

## Effects of School-Based Quality Factors on Secondary School Students' Achievement in English Language in South-Western and North-Central Nigeria

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### Abstract

*English Language plays a central and strategic role in the school system because almost all the school subjects are taught using English language. However, students' achievement in this subject at senior secondary school is not encouraging. Therefore, the study investigated influence of school-based quality factors on secondary students' achievement in English Language in South-Western and North-Central Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type and made use of a sample of 1,014 English Language teachers and principals selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The two validated instruments used for data collection were School-based Quality Inventory ( $r = 0.89$ ) and School-Based Quality Factor Questionnaire ( $r = 0.92$ ). Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analysed using means, standard deviation and multiple regression. Out of the nine independent variables, only three have significant relationship with students' academic performance in English. These are supervision of instruction ( $r = 0.153$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), school leadership ( $r = 0.164$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) and quality of instruction ( $r = 0.237$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). Also, the independent variables (i.e the nine school-based variables) accounted for 47% of the variance in the dependent variable and the joint effect of school-based quality factors is significant on the students' achievement in English Language ( $F=3.333$ ;  $df= (9,420)$ ;  $P<0.05$ ). The study concluded that instructional materials, quality of instruction and supervision have been adjudged to have contributed significantly to students' achievement in English Language. Based on the findings, some of the recommendations made include effective supervision, provision of relevant and adequate instructional materials and encouragement of quality instruction*

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**Keywords:** Effect, quality, school-based factors, supervision, leadership

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### INTRODUCTION

English Language plays a central and strategic role in the school system because almost all the school subjects are taught using English Language. The place of English Language and its objectives as revealed in the secondary school curriculum cannot be substituted. The terminal objectives of the English Language cited by Odesina and Ikegulu (1992) include: providing pupils and students with a sound linguistic basis for further learning in secondary, tertiary and vocational institutions; equipping school learners with a satisfactory level of proficiency in English Language usage in their places of work; promoting the art of spoken English as medium for national and international communication; enhancing and developing further the various skills and competence already acquired at primary and junior secondary level(p.45)

In fact, Adegbile (1999) attested to this that a child cannot learn most of the elementary facts or ideas unless he understands the language in which these ideas are expressed. Thus, at the senior secondary school certificate examination level, a credit pass or failure in English Language determines to a great extent, the educational advancement of Senior

Secondary School students. However, the achievement of students in the subject most especially in external examination has been a source of concern to parents, teachers, educators and researchers. The West African Examinations Council Chief Examiners' Report (1996 to 2007) as well as the statistics of WAEC results (1996 – 2006) as shown in table 1, buttress this point. From table 1 when 516,196 students sat for the examination in 1996, only 58, 533 representing 11.3% had between A1 to C6 in English Language. These are the only candidates who could use the result to advance to higher level provided they have credits in the subjects relevant to their proposed course of study. On the other hand, 124,041 (24%) candidates had between D7 to E8. For admission, we can submit that the total failure will be the addition of candidates with D7 – E8 and F9 including absent. Thus, 461, 126 (representing 89.33%) candidates failed. The achievement declined consistently until 2001, when the percentage of candidates with A1 – C6 was 26.1%. Between 2001 and 2006, it fluctuated. In summary, the percentage of students with A1 – C6 between 1995 and 2006 did not go beyond 32%. This is a serious concern to education stakeholders.

Table 1: Summary of the Statistics of Achievement of Nigerian Students in English Language MAY/JUNE WASCE (1996 – 2006)

Year	Total entry	Total sat	Total Credit A1 – C6	Total Pass D7 – E8	Fail F9	Absent
1996	519667	516196 (99.3%)	58,533 (11.3%)	124,041 (24.0%)	333,614 (64.6%)	3,471 (0.7%)
1997	622433	618139 (99.3%)	40,488 (6.5%)	165,533 (26.8%)	412,118 (66.7%)	4,294 (0.7%)
1998	640626	636777 (99.4%)	53,990 (8.5%)	136,873 (21.5%)	417,312 (65.5%)	3,849 (0.6%)
1999	761060	757233 (99.5%)	73,531 (9.7%)	171,098 (22.6%)	491,593 (64.9%)	3,827 (0.7%)
2000	643378	636064 (98.9%)	68,792 (10.8%)	159,029 (25.0%)	408,243 (64.2%)	7,314 (1.1%)
2001	1040104	1025027 (98.6%)	267,251 (26.1%)	316,767 (30.9%)	441,009 (43.0%)	15,074 (1.4%)
2002	925289	909888 (98.3%)	223,568 (24.6%)	298,562 (32.8%)	387,758 (42.6%)	15,401 (1.7%)
2003	939507	929271 (98.9%)	269,824 (29.0%)	320,185 (34.5%)	314,225 (33.8%)	10,236 (1.1%)
2004	844540	833204 (98.7%)	252,271 (30.3%)	257,054 (30.9%)	323,879 (38.9%)	11,336 (1.3%)
2005	1080162	1064587 (98.55%)	272922 (25.63%)	371095 (34.85%)	393201 (36.93%)	15575 (1.44%)
2006	1170523	1154266 (98.61%)	375007 (32.48%)	39994 (34.13%)	342311 (29.65%)	16257 (1.38%)

Source: Computed from WAEC Annual Reports, 2006 WAEC Head Office Yaba, Lagos State.

The recent statistics of students who passed English Language with other four subjects showed that there is no improvement. For instance, in 2007, out of 1,275,466 candidates, 325,754 (25.5%) passed English Language with other four subjects while, in 2008, 188,442 (13.76%) passed English with additional four subjects out of 1,369,42. This was even worse than 2007. In 2009, out of 1,373,009 candidates, 356,981 (25.9%) passed. The improvement in that year was appreciable. However, in 2010 the percentage of students who passed English Language with four other subjects dropped to 24.9%, because only 337,071 passed out of 1,351,557 candidates (FME, 2010). This implies that it is only an average of 25% of candidates that sit for WAEC annually that would have opportunity of competing for placement in higher institutions provided they have right subject combination. Scholars have made concerted efforts at investigating trends of students' achievement in English Language as well as factors responsible for the level of their achievement. The report paper presented at WAEC monthly seminar by the Acting Head of Research Division (2007) revealed that the percentage of failure rate for English Language in the past five years surpasses that of the percentage of credit level. This corroborated earlier studies by various researchers who have found that the achievement of students in English Language at the secondary school level is poor (Adegbite, 2005; Ayodele, 2002; Kolawole, 1998 and Obemata, 1995). Students' poor writing skill has reported by as reported by Chief Examiner (West African Examination Council, 1999) to be responsible for the

poor performance recorded in English Language. This, established the findings of Obanya and Okpala(1984), which was over a decade to this report. They revealed that adequate attention has not been paid to the teaching of writing skill during English Language lessons. Adesanoye (1973), Ayodele (1981) and Adegbile (1985) made the same report from their various studies that performance of Nigerian candidates in the written, reading and spoken aspects are lamentably poor. The revelation of Onwuakpa (1998) that Mathematics and English Language had the lowest performance in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results, still manifested in English Language with little improvement till 2006. This is an indicator of decline in quality. Adenuga (2002) attributed the decline in education quality (students' achievement) to low and declining level of key inputs such as infrastructural materials, laboratories, libraries and teaching facilities and manpower (classroom teachers) among others. Studies on teachers' effect at the classroom level have found that differential teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in student learning, far outweighing the effects of differences in class size and heterogeneity (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). In the findings of Sanders & Rivers (1996), students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower achievement and, gain in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in sequence. This means that teacher's effectiveness is highly related to students' performance.

Good physical and mental health of students is essential if they are to fully participate in education services being offered and if they are to concentrate and learn while in school. Children involvement daily in physical activity have shown superior academic performance and better attitudes towards school (Dwyer et al., 1996). In the same vein, the ability of children to learn can be significantly affected by their health status. This is established by Dilley (2009), who found a strong relationship between health factors and academic factors among Washington State students. In fact, some barriers to effective learning have been attributed to students' mental and physical health (<http://www.minetnka.ki2.mn.us/services/3/12/08>). Communities expect schools to prepare students to become healthy productive citizens. In addition, a lot of studies have revealed a close link between school counselling and students' academic achievement. For instance, Capuzzi, (1998), House and Martin (1998) and, Lee and Watz (1998) discovered that, school-counselling service through the counsellors has great effect on academic achievement of students. Attesting to potential efficacy of Comprehensive guidance counselling programme (CGCP) as a scaffold for improving, in particular academic achievement, the programme evaluation research conducted in Missouri (Lapan

2001; House and Heyes, 2002) and to a lesser extent in Utah (Nelson and Gardner, 1998) indicated that CGCPs have a positive influence on various non-cognitive and cognitive student outcomes, including achievement. Brigman and Campbell (2003) finding showed that school counselling interventions that focus on the development of cognitive, social and self-management skills can result in sizeable gains to students' academic achievement. There is considerable empirical support for leadership influence on students' achievement (Hallinger 1992, Sheppard 1996). In their writing, Heck et al., (1990) viewed instructional leadership as a multidimensional construct which includes characteristics such as high expectations of students and teacher, an emphasis on instruction, provision of professional development, and use of data to evaluate students' progress among others. Obadara (2005) discovered that transformational and transactional leadership styles contributed significantly to academic performance of secondary schools ( $R = 0.712$ ,  $P < 0.05$  and  $R = 0.799$   $P < 0.05$  respectively). It could be inferred that leadership gives direction to nearly all activities in school. Studies have revealed significant contribution of instructional supervision to teachers' performance, which in turn boosts students' achievement. Explaining the concept of teachers' performance.

Adewumi (2000) explained teacher's performance as the ability of teacher to combine relevant input for enhancement of teaching-learning process. This implies that teacher's performance is a function of other variables. Likewise, Jaiyeoba and Ukandu (1998) found that the performance of PTA teachers, whether professionally qualified or not is high because of their subjection to rigorous supervision. From this finding, it is inferred that supervision is one of the major factors or variables that enhance teachers' performance, which could result into improved learners' performance. In an international study carried out by Senar (2003) to determine the impact of instructional supervision on teachers' performance and students' achievement in the secondary schools of Garchitorena, Camarines, he concluded that the level of achievement of the high school seniors in English, Mathematics and Science was fair. The place of instructional materials in facilitating teaching and learning has been a major concern of researchers in recent time. Abimbade (1997) and Lasisi (2001) agreed that no matter the method or strategies chosen to be effective, there is need to make use of appropriate instructional materials in facilitating learning. The use of audio based media as radio communication medium has been found to enhance learning. Nureni (2001) established that radio communication medium significantly affects or influences the knowledge of people on immunization programme. Other researchers confirmed that audio allows learners the capability to personalize message and instructions

(Moemeka, 1980 and Augustus, 2001). Further, library has been identified as an important quality factor in schools. Daniel (2004) stated that while education is an eye-opener, the library is the tool for opening the eye and its neglect will impair the acquisition of knowledge. As a result of important role played by library in education quality, the National Policy on Education (2004) under its 'section 10' (Education services), has given a place for library provision, which is as follows "Libraries are one of the most important education services. Every state ministry needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all education institutions and to train librarians and library assistants for this service" This statement shows that libraries are considered very important by the Federal Government. For library to serve its purposes in the era of technology, it requires application of information technologies. Information Technology (IT) is an omnibus term that combines computer and telecommunications technology. It is sometimes called information and communication technology (ICT). It is concerned with the technology used in handling, acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating information. Information technology is applied to the operation of libraries to ensure that information delivered is timely, accurate, precise and relevant.

Over the years, students' achievement was poor in English Language, and this has hindered the transition of many to the next level. It has also been revealed that only an average of 30% of candidates enrolled yearly for English Language passed it at the credit level. This is a source of worry to the parents, public, researchers, in fact, every stakeholder in education. It is against this background that the study investigated the effects of school-based quality factors (school leadership, quality of instruction, school library, supervision of instruction, counselling services, health services, convenience, instructional materials and sports facilities) on students' academic achievement in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in Nigeria with special reference to English Language.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between school-based quality factors and students' academic achievement in English Language in public senior secondary schools in South-West and North Central, Nigeria
- Ho<sub>2</sub> School-based quality factors have no significant joint effect on students' academic achievement in English Language in public senior secondary schools in South-West and North Central, Nigeria

H<sub>03</sub> School-based quality factors have no significant relative contribution to students' academic achievement in English Language in public senior secondary schools in South-West and North Central, Nigeria.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design of the *ex-post facto* type. There was no manipulation done to the variables under study. The population of the study covered principals and teachers in all the public senior secondary schools in South-West (Lagos, Ekiti, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ogun States) and North-Central (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nazarawa, Niger, Plateau States and Federal Capital Territory) geo-political zones. However, the target population of the study covered principals and teachers in all the public senior secondary schools in Oyo and Ogun States (South West, Nigeria), Kwara and Kogi States (North Central, Nigeria). The total number of schools in the four states as at the time of data collection was 1,684. The sample for the study was selected through multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage was sampling of geo-political zones. The total number of schools sampled was 507. The principals of all the selected schools (507) participated in the study while 507 English Language teachers were sampled through purposeful sampling technique (that is, teachers that taught Senior Secondary School III whose the results were used). Both teachers and principals were 1,014. Two research instruments were used for data collection. The instruments are: School-Based Quality Factors Inventory (SQIFI) meant for the school principals and "School – Based Quality Factor Questionnaire (SQIFQ) completed by the English Language teachers were face and content validated. The reliability coefficient for School-Based Quality Factors Inventory (SQFI) was 0.89 that for the School Quality Factor Questionnaire was 0.92. The data collected were analysed with multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 2: Pattern of Relationship Between School-Based Quality Factors (Independent Variables) and Students' Achievement in English Language in South-West and North-Central, Nigeria

Independent variables	Performance in English Language		Remark
	R	Sig.	
Supervision of Instruction	.153	.001	Significant
School Leadership	.164	.000	Significant
Quality of Instruction	.237	.000	Significant
Guidance and Conselling	.026	.299	Not significant
Health services	.006	.447	Not significant
School library	.043	.187	Not significant
Conveniences	.009	.424	Not significant
Teaching Apparatus	.016	.370	Not significant
Sports facilities	.053	.138	Not significant

Table 2 shows the pattern of relationship between school-based quality factors and students' academic achievement in English Language. Out of nine independent variables, only three have significant relationship with students' academic performance in English. These are supervision of instruction ( $r = 0.153$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), school leadership ( $r = 0.164$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) and quality of instruction ( $r = 0.237$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ).

Table 3: Composite Effect of Independent Variables on Students Achievement in English Language in South-West and North-Central, Nigeria

Multiple R	=	.258			
R Square	=	.067			
Adjusted R Square	=	.47			
Standard Error	=	7.300			
Analysis of variance					
Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Regression	1598.804	9	177.645	3.333	0.001
Residual	22382.522	420	53.292		
Total	23981.326	429			

Table 3 shows that coefficient of determination (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) = 0.47, which gives proportion of variance (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> x 100) = 47%. This implies that the independent variables accounted for 47% of the variance in the dependent variable. The joint effect of school based quality improvement factors is significant on the students' achievement in English Language ( $F=3.333$ ;  $df= (9,420)$ ;  $P<0.05$ )

Table 4: Relative Contribution of School-Based Quality Factors to Students' Achievement in English Language in South-West and North-Central, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient Beta B	T	Sig.
	β	Std. Error			
Constant	17.672	3.107		5.688	.000
Supervision of Instruction	-.542	.100	-.021	-4.386	.002
School leadership	-9.65E-02	.098	-.055	-.982	.327
Quality of Instruction	-.291	.086	-.198	-3.371	.001
Guidance and Counselling	.133	.389	.023	.341	.733
Health Service	-.242	.385	-.048	-.628	.530
School Library	.311	.230	.083	1.353	.177
Conveniences	.323	.414	.042	780	.436
Instructional materials	.321	.333	.015	4.27	.004
Sports facilities	-.307	.251	-.078	-1.219	.223

Table 4 shows the relative contribution of independent variables to dependent variable (students' achievement in English). Quality of instruction ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $t = -3.37$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), instructional materials ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $t = -4.27$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) and supervision of instruction ( $\beta = 0.54$ ,  $t = -4.38$ ;  $P < 0.05$ )

< 0.05) contributed significantly to students' achievement in English Language

### **DISCUSSION**

The quality of instruction has significant relationship with students' academic achievement in English Language and also contribution significantly to students' achievement in English Language. It means that teachers' quality of instruction matters a lot in improving students' achievement in English Language. This finding does not differ from submissions of previous findings. Teacher's related factors that could bring about quality of instruction which have been found related and contributed to students' achievement include, teachers' effectiveness (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Horn Sanders, 1997), teachers' efficacy (Tschanuen-Moran and Hoy, 2001), teachers' subject matter (Monk and King, 1994).

Relationship between supervision of instruction and English Language was also significant. The contribution made to students' academic achievement in English Language was significant. The findings of the study indicate that supervision of instruction plays important role in students' achievement in English Language. Supervision has been confirmed as a strong factor in enhancing teachers' performance (Adewumi, 2000). Thus Adewumi's submission complements the report of Jaiyeoba and Ukandu(1998), that the performance of Parents Teacher Association (PTA), whether professionally qualified or not was high because of their subjection to rigorous supervision. One can submit that supervision is a precondition to effective performance of teachers in secondary schools (Ntukidem, 2003; Aniah, 2005), which in turn determines students' academic achievement especially in English Language.

There was insignificant relationship between instructional materials and students' achievement in English Language. However, its contribution was significant. It was a demonstration that, if there were more materials in schools the contribution made would be better and relationship significant with achievement in the subject. It can also be explained further that instructional materials can only be one of the factors that influence students' achievement but not the sole factor or variable. Interestingly, the nine school-based quality factors have joint effect on students' performance in English Language because their proportion of contribution was significant. This means that their adequacy and effectiveness can enhance students' achievement while their decline in quantity and ineffectiveness might be detrimental to students' achievement in the English Language. Therefore, teacher quality of instruction, effective school leadership, effective counselling services, effective health services, functional library services,

adequate sports facilities, adequate and functional toilet facilities, adequate instructional materials as well as effective instructional supervision are confirmed as important school-based quality factors that can boost students' academic achievement especially in English Language. It is possible that any decline in the present status of these factors (i.e as at the time of research) could lead to decline in proportion of their contribution in students' academic achievement in English Language.

### **CONCLUSION**

Instructional materials and supervision have been adjudged to have contributed significantly to students' achievement in English Language. It means their absence or inadequacy in schools might hamper effective learning which eventually results into poor achievement. Their availability and adequacy could enhance effective learning and better performance in the subject by the students. The school-based quality factors have significant joint effects on students' academic achievement in English Language. It implies that availability and adequacy of these factors to some extent could determine students' success in English Language in senior secondary schools

### **Implications Of Findings**

The significant effect of the entire school-based quality factors (teachers' quality of instruction, school leadership, supervision of instruction, school counselling service, health services, sport facilities, library resources, toilet facilities, and instructional materials) on students' academic achievement in English Language implies that if these factors are enhanced there is likelihood of higher significant contribution to student' achievement. In other words, if the present status of these variables declines, their joint contribution might be lower. Further, supervision is a precondition to effective performance of teachers in secondary schools and thus students' academic achievement. The importance of instructional materials has been established, failure to use relevant instructional materials in teaching English Language could lead to poor achievement by students.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, following recommendations are made; School leadership gives direction to other activities in schools and as such school principals should provide effective leadership for academic staff, non-academic staff and students because the extent at which principals are able to steer school activities in the right direction would determine the level of staff and students achievement. It is also recommended that instructional resources be provided in schools. Instructional materials make teaching real and facilitate learners understanding. Apart from provision by government, teachers should be creative

in improvising instructional materials in their different disciplines. Supervision of instruction should be intensified so as to enhance the effectiveness of teachers thereby improve students' achievement in English Language.

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