

# Teacher Factors Influencing Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

OBILOR, Ezezi Isaac, Ph.D.

Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

**Abstract:** *The study investigated teacher factors influencing students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State using the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 274724 made up of Senior Secondary Two (SSII) students (34168) and teachers (240556) in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the 2018/2019 academic session. The sample size of the study was 764 comprising 380 students and 384 teachers obtained by applying the online Fluid Survey Sample Size Calculator. The sample was categorised into urban [SSII students (163) and teachers (230)] and rural [SSII students (217) and teachers (154)] public secondary schools in Rivers State. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled Teacher Factors on Students' Academic Performance (TFSAP) with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 established using Cronbach Alpha. The research questions were answered with means and standard deviations computed from the collected data, while the independent samples t-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. It was found that teacher's administration of students' assignments, teachers' commitment to duty, and teacher-students interaction were poor and as such could not significantly influence students' academic performance. It was further found that teachers' communication skills were good and influenced students' academic performance, but that teachers had excess workload that impinged their influence on students' academic performance. It was recommended, among others, that teachers' workload should be made lighter to make them effective and be able to administer students' assignments and other duties, enhance teachers' salaries and other incentives to whip up their commitment to duty.*

**Keywords:** *Assignment, commitment, communication, duty, interaction, workload.*

© 2020. Obilor, Ezezi Isaac. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a very important human activity and the teacher is at the centre of it all. Education builds the individual and brings developments to environments and nations. The purpose of education is to equip the citizenry to reshape their society and eliminate inequality (Boit, Njoki and Chang'ach, 2012). Education plays a vital role in creating a country's human resource (Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo & Mualuko, 2007) and generates opportunities for social and economic development (Onsumu, Muthaka, Ngware & Kosembei, 2006). Education cannot reshape the society and eliminate inequality, create a country's human resource, generate opportunities for social and economic development if the learners do not acquire the requisite skills stipulated by the school programmes through the instructional objectives. The teacher uses achievement tests to ensure that these skills have been acquired. Without the test and the teacher, education is meaningless.

Achievement tests assess the proficiency of students (Obilor, 2019). Proficiency is the amount of grade-appropriate knowledge and skills a student has acquired up to the point of testing. The most common types of achievement tests are the standardized test and the classroom (or teacher-made) test developed to measure skills and knowledge learned in a given grade level, usually through planned instruction, such as training or classroom instruction. Achievement test scores are often used in an educational system to determine the level of instruction for which a student is prepared. High achievement scores usually indicate a mastery of grade-level material, and the readiness for advanced instruction. Low achievement scores can indicate the need for remediation or repeating a course. Although students' performances are generally defined in terms of students' test scores which denote their academic achievement (Worthington, 2001), students' achievement is produced by several inputs in the educational process which include, but are not limited to, student's family background characteristics, class size, availability of teaching and learning materials, and teacher characteristics (Wobmann, 2004). The teacher is the focus on which all the programmes, tests, and even extra-curricular activities of the school rotate. In other words, the teacher a principal factor in the provision of education and thus affects the quality of education in a significant way (Kimani, Kara, & Njagi, 2013).

Teachers play crucial roles in educational attainment of learners because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2001). Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) stressed that the most important factor influencing student learning is the teacher. Thus, the teacher has a great influence on students' academic achievement. Teachers stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, values and skills in the learning process. If the teacher is ineffective, students under the teacher's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically (Kimani, Kara, & Njagi, 2013) and this is regardless of how similar or different the students are in terms of individual potential in academic achievement.

Often when students perform well academically, the teacher is never mentioned, but when the students perform poorly or behave irrationally, the teachers are to blame. Odhiambo (2005) contended that there is a growing demand from parents, governments and the public for teacher accountability. Although schools are commonly evaluated using students' achievement data (Heck, 2009), but the teachers cannot be dissociated from the students they teach and academic results of schools. Thus, it would be logical to find out how much influence teachers have on students: Teachers' influence in terms of teacher's administration of students' assignments, teacher's workload, teacher-students interaction, teacher's communication skills, teacher's commitment to duty, and many more.

Teacher's administration of students' assignments is a very important source of influence of teachers on their students. The teacher must score classroom exercises (tests, quizzes, questioning), and take home assignments which are forms of assessment for learning and assessment as learning (formative assessment) and final examinations which serve as assessment of learning (summative assessment) to evaluate the progress of students in achieving specified instructional objectives and provide them with appropriate feedback which make for effective teaching and learning. Unfortunately, most teachers do not score these exercises either due to laziness and nonchalance, or over bearing workload, or lack of motivation or sometimes all of the above. Molokomphale and Mavis (2014) declared that the non-scoring of exercises given to students by teachers smacks of lack of commitment to duty and makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to know if the students have mastered the skills taught or achieved the instructional objectives stipulated.

Teacher's workload is inversely related to teachers' performance. In other words, as teachers' workload increases, teachers' performance decreases. For instance, in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education stipulates a teacher-students ratio of 1:40. But this is only on paper as most public secondary schools have teacher-students ratio of over 1:200. This impacts on teachers' efficiency very negatively, particularly on teachers' administration of students' assignments. In addition to this gigantic teacher-students ratio, some teachers take up to 10 hours of teaching per week and attend to 3 to 5 classes. In some rural schools, a teacher may handle the teaching of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry, in spite of the ratio. Rose and Sika (2019) declared that the negative impact of teachers' excessive workload is real and needs to be addressed to improve students' outcomes. According to Nwikina and Nwanekezi (2010) teachers' workload was one of the factors that inhibited students' academic achievement. Truly, reducing teachers' workload will undoubtedly mean improving students' academic performance. This is so because it will lead to teacher efficiency and dedication (though not without adequate motivation).

Appropriate teacher-students interaction makes the teaching-learning process a relaxing experience to behold. Teaching is a unique and dynamic profession and what a nation becomes is dependent on the type and quality of her teachers (Aboho, Dodo, & Isa, 2014). In education, the classroom teacher is accountable for the destiny of the nation because there is a strong tie between his instructional activities, the eventual outcome of his instruction and the development of the learners and the nation. Therefore, if teachers' interaction with their students is cordial and responsive, the teachers will be able to effectively motivate their students and cause them (the students) to be efficient in their studies. It is very pertinent that the teacher recognises this enormous influence on his students and their education, and dutifully applies same for the students' ultimate improved academic performance and good life after school. According to Tyler and Boelter (2008), positive teacher expectations about his students are associated with high academic performance or academic gains; whereas negative teacher expectations can result in decrease in academic performance of the students. The significance of teachers knowing the level of their influence on their students is to build positive teacher-student interaction which will propel the students into improved learning and better academic performance. Thus, teachers have to ensure that they are meeting students' needs, both academically and emotionally by creating learning environments that promote positive cultures with healthy interaction, as it can induce students to channel their educational goals appropriately (Aboho, Dodo, & Isa, 2014). The teacher-students interaction includes, among other things, teacher-pupil questioning, class work, take home assignments, marking of these work and providing prompt feedbacks, and friendliness of teachers and learners.

Thomas, Dose, and Scott (2002) informed that communication is the lifeblood of any organization and that the survival and health of the organization depend on effective communication. The school, an educational organisation, is run through communication. Information flows through communication to and from head-teachers, teachers, and students. Communication is the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place (Saunders & Mills, 1999). In addition, teacher communication skills are important for a teacher in the delivery of education to students (McCarthy & Carter, 2001). Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching a teacher needs to be highly skilled in all these areas. Teachers with good communication skills always make learning easier and more understandable for students.

Good communication skills of teachers are the basic need of academic success of students, and their professional success in life. Fundamental to teachers' and students' success is the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students, parents and colleagues. Teachers must have good communication skills to help their students achieve academic success. Without good communication skills, teachers disable the teaching-learning process as well as their own career mobility. Teachers with poor communication skills may cause poor academic performance of students and lead to unstable professional life after school. Good communication minimises the potential of unkind feeling during the process of teaching and learning. For a teacher, it is very pertinent to have good communication skills to create good classroom environment for effective teacher-student interaction to promote effective learning by students and acquisition of desired professional goals. Good communication is not only needed for effective teaching and learning, but it is also very important in the effectiveness of every human concern in life (Batenburg & Smal, 1997).

Teacher's commitment or lack of commitment to duty can be observed in different ways, ranging from preparation of his lessons, punctuality to duty, completion of scheme or content of work, to motivation of his students. Teacher preparation such as writing schemes, records of work and lesson-plan is a professional requirement for teachers (Malambo, 2012). When teachers do not prepare their lessons, delivery becomes suspect: they commit several blunders when teaching and are easily provoked when students ask questions. Ultimately this lack preparation robs the learners of quality learning because the teachers are bereft of quality lesson delivery.

A teacher's commitment to duty is also displayed by his punctuality. Some teachers go to the classroom 40 minutes to 50 minutes late for a 1½ hour lesson. As a result of lack of punctuality, such teachers rush through their lessons to cover up for lost time which impacts negatively on students' comprehension of the taught material leading to poor academic performance by students. On the other hand, teachers that are punctual to duty have enough time to complete their schedule, answer students' questions and attend to slow learners, the result of which is improved performance. The attitude of punctuality is a virtue which students can imbibe for individual and national development.

Although few teachers may be committed to duty without motivation, most teachers (and in fact employees generally) will not be committed to duty if they lack motivation from the school or their employers. A highly motivated person puts in the maximum effort in his job. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes towards students which in turn affect the performance of students academically. Teachers should therefore have adequate incentives in terms of good salary structure, awards for excellence, proper housing facilities, in-service training, and many more. When, for instance, teachers can only afford uncomfortable residential accommodation far away from school due to poor wages and lack of staff accommodation in the school premises, the results are lack of punctuality resulting from chronic traffic congestions, ill preparedness of teachers in delivering lessons, and lack of coverage of syllabus all of which negatively affect the performance of students. This lack of teacher motivation was also noted by Musili (2015) when he opined that when teachers are motivated, they are able to perform better than when they are frustrated or ill motivated. A highly motivated teacher would go an extra mile in ensuring effective syllabus coverage (Cowell & Holsinger, 2000) and also lends extra hand to the weaker learners, and this will certainly ensure improved school performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Students' performance at internal and external examinations (especially School Certificate Examinations) leaves a "sour taste in the mouth". Teachers, parents and school administrators are at sea on what the causes of such abysmal performances are. Measurement and Evaluation experts, Guidance Counsellors and other Psychologists are working assiduously to unravel the reasons for the poor performances and possibly suggest ameliorative strategies. In furtherance of this search, this study investigated the influence of teacher factors on students' academic performance in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the teacher factors that influence students' academic performance. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine how teacher's administration of students' assignments influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. Investigate whether teacher's workload influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. Examine how teacher-students interaction influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. Determine whether teacher's communication skills influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
5. Investigate how teacher's commitment to duty influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

### **Research Questions**

1. How well does the teacher administer students' assignments to influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. How much teacher's workload influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What is the extent to which teacher-students interaction influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. To what extent do teacher's communication skills influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
5. How well is the teacher committed to duty to influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Teacher's administration of students' assignment does not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. The workload of teachers does not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

3. Teacher-students interaction does not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Teacher's communication skills do not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
5. Teacher's commitment to duty does not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 274724 made up of Senior Secondary Two (SSII) students (34168) and teachers (240556) in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the 2018/2019 academic session (Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board: Planning, Research and Statistics Department, 2019). The sample size of the study was 764 comprising 380 students and 384 teachers obtained by applying the online Fluid Survey Sample Size Calculator. The sample was categorised into urban [SSII students (163) and teachers (230)] and rural [SSII students (217) and teachers (154)] public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample was selected using the multistage sampling approach which involved proportional, stratified, and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled Teacher Factors on Students' Academic Performance (TFSAP) with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 established using Cronbach Alpha.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** How well does the teacher administer students' assignments to influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics of SS2 Students Responses on their Teachers' Administration of their Assignments

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students [n <sub>1</sub> = 163]			Rural Students [n <sub>2</sub> = 217]		
		x	SD	Decision	x	SD	Decision
1	My teacher promptly answers students' questions in class	1.47	0.76	Very Poorly	1.82	1.03	Poorly
2	My teacher does not bother whether or not students complete assignments	2.10	1.28	Poorly	1.97	0.71	Poorly
3	My teacher scores students' assignments promptly with comments for future improvement	1.70	0.54	Poorly	1.35	0.84	Very Poorly
4	My teacher does not give assignments and tests (He gives only final examination).	1.84	0.83	Poorly	2.22	1.33	Poorly
5	My teacher assists slow learners in class.	1.37	1.42	Very Poorly	1.45	0.65	Very Poorly
<b>Grand Mean and Decision</b>		<b>1.70</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>Poorly</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>Poorly</b>

The information in table 1 presents that students in urban schools have a grand mean of 1.70 and standard deviation of 0.97, while students in rural schools have a grand mean of 1.76 and standard deviation of 0.91 on their rating of how well their teachers administered their

assignments, indicating a poor level of administration. In other words, teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State poorly attend to students’ assignments, which is a negative drag on students’ academic performance.

**Research Question 2:** How does teacher’s workload influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics of Teachers Responses on their Workload.

S/No.	Statement	Urban Teachers [n <sub>1</sub> = 230]			Rural Teachers [n <sub>2</sub> = 154]		
		x	SD	Decision	x	SD	Decision
6	I have enough time to get to know my students as individuals.	1.82	0.96	Disagree	1.48	1.10	Strongly Disagree
7	I do not need extra help with schoolwork.	1.38	0.81	Strongly Disagree	2.14	0.82	Disagree
8	I teach only one subject and one class in my school	1.93	1.04	Disagree	2.03	1.41	Disagree
9	The teacher-students ratio in my class is 1:40	2.12	0.87	Disagree	1.87	1.02	Disagree
10	I do not use teaching time to do administrative work.	1.65	1.23	Disagree	1.69	0.67	Disagree
	<b>Grand Mean and Decision</b>	<b>1.78</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

Table 2 shows that teachers in urban schools have a grand mean of 1.78 and standard deviation of 0.98, while teachers in rural schools have a grand mean of 1.84 and standard deviation of 1.00 on their rating of the level of their workload, indicating excess teacher workload. This implies that teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State have too much workload that affect the effective performance of their duties, including administration of students’ assignments.

**Research Question 3:** What is the extent to which teacher-students interaction influences students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics of SSII Students Responses on Teacher-students Interaction

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students [n <sub>1</sub> = 163]			Rural Students [n <sub>2</sub> = 217]		
		x	SD	Decision	x	SD	Decision
11	Students and teachers treat each other with respect.	1.71	1.12	Low Extent	1.93	0.70	Low Extent
12	Most teachers are enthusiastic about teaching and communicate this to students.	1.83	1.02	Low Extent	1.75	0.92	Low Extent
13	They have high expectations for all students.	1.79	0.79	Low Extent	2.11	1.24	Low Extent
14	They think about students as individuals and believing all students can learn.	2.04	0.91	Low Extent	1.69	1.13	Low Extent
15	Teaching individual students according to their	1.37	1.42	Low Extent	1.45	0.65	Low Extent

different needs and abilities.							
<b>Grand Mean and Decision</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>Low Extent</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>Low Extent</b>	

The information in table 3 presents that students in urban schools have a grand mean of 1.75 and standard deviation of 1.05, while students in rural schools have a grand mean of 1.79 and standard deviation of 0.93 on their rating on the extent of teacher-students interaction, which indicates that teachers and students interact to a low extent in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This means that teachers and students in public secondary schools in Rivers State do not have good enough relationship that can positively influence students’ academic performance.

**Research Question 4:** To what extent do teacher’s communication skills influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 4:** Descriptive Statistics of SSII Students Responses on their Teachers’ Communication Skills

S/No.	Statement	Urban Students [n <sub>1</sub> = 163]			Rural Students [n <sub>2</sub> = 217]		
		x	SD	Decision	x	SD	Decision
16	My teacher presents information in a way that is easy to understand.	2.87	1.16	High Extent	3.13	1.05	High Extent
17	My teacher speaks clearly and tries to carry every student along.	3.12	0.79	High Extent	2.97	0.81	High Extent
18	I admire the way my teacher speaks.	2.91	1.07	High Extent	3.35	0.64	High Extent
19	My teacher guides students in a positive direction for their academic and personal growth	2.84	0.83	High Extent	3.22	0.92	High Extent
20	My teacher provides high and clear explanations to enhance students’ academic performance.	3.37	1.14	High Extent	2.85	1.15	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean and Decision</b>		<b>3.02</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

Table 4 shows that students in urban schools have a grand mean of 3.02 and standard deviation of 1.00, while students in rural schools have a grand mean of 3.10 and standard deviation of 0.91 on their rating of the communication skills of their teachers, which indicates high extent communication skills. In other words, teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State have good communication skills, which impact positively on students’ academic performance.

**Research Question 5:** How well is the teacher committed to duty to influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 5:** Descriptive Statistics of Teachers Responses on Teachers’ Commitment to Duty

S/No.	Statement	Urban Teachers [n <sub>1</sub> = 230]			Rural Teachers [n <sub>2</sub> = 154]		
		x	SD	Decision	x	SD	Decision
21	I am very committed to teaching.	1.78	0.76	Poorly	1.82	1.13	Poorly
22	I feel comfortable and appreciated in my job.	2.14	1.28	Poorly	1.97	0.91	Poorly
23	I adequately prepare my lessons before delivery.	1.70	0.54	Poorly	1.35	0.84	Very Poorly
24	My salary and other incentives are encouraging.	1.84	0.83	Poorly	2.22	1.33	Poorly
25	I am punctual to class.	1.37	1.19	Very Poorly	1.45	0.65	Very Poorly
<b>Grand Mean and Decision</b>		<b>1.77</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>Poorly</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>Poorly</b>

Table 5 shows that teachers in urban schools have a grand mean of 1.77 and standard deviation of 0.92, while teachers in rural schools have a grand mean of 1.76 and standard deviation of 0.97 on their rating of the level of their commitment to duty, indicating poor commitment to duty. This implies that teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State are poorly committed to duty resulting from poor incentives and motivation.

**Hypothesis 1:** Teacher’s administration of students’ assignment does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 6:** t-test Analysis of Teacher’s Administration of Students’ Assignments

		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	20.868	.000	1.955	378	.048
	Equal variances not assumed			2.013	375.620	.045

Table 6 displays t-test analysis of teacher’s administration of students’ assignment with F = 20.868, p value of 0.000 (Sig.), t-ratio = 1.955, degrees of freedom (df) = 378 and p value of 0.48 (Sig. for 2-tailed). Thus, with t(378) = 1.955, p < .05 (2-tailed), the null hypothesis that “teacher’s administration of students’ assignment does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected. In other words, teacher’s administration of students’ assignment significantly influences students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. But since the results of table 1 show that teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State poorly administer students’ assignments, the implication is that students’ academic performance is negatively influenced.

**Hypothesis 2:** The workload of teachers does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 7:** t-test Analysis of Teacher’s Workload

		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	.204	.652	2.370	382	.018
	Equal variances not assumed			2.398	341.434	.017

Table 7 displays t-test analysis of teacher’s workload with  $F = 0.204$ , p value of 0.652 (Sig.), t-ratio = 2.370, degrees of freedom (df) = 382 and p value of 0.018 (Sig. for 2-tailed). Thus, with  $t(382) = 2.370$ ,  $p < .05$  (2-tailed), the null hypothesis that “the workload of teachers does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected. In other words, teachers’ workload significantly influences students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. But since the results of table 2 show that teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State have excess workload, teachers cannot effectively positively influence students’ academic performance.

**Hypothesis 3:** Teacher-students interaction does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 8:** t-test Analysis of Teacher-students Interaction

		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	2.693	.102	1.662	378	.097
	Equal variances not assumed			1.668	353.865	.096

Table 8 displays t-test analysis of teacher-students interaction with  $F = 2.693$ , p value of 0.102 (Sig.), t-ratio = 1.662, degrees of freedom (df) = 378 and p value of 0.097 (Sig. for 2-tailed). Thus, with  $t(378) = 1.662$ ,  $p > .05$  (2-tailed), the null hypothesis that “teacher-students interaction does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State” is not rejected. In other words, teacher-students interaction does not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Also the results of table 3 show that teacher-students interaction of public secondary schools in Rivers State is of low extent and cannot possibly influence students’ academic performance.

**Hypothesis 4:** Teacher’s communication skills do not significantly influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 9:** t-test Analysis of Teacher’s Communication Skills

		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	7.190	.008	4.087	378	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			4.015	323.828	.000

Table 9 displays t-test analysis of teacher’s communication skills with  $F = 7.190$ , p value of 0.008 (Sig.), t-ratio = 4.087, degrees of freedom (df) = 378 and p value of 0.000 (Sig. for 2-tailed). Thus, with  $t(378) = 4.087$ ,  $p < .05$  (2-tailed), the null hypothesis that “the teacher’s

communication skills do not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State" is rejected. In other words, teachers' communication skills significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The results of table 4 also show that teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State have good communication skills that can effectively and positively influence students' academic performance.

**Hypothesis 5:** Teacher's commitment to duty does not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 10:** t-test Analysis of Teacher's Commitment to Duty

		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	42.318	.000	.149	382	.027
	Equal variances not assumed			.142	268.089	.020

Table 10 displays t-test analysis of teacher's commitment to duty with  $F = 42.318$ ,  $p$  value of 0.000 (Sig.),  $t$ -ratio = 0.149, degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) = 382 and  $p$  value of 0.027 (Sig. for 2-tailed). Thus, with  $t(382) = 0.149$ ,  $p < .05$  (2-tailed), the null hypothesis that "teacher's commitment to duty does not significantly influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State" is rejected. In other words, teacher's commitment to duty significantly influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. But since the results of table 5 show that teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State are poorly committed to duty, these teachers cannot effectively and positively influence students' academic performance.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study analyzed teacher factors influencing students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State and found that teacher's administration of students' assignments, teachers' commitment to duty, and teacher-students interaction were poor and as such could not significantly influence students' academic performance. It was further found that teachers' communication skills were good and influenced students' academic performance, but that teachers had excessive workload that impinged their influence on students' academic performance. The study found that teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State poorly attend to students' assignments, which is a negative drag on students' academic performance. The study revealed that while some teachers gave very few assignments, others gave quite a good number without bothering whether or not students completed the assignments, yet many others did not score the assignments and thus did not give any feedback to students. Assignments are a critical ingredient for teaching and learning as they serve as a diagnostic tool for the teaching-learning process Supporting the results of this study, Molokomphale and Mavis (2014) declared that the non-scoring of exercises given to students by teachers smacks of lack of commitment to duty and makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to know if the students have mastered the skills taught or achieved the instructional objectives stipulated. Teachers' workload was found to significantly influence students' academic performance. The results showed that in some schools while the teacher-students ratio was up to 1:120, in other schools one teacher taught up to three subjects and several classes. Summarily, it was found that

the teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State had excess workload that impinged on their performance (which negatively influenced students' academic performance). The finding agrees with Nwikina and Nwanekezi (2010) who concluded that teachers' workload was one of the factors that inhibited students' academic achievement. Still supporting the results of this study, Rose and Sika (2019) declared that the negative impact of teachers' excessive workload is real and needs to be addressed to improve students' outcomes. These findings point to the negative impact of excessive workload for teachers on the teaching-learning process. Teacher-students interaction was found to be poor and that it does not have any significant influence on students' academic performance. In a normal situation, teachers are expected to ensure that they are meet students' needs, both academically and emotionally by creating learning environments that promote positive cultures with healthy interaction, as it can induce students to channel their educational goals appropriately (Aboho, Dodo, & Isa, 2014). The teacher-students interaction includes, among other things, teacher-pupil questioning, class work, take home assignments, marking of these work and providing prompt feedbacks, and friendliness of teachers and learners. This was found to be lacking in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

The study found that teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State have good communication skills, which influence students' academic performance to high extent. Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching, a teacher needs to be highly skilled in all these areas. Teachers with good communication skills always make learning easier and more understandable for students. McCarthy and Carter (2001) corroborated this finding when they declared that teachers' communication skills are important for teachers in the delivery of education to students. Additionally, Batenburg and Smal (1997) averred that good communication is not only needed for effective teaching and learning, but it is also very important in the effectiveness of every human concern in life.

Teachers' commitment to duty was found to be at its lowest ebb. The implications were, among others, that syllabuses were not completed on schedule, teachers were mostly late to duty, class presentations were predominantly rushed, and assignments were not attended to: All these will doubt negatively influence students' academic performance. In line with the results of this study, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) indicated that lack of motivation of teachers and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes towards students which in turn affect the performance of students academically.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this study have shown that teacher's administration of students' assignments, teachers' commitment to duty, and teacher-students interaction were poor and as such could not positively influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. It was further found that teachers' communication skills were good and influenced students' academic performance, but that teachers had excessive workload that impinged their influence on students' academic performance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Teachers should adequately motivated through good salary structures, in-service training, awards for excellence and punishment for truancy to enhance the teachers' commitment to duty which will, among others,

- (i) Make them punctual to duty
  - (ii) Cause to prepare adequately for their lessons
  - (iii) Enable them effectively administer students' assignments
2. Teachers' workload should be made appropriate (teacher-students ratio of 1:40; not more than 3 lessons of 1½ hours per week; etc.). This will enable them
- (i) Prepare adequately for their lessons
  - (ii) Enable them effectively administer students' assignments
  - (iii) Improve teacher-students interaction
3. Teachers' administration of students' assignments and teacher-students interaction should be improved upon through adequate motivation of teachers and making lighter teachers' workload.

## REFERENCES

- Aboho, M. R., Dodo, A. E., & Isa, E. L. (2014) Teacher-Student Class Interaction on Academic Performance: A Case of Senior Secondary Economics Students in Benue State. *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction*, 7(1), 1 - 16
- Achoka, J. S. K., Odebero, S., Maiyo, J. K. & Mualuko, N. J. (2007). Access to Basic Education in Kenya: Inherent Concerns. *Educational Research and Review*, 2 (10): 275-284.
- Afe, J. O. (2001). *Reflections on becoming a teacher and the challenges of teacher education*. Inaugural Lecture Series 64. Benin City: University of Benin.
- Batenburg, V., & Smal, J. A. (1997). Does a communication skills course influence medical students attitudes? *Med Teacher*, 19, 263 – 269.
- Boit, M., Njoki, A., & Chang'ach, J. K. (2012). The Influence of Examinations on the Stated Curriculum Goals. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(2): 179 – 182.
- Cowell R.N &Holsinger D.B (2000). *Positioning Secondary School Education in Developing Countries*. Paris: UNESCO, IIEP.
- Heck, R. H. (2009). Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement. Investigating a Multilevel Cross-Classified Model. *Journal of Education Administration*, 7(22): 227-249.
- Kimani, G. N., Kara, A. M., & Njagi, L. W. (2013). Teacher factors influencing students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(3), 145 -158.
- Lockheed, M. E., & Verspoor, A. (1991). *Improving primary education in developing countries*. World Bank/OUP.
- Malabo, B. (2012) *Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Grant-Aided and Non – Grant Aided Secondary Schools: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in the Western Province of Zambia*. A Master of Education Thesis: University of Zambia.
- McCarthy, M. R., & Carter, R. (2001). *Ten criteria for spoken grammar in E. Hinkel and S. Fotos (eds). New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Molokomphale, L. & Mavis, B. M. (2014). Investigation on Students Academic Performance for Junior Secondary Schools in Botswana. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 3, 111-127
- Musili A.M, (2015), *Influence of teacher related factors of students' performance in Kenya certificate of Secondary education in public Secondary schools in Kibwezi sub-county*. Kenya. Masters of Education Thesis. South Eastern Kenya University.
- Nwikina, L., & Nwanekezi, A. (2010). Management of job-related teacher burnout in Nigerian Schools. *Report and Opinion*, 2(8), 36 – 42.
- Obilor, E. I. (2019). *Essentials of Measurement and Evaluation*. Port Harcourt: Sabcos Printers and Publishers.
- Odhiambo, G. (2005). Elusive search for Quality Education. The Case of Quality Assurance and Teacher Accountability. *International Journal of Education Management*, 22(5): 417-431.
- Onsomu, E., Muthaka, D., Ngware, M. & Kosimbei, G. (2006). Financing of Secondary Education in Kenya: Costs and Options. *KIPPRA Discussion Paper No. 55*. Nairobi: Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis.
- Rose, A. B., & Sika, J. O. (2019). Determining Influence of Teacher's Workload on Academic Performance In Secondary Schools, Suba Sub-County Kenya. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 6(3) 287-295.
- Saunders, S., & Mill, M. A. (1999). *The knowledge of communication skills of secondary graduate student teachers and their understanding of the relationship between communication skills and teaching*. NZARE/AARE Conference Paper - Melbourne, Conference Paper Number MIL99660.
- Thomas, P., Dose, J. J., & Scott, K. S. (2002). Relationship between accountability, job satisfaction and Trust. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 13(3), 307 – 323.
- Tyler, K., & Boelter, C. (2008). Linking black middle school students' perceptions of teachers' expectations to academic engagement and efficacy. *The Negro Educational Review*, 59(1-2), 27 – 44.
- Worthington, A. (2001). An Empirical Survey of Frontier Efficiency Measurement Techniques in Education. *Education Economics*, 9(3): 245-268.
- Wößmann, L. (2004). Institutions for Better Education. *CESifo DICE Report 4*.
- Wright, S. P., Horn, S. P. & Sanders, W. C. (1997). Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in education*, 11, 57-67.