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ISSN: 2705-3342

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPACT OF TEACHER SHORTAGES AND TEACHER TURNOVER ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study investigated impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in schools, in Benue State, Nigeria. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The study utilised the descriptive survey design selecting a sample of 110 secondary school teachers was selected through random sampling technique.The instrument of the study was developed by two experts. A reliability index of 0.81 was determined through Cronbach alpha statistics. Data analysis was conducted using means and standard deviations to answer research questions, while t-test was used to test null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that both teacher shortages and teacher turnover have negative impact on students' academic performance in schools, in Benue State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that school organizations and managements should encourage the retention of high quality teachers through improvements in schools as work places, the school organizations and managements should ensure equitable distribution of high-quality teachers to fill shortages concentrated in schools educating high number of economically disadvantaged students in rural schools, and in special education as well as science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses.

Key words: *Teacher shortages, teacher turnover, academic performance.*

DOI: https://doi.org/10.60787/nijolee.vol2no6.151

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Introduction

Teacher supply is a key driver to students' academic performance irrespective of school location whether it is in urban or rural areas. Thus, teacher shortages is likely to lead to students' poor academic performance. Research has consistently demonstrated that classroom teachers have the strongest and significant influence on students' educational outcomes. (Chetty, Frledman & Rockoff, 2014; Lee, 2018). This does not limit to cognitive achievement but also include non cognitive such as motivation and self-efficacy (Jackson, 2018).

Impact of Teacher Shortages

According to Ingersall and Tran (2023), teacher shortages and staffing problems are attributed to insufficient supply of new teachers, increasing student enrolment, and increasing teacher retirement. They further stated that researchers have argued that these often result in lower school performance.

Additionally, recent research and reform on teacher shortages and staffing problems has began to recognise the role of preretirement teacher turn over in teacher staffing problems (Ingesall & Tran, 2013). According to Ingersall and Tran, beginning over two decades ago, it is empirically demonstrated that teacher shortages are not solely as a result of producing too few teachers but also a result of too many existing teachers leaving long before retirement, which in turn is largely driven by school organizational conditions. Therefore, the solution to teacher shortages does not lie solely in recruiting more new teachers, but also in improving the retention of existing teachers through improvements in schools as work places (Ingersall & May, 2012; Ingersall & Penda, 2010; Ingersall et al. 2019, 2022).

However, many studies have provided support that teacher turnover is the leading factor behind teacher shortages (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Sutcher et al.; 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; 2019; Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Many researchers argued that teachers become more effective as they accumulate years of teaching experience (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). The researchers further argued that when teachers leave a school, they take along their knowledge and expertise in instructional strategies, collaborative relationships with colleagues, professional development training, and understanding of students' learning needs at school, all of which may harm student learning, school operations and climate (Bryk, Sebring, Allansworth, Luppesen, & Easton, 2010; Ingersall, 2001; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Considering the impact of teacher shortages on students' academic performance, in US in order to mitigate the impact, a large range of initiatives have been implemented to recruit new candidates into teaching profession. Among these, according to Ingersall and Tran (2023), are mid career change programmes, alternative certification programme designed to expedite entry, overseas teacher recruitment initiatives, and financial initiatives such as scholarships signing bonuses, and student loan forgiveness.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government (FG) has initiated and implemented similar programmes, while some are still ongoing, to mitigate teacher shortages. For example, the FG has shortened the period of training teachers who are graduates of other disciplines and want to become professional teachers to one year programme. The programme is Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). The PGDE is run in Faculties of Education, Institutes of Education in the Universities and Colleges of Education. After completion of one year

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The distinction can be illustrated as follows:

Concept	Main question	Example in Ebonyi reading instruction
Cultural content	What cultural knowledge is represented in the text?	A passage about yam farming, rice cult ivation, New Yam Festival or an Igbo proverb
Culturally responsive pedagogy	How does the teacher use learners' cultural knowledge to support learning?	Activating prior knowledge, discussing experiences, explaining cultural references, encouraging comparison and requiring evidence-based interpretation
Reading comprehension outcome	What reading abilities are developed?	Vocabulary understanding, identifying main ideas, making inferences, interpreting meaning and critical evaluation

programme, the successful candidates are eligible to sit for teacher professional qualifying examinations, usually conducted by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). The TRCN licenses or certifies successful candidates in the examination as professional teachers. The candidates spend only one year instead of the traditional three years for the award of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), and four years for the award of B.Ed or B.Sc (Ed) degrees.

In addition, the FG and some state governments have increased the retirement age and work duration from 60 – 65 and 35 – 40 years respectively for primary and secondary school teachers. This initiative helps teachers to stay on the job longer than before. Also, the FG and some state governments recruit new candidates into teaching profession to solve the problem of teacher shortages. Furthermore, the FG has come up with another new initiative, Nigeria Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) which is ongoing, and it is students' loan scheme. One of the aims of the NELFUND is to provide financial assistance for undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions especially those studying education courses.

Furthermore, the Federal Government through the N-Power initiative (N-Teach) engaged over 1 million graduate volunteer teachers in 2016. The volunteers received a monthly stipend of N30,000. They were also provided with tablet computers to facilitate their work (Idajili, no date).

Impact of Teacher Turnover

Teacher turnover, according to Sorenson and Ladd (2018), is change in teachers in one year to the next in particular school setting. It has been persistent problem often described as a revolving door in teaching profession (Ingersall & Tran, 2023). Teacher turnover in this context also means teacher exit or leaving and is used interchangeably.

Researchers continue to argue that turn over contributes to teacher shortages (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2019), and frequently leads to inequitable distribution of high-quality teachers and poor student outcomes for those most in need of high-quality instruction (Goldhaber, Gross & Player, 2011; Goldhaber, Krieg Theobald & Brown, 2015). According to Dee and Goldhaber (2017), shortages are often concentrated in schools educating high number of economically disadvantaged and minority students, in rural schools, and in special education as well as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses.

Sutcher et.al (2019) and others (e.g

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Cowan et.al 2016; Ingersall & May, 2012; Ingersall & Perda, 2010; Ingersall et.al 2018) have argued that teacher turnover is a highly significant factor in producing these staffing shortages. Besides, studies have shown that math and science teachers are significantly more likely to leave high-poverty than their counterparts teaching math and science in other schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersall & May, 2012). Thus, high turnover in high needs of teachers contributes to shortages in schools in both urban and rural areas (Goldhaber et.al, 2015; player, 2015).

Furthermore, shortages and turnover also often translate into schools needing to hire alternatively certified teachers, that is, those holding a teaching certificate or license outside of traditional college preparation program, and fewer qualified and experienced teachers (Dee & Goldhaber, 2017). In addition, high turnover rates can serve as a barrier to the teacher collaboration that is essential for instructional improvement (Guin, 2004). Also, correlational research has demonstrated that schools with higher teacher turnover rates have lower student achievement (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005). Similarly, in a causal study of teacher-turnover in New York City elementary schools, Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff (2013) found that turnover reduced Math, English Language Arts (ELA) performance in students whose teachers left as well as in students whose teachers stayed at the school. This impact was demonstrated across all kinds of schools, high-and-low minority, and high-and-low poverty schools (Danley, Detrich, Keyworth & States 2019). Hanushek et.al (2016) similarly found reduced student achievement as a result of teacher turnover in low-achieving but not higher-achieving schools in Texas despite the tendency for less effective teachers to leave low-achieving schools. The researchers further determined that replacement teachers were even less effective than those who left, due to loss of experience and frequent grade switching among staff as well as the ineffectiveness of newly hired teachers and organizational disruptions. Sorenson and Ladd (2018) studied turnover in North Carolina middle schools and found that 3 – year turnover rates adversely impacted students' Math and ELA performance, for example, a turnover increase of 100 percent led to significant performance reductions particularly in Math.

Corroborating, Redding and Henry (2018) stated that teacher turnover that occurs within the school year has recently been shown to be particular concern for the disruption of student learning accounting approximately one quarter of all turnover. Similarly Danley, Detrich, Keyworth and States (2019) argued that this type of turnover can result in classroom disruption, staff instability and changes to teacher quality, all of which combine to negatively impact student learning and achievement, particularly when it occurs after the first semester and closer to the end of the school year. But schools with higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students are more likely to experience within-year turnover (Redding & Henry, 2018), making a corroborative work environment difficult and resulting in insufficient resources to mentor the large numbers of new teachers who enter during the school year (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

It should be noted that not all teacher turnover is created equal (Grisson & Bartanen, 2019). Grisson and Bartanen further explained that in some cases, turnover may result in benefits for students, schools, and districts. For example, some within-year turnover is due to supportive parental and

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medical leave policies that make it possible for teachers to temporarily exit for family considerations and return to school, thus defraying the cost of recruiting new teachers (Papay, Barcher-Hicks, Page & Mannell, 2017). In addition, it is also possible that teacher exits due to extremely poor performance can benefit the composition of the teaching workforce and student learning if low-performing teachers are replaced with more effective ones (Hanushek, 2009).

Additionally, in a study of District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS), Adnot, Dee, Katzi and Wyckoff (2017) found that using a teacher evaluation and compensation system that moved ineffective teachers out of schools and provided financial and non-financial rewards to highly efficient teachers who remained was beneficial both to overall effectiveness of teaching workforce and to student achievement. Similarly, Cullen, Koedel and Parsons (2016) found that a teacher evaluation system increased exit rate for low-performing teachers, but the change to workforce composition were not large enough to improve student achievement, a finding the authors attributed in part to the lack of financial reward system for high-performing teachers like the one used in the DCPS system. Research has also demonstrated that more effective schools have higher turnover rates for low-performing teachers and higher retention rates of high-performing teachers (Loeb, Betelle & Kalogrides, 2012).

In Nigeria, a study by Babatope, Akinwumi, and Ige (2023) indicated that teacher turnover has significant impact on students' academic performance. According to their study, the main effects include: teacher shortage, poor syllabus coverage, disruption of teaching/learning, and planning increased work load. All these have adverse effects on students' academic performance. A similar study by Onanusi and Ganiyu (2025) found that a teacher turnover rate of 76.2 percent, and a low mean scores of 2.83 for school effectiveness indicated a substantial adverse impact on school performance.

Some studies in Nigeria suggest ways of increasing teacher retention rate. For example, a study by Cynthia (2023) provided suggestions to include: engagement of staff in decision making, build a strong sense of community, encourage collaboration among teachers, provide a supportive environment, support professional development and utilise technology to better support staff well-being.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher turnover resulting in teacher shortages and staffing problems is a recurring phenomenon globally. Many studies supported that teacher turnover and shortages have negative impact on students' academic performance (Redding & Henry, 2018; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013). In some countries, in order to mitigate the negative impact of turnover, a wide range of initiatives and programmes has been implemented. In US, for example, initiatives such as midcareer change programmes, alternative certification programme, overseas teacher recruitment, and financial initiatives (Ingersall & Tran, 2023) are implemented. Also, in Nigeria, the FG has initiated and implemented similar programmes which include establishment of Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), recruitment of new teachers and elongation of retirement period for primary and secondary school teachers. In spite of these initiatives and programmes, the problem still persists. Moreover, from the literature reviewed, the researchers did not find any study on the topic in Benue State. Therefore, the researchers are motivated to answer the question; what impact teacher shortages and teacher turnover have on students' academic performance in

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Benue State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in schools, in Benue State.

Specifically, the study investigated:

1. Impact of teacher shortages on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.
2. Impact of teacher turnover on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study:

1. What impact do teacher shortages have on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State?.
2. What impact does teacher turnover have on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Benue State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design is considered appropriate for the study because the respondents were allowed to answer questions through questionnaires (Hale, 2011). The study was carried out in Kwande LGA of Benue State, Nigeria, and covered a population of 576 secondary school teachers. A sample of 110 teachers was selected through random sampling techniques. The instrument for collecting data was developed by the researchers and titled, Teacher Shortages and Turnover (TSAT) questionnaire. The instrument is a structured questionnaire which has two parts (A & B). Part A contained biodata of the respondents, while part B was designed to elicit information from the respondents on teacher shortages and turnover. The instrument is based on four points Likert Scale format: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument was validated by two professionals, one each from Sociology of Education, and another from Measurement and Evaluation both from Department of Educational Foundations, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Nasarawa State. The draft of the instrument was given to the validators along with purpose of the study, research questions and hypothesis to assess contents and face-validity. Based on their suggestions, and amendments, the new version of the instrument was structured. The reliability of the instrument was determined by conducting a pilot-test on 20 teachers who were part of the population but did not form part of the sample. Adopting Cronbach alpha statistics, the reliability index of 0.81 was obtained. The researchers administered 110 copies of the instrument on the respondents by themselves, who properly completed the questionnaires. After completion of the questionnaires, the researchers retrieved them on the spot. Data analysis was conducted through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Means and standard deviations were used for answering research questions. Any mean score of an item below 2.50 cut-off mark means that teacher shortages or turnover has no impact on students' academic performance. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test.

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Results: Results of data analysis for the study are presented in tables as follows:

Research question one
What impact do teacher shortages have on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Benue State?

Table 1: Means and standard Deviations of impact of teacher shortages on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Benue State.

Item	Impact of teacher shortages	No.	Means	SD	Remarks
1.	Teacher shortages can affect students' academic performance	110	3.70	5.34	Agree
2.	Shortage of qualified teachers can affect students' academic performance	110	3.72	5.77	Agree
3.	Shortage of science teachers in school can affect science students' academic performance	110	3.68	6.05	Agree
4.	Staffing problem can affect students' academic performance	110	3.16	7.36	Agree
5.	Teachers' t ransfer without replacement can affect students' academic performance	110	3.62	7.01	Agree
6.	Teacher shortages due to poor financial rewards can affect students' academic performance	110 110	3.57 3.56	6.84 6.70	Agree Agree
7	Cluster mean		3.51	6.43	

Table 1 reveals that the cluster mean is 3.51 which is above 2.50 cut off mark. This means that the respondents agree, teacher shortages have impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.

Research Question Two-
What impact does teacher turnover have on students' academic performance in schools in Benue State?

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Table 2: Means and standard deviations of impact of teacher turnover on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.

Item	Impact of teacher turnover	No.	Means	SD
1.	Recruiting less qualified teachers can affect students' academic performance	110	3.30	6.19
2.	Teacher turnover in the middle of term can affect students' academic performance.	110	3.35	7.56
3.	Teacher turnover due to poor working environments can affect students' academic performance	110	3.22	8.17
4.	High rates of teacher turnover can affect students' academic performance	110	3.15	9.16
5.	Teacher turnover of highly experienced teachers can affect students' academic performance	110	3.35	8.74
6.	Teacher turnover without replacement of qualified teachers can affect students' academic performance	110	3.49	7.14
7.	Teacher turnover due to increase in teaching load can affect students' academic performance	110	3.15	8.55
	Cluster mean	110	3.32	8.00

Table 2 reveals that the cluster mean is 3.32 which is above 2.50 cut off mark, this means, the respondents agree that teacher turnover has impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference between the impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.

Table 3: Mean Difference Between Teacher Shortages and Teacher Turnover

Variables	Sample	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Teacher shortages	110	3.34	0.661	
Teacher turnover	110	3.49	0.720	
		0.15		

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Table 3: shows the mean difference between teacher shortages and teacher turnover. The table reveals that teacher shortages has the means of 3.34 while teacher turnover has the mean of 3.49. the mean difference between teacher shortages and teacher turnover stands at 0.15 in favour of teacher shortages.

Table 4: Independent t-test of the mean difference between teacher shortages turnover.

Variables	Sample	Mean	SD	DF	t	Sig.	Decision
Teacher shortages	110	3.34	0.72				
Teacher turnover	110	3.49	0.661	218	-1.575	0.117	Not significant

Table 4 shows that t = -1.57, df = 218, and p=0.117>0.05. since P= 0.117 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. There is no significant difference between the impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in secondary schools, in Benue State. Data analysis presented in tables revealed that both teacher shortages and turnover affect students' academic performance. Specifically, the findings of the study showed that teacher shortages arising from qualified teachers, science teachers, preretirement, teacher transfer, staffing problems or poor financial rewards, all affect students' academic performance negatively (Table, 1). These findings conform with what research has consistently demonstrated that classroom teachers have the strongest and significant influence on students' educational out comes (Chetty, Fieldman & Rockoff, 2014, Lee, 2018).

This does not limit to cognitive achievement but include non-cognitive such as motivation and self-efficacy (Jackson, 2018). For example, staffing problems resulting from teacher shortages can lower school performance (Ingersall, & Tran, 2023). Ingersall and Tran further found that recent research and reform on teacher shortages and staffing problems has began to recognise the role of preretirement teacher turnover which often affect educational outcomes.

On impact of teacher turnover, the respondents agreed that teacher turnover exert significant impact on students' academic performance. They agreed that turnover resulting in recruiting less qualified teachers, turnover in the middle term, turnover due to poor working environments, high rates of turnover, turnover of highly experienced teachers, and turnover due to increase in teaching load, all affect students' academic performance (table, 2). These findings agree with what many researchers have argued that teachers become more affective as they accumulate years of teaching experience (Kini & Podolsky, 2016), and when teachers leave a school, they take along their knowledge and experience in instructional strategies, collaborative relationship with colleagues, professional development training and understanding of students' learning needs at school, all of which may harm student learning, school operations and climate (Bryk, Sebring, Allansworth, Luppesen, & Easton, 2010; Ingersal, 2001, Simon & Johnson, 2015). Similarly, researchers continue to argue that turnover contributes to teachers shortages (Sutcher,

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Darling, Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2019), and that this frequently leads to inequitable distribution of high-quality teachers and poor student outcomes for those most in need of high quality instruction (Goldhalber, Gross & Player, 2011; Goldhalber, Kreg Theobald & Brown, 2015)

Also, correlation research has demonstrated that schools with high teacher turnover rates have lower student achievement (Boyd, Lankfood, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005).

Similarly, in a causal study of teacher turnover in New York City elementary school, Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckpff (2013) found that turnover reduced Math, English Language, Arts (ELA) performance in students whose teachers left as well as in students whose teachers stayed at the school. Their study revealed that this impact was demonstrated across all kinds of schools, high and low majority, high-and low poverty schools (Danley, Detrich, Keyworth & states, 2011). Corroborating, Hanushek et al (2016) found reduced student achievement as a result of teacher turnover in low-achieving but not higher achieving schools in Texas despite the tendency for less effective teachers to leave low-achieving schools.

This is not all, Redding and Henry (2018) found that teacher turnover that occurs within the school year has recently been shown to be particular concern for the disruption of student learning accounting approximately one quarter of all turnover. In similar vein, Danley, Detrich, Keyworth and States (2019) argued that this type of turnover can result in classroom disruption, staff instability and changes in teacher quality, all of which combine to negatively impact student learning and achievement, particularly when it occurs after the fist semester and closer to the end of the school year.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that not all turnover is created equal (Gnsson & Bartanen, 2019). In some cases, turnover may result in benefits for students, schools and districts. For example, Adnot, Dee, Katzi and Wyckoff (2017) found that using a teacher education and compensation system that moved ineffective teachers out of schools and provided financial and non financial rewards to highly efficient teachers who remained was beneficial both to overall effectiveness of teaching workforce, and student achievement. It is also possible that teacher exits due to extremely poor performance can benefit the composition of the teaching workforce and student learning if low performing teachers are replaced with more effective ones (Hanushek, 2009).

Conclusion

The study investigated impact of teacher shortages and teacher turnover on students' academic performance in school, in Benue State. The study found that teacher shortages and turnover have negative impact on students' academic performance. The study therefore concludes that teacher shortages and turnover are important factors that impact negatively on students' academic performance and should not be overlooked by school organizations and managements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school organizations and managements should encourage the retention of existing teachers through improvements in school as work place.
2. The school organizations and managements should recruit more efficient teachers to replace those leaving for preretirement or other jobs.
3. The school managements should ensure

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equitable distribution of high-quality teachers to fill shortages often concentrated in schools educating high number of economically disadvantaged students in rural schools, and in special education as well as science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses.

4. The school organizations should increase teacher retirement period to retain teachers who are due for retirement. The Federal and Benue State governments should be commended for this initiative by extending the retirement period of primary and secondary school teachers from 35-40 years and 60-65 years respectively for work and birth periods. Other states should also follow suit.
5. Federal and state governments should adopt other initiatives such as midcareer change programmes, alternative certification programme designed to expedite entry into teaching profession, financial initiatives such as scholarships signing bonuses, and student loan forgiveness.
6. The school managements should use a teacher evaluation and compensation system that moves ineffective teachers out of schools and provides financial and non financial rewards to high efficient teachers who remain.

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ISSN: 2705-3342

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