



TEACHER EXPERIENCE AS DETERMINANT OF ECONOMICS STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF OKITIPUPA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of teachers' experience on Economics students' achievement in secondary schools within Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. Using an ex-post facto design, data were collected from 12 public secondary schools, 12 Economics teachers, and 360 SS II students. Teachers were categorized into experienced and less experienced groups, and students' examination results for the 2024/2025 academic session were analyzed using independent sample t-tests at the 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that students taught by experienced teachers performed significantly better than those taught by less experienced teachers. While no significant difference was observed in urban schools, rural students taught by experienced teachers achieved higher scores than their counterparts. The study concludes that teacher experience is a critical determinant of students' academic success in Economics, particularly in rural contexts where resources are limited.

Keywords: Teacher experience, Economics achievement, Secondary education, Rural schools, Academic performance



Introduction

Education is universally recognized as one of the most powerful instruments for promoting national development, economic growth, social transformation, and individual advancement. It serves as a means through which societies transmit knowledge, skills, values, and cultural heritage from one generation to another. The primary objective of education is to facilitate effective teaching and learning that will bring about desirable changes in learners' behaviour, attitudes, knowledge, and academic achievement. Through education, individuals acquire the competencies necessary for productive living and meaningful participation in society. Consequently, every educational system aims at providing quality education capable of producing competent and responsible citizens.

The achievement of educational objectives largely depends on the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Among the various components of the educational system, the teacher occupies a strategic position because he or she is directly involved in the implementation of educational policies and curriculum objectives. Teachers are regarded as the backbone of any educational system because they are responsible for translating educational goals into practical classroom activities. No matter how well-designed a curriculum may be, its success depends significantly on the competence, dedication, and experience of the teacher who implements it.

Teaching is a complex and dynamic profession that requires adequate knowledge, skills, and experience. The teacher serves as a facilitator, motivator, instructor, counselor, evaluator, and role model to students. According to Kini and Podolsky (2021), an effective teacher possesses the ability to communicate knowledge efficiently, manage classroom activities successfully, motivate learners, and create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning. Effective teaching promotes students' understanding, encourages critical thinking, and enhances academic achievement. Therefore, the quality of teaching provided by teachers has become a major concern among educators, researchers, parents, and policymakers.

One of the factors that determine teaching effectiveness is teachers' experience. Teacher experience refers to the practical knowledge, skills, competencies, and professional expertise acquired through years of teaching and classroom interaction. Kraft and Papay (2022) described teacher experience as the professional growth that occurs as teachers acquire knowledge, refine instructional practices, and improve their effectiveness through years of classroom engagement. Through experience, teachers develop effective instructional techniques, improve classroom management skills, understand students' learning needs, and become more competent in delivering subject content. Experienced teachers are often better equipped to handle classroom challenges, adapt teaching methods to learners' needs, and maintain a productive learning environment.

The importance of teachers' experience in the educational process cannot be overemphasized. Experience enables teachers to acquire a deeper understanding of curriculum content, students' behaviour, and effective pedagogical practices. Guthrie (2016) maintained that teacher experience is the sum total of a teacher's professional exposure from the beginning of his or her teaching career to retirement. Through years of service, teachers gain expertise in lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom control, student assessment, and curriculum implementation. Such expertise enables them to make informed decisions that positively influence students' academic performance.

Similarly, Mayer (2017) viewed teacher experience as a continuous process through which teachers improve their professional competence by engaging in various teaching and learning activities. As teachers gain more years of service, they become more familiar with different teaching approaches and develop the confidence required to address diverse classroom situations. This accumulated knowledge and expertise often translate into improved student learning outcomes and better academic achievement.

Academic achievement is an important indicator of the effectiveness of the educational system. It refers to the extent to which students have attained educational objectives as measured through examinations, tests, assignments, and other evaluation procedures. Students' academic achievement serves as a measure of learning outcomes and provides evidence of the success or failure of teaching efforts. Consequently, factors that influence students' academic achievement have attracted considerable attention from educational researchers across the world.

Among these factors, teacher-related variables such as qualification, professional competence, teaching methods, attitude to work, motivation, and experience have been widely studied. Research findings suggest that experienced



teachers tend to possess superior instructional skills and classroom management abilities compared to less experienced teachers. They are often able to identify students' learning difficulties more quickly, employ appropriate teaching strategies, and provide meaningful feedback that enhances learning. As a result, students taught by experienced teachers are generally expected to perform better academically than those taught by inexperienced teachers.

Economics is one of the core social science subjects taught in secondary schools in Nigeria. The subject is concerned with the study of how individuals, firms, and governments allocate scarce resources to satisfy unlimited human wants. Economics provides students with knowledge and skills necessary for understanding economic issues, making rational decisions, and contributing meaningfully to national development. It equips learners with analytical and problem-solving skills required in both academic and professional settings. Furthermore, Economics serves as a prerequisite for various disciplines at tertiary institutions, including Accounting, Banking and Finance, Business Administration, Marketing, Public Administration, and other related fields.

The significance of Economics in the educational curriculum makes students' achievement in the subject a matter of concern. Despite the importance of Economics, reports from examination bodies and educational stakeholders indicate that many secondary school students continue to perform below expectations in the subject. This poor performance has been attributed to several factors such as inadequate instructional materials, poor study habits, lack of motivation, ineffective teaching methods, poor learning environment, and teacher-related factors including teaching experience. Consequently, there is a growing need to investigate the factors responsible for students' achievement in Economics.

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement. Adeyemi (2016) found that teachers with longer years of teaching experience produced better learning outcomes than less experienced teachers because they possessed greater mastery of subject content and classroom management skills. Similarly, Walter (2017) reported that students taught by experienced teachers generally performed better in examinations than students taught by inexperienced teachers. Darling-Hammond (2018) also observed that experienced teachers contribute significantly to students' academic success through effective instructional practices and improved classroom management.

However, findings from some studies have not been entirely consistent. While some researchers reported a positive relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic achievement, others found little or no significant influence. These conflicting findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly within specific educational contexts and subject areas. It is therefore important to determine whether teachers' experience significantly influences students' achievement in Economics in different geographical locations and school environments.

In Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State, concerns have been expressed regarding the performance of secondary school students in Economics. While some schools consistently record satisfactory results in both internal and external examinations, others continue to experience poor academic outcomes. Differences in teachers' experience levels across schools may partly explain these variations in students' performance. Therefore, understanding the extent to which teachers' experience influences students' achievement in Economics is essential for improving educational quality and policy formulation.

Recent studies have continued to emphasize the importance of teachers' experience in determining students' academic achievement. According to Kini and Podolsky (2021), teachers become more effective as they gain experience because they acquire improved instructional strategies, classroom management skills, and deeper knowledge of subject content. Their study revealed that students taught by experienced teachers consistently achieved better academic outcomes than those taught by novice teachers. Similarly, Akinsolu and Fadare (2024) found a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students in rural secondary schools taught by experienced and less experienced teachers. Their results showed that students taught by experienced teachers had higher academic achievement compared to those taught by less experienced teachers, indicating that teacher experience positively enhances students' performance, particularly in rural school settings.



Furthermore, Eze and Nwafor (2023) explored the influence of teacher-related factors on students' academic achievement in Economics among secondary school students in South-West Nigeria. Their findings showed that teaching experience significantly influenced students' understanding of Economics concepts and examination performance. The study recommended continuous professional development programmes to enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness.

Similarly, Yusuf and Alabi (2023) investigated determinants of students' performance in Economics in selected secondary schools in Nigeria and found that teacher experience was one of the strongest predictors of students' achievement. According to the study, experienced teachers were more likely to employ learner-centred instructional approaches that enhanced students' comprehension and retention of Economics concepts.

At the international level, Kini and Podolsky (2023) reaffirmed that teacher experience contributes significantly to student achievement, particularly when teachers have accumulated more than five years of classroom experience. Their findings indicated that experienced teachers are more effective in promoting students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and academic success.

In another empirical study, Akinsolu and Fadare (2024) examined the effect of teacher experience on students' academic achievement in social science subjects in Ondo State. The findings revealed a significant difference in the academic performance of students taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers. The researchers attributed this difference to the ability of experienced teachers to utilize diverse teaching methods and effectively manage classroom activities.

Similarly, Olatunji and Adegboye (2024) investigated factors influencing students' achievement in Economics in public secondary schools in South-West Nigeria. The study found that teachers' experience, qualification, and instructional competence jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of the variation in students' academic performance. Among these variables, teaching experience emerged as one of the strongest predictors of achievement.

Despite the overwhelming evidence supporting the positive influence of teachers' experience on students' achievement, some studies have reported contrary findings. For instance, Ibrahim and Mohammed (2025) found that teacher experience alone did not significantly influence students' academic performance when factors such as instructional resources, school climate, and student motivation were controlled. The study suggested that teacher experience should be considered alongside other school-related and learner-related variables.

The reviewed empirical studies indicate that while teachers' experience generally contributes positively to students' academic achievement, the magnitude of its influence may vary across subjects, school locations, and educational contexts. This inconsistency in findings underscores the need for further investigation, particularly in Economics education and within the context of Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' experience has been identified as an important factor in determining students' academic achievement. Experienced teachers are expected to possess greater pedagogical skills, classroom management techniques, and mastery of subject content than less experienced teachers. These qualities are believed to enhance students' understanding and performance in school subjects, including Economics.

Despite the importance of Economics in secondary school education, many students in Okitipupa Local Government Area continue to perform below expectation in both internal and external examinations. This poor performance has generated concerns among educators, parents, and policymakers. Although several factors have been linked to students' poor achievement, the influence of teachers' experience remains an issue that requires further investigation. The problem of this study, therefore, is to determine the extent to which teachers' experience influences the academic achievement of secondary school students in Economics in Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State.



Research Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference between the Economics achievement scores of students taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers.
2. There is no significant difference between the Economics achievement scores of students in urban secondary schools taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers.
3. There is no significant difference between the Economics achievement scores of students in rural secondary schools taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers.
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Methodology

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The design was considered appropriate because the students' examination results already existed and were used without manipulation. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary School II (SS II) Economics students and Economics teachers in public secondary schools in Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State. A sample of twelve (12) public secondary schools, twelve Economics teachers, and three hundred and sixty (360) SS II Economics students was selected through a multi-stage sampling technique.

The instruments used for data collection were the Teachers' Experience Questionnaire (TEQ) and students' Economics examination results for the 2024/2025 academic session. The questionnaire was used to classify teachers into experienced and less experienced categories based on years of teaching experience. Data collected were analyzed using independent sample t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study are presented according to the hypotheses tested.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the Economics mean achievement scores of students taught by experienced Economics teachers and students taught by less experienced Economics teachers.

Table 1: Summary of Independent Sample t-test Comparison of Economics Mean Achievement Scores of Students Taught by Experienced and Less Experienced Teachers

Teachers' Experience	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	Decision
Less Experienced	175	52.41	11.84			
Experienced	185	58.26	10.92	358	3.214	Ho Rejected

$P < 0.05$

The result in Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference between the Economics mean achievement scores of students taught by experienced and less experienced teachers. Since the calculated t-value of 3.214 is significant at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, students taught by experienced teachers performed significantly better than those taught by less experienced teachers.



Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the Economics mean achievement scores of students in urban secondary schools taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers.

Table 2: Summary of Independent Sample t-test Comparison of Economics Mean Achievement Scores of Urban Students Taught by Experienced and Less Experienced Teachers

Teachers' Experience	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	Decision
Less Experienced	82	55.10	10.25			
Experienced	98	57.04	11.18	178	1.285	Ho Accepted

$P > 0.05$

Table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference between the Economics achievement scores of urban students taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers. Since the calculated t-value of 1.285 is not significant at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the Economics mean achievement scores of students in rural secondary schools taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers.

Table 3: Summary of Independent Sample t-test Comparison of Economics Mean Achievement Scores of Rural Students Taught by Experienced and Less Experienced Teachers

Teachers' Experience	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	Decision
Less Experienced	93	49.87	12.06			
Experienced	87	55.32	10.77	178	2.756	Ho Rejected

$P < 0.05$

Table 3 indicates that there is a significant difference between the Economics mean achievement scores of rural students taught by experienced teachers and those taught by less experienced teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Students taught by experienced teachers in rural schools performed significantly better than those taught by less experienced teachers.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that students taught by experienced Economics teachers achieved significantly higher scores than students taught by less experienced teachers. This finding agrees with Adeyemi (2016), who found that experienced teachers contributed positively to students' academic performance through effective teaching strategies and classroom management skills.

The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the performance of urban students taught by experienced and less experienced teachers. This may be due to the availability of educational resources and conducive learning environments in urban schools.

Furthermore, the study showed a significant difference in the achievement of rural students taught by experienced and less experienced teachers. This finding agrees with Akinsolu and Fadare (2024) who found a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students in rural secondary schools taught by experienced and less



experienced teachers. This suggests that teacher experience plays a more critical role in rural schools where educational facilities may be limited.

Conclusion

The study established that teachers' experience significantly enhances students' achievement in Economics in Okitipupa Local Government Area. Experienced teachers demonstrated stronger instructional competence, classroom management, and subject mastery, which translated into improved student outcomes. The absence of significant differences in urban schools suggests that resource availability may mitigate the effect of teacher experience, whereas rural schools highlight its importance in compensating for limited facilities. Overall, teacher experience remains a vital factor in achieving quality education and fostering academic success in Economics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Retention of experienced teachers: Government should provide welfare incentives to retain experienced Economics teachers in secondary schools.
2. Professional development: School administrators should organize continuous in-service training to strengthen the instructional capacity of less experienced teachers.
3. Mentorship programmes: Experienced teachers should mentor novice teachers to enhance pedagogical skills and classroom management.
4. Equitable distribution: The Ministry of Education should ensure balanced deployment of experienced teachers across urban and rural schools.
5. Resource provision: Schools should be adequately equipped with teaching and learning materials to support effective Economics instruction.

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