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TEACHER COMPETENCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between teacher competence and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Utilising a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 203 secondary schools, focusing on teacher competencies such as mastery of subject matter, teaching qualifications, teaching experience, training, and regular supervision. The findings revealed that out of 1118 respondents in the 2014/2015 session, 64.67% achieved 5 credits and above, including Mathematics and English. A significant positive correlation was observed between teacher competence and students' academic performance, with an r-cal value of 0.770 indicating that higher teacher competence is associated with improved student outcomes. Specifically, mastery of subject matter and teaching qualifications were identified as the most impactful variables. The study recommends that teachers pursue further education and training to enhance their subject knowledge and teaching effectiveness. Overall, the results underscore teacher competence's critical role in fostering student academic success.

Keywords: Teacher competence, academic performance, mastery of subject matter.

Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in achieving educational goals, making it essential for them to be competent. Teacher competence refers to the ability of educators to effectively carry out their responsibilities in alignment with educational objectives. The competence of teachers is fundamental for quality instruction and student academic performance. (Pascoe et al., 2020). Research indicates that a teacher's understanding of the subject matter significantly affects both the content taught and the methods used, ultimately influencing student outcomes. This relationship between subject knowledge and pedagogy encompasses classroom management, lesson structure, and teaching strategies. Competence is often linked to professional excellence, illustrating a direct connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. (Asghar et al., 2022). Theoretically, competence is viewed as a cognitive framework that enables specific behaviours. Operationally, it encompasses a wide range of advanced skills and behaviours necessary for navigating complex and unpredictable situations. This broader definition includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, metacognition, and strategic thinking, all of which require conscious and intentional decision-making (Westera, 2001); (Бирка et al., 2019).

WesternWestera (2001) describes operational competence as an individual's cognitive framework frameworks enriched with substantial theoretical and practical knowledge. This knowledge can be expressed through various reproductive

skills such as speaking, writing, or gesturing, or it can enhance other skills and behaviours (Hatlevik, 2020); (Opele, 2023). In complex, non-standard situations, competence integrates knowledge, skills, and specific attitudes, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of effective teaching. Competence encompasses both a mental component related to thought and a behavioural component associated with effective performance. However, understanding the true essence of competence requires us to look beyond mere knowledge, skills, and attitudes; something additional is necessary for ensuring effective performance (Iyanda, Opele & Akintunde, 2016). Competent individuals can make informed choices from a range of possible behaviors, anticipating the outcomes of their actions (Basantes-Andrade et al., 2020). A competent person possesses the ability to perform specific tasks aimed at achieving desired results. Westera (2001) emphasizes that competence is closely linked to mastering complex situations, extending beyond just knowledge and skills to include how these elements are effectively applied (Fraillon et al., 2020). In a broader sense, competence is a highly valued attribute that facilitates the practical application of knowledge and skills in specific contexts (Opele, Omole, M.S., Adebayo, 2019).

Merely mastering relevant knowledge and skills does not guarantee success in complex environments Individuals must be able to select and utilize their knowledge and skills appropriately to foster efficient and effective behaviour (Awogbami et al., 2021). This requires special abilities that consider the unique characteristics of a given context (Westera, 2001). Researchers such as Fraser (2000), Norris (1991), Short (1985), and Popham (1986) have proposed various frameworks for understanding teacher knowledge. It can be concluded that a teacher's performance is contingent upon their knowledge comprising both subject matter and general pedagogy which directly relates to their competence, characteristics, and attitudes. A lack of professional training can hinder a teacher's competence. Shulman (1986) identifies three types of knowledge: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and curriculum knowledge (Opele, Alade, & Ajifowoke, 2024). Content knowledge refers to the organization and depth of knowledge within a teacher's mind. Teachers must not only define concepts for learners but also explain how these concepts interrelate and justify why certain propositions are valid. Pedagogical content knowledge extends beyond mere subject knowledge to encompass understanding how to teach that subject effectively (Adebanjo, Opele, & Onayinka, 2024). Lastly, curricular knowledge includes familiarity with the range of programs designed for teaching specific subjects and the instructional materials associated with those programs, along with insights into when to use particular materials in specific contexts. In essence, teacher competence integrates knowledge, skills, attitudes, recognition, and strategic thinking, all of which support conscious and intentional decision-making (Effiong Ibok et al., 2024). This competence is crucial for creating a supportive environment that fosters both academic and social learning among students. Enhanced teacher competence positively influences student behavior and academic performance. A review of variables related to teacher competence such as mastery of subject matter, qualifications, teaching experience,

ongoing training, and regular supervision has confirmed that the cognitive skills and abilities teachers possess significantly contribute to students' academic success.

Statement of the Problem

Recent results from the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examination Council have revealed a concerningly high failure rate among students. This trend is troubling for stakeholders in the education sector in Ekiti State, especially given the significant investments made in education. Despite the assumption that secondary schools in Ekiti State are staffed with teachers, the poor academic performance of students in these examinations persists (Studies et al., 2024). The declining results in core subjects have raised alarms among stakeholders and parents, prompting mixed reactions regarding teacher competence in public secondary schools. Parents are particularly concerned about the competence of teachers, believing it directly influences students' overall academic performance. When teachers lack the necessary skills and knowledge, it can severely hinder students' success. For instance, a teacher's inability to effectively convey relevant knowledge may lead to conflicts with students, fostering resentment toward the teacher and, consequently, the subject itself (State, 2023). This negative dynamic can result in diminished academic performance. Additionally, insufficient mastery of subject matter can adversely affect teachers' morale and productivity, further contributing to poor student performance. Factors such as inadequate teaching qualifications, insufficient professional development through training and retraining, lack of teaching experience, and inadequate supervision appear to play significant roles in the disappointing outcomes of students in examinations (Gracia-leiva, 2020). In light of these issues, this study aims to examine the relationship between teacher competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools across Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study examined the relationship between teacher competence and academic performance of students in Senior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State.

Research Questions

In addressing these problems, the following research questions were raised.

1. What is the level of teacher competence in public secondary schools?
2. What is the level of academic performance of students in public secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' competence and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between relationship between teachers' mastery of the subject matter and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.
4. There is no significant relationship between teachers' teaching

experience and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

5. There is no significant relationship between teachers' training and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.
6. There is no significant relationship between teachers' regular supervision and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.
7. The components of teacher competence will not significantly contribute to the variation in the academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Review of Literature

The Concept of Teacher Competence

Competence encompasses a blend of knowledge, skills, attitudes, recognition, and strategic thinking, all of which require conscious and intentional decision-making. It consists of a mental component related to thought and a behavioral component focused on effective performance (Effiong Ibok et al., 2024). Competent individuals should be able to make informed choices from a variety of behaviors by anticipating the outcomes of their actions. Several authors, including Fraser (2000), Norris (1991), Short (1985), and Popham, describe competence in relation to actions, behaviors, or outcomes that can be demonstrated, observed, and assessed. Tomlinson (1995) defines competence as a skill characterized by a consistent ability to achieve specific objectives. A competent person is capable of performing certain actions to reach intended outcomes (Indah et al., 2022) competence. The explanation of teacher knowledge aligns with Westera's adapted model, indicating that teacher knowledge comprises both subject matter and general pedagogy. Medley and Shannon (1994) further develop the concept of professional knowledge, defining it as the understanding of effective teacher behaviors that facilitate student progress toward significant educational goals. They also acknowledge that various factors, such as knowledge of specific teaching methods, influence teacher performance in primary education. They emphasize the dual components of teacher knowledge, stating that competence in teaching includes both subject matter knowledge and professional knowledge. Consequently, training programs should be designed to enhance these competencies (Medley and Shannon, 2000). For improved teacher performance in primary education, it is crucial to incorporate both subject matter expertise and general pedagogy into teacher training programs.

Teacher competence reflects quality, as seen through degrees, exam scores, certification, subject knowledge, and experience. It signifies a combination of skills, attitudes (related to professional knowledge), general pedagogy, and teachers' characteristics, beliefs, and expectations (Olusola Samuel & Olugbenga Adekunle, 2019). Teachers must not only define content or concepts for students but also explain the relationships between these concepts and provide justifications for specific propositions. Pedagogical content knowledge goes beyond mere subject mastery to encompass an understanding of how that subject matter can be effectively taught (Rahimi, 2024). Subject matter knowledge encompasses the complete range of programs designed for teaching specific subjects and topics at various educational levels. It includes the variety

of instructional materials associated with those programs and the characteristics that indicate when particular curriculum materials should or should not be used in specific circumstances.

Medley and Shannon (1994) further develop the concept of subject knowledge, defining it as an understanding of effective teacher behaviors that facilitate student progress toward important educational goals. They also note that other factors influencing teacher performance in basic education include knowledge of specific teaching methods (Fajardo & Ed, 2021). They stress the dual components of teacher knowledge, asserting that "competence to teach is defined in terms of possession of two kinds of knowledge: knowledge of subject matter and professional knowledge," and that training programs should be designed to foster these competencies (Medley and Shannon, 2001). Therefore, to enhance teacher performance in secondary education, it is crucial to include both subject matter knowledge and general pedagogy in teacher training programs (Opele, Adewole, Okrigwe, 2021).

Competence can be seen as a marker of accepted excellence in the teaching and learning process within schools. Ejiofor and Aniagoh (2003) assert that "the competence of personnel determines the products and services they render; no educational system can rise above the competence of its teachers." Teachers, as the core of the learning process, are expected to possess the necessary personal and professional competencies to effectively meet the aims and objectives of education as outlined in the National Policy on Education. Similarly, Obanya (1993) suggests that, like in any other field, teachers should have both natural and acquired competencies to perform satisfactorily. Natural competencies are inherent traits that a typical teacher possesses, while acquired competencies include those developed through learning and experience (Iyanda & Opele, 2015). Teachers need to cultivate their human and academic competencies to enhance their effectiveness. This includes personality traits such as physical energy, perseverance, responsibility, initiative, self-control, decisiveness, humor, sincerity, loyalty, leadership, and academic excellence (Opele, & Uthman, 2023).

Academic competence encompasses several key elements, including intelligence, subject matter knowledge, understanding of teaching and learning processes, teaching experience, qualification status, and the motivation to deliver effective instruction. Supporting this view, Majasan (2002) emphasized that teachers should possess certain competencies for effective teaching and learning to occur. These include initiative, patience, empathy, respect, flexibility, honesty, foresight, intellectual curiosity, and enthusiasm. Such competencies are essential for teachers to foster academic performance in students and to develop well-rounded individuals capable of making meaningful contributions within the school environment.

Darling-Hammond and Hudson (2001) further reinforce this perspective, stating that "one way to measure the competence of teachers is to look at their qualifications, teaching experience, academic responsibilities, and the academic performance of students." The academic performance of students serves as a key indicator of teaching competence.

However, education provided by a competent teacher extends beyond merely achieving good grades; it involves instilling the right values, skills, and competencies that enable individuals to become constructive members of society. Parents, therefore, expect their children to gain these competencies in school. For education to meet these expectations, it must be of high quality. As Nwangwu (2000) pointed out, quality education should encompass more than just passing examinations, which is often the primary focus. It should also facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Improved school environments that support teachers' efforts are crucial in influencing the academic performance of students.

Concept of Academic Performance of Students

The term "academic performance" refers to a student's scholastic standing at a given time, reflecting how effectively they engage with their studies and complete various tasks assigned by teachers. It indicates how well an individual can demonstrate the desired abilities. Scholastic standing can be represented by the grades earned in specific courses (Omolayo, 2009). Bello, Bukar, and Ibi (2016) argue that performance measures educational output, primarily expressed in terms of learning—the changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes that result from experiences within the school system. In assessing academic performance, Sakin (2000) highlights the importance of examination grades as both predictive and criterion measures. Thus, academic performance is often identified through various social indicators. Bello (2016) supports this view, stating that performance reflects an individual's ability to demonstrate their skills in examinations, making it a measure of educational output.

In the Nigerian context, academic performance encompasses consistent, diligent, and honest teaching, which is reflected in improved student results. This includes setting appropriate written and practical exercises, ensuring effective grading, promptly evaluating all assignments, and adhering to academic regulations (Bello, Bukar, & Ibi, 2016). However, many, including the researcher, believe that this understanding of academic performance is superficial. The researcher posits that student performance should not be solely assessed through academic outcomes but should also consider other educational dimensions, such as affective and psychomotor domains (Gil-Fernández et al., 2021). Therefore, in a school environment, academic performance should not be limited to test scores and examination results. It should also encompass students' abilities to apply what they've learned socially and their progression to higher education. Additionally, it should reflect the school's achievements in equipping learners with essential survival skills. Evidence suggests that many school leavers struggle to adapt to the workforce, and those who are employed often lack efficiency. These issues highlight potential deficiencies in teaching competence, raising questions about whether students receive the right instruction from capable teachers.

Moreover, it prompts reflection on whether education stakeholders are fulfilling their responsibilities effectively. Effective teaching is central to educational practice and research aimed at improving learning; however, successful learning is contingent

upon the mastery of teaching. Understanding teaching has posed a persistent challenge for those striving to enhance teacher competence over the years. Teachers play a vital role in making a difference in students' lives. The competence of the teacher is crucial for fostering effective learning in schools. Teaching is an art; like painters, composers, and dancers, teachers make judgments based on qualities that emerge during the educational process. Despite their diverse backgrounds, teachers share a common mission: to help each child achieve the highest possible level of personal development. Many researchers, including Sander and Horn (1998) and Raudenbush, Eamsukkawat, Di-Ibor, Kamali, and Taoklam (1993), emphasize that teachers must take a leading role in efforts to enhance students' academic performance. The Holmes Group study on educational reform (Kanu, 1996) highlights the critical importance of teachers, asserting that the quality of learning in schools is directly linked to the quality of teachers. This recognition of the teacher's pivotal role in facilitating meaningful educational change is acknowledged in both developed and developing countries. Ultimately, the teacher is the key to educational quality; without competent teachers, even the best curricula, materials, infrastructure, and administration will fail to improve education. Conversely, positive academic outcomes can be achieved with competent teachers, even in the presence of inadequate curricula or resources.

As Châu (1996) notes, factors such as a teacher's beliefs, expectations, motivation, clarity in teaching, enthusiasm, interest in students, availability for assistance, interaction intensity, and organizational skills must be examined to understand their impact on academic performance. The foundations of education within the curriculum typically cover the history, philosophy, and sociology of education; however, it is essential to incorporate contemporary issues and educational policy. The professional studies component generally includes methods courses, curriculum studies, and research-based knowledge, while practicum or supervised practice is often seen as a highly valuable aspect of teacher education in many countries. General competencies encompass knowledge related to subject content, national and regional curriculum policies, curriculum theory, parental roles in education, the organized teaching profession, and the cultural and community context. Research indicates that students can play a critical role in improving their own academic performance (Nicholas and Sutton, 2013; Tella, 2007). In Nigeria, poor academic performance has been linked to inadequate teaching characterized by negative attitudes toward work and lack of experience, often stemming from poor motivation (Ofoegbu, 2004). Several factors contribute to students' academic struggles, including socio-economic background, family support, intellectual aptitude, personality traits, self-confidence, and instructional practices. However, teacher competence has been identified as a high-priority factor influencing student academic outcomes (Adediwura and Tayo, 2007; Adu and Olatudun, 2007; Lockhead and Komenan, 1988; Schacter and Thum, 2004; Starr, 2002).

These studies suggest that competent teaching is a significant predictor of students' academic performance in achieving educational goals. The

prevailing conditions in public schools may negatively impact academic performance, translating into poor outcomes for secondary school students. While teacher competence significantly influences student performance, Blankstein (1996) cautions that grades and test scores alone are not reliable indicators of teacher competence. The studies mentioned suggest that competent teaching is a significant predictor of students' academic performance in achieving educational objectives. Current conditions in public schools may negatively impact academic outcomes, potentially leading to poor performance among secondary school students. While the level of teacher competence plays a crucial role in influencing student performance, it is important to note that students' grades and test scores are not reliable indicators of teacher competence, as stated by Blankstein (1996). Supporting this view, a study conducted in Nigeria by Joshua (2006) revealed that Nigerian teachers criticize using student performance scores as measures of teacher competence or effectiveness. Since academic scores are not the sole predictors of teacher competence, researchers have sought more equitable methods for evaluating teachers. Evaluations have included feedback from students, school administrators, colleagues, and self-assessments by teachers themselves. Studies indicate that student ratings can serve as valuable indicators of teacher competence (Barnett, 2003; Imhanlahini and Aguele, 2006; Pozo-Munoz, 2000). However, Nuhfer (2004) and Pozo-Munoz (2000) caution that while student ratings are useful, they should be part of a comprehensive evaluation system and not the only measure of teacher competence. The literature on academic performance reflects varying opinions among authors. Some define academic performance as a student's scholastic standing at a specific time, while others view it as the ability to demonstrate intellectual skills.

Teacher Competence and Academic Performance of Students

The issue of teacher competence is not solely dependent on the level of instruction but also on the quality and level of training received. Both the academic qualifications and the effectiveness of professional training contribute significantly to a teacher's competence. Researchers such as Kanu (1996), Châu (1996), Myint (1999), and Darling-Hammond (1999) emphasize that the quality of education is fundamentally linked to teacher competence. Researching teacher competence can be approached from various perspectives. Warham (1993) identifies the positivist view, which suggests that only research from academic sources is relevant for assessing teacher competence, while the hermeneutic view focuses solely on knowledge generated within the classroom. Warham proposes a middle ground—the critically reflective teacher perspective—acknowledging the importance of knowledge from both inside and outside the classroom in assessing competence. Châu (2001) argues that a teacher's level of competence directly affects students' academic performance.

The researcher believes that there should not be significant issues regarding teacher competence at the secondary level, given that many teachers in Nigeria have a reasonable level of education. However, formal education does not always equate to effective teaching competence. Observations in many Nigerian public schools indicate that some teachers lack

sufficient mastery of the subjects they teach and often miss essential pedagogical skills necessary for effective lesson delivery (Tolu-Ekeke, 2013). A similar issue has been noted in Madhya Pradesh, India, where many teachers had not received specific professional training, adversely affecting teaching and learning outcomes. Such challenges have also been identified in other countries (Châu, 2001). Botha and Hite (2000) assert that a competent teacher focuses on predetermined outcomes to be achieved by the end of each learning process. Evidence from research shows that students can significantly influence their academic performance (Nicholas and Sutton, 2013; Tella, 2007). In Nigeria, poor academic performance has been connected to inadequate teaching practices characterized by negative attitudes and lack of experience, often due to poor motivation (Ofoegbu, 2004). Several factors contribute to students' academic challenges, including socio-economic background, family support, intellectual aptitude, personality traits, self-confidence, and instructional effectiveness. While these factors influence examination scores, teacher competence is paramount in shaping student learning outcomes (Adediwura and Tayo, 2007; Adu and Olatudun, 2007; Lockhead and Komenan, 1988; Schacter and Thum, 2004; Starr, 2002). These studies indicate that competent teaching is a crucial predictor of student academic performance.

Despite the recognized influence of teacher competence, Blankstein (1996) notes that students' grades and test scores are not reliable indicators of teacher effectiveness. Supporting this view, a study by Joshua (2006) found that Nigerian teachers reject the use of student performance scores as measures of teacher competence. Since student academic scores are not the sole predictors of teacher effectiveness, researchers have explored alternative methods for evaluating teacher competence, including feedback from students, school administrators, colleagues, and self-assessments. While student ratings have been shown to be valuable indicators of teacher competence (Barnett, 2003; Imhanlahini and Aguele, 2006; Pozo-Munoz, 2000), Nuhfer (2004) and Pozo-Munoz (2000) caution that student performance should be part of a comprehensive evaluation system and should not be the sole measure of teacher effectiveness. Although using student performance to evaluate teaching competence is reasonable, it is essential to ensure that this measure is part of a broader assessment framework. Links between student performance and teacher competence are increasingly viewed through the lens of "connected accountability" in teacher evaluation systems (Pearlman and Tannenbaum, 2003). While there is a growing emphasis on the relationship between teacher competence evaluation and student academic performance, the specifics of establishing this connection remain unclear (Ibid, 2003). Blankstein (1996) reiterates that student grades are not reliable indicators of teaching competence. Additionally, research by Joshua and Kritsonis (2005) supports the notion that Nigerian teachers dismiss the use of student performance scores as indicators of teacher effectiveness. The search for fairer methods of evaluating teacher competence continues, with researchers advocating for a more holistic approach that includes student feedback.

Research Method

This study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. Descriptive research is suitable for this study as it focuses on observing and interpreting the existing situation, describing issues, conditions, practices, relationships, beliefs, and attitudes. The aim is to highlight the relevance of these phenomena to specific contexts. Survey research involves studying a small sample from a larger population, allowing inferences to be drawn about the characteristics of the population based on the sample. Thus, the survey research design provides a conceptual and methodological framework for investigating the study's problem.

The population for this study included all 203 public senior secondary schools in Ekiti State, as reported by the Ministry of Education, Ekiti State. This consisted of 203 principals and 406 vice principals across these schools (Ministry of Education, 2016). The sample comprised 90 respondents, including 30 principals and 60 vice principals, selected to assess teacher competence in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed for the study. In the first stage, two local governments were selected from each senatorial district using simple random sampling. In the second stage, five schools were chosen from each selected local government area using stratified sampling. The third stage involved selecting two principals from each school through simple random sampling. Finally, one principal was selected from each of the previously mentioned schools using purposive random sampling. The study utilized the West African Examination Council Senior School Certificate Examination results for the academic sessions of 2013/2014, 2014/2015, and 2015/2016.

Data collection was carried out using two research instruments: the Teacher Competence Questionnaire (TCQ) and an inventory of Senior Secondary Certificate Examination results. Section A of the TCQ gathered demographic information about the respondents, while Section B included 31 items related to teacher competence variables. The inventory requested students' grades in subjects taken during the May/June Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination for the specified academic years. A four-point Likert scale was used to assess responses: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). This scale also classified student results as follows: 5 credits and above, 4 credits, 3 credits, and below. Scoring was assigned as follows: Strongly Agree/5 credits = 4 points, Agree/4 credits = 3 points, Disagree/3 credits = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree and below = 1 point.

The TCQ was validated by the researcher's supervisor and specialists in Tests and Measurement and Educational Management, both within and outside the university. Experts evaluated the content validity by assessing the relevance and suitability of the items and student inventory data from the specified academic years before the supervisor granted final approval. To ensure reliability, the test-retest method was employed; the TCQ was administered to two schools outside the sample area. After two weeks, the instrument was re-administered to the same respondents. Data from both administrations were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis, yielding a reliability coefficient

of 0.71, indicating that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study. The reliability of the pro-forma was deemed unnecessary due to its standardized nature, which minimizes the potential for manipulation. The researcher personally visited each selected school to administer 203 questionnaires, assisted by two trained research assistants. This approach facilitated the explanation and interpretation of the questionnaire items to respondents as needed. The researcher's direct contact with respondents enhanced understanding of the instruments and eased retrieval. The research assistants were guided on how to distribute the questionnaires. Responses to each item were scored, and the relationships between variables were analyzed.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included percentages, frequency counts, means, and standard deviations, while inferential statistics involved Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and multiple regression analysis. Hypotheses 1-6 were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis, while hypothesis 7 was tested using multiple regression analysis. All hypotheses were evaluated at a significance level of 0.05.

Presentation of Results

Question 1: What is the level of teacher competence in public secondary schools in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Level of Teacher Competence in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State

Levels of teacher competence	**No of Schools**	**Percentage**
Low (30.00 – 92.31)	5	16.67
Moderate (92.32 – 99.28)	19	63.33
High (99.29 – 120.00)	6	20.00
Total	**30**	**100**

The results revealed varying levels of teacher competence among respondents from 30 schools in Ekiti State. Specifically, 16.67% (5 schools) of respondents acknowledged a low level of teacher competence. In contrast, 63.33% (19 schools) indicated that teacher competence is at a moderate level, while 20.00% (6 schools) recognized a high level of teacher competence. These findings suggest that the overall level of teacher competence in secondary schools is moderate.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis showing academic performance of Students

Year	**Number Reg.**	**5 credits and above including English and Mathematics**		**5 credits and above with either English or Mathematics**		**5 credits and above without English and Mathematics**		**Less than 5 credits**	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
2014/15	1118	723	64.67	187	16.73	120	10.73	88	7.87
2015/16	1299	842	64.82	182	14.01	208	16.01	67	5.16
2016/17	1267	692	54.62	173	13.65	239	18.86	163	12.87
Average	**1228**	**752**	**61.24**	**181**	**14.74**	**189**	**15.39**	**106**	**8.63**

Table 2 revealed the levels of students' academic performance, in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The result showed that out of 1118 respondents in 2014/2015 session, 723 representing 64.67% had 5 credits and above including Mathematics and English Language, 187 respondents representing 16.73% had 5 credits and above with either Mathematics or English, 120 respondents representing 10.73% had 5 credits and above without Mathematics and English while 88 respondents representing 7.87% had below 5 credits. In 2015/2016 session, the result showed that out of 1299 respondents, 842 representing 64.82% had 5 credits and above including Mathematics and English Language, 182 respondents representing 14.01% had 5 credits and above with either Mathematics or English, 208 respondents representing 16.01% had 5 credits and above without Mathematics and English while 67 respondents representing 5.16% had below 5 credits. In 2016/2017 session, the result showed that out of 1267 respondents, 692 representing 54.62% had 5 credits and above including Mathematics and English Language, 173 respondents representing 13.65% had 5 credits and above with either Mathematics or English, 239 respondents representing 18.86% had 5 credits and above without Mathematics and English while 163 respondents representing 12.87% had below 5 credits. The results indicate a slight fluctuation in student performance over the three academic sessions. While the percentage of students achieving 5 credits and above (including Mathematics and English) remained relatively stable in the first two years, there was a noticeable decline in the 2016/2017 session. This trend suggests a potential area of concern for educational stakeholders, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support students in achieving better academic outcomes.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teacher competence and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Table 3: Test of relationship between teacher competence and academic performance of students

Variables	**N**	**$\bar{X}$**	**SD**	**r-cal**	**r-tab**
Teacher Competence	30	95.80	3.49		
Academic Performance of students	30	3.27	0.16	0.770*	0.361

*P<0.05 (significant result)

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of 0.770 exceeds the critical r-table value of 0.361. As a result, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teacher competence and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. In other words, higher levels of teacher competence are associated with improved academic outcomes for students. This underscores the importance of investing in teacher training and professional development to

enhance educational quality and student success.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between relationship between teachers' mastery of the subject matter and academic performance of students in public secondary schools

Table 4: Test of relationship between teachers' mastery of the subject matter and academic performance of students

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Teachers' Mastery of the Subject Matter	30	19.17	1.09		
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.27	0.16	0.620*	0.361

*P<0.05 (significant result)

The results in Table 4 show that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of 0.620 is greater than the critical r-table value of 0.36. Consequently, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' mastery of the subject matter and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. In essence, greater mastery of the subject by teachers is associated with improved academic outcomes for students. This highlights the critical need for ongoing professional development and support for teachers to enhance their subject knowledge, ultimately benefiting student learning.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Table 5: Test of relationship between teachers' qualifications and academic performance of students

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Teachers' Qualifications	30	18.20	0.85		
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.27	0.16	0.664*	0.361

*P<0.05(Significant results)

The results in Table 5 indicate that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of 0.664 exceeds the critical r-table value of 0.361. Therefore, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' qualifications and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. In other words, higher qualifications among teachers are associated with better academic outcomes for students. This underscores the importance of prioritizing qualified educators in the teaching workforce to enhance student learning and achievement.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and academic performance of students in public secondary schools

Table 6: Test of relationship between teachers' teaching experience and academic performance of students

Variables	**N**	**$\bar{X}$**	**SD**	**r-cal**	**r-tab**
Teachers' Teaching Experience	30	17.87	0.68		
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.27	0.16	0.636*	0.361

*P<0.05 (Significant result)

The results in Table 6 reveal that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of 0.636 is greater than the critical r-table value of 0.361. Consequently, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' teaching experience and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. This suggests that greater teaching experience contributes to improved academic outcomes for students. It emphasizes the importance of valuing and retaining experienced educators in the school system to support student learning and success.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between teachers' training and academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Table 7: Test of relationship between teachers' training and academic performance of students

Variables	**N**	**$\bar{X}$**	**SD**	**r-cal**	**r-tab**
Teachers' Training	30	19.87	0.78		
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.27	0.16	0.671*	0.361

*P<0.05 (Significant result)

The results presented in Table 7 indicate that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of **0.671** exceeds the critical r-table value of **0.361**. Therefore, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' training and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. In other words, effective training for teachers is associated with enhanced academic outcomes for students. This highlights the necessity of investing in comprehensive training programs to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to foster student success.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant relationship between teachers' regular supervision and academic performance of students in public secondary schools

Table 8: Test of relationship between teachers' regular supervision and academic performance of students

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Teachers' Regular Supervision	30	20.70	0.75	0.664*	0.361
Students' Academic Performance	30	3.27	0.16		

*P<0.05 (Significant result)

The results in Table 8 indicate that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of 0.664 is greater than the critical r-table value of 0.361. Therefore, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' regular supervision and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. This suggests that consistent and effective supervision of teachers contributes to improved academic outcomes for students. It emphasizes the importance of implementing regular supervisory practices to support teachers in their professional development and enhance student learning.

Hypothesis 7: The components of teacher competence will not significantly contribute to the variation in the academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Table 9: Multiple Regression on the component of teacher Competence to the variation in the Academic Performance of Students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand Coefficients		R	sR^2	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta weight				
(Constant)	2.035	.210		9.683			
Mastery of the Subject Matter	.017	.010	.312	1.746			
Teaching Qualifications	.016	.013	.228	1.218			
Teaching Experience	.038	.035	.438	1.078	0.793	0.628	8.11
Training	.043	.031	.569	1.398			
Regular Supervision of Teachers	.021	.022	.270	.986			

*P<0.05

The results in Table 8 indicate that the calculated correlation coefficient (r-cal) value of 0.664 is greater than the critical r-table value of 0.361. Therefore, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' regular supervision and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. This suggests that consistent and effective supervision of teachers contributes to improved academic outcomes for students. It emphasizes the importance of implementing regular supervisory practices to support teachers in their professional development and enhance student learning. The resulting regression equation is given as:

$Y = 2.035 + 0.017X_1 + 0.016X_2 + 0.038X_3 + 0.043X_2 + 0.021X_3$

where:
Y = Students' Academic Performance
X_1 = Mastery of Subject Matter
X_2 = Teaching Qualifications
X_3 = Teaching Experience
X_4 = Teachers' Training
X_5 = Regular Supervision of Teachers

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study indicated that the level of teacher competence in public secondary schools in Ekiti State was relatively moderate during the investigation period. Similarly, students' academic performance also showed a moderate level. This correlation suggests that the moderate academic performance of students may be linked to the moderate level of teacher competence. This finding aligns with Akinsolu (2011), who reported that students' academic performance in Southwest Nigeria was above average.

Key Findings and Implications

Relationship between Teacher Competence and Academic Performance: The study revealed a significant relationship between teacher competence and student academic performance. This implies that competent teachers contribute positively to students' academic success, reinforcing the critical role teachers play in the educational process. This supports findings from Adediwura and Tayo (2007) and Adu and Olatudun (2007), who similarly found a significant link between teacher competence and student performance.

Mastery of Subject Matter: A significant relationship was also found between teachers' mastery of subject matter and students' academic performance. Teachers who have a deep understanding of their subjects are more effective in delivering lessons, which enhances student engagement and comprehension. This finding is consistent with Majason (1995) and other studies (Harris & Sass, 2008; Ojo, 2008; Robinson, 2009; Owoyemi & Adesoji, 2012) that highlight the importance of subject mastery in achieving better student outcomes.

Teachers' Qualifications: The research indicated a significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' academic performance. Effective teaching requires not just knowledge but also the ability to communicate and engage students. This finding aligns with Betts (2003) and Cavalluzo (2004), who noted that qualified teachers have a positive impact on student performance.

Teaching Experience: The results showed a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' academic performance. Experienced teachers are better equipped to manage classroom dynamics and foster higher academic achievement. This is supported by Ayodele and Ige (2012) and Greenwald et al. (1996), who found a strong positive relationship between teacher experience and student outcomes. However, some studies (Mud Carr, 2006; Calisher, 2004) reported no significant difference, suggesting that experience alone does not guarantee effectiveness.

Teachers' Training: A significant relationship was found between teachers' training and students' academic performance. Regular training helps teachers enhance their pedagogical skills and adapt to new teaching methods. This finding is consistent with the work of

Alman (2006) and Sandra (2013), emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional development for improving student outcomes (Wambsganss et al., 2021).

Regular Supervision of Teachers: The study revealed a significant relationship between regular supervision of teachers and students' academic performance. Effective supervision plays a crucial role in enhancing teaching quality. This supports findings by Bormman (2015) and Onuma (2015), indicating that regular oversight can lead to improved academic results for students. This also agreed with the findings of (Igbinlade, Oloyede, Aina., & Opele, 2024)

Contributions to Academic Performance: The analysis indicated that various components of teacher competence significantly contributed to variations in students' academic performance. Among these, regular teacher training emerged as the highest contributor, while teachers' qualifications were the least influential factor. This highlights the need for focused training initiatives to bolster educational outcomes.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the levels of teacher competence and students' academic performance were found to be satisfactory. The selected variables of teacher competence made a significant contribution to students' academic performance. This indicates that teacher competence is integral to enhancing educational outcomes. It was concluded that teacher competence significantly influences students' academic performance. All examined variables mastery of subject matter, teaching qualifications, teaching experience, training, and regular supervision were found to have a positive impact on student achievement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers are encouraged to pursue further studies to enhance their knowledge and experience in their subject areas. Continuous learning is essential for improving teaching practices and student outcomes.
2. Teachers should demonstrate a strong commitment to their duties, ensuring they are fully engaged in the educational process.
3. It is crucial for teachers to have a deep understanding of their subject matter. This knowledge enables them to facilitate better learning experiences for their students.

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