

## TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN GEOGRAPHY IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA

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### Abstract

*The extent to which education is effective in nations building depends basically on the teachers' characteristics and influence measured by students' academic achievement which portrays the educational outcome. The study determined the extent to which teachers' characteristics correlated students' achievement in Geography in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Four research questions and their corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised 120 (75 males and 45 females) Geography teachers and 2550 (1324 males and 1226 females) Senior School II (SS II) Geography students from 31 public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja for the 2019/2020 academic session. A sample size of 12 (7 males and 5 females) Geography teachers and 480 (270 males and 210 females) SS II Geography students from four secondary schools sampled using multistage and stratified random sampling procedure. The Geography Teachers' Characteristics Checklist (GTCC) and Students' Proforma for Geography Result (SPGR) were used to determine the extent to which teachers' characteristics correlate with students' academic achievement in Geography. Face and content validity were sought by subjecting the instruments to critical appraisal of two research experts which enabled logical validity indices of 0.72 for TCSAAGQ and 0.90 for SPGR and reliability indices of 0.82 for GTCC and 0.87 for SPGR were obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage mean and standard deviation) were used for answering research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Results revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' characteristics (teachers' qualifications and experience) and students' academic achievement in Geography. Similarly, there was no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' academic achievement in Geography. The study recommended that government should encourage teachers to remain and grow on the job so that their accumulated experience will provide a leeway for students enhanced classroom achievement and societal development and qualified teachers, irrespective of their gender should be employed to teach geography in Secondary schools.*

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**Keywords:** Teachers' qualifications, Teachers' experience, Geography, Students Achievement

### **Introduction**

Teachers are essential in the entire educational system of any nation and are pivots on which education wheels revolve. Ashimole (2011) emphasized that teaching and learning depends largely on teachers, and that it is on teachers' number, quality and devotion that rest the effectiveness of all educational arrangements, development and growth. Similarly, Akinsolu (2010) observed that teachers are vital pre-requisites for students' attainment of educational goals and objectives. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) also recognized the importance of teachers by stating that no nation's education system can be greater than the standard of their teachers. Therefore, teachers remain the major factor in any educational system, and their quality of teaching is undoubtedly one of the most important factors shaping the teaching/learning and achievement of students (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005).

Teachers therefore, are highly essential for successful operation of the educational system and important tools for educational development. It is an acceptable fact that the teacher is the most important factor in the educational process and that teachers are instrumental to the success of any educational programme embarked upon by any government. The National Policy on Education further stated that, "no educational system can rise above the quality of teachers in the system" (FRN, 2014). In view of the above statement on the pre-eminent role of the teacher in boosting the quality of education of a nation, the Federal Government of Nigeria has made several attempts and enacted laws aimed at developing the education system. Among such attempts is the law concerning the training and recruitment of teachers which was done in order to achieve qualitative educational outcome. The National Policy on Education emphasizes that only qualified and skilled teachers should be recruited into the educational system of Nigeria (FRN, 2014).

Geography as an essential field in every human endeavours consists of knowledge of the world around us. It goes from studying the physical environment we live in to studying interactions that goes on within this environment. Geography as a vast field of study should therefore be taught by a highly qualified and skilled teacher. The study of the distinctive characteristics of Geography contributes to the balanced development of an individual. In view of this, Geography is a subject that focuses on disciplinary change and paradigm. Despite the noble objectives of Geography, the academic achievements of students at the external examination continue to decline in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. This is evident in the dismal academic achievement recorded in Geography by students' who wrote the year 2020 Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO). According to WAEC (2020), out of a total of 32,557 candidates that wrote the examinations, only 8,240 candidates, representing just 25.31 per cent, obtained

credit pass in Geography. The result, when compared to that of the previous three years, shows a marginal decline in the performance of candidates. For instance, in the year 2018 SSCE, 43.02 per cent of the candidates obtained credit pass in Geography. In 2019, the percentage declined to 37.57 and further to 35.31 per cent recorded in 2020. The current state of affairs is displeasing and this trend may have contributed to the high rate of moral decadence, kidnapping, assassination, armed robbery and other acts of criminality witnessed in FCT in recent time.

This poor performance of students requires urgent attention because it indicates or spells doom for the achievement of the objectives of secondary schools curriculum. There are many 21st century teacher characteristics that could influence the outcome of learning. Some of the 21st century teacher characteristics of a teacher include punctuality to work, diligence, honesty, sound knowledge of the subject, maintaining good teacher-student relationship, effective use of instructional methods and materials level of qualification, teaching experience towards teaching and gender. For the purpose of this study, the teacher characteristics considered are teachers' level of qualification, teaching experience towards teaching and gender. Teachers' qualification entails the basic training acquired by a teacher to enable him/her to practice in the teaching profession. According to Solomon (2009), a well qualified teacher could apply teaching methods and materials better than a less qualified teacher. The implication of this is that when a qualified teacher handles a subject in the classroom, the students could pay attention to the learning activities which will enhance their performance in the subject. Apart, from teachers' qualification, the years of experience of the teachers could also influence students' performance and interest in Geography. Udenyi (2010) argued that teachers with many years of teaching experience could easily organize students in the classroom and gain their attention more than less experienced teacher. Teachers' ability to organize students in Geography classroom could stimulate students and enhance their performance in the subject. Teachers' gender is another variable that could influence students' performance and interest in Geography. Gender is a social construct which is not biologically determined but a concept equivalent to race or class. Offorma (2004) viewed gender as a learned socially constructed condition ascribed to male and female. Offorma (2004) further noted that gender is enforced through cultural practices, as gender identity is the outcome of cultural learning; hence the expectations from males and females are dependent on their cultural milieus. These expectations could influence the way male and female teachers implement geography curriculum to improve students' performance in the subject. The gender of the teacher could influence students' attention in Geography classroom. Hence, teachers' gender could influence students' performance in the Geography. Some studies by Ajayi, Onibeju and Olutayo (2020) revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' mastery of content and students' achievement in Economics ( $r=0.507$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) as well as between teachers' attitude and achievement ( $r = .362$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). However, no significant relationship was established between qualification and achievement ( $r = 0.77$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). Likewise,

Ezema (2016) revealed that teachers' qualification and experience influenced students' performance in Social Studies and that there was no significant difference in the influence of male and female teachers on students' performance in junior secondary school Social Studies; Ahmed (2013) revealed that teachers' gender had no influence on students' interest and performance in History. Moreso, Bolarinwa (2013) revealed that a positive relationship existed between teachers' characteristics (educational qualification and years of experience) and performance level of the students in Financial Accounting. Kosgei (2013) also found out that there was no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and students' academic achievement in Biology ( $p>0.05$ ). In terms of geographical scope, the reviewed studies were conducted outside FCT, Abuja while the present study was conducted in FCT, Abuja. The period of studies was at variance with the present study (2021). This was therefore, the gap this study intended to fill.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the influence of teachers' qualification on students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja?
- ii. What is the influence of teachers' teaching experience on students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja?
- iii. What is the influence of teachers' gender on students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses postulated were tested at 0.05 alpha level:

- i. There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for this study comprised 120 (75 males and 45 females) Geography teachers and 2550 (1324 males and 1226 females) SS II Geography students from 15 senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja for the 2019/2020 academic session. A sample of 12 (7 males and 5 females) Geography teachers and 480 (270 males and 210 females) SS II Geography students were selected from 4 senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja using a combination of multistage and stratified random sampling technique. For the purpose of the study, the researchers developed two instruments used for this study. They were: Geography Teachers' Characteristics Checklist (GTCC) and Students' Proforma for Geography Result (SPGR). The GTCC contained 20 items and were

designed for students in order to meet the objectives of the study. The scoring was based on the Likert four–point scales of measurement of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) and vice versa for both negative and positive statements. The Proforma for harvesting the students' cumulative scores in Geography Result contained of 3 columns of serial number, gender and grades. Face and content validity were sought by subjecting the instrument to critical appraisal of two research experts. The logical validity consensus indices of 0.72 for GTCC and 0.90 for SPGR indices of rational validities and the reliability indices of 0.82 for GTCC and 0.87 for SPGR were obtained using Cronbach Alpha method of estimating reliability to compute coefficient of internal consistency. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) were used for answering research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

## Results

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage and mean to answer research questions whereby a mean cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as having the desired positive influence while any mean score below 2.50 was considered as having the negative influence.

**Research Question One:** What is the influence of teachers' qualification on students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja?

**Table 1:** Mean analysis of the influence of teachers' qualification on students' achievement in Geography

Teachers' Qualification	Frequency	Mean	Percentage (%)
NCE	3	2.23	25
B. Ed	7	2.53	58
M. Ed	2	2.74	17

Table 1 shows that the students under Geography teachers with NCE have mean score below the benchmark of 2.50. Also, the students under Geography teachers with B. Ed and M. Ed have mean score above the benchmark of 2.50.

**Research Question Two:** What is the influence of teachers' teaching experience on students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja?

**Table 2:** Mean analysis of the influence of teachers' teaching experience on students' achievement in Geography

Teachers' Teaching Experience	Frequency	Mean	Percentage (%)
1-5	5	2.52	42
6-10	3	2.60	25
11 and above	4	3.32	33

Table 2 shows that the students under Geography teachers with 1-5, 6-10, 11 and above years of teaching experience have mean score above the benchmark of 2.50.

**Research Question Three:** What is the influence of teachers' gender on students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja?

**Table 3:** Mean analysis of the influence of teachers' gender on students' achievement in Geography

Teachers' Gender	Frequency	Mean	Percentage (%)
Male	7	2.41	58
Female	5	2.32	42

Table 3 shows that the students under male and female Geography teachers have mean score below the benchmark of 2.50.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

To test this null hypothesis, the teachers' qualification and students' achievement in Geography were collected and related to obtain correlation coefficient (r), and the result is presented in Table 4

**Table 4:** Correlation Coefficient for relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Geography

Variables	N	df	r	Sig	Decision
Teachers' Qualifications	490	488	0.791	0.455	Significant
Students' Achievement					

Table 4 above shows r-value of 0.791 and p-value of 0.455. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05. So, the null hypothesis which states that there will no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja was rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

**Table 5:** Correlation Coefficient for relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' achievement in Geography

Variables	N	df	r	Sig	Decision
Teachers' Teaching Experience	490	488	0.511	0.265	Significant
Students' Achievement					



Table 5 above shows r-value of 0.511 and p-value of 0.265. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05. So, the null hypothesis which states that there will no significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja was rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

**Table 6:** Correlation Coefficient for relationship between teachers' gender and students' achievement in Geography

Variables	N	df	r	Sig	Decision
Teachers' Gender	490	488	0.392	0.505	Not Significant
Students' Achievement					

Table 6 above shows r-value of 0.392 and p-value of 0.455. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05. So, the null hypothesis which states that there will no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja was retained. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were discussed in line with research questions and hypotheses that guided the study. The finding of the study with respect to research question one and hypothesis one showed that teachers' qualification influences students' achievement in Geography and that there is a significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Bolarinwa (2013) who submitted that a positive relationship exists between teachers' characteristics (educational qualification and years of experience) and performance level of the students in Financial Accounting. This finding is not in agreement with the findings of Ajayi, Onibeju and Olutayo (2020); Kosgei (2013) who reported that there was no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and students' academic achievement in Biology.

The finding of the study with respect to research question two and hypothesis two showed that teachers' teaching experience influences students' achievement in Geography and that there is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja. This finding supported the earlier findings of Imeokparia (2018) who reported that there is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students'

academic performance in Business studies.

The finding of the study with respect to research question three and hypothesis three showed that teachers' gender does not influence students' achievement in Geography and that there is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' achievement in Geography in FCT, Abuja. This finding is in line with the earlier findings of Ezema (2016) who reported that teachers' gender does not influence students' performance in Social studies. Similarly, Ahmed (2013) reported that teachers' gender has no influence on students' performance in History.

### **Conclusion**

In view of the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is a great level of relationship between the teachers' characteristics (teachers' qualifications and teaching experience). They have a greater influence on the academic achievement of students in secondary school geography. Conclusively, good teachers who possess good qualifications towards teaching, play a significant role to educational attainment of students in senior secondary schools.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should introduce tests and examination for teachers at regular intervals based on the subject they teach and general teaching practice. Furthermore, Geography teachers should incorporate field trips and excursions as integral part of their teaching method, since Geography is more of a field experience than classroom subject.
2. Government should encourage teachers to remain and grow on the job so that their accumulated experience will provide a leeway for students enhanced classroom achievement and societal development and qualified teachers, irrespective of their gender should be employed to teach Geography in Secondary schools.



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