TEACHERS' NON-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, STUDENTS'WORK ETHICS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOME IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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Abstract
This study examined how teachers'non-demographic characteristics and student-related factors such as students' work ethics (hours of study, goal setting and group study) relate to students learning outcomes in the senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The simple random sampling technique was used to select one Education District which has1,885 teachers and 28,234 students in 51 public senior secondary schools. The sample consisted 150 teachers and 300 students selected from 10 schools using the proportionate sampling technique. The total number of participants involved in the study was 450.Two sets of self-constructed questionnaires entitled: Teachers'Characteristics Questionnaire (TCQ) and Students' Work Ethics Questionnaire (SWEQ) were used for data collection. A standardised test drawn from the Mathematics and English Examinations past question papers of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) was administered on the students to collect data on students' learning outcome. Reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for the TCQ and 0.74 for the SWEQ. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation at0.05significance level. The study revealed that there is significant relationship among teachers' interactions, frequency of teachers' feedback, hours of study and students' learning outcomes. The study recommended among others that policy on teacher professional training should be regularly reviewed and enforced to update teachers with classroom management skills among others.

Keywords: Teachers' non-demographic characteristics, students' work ethics, learning outcome, quality assurance, time management, policy reform

Introduction

The debate on education in Nigeria in recent times is centered on the quality of output in the educational system. This is evidenced in the high rate of unemployment, unemployability of graduates and increase in social vices in Nigerian society, which are attributed to dysfunctional education. Karegon (2013)

observed that since the introduction of western education, the Nigerian education has faced its most critical crisis in the last decades. He reiterated that our education is in travail, the system is riddled with crises of various dimensions and magnitude. A number of multi-faceted problems have inhibited goal attainment and are raising questions, doubts and fears, all of which combined to suggest that the system is at a cross-road. The problems range from relevance of programme learning experience, management, government policies, provision of infrastructure, staffing, funding to pedagogical issues among others. As Obanya (2006) observed, education in Nigeria from inception, design and execution, has been inappropriate and unresponsive and cannot serve the needs of society. He concluded that this academic oriented model of education does not usher in sustainable development or encourage entrepreneurial education that emphasizes on skill acquisition.

That aside, the academic performance of students has also been of a major concern to all stakeholders in education. This has been seen as a major contributing factor to the perceived decline in the quality of education in Nigeria. Akomolafe (2013) observed that the academic performance of the students manifests in the consistent poor results in senior secondary examinations over the years. The senior secondary students' performance in WASSCE from 2008 – 2015 is below average. The percentage of student with 5 credits including English and Mathematics within these years ranged from 13,76% to 36.68%. The percentage increased to 52.97% and 59.22% in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Hence, the performance of students in WASSCE over the decade (2008 – 2017) has consistently ranged between average and below.

The manifestation of the performance could be seen in the routine academic activities in schools. He reiterated that these include the attitude of students to learning, the performance of students in academic activities in the classroom, assignments, attendance in the school, readiness to learn and do academic activities, perception and expectation of education. All these activities seem to be the prerequisite to the end product which come in form of the results of external examinations such as WAEC and NECO. While in higher institutions, it is the outcome of academic programmes in terms of quality and class of degree or diploma. These are results of inappropriate teaching strategies, students' attitudes to learning, poor study habits and indiscipline. Other factors include poor infrastructure in school, menace of examination malpractices', parental inadequacies, teachers' capacity and willingness to perform their job, leadership capacity, societal indiscipline and value system, as well as curriculum innovations in the school environment (Akomolafe, 2013). All these are the major challenges in the teaching-learning process, which need to be aggressively addressed in enhancing the cognitive skills of learners in our schools if sustainable development is to be attained.

Teachers are considered critical and indispensable in the educational system. Teachers are respected authorities who teach with an absolute control over

their subject matter rather than facilitate learning through child-centred explorations. Adeboyejo (2014) sees a teacher as a qualified person, professionally trained, certified and well prepared to teach specific subject or subjects in a school thereby helping student to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities and competences as well as values and attitudes, thus equipping them to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Teachers therefore constitute an important aspect in students' learning. Umeasiegbu (1991) argued that the level of performance in any school is intimately related to the quality of its teachers while the quality of any school system is a function of the aggregate quality of teachers who operate it. Competent teachers would improve effective teaching in schools. The level of a teacher's subject matter competence is a prime predictor of students learning (Mullens, 2003). Mullens argued that it is not simply the completion of schooling that could contribute to a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom but actual achievement in terms of subject matter competence.

Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf (2008) stated that the explanations for good or poor student's learning outcome have been quite exhaustive yet controversy still exists among scholars as to what contribute singly or jointly to students' poor performance. The teacher characteristics found to be dominant in cross-country studies are related to; qualification, experience, attitude and personality. Adu and Olatundun (2007) contended that teachers' characteristics are strong determinants of students' performance. The performance of students in school greatly depends on the attributes of a good teacher and what is expected of a professional teacher in terms of enthusiasm, discipline, ethics and code of conduct, educational qualification, teaching experience and teachers' attitude and interest (Oredein & Oloyede, 2007). Hence, an efficient, reliable and courteous teacher equipped with professionalism, creative imagination, costly ingenuity and depth of experience is a necessity for optimal performance in the 21st century.

The evaluation of students' learning outcome in secondary schools is determined internally through continuous assessments and periodic tests and examinations, while it is determined externally through various forms of standardised examinations. Various educational agencies like West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and others, have developed performance standards through which individual student performance can be compared for rating and certification. Students' learning outcome indicators according to Roger (2010), include knowledge, comprehension, application of knowledge or methods, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In this study however, student' learning outcome was measured using performance of the students in an achievement test.

Teacher-student relationship is an important factor in this study and can be formed through teachers' interactions with individual students. The relationship provides the context through which students experience both the classroom and the

school. Education in its fundamental form is an interaction among instructor, student and subject content. Moore (2007) identified three types of interaction essential for learning as; learner-content interaction, learner-instructor interaction and learner-learner interaction.

Ojelabi (2009) in his study on organizational climate as correlates of students' academic achievement in secondary school Economics in Oyo State, Nigeria, found that organizational climate, which include teachers' teaching behaviour in the classroom facilitates learning and improves teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance. In a similar study, Ekpo, Akpan, Essien and Imo-Obot (2009) in their study of classroom climate and student academic achievement in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria, found that physical layout of the classroom, teachers' teaching behaviour and instructional materials utilization jointly relate to students' academic achievement. From the foregoing, existing literature on teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcomes show that relationship is the pillar upon which the teaching-learning process rests, as effective teaching or learning cannot take place without cordial relationship between the teacher and the learners.

It is widely recognised that classroom assessment and feedback are among a teacher's most essential educational tool. When properly developed and interpreted, assessments can help teachers better understand what their students are learning. It helps both students and teachers to frequently examine how well they are attaining the goals of the teaching-learning process. Feedback, if timely, is expected to help students to improve subsequent performance.

Hattie and Timperly (2007) conceptualized feedback as information provided by an agent (such as teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. Winne and Butler (1994) referred to feedback as information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies. Feedback does not come without a prior activity; there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed. It is part of the teaching process, which happens after a student has responded to initial instruction, when information is provided regarding some aspect(s) of the student's task performance.

Teachers' assessment/feedback could be either formal or informal. Informal feedbacks, check-ups and check-ins are used to see how students are progressing, answer questions, or help with ideas. With formal feedback, teachers can provide suggestions and comments along with individualized goal setting. Peer-to-peer feedback, with the use of structured peer conferences students give and receive feedback on their current work.

Several research studies have reported diverse findings on the frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes. Hattie and Timperley (2007)

in their study of the power of feedback reported that frequent feedback from teachers had significant effect on students' learning achievement. They further reported however, that this potential is strongly related to the quality of the feedback.

Study effort is another significant factor in this study and the relationship between study effort and students' performance seems natural and is widely accepted. However, study effort is now viewed as an outcome of academic activity. Students with a strong work ethics prefer work over other activities. They develop a habit of studying on daily basis even on weekends. As their work has become their goal, students tend to work hard and long hours to achieve that goal. They become more dedicated, responsible and focused. Hence, having strong work ethics can help students in increasing qualitative (working behavior) and quantitative (higher grades) academic achievements (Abdus, & Ghulam, 2012).

Time is the single priceless resource that cannot be changed, cannot be taken back once it is used and is used completely at the appreciation of the owner. No one can control the moving of time but everyone is able to decide how to use it, thus, a deciding factor. Time management is self-management with an explicitly focus on time in deciding what to do; on how much time to allocate to the activities; on how activities can be done more efficiently and on when the time is right for particular activities. Time management is the art of arranging, organizing, scheduling and budgeting one's time for the purpose of generating more effectiveness in work and productivity. It is a priority-based structuring of time allocation and distribution among competing demands since time cannot be stored, and its availability can neither be increased beyond nor decrease from the 24 hours. Argarwal (2008) in his contribution asserts that time management is usually a personal problem and if one instinctively knows what the right is, then there is no need to worry. Proper time management becomes important in education because teachers work within limited time frame during the school hours to achieve the goals of teaching and learning, while students also have the duty to manage their time for personal study. It is of great importance for both the teachers and the students themselves to know how to allocate their time most efficiently to maximize high academic performance. Literature has also indicated that students' time allocation for study has exerted some influence on their learning outcomes.

The importance of students doing well in school has caught the attention of parents, government, education departments alike. Yusuf (2012) noted that the performance of students at all levels of education in Nigeria has witnessed criticisms from all and sundry in recent time. Teachers therefore have been identified as the heart of the educational process and the main determinant of quality and effectiveness of its result. Sandt (2007) pointed out that the main bottleneck to improvement of students' academic performances is recruitment of good and quality teachers. He further observed that teacher's behaviour is not only influenced by their beliefs but also by their attitudes towards teaching. Teachers'

attitude according to Sandt is the internal beliefs that influence personal action and is learned indirectly through one's experience and exposures. Teachers' attitudes toward teaching include: work value, teacher self-esteem, teachers' self-efficacy, teachers' expectation, teachers' commitment etc. The attitudes teachers hold regarding students could be attitudes toward individual learners, groups or classes of learners.

Improving educational outcomes is a nearly universal goal (Scott-Webber, Strickland & Kapitula, 2014). This is because the modern society expects everyone to be a high achiever. Academic achievement is a key criterion to assess an individual's learning, ability and potentials. It has also become an index of a child's future. Therefore, it is putting a great pressure on the minds of children and their parents. This scholastic achievement is a function of cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of personality, and is resultant of various factors (Sharma, Choudhary & Sahdev, 2013). Ewell (2001) defined Student Learning Outcome (SLO) as a particular level of knowledge, skill, and ability that a student has attained at the end (or as a result) of his/her engagement in a particular set of collegiate experiences.

Among the critical determinants of students learning outcome are teachers' characteristics, which are those attributes, characters and behaviours exhibited by teachers in the classroom during teaching and learning process. These include his professional skills and dispositions, enthusiasm and interactive behaviour, attitude to work, support and motivation given to students. All these could affect the efficiency of the teacher in the course of discharging his instructional tasks. To ensure that students are properly prepared for the future, as Barry (2010) asserted, that teachers must have high expectations for student learning, provide clear and focused instruction, closely monitor student learning progress, reteach using alternative strategies when students do not learn, use incentives and rewards to promote learning, be highly efficient in the classroom routines, set and enforce high standards for classroom behaviour, maintain excellent personal interactions with their students. In essence, there is need for every teacher to be effective for the goals of education to be achieved.

The impact of student work ethics on students' performance is a newer concept. Work ethics refers to the moral behavior of viewing work as a desirable activity rather than a burden. Individuals with strong work ethics are strongly committed to their work and feel more satisfaction in the work than their peers. They value that they are being given the opportunity to work and put all their energy and work more hours to complete task. Organizations nowadays have realized the significance of work ethics and some have started training programs to develop work habits of people. This leads to creativity, hard work, commitment and competition among individuals resulting in better performance. Teachers' are now focusing to develop strong work ethics in their students to help them improve

their academic achievement and perform better in professional life (Abdus, & Ghulam, 2012).

Apart from the personal characteristics of teachers, stakeholders in education have also blamed the growing failure rate of students on general unpreparedness (Ayodele, 2004). Students as major stakeholder also have responsibility to improve their performance by planning their personal study, managing their time, and creating interest to reinforce what had been taught by the teacher. Adesina (2008) also noted that the way the students perceive the teachers in terms of their knowledge of content of subject matter and disposition may affect the student's readiness and attitude to work, because the learner acquires from the teacher's disposition to form attitude towards learning which could positively or negatively affect his performance.

Considering government's huge investment in education, one expects that its output in terms of quality of students be at least commensurate to government expenditure. Where this falls short of expectation, it is logical to conclude that it is a reflection of the quality of learning experiences in schools. In other words, the ineffectiveness of teachers in classroom interaction with the students could be responsible for poor learning outcomes.

There is therefore the need to examine how non-demographic teacher characteristics and student-related factors such as students' work ethics (hours of study, goal setting and group study) relate to students learning outcomes. It is against this background that this study intends to examine the relationship among teacher characteristics, students work ethics and students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Lagos State. The hypothetical questions that form the problem of this study are; what is the relationship between teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcome? How does hours of study relate to students' learning outcome?

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher related factors, students' work ethics and students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Lagos State. Specifically, this study sought to determine the relationship between: teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcomes; Frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes; and Hour of study and students' learning outcomes;

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested to guide the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcome.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcome.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between hours of study and students' learning outcome.

Method

This study adopted the correlational research design. The population of this study consisted all the public secondary schools in the six Education Districts in Lagos State. The simple random sampling technique was used to sample one Education District which has1,885 teachers and 28,234 students in 51 public senior secondary schools. The District is made up of three zones namely, Ikeja (11 schools), Mushin (17 schools) and Oshodi/Isolo (22 schools).The sample for the study consisted 150 teachers and 300 senior secondary school students sampled from 10 schools. The 10 schools were sampled using the proportionate sampling technique. There were 3, 4, and 3 schools from the Ikeja, Mushin and Oshodi/Isolo zones respectively. From each of the selected schools, 10 teachers and 30 students were sampled using the simple random sampling technique. This brought the total number of participants involved in the study to 450.Two sets of researcher constructed questionnaires titled: Teachers' Characteristics Questionnaire (TCQ) and Students' Work Ethics Questionnaire (SWEQ) were used for data collection. A standardised test drawn from the Mathematics and English Examinations past question papers of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) was administered on the students to collect data on students' learning outcome. For the reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted. The scores of the two administrations of the instrument were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. Reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for TCQ and 0.74 for SWEQ. The researcher administered the instruments directly on the respondents. All the 450 copies of the two instruments administered were successfully completed are retrieved. They were used for data analysis. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 5% significance level.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcome.

Table 2

Teachers' Interaction with Students and Students'Learning Outcome

Variables	Mean	SD	N	r	P	Remark	Decision
Teachers' Interaction with Students	21.85	1.19	150	0.38	0.001	Sig.	Ho_1 rejected
Students' Learning Outcome	28.35	2.72	300				

$p<0.05$

Table 2 presents the test of relationship between teachers interaction with students and students' learning outcomes using PPMC. It shows a weak relationship between teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcomes, but the relationship, however is significant (r = 0.38; p = 0.001). The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcomes was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between teachers' interaction with students and students' learning outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcome.

Table 3: Frequency of Teachers' Feedback and Students' Learning Outcomes

Variables	Mean	SD	N	R	P	Remark	Decision
Frequency of Teaches' Feedback	22.49	1.12	150	0.57	0.00 1	Sig.	Ho_5 rejected
Students'Learning Outcome	28.35	2.72	300				

p<0.05

Table 3 presents the test of relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes using PPMC. It shows a moderate relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes, which is also significant (r = 0.57, p = 0.001). The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between hours of study and students' learning outcome.

Table 4:
Hours of Study and Students' Learning Outcome

Variables	Mean	SD	N	r	P	Remark	Decision
Hours of Study	2.48	0.57	300	0.64	0.003	Sig.	Ho_4 rejected
Students' Learning Outcome	28.35	2.72					

p<0.05

Table 4 presents the test of relationship between hours of study and students' learning outcomes using PPMC. It shows a strong and significant relationship between hours of study and students' learning outcomes ($r = 0.64$; $p = 0.003$). The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between hours of study and students' learning outcomes was rejected. Thus, this implies that there is significant relationship between hours of study and students' learning outcome.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that there is significant relationship between teachers' interactions and students' learning outcomes. This result underscores the importance of cordial working relationship between teachers and students. The cordiality of this working relationship could result in improved learning outcomes for students. This result is in agreement with the findings of Furrer and Skinner (2003), Malecki and Demaray (2006),Ojelabi (2009),who reported that teachers' attitude towards students was related to students' academic achievement and attitude towards learning. Other researchers (Klem& Connell, 2004; Wentzel, 2009; Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012)also reported that close, caring teacher–student relationships influence students' academic self-perceptions, school engagement, motivation, learning, and performance.

The findings also showed that there is significant relationship between frequency of teachers' feedback and students' learning outcomes. This result emphasises classroom assessment and feedback as teacher essential educational tools in properly interpreting and assessing how their students are learning and helps teacher to provide corrective information to the learner. Scholars who have reported similar findings are Hattie and Timperley (2007) who found that frequent feedback from teachers significantly relate to students' learning achievement. Kivuti (2015) also found that frequent formative evaluation enables teachers to adjust their teaching to meet individual student needs, and to better help all students to reach high standards. Aladeand Kuku (2017) also found that there were significant differences in the mean scores of students' achievement in Mathematics and study habits as a result of exposing students to varying test frequencies. De Paola and Scoppa (2010) have also reported that students tested frequently had probability of passing subsequent examinations. Faleye and Adefisoye (2016) found a significant difference, Tara (2003) and Zgraggen (2009) however reported that the frequency of teachers' feed did not have significant relationship with students' learning outcomes.

The study also revealed that hours of study significantly relate to students' learning outcomes. The number of hours spent in studying is a function of students' ability to manage their time. This result is similar to that of Ukpongand George (2013) who reported that academic performance of students who studied for long hours was significantly different from that of their short study time counterparts. Zulauf and Gortner (1999) also found that time management skills and study time

were positively related with Grade Point Average (GPA) for the 93 students in Agricultural Economics Courses and concluded that study time significantly interacted with ability to influence academic performance.

Conclusion

It is a common knowledge that the educational system reflects the quality of the teaching workforce. This further underscores the Federal Government's efforts not only to sensitize the nation, of the importance of qualitative and quantitative teacher education, but also to actually produce teachers who are highly motivated, conscientious and efficient. Teachers therefore have been identified as the heart of the educational process and the main determinant of quality and effectiveness of its result. However, a number of multi-faceted problems have inhibited goal attainment in the Nigerian educational system and these are raising questions, doubts and fears, all of which combined to suggest that the system is at a cross-road. Consequently, the academic performance of the students manifests in the consistent poor results in senior secondary examinations over the years. Again, the manifestation could be seen in the routine academic activities in schools, which include the attitude of students to learning, their performance in academic activities in the classroom, assignments, attendance in school, readiness to learn and do academic activities, perception and expectations of education. Obviously, this is a major challenge in the teaching-learning process, which needs to be aggressively addressed in enhancing the cognitive skills of learners in our schools if sustainable development is to be attained. Apart from the personal characteristics of teachers, stakeholders in education have also blamed the growing failure rate on poor students' work ethics resulting in general unpreparedness to learn. Based on all these, the study sought to examine the relationship among non-demographic characteristics of teachers, students' work ethics and students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Lagos State. The study revealed that there is significant relationship among teachers' interactions, frequency of teachers' feedback, hours of study and students' learning outcomes. This implies that the performance of students in school greatly depends on the attributes of a good teacher and students' level of preparedness. Thus, teachers' characteristics and students' work ethics are strong determinants of students' performance.

Similarly, having strong work ethics can help students in increasing qualitative (working behavior) and quantitative (higher grades) academic achievements. Therefore, there is the need to encourage students' to become more dedicated, responsible and focused and develop a habit of studying on daily basis even on weekends.

Implications for Educational Policy

Policy on teacher professional training should be regularly reviewed and enforced to update teachers with classroom management skills; quality assurance

policy should also be regularly reviewed in accordance with the annual instructional needs assessment of teachers; and the government should extend school hours for at least two hours as a matter of policy. The extra hours should be dedicated to reading and completion of assignments.

More so, teachers should be flexible enough to respond appropriately to each situation as the needs warrant during teaching learning process; and teachers should be adept in motivating and reinforcing learning and ensure learners' interest in classroom activities.

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