



Assessment of the Availability and Qualifications of Government Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Plateau State.

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ARTICLE'S INFO

Article No.: 021225024

Type: Research

Full Text: PDF, PHP, EPUB, MP3

DOI: [10.15580/gjer.2025.1.021225024](https://doi.org/10.15580/gjer.2025.1.021225024)

Accepted: 12/02/2025

Published: 19/02/2025

Keywords: Teacher availability, qualifications, government subject, public secondary schools.

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Article's QR code



ABSTRACT

This study examines the availability and qualifications of Government subject teachers in public secondary schools in Plateau State. Concerns about teacher shortages and inadequate qualifications have raised questions about the quality of instruction and student performance. Using a quantitative descriptive research design, data were collected from a sample of 316 teachers across 17 Local Government Areas. Three research questions guided the study using a developed questionnaire titled Government Teachers Availability and Qualification Questionnaire (GOTAAQQ), built in three clusters and structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree; the instrument was validated by experts in Faculty of Education with reliability co-efficient of 0.81 and 0.85 using Cronbach Alpha. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically Mean and Standard Deviation. Findings reveal a significant gender imbalance, with 94% of teachers being male, and a disproportionate concentration of qualified teachers in urban areas. While most teachers hold non-Government subject qualification and certification, only a few possess advanced degrees, and 29% lack professional certification, potentially affecting instructional quality. The study also highlights a critical shortage of Government teachers, leading to high student-teacher ratios and reduced individual attention. Respondents emphasized that teacher qualifications and availability significantly impact student academic performance. The study concludes that addressing these issues requires targeted interventions, including gender inclusivity, incentives for rural teachers, enhanced teacher training, and government policies to ensure proper certification and recruitment. These measures are essential for improving teaching effectiveness and fostering better academic outcomes in Plateau State's public secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, robust education systems are crucial for fostering sustainable development. The quality of education is inherently linked to teacher availability and qualifications, significantly impacting student achievement and personal growth (Hanushek, 2016; OECD, 2018; Akiri & Ogunmakin, 2022). More so, responsive and adequately resourced education systems are vital for sustainable development, necessitating continuous assessment and improvement at all levels (UNESCO, 2015).

However, public secondary schools in Nigeria, including those in Plateau State, face persistent challenges concerning teacher supply and competence, ultimately impacting student outcomes (Nwagwu, 2018; Sosu & Pheunpha, 2020; Yusuf, 2021). Plateau State mirrors the broader national struggle to provide quality education. Increased student enrollment, driven by internal migration and population growth, has worsened existing teacher shortages and qualification inadequacies, a situation similar to that observed in neighboring Bauchi State (Ibrahim & Bala, 2020). While national standards mandate a minimum of a National Certificate in Education (NCE) or a Bachelor's degree in Education for secondary school teachers (FRN, 2004), inconsistencies in adherence are evident, particularly between urban and rural schools (Okebukola, 2015; Adedeji & Akintunde, 2021). Rural schools often experience acute shortages of qualified teachers, which hinders the delivery of quality instruction (Ofoegbu, 2017).

This study empirically assesses the availability and qualifications of government teachers in public secondary schools in Plateau State to inform policymakers and educational administrators, and ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students within the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher availability and qualifications significantly impact educational quality. This review examines the teacher-to-student ratio, academic and professional qualifications of government subject teachers, and their influence on student performance in Plateau State. It also highlights urban-rural disparities in teacher distribution and qualifications, demonstrating their collective impact on educational outcomes.

Teacher-to-Student Ratio and Availability

The teacher-to-student ratio (TSR) is a key determinant of educational quality, as larger class sizes limit individualised instruction (Fakorede & Ajayi, 2017). In Plateau State, teacher shortages persist, with an estimated need for 12,000 additional teachers, particularly in public schools (Plateau Teachers Service Commission, 2019). This shortage is more pronounced in rural areas due to inadequate infrastructure and resources (Iji & Harbor-Peters, 2013). Research indicates that insufficient teachers lead to overcrowded classrooms and declining student performance (Umar, 2020). Addressing TSR

disparities is essential for improving education quality in Plateau State.

Teacher Qualifications and Their Impact

Teacher qualifications directly influence teaching effectiveness and student achievement. In Nigeria, the minimum requirement is typically a B.Ed. or equivalent (Umar, 2020), yet rural areas struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers (Aderinoye, 2018). Studies show that students taught by well-qualified teachers outperform those taught by less qualified ones (Ogunyemi, 2015). This is particularly crucial in government subjects, where deep subject knowledge enhances critical thinking and analytical skills (Fakorede & Ajayi, 2017). Continuous professional development further strengthens pedagogical competence, ensuring teachers remain effective amidst evolving educational standards (Iji & Harbor-Peters, 2013).

Impact of Teacher Availability and Qualifications on Student Performance

Research consistently links teacher shortages and low qualifications to poor student outcomes. Schools with insufficient qualified teachers report lower student performance, a trend observed in Plateau State (Plateau Teachers Service Commission, 2019; Oludipe & Oludipe, 2020; Pandén, 2022). Well-qualified teachers employ effective teaching strategies, assess student progress accurately, and create engaging learning environments, improving academic achievement (Ogunyemi, 2015). In government subjects, this is particularly vital, as students require a strong grasp of governance and political theory to succeed (Aderinoye, 2018).

Urban-Rural Disparities in Teacher Qualifications and Availability

Urban schools generally have better access to qualified teachers due to more attractive working conditions and proximity to educational institutions, whereas rural schools face recruitment challenges (Iji & Harbor-Peters, 2013). As a result, rural schools often rely on unqualified teachers, leading to lower student performance (Fakorede & Ajayi, 2017; Umar, 2020). These disparities worsen educational inequality, limiting rural students' access to quality education (Aderinoye, 2018). Addressing these gaps requires policy interventions to improve teacher recruitment, retention, and training in underserved areas.

Statement of the Problem

The bedrock of our society future hinges on the quality of education received by its secondary school students. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a critical vulnerability: a potential deficit in both the availability and qualifications of Government teachers within the public secondary education system. Reports of persistent teacher shortages are compounded by concerns about the adequacy of teacher training and

subject matter expertise resulting in the poor academic performance of students (Plateau State Ministry of Education, 2024). This situation raises alarming questions about the State's capacity to deliver quality education. If left unaddressed, these shortcomings threaten to undermine student academic performance, diminish future workforce preparedness, and aggravate existing socio-economic inequalities. A comprehensive assessment is urgently needed to determine the true extent of teacher availability and qualifications. Such an assessment will provide the empirical basis for informed policy interventions to address these challenges, ensuring that Plateau State's secondary schools are staffed by competent and readily available teachers, thereby safeguarding the future educational attainment and socio-economic prospects of its youth and society.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the teacher-to-student ratio in public secondary schools in Plateau State and identify potential shortages of government subject teachers.
2. To examine the academic and professional qualifications of government subject teachers in relation to national educational standards and regional requirements.
3. To assess the impact of teacher availability and qualifications on students' academic performance in government.

Research Questions

1. What is the teacher-to-student ratio in public secondary schools in Plateau State, and how does it affect the availability of government subject teachers?
2. What are the academic and professional qualifications of teachers teaching government in public secondary schools, and do they meet national educational standards?
3. How does the availability and qualification of government subject teachers influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Plateau State?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to assess the availability and qualifications of government teachers in Plateau State. Consistent with Nworgu (2015), this design uses quantitative data to describe the characteristics of a population based on a sample. The target population was all 516 government teachers in public secondary schools in Plateau State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to ensure proportional representation across the state's three educational zones. First, stratified sampling was applied, using the educational zones as strata. Next, proportionate stratified sampling, followed by simple random sampling, was used to select participants. An 61.24% sample was drawn, resulting in a sample size of 316

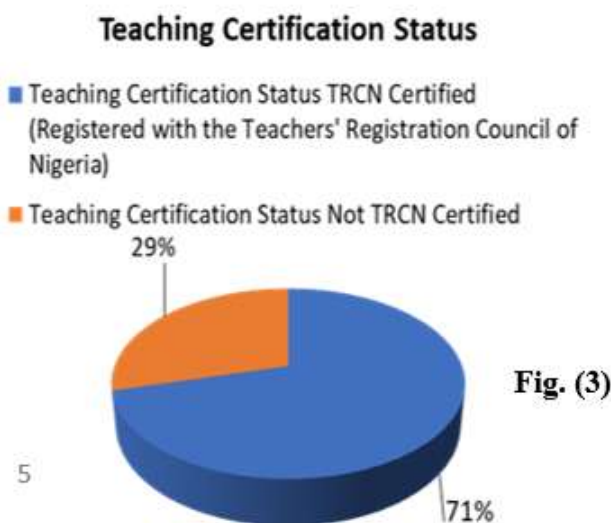
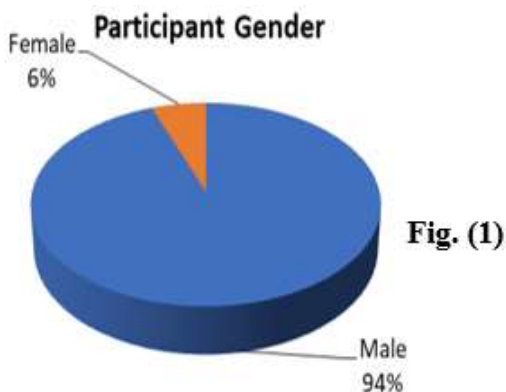
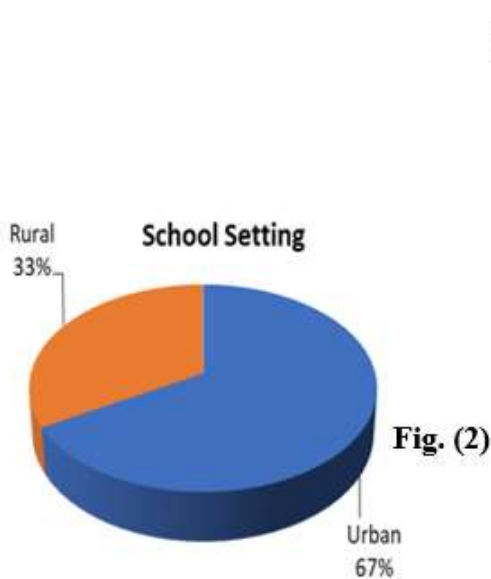
teachers which was distributed across the 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the State. Specifically, in the Northern Zone, a total of 116 teachers were selected, with specific numbers from each LGA: Bassa (7), Barkin Ladi (7), Jos East (6), Jos North (15), Jos South (13), and Riyom (4). Within the Central Zone, 43 teachers were sampled: Bokkos (11), Mangu (13), Pankshin (9), Kanke (5), and Kanam (5). Likewise, for the Southern Zone, 31 teachers were chosen: Langtang North (11), Langtang South (6), Mikang (3), Shendam (4), Qua'an Pan (3), and Wase

(4). This proportional stratified sampling approach ensured representation from each LGA.

Data were collected using a self-developed instrument, titled Government Teachers Availability and Qualification Questionnaire (GOTAAQQ). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically Mean and Standard Deviation.

RESULTS

Teachers Demographic Characteristics (Field Study, 2024)



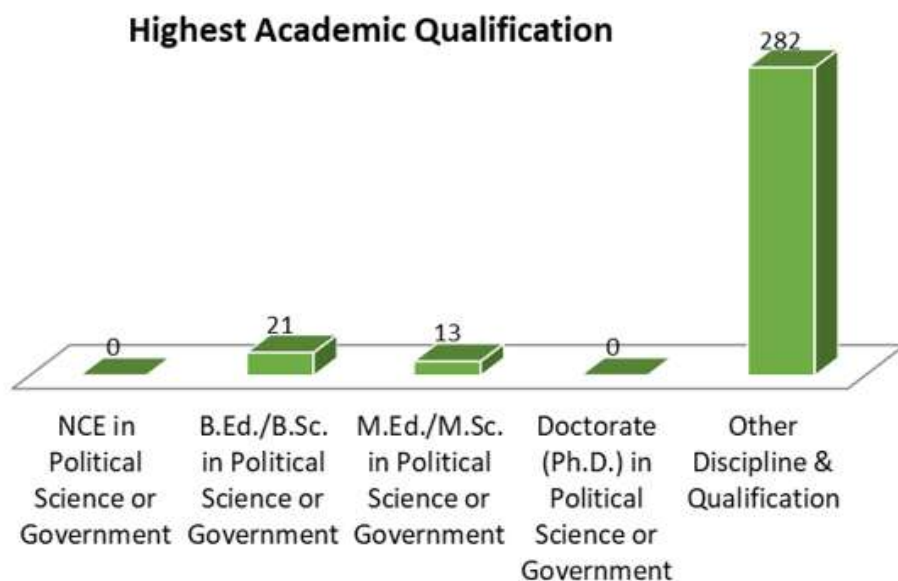


Fig. (5)

The demographic characteristics of respondents highlight gender distribution, school setting, academic qualifications, teaching certification, and teaching experience. The findings reveal a male-dominated profession, with 94% of teachers being male and only 6% female (Fig. 1), indicating a significant gender imbalance. Regarding school setting, 67% of teachers work in urban areas, while 33% teach in rural schools (Fig. 2), suggesting a concentration of qualified teachers in urban schools.

Academic qualification data show that 282 teachers hold non-Government subject qualification and certification; 21 teachers possess a B.Ed./B.Sc., and 13 have an M.Ed./M.Sc. in Political Science or

Government discipline, with no respondents holding a doctorate (Fig. 3). This suggests that most of the teachers' do not meet the required qualification and certification, and a number few have advanced degrees, potentially affecting subject mastery. Additionally, 71% of teachers are TRCN-certified, while 29% lack formal accreditation (Fig. 4), which may impact instructional quality.

Research Questions 1

What is the teacher-to-student ratio in public secondary schools in Plateau State, and how does it affect the availability of Government subject teachers?

Table 2.: Teacher-to-Student Ratio of Government Subject Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	There are enough Government teachers to manage students effectively	316	1.34	0.65
2.	My class size meets the recommended teacher-student ratio.	316	1.21	0.41
3.	Teachers' workload is reasonable for effective teaching.	316	1.64	0.63
4.	Teacher shortages limit individual student attention.	316	3.50	0.52
5.	The Government recruits teachers to ensure adequate staffing.	316	1.45	0.50

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 1 presents the perceptions of respondents regarding the adequacy of Government teachers in managing students effectively. The findings indicate that respondents generally disagree that there are enough government teachers to manage students effectively (M = 1.34, SD = 0.65) and that class sizes meet the recommended teacher-student ratio (M = 1.21, SD = 0.41). Additionally, teachers perceive that their workload is not reasonable for effective teaching (M = 1.64, SD = 0.63). A notable concern is that

teacher shortages significantly limit individual student attention (M = 3.50, SD = 0.52), suggesting a considerable challenge in maintaining effective student engagement. Furthermore, respondents disagreed with the notion that the government recruits teachers adequately to ensure sufficient staffing (M = 1.45, SD = 0.50). These findings suggest that teacher shortages are a critical issue affecting public secondary schools.

Research Question 2

What are the academic and professional qualifications of teachers teaching Government in public secondary

schools, and do they meet national educational standards?

Table 3.: Academic and Professional Qualifications of Teachers Teaching Government

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1.	I have the qualifications to teach government effectively.	316	1.72	0.91
2.	My training prepared me to teach at the secondary level.	316	1.91	0.90
3.	I regularly participate in professional development.	316	1.22	0.41
4.	Seminars and workshops improve my teaching methods.	316	1.13	0.34
5.	My qualifications enhance my lesson delivery.	316	1.93	0.85

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2 highlights the qualifications and professional preparedness of teachers teaching Government. The responses indicate that while teachers believe they have the qualifications to teach government effectively ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 0.91$), their training in secondary-level instruction appears to be somewhat inadequate ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 0.90$). Participation in professional development activities is also low ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 0.41$), though teachers acknowledge that seminars and workshops help improve their teaching methods ($M = 1.13$, $SD = 0.34$). Moreover, the findings suggest that

teachers recognise the role of their qualifications in enhancing lesson delivery ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.85$). These results imply that while teachers possess the required credentials, continuous professional development opportunities remain limited.

Research Question 3: How does the availability and qualification of Government subject teachers influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Plateau State?

Table 3.: Influence of Teacher Availability and Qualification on Student Academic Performance

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	The availability of Government teachers affects student performance.	316	3.57	0.50
2.	Qualified teachers improve student outcomes.	316	3.37	0.66
3.	Teacher shortages result in poor academic performance.	316	3.58	0.52
4.	My qualifications enhance teaching effectiveness and student success.	316	3.37	0.48
5.	Professional development improves teaching skills and student achievement.	316	3.77	0.42

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 3 examines how teacher availability and qualifications impact student academic performance. The findings suggest that respondents strongly agree that the availability of government teachers affects student performance ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.50$) and that qualified teachers contribute to better student outcomes ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.66$). Additionally, teacher shortages are perceived to result in poor academic performance ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.52$). Teachers also acknowledge that their qualifications enhance teaching effectiveness and student success ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.48$). Notably, professional development is seen as a crucial factor in improving teaching skills and student achievement ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.42$). These findings reinforce the importance of having well-trained and adequately available teachers to ensure better academic performance in secondary schools.

education. Findings reveal a significant gender imbalance, with government subject teaching largely male-dominated. This trend, consistent with Aderinoye (2018), may limit gender diversity in classrooms, affecting students' perspectives and experiences.

The study also highlights disparities in teacher distribution, with a higher concentration in urban schools. This supports Iji and Harbor-Peters (2013), who found that rural schools struggle to attract qualified teachers due to unfavourable working conditions and resource limitations. Consequently, rural students face reduced access to quality education, exacerbating educational inequalities.

Regarding academic qualifications, most teachers meet minimum requirements, but few have advanced degrees. This aligns with Umar (2020), who noted that while Nigerian teachers often have basic credentials, a lack of advanced training may limit subject mastery. Fakorede and Ajayi (2017) emphasizes that Government subject require deep political and governance knowledge, which advanced qualifications can enhance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study aligns with existing literature on teacher availability, qualifications, and their impact on

The study also finds that many teachers lack professional certification, which could impact teaching effectiveness. Ogunyemi (2015) underscores the role of certification and ongoing professional development in improving teaching quality and student outcomes. The findings suggest a need for structured training programs to strengthen instructional skills.

Teacher shortages present another challenge, with respondents noting that large class sizes hinder effective student engagement. This aligns with Fakorede and Ajayi (2017), who argue that high teacher-student ratios reduce individual attention, affecting learning outcomes. Similarly, Oludipe and Oludipe (2020) link teacher shortages to lower student performance.

Furthermore, teacher qualifications significantly influence academic performance. Respondents emphasised that students perform better when taught by qualified teachers, corroborating Ogunyemi (2015). The study also highlights the importance of professional development, echoing Iji and Harbor-Peters (2013), who stress continuous training to meet evolving educational standards.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore several critical issues in the teaching of Government subjects in public secondary schools in Plateau State. The gender imbalance, urban-rural disparity in teacher distribution, and the predominance of teachers with only minimum qualifications highlight the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges. The lack of advanced academic qualifications and professional certification among a significant portion of teachers may also impact the quality of education and student outcomes.

The study also reveals that teacher shortages and inadequate professional development opportunities are significant concerns. These issues are likely to affect the availability of qualified teachers and their ability to deliver effective instruction, ultimately influencing student academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Efforts should be made to encourage more females to enter the teaching profession, particularly in government subjects.
2. To address the urban-rural disparity in teacher distribution, the government should implement incentives such as higher salaries, housing allowances, and professional development opportunities for teachers working in rural areas.
3. The government and educational institutions should provide opportunities for teachers to pursue advanced degrees and continuous professional development.

4. There should be a concerted effort to ensure that all teachers are TRCN-certified.
5. The government should prioritise the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers to address teacher shortages.
6. Regular professional development programs, such as seminars and workshops, should be organised to enhance teachers' skills and teaching methods.
7. The government should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the impact of these interventions on teacher quality and student outcomes.

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Cite this Article: Panden, PE; Dimka, YJ; Solomon, YM; Ngyel, K (2025). Assessment of the Availability and Qualifications of Government Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Plateau State. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 15(1): 17-24, <https://doi.org/10.15580/gjer.2025.1.021225024>.