

Over-Schooling and Secondary School Teachers' Job Performance in Nigeria.

Dr. Iniobong Ekong Nkang * Dr. Christopher S. Uwah

1. Faculty of Education, Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden, Mkpata Enin L.G.A. P.M.B.1167, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
 2. Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
- * E-mail of corresponding author: sinemobong@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the impact of over-schooling on teachers' job performance at the secondary school level in Uyo Senatorial District. To guide the study, two specific objectives and two null hypotheses were formulated. The population for the study consisted of Public Secondary School Principals and Teachers in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, totaling 2520. The sample of the study was 252 respondents (84 principals and 168 teachers). While all the 84 public secondary school principals in the Senatorial District were involved in the study, the simple random sampling technique was used in drawing two teachers (1 male, 1 female) from each of the schools. Data collection was carried out with a structured questionnaire, "Over-schooling and Teachers' Job Performance" (OTJP). The data collected were analysed using the independent t-test. The first hypothesis was upheld while hypothesis two was rejected signifying no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities at the secondary school level. Based on the findings, it was concluded that over-schooled teachers at the secondary school level in Akwa Ibom State were committed to teaching despite the low returns to their education; and that they were less interested in school activities other than teaching. It was recommended, among others, that teachers with higher degrees at the secondary school level should be motivated to put in their best in the system.

Keywords: over-schooling, teachers' job performance, higher degrees, low returns, secondary school, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Although the National Policy on Education (2004) specifies the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification for teaching in Nigerian schools, at the secondary school level, the Bachelor's or First Degree is generally upheld as the standard qualification for every teacher. On the basis of this, attempts are being made to phase out teachers who are unable to go beyond the NCE level from secondary schools. Although the secondary school system rejects teachers below first degree and does not require any higher degrees from the teachers, it is interesting to note that this level of education has a good number of teachers with higher degrees. This amounts to over-schooling as the teachers with higher degrees possess levels of education in excess of that which is required for their jobs (Dolton and Vignoles, 2000). Based on this background, the study was undertaken to determine the impact of over-schooling on teachers' job performance at the secondary school level in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Scholars and researchers have published series of studies about the qualitative structure of the labour market and the match between educational levels and job levels of workers and employees (Van der Meer, 2000). In the United States and many other countries, studies have been published about the possible consequences of a rapid rise in educational attainment (Wielers and Van der Meer, 2002). In Nigeria, and indeed Akwa Ibom State today, a common government policy is to encourage participation in education as can be seen in the Free Education Policies and various scholarship programmes mounted by the Federal and State Governments, multinational companies, NGOs and private individuals. The cornerstone of such policies lies in the belief that a more educated labour force leads to increase in economic growth and development (Gemmel, 1996).

Over-schooling describes the extent to which an individual possesses a level of education in excess of that which is required for his particular job. The phenomenon was first brought to the attention of researchers by Freeman (1976) cited in McGuinness (2006). Freeman concluded from his study that as the excess qualified workforce has to settle for jobs that do not require their qualifications, the returns for education plummet. Lower returns should reduce the investment in higher education and the labour market should then return to an equilibrium point. However, this was not the case as can be seen even in the Nigerian education system today. Returns to education

still remain high, encouraging more of over-schooling. This occurs mostly at the secondary school level. The number of secondary school teachers that go for higher degrees is increasing steadily in Akwa Ibom State. Some of these teachers with higher degrees have developed qualities that make them suitable for higher jobs whereas others appear to lack these skills.

A number of studies have shown that over-schooled workers have lower returns to their education (Battu, Belfield and Sloane, 2000; Green, McIntosh and Vignoles, 1999). This becomes disincentive and subsequently affects their level of job performance (Groot and Van den Brulk, 2000). Teachers with higher degrees at the secondary school level in Akwa Ibom State fall within this bracket. They seem to be discouraged from putting in their best and are always searching for better jobs. These classes of teachers apparently show lack of interest in school activities, including teaching. This results in poor job performance.

Performance could be described in various ways. It could be described as an act of accomplishing or executing a given task (Okunola, 2000). It could also be described as the ability to combine skillfully the right behaviour towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Olaniyan, 2005). Public education ultimately succeeds or fails based on the performance of the teachers. Education authorities have tried to improve the performance of the teaching workforce by raising certification requirements. Research shows, however, that these credentials have little to do with teaching excellence, as measured by students' performance (Gordon, Kane and Staiger, 2006). Once teachers are hired, education authorities do very little additional screening and commonly award promotion after two or three years, regardless of the teachers' performance. The most effective teachers generally receive no incentives to work in many instances. Teachers with higher degrees at the secondary school level often feel wasted as no recognition is given to such qualifications at that level in Nigeria (Olaniyan, 2005).

Job performance is commonly used, yet inconsistently defined. It most commonly refers to whether a person performs an assigned job well. Despite the confusion over how it should exactly be defined, performance is a very important criterion that relates to educational outcomes and successes. Among the most commonly accepted theories of job performance is the work of Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993). Coming from a psychological perspective, Campbell describes job performance as an individual level variable. That is, performance is something a single person does. This differentiates it from more encompassing constructs such as organizational performance or national performance, which are higher level variables. Equally, Abramis (2004) defined job performance as a worker's effective execution of tasks or job and useful contributions to the social work environment. Teachers' job performance is directed towards the realization of education goals and objectives.

Performance therefore has to be goal relevant. Teachers' performance must be directed towards educational goals and objectives that are relevant to their job. It does not include activities where effort is expended toward achieving peripheral goals (Campbell, 2003). Maurer (2001) identified the following as factors affecting employees' job performance:

- ◆ *Ability*: The capacity to learn and perform the tasks required.
- ◆ *Standards*: Expectations to achieve and guidelines by which to achieve them.
- ◆ *Knowledge and Skill*: The information and expertise necessary to perform the job.
- ◆ *Feedback*: Feedback from management that effectively communicates the status of the person's performance, based on measurable guidelines and tools.
- ◆ *Environment*: Acceptable working conditions, such as enough time and equipment to perform the job effectively.
- ◆ *Motivation*: Incentives in place that positively reinforce good performance.

Although all of these factors are crucial to a teacher's success on the job, only one aspect-knowledge and skill-can actually be improved by training. If any of the other factors are the cause of decreased performance, management or other forces in the school system must institute the changes necessary to resolve the problem.

Gordon, Kane and Staiger (2006) studied some 150,000 Los Angeles students in grades three through five from 2000 to 2003 and found no statistically significant achievement differences between students assigned to certified teachers and students assigned to uncertified teachers. Other recent studies similarly have found that differences in teaching quality between certified and uncertified teachers are small compared with the difference in teaching quality within each group. In other words, there are good teachers and poor teachers, regardless of their certification. Much more relevant to predicting long-term performance of teachers is performance in the first few years of teaching.

Gordon, Kane and Staiger (2006) concluded from their study that good and bad teachers can be identified after only a year or two in the classroom. In particular, they found that teachers' performance during their first two years on the job provides a lot of information about their likely effectiveness in subsequent years rather than

higher qualifications. On the average, students assigned to third-year teachers who performed poorly during their first two years lose ground relative to other students, whereas students of third-year teachers who performed well gained ground. These researchers also found out that students assigned to the best quarter of teachers ended up about 10 percentile points ahead of students assigned to the worst quarter of teachers. By implication, teachers' job performance has no significant relationship with their levels of educational attainment. Higher degrees do not make the teacher perform better at the secondary school level.

A considerable body of evidence shows that differences in teacher performance are largely unrelated to whether a teacher is certified (Gordon, Kane and Staiger, 2006). The research on teacher job performance finds considerable variation in estimated job performance, suggesting there is great potential for improving education through teacher workforce accountability policies such as teacher tenure reforms, selective retention, salary incentives, and targeted professional development rather than higher qualifications (Aaronson, Lisa and William, 2007).

Owoeye (2007) asserted that variables of job performance such as effective use of the scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work and discipline are virtues, which teachers should uphold in the school system. UNESCO (1996) Report observed that the pace of development of any nation is a function of the adequacy of its teachers; that no state of art, infrastructure or adequate funding would ensure success in the school system, when the teachers fail at the delivery level. The teachers as the primary actors in the business of child training and development should be recognized and treated well, if improved performance and high productivity is to be achieved. It is not the higher degrees that facilitate teachers' job performance but their level of motivation. Over-schooled teachers who are not sufficiently motivated, and whose returns on education are not comparable with those of their colleagues elsewhere suffer from inequity (Adams, 1963). This may lead to low morale and poor performance.

2. Purpose of the Study

The study was carried out to determine the impact of over-schooling on teachers' job performance at the secondary school level in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of commitment of teachers with higher degrees to teaching at the secondary school level.
2. Determine the level of participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities.

3. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to direct the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the commitment of teachers with higher degrees to teaching at the secondary school level.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities (teaching, discipline and extra curricular activities) at the secondary school level.

4. Population

The population for the study consisted of all the Public Secondary School Principals and Teachers in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. There are 84 such schools with a teacher population of 2520 including the principals.

5. Research Methodology

The sample of the study stood at 252 respondents (84 principals and 168 teachers). The purposive sampling technique was used in drawing the sample of the principal as all the principals were involved in the study, while the simple random sampling technique was used in drawing the sample of the teachers (1 male, 1 female) from each of the schools. A structured instrument, "Over-schooling and Teachers' Job Performance" (OTJP) was developed and used in collecting data for the study. The instrument was fully validated and a reliability test carried out using Cronbach Alpha Formula. This gave a reliability coefficient of 0.79.

6. Data Analyses and Results

The data collected were analysed using independent t-test.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the commitment

of teachers with higher degrees to teaching at the secondary school level.

Table 1:
Weighted means and t-test of the responses of principals and teachers on the commitment of teachers with higher degrees to teaching at the secondary school level

S/N	Commitment to Teaching <i>Teachers with higher degrees:</i>	Means		t-value	Remarks
		Principals	Teachers		
1.	Come to school regularly	3.7	3.6	0.97	NS
2.	Are punctual to school	2.5	2.6	1.52	NS
3.	Write and submit their lesson notes	3.5	3.4	1.01	NS
4.	Attend to their classes conscientiously	3.2	3.2	1.04	NS
5.	Give, mark and record students' tests.	3.1	3.1	1.06	NS
6.	Fill school records.	2.9	2.9	1.11	NS
7.	Are involved in the conduct of examinations	3.8	3.7	0.94	NS
8.	Are steady in school	2.4	2.4	1.66	NS

$N_1 = 84; N_2 = 168; df = 250; t\text{-cri} = 1.96; \text{Average } t\text{-cal} = 1.16;$

$S = \text{Significant}; NS = \text{Not Significant}$

Table 1 indicates no significant difference in the mean responses of the principals and teachers in all the identified performance indices, with t-values less than the critical t-value of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore upheld.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities at the secondary school level.

Table 2:
Weighted mean and t-test of the responses of principals and teachers on participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities

S/N	Participation in School Activities <i>Teachers with higher degrees:</i>	Means		t-value	Remarks
		Principals	Teachers		
1.	Take part in extra curricular activities.	3.0	1.1	2.24	S
2.	Participate in club activities.	3.7	1.8	1.99	S
3.	Participate in staff meetings.	3.3	3.2	1.11	NS
4.	Participate in PTA meetings.	2.8	2.6	1.21	NS
5.	Take active part in school discipline.	3.6	2.1	3.18	S
6.	Accept responsibilities from the principals.	3.1	2.9	1.83	NS
7.	Assist in all aspects of schoolwork.	2.9	1.03	3.52	S
8.	Show interest in school matters.	2.6	1.01	2.91	S

$N_1 = 84; N_2 = 168; df = 230; t\text{-cri} = 1.96; \text{Average } t\text{-cal} = 2.25;$

$S = \text{Significant}; NS = \text{Not Significant}$

Table 2 reveals a significant difference in the mean responses of the principals and teachers on participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities at the secondary school level. The t-values in 5 of the 8 identified items are greater than the critical t-value. Besides the average t-value of 2.25 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

7. Discussion of Findings

Data analysis in hypothesis one revealed no significant difference in the mean responses of secondary school principals and teachers on the commitment of teachers with higher degrees to teaching. The null hypothesis was

therefore upheld. Both the principals and teachers agreed that teachers with higher degrees are committed to their duties as teachers. They prepare their lessons, go to class, give and mark assignments. The finding is contrary to that of Groot and Van den Brulk (2000). These scholars noted from their studies that the low returns to education received by over-schooled teachers serve as a disincentive for the teachers, resulting in poor job performance. Credentials, according to Gordon, Kane and Staiger (2006) have little to do with teaching excellence or work performance. Hardwork or commitment to duties is not predicated on the level of education. Teachers with higher degrees, though not sufficiently motivated, still perform effectively at the secondary school level in Akwa Ibom State. Oftentimes they do these to justify their higher status and the leadership role they are expected to give to their subordinate.

The test of hypothesis two indicated a significant difference in the mean responses of the principals and teachers regarding the participation of teachers with higher degrees in school activities other than teaching. The null hypothesis was rejected. Most of the calculated t-values were greater than the t-critical. This study is in line with Battu, Balfield and Sloane (2000) who stated that teachers with higher degrees are not getting adequate returns to their education at the secondary school level. This lowers their morale, hence affects their participation in school activities that are not directly related to teaching. This is obvious because a number of teachers with higher qualifications seem not bothered by any school activities outside teaching. This could further be explained in terms of the higher status obtained by these teachers. They see themselves as being superior to other teachers with lesser qualification and hence should not partake in most of the activities they do.

8. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: over-schooled teachers at the secondary school level in Akwa Ibom State are committed to teaching, the poor returns of their education notwithstanding. Over-schooled teachers in secondary schools in the state show little interest in school activities outside teaching.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers with higher degrees at the secondary school level should be encouraged through motivation to put in their best in the system.
2. Teachers should be given better incentive to justify their higher educational status and serve as an encouragement for other teachers.
3. The secondary school system should be re-designed to accommodate and attract teachers with higher degrees.
4. A policy should be put in place to recognise higher degrees at the secondary school level.

References

- Aaronson, P. F. and William, R. D. (2007). *Supervision for today's school* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Abramis, R. K. (2004). The special nature of leadership. *American Journal of Nursing*, 69 (2).
- Adams, S. (1963). Toward an Understanding of Inequality, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 67 (5): 422.
- Battu, H., Belfield, C. and Sloane, P. (2000), "How Well Can We Measure Graduate Over-Education and its Effects?" *National Institute of Economic Review*, 171: 82-93.
- Campbell, R. (2003). *Introduction to education administration*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Campbell, R., McCloy, A., Oppler, D. and Sager, E. (1993). *Quality Assurance and the Development of Course Programmes*. Papers on Higher Education Regional University Network on Governance and Management of Higher Education in South East Europe Bucharest, UNESCO.
- Dolton, P. and Vignoles, A. (2000), "The Incidence and Effects of Over-education in the UK Graduate Labour Market", *Economics of Education Review*, 19: 179-198.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Gemmel, N. (1996). "Evaluating the Impacts of Human Capital Stocks and Accumulation on Economic Growth: Some New Evidence", *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 58: 9-28.
- Gordon, R. A. Kane, D. S. and Staiger, R. O. (2006). *School Administration and Supervision: Important Issues, Concepts and Case Studies*, 2nd Edition, Dupuque Iowa, Ecb Publishers.
- Green, F., McIntosh, S. and Vignoles, A. (1999). "'Over-education' and Skills: Clarifying the Concepts", Discussion Paper No. 435, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics.

-
- Groot, W. and Maassen H. van den Brink (2000). 'Over-education in the labor market: a meta-analysis', *Economics of Education Review*, 19: 149-158.
- Maurer, R. D. (2001). A review of the relationship between personality and performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 56.
- McGuinness, S. (2008). Over-education in the graduate labour market. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 20 (3): 389.
- Olaniyan, D. A. (2005). "Leadership Roles of School Administrators and Challenges Ahead in Post-Primary Institutions in Nigeria". Paper presented at the Department of Educational Management University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Owoeye, I. K. (2007). *Work Orientation and Job Performance: Toward a Cultural Theory of Work Motivation*. Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited. Ikeja: Lagos, Nigeria.
- UNESCO (1996). Strengthening the Role of Teachers in a Changing World. (African Position paper at the Regional Consultation Meeting to the 45th Session of the International Conference on Education, 11- 13 March; Dakar, p. 34.
- Van der Meer, P. H. (2000). "Overscholing 'objectief' beschouwd" paper gepresenteerd op het TVA/WESWA-Congres 2000 'Trends en toekomst van arbeid en organisatie in de 21e eeuw', 12 oktober 2000 te Amsterdam.
- Wielers, R. and Van der Meer P. H. (2002). 'Lower educated workers and part-time work. The Netherlands 1973-1991'. *SOM Research Report 02A26*.