when taught by experience teachers as details of item 2 showed that 38 strongly agreed, 3 agreed and 3 disagreed with this opinion. Therefore teachers’ length of service/experience affects student’s performance.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationships between teachers’ knowledge of subject matter and the performance of students in JSS3 examination.

**Table 4:** Pearson product Moment Correlation (PPMC) on the relationship between students’ academic performance and teachers’ knowledge of subject matter (KSM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>r²</th>
<th>Sig (P)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ academic</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>38.77</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>0.99*</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers view on KSM</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.19</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant P<0.05

The table presents Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) results of students’ academic performance and teachers’ knowledge of subject matter. From the table the mean academic achievement is 38.77, while the mean of teachers’ knowledge of subject matter is
24.19 with standard deviation of 11.50 and 6.84 respectively. The correlation index \( r \) obtained is 0.990 which was significant at \( P = 0.000 \). This is because the calculated alpha level of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance \( (P<0.05) \). The \( r^2 \) value of 0.98 was significant as this correlation account for 98% of association between two sets of variable level of relationship. Therefore, the null hypothesis one is hereby rejected. Therefore there is a significant relationship between students’ academic performance and teachers’ knowledge of subject matter

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationships between teachers’ communicative competence and the performance of students’ in JSS3 examination.

**Table 5: Pearson Moment Correlations (PPMC) Statistics between students’ academic performance and teachers’ communicative competence. (CC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>( r^2 )</th>
<th>Sig (P)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ academic</td>
<td>355</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.76</td>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>0.97*</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25.58</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant \( P<0.05 \)

The table presents Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) results of students’ academic performance and teachers’ communicative competence. From the table the mean academic achievement of students is 38.76, while the mean of teachers’ communicative competence is 25.58 with standard deviation of 11.65 and 5.96 respectively. The correlation index \( r \) obtained is 0.97 which was significant at \( P = 0.001 \). This is because the calculated alpha level of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance \( (P<0.05) \). The \( r^2 \) value of 0.94 was significant as this correlation account for 94% of association between two sets of variable level of relationship. Therefore, the null hypothesis two is hereby rejected. Therefore there is a significant relationship between students’ academic performance and teachers’ communicative competence.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationships between teachers’ length of service/experience and the students’ in JSS 3 examination.
The table presents Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) results of students’ academic performance and teachers’ length of service/experience. From the table the mean academic achievement is 36.74, while the mean of pedagogical skills is 24.47. The correlation index (r) obtained is 0.99 which was significant at P = 0.000. This is because the calculated alpha level of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance (P<0.05). The $r^2$ value of 0.98 was significant as this correlation account for 98% of association between two sets of variable level of relationship. Therefore, the null hypothesis three is hereby rejected. Therefore there is a significant relationship between students’ academic performance and teachers’ length of service/experience.

Discussion

The result of the analysis on hypothesis one revealed significant relationship between the perception of English language teachers on knowledge of the subject matter and Students’ performance in English language at JSCE. It is clear from the result that teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter directly affects students’ performance. The result agrees with the earlier findings of Wayne and Young (2003), Carnoy and Arends (2012) in their separate findings found that there is relationship between teachers knowledge of subject matter and students performance. Similarly this findings draws support from Hanushek, Kain, O’Brien, and Rivkin (2005) who concluded that teachers’ knowledge of subject matter has significant relationship with students’ performance.

The result of hypothesis 2 established significant relationship between teachers communicative skills and student performance in English language at JSCE. Majority of the teachers are of opinion that communicative skills in teaching will go a long way in determining the students’ performance. This finding is in agreement with Bailey (2006) and Bjekic, Zlatic and Capric (2008) who observed that successful teachers tend to be those who have better communicative skills. It also agrees with Olaofe (2008) who observed that teachers should use interactive, particular cooperative and integrative teaching – learning approaches that are not only communicative but also activity based, as this will enhance their performance in English language.

The result of hypothesis 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between students’ academic performance and teachers’ length of service/experience. This findings agrees with
the earlier findings of Hans and Sas (2007), Aos, Miller and Panucci (2007) which revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers’ length of service /experience and students performance. On the contrary, the result of this study did not agree with the findings of Wayne and Young (2003) who found no relationship between teaching experience and students’ performance.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has critically examined the relationship between teachers’ quality such as knowledge of subject matter, communicative skills and teachers experience on students’ performance. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables. Hence, there is need change from attaching value to credentials as yardstick for teacher quality to other essential qualities that can enhance teaching and learning such as knowledge of subject matter, communicative skills as well as teaching experience which determine the success of teaching and learning. It is recommended that there should be training and retraining of teachers to update their knowledge of subject matter and communicative skills.

**References**


