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ASSESSING THE PREPAREDNESS AND IMPACT OF NCE-TRAINED MATHEMATICS TEACHERS ON JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study assessed the preparedness and impact of NCE-trained mathematics teachers on Junior Secondary School students' academic achievement in Benue State. Both cross-sectional survey and experimental research designs were employed for the study. The population of the study consisted of all 45,172 JSS 2 students in 749 secondary schools. A sample of 360 students was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data was collected using the Mathematic Achievement Test (MAT) and questionnaire. Data was analysed using charts, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, and simple regression analysis. The study revealed that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program in the study area was low. Furthermore, there was no effectiveness of NCE-trained teachers in delivering Mathematics instruction. However, the study established that there was a significant impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in the study area. The study further showed that the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of Mathematics instruction were absence of education professional academy, lack of professional and in-service trainings, poor welfares, politicising education among others. The study concluded that improvement in the level of training of NCE Mathematics teachers will lead to higher academic achievement among students in junior secondary schools in the study area. The study recommended that the government restructure the NCE program and ensure that only qualified teachers are allowed to teach at all levels of education in the study area.*

KEYWORDS: Preparedness, NCE-Trained Mathematics Teachers, Academic, Achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a critical determinant of national progress and individual prosperity. As Woessmann (2015) buttressed, disregarding the economic aspect of education would jeopardise the fortune of the upcoming generations. Therefore, investment in secondary education is necessary for economic advancement (Grant, 2017). Consequently, the curriculum at the Junior secondary school level is both pre-vocational and academic, and mathematics is one of the core subjects at this level of education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013; Olugbenga, Yakubu & Ali, 2023). According to Anyagh, Abari and Ikyanyi (2023), Mathematics is the basis of science and technology, and the useful role of Mathematics to science and technology is multidimensional and diverse that no area of science, technology and business enterprise escapes its application. Generally, Ochoche and Oguche (2022) described Mathematics as indispensable in humans day to day activities and the basis of science and technology as well as a core subject in the secondary school curriculum.

Bearing in mind the importance of Mathematics, the subject has to be effectively taught for better students' academic achievement in the subject. Academic achievement, according to Kenni (2020), is the extent to which students realise the set learning objectives. Adejumo (2013) related academic achievement to the knowledge acquired or skills shown in the school subject. Alata (2016) was certain that what students learn and how they are taught affects their academic achievement and goes a long way in transforming their future for better living in Nigerian society. However, Mateya, Utete, and Ilukena (2016) and Yahya (2021) were worried that students' achievement in Mathematics continues to be poor, especially in national and international examinations. Hafiz and Hina (2016) admitted that students' failure in Mathematics at basic and secondary levels is really disturbing for all.

Understandably, the success of students in any academic undertaking has always been of special attention to educators, parents and society at large (Ochoche & Oguche, 2022). Therefore, stakeholders in education continuously question why the education system cannot meet the expectations of the children, families, and society at large (Yahya, 2021). Excitingly, poor achievement of students in Mathematics may be addressed if special instructions and programs are put in place to enable the teachers to acquire the skills necessary to assist students develop essential Mathematical skills (Beyoh & Akwo, 2024). Hence, the starting point for better students' achievement in Mathematics is through teacher training, given that training generally equips teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to impact students. This explains why teachers are recognised as professionals who are trained and equipped to ensure quality instruction in the education system (Arongi & Ogbadu, 2010).

In Nigeria, the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) program is designed to prepare teachers for effective instruction delivery in various subjects, including mathematics. As rightly stated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (2012), NCE is a specialised teacher education program that is designed to prepare candidates to acquire attitudes, skills and the knowledge needed for effective and efficient teaching in Nigerian schools. This implies that NCE is a qualification awarded to individuals who have completed a program of study in a Nigerian college of education. The NCE program generally takes two to three years to complete, depending

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on the nature of the course. During the program, candidates are exposed to a range of subjects, including teaching methods, educational psychology, educational technology, curriculum development, and subject-specific content (NCCE, 2012). After completing the NCE program, candidates are expected to possess the necessary skills to plan and deliver effective lessons, manage a classroom, assess students' progress, and create a positive learning environment that facilitates improvement in students' academic achievement. The certificate is recognised by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and is a requirement for teaching in Nigeria's primary and secondary schools. Therefore, this study assessed the preparedness and impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on the academic achievement of Junior Secondary School students in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Better academic achievement of students in Mathematics involves a high level of preparation on the side of teachers and students. Precisely, teachers have prominent roles in determining the level of students' achievement in the subject. It is in the realisation of this fact that Madu (2016) insisted that the nature of teacher's preparation in both pedagogy and subject matter is crucial in determining students' rate of achievements in the subject. Teachers' preparedness has to do with teachers acquiring content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge and the pedagogic content knowledge (Madu, 2016). The essence of diverse knowledge acquired by teachers during preparedness is to assist teachers in being effective in the teaching and learning process.

On the contrary, when teachers have inadequate knowledge of the teaching and learning process, they cannot effectively teach, and it can create great problems for the academic achievement of students in that particular subject and Mathematics are no an exceptions. Therefore, in Benue State, despite the efforts to enhance teacher education through the NCE program, concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy of NCE-trained teachers and its subsequent impact on students' performance. Therefore, this study investigated whether Mathematics teachers trained under the NCE program are adequately prepared and if their level of teaching enhances the academic achievement of Junior Secondary School students in Benue State.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the research project were:

1. To assess the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of NCE-trained teachers in delivering Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State.
3. To analyse the impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State.
4. To identify the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers in the effective delivery of mathematics instruction in junior secondary schools in Benue State.

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Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised in line with the objectives of the study:

1. What is the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program?
2. How effective are NCE-trained teachers in delivering mathematics instruction at junior secondary schools in Benue State?
3. What is the impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State?
4. What are the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers in the effective delivery of mathematics instruction in junior secondary schools in Benue State?

Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis for the study was formulated as follows:

$H_{O1:}$ There is no significant impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Preparedness

Teacher preparedness, according to Ondimu (2018) and Damien and Claire (2022), embraces skills, attitudes, and knowledge acquired by teachers, which are mainly used to improve teaching and learning outcomes in education. In inclusive education, Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001) viewed teacher preparedness as the level of training and skills that teachers possess to effectively support learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms. In the same vein, William, Andrew and Ashley (2023) considered teacher preparedness as what the teacher brings to the classroom from pre-service training and on-the-job learning. According to Yimin, Jiahe, Jiani and Siying (2024), preparedness to teach is individual teachers' psychological preparation. So, active teaching requires great teacher preparedness that will result in the effective use of instructional development and practices that lead to adequate classroom instruction (Urevbu, 2015). That is, teacher preparedness enhances the efficiency of teaching tasks by enabling teachers to make relevant lesson plan that increases their confidence in the implementation of curriculum instruction.

Students' Academic Achievement

Achievement can be viewed as feedback derived from the curriculum and instruction program. However, students' academic achievement has been defined by different scholars in different ways. Ifeason (2012) defined students' academic achievement as a change in behaviour demonstrated by the learner at the end of a given period. Williams (2018) contended that when talking about academic achievement, it is frequently related to students' success in scientific

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attainments and skills, impressive test scores and students' capability to lead if assigned to. According to Okosun and Isabur (2023), academic achievement is the level of a student's accomplishment in their assignments and coursework. Apparently, achievement results are made known in the form of letter or number grades and side notes that describe how well a student has done (Bell, 2012). That is, academic achievement may be a person's level of efficiency and understanding after learning has taken place.

Overview of Mathematics Education in Nigeria

Mathematics is a science of magnitude and number, and it is the science that sustains man's day-to-day activities (Adamu, 2024). Mathematics is considered the foundation for the advancement of science and technology of any nation. Its significance to the development of the nation's economic and technical progress makes it a compulsory subject at both junior and senior secondary school levels (Adigun, 2018). According to Kyari and Obed (2018), mathematics has continued to receive attention in Nigeria since independence; this is because mathematics is the basis for scientific and technological breakthroughs. Obviously, before the introduction of formal education, mathematics was employed principally in taking stock of daily farming and trading activities. That is, most traditional societies have their number systems, which were either base five or twenty. This was generally reflected in determining market days and counting systems. Nevertheless, the advent of the missionaries brought formal education to Nigeria, and mathematics has occupied a central position in the school curriculum to date, even with the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education.

Professional Development of Mathematics Teachers in Nigeria

Effective teaching and learning of Mathematics at the junior secondary school level require a good assessment instrument to determine the extent of mathematics achievement of students at each stage of their educational program (Nwuchegbuo & West, 2023). As such, teacher training affords teachers with opportunities to acquire theoretical knowledge vital for effective teaching and learning (Beyoh & Akwo, 2024). Adelodun (2014) admitted that the importance of Mathematics calls for having versatile and resourceful graduates required for economic development. In Nigeria, teachers' professional development has two main phases: initial preparation which usually takes the form of full-time residential pre-service programmes in teachers' colleges or universities and continuing professional development which may be regarded as all forms of 'in service', continuing education', 'on-the-job-training', 'workshop', post-qualification courses' among others (Kyari & Obed, 2018).

Problems Faced by Teachers for the Effective Delivery of Instruction

The nature of teachers in any educational system defines the quality of the system itself. However, there are some problems that are usually faced by teachers in secondary schools. Among these problems is inadequate funding of teachers' education programmes, which continued to be a serious obstacle affecting teachers' education in Nigeria and responsible for inferior education that students sometimes received, which is incapable of ensuring enduring growth and development (Joseph, 2017). Jason and Kerry (2011) reported that inadequate training of teachers and deficient financial motivation are the reasons for the dearth of competent teachers teaching in secondary

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schools. Some of the challenges facing effective teaching and learning, according to Akinduyo (2014), include:

i. Poor wages, insufficient motivation and poor welfares

ii. Low self-esteem in society

iii. Lack of specialised education schools

iv. Bad re-enforcement, which is negatively affecting the teaching profession

v. Lack of professional and in-service training

vi. Low professional status

vii. Inadequate budgetary allocation to the educational system

viii. Porous entry qualification

Empirical Studies

The attainment of any education goal in terms of students' high standard in academics, moral, social and physical achievements have to do with proper appraisal and adequate reward of teachers just like their counterparts in other sectors of the economy (Oduwaiye & Oyedepo, 2017). This is because teachers are essential in the implementation of the curriculum in both public and private schools for the effective functioning of such schools (Shehu, 2020). This means that quality teachers determine students' academic achievement. Therefore, a few studies in different countries in Africa were carried out in order to establish the relationship between the level of teacher's preparedness and students' academic achievement.

In Ghana, Patrick, Michael, Bismark, Joseph and Ishmael (2024) conducted a study in the Asunafo North Municipality, Ghana, to determine the impact of teacher qualifications on students' achievement in mathematics classrooms. The study found that students taught by highly qualified teachers achieved higher than those taught by less qualified teachers. The study resolved that teacher qualification is a key determinant of students' academic achievement in mathematics. Also in Ghana, a study conducted by Ebenezer, Daniel, Sophia, Comfort and Margaret (2015) to investigate relationship between the quality teachers and students' academic performance in Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) Junior High Schools indicated that despites the high quality of teachers in respect of educational and professional qualifications, students' academic achievement were not the reflection of the quality of teachers.

In Cameroon, Beyoh and Akwo (2024) examined the influences of teacher training in mathematics on public secondary school students' academic achievement in the Bamenda III Subdivision, Cameroon. The results of the study indicated that students' academic achievement has been greatly determined by the teacher's professional development, in-service training in mathematics and teaching practice in mathematics.

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In Rwanda, Damien and Claire (2022) examined the effect of teachers' preparedness on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Gatsibo district in Rwanda. The study submitted that students' academic achievement has a significant relationship with teacher level of preparedness. Also in Rwanda, a study by Casian, Mugo and Claire (2021) assessed the impact of teacher qualification on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Gasabo district in Rwanda and established that there was a significant relationship between teacher qualification and students' academic achievement.

In Zimbabwe, Machingambi, Oyedele, Chikwature and Oyedele (2016) analysed the impact of teachers' qualification on students' achievement in 'A'-level Science subjects at selected secondary schools in the Mutare District, Manic land Province in Zimbabwe. The study showed that teaching qualification has a significant impact on students' academic achievement, given that students taught by qualified teachers outperformed those taught by unqualified teachers.

In Nigeria, Oluwole, Idikwu, Bawa and Owobu (2017) examined the impact of teachers' professional improvement on students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa State. The study established that teachers' attendance at conferences and workshops has a momentous impact on students' academic achievement in secondary school in both states. Also in Nigeria but in a different state, Madu (2016) assessed the impact of mathematics teachers' preparedness on effectiveness from students' point of view in secondary schools in Kano State. The findings of the study revealed that the ineffectiveness of mathematics teachers was a result of insufficient preparation for lessons.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted both a cross-sectional survey and experimental research designs. A cross-sectional survey design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analysing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. In contrast, experimental research designs are systematic approaches employed to examine cause-and-effect relationships by manipulating independent variables and observing their impact on dependent variables, ensuring validity and reliability through controlled conditions and random assignment.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Benue State, Nigeria. Benue State is one of the North Central states in Nigeria, with a population of 4,253,641, based on the 2006 census. The State was created in 1976 and was among seven states created at that time with Makurdi as its headquarters. The State is divided into three educational zones: A, B, and C.

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Population

The population for this study consisted of all the students enrolled in Junior Secondary School Two (JSS 2) in Benue State in the 2023/2024 Academic Session. There were 45,172 JSS 2 students (22,654 boys and 22510 girls) enrolled in the Junior Secondary Schools in the 749 secondary schools in the State at the time of this study (Benue State Teaching Service Board Statistics Unit, 2024).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of 360 students was used for this study. Two schools were selected from each of the three educational zones in Benue State using a simple random sampling technique; however, each of the selected schools was a co-educational school. Then, the sample of 60 students (30 males and 30 females) was randomly selected from each school in order to ensure homogeneity. The students were selected from JSS II because it is the middle class at Junior Secondary School level, and they were about to cover the syllabus of Junior Secondary School.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two instruments were designed and constructed for the data collection. The instruments were the Mathematics Achievement Test (MAT) and a questionnaire. The Mathematics Achievement Test (MAT) was a 25-item multiple choice objective test with four options (A, B, C and D), and it was used for both achievement and retention tests. MAT was based on the Junior Secondary School curriculum. It was structured according to lower-order questions based on knowledge and comprehension of the cognitive domain and higher-order questions covering applications and analysis. The questionnaire was used to source information from respondents, and it consisted of four sections (A, B, C and D).

Validation of Instrument

The MAT and questionnaire were presented to three experts, two in Mathematics education and one in measurement and evaluation, for validation. The experts performed a face validation and scrutinised the entire instrument and advice in terms of scope and coverage, content relevance, ambiguity, and vagueness of expressions. The experts' corrections and suggestions were used to restructure the MAT and questionnaire accordingly.

Reliability of the instrument

The MAT was administered twice to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Kuder-Richardson ($K\text{-}R_{(21)}$) was used to estimate the internal consistency (reliability) as 0.88 for MAT, and Cronbach Alfa was used to calculate the reliability as 0.86 for the questionnaire was sufficient.

Method of Data Collection

NCE-trained Mathematics teachers in each of the selected schools were used to teach. Teachers were allowed to select groups as it suited their classes and learning environment, and they were supervised by the principal researcher and co-researcher. The MAT and questionnaire were

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administered after the teaching. MAT takes a maximum of 100%. The trained research assistants were also assisted by the principal researcher in administering, collecting, and scoring the MAT and questionnaire for analysis.

Statistical Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of charts, frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviations were used to answer research questions. The inferential statistics of simple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis formulated at a 0.05 level of significance.

The model for the study has been expressed as students' academic achievement (dependent variable) is the function of the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers (independent variable). Thus, the simple linear regression model is explicitly expressed as:

$$SAA = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{LPMT} + \varepsilon \quad \text{..... (1)}$$

where;

SAA = Students academic achievement

LPMT = Level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers

α = Constant,

β_1 = Parameter estimated

ε = Error term

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RESULTS/FINDINGS

The level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program.

The level of preparedness of mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program is shown in Figure 1.

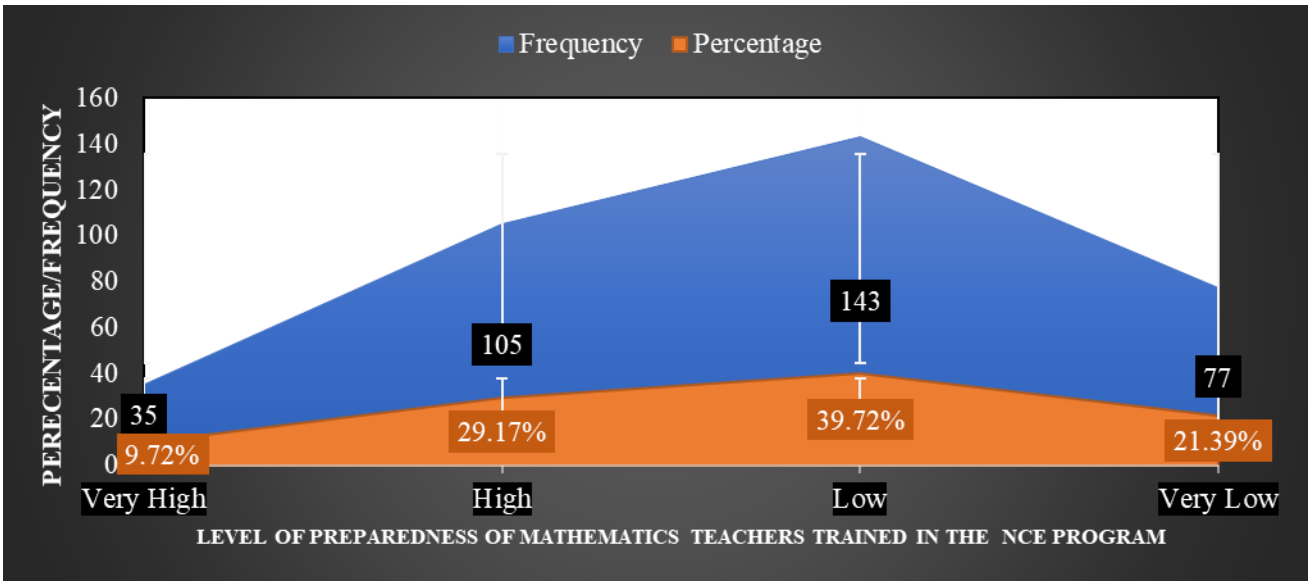

Figure 1: Area chart showing the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program

The level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program as shown in Figure 1 showed that 143 respondents representing 39.72% were of the opinion that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program was low whereas 105 respondents which constituted 29.17% opposed that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program was high. Furthermore, 77 respondents, constituting 21.39%, believed that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program was very low, while 35 respondents, constituting 9.72%, accepted that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program was very high. This means that most (220) of the respondents, which constituted 61.11%, accepted that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program in the study area was low.

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Effectiveness of NCE-trained teachers in delivering Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary School in Benue State

The effectiveness of NCE-trained teachers in delivering mathematics instruction in junior secondary school in Benue State is reflected in Figure 2.

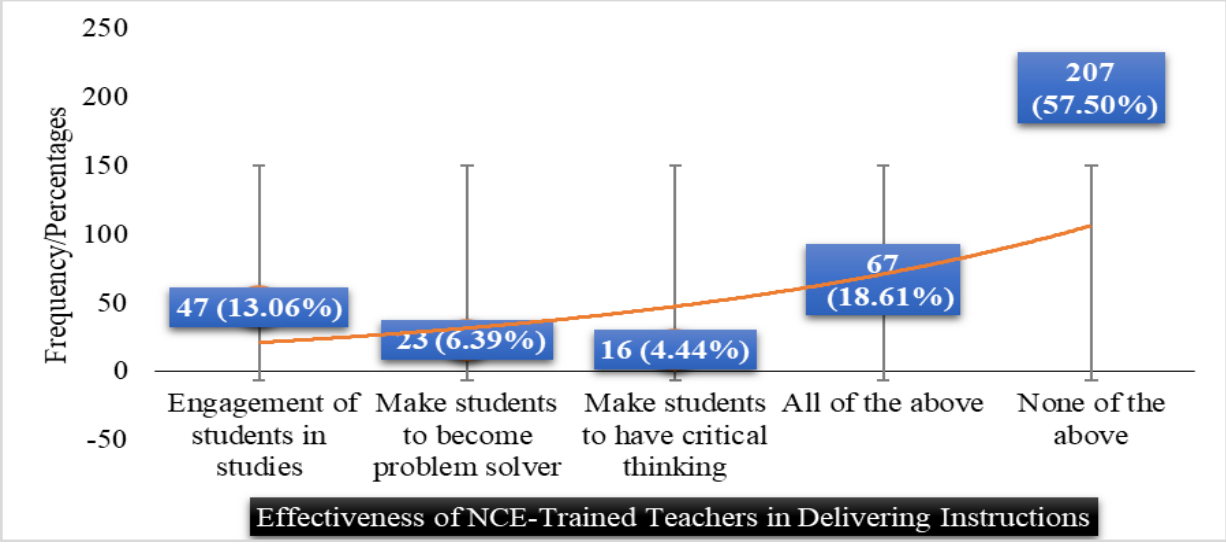

Figure 2: Line chart showing the effectiveness of NCE-trained teachers in delivering Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary School

Figure 2 above indicated that 47 (13.06%) of respondents were of the view that there was effectiveness of delivering instructions by NCE-trained teachers in terms of engagement of students in studies and 23 (6.39%) of the respondents agreed that instructions delivered by NCE-trained teachers make students to become problem solvers as well as 16 (4.44%) of the respondents supported that instructions delivered by NCE-trained teachers make students to have critical thinking. Based on all the items, only 67 (18.61%) of the respondents accepted all the items that there was effective delivery of instructions in respect of engagement of students in studies, making students become problem solvers and develop critical thinking. Meanwhile, the majority (207) of the respondents, representing 57.50%, rejected that there was no effectiveness of NCE-trained teachers in delivering Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary School in the study area.

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Impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Junior Secondary Schools

The impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State has been determined using simple regression analysis as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Mathematics

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	46.99779	1.610149	29.18847	0.0000
LPMT	4.089438	0.602513	6.787305	0.0000
R-squared	0.514009			
Adjusted R-squared	0.51535			
F-statistic	46.06750	Durbin-Watson stat		1.809582
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: *Computed by Researchers using E.view Version 10*

The results of simple regression in Table 1 showed that the level of preparedness of NCE-trained teachers (LPMT) was positive and significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance, meaning that a unit increase in the level of preparedness of NCE-trained mathematics teachers will increase students' academic achievement by 4.089438. This implies that improvement in the level of preparedness of NCE-trained teachers will result in better students' academic achievement in the study area. The adjusted R-square was 0.51535, meaning that about 52% variations in the students' academic achievement were explained by the level of preparedness of NCE-trained mathematics (explanatory variable) included in the model, while 48% constituted other factors that were responsible for variations in students' academic achievement not included in the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic value of 1.809582 was within the acceptable range of between 1.50 - 2.50, meaning that there was no serial correlation within the data. Similarly, the F-statistic was 46.06750 with Prob (F-statistic) of 0.000000, which was significant at a 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was a significant impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State.

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Problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State

The problems faced by NCE-trained teachers in the effective delivery of mathematics instruction in junior secondary schools in Benue State are as shown in Figure 3.

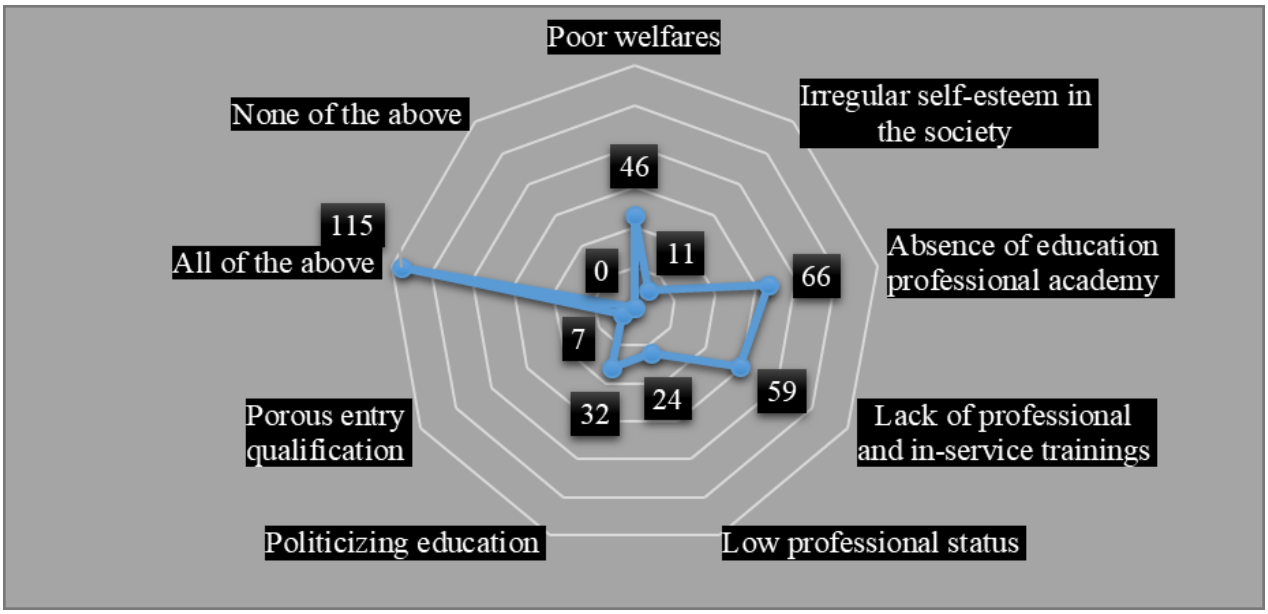

Figure 3: Radar showing Problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of Mathematics instruction

Figure 3 indicated that the absence of education professional academy, lack of professional and in-service trainings, poor welfares, politicising education, low professional status, irregular self-esteem in the society and porous entry qualification were the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary Schools in the study area given that 66, 59, 46, 32, 24, 11 and 7 of the respondents which represented by 18.33%, 16.39%, 12.78%, 8.89%, 6.67%, 3.06% and 1.94% respectively agreed with those items. In a similar vein, 115 (31.94%) of the respondents also accepted that all the items were the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of Mathematics instruction.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study revealed that most (220) of the respondents, which constituted 61.11%, accepted that the level of preparedness of Mathematics teachers trained in the NCE program in the study area was low. This implies that there was inadequate training of teachers that can lead to a dearth of competent teachers teaching in secondary schools in the study area. Thus, this finding confirmed that of Jason and Kerry (2011) that inadequate training of teachers and deficient

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financial motivation are the reasons for the dearth of competent teachers teaching in secondary schools.

Furthermore, the the majority (207) of the respondents,, representing 57.50%,, rejected the idea that NCE-trained teachers were ineffective in delivering Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary Schools in the study area. This finding resonates with Madu's (2016) finding that the ineffectiveness of mathematics teachers resulted from insufficient preparation for lessons.

Given the hypothesis formulated and tested, the result showed that there was a significant impact of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers on students' academic achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State. This implies that improvement in the level of training of NCE Mathematics teachers will lead to higher academic achievement among students. This finding is consistent with that of Patrick, Michael, Bismark, Joseph and Ishmael (2024); Beyoh and Akwo (2024); Damien and Claire (2022) that the students' academic achievement can be greatly determined by the teacher's level of professional development.

The study further established that absence of education professional academy, lack of professional and in-service trainings, poor welfares, politicising education, low professional status, irregular self-esteem in the society and porous entry qualification were the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of Mathematics instruction in Junior Secondary Schools in the study area. Thus, these findings corresponded with that of Akinduyo (2014) that poor welfares, politicising education, low professional status, irregular self-esteem in the society among others are the problems faced by NCE-trained teachers for the effective delivery of instruction.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The findings of this study will encourage the government to restructure the NCE program and guide the stakeholders in education to ensure that only qualified teachers are allowed to teach at all levels. In addition, the study's findings will encourage the government to embark on state-wide screening of teachers to identify unqualified teachers in public schools. The government will also ensure that NCE trainee teachers who are in teaching practice undergo intensive supervision and guidance on-the-field training by assigning graduate teachers as supervisors for each trainee.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that improvement in the level of training of NCE Mathematics teachers will lead to higher academic achievement among students in the study area. Hence, the study recommended that the government should restructure the NCE program and also ensure that only qualified teachers are allowed to teach at all levels of education. The government should also embark on state-wide screening of the teachers to fish out the unqualified teachers in public schools and ensure that NCE trainee teachers who are on teaching practice undergo intensive supervision and the welfare of NCE-trained Mathematics teachers is given the needed attention.

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