TEACHERS' QUALITY AND GENDER AS PREDICTORS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This Study investigated teacher quality and gender as predictors of primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State. Five research questions and five null hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was employed for the study. A sample of three hundred and sixty (360) primary school teachers out of a population of 11,971 was used. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were the Teacher Quality and Gender questionnaire (TQGQ) and academic performance scale. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to compute reliability coefficient which yielded a coefficient of 0.88 for the teachers' verbal ability and 0.65 for teachers' use of instructional skills. The research questions and the hypotheses were analyzed using regression analysis, Findings revealed that teachers' qualification predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a weak degree, teachers' verbal ability predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a modest degree, teachers' use of instructional skills predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a modest degree, teachers' gender predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a weak degree and teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender jointly predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teacher education institutions should place stronger emphasis on practical training that develops verbal communication skills and mastery of instructional strategies

alongside theoretical knowledge. Ministries of Education and school administrators should organize regular capacity-building workshops and seminars focused on effective communication and instructional practices for primary school teachers and that recruitment and promotion of teachers should not be based solely on academic qualifications but should incorporate evaluation of teaching competence, classroom performance, and communication ability among others.

Keywords: *Teacher Quality, gender, academic performance, verbal ability, instructional skill, teacher qualification.*

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right that is essentially meant to aid learners in realizing their potentials. Since the United Nations declaration in 1948, which emphasized that education is a human right, efforts have been made to ensure that children; both boys and girls across the world access education. However, it is now a common concern that the main challenge in education is not simply getting children into schools but also improving the overall quality of schooling and addressing threat participation.

As noted by United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) (2018), if both quality and access are taken into consideration, then children enrolled in primary schools are likely to pursue and complete the full basic education cycle, achieve expected learning outcomes and successfully transit to secondary schools. All over the world, education has been regarded as an indispensable tool for societal development and transformation. It is on this basis that the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2013) stated in her National Policy on Education that education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. To achieve the goals of education, Federal government of Nigeria from time to time initiates various policies and programmes. These policies and programmes are achieved through the establishment of schools at various levels of which primary education is one of them. Primary education as stated by Okolocha and Okeke (2018), is a type of education received before the secondary level of education and it has its own goals and objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education. UNESCO (2019) emphasized that primary education serves as the foundation for lifelong learning and sustainable development, noting that the quality of education at this level largely determines learners' future academic success.

Globally, primary education is regarded as the cornerstone of the education system because it equips learners with basic literacy, numeracy, and social skills required for further learning. UNESCO (2021) asserted that effective primary education strengthens pupils' cognitive and social development, forming the basis for successful transition to secondary and tertiary education. Similarly, UNICEF (2020) reported that access to quality primary education significantly improves children's cognitive development and long-term academic achievement, particularly in developing countries. More recently, UNICEF (2023) highlighted that strong primary education systems are essential for reducing learning poverty and ensuring pupils' smooth transition to post-primary education. In recognition of the importance of primary education, governments across the world have continued to invest heavily in this level of schooling. Primary education, in particular, occupies a strategic position in achieving national educational goals. Okeke and Okeke (2020) described primary education as the bedrock of Nigeria's education system, responsible for shaping pupils' intellectual, moral, and social development. In the context of this study, primary education is the foundation upon which other levels of education are built.

Despite the recognized importance of primary education, evidence shows that pupils' learning outcomes at this level remained below expectations. Reports from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2023) indicated that although enrolment in Nigerian primary schools has increased, many pupils still perform poorly in literacy and numeracy. This persistent underachievement raises concerns about the effectiveness of primary education delivery. Nwankwo and Umeh (2023) reported that weaknesses in primary education contribute significantly to pupils' academic difficulties at the secondary school level, thereby undermining the overall education system. Empirical studies further revealed that the quality of teaching received at the primary school level strongly influences pupils' academic performance. Eze and Obi (2021) observed that pupils' academic achievement in Nigeria is closely linked to the quality of instruction delivered by teachers in primary schools. Similarly, Okorie and Onwuka (2022) found that effective primary education significantly predicts pupils' achievement in core areas such as literacy and numeracy. Teveshote (2023) further opined that successful completion of primary education is a key determinant of pupils' retention, progression, and performance at higher levels of schooling.

Reports from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2023) indicated that many pupils still perform below expected standards in literacy and numeracy. This persistent underachievement has raised questions regarding the factors influencing pupils' academic outcomes. One major factor often implicated in pupils' learning outcomes is teacher quality. Empirical evidence suggests that the competence, pedagogical skills, experience, and subject mastery of teachers significantly determine how well pupils learn (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2022).

However, in many public schools in Anambra State, disparities exist in teacher recruitment, professional development, and classroom practices, which may affect the quality of instruction delivered to pupils which in turn can affect their academic performance. Given the foundational role of primary education and the continued concerns about pupils' academic performance, it becomes imperative to examine factors that influences learning outcomes at this level. One major factor consistently identified in literature is teacher quality, which encompasses teachers' qualifications, verbal ability, and instructional skills. Understanding how these teacher-related variables influence pupils' academic performance at the primary school level is essential for improving educational quality and achieving national development goals.

Academic performance is the measurement of pupils' achievement across various academic subjects. Teachers and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates and results from standardized tests (Okigbo and Esajobor 2024). Okigbo and Esajobor further stated that academic performance is the outcome of education; it is the extent to which a pupil, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic performance also means the knowledge and skills that students have mastered in a subject or a course. It is basically a measure of how well students have performed in the various assessment items set for them based on some educational criteria determined by professional educators (Yunlok 2014).

Academic performance has been defined and explained by several authors in different ways. According to Goshi (2020), academic performance is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by pupils and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. Goshi added that these goals are measured by using continuous assessment or examinations results. Similarly, Ali, Tela and Saleh (2020) opined that academic performance is a measurable and observable behaviour of a pupil within a specific period. They

added that it consists of scores obtained by a student in an assessment such as class exercise, class test, mid-semester, mock examination, and end of semester examination. Amie-Ogan and Etuk (2020) opined that academic performance is the consequence of teaching and learning. Pupil's academic performance is seen as a pupils' scholastic standing at a given moment. For this study, pupils' academic performance is the achievement of an individual obtained through the use of evaluation instruments such as test, which may be written or oral. The academic standing of a learner concerning a subject matter is termed as a measure of learner academic performance.

Academic Performance is characterized by performance on tests associated with coursework and the performance of students on other types of examinations. However, pupil's low academic performance can be defined as low or weakness of the pupil's overall mark under the normal average in a study subject level as a result of a variety of reasons. Various studies have been carried out on the factors that affect academic performance of pupils in schools and universities. Some of the factors identified and reported to have affected the academic performance of pupils in these different settings are: pupils learning effort, previous or prior educational performance, self-motivation, the social-economic status of the pupil's parents, pupils' age, number of hours of study per day, tuition trends and the pupils' area of residence (rural or urban) (Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan and Ahmed, 2013). In fact, pupils' academic performance plays an important role in identifying graduates who will become great leaders and productive manpower for nations' economic and social development. Undoubtedly, the aim of enrolling a child in school is to achieve high in their academics especially at primary schools' level, which is the foundation for career building. Unfortunately, many primary school pupils are leaving this stage without performing high academically in core subjects, this poor performance limits the ease of transition to the post-primary school level (secondary school). Teachers as the major stakeholder in the learning environment could influence the learning process and overall performance of pupils in primary schools. Today, the need for improved academic performance of pupils has become universally accepted and that it depends on efficient and effective training of teachers.

Teachers at all levels of education play a decisive role in pivoting the growth and the direction of education. Teachers are in the centre of formulating and organizing effective teaching and learning activities and are highly essential for a successful operation of the

educational system (Amie-Ogan and Etuk 2020). Specifically, Filgona and Sakiyo (2020) opined that one key overriding factor for the success of pupils is the teacher. They are the most important component in the educational sectors and are highly instrumental to the success of any educational programme (Yakubu 2023). Therefore, the quality of any education system is a function of the teacher quality within the system (Bamidele and Adekola 2019). The success and effectiveness of any educational system is dependent on the quality of the teachers in the system and the training they acquired.

Teacher quality refers to the set of characteristics, competencies, and practices that make teachers effective in facilitating learning and improving student achievement. It encompasses both personal attributes (such as commitment, motivation, and professional ethics) and professional competencies (such as subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and classroom management). Darling-Hammond (2017) described teacher quality as the single most important school-related factor influencing student learning outcomes," stressing that teachers' knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical approaches directly affect how well students understand and apply knowledge. Operationally, teacher quality refers to the skills, characteristics and effectiveness of a teacher in promoting pupils learning and achievement.

Moreover, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) emphasizes that teacher quality is multidimensional, covering instructional delivery, assessment literacy, classroom climate, and student engagement. This highlights that effective teaching is more than content delivery; it involves creating supportive learning environments that foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills among learners. It follows therefore that acquisition of relevant skills and expertise knowledge is necessary for teachers to carry out their duties effectively.

The works of several researchers hold that the success of any educational system is a reflection of the successful academic performance of the pupils. Christopher and Gary cited in Yakubu (2023) argued that one key overriding factor for the success of pupils' academic performance is the academic qualification of the teacher. It was the opinion of Flipovic (2018) that shortage of qualified teachers is responsible for the poor academic achievement observable among the pupils. The views of Nwigwe and Arua (2019) implies that teacher academic qualification is fundamental to pupils' academic performance. In view of this, several factors

such as teacher quality among other variables have been identified as predictors of poor academic achievement among pupils. Trude and Nilsen (2016) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and the professional teaching qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject.

Variables presumed to be indicative of teachers' competence which has been examined for their relationship to pupils learning include measures of academic ability, years of education, years of teaching experience, measures of subject matter and teaching knowledge, certification status, and teaching behaviors in the classroom. This is as proposed by Darling-Hammond in 1992. Along with these qualities listed by Darling Hammond, other teachers' variables still exist which can either positively or negatively predict pupils' performance. In the context of this study, the indices of teacher quality to be examined are teacher qualification, teachers' verbal ability and teachers' use of instructional skills.

Teaching qualification or teacher qualification is one of a number of academic and professional degrees that enables a person to become a registered teacher in school system (Adebanjo 2020). Such qualifications include, but are not limited to, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGDE), Professional Diploma in Education (PDE), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Aina and Olanipekun (2015) are of the view that teachers' qualification is a particular skill or type of experience or knowledge someone possesses to make him or her suitable to teach. Teachers' qualifications in this regard refer to all the skills a teacher requires to teach effectively. Such skills include formal education, experience, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy studies, duration of training, certificate/licensing and professional development.

Another key neurocognitive competence associated with academic performance of pupils is verbal ability. Wang and Zhang (2025) opined that verbal ability refers to the capacity to understand and use language effectively, including reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. According to Alloway and Alloway (2013), verbal ability is a key component of cognitive ability, encompassing various mental processes like logical reasoning, memory retention and language comprehension. These tasks require access to language functions such as lexical knowledge and literacy (Gonzalez et al., 2021) and other functions such as executive functioning, cognitive flexibility, strategic search processes, attention, working memory, and task monitoring

Teacher's use of instructional skill could be another variable which could predict the academic performance of pupils. Teachers use instructional strategies to help pupils become more independent and tactical learners. Instructional strategies can stimulate pupils and help them concentrate and merge information for understanding and remembering (Francisco and Celon, 2020).

The use of Instructional skills has been emphasized in Sub-Saharan Africa by various governments with the aim of improving the quality of education. Through effective use of instructional skills such as questioning, modelling, scaffolding, differentiated instruction and providing feedback among others, countries have sought to ensure that teaching policy is fully implemented; teachers work is appraised within the broader educational improvement agenda and realistic quality assurance frameworks. Lack of coherency between teaching policy and the broader components of education systems continue to be one of the greatest weaknesses affecting African education systems (UNESCO – IICBA, 2016).

Teacher's use of instructional skills has been viewed as the principal vehicle to enhance effective learning in schools, with head teachers as instructional administrators. As the Republic of Kenya Service of Training, Science and Innovation cited in Yego, Amimo, Mendoza-Role, (2020) noted, head teachers as the supervisors of their schools have the duty to guarantee that teachers actualize the set of educational programs and that effective learning occurs through the use of instructional skills. Teachers' use of instructional skill affects their capacity to simplify content to help pupils to understand. Gender is another factor that may influence the academic performance of pupils.

Gender remains an important variable in educational research, particularly in relation to teaching effectiveness and pupils' academic performance at the primary school level. In recent years, scholars have continued to debate whether the gender of teachers significantly influences pupils' learning outcomes. While some studies suggest that teacher gender may shape classroom interaction patterns, others argue that instructional competence rather than gender determines pupils' academic success (Okeke and Okechukwu, 2021; Eze and Obi, 2022). Several contemporary studies have examined gender differences in teaching styles and their implications for learning. For instance, Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2020) observed that female teachers at the primary level often demonstrate stronger nurturing behaviours, emotional support, and learner-

centred instructional approaches, which may enhance pupils' engagement and academic performance. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) reported that female teachers are more likely to employ inclusive and supportive pedagogical practices, particularly in early childhood and primary education settings. Conversely, studies by Ibrahim and Yusuf (2019) and Bello and Abubakar (2022) found that male teachers tend to emphasize classroom control and discipline, which may also positively influence pupils' academic outcomes.

Empirical evidence on the effect of teacher gender on pupils' academic performance, however, remains inconsistent. Afolabi (2019) reported a significant gender difference in favour of male teachers, while Saadu, Ajeigbe, and Olayonu (2022) found no significant difference in pupils' academic achievement based on teacher gender, particularly in numeracy skills. Okeke and Okechukwu, (2021) opined that female teachers tend to show more nurturing tendencies that may enhance pupils' performance, while others argued that male teachers enforces more discipline that equally supports learning outcomes. In another study, it was reported that pupils taught by male teacher achieve higher than those taught by female teachers this was in contrast with the findings of Adedipe cited in Afolabi and Audu (2017) who opined that pupils that are taught by female teachers performed significantly better than those taught by their female counterparts. Operationally, gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours , and expectations associated with being male or female. In contrast, Okorie and Nwankwo (2023) opined that teacher gender alone does not significantly predict pupils' academic performance when instructional skills and teacher competence are controlled. These findings suggest that teachers' gender may interact with other teacher-related variables rather than acting as an independent determinant of academic performance.

Recent international studies further support this view. A meta-analysis by Kim and Cho (2020) concluded that the impact of teacher gender on pupils' achievement is minimal compared to factors such as teaching quality, verbal ability, and instructional strategies. Likewise, OECD (2022) emphasized that teacher effectiveness is primarily driven by pedagogical competence, classroom practices, and professional development rather than demographic characteristics such as gender. This position aligns with the view that teacher gender should be examined alongside other dimensions of teacher quality to fully understand its role in pupils' academic performance.

In the Nigerian context, studies by Okafor and Umeh (2021) and Eze, Onyekachi, and

Nnamani (2023) indicate that disparities in pupils' academic performance are more strongly associated with teacher qualification, instructional delivery, and communication skills than with teachers' gender. Nonetheless, gender remains a relevant variable, particularly in culturally diverse learning environments where teacher–pupil interactions may be influenced by social norms and expectations. In light of the vast studies on the performance of pupils, the researcher seeks to explore the prediction of teacher quality and gender on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of the study was to examine teacher's quality and gender as predictors of primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine;

1. how teachers' qualification predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.
2. how teachers' verbal ability predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.
3. how teachers' use of instructional skill predicts primary school pupils on academic performance in Anambra State.
4. how teachers' gender predicts primary school pupils' academic performance Anambra State.
5. how teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use instructional skills) and gender jointly predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study

1. How does teachers' qualification predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?
2. How does teachers' verbal ability predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?
3. How does teachers' use of instructional skill predict primary school pupils on

academic performance in Anambra State?

4. How does teachers' gender predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?
5. How does teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender jointly predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Teachers' qualification does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
2. Teachers' verbal ability does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
3. Teachers' use of instructional skills does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
4. Teachers' gender does not significantly predict the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
5. Teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skill) and gender jointly does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Methods

This study employed a correctional survey research design and was carried out in Anambra State. F A sample of three hundred and sixty (360) primary school teachers out of a population of 11,971 was used. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were the Teacher Quality and Gender questionnaire (TQGQ) and academic performance scale. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to compute reliability coefficient which yielded a

coefficient of 0.88 for the teachers' verbal ability and 0.65 for teachers' use of instructional skills. The research questions and the hypotheses were analyzed using regression analysis.

Results

Research Question One: How does teachers' qualification predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 1: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Qualification as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***Decision***
Constant	69.00	1.19		
Teachers' Qualification	0.27	0.23	0.06	Weak
R = 0.06				
R^2=0.00				

Table 1 presents the summary of regression analysis with teachers' qualification as predictor of pupils' performance. The R and R^2 were 0.060 and 0.004 respectively. The R^2 indicates that 0.0% of the variance in pupils' academic performance was explained by teachers' qualification. This suggests a predictive ability of teachers' qualification for pupils' academic performance was weak. The standardized regression coefficient (β) was 0.06 which indicates that weak but positive predictive value since a unit increase in teachers' qualification results in 0.06 increase in pupils' academic performance.

Research Question Two: How does teachers' verbal ability predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 2: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Use of Instructional Skills as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***Decision***
Constant	61.21	1.55		
Teachers' Verbal Ability	0.06	0.23	0.11	Modest
R = 0.11 R^2=0.01				

Table 2 shows the summary of regression analysis with teachers' verbal ability as predictor of pupils' performance. The R and R^2 were 0.11 and 0.01 respectively. The R^2 indicates teachers' verbal ability explained 1% of the variance in pupils' academic performance. This implies that teachers' verbal ability predictive capacity for pupils' academic performance was modest. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficient (β) of 0.11 confirms that as a unit increase in teachers' verbal ability results in 0.11 increase in pupils' academic performance.

Research Question Three: How does teachers' use of instructional skill predict primary school pupils on academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 3: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Verbal Ability as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	**Decision**
Constant	56.27	2.40		
Teachers' Use of Instructional Skills of	0.50	0.08	0.30	Modest
R = 0.30				
R^2 = 0.09				

Table 3 shows the summary of regression analysis with teachers' verbal ability as predictor of pupils' performance. The R and R^2 were 0.30 and 0.09 respectively. The R^2 indicates teachers' use of instructional skills explained 9% of the variance in pupils' academic performance. This implies that teachers' use of instructional skills capacity to predict pupils' academic performance was modest. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficient (β) of 0.30 confirms the modest predictive ability since a unit increase in teachers' use of instructional skills leads to 0.30 increase in pupils' academic performance.

Research Question Four: How does teachers' gender predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 4: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Gender as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**Academic Performance**	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***Decision***
Constant		70.42	0.70		
Teachers' Gender R = 0.01 R^2=0.00		-0.06	0.41	-0.01	Weak

Table 4 shows the summary of regression analysis with teachers' gender as predictor of pupils' performance. The R and R^2 were 0.007 and 0.000 respectively. The R^2 indicates teachers' gender did not explain any variance in pupils' academic performance. This suggests that predictive ability of teachers' verbal ability for pupils' academic performance was weak. The standardized regression coefficient (β) of -0.01 also indicated a weak predictive value as unit change in gender of the teacher (0=male to 1=female) pupils' academic performance reduces by 0.01 unit.

Research Question Five: How does teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender jointly predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.

Table 5: *Multiple Regression Analysis with Teacher Quality (Qualification, Verbal Ability and Use of Instructional skills) and Gender as Predictors of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***Decision***
Constant	52.72	3.00		
Teachers' Qualification	0.10	0.23	0.02	
Teachers' Verbal Ability	0.12	0.06	0.11	
Teachers' Use of Instructional skills	0.49	0.09	0.29	Modest
Teachers' Gender	0.05	0.39	0.01	
R = 0.32				
R^2=0.10				

Table 5 presents the summary of multiple regression analysis with teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender as predictors of pupils' performance. The R and R^2 were 0.32 and 0.10 respectively. The R^2 indicates teachers' use of the four predictors explained 10% of the variance in pupils' academic performance. This implies that the capacity of teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender to predict pupils' academic performance was modest. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficients (βs) which ranged between 0.01 and 0.29 indicates that teachers' use of instructional skills was a better predictor of pupils' academic performance than the other predictors.

Hypothesis One: Teachers' qualification does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Qualification as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	**T**	**P**	**Decision**
Constant	69.00	1.19		58.18	0.000	Not Significance
Teachers' Qualification	0.27	0.23	0.06	1.14	0.256	
*R = 0.06						
R^2 0.00						

*F(1,357) = 1.30, p = 0.256

The result displayed in Table 6 indicates teachers' qualification did not significantly predict pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, β= 0.06, t = 1.14, p=0.256. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that teachers' qualification was not a significant predictor of pupils' academic performance in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Two: Teachers' verbal ability does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 7: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Verbal Ability as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***T***	***P***	***Decision***
Constant	61.21	1.55		43.33	0.000	
Teachers' Verbal Ability R = 0.11 R^2=0.01	0.06	0.23	0.11	2.12	0.035	Significant

**F* (1,357) = 4.48, *p* = 0.035

The result displayed in Table 7 indicates teachers' verbal ability significantly predicted pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, β= 0.11, t = 2.12, p=0.035 as the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that teachers' verbal ability was a significant predictor of pupils' academic achievement in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Three: Teachers' use of instructional skills does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 8: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Use of Instructional Skills as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***T***	***P***	***Decision***
Constant	56.27	2.40		23.42	0.000	
Teachers' Use of Instructional skills R = 0.30 R^2=0.09	0.50	0.08	0.30	5.87	0.000	Significant

The result displayed in Table 8 indicates teachers' use of instructional skills significantly predicted pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, $\beta = 0.30$, $t = 5.87$, p=0.000 as the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that teachers' use of instructional skills was a significant predictor of pupils' academic achievement in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Four: Teachers' gender does not significantly predict the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 9: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Gender as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***T***	***P***	***Decision***
Constant	70.42	0.70		100.71	0.000	
Teachers' Gender R = 0.01 R^2=0.00	-0.06	0.41	-0.01	-0.14	0.890	Not significant

*****F (1,357) = 0.02,
p = 0.890

The result displayed in Table 9 indicates teachers' gender did not significantly predict pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, β= 0.01, t = -0.14, p=0.890 as the p- value was greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This suggests that teachers' gender was not a significant predictor of pupils' academic achievement in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Five: Teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skill) and gender jointly does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra.

Table 10: *Test of Significance of Multiple Regression Analysis with Teacher Quality (Qualification, Verbal Ability and Use of Instructional skills) and Gender as Predictors of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	***T***	***P***	***Decision***
Constant	52.72	3.00		17.55	0.000	
Teachers' Qualification	0.10	0.23	0.02	0.43	0.668	Not Significant
Teachers' Verbal Ability	0.12	0.06	0.11	2.13	0.034	Significant
Teachers' Use of Instructional skills	0.49	0.09	0.29	5.78	0.000	Significant
Teachers' Gender	0.05	0.39	0.01	0.14	0.891	Not Significant
R = 0.32						
R^2=0.10						

*****F (1,358) = 9.86, p = 0.000

As shown in Table 10 teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skill) and gender significantly predicted pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, R = 0.32, F (1,358) = 9.86, p = 0.000. Since the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that teachers' qualification predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a weak degree. This suggests that although teachers' academic and professional qualifications contribute to pupils' learning outcomes, qualification alone may not be sufficient to substantially enhance pupils' academic performance at the primary school level. This finding supports the assertion of Nyenime-Ikpeme (2021), who found that teachers' qualifications influence pupils' academic performance mainly when they are translated into effective classroom practices such as lesson planning and instructional delivery. Similarly, Eze and Obi (2021) observed that teacher qualification improves pupils' academic performance only when accompanied by effective pedagogy and classroom management.

The result also aligns with Filgona and Sakiyo (2020), who emphasized that teachers remain the most critical determinant of pupils' academic success, as well as with the view of Yakubu (2023), who noted that teachers' effectiveness goes beyond possession of certificates to include instructional competence and professional commitment. Bamidele and Adekola (2019) further asserted that the quality of any education system is a function of the quality of teachers operating within it. However, the weak predictive strength observed in this study may be attributed to inadequate opportunities for continuous professional development among primary school teachers in Anambra State, as reported by Nwankwo and Umeh (2022).

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' qualification did not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State. This finding contrasts with Adebanjo (2020), who reported a significant contribution of teacher qualification, experience, and content mastery to pre-primary school effectiveness in Ogun State. However, it aligns with the findings of Saadu, Ajeigbe, and Olayonu (2022) and Okeke and Okafor (2021), who reported no significant difference in pupils' academic achievement based solely on teachers' qualifications. These findings suggest that qualification alone, without effective instructional practices, may have limited impact on pupils' academic performance.

Findings revealed that teachers' verbal ability predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. This indicates that teachers' communication

skills play a meaningful role in facilitating pupils' understanding of concepts, especially at the primary school level where learning is language-dependent. This finding is consistent with Adeyemi (2017), who reported that teachers with strong verbal and communication skills are more effective in enhancing pupils' academic achievement. Similarly, Ezeudu and Obiageli (2020) found that teachers' clarity of explanation significantly influences pupils' comprehension and retention of lesson content.

Furthermore, Hanushek and Rivkin (2012) emphasized that teacher quality, measured partly through communication competence, is a consistent predictor of pupils' learning outcomes. In the Nigerian context, Okorie and Onwuka (2022) reported that teachers' verbal expressiveness significantly predicts pupils' literacy and numeracy outcomes in primary schools. The modest predictive strength observed in this study suggests that while verbal ability is important, its effectiveness may be influenced by class size, pupils' language background, and availability of teaching aids.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' verbal ability was a significant predictor of academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State. This finding corroborates the study of Aksamovic et al. (2019), who established a positive relationship between verbal ability, emotional competence, and academic performance. It also supports the findings of Yusuf and Bello (2021), who observed that teachers' verbal fluency enhances pupils' classroom engagement and academic achievement in Nigerian primary schools.

Findings revealed that teachers' use of instructional skills predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. This implies that effective instructional strategies, lesson presentation, and the appropriate use of teaching materials enhance pupils' learning experiences. This finding supports Fuller and Clark (2019), who posited that the quality of instructional processes experienced by learners determines the quality of education. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasized that effective instructional practices significantly improve pupils' academic outcomes, particularly at the foundational levels of education. Mwiria (2019) further observed that pupils' academic performance is influenced by both the quality and quantity of teaching and learning resources. In the Nigerian context, Adebayo and Lawal (2021) reported that the effective use of instructional materials positively influences

pupils' academic performance in public primary schools. The modest predictive strength observed in this study may be attributed to limited instructional resources and overcrowded classrooms in many public primary schools in Anambra State, as noted by Okafor and Nwoye (2022).

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' use of instructional skills significantly predict pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Anambra State. This finding reinforces the importance of continuous teacher training in modern instructional strategies and learner-centred teaching approaches (UNESCO, 2021).

Findings of the study revealed that teachers' gender predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a weak degree. This suggests that gender alone has minimal influence on pupils' academic outcomes. This finding is in collaboration with Okoro, Ekanem, and Udoh (2012), who reported that teacher-pupil gender interactions may influence academic performance but are not consistently strong predictors across contexts. Similarly, Okeke and Okechukwu (2021) found that pupils' academic achievement is more strongly influenced by teaching competence than by teachers' gender. Mensah , Aam -Yawson and Yeboah (2021) further indicated that teacher gender interacts with cultural expectations; thus, children may react differently based on the qualities that they associate with perceived authority or nurturing styles rather than gender itself. This insight suggests that while teacher gender may play a role, the emphasis should also be on the qualities of teaching practices that engage and inspire students. Additionally, Umeh (2023) opined that academic performance in early grades is strongly shaped by metacognitive support from teachers, such as guided practice and scaffolding, rather than assessment alone, reinforcing the need for quality instruction regardless of teacher gender

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' gender was not a significant predictor of pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Anambra State. This aligns with Saadu, Ajeigbe, and Olayonu (2022) and Yusuf and Sadiq (2020), who reported no significant difference in pupils' academic achievement based on teachers' gender. However, the finding is in contrast with the finding of Afolabi (2019), who reported significant gender differences in favour of male teachers. These mixed findings suggest that gender effects may be context-dependent and mediated by teaching style, classroom interaction, and subject area.

Findings further revealed that teachers' quality measured by qualification, verbal ability, and use of instructional skills together with gender jointly predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. This indicates that pupils' academic performance is better explained when multiple teacher-related factors are considered simultaneously. This finding supports Folorunsho et al. (2024), who reported that teacher qualification, lesson presentation, and classroom discipline jointly predicted pupils' academic performance. Similarly, Odey (2024) found that teacher qualification, instructional methods, and gender jointly influenced pupils' communicative competence. In addition, Eze and Okonkwo (2023) emphasized that improving pupils' academic performance requires a holistic approach that integrates teacher training, instructional competence, and supportive school environments. This finding underscores the need for comprehensive teacher development programmes aimed at improving multiple dimensions of teacher quality.

Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which teachers' quality and gender predict the academic performance of primary school pupils in Anambra State. The findings revealed that teachers' qualifications and gender were weak and insignificant predictors of pupils' academic performance. In contrast, teachers' verbal ability and the use of instructional skills significantly predicted academic performance to a modest degree. When considered jointly, teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, and instructional skills) and gender did not significantly predict pupils' performance.

From these findings, it can be concluded that pupils' academic performance in Anambra State primary schools depends more on the teachers' verbal ability and effective use of instructional skills than on their paper qualifications or gender. Therefore, the capacity of teachers to communicate effectively and employ appropriate instructional strategies plays a more critical role in improving pupils' achievement than their academic certificates or demographic factors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teacher education institutions should place stronger emphasis on practical training that develops verbal communication skills and mastery of instructional strategies alongside theoretical knowledge.
2. Ministries of Education and school administrators should organize regular capacity-building workshops and seminars focused on effective communication and instructional practices for primary school teachers.
3. Recruitment, retention, and promotion of teachers should not be based solely on academic qualifications but should incorporate evaluation of teaching competence, classroom performance, and communication ability.
4. School heads should ensure continuous classroom supervision and mentoring of teachers to promote the consistent use of effective instructional strategies.
5. Educational policymakers should formulate policies that encourage continuous professional development for teachers, irrespective of gender, to enhance instructional quality in primary schools.

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