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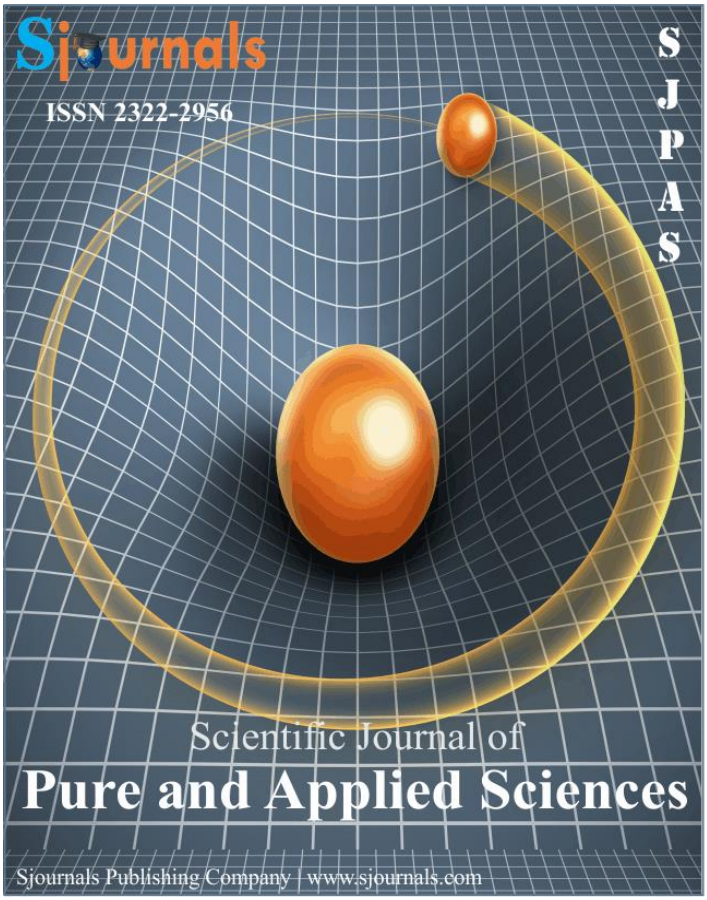

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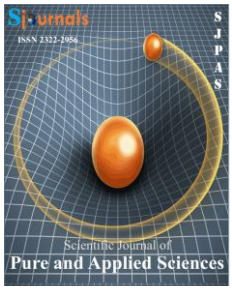

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Review article

Teachers' influence on student's mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined teacher's influence on student's mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used to gather primary sources of information from the respondents in the study area. Data was collected using questionnaire and information obtained from the data was analyzed using inferential statistics such as multiple linear regression analysis. The hypotheses of the study were tested using the probability values of the estimates. The results of the regression analysis shows that Teachers' competence (TCP) has a positive effect on Students' mathematics performance (SMP) and the effect is statistically significant ($p<0.05$) and in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in teachers' competence (TCP) will result to a corresponding increase in Students' mathematics performance (SMP) by a margin of 15.4 percent. Teachers' commitment (TCM) has a negative effect on Students' mathematics performance (SMP) and the effect is not statistically significant ($p>0.05$) and not in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in Teachers' Commitment (TCM) will result to a corresponding decrease in Students' Mathematics Performance (SMP) by a margin of 2.4 percent. Teachers' qualification (TQL) has a positive effect on Students' mathematics performance (SMP) and the effect is statistically significant ($p<0.05$) and in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in teachers' Qualification (TQL) will result to a

corresponding increase in Students' mathematics performance (SMP) by a margin of 19.2 percent. It was concluded that The students' performance or academic achievement plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development. It was recommended among others that competent teachers in the subject matter of Mathematics should be employed in the study area while existing teachers should be trained retrained to meet up with the current needs of the students in the study.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the study

Research has shown that many countries consider students' academic performance to be a significant indicator of the quality of the education system. Therefore, studies have been undertaken to determine the factors that influences students' academic performance by various scholars. As part of this process, within the last two decades, several countries have participated in international educational assessment studies to monitor their quality of education. In Nigeria public discussions frequently focus on educational standards. The public's unhappiness becomes more prominent following the annual release of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination results (WASSCE). Student outcomes do not match the government and parental investment. All stakeholders are concerned about why the system is turning out graduates with poor results. To them, it is questionable whether or not teachers in the public secondary schools, the most important factor in the effectiveness of schools and in the quality of a child's education are competent to teach effectively. The National Policy of Education states that no education system can rise above the quality of teachers in the system (Ker, 2013). The academic standard in all Nigerian educational institutions has fallen considerably below societal expectations. According to Ijaiya (1998), improving the quality of the teaching force in schools is seen as the key to raising student performance. Thus, raising educational standards should be the government's number one priority.

Mathematics is one of the several subjects covered in secondary schools and in senior secondary school examinations in Nigeria. It is necessary to learn mathematics in order to learn interdisciplinary areas such as science, technology and engineering. Also, mathematics is an important skills for a country for the innovation and creation of new scientific- technological professions (Ker, 2013). Mathematics performance of students have been considered to be connected with a country's future economic well-being and competitive power against other countries. Thus, it is a common objective of the national policy makers and educators worldwide to understand and identify factors such as teachers' influence that have a significant and consistent relationship with mathematics performance (Wagemaker, 2003).

1.2. Statement of problem

Teachers' influence in students' performance matters greatly. In fact, it is the most important school-related factor influencing students' performance in the subject of Mathematics in secondary schools. In the absence of a strong, robust, and deep body of research, the debate in this field is largely ideological. There is a consensus in the academia that teachers are the main determinants of quality in education: If they are apathetic, uncommitted, uninspired, lazy, unmotivated, immoral, and anti-social, the whole nation is doomed. If they are ignorant in their disciplines and thus impart wrong information, they are not only useless but dangerous. Therefore, the kind of teachers trained and posted to schools may well determine what the next generation will be like. Teachers can make or mar the school curriculum; therefore, their adequacy and quality for better service delivery needs to be assessed on a regular basis.

The researcher has noticed that overtime, they have been poor performance of secondary school students at the secondary school examinations such as the senior secondary school certificate Examination (SSCE). This poor

performance could be attributed to so many factors. The researcher is keen to knowing the extent to which teachers' influences affect the performance of students in the study area with a view to making a policy recommendations to stem the tide of mass failures of students at the senior school examination in Mathematics.

1.3. Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine teacher's influence on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Examine the effect of teachers' commitment on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
ii. Assess the effect of teachers' competence on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
iii. Determine the effect of teachers' qualification on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

1.4. Research hypotheses

H_{01}: Teachers' commitment has no significant effect on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
H_{02}: Teachers' competence has no significant effect on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
H_{03}: Teachers' qualification has no significant effect on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

1.5. Significance of the study

Findings of this study will provide educational planners and administrators with adequate information about teachers' availability and how this affects performance of students in secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State. It will likewise assist in establishing corrective measures with respect to some disadvantaged schools to ensure equity and uniformity in posting of teachers to schools in the state and improve the performance of students at the various examination undertaken by the students.

2. Review of literature

2.1. Conceptual framework

2.1.1. Teacher's influence

A teacher's influence is the role the teacher plays in bringing about mental and attitudinal change in his students. When students are viewed in a negative way by their teachers such as, being lazy, unmotivated and having no abilities, they take on those beliefs about themselves and it thus affect their performance. According to Ball (1990), the behaviour which a teacher adopts either inside or outside the classroom greatly affects the students' learning and performance outcomes. Also, the teaching style can also generate or steal the interest of students in a particular course which, as a result, affects their interest and performance. When teachers show their own interest and passion in their course and their profession, the students are bound to be motivated. To effectively motivate students to learn actively, it is better to promote team competition in order to enhance group efforts and to avoid competition for grades and teachers attention. Also, good to promote team work and team efforts that will eventually cause a decrease in individual level competition.

2.1.2. Students' academic performance

Academic performance involves meeting goals, achievements and objectives set in the program or course that a student attends. These are expressed through grades which are the result of an assessment that involves passing or not certain tests, subjects or courses. On their part, Willcox (2011) define academic performance as the level of knowledge shown in an area or subject compared to the norm, and it is generally measured using the grade point average. Several authors agree that academic performance is the result of learning, prompted by the teaching activity by the teacher and produced by the student. From a humanistic approach, Martinez (2007) states that

academic performance is the product given by the students and it is usually expressed through school grades. Academic performance is a measure of the indicative and responsive abilities that express, in an estimated way, what a person has learned as a result of a process of education or training.

2.1.3. Theory of achievement motivation

The theory of achievement motivation was propounded by David McClelland in 1953. Motivation is the driving force behind a person's actions. There are many different types of motivation, and everyone is inspired by something different. The theory of achievement motivation attempts to account for the determinants of direction, magnitude and persistence of behaviour in a limited but very important domain of human activities. It applies only when an individual knows that his performance will be evaluated (by himself or others) in terms of some standard of excellence and that the consequence of his actions will be either a favourable evaluation (success) or an unfavourable evaluation (failure). It is in other words achievement oriented performance.

2.1.4. Empirical review

According to UNESCO (1984), a necessary condition for teachers to teach mathematics was not only to know mathematics but also to be competent in understanding the basic contents, concepts and the associated skills. The teacher must know what it means to do mathematics so as to make students achieve good performance. Teachers must consider student's perceptions and the ideas the student brings into the classroom. It was therefore important that teachers should find what their students already know about the concepts or the principles that are to be introduced.

Abraham and Keith (2006) examined Measuring and Targeting Internal Conditions for Schools Effectiveness in the Free State of South Africa, using a questionnaire as the basis for constructing an index of school effectiveness. Their findings revealed that teachers commitment were the key drivers of internal school conditions for effectiveness, development and school change.

Ijaiya (1998) investigated the problems of teacher staffing in Kwara State secondary schools and found that there is an acute shortage of teachers in Kwara State secondary schools thus contributing to massive failures as well as poor quality teaching. In a study of relationship among school size, resource utilization and school effectiveness in Ilorin Local Government Areas.

Also Ehrenberg and Brewer (1995) and Ferguson (1991) asserted that students learn more from teachers with strong academic skills. According to these researchers, teachers' assignments depend on their qualification of the subject(s) being taught. Middle and high school students learn more from teachers who hold Bachelor's or Master's degrees in the subjects they teach and from experienced teachers than they do from less experienced ones.

Amoo (1982) reported that there were wide gaps between the demand and supply of qualified teachers in Osun state. Shortage of qualified teachers as revealed by the findings of his study was expressed as 44 percent in the 1978/80 sessions, 56 percent in the 1980/81 sessions and 51 percent in the 1981/82 session. He recommended that the State Government ensure the funding of the State Colleges of Education so that they could train well-qualified teachers and address the problem of teacher shortage.

3. Research methodology

The survey research design was used in this study. The population of the study is six (6) secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis purposively chosen from public and private secondary schools operating in the study area, three from each category. Senior secondary school students were studied from Special Science Senior Secondary School, Government College Secondary School and Government Girls Secondary School from the public secondary schools operating in Makurdi. Padopas Harmony Secondary School, Mount Carmel Girls Secondary School and Mount Saint Gabriel Secondary School from the privately owned secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis. A population of forty (40) students were purposively selected from each of the six secondary schools bringing the population to two hundred and forty (240) respondents to be used for the study.

The data for the study was collected using questionnaire, coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0 for Microsoft Windows). The validity and the reliability of the instrument was established using the confirmatory factor analysis as shown below with the following statistics.

A pilot test was conducted. The input variable factors used for this study were subjected to exploratory factor analysis to investigate whether the constructs as described in the literature fits the factors derived from the factor

analysis. From Table 1, factor analysis indicates that the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measure for the study's three (3) independent variable items is 0.846 with Barlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) value to be 6 at a level of significance p = 0.032. Our KMO result in this analysis surpasses the threshold value of 0.50. Therefore, we are confident that our sample and data are adequate for this study.

Table 1
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.846
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6.971
	df	6
	Sig.	0.032

Source: SPSS Result, 2020

Table 2
Total variance.

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.580	39.507	39.507	1.580	39.507	39.507	1.580	39.499	39.499
2	1.124	28.096	67.603	1.124	28.096	67.603	1.124	28.105	67.603
3	0.866	21.657	89.260						
4	0.430	10.740	100.000						

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.
Source: SPSS Result, 2020

The Total Variance Explained table shows how the variance is divided among the four (4) possible factors. Two (2) factors have Eigenvalues (a measure of explained variance) greater than 1.0, which is a common criterion for a factor to be useful. When the Eigenvalue is less than 1.0 the factor explains less information than a single item would have explained. Table 2 shows that the Eigenvalues are 1.580 and 1.124 are all greater than 1. Component one gave a variance of 39.499 while Component 2 gave the variance of 28.105. The cumulative of the rotated sum of squared loadings section indicates that two components i.e component 1 and 2 accounts for 67.603% of the variance of the whole variables of the study. This shows that the variables have strong construct validity.

Fig. 1. The Scree Plot (Source: SPSS Result, 2020).

The above shows the Scree Plot which indicates the initial Eigenvalues. Both the scree plot and the Eigenvalues support the conclusion that these four variables can be reduced to two components. The scree plot also slopes downward after the second component. The Scree plot shows that after the second components, differences between the Eigenvalues decline sharply (the curve flattens), and they are less than 1.0. This again supports a two components solution.

Table 3
Reliability statistics.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.894	0.988	4

Source: SPSS Result, 2020

As shown by the individual Cronbach Alpha Coefficient the entire construct above falls within an acceptable range for a reliable research instrument of 0.70. The Cronbach Alpha for the individual variables is 0.894 and is found to be above the limit of acceptable degree of reliability for research instrument.

Table 4
Item-total statistics.

	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
SMP	95.6000	356.674	0.725	0.045	0.336
TCP	99.8500	415.292	0.441	0.076	0.523
TCM	95.8000	232.274	0.385	0.282	0.422
TQL	99.5000	265.737	0.310	0.326	0.648

Source: SPSS Result, 2020

As shown in Table 4, an item-total correlation test is performed to check if any item in the set of tests is inconsistent with the averaged behaviour of the others, and thus can be discarded. A reliability analysis was carried out on the variables of the study values scale comprising four (4) items. Cronbach's Alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.894$. All items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if deleted. There is no exception to this in all the variables of the study as none of the items if deleted will improve the overall Cronbach alpha statistics. As such, none of the variables was removed. A correlation value less than 0.2 or 0.3 indicates that the corresponding item does not correlate very well with the scale overall and, thus, it may be dropped.

3.1. Models specification

The functional relationship between the variables of the study, the model is expressed in implicit and explicit function as shown below:

$$SMP = f(TCP, TCM, TQL) \quad (1)$$

Where,

SMP = Students mathematics performance
TCP = Teachers' commitment
TCM = Teachers' competence
TQL = Teachers' qualification
SMP = Students mathematics performance
In explicit form, the functional relationship between the variables of the study can be shown below:

$$SMP = b_0 + b_1TCP + b_2TCM + b_3TQL + U_t \quad (2)$$

Where,

b_0 = Regression constant
b_1 - b_3 = coefficients of independent variables.
U_t is the error term

A priori expectations

(X_1) = Teachers' commitment; *a priori* expected to have a positive effect on Students mathematics performance

(X_2) = Teachers' competence; *a priori* expected to have a positive effect on effect on Students mathematics performance.

(X_3) = Teachers' qualification; *a priori* expected to have a positive effect on effect on Students mathematics performance.

This model was built on the multiple regression analysis which examined the effect of the independent variables of the study on the dependent variable. The probability value of the regression estimates was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The following decision rules were adopted for accepting or rejecting hypotheses: *If the probability value of* b_i [p (b_i) > critical value] we accept the null hypothesis, that is, we accept that the estimate b_i is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level of significance. *If the probability value of* b_i [p (b_i) < critical value] we reject the null hypothesis, in other words, that is, we accept that the estimate b_1 is statistically significant at the five percent level of significance.

4. Results and discussion

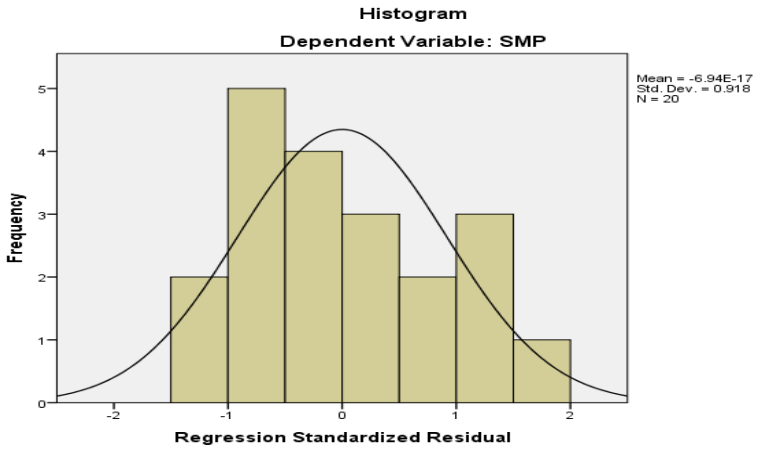

Fig. 2. Regression standardized residual (Source: SPSS Result, 2020).

Figure 2 above shows a histogram of the residuals with a normal curve superimposed. The residuals look close to normal, implying a normal distribution of data. Here is a plot of the residuals versus predicted dependent variable of Students' Mathematics Performance (SMP). The pattern shown above indicates no problems with the assumption that the residuals are normally distributed at each level of the dependent variable and constant in variance across levels of Y.

Table 5
Statistical significance of the model.

ANOVA[a]						
Model		**Sum of squares**	**df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	50.852	3	16.951	0.250	0.040[b]
	Residual	1083.698	16	67.731		
	Total	1134.550	19			

a. Dependent variable: SMP
b. Predictors: (Constant), TQL, TCP, TCM
Source: SPSS Result, 2020

The result of the statistical significance of the model is presented in Table 5. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table above tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predicts the dependent variable F (3, 16) = 0.250, p =0.040[b] (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data).

Table 6
Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.812[a]	0.745	0.634	8.22989

a. Predictors: (Constant), TQL, TCP, TCM
b. Dependent variable: SMP
Source: SPSS Result, 2020

Table 6 shows the model summary. The coefficient of determination R^2 for the study is 0.745 or 74.5 percent. This indicates that 74.5 percent of the variations in the model can be explained by the explanatory variables of the model while 25.50 percent of the variation can be attributed to unexplained variation captured by the stochastic term. The Adjusted R Square and R^2 show a negligible penalty (63.4 percent) for the explanatory variables introduced by the researcher.

Table 7
Regression coefficients.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	26.259	10.651		2.465	0.025		
	TCP	0.604	0.239	0.154	2.527	0.050	0.946	1.057
	TCM	-0.018	0.212	-0.024	-0.084	0.934	0.719	1.392
	TQL	0.485	0.227	0.192	2.137	0.022	0.692	1.445

a. Dependent Variable: SMP
Source: SPSS Result, 2020

The result of the regression analysis indicates that Teachers' competence (TCP) has a positive effect on Students mathematics performance (SMP) and the effect is statistically significant ($p<0.05$) and in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in teachers' competence (TCP) will result to a corresponding increase in Students mathematics performance (SMP) by a margin of 15.4 percent. Using the probability value of the estimate, p (b_1) < critical value at 0.05 confidence level. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_1 is statistically significant at the 5 percent level of significance. This implies that teacher's competence has a significant effect on Students Mathematics Performance in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis. This finding is in line with that of According to UNESCO (1984). Their study concluded that a necessary condition for teachers to teach mathematics was not only to know mathematics but also to be competent in understanding the basic contents, concepts and the associated skills. The findings of the study indicates that the teacher must know what it means to do mathematics so as to make students achieve good performance.

Teachers' commitment (TCM) has a negative effect on Students mathematics performance (SMP) and the effect is not statistically significant ($p>0.05$) and not in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in Teachers' Commitment (TCM) will result to a corresponding decrease in Students Mathematics Performance (SMP) by a margin of 2.4 percent. Using the probability value of the estimate, p (b_2) > critical value at 0.05 confidence level. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_2 is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level of significance. This implies that teacher's commitment has no significant effect on Students Mathematics Performance in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis. This finding is contrary to that of Abraham and Keith (2006) who examined Measuring and Targeting Internal Conditions for Schools Effectiveness in the Free State of South Africa, and found that teachers commitment were the key drivers of internal school conditions for effectiveness, development and school change. The negative effect of the independent

variable on the dependent variable in our study could be linked to other factors that affect performance even in the present of committed teachers such as good working environment, poor remuneration of teachers, autocratic leaders style by management of the schools among others could be responsible for commitment of teachers to have a negative effect on the performance of the students in the study area.

As shown from the result of the regression analysis in Table 7, Teachers' qualification (TQL) has a positive effect on Students mathematics performance (SMP) and the effect is statistically significant ($p<0.05$) and in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in teachers Qualification (TQL) will result to a corresponding increase in Students mathematics performance (SMP) by a margin of 19.2 percent. Using the probability value of the estimate, p (b_3) < critical value at 0.05 confidence level. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_3 is statistically significant at the 5 percent level of significance. This implies that teacher's Qualification has a significant effect on Students Mathematics Performance in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis. This finding is in line with that of Amoo (1992) who reported that there were wide gaps between the demand and supply of qualified teachers in Osun state. Shortage of qualified teachers were huge in the study area and this hampered the effective performance of the students in their mathematics examinations. This finding also agrees with that of Also Ehrenberg and Brewer (1995) and Ferguson (1991) who asserted that students learn more from teachers with strong academic skills. According to the findings, middle and high school students learn more from teachers who hold Bachelor's or Master's degrees in the subjects they teach and from experienced teachers than they do from less experienced ones.

5. Conclusion

The study examined teachers' influence on students' mathematics performance in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State, Nigeria. The study revealed that teacher's competence and qualification are the most significant predictor of students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in the Makurdi Metropolis. Teachers' commitment was found to have a negative effect on student's performance in the study area. This could be attributed to other factors such as good working environment, poor remuneration of teachers, autocratic leaders' style by management of the schools among others which are outside the scope of this study.

The results of this study have shown that students are most essential asset for any educational institute as the social and economic development of the country is directly linked with student academic performance. The students' performance or academic achievement plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development.

Recommendations

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

1. Since teachers competence is significant to student's mathematics performance, more competent teachers in the subject matter of Mathematics should be employed in the study area. The teachers should be trained and retrained to meet up with the current needs of the students and the environment.
2. Since teachers' commitment is not being translated to students' performance in the study area, the management of the selected schools should look at the other factors peculiar to their schools which could be responsible for this negative effect. These factors be it poor remuneration, poor working environment or poor management of the school should be quickly identified so that the efforts of the teachers could be translated to improved performance of the students in the study area.
3. To get the desired result of enhanced performance, a stringent recruitment process to hires only highly qualified Mathematics teachers should be used in recruitment of qualified teachers who are able to translate the mathematical concepts better to students in the study area.

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