

# Teacher Factors and Students' Achievement in Prose Literature among Senior Secondary School Students in Ogbomosho South Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study investigated teacher-factors and students' achievement in and attitude to Prose Literature among senior secondary students in Ogbomosho South Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research design of the correlational type. Five public senior secondary schools were randomly selected from sixteen (16) public secondary schools in Ogbomosho South Local Government Area, Oyo State. Forty senior secondary 11 students were randomly selected from each school making a total of 200 students. Four Literature-in-English teachers were randomly selected from each school making a total of twenty teachers. In all, a total number of 200 senior secondary 11 students and 20 Literature-in-English teachers participated in the study. The instruments used were Teachers Motivation Questionnaire ( $r = 0.93$ ), Teacher-Students Relationship Observation ( $r = 0.85$ ), Teachers Teacher Teaching Style Observation ( $r = 0.75$ ) schedules, Students Achievement in ( $r = 0.79$ ) and Students Attitude to Literature in English Questionnaire ( $r = 0.86$ ). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, Pearson product moment correlation and Multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there were no positive relationships between teacher motivation ( $r = -0.32$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), teaching style ( $r = 0.36$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) and students' achievement in Literature in English. The joint contribution of the independent variables (teacher motivation, teaching style) to the prediction of students' achievement in Literature in English was not significant ( $F_{(3,17)} = 1.74$ ;  $Adj R^2 = 0.10$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).*

*Based on findings of the study, it was recommended that teacher's salaries and allowances should be paid regularly and promptly in order to enhance their dedication to duties.*

**Keywords:** Teacher-students' relationship, Teacher motivation, Teaching style, Achievement and attitude to Literature in English

## Introduction

Literature is the representation of human actions in written works of superior artistic merit. Generically, it is any form of written works deemed to have artistic or intellectual value, often deploying language in ways that differ from ordinary language. Like other school subjects, the teacher adopts a variety of styles in teaching Literature. The teaching of Literature also demands a great deal of commitment from the teacher because the teacher will lead the students in discussing literary texts. Even when the students are given the task of analysing a text, the teacher will provide necessary hints and guidelines. These teacher's characteristics come to play in determining students' achievement in as well as attitude to Literature.

Fakeye and Amao (2013) sees Literature as an important aspect of culture and a means of communication among the members of the society. It is concerned with the literary aspect of communication using language for artistic and

creative purposes with a view to creating beauty which is intellectual. Literature is a more elevated form of language, used in a more special and beautiful manner to express views, feelings, ideas, beliefs and emotions (Lawal, 2010). Literature is a microcosm of an entire society, a little window that permits us to look into the cultural values, traditions, lifestyles of people and as a person's word reflects character, literature reflects the unique character of a group of people who share a language. Literature helps students understand and appreciate cultures and beliefs different from their own. "By constructing with the literary text a reality different from that of texts of information, students are given access to a world of attitudes, and values, collective imaginings and historical frames of reference that constitute the memory of a people or speech community. Thus, literature and culture are inseparable" (Kramsch, 2006).

Literature has three genres: Poetry, drama and prose. However, prose received main attention in this study. Prose is made up of complete

sentences which constitute paragraphs in a narrative form. Prose reflects the pattern of everyday speech. If words are not presented in prose, they are presented in poetry or verse form that adheres to a particular metric form and definite structure. Poetry has a more systematic form of presentation than prose. However, in prose the writer does not just present words whether they make sense or not. Words in prose are arranged in correct sentences and in a logical sequence for a meaningful understanding of the intended communication. In view of this, Samuel Taylor Coleridge insists in his definition of prose and poetry that; “prose is words in their best order; poetry is the best words in their best order.” (Hall, 1962). Even in everyday speech, we arrange words in a proper way for the presentation to make sense in the language of communication. In writing, therefore, anything that is not presented in verse is presented in prose.

Prose is a kind of writing that is not poetic (Ibitoye, 2005). One major characteristics of a prose is the use of action. Action in prose is of two types: Rising action and falling action. Rising action is that stage in the growth and development of the plot, which proceeds, leading up to the climax. Falling action on the other hand is that stage of the prose which comes between the climax and the conclusion. A prose lacks an established regular rhythm pattern associated with poetry. It makes use of continuous writing ideas that are sometimes connected. It may also consist of dialogue, chapters and paragraphs. Furthermore, prose consists of cast, setting and resolution for example Chinua Achebe's “Things Fall Apart”, Buchi Emecheta's Joys of Motherhood. Prose is studied in schools so as to make the students recall the incidents in fiction that are probable in life and refine their sensibility. Prose non-fiction otherwise referred to as “occasional literature” is also an important genre of literature which may be chosen by some students because it deals with important issues. It also includes biographies and autobiographies. One of the unique benefits of such literature is that it touches on contemporary issues, not only in book form but in essays and articles in popular or serious-minded Journals (Ezedinbu, 2011).

Literature is taught at different levels of education to achieve specific objectives which are,

in turn related. While the purpose of teaching literature in the primary school level is to introduce pupils to literary reading in such a way that they can enjoy it and develop regular reading habits, the more advanced the students are the more likely the teaching of literature is to show explicit traces of literary studies. For instance, at junior secondary school level, literature is often integrated with other components of language learning and teaching. Literature is taught alongside English, hence the name English Studies. The aid of literature in English language was identified as far back as 1966 with the Ford Foundation's report (Uwaifo, 1979).

Literature and language are intertwined because language is the medium through which messages in literary discourses are encoded. Basically, the main objective of literature at the junior secondary level of education is to help learners to develop their language skills. The resources of literature through various texts and accompanying tasks are employed by teachers to enable students to attain a considerable level of proficiency in the four basic language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Also, the basis of the integration of literature in language teaching is to encourage students to read and to experience language in use.

Literature at the junior secondary school level is also taught to inculcate good values and beliefs which are generally acceptable in the society. After reading a text or listening to a particular story, students are asked to list the good values which they have learnt through the passage or story. Such values include honesty, discipline, godliness, patriotism, love, empathy, kindness, etc. Therefore, the main objective of teaching literature at that level of education is to teach morals and develop learners' language proficiency.

According to Owoeye (2003), the primary aim of literature is to give pleasure, to entertain those who voluntarily attend to it. It also brings us back to the realities of human situations, problems, feelings and relationship. Owoeye further states that the importance of literature in the school curriculum cannot be underestimated. It plays an important role in the achievement of the goal that education aims at the complete development of the individual. In whatever genre that the author decides to relay his/her message, the centre point is that of teaching moral lessons, albeit entertaining

an audience. In whatever genre a piece of work may feature the message, though sometimes claimed as fictions, the essence is to relate true life situations shrouded in fictitious characters and locations. Even when such writings are truly fictitious, delivery of the authors reflect experiences of somebody somewhere in the human existence.

Teaching literature at junior secondary level aims at promoting a systematic development of both the language skills and literary knowledge considered essential ingredient for effective use of English in oral and written communication and in learning other school subjects. At the senior secondary school level, literature is taught for a comprehensive literary experience i.e. for literary knowledge and understanding; in addition to other vicarious experiences acquired through the study of prose, poetry and drama (Lawal, 2010). Literature helps towards training the learner in the skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. Literature is concerned with all aspects of man and the universe. It is therefore not surprising that literature plays important role in improving the learner's language and enlarging his awareness of life at home and school. It is also informative thereby helping the understanding of different culture (Owoeye, 2003).

Despite the importance of teaching and learning of Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools, it is discouraging to note that students' performance in the subject is consistently poor. Adija (2002) and Ayanniyi (2009) agree that the performance of students in Literature-in-English has been very poor over the years and that students are gradually losing interest in the registering for the subject in public examinations. Literature-in-English Chief Examiner's Report of the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) indicates the need for improvement in students' performance in Literature-in-English. According to the WAEC Chief Examiners' Report (2016), the standard of the paper is comparable to that of previous years. Questions were equitably distributed from all areas both African and Non-African prose. Candidates' performance was below expectation. Although there were a few good centres, the poor performance of most of the candidates adversely affected the overall performance. Some candidates misunderstood

some of the questions and therefore provided extraneous materials and irrelevant answers. Candidates provided sketchy and scanty answers. Most candidates had very poor communication skill. Example were grammatical errors, wrongly spelt words, wrong identification of characters and text and poor punctuation which detracted the quality of analyses...Answers to questions were mostly generalized having no bearing on the questions asked... Failure to use material from text to support points made.

Students have also developed negative attitude towards literature as a school subject. This attitudinal problem by the students may be due to the nature of the subject. Students have preferences for literary genres. In a study conducted by Ghazali, Setia, Muthusamy and Jusoff (2009), the attitudes of students towards the literary texts and what kind of texts they prefer to read were investigated in Malaysia. As conclusion of their study, it was found that short story was the most popular type of literary text among students but poem and novel were not popular among students. In a study conducted by Phat (2013), students' opinions towards literature were searched with participation of 234 students at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. It was found that most of the students approved the benefits of literature in speaking skill. 154 (65, 81%) students agreed that literature improved their speaking-communication-skills.

Teacher motivation is another variable in literature which can account for students' achievement and attitude to Literature. Most teachers are trained and have clear goals to guide their teaching, but good motivations for the teachers and teaching/learning materials seem to be inadequate. As a result, there has been a public outcry about poor performance of students in Literature at secondary school level. Dornyei (2001) stressed that the achievement of successful schooling largely depends on the quality of teaching force. At the centre of quality teaching are teachers and students who are supposed to jointly achieve the goals, quality teaching, measured by teachers' performance through students' performance in secondary schools. This is an output of many variables which one of them is the motivation of the teachers (Adair, 2009).

According to Alarm and Farid (2011),

motivation of teachers is very important as it affects the students directly. This fact is supported by Marques (2010) in her conclusion that motivation, satisfaction and performance are interdependent. Dornyei (2001) further states that teacher efficacy affects students directly as there is strong correlation between teacher efficacy and students' performance. Hence, a desired outcome by the students can occur with the help of the teacher. This means that low motivation of teachers affects their performance which also affects students' performance. Teacher's motivation as a teacher factor triggers another teacher factor that cannot be ruled out as far as this study is concerned which the teaching style of the teacher.

Teaching style, the last variable of concern in this study, refers to a teacher's pervasive qualities that persist even though situational conditions may change. It is a label associated with various acquirable and identifiable sets of consistent classroom behaviours by the teacher regardless of the content that is being taught (Conti and Welborn, 1996). In other words, teaching style is the expression of the totality of one's philosophy, beliefs, values, and behaviours (Jarvis, 2004) and it "includes the implementation of this philosophy; it contains evidence of beliefs about values related to and attitudes toward all the elements of the teaching-learning exchange".

Teaching and learning styles improve students' achievement (Stitt-Gohdes, 2001; Henson, 2004 and Hou, 2007). Zeeb's (2004) study indicated that aligning learning styles of students with teaching styles of instructors could lead to an improvement in academic achievement. Zeeb used the information obtained from assessing learning and teaching styles to help teachers modify their teaching styles to accommodate varying learning preferences, which resulted in improving students' test scores.

Research conducted by Chang (2002) indicated that constructivist teaching style affected students' perceptions towards physics teaching and learning. Chang explored views of students who were instructed with a constructivist and traditional approach. Students placed more value on having the opportunity to actively participate in group discussions and to examine concepts they learned when they were taught through the

constructivist approach rather than the traditional approach. The study suggested that the constructivist teaching style fosters greater flexibility in teaching, and brings about students' use of deep learning strategies (thinking and discussion) and knowledge construction. In contrast to Chang's study, Kim's (2005) research in Korea indicated that even though students who received a constructivist teaching style had greater use of learning strategies than those who received a traditional teaching style, there was no significant difference between learning strategies used by these two groups.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the fact that Literature-in-English is an important subject in the senior secondary school curriculum in Nigeria, students' performance in the subject yearly is below average. Reports from WAEC and NECO have shown that students' persistence poor performance in the prose aspect of the subject is largely responsible for students' failure in Literature-in-English. As a way of addressing this problem, several intervention studies have been carried out but students' negative attitude towards reading has not changed and many of them do not comprehend the text they read and this made their responses to examination questions to be wrong answers or fall below average. It was found out in literature that one way to improve students' performance in prose literature is to address teacher factors and students, achievement in and attitude to prose literature among senior secondary students but it has not been given much research focus especially in Ogbomoso, Oyo State. Therefore, this study investigated teacher-factors and students' achievement in and attitude to Prose Literature among senior secondary students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What relationship exists between the independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) and students': achievement in Prose Literature?

2. What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) to students' achievement in Prose Literature?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) to students' achievement in Prose Literature?

### Scope of the Study

This study focused on teacher factors (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) and students' achievement in and attitude to Literature in English. It covered Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) students from five (5) public secondary schools in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Oyo State.

### Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many ways. It revealed that teacher factors are predictors of students' learning outcomes in Prose Literature among senior secondary students. The study contributed to the existing body of researches on solving the problem of poor performance in Literature-in-English. Furthermore, findings from the study provided empirical information on the contribution of teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation and teaching style to effective teaching and learning of Literature-in-English. Finally, the study served as an eye opener to students, parents and teachers about the contribution of these teacher related variables to students' achievement in and attitude to Prose Literature, thereby ultimately helping to improve their performance in Literature-in-English.

### Methodology

The descriptive research design of the correlational type was adopted for the study because data were gathered from a relatively large

number of respondents on traits they already manifested as the variables studied were measured as they occurred. The design is suitable because the study aimed at interpreting existing relationship between the independent and dependent as well as the comparison of the variables. The population of this study comprised all public senior secondary school students and Literature-in-English teachers in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Five (5) public senior secondary schools were randomly selected from sixteen (16) public senior secondary schools in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Oyo State. Forty senior secondary II students were randomly selected from each school making a total of 200 students. Four Literature-in-English teachers were randomly selected from each of the schools making a total of twenty (20) teachers. In all, a total number of 200 senior secondary II students and 20 Literature-in-English teachers participated in the study. **Instruments used were** Teacher Motivation Questionnaire ( $r=0.93$ ), Teacher Teaching Style Observation Schedule ( $r=0.75$ ) and Students' Achievement Test in Prose Literature ( $r=0.79$ ). Before the commencement of the field work, adequate training was given to three research assistants on test administration, collection of data through research instruments and the scoring of SATPL. The instruments were administered one after the other. Data collection lasted three weeks after which the data were analysed. Data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. The results were interpreted at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

**Research question 1:** What relationship exists the independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) and students' achievement in Prose Literature?

**Table 1:** Correlation Matrix showing relationship between teachers' variables and students' achievement in Prose Literature

Variables	Achievement	Teacher-students relationship	Teacher motivation	Teaching style
Achievement	1			
Teacher motivation	-0.320 0.170	0.474* 0.035	1	
Teaching style	0.362 0.117	-0.369 0.109	-0.554* 0.011	1
Mean	3.28	37.25	36.60	42.95
STD.D	1.70	10.53	2.39	5.58

\* denotes significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significant

Results show that there is negative, low relationship between teacher motivation ( $r = -0.32$ ) and students' achievement in Prose Literature. It further reveals a positive, low relationship between teaching style ( $r = 0.36$ ;) and students' achievement in Prose Literature.

**Research questions 2a:** What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) to students' achievement in Prose Literature?

**Table 2:** Multiple Regression Analysis showing the joint contribution of independent variables and students' achievement in Prose Literature

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significant
Regression	15.190	3	5.063	1.738	0.200
Residual	46.610	16	2.913		
Total	61.800	19			
R = 0.496 R Square = 0.246 Adjusted R Square = 0.104 Std. Error of the Estimate = 1.70680					

Table 2 indicates that there the joint contribution of the independent variables (teacher motivation, teaching style) to the prediction of students' achievement in Literature in English ( $F_{(3,17)} = 1.74$ ;  $\text{Adj } R^2 = 0.10$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) is negative. This implies that independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation and teaching

style) are taken together, they did not jointly predict students' achievement in Prose Literature.

**Research question 3a:** What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (teacher-students relationship, teacher motivation, teaching style) to students' achievement in Prose Literature?

**Table 3:** Multiple Regression Analysis showing relative contributions of independent variables and students' achievement in Literature in English

Model	Under standardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficient		t	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )		
(Constant)	3.363	9.702		0.347	0.733
Teacher motivation	-0.026	0.210	-0.035	-0.125	0.902
Teaching style	0.069	0.085	0.212	0.805	0.433

Table 4.6 reveals that the relative contribution of teacher motivation ( $\beta = -0.04$ ;  $t = -0.13$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) to students' achievement in Prose Literature is not significant. Also, the relative contribution of teaching style ( $\beta = 0.21$   $t = 0.81$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) to students' achievement in Prose Literature is negative.

### Discussion of findings

#### Relationship between teacher motivation relationship and students' achievement in Prose Literature

The findings of the study indicated that there was a negative relationship between teacher motivation and students' achievement in Prose Literature. This negative relationship may be due to the facts that prose literature teachers are not promoted as at when due and that they do not receive satisfactory incentives. This finding is in distance with the findings of Omodan and Tsetetsi (2018) and Kihara (2018) who in their studies found that there was a positive relationship between teacher motivation and students' academic performance. The result negates the findings of Adeyemo, Oladipupo and Omisore (2013) who observed in their study that the teacher motivation indicators (condition of service of teachers, teachers' Fringe benefit payment, and teachers' promotion of in-service training) have a direct influence on the student's performance in mathematics.

This finding also disagreed with the findings of Skinner, Furrer, Marchand and Kindermann (2008) who in their study stated that teachers' attention to students can motivate students in order to participate in classroom activities, because positive emotions drive student

learning. This is not in line with the finding of Ryan and Patrick (2001) who stated that the need to belong is a powerful motivation in itself, and that is why students who feel connected with and supported by their teacher are more likely to feel motivated to learn. This disagreed with the suggestion of Fan and Williams (2010) that teachers' motivation plays an important role in motivating them to perform better.

#### Relationship between teaching styles and students' achievement in Literature in English

This finding revealed that there was a positive, low relationship between teaching style and students' achievement in Literature in English. This indicated that teacher's teaching style has no influence on students' achievement in Literature in English. This may be due to the fact that the prose literature teachers failed to listen attentively to what the class members are saying, criticism and suggestions. The prose literature teachers did not provide students with feedback about their learning and does not encourage diverse contribution from the students. This may also be due to the fact that teachers failed to provide the vital human connection between the content and the environment and the students.

This finding of relationship between teaching style and students' achievement in Literature in English supported the findings of Khalid, et al (2017) who in their study stated that statistically significance effect was not found between teachers' teaching styles on students' English achievements. The finding supports the results of other studies of Wilson (2011) and Rozalina (2013) which produced the evidences that teaching-learning style match do

not have a considerable impact on the academic success of the students. Uzuntiryaki (2007) found that matching the teaching styles of the teachers with their students' learning styles did not produce a significant effect on the academic achievements of the students. This supported the argument of Felder and Spurlin (2005) that when the teaching styles of the instructors do not match with their learners' styles, the state of mismatch exist between teaching styles which ultimately result in that the students may become inattentive and bored, perform poorly in their tests

This finding is not in line with the findings of Akbari, et al (2019) who in their study revealed that there was an interesting relationship between teaching styles of teachers and students' achievement. Carabelle (2015) who found that there was a positive relationship between the teaching styles of teachers to students' achievement. This finding disagreed with Brown (2003) who held that instructors teaching styles significantly improved achievement.

#### **Joint contribution of independent variables to students achievement in prose Literature in English**

The findings of revealed that the composite contribution of teacher motivation and teaching style to the prediction of students' achievement Literature in English was not significant. The findings also revealed that the independent variables of teacher motivation and teaching style jointly predicted students' attitude to Literature in English.

#### **Relative contribution of independent variables to students' achievement in prose Literature in English**

This study revealed that the relative contributions of teacher motivation and teaching styles to students' achievement in Literature in English were negative. This indicated that none of the variables predicted was a potent predictor of students' achievement in Literature in English. These findings disagreed with the findings of Akbari, et al (2019) who in their study indicated that teachers' variables strongly significantly predict student achievement in English language. This also in disagreement with the findings of Churcher and Asiedu (2016) that teachers teaching

styles on academic achievement in mathematics are good and even better predictors of academic achievement and performance in Junior Secondary School in Ghana.

#### **Conclusion**

The study has shown that teacher students' relationship is related to students' achievement in Prose Literature. Based on the finding, the study has provided a better understanding of teacher factors and students' achievement in and attitude to prose literature among senior secondary students in Ogbomosho South Local Government Area, Oyo State.

#### **Recommendations**

**Based on the findings the following recommendations were made.**

1. Secondary school administrators, alongside with government through agencies such as the ministry of education at both state and federal levels and federal and state teaching service commissions, should constantly ensure that teachers are trained and equipped with classroom engagement skills that will enable teachers to effectively communicate feelings, ideas and thoughts.
3. Teachers should be equipped through various development programmes such as workshops, capacity building, training and retraining sessions to enable them to develop various motivational strategies.

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