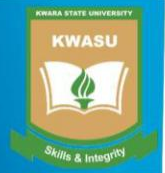


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## TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS, AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE

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### Abstract

*Poor academic performance in internal and external examinations remains a major concern for educators, parents, and stakeholders in the education sector. This study examined the relationship between teacher characteristics and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. A correlational survey design was adopted, guided by*

*five research questions and four null hypotheses. The study was anchored on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). The population comprised 3,500 teachers from 40 public senior secondary schools, with a sample of 345 respondents selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) Table and purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire (TCQ) and Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) results from 2020–2023. Instruments validity was ensured by experts, and reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's Alpha (0.90 and 0.88). Data were analyzed using mean ratings, standard deviation, Pearson Correlation, and multiple regression at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that teachers in public senior secondary schools were qualified ( $\bar{x}=3.08$ ;  $SD=0.60$ ) and experienced ( $\bar{x}=3.87$ ;  $SD=1.16$ ). A significant relationship existed between teacher characteristics and students' academic performance ( $R=0.674$ ,  $R^2=0.454$ ,  $F=200.642$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It was concluded that teacher qualifications, lesson presentation, and discipline significantly influence academic success.*

**Keywords:** Teacher characteristics, Academic performance, Secondary education, Correlational study, Teacher qualifications

## Introduction

Education is essential for promoting economic progress and national success and is regarded as the most effective means for sustainable human development. The capacity to read and write, learn new competencies, progress technologically, and use a nation's natural resources effectively originates from a robust educational foundation, which subsequently underpins development. As a result, the world will become a better, safer, wealthier, and more ecologically sustainable place. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) posits that education is a foundation for establishing a free and democratic society, a fair and equitable community, a robust and unified country, and a dynamic and productive economy.

Secondary schools are tasked with delivering quality instruction aimed at fulfilling national objectives, which include instilling respect for individual worth and dignity, fostering rational decision-making, promoting moral and spiritual values in interpersonal relationships, and encouraging shared responsibility for the common good of society, among other goals (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Educators are regarded as the essential catalyst for the efficacy of the educational system and the achievement of national educational objectives.

Baringa (2017) asserts that educators represent an educational system's most significant and essential component. The quality of educators is a crucial metric of the efficacy of the educational system. Teachers are supposed to cultivate people with valuable knowledge, practical skills, and appropriate value orientation in executing their responsibilities. In contemporary civilizations, educational institutions significantly impact child socialization, with the teacher playing a pivotal role (Agbatogun, 2019).

Teacher characteristics denote attributes that may be quantified or inferred from their academic or professional credentials. The attitudes of instructors strongly influence student attentiveness in classrooms (Kosgil et al., 2013; Denessen et al., 2022), whereas students' attitudes are associated with teacher features (Adesoji & Olatunbosun, 2008; Jarl et al., 2021). Teachers' attributes significantly influence pupils' academic achievement in Senior High Schools (Audu & Olatundun, 2008; Jarl et al., 2021). Olaleye (2019) said that a correlation exists between instructor traits and student performance, these factors including personal attributes such as background, teaching experience, topic competence, and teachers' credentials.

The teachers' credentials, including degrees, certificates, and specialized training, are crucial to student achievement. Research evidence indicates that highly skilled educators may equip students with material mastery and pedagogical expertise to successfully convey complex subjects. They may also discern several pupils' requirements and modify diverse instructional tactics for enhanced learning. The gap in teacher credentials, particularly between public and private schools, sustains the imbalance in student accomplishment in Nigeria. This necessitates ongoing professional development to improve teachers' competencies, hence enhancing learning outcomes in all schools.

A significant component influencing teachers' performance is experience. The research indicates that an experienced educator cultivates sophisticated teaching methods, enhances classroom management, and improves responsiveness to student issues. Experienced educators can tailor courses for diverse learners, fostering academic engagement and improved performance. Research indicates that the direction of seasoned educators and the mentoring of less experienced colleagues facilitate sustained student performance, hence promoting consistent academic development, as seen in Kwara State (Onyebuchi et al., 2023).

Discipline concerning instructors' professionalism and classroom behaviour management is a crucial aspect of creating an optimal learning environment. These proficient educators exemplify professionalism by timeliness, readiness, and dedication, serving as positive role models for their pupils. Classroom management tactics establish order by setting expectations and reinforcing good behaviour, so minimising disturbances and maintaining student engagement in learning activities. Simultaneously, stringent disciplinary measures engender antagonism, hence diminishing student motivation and success, as noted by Ekmekci and Serrano (2022).

Student academic performance includes several measurable outcomes, such as examination scores, ongoing assessments, and grade point averages. It reflects both the intellectual capabilities of pupils and the effectiveness of educators, the educational environment, and several external influences. A multitude of difficulties impacts the academic achievement of kids in Nigeria. The primary issues include inadequate school infrastructure, classroom congestion, and a deficiency of instructors (Alabi 2023). It is important to recognise that enhancements in teacher quality factors such as qualifications, experience, and discipline will alleviate most issues related to underdeveloped academic outcomes. Institutions that adopt teacher training, professional conduct, and effective classroom management exhibit enhanced student engagement and superior achievement in national assessments like the WASSCE.

This study is imperative, especially at this time when the clamour about the falling standard of education and moral decadence is the concern of all Nigerians. Given the foregoing, this study investigated the relationship between teachers' characteristics, classroom management strategies and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The academic performance of students in secondary schools is influenced by various factors, among which teacher characteristics play a significant role. In Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State, there is a growing concern about the declining academic performance of students in public examinations. While several factors may contribute to this trend, the role of teacher characteristics—such as qualifications, teaching experience, teaching methods, and classroom management skills—remains underexplored in this context.

Despite the importance of teachers in shaping students' learning outcomes, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific teacher characteristics impact academic performance in Ilorin

South. This gap in knowledge hinders the development of targeted interventions to improve educational quality. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between teacher characteristics and students' academic performance in secondary schools within Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State, with the aim of providing insights that can inform policy and practice.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of teachers' qualification in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?
2. What is the level of the teachers' working experience in secondary schools in Ilorin south Local Government Area of Kwara State
3. What are the lesson presentation strategies employed in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?
4. What is the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teacher's qualifications and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' work experience and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

### Methodology

The study employed a correlational survey research design to investigate the relationship between teacher characteristics and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. The teachers' characteristics in this study are teachers' qualifications, work experience and lesson presentation strategies. The target population comprised 3,500 teachers from 40 public senior secondary schools, with a sample size of 345 teachers determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table. A purposive sampling technique was used to select schools, ensuring the inclusion of relevant participants.

Data were collected using two instruments: the Teachers' Characteristics Questionnaire (TCQ) and the Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPA). The TCQ gathered demographic and teacher-related data, such as qualifications, teaching experience, and gender, while the SAPA collected students' academic performance records from the West African Examination Council (WAEC) for Mathematics and English Language between 2020 and 2023. The instruments were validated by three experts in Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation, and their reliability was confirmed through a pilot study, with Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 0.90 for the TCQ and 0.88 for the SAPA.

Data collection was conducted over two weeks, with the assistance of three trained research assistants. Ethical approval was obtained, and participants were assured of confidentiality. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) for demographic variables and research questions, while inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression) were used to test hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The

decision rule for research questions was based on a four-point Likert scale whereby highest and lowest expected mean range from 4 to 1. Thus, from 3.26 to 4.00 is considered (Very high), 2.51-3.25 (High), 1.76-2.50 (Low), and 1.00-1.75 (Very low). Hypotheses were accepted or rejected based on the p-value threshold of 0.05. This methodology provided a robust framework for examining the impact of teacher characteristics on students' academic performance.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What is the level of teachers' qualification in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?

**Table 1: Mean responses of the respondents on the level of teachers' qualification in secondary schools**

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	The educators at my institution have the requisite academic credentials for their respective disciplines.	3.09	0.55	High
2	All educators at my institution possess legitimate teaching credentials that the relevant educational authorities acknowledge.	3.00	0.59	High
3	The educators at my institution consistently engage in professional development initiatives to improve their pedagogical abilities.	2.43	0.61	Low
4	I believe that the instructors at my school have sufficient teaching expertise to teach their courses properly.	3.19	0.68	High
5	The educators have a profound comprehension of their disciplines and can proficiently impart information to pupils.	3.32	0.55	Very high
6	Educators actively include students in the educational process, establishing a constructive and engaging classroom atmosphere.	3.44	0.63	Very high
Grand Mean		3.08	0.60	High

*Field survey, 2022*

Data in Table 1 reveals the mean response of the respondents regarding the level of teachers' qualification in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. Results indicated that the statement that educators in the selected secondary schools actively included students in the educational process, while establishing a constructive and engaging classroom atmosphere recorded highest mean response ( $\bar{x} = 3.44$ ;  $SD = 0.63$ ), followed by the statement that the educators have a profound comprehension of their disciplines and can proficiently impart information to pupils ( $\bar{x} = 3.32$ ;  $SD = 0.55$ ). However, mean rating ( $\bar{x} = 2.43$ ;  $SD = 0.61$ ) for the statement that educators in the studied institutions consistently engaged in professional development initiatives to improve their pedagogical abilities was low.

In summary, the overall response indicated that the teachers in the studied public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara state, are qualified, with their responses supported by a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of ( $\bar{x} = 3.08$ ;  $SD = 0.60$ ).

### Research Question 2

What is the level of the teachers’ work experience in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?

**Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on the level of teachers’ work experience in secondary schools**

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Most teachers in my school have several years of teaching experience in their respective subjects.	3.74	1.23	Very High
2	Teachers demonstrate effective classroom management skills developed through years of experience.	3.91	0.90	Very High
3	Teachers effectively manage students from diverse backgrounds, utilizing their experience to foster inclusive learning.	3.67	1.29	Very High
4	Experienced teachers in my school easily adapt to new curricula and teaching standards.	3.76	0.94	Very High
5	Teachers in my school exhibit confidence and competence when delivering lessons, reflecting their teaching experience.	3.55	1.35	Very High
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.73</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>Very High level</b>

#### *Field survey, 2022*

Data in Table 2 reveals the mean response of the respondents regarding the level of teachers’ work experience in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. All the statements regarding teachers’ work experience had their mean rating within the mean interval of 3.26 to 4.00 (Very high). However, the statement that read: ‘Teachers demonstrate effective classroom management skills developed through years of experience’ recorded the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 3.91$ ;  $SD = 0.90$ ), while the one that read, ‘Experienced teachers in my school easily adapt to new curricula and teaching standards’ ( $\bar{x} = 3.76$ ;  $SD = 0.94$ ) closely followed.

The overall response mean score indicated that the teachers in public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara state were highly experienced, with their responses supported by grand weighted mean and standard deviation ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ;  $SD = 1.16$ ) falling within the threshold.

### Research Question 3

What are the lesson presentation strategies employed by teachers in senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State?

**Table 3: Mean responses of the respondents on lesson presentation strategies employed in secondary schools**

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Teachers always use collaborative learning to explore questions in the classroom	3.02	1.16	Agreed
2	Teachers always use group work in the classroom	3.86	1.14	Strongly Agreed
3	Teachers always use inquiry-based learning in the classroom	3.10	1.09	Agreed
4	Teachers firmly redirect students back to the topic when they get off task	3.17	1.03	Agreed
5	Teachers always adjust instruction in response to individual students' needs	3.65	1.27	Strongly Agreed
6	Teachers always use a teaching strategy that encourage interaction among students	3.02	1.16	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.43</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>Strongly Agreed</b>

#### *Field survey, 2022*

Data in Table 3 reveals the mean response of the respondents regarding the lesson presentation strategies employed by teachers in teaching secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. All the statements made in this regard were agreed to since the mean ratings for them fell within interval 2.51-3.25 (High), with the exception of both statements: teachers always use group work in the classroom ( $\bar{x} = 3.86$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ); and teachers always adjust instruction in response to individual students' needs ( $\bar{x} = 3.65$ ;  $SD = 1.27$ ) being strongly agreed to. Therefore, the overall response indicated that the teachers teaching in public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara state employed diverse teaching strategies, with their high level of agreement supported by grand weighted mean and standard deviation of ( $\bar{x} = 3.43$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ).

### Research Question 4

What is the level of students' academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State?

**Table 4: Frequency distribution table showing the level of students' academic performance**

Grade	Equivalent	Aggregate	Frequency	Mean	Std.	Decision
F9	0	0-39	21	2.3304	1.35496	Low
E8	1	40-44	56	2.4673	1.45322	Low
D7	2	45-49	73	2.0121	1.54333	Low
C6	3	50-54	23	4.1237	1.64100	High
C5	4	55-59	46	4.6789	1.08671	High
C4	5	60-64	13	4.0980	1.02521	High
B3	6	65-69	31	4.7863	1.26510	High
B2	7	70-74	16	4.4521	1.53333	High
A1	8	75-100	05	4.9678	1.87654	High
<b>Grand mean</b>				<b>3.7685</b>	<b>1.4199</b>	<b>High</b>

*Field survey, 2022*

The result, as reviewed in Table 4, shows that the level of students' academic Performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. With a grand mean of 3. 7685, a grade with a mean of less than three is for low, while a grade with a mean above 3 is for high. Consequently, mean value was high for all the number of students with A1, B3, C5, B2, C6 and C4 in the order from ( $\bar{x} = 4.9678$ ;  $SD = 1.87654$ ) to ( $\bar{x} = 4.0980$ ;  $SD = 1.02521$ ) respectively. On the other hand, mean response rate was low for students with E8 ( $\bar{x} = 4.9678$ ;  $SD = 1.87654$ ), followed by F9 ( $\bar{x} = 2.3304$ ;  $SD = 1.35496$ ) and lowest for students with D7 ( $\bar{x} = 2.0121$ ;  $SD = 1.54333$ ). Overall, the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State was high with the grand mean of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7685$ ;  $SD = 1.4199$ ).

### Test of Hypotheses

The three hypotheses generated for the study were tested and the results were presented in tables 5-7.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teacher's qualifications and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

**Table 5: Pearson correlation of teachers’ qualifications and students’ academic performance in secondary schools**

Variables	No of cases	Mean	SD	DF	Calculated R-value	Critical R-value	Decision
Teacher qualifications	345	1.98	0.50				
				344	.996	.000	Ho rejected
Students’ academic performance	345	11.80	16.39				

*Field survey, 2022*

Table 5 shows the test results between teachers' academic qualifications and students' academic performance. It shows that the  $r = 0.996$ ,  $n = 345$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that no significant relationship exists between teachers' academic qualifications and students' academic performance, is rejected. This means a statistically significant relationship exists between teachers' academic qualifications and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin south local government.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teachers’ work experience and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

**Table 6: Pearson correlation of teachers’ work experience and students’ academic performance in secondary schools**

Variables	No of cases	Mean	SD	DF	Calculated R-value	Critical R-value	Decision
Teacher experience	345	1.96	0.45				
				344	.659	.000	Ho rejected
Students’ academic performance	345	11.80	16.39				

*Field survey, 2022*

Table 6 shows the result of the test between teachers’ experience and students’ academic performance. It shows that the  $r = 0.659$ ,  $n = 345$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that no significant relationship exists between teachers’ experience and students’ academic performance, is rejected. This means a statistically significant relationship exists between teachers’ experience and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South local government.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teacher's lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance in Secondary Schools in Ilorin South Local Government, Kwara State.

**Table 7: Pearson correlation of teachers' lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance in secondary schools**

Variables	No of cases	Mean	SD	DF	Calculated R-value	Critical R-value	Decision
Teacher Lesson Presentation strategies	345	1.86	0.42	344	.670	.000	Ho rejected
Students' academic performance	345	11.80	16.39				

Table 7 shows the result of the test between teachers' lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance. It shows that the  $r = 0.670$ ,  $n = 345$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis, which states that no significant relationship exists between teachers' lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance, is rejected. This indicates that a statistically significant relationship exists between teachers' lesson presentation and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South local government.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship among teachers' qualifications, teachers' experience, lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Findings on the research question one revealed that the level of teachers' qualification was high in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. In other words, teachers in the studied public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara state, were found to be highly qualified. This finding is supported by Gimba (2016), who opined that educators with advanced educational qualifications are more successful than those with lesser credentials and that trained teachers with additional competencies display more productivity than their less skilled colleagues. Huang et al. (2019) also contended that teachers' qualifications accounted for around 40 to 60 per cent of the variability in average student performance on evaluations.

Findings on research question two indicated a high level of work experience among teachers in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. This finding is consisted with a previous study by Kayode (2016) which demonstrated that a teacher's years of experience directly influence pupils' academic performance. This suggests that educators with more years of experience instruct more proficiently than those with less expertise.

Research question three sought to find out about the lesson presentation strategies employed by teachers in teaching secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. Overall findings indicated that the teachers teaching in public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara state employed diverse lesson presentation strategies, such as always using group work in the classroom and always adjusting instruction in response to individual students' needs among others. This is in accord with Obot (2010) and Gordon and Espinoza (2020) who emphasised

the importance of strategies such as instructional supervision involving moving through the classroom to closely observe students, engaging them in academic activities, asking questions, and employing both verbal and non-verbal teaching methods to ensure students remain attentive and achieve a deeper comprehension of the lesson beyond superficial facts.

The fourth research question, which examined the academic performance of students in secondary schools, revealed a high level of academic performance among the selected students of secondary schools in Kwara State. This finding aligns with Darling-Hammond's (2000) assertion that teachers' commitment and expertise are critical components of the educational system for improving students' academic outcomes.

The first hypothesis tested the relationship between teacher qualifications and students' academic performance. The results revealed a significant correlation indicating that teacher qualifications significantly influence students' academic performance. This finding is supported by Olutola (2017) and Ojera (2016), who emphasized that teachers' intellectual qualifications significantly impact the quality of education. Darling-Hammond (2006) and Maphoso and Mahlo (2015) also highlighted that teachers' subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and certification status as strongly associated with students' academic success.

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between teacher experience and students' academic performance. The results showed a significant correlation, which suggests that teachers' experiences positively influence students' academic performance. Teachers with years of experience are more likely to employ effective teaching strategies and manage classroom dynamics better, leading to improved student outcomes. This finding aligns with studies by Commeyras (2003), Ijaiya (2000), and Ogundare (2001), which emphasized the importance of experienced teachers in enhancing teaching effectiveness and student learning.

The third hypothesis explored the relationship between teacher lesson presentation strategies and students' academic performance. The results revealed a significant correlation, which indicates that lesson delivery strategies by teachers positively impacts students' academic performance. Teachers who prepare thoroughly and present lessons clearly are more likely to engage students and facilitate better understanding. This finding is consistent with studies by Masor et al. (2023) and Awofala (2017), which highlighted that effective lesson presentation sustains student engagement and improves learning outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship among the teachers' qualifications, work experience, lesson presentation strategies, and academic performance of secondary school students in the Ilorin South local government area of Kwara State. The study concluded that the success of an academic program is largely determined by the relationship between the teachers' characteristics, classroom management and students' academic performance. Therefore, a lack of these variables might contribute immensely to teachers' poor performance and, hence, students' consistent failures in their examinations.

## **Recommendations**

- Based on the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations were made:
1. Teachers should have minimum teaching qualifications before they are employed to teach at the senior secondary schools.
  2. Secondary school teachers should be well versed and experience in the pedagogy of teaching as a profession to improve students' academic performance.

3. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be periodically organized for teachers who are not fully informed or aware about the principles of lesson presentation to enhance students' academic performance.

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