

INVESTIGATING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER'S GENDER AND EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING TYPES OF WRITING IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Stiti Pragyan Mahapatra¹, Jagannath Pradhan²

^{1,2} Gandhi Institute for Education and Technology, Baniatangi, Bhubaneswar

ABSTRACT: Gaining writing proficiency is essential for success in both the classroom and the workplace. The reason for this study was the low performance of Nigerian middle and high school pupils on national and international exams. Its goal is to provide answers to questions such as whether teaching experience and the instruction of persuasive/argumentative essays in middle and high schools are related, or if there is a relationship between the gender of teachers and these subjects. To gather information, a questionnaire was created. Participating in the survey were 100 English language instructors from 15 junior secondary and senior secondary schools in South-South Nigeria. SPSS was used to examine the data. The results showed that there was a positive correlation between the gender of the teacher and the type of persuasive or argumentative essay that was taught, with more male teachers than female teachers. Additionally, it was observed that there was a positive correlation between the gender of the instructor and the sort of writing that was taught—female teachers were found to teach this type of writing more frequently. The study also showed that, with female teachers communicating more than male teachers, there is a favorable correlation between teacher gender and talking with students on drafts prior to final submission. A number of recommendations have been offered in light of these findings to help students write more effectively.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are necessary and may be a prerequisite for success in school and in the world of work. [Gallagher \(2017\)](#) pointed out that students need to write for five reasons.

- i. When students write, they generate deeper thinking in any content.
- ii. Writing helps students become career ready.
- iii. Writing helps students become college ready.
- iv. Writing across the curriculum is now assessed in many state tests. Students need to be lifelong writers.

According to the [U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#) improving writing skills for students helps them succeed in and out of school. The report further added.

Effective writing is a vital component of students' literacy achievement, and writing is a critical communication tool for students to convey thoughts and opinions, describe ideas and events, and analyze information. Indeed, writing is a life-long skill that plays a key role in postsecondary success across academic and vocational disciplines. (p.8).

In order to improve students' writing skills in schools, the report recommended that teachers needed to —explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model- Practice- Reflect Instructional Cycle and also that they needed to use —assessment of student writing to inform instruction and feedback (p.4). [Graham and Hebert \(2010\)](#) indicated the importance of writing and posited that —young people who do not have the ability to transform thoughts, experiences, and ideas into written words are in danger of losing touch with the joy of inquiry, the sense of

intellectual curiosity, and the inestimable satisfaction of acquiring wisdom that are the touchstones of humanity. (p.1). However, for some students, their performance in writing is not very good. The [National Center for Education Statistics \(2011\)](#) reported that —Twenty-four percent of students at both grades 8 and 12 performed at the Proficient level in writing. Fifty-four percent of eighth-graders and 52 percent of twelfth-graders performed at the Basic level. Three percent of eighth- and twelfth-graders performed at the Advanced level. (pp.1-2). [Gallagher \(2017\)](#) observes the lack of rigor in writing expectations for students in middle schools. As a result, Gallagher concluded that many students come to us with weak writing skills with very limited writing experiences in school (pp. 24-25). [Kiuahara et al. \(2009\)](#) agreed that in high schools students suffered from poor writing skills (p.136) and suggested that the process of composing longer texts should become more common activity in high school classrooms. The teacher education programs also need to do a better job preparing teachers who will eventually teach writing in high schools (p.155). [Applebee and Langer \(2011\)](#) indicated a stark situation in schools when they declared that —Given the constraints imposed by high-stakes tests, writing as a way to study, learn, and go beyond—as a way to construct knowledge or generate new networks of understandings is rare. (p.26).

1.1. What is working in Writing?

However, notwithstanding the lack of rigor and the limited number and types of writing that takes place in many classrooms, there are several success stories ([Gallagher, 2017](#)). According to [Langer et al. \(2000\)](#) students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson types. Therefore, providing —overt target instruction and review as models (p.5) is useful and helpful to learners. [Graham and Perin \(2007\)](#) listed and discussed 11 strategies that will improve writing in middle and high schools. A selected list includes the following:

1. Writing Strategies, which involves teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions.
2. Summarization, which involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize texts;
3. Collaborative Writing, which uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions.
4. Prewriting, which engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition.
5. Study of Models, which provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing (pp11-13).

In another study, [Graham and Harris \(2016\)](#) provided several principles that teachers need to implement in their classrooms that will lead to improved writing among students. These include:

- i. Constructing a positive classroom atmosphere where students are encouraged to try hard.
- ii. Making students' writing visible by having them share with others and displaying these on the wall. Setting high but realistic expectations for students' writings. (p362).

1.2. Writing Types in the Secondary School Syllabus in Nigeria

[Table 1](#) provides information on writing requirements in secondary school syllabus as provided by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council.

Table-1. Writing requirements in secondary school syllabus

| Level | Requirements |
|---------------------------|---|
| Junior secondary school 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revisions: Various types of composition writing: narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentation. ● Revision: Letter writing (informal and formal). ● Summary writing. |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Senior secondary 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuous writing-narrative. ● Continuous writing-descriptive. ● Letter writing-informal letter. ● Semi - formal letter. |
| Senior secondary 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expository writing. ● Argumentative writing. ● Letter writing formal letters (a) apology (b) appreciation (c) complaint. ● Writing speeches for specific purposes. ● Technical and specific purposes. ● Creative writing. ● Free writing. |
| Senior secondary 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revising continuous writing. ● Revising letter writing. ● Writing for different audiences. ● Revising report writing. |

Source: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2014).

Table 1 illustrates several writing requirements in the syllabus for junior and senior secondary school students. These range from narrative essays through letter writing to argumentative essays.

1.3. Selected Studies on Writing in Nigeria

Okotie (2010), in a review of literature on teaching writing, points out ineffectiveness of teaching of writing in Nigeria (p.151). He indicated that the most common strategy used is the process approach (p.152), and reasons for students' poor writing skills included poor linguistic background, lack of knowledge about different types of writing, poor teaching methods, lack of a reading culture and poor writing skills (p.153). He recommended that —English Language teachers should be trained specifically in how to teach writing (p.154). Similarly, Amuseghan (2007) points out that most secondary school teachers of English Language Arts are concerned with disseminating facts, like —information and principles of learning in language classrooms rather than teaching language skills or allowing students to do and learn, practice and engage in language activities aimed at acquiring communicative skills or competence (p.324). This does not promise well for teaching writing since writing demands language skill building and reinforcement and constant practice. Alufohai (2016) in her research at the junior secondary school level indicates that students face problems in areas of — content, organization, expression and mechanical accuracy in essay writing; and common sources of these problems manifest in spelling errors, punctuation errors, capitalization errors and inability to differentiate the use of present from past tense (p.65)

The Problem

Table 1 has illustrated several writing demands for students in both junior secondary and senior secondary schools. These demands include the teaching of narrative essays, descriptive writing, letter writing, argumentative essays and speech writing (NERDC, 2014). Most Nigerian students fail to perform very well in the writing section of the English Language Test in national and international examinations. Students at the end of secondary education are required to compete the West African School Certificate Examination and / or the National Examination Council in at least six subject areas including English Language. Both Examinations have a writing section in English Language Paper I. —Gadd and Parr (2017), in an extensive literature review, observed that —ability to write is a concern internationally (p. 1552) and showed that globally there was student underachievement in writing. In the context of Nigeria, Ayodele et al. (2017) observed that —some students in tertiary institutions face challenges in writing essays, articles and letters, which they ought to have significantly mastered at secondary school level. (p. 2). The Chief Examiners Report for the West African School Certificate Examination indicated a continuing poor performance of students in English Language over a three-year period (2006). Similarly, Okotie (2010) indicated that the underachievement was seen in students' poor performance in internally and externally conducted

examinations in English Language (p.151). He suggested that the poor performance was related to students' lack of knowledge of different types of writing (p.154).

Peterson and Kennedy (2006) reported on the types and frequency of comments made by sixth grade teachers, varying on gender basis. They found out that female teachers generally wrote more comments and tended to make more corrections than male teachers when evaluating student's narrative and argumentative essays. Suriyanti and Yaacob (2016) found that many teachers used limited strategies in teaching writing. However, teachers improved their instructional strategies after a writing intervention (p.71). Teachers are very important in the educational process and well-qualified and effective teachers are necessary for student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, there are no reported studies on teacher gender and the teaching of persuasive/ argumentative writing. There are also no reported studies on teacher experience and the teaching of argumentative writing. Given the requirements in the English Language Arts syllabus and the importance of writing for student academic success, the following hypotheses were framed for this study:

Hypothesis 1. $H_{1,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' gender and teaching persuasive/argumentative essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

$H_{1,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' gender and teaching persuasive/argumentative essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

Hypothesis 2. $H_{2,N}$: *There is no relationship between teaching experience and the teaching of persuasive /argumentation essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

$H_{2,A}$: *There is a relationship between teaching experience and teaching of persuasive/argumentation essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

Hypothesis 3. $H_{3,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' gender and the teaching of comparing and contrasting essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

$H_{3,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' gender and teaching of comparing and contrasting essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

Hypothesis 4. $H_{4,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' gender and teaching writing to analyze essays in junior and senior secondary schools.*

$H_{4,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' gender and teaching writing to analyze essays in junior and senior secondary school.*

Hypothesis 5. $H_{5,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' gender and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.* $H_{5,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' gender and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.*

Hypothesis 6. $H_{6,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' experience and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.*

$H_{6,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' experience and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.*

Hypothesis 7. $H_{7,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' teaching experience and student use of software for spell check / check of grammatical errors.*

$H_{7,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' teaching experience and student use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.*

Hypothesis 8. $H_{8,N}$: *There is no relationship between teachers' gender and student use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.*

$H_{8,A}$: *There is a relationship between teachers' gender and student use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.*

2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Several studies carried out in the USA used a questionnaire to gather information on writing (Kiuahara *et al.*

(2009); Applebee and Langer (2009;2011)) This study too used a questionnaire to collect data. A questionnaire, —Writing Instruction Provided by Middle and High School English Language Arts Teachersl was developed by the researcher and field tested in Jos, Nigeria.

It was found to be relevant and valid by three senior secondary school English Language teachers who reviewed the instrument. The questionnaire had 45 items divided into four sections.

Section 1 sought demographic information about the subjects of the study- gender, teaching level and years of teaching experience. Section 2 comprised questions on writing types that teachers had their students to complete during the school year. The questions in section 3 dealt with instructional strategies used by teachers in the teaching of writing while section 4 had questions on teachers' use of technology in teaching writing. The questionnaire was administered upon 110 teachers in South Region of Nigeria. A total of 100 teachers completed the questionnaires.

3. ANALYSIS

SPSS package was used in the analysis of data. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for subjects of the study by gender.

Table-2. Gender distribution.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 58 | 58.0 | 58.0 | 58.0 |
| | Female | 42 | 42.0 | 42.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Data from this study.

Table 2 illustrates that there were 58 male teachers and 42 female teachers. Table 3 shows that a majority of teachers (41) had between 0-3 years teaching experience. Table-3. Teaching experience.

| | | Years | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|--------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 0-3 | 41 | 41.0 | 41.0 | 41.0 | |
| | 4-6 | 28 | 28.0 | 28.0 | 69.0 | |
| | 7-10 | 11 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 80.0 | |
| | 11-15 | 13 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 93.0 | |
| | 16 and above | 7 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 100.0 | |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | |

Source: Data from this study.

3.1. Test of Hypothesis 1

H_{1N} : There is no relationship between teachers' gender and teaching persuasive/argumentative essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

H_{1A} : There is a relationship between teachers' gender and teaching persuasive/argumentative essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

Table-4. Relationship between teacher gender and teaching persuasive/argumentative essays.

| | | Gender | Persuasive/ Argumentative essays |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Gender | Correlation coefficient | .949 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | | N | 100 |
| | Persuasive/Argumentative essays | Correlation coefficient | .949 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | | N | 100 |

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teacher's gender and teaching of persuasive/ argumentative essay was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as shown in Table 4. There is a significant positive correlation between the

variables ($r = 0.949$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.949$ between gender and persuasive/argumentative essay is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_1) which states that there is a relationship between teachers' gender (Male) and teaching persuasive/argumentative essays in junior and senior secondary schools. However, male teachers relate more in this context than their female counterparts in terms of teaching persuasive/argumentative essay in junior and senior secondary schools.

3.2. Test of Hypothesis 2

$H_{2,N}$: There is no relationship between teaching experience and the teaching of persuasive /argumentation essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

$H_{2,A}$: There is a relationship between teaching experience and teaching of persuasive/argumentation essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

Table-5. Relationship between teacher experience and teaching persuasive/ argumentative essays.

| | | | Teaching experience | Persuasive/ Argumentative essays |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Teaching experience | Correlation coefficient | 1.000 | .858** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |
| | Persuasive/Argumentative essays | Correlation coefficient | .858** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teaching experience and teaching persuasive/argumentative essay was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as shown in Table 5. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .858$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.858$ between teaching experience and persuasive/argumentative essay is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_2) which states that there is a relationship between teaching experience and teaching persuasive/argumentation essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

3.3. Test of Hypothesis 3

$H_{3,N}$: There is no relationship between teacher's gender and the teaching of comparing and contrasting essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

$H_{3,A}$: There is a relationship between teachers' gender and teaching of comparing and contrasting essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

Table-6. Relationship between gender and the teaching of comparing and contrasting essays.

| | | | Gender | Comparing and contrasting |
|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Gender | Correlation coefficient | 1.000 | .710** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |
| | Comparing and contrasting | Correlation coefficient | .710** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teacher's gender and teaching comparing and contrasting essays was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as seen in Table 6. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .710$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.710$ between teacher's gender and comparing and contrasting is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_3) which states that there is a relationship between teacher's gender (female) and teaching of comparing and contrasting essays in middle and high schools. More female teachers taught comparing and contrasting essays than male teachers in middle and high schools.

3.4. Test of Hypothesis 4

$H_{4,N}$: There is no relationship between teachers' gender and teaching writing to analyze essays in junior and senior secondary schools.

$H_{4,A}$: There is a relationship between teachers' gender and teaching writing to analyze essays in junior and senior secondary school.

Table-7. Relationship between teacher gender and the teaching of writing to analyze essays.

| | | Gender | Writing to analyze |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Gender | Correlation coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | N | 100 |
| | Writing to analyze | Correlation coefficient | .811** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | | N | 100 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teacher's gender and teaching students writing to analyze essay was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as seen in Table 7. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .811$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.811$ between teacher's gender and writing to analyze is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_4) which reveals that there is a relationship between teacher's gender (female) and teaching writing to writing to analyze essays in junior and senior secondary school.

3.5. Test of Hypothesis 5

$H_{5,N}$: There is no relationship between teachers' gender and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.

$H_{5,A}$: There is a relationship between teachers' gender and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.

Table-8. Relationship between teacher's gender and communicating with students on drafts.

| | | Gender | Communicating |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Spearman's rho | Gender | Correlation coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | N | 100 |
| | Communicating | Correlation coefficient | .929** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | | N | 100 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teacher's gender and communicating with students on drafts of their paper before final submission was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as shown in Table 8. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .929$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.929$ between teacher's gender and communicating with students is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_5) which shows that there is a relationship between teacher's gender (Female) and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before final submission.

3.6. Test of Hypothesis 6

$H_{6,N}$: There is no relationship between teachers' experience and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission.

$H_{6,A}$: There is a relationship between teachers' experience and communicating with students on the draft of their

Table-9. Relationship between teaching experience and communicating with students on drafts of paper before final submission.

| | | Teaching experience | Communicating |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Spearman's rho | Teaching experience | Correlation coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | N | 100 |
| | Communicating | Correlation coefficient | .832** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | | N | 100 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teaching experience and communicating with students was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as seen in Table 9. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .832$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.832$ between teaching experience and communicating with students is significant at 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_6) which reveals that there is a relationship between teachers experience and communicating with students on the draft of their paper before submission. *Test of Hypothesis 7*

$H_{7.N}$: There is no relationship between teachers' teaching experience and student use of software for spell check / check of grammatical errors.

$H_{7.A}$: There is a relationship between teachers' teaching experience and student use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.

Table-10. Relationship between teachers teaching experience and students use of spellcheck.

| | | Teaching experience | Spellcheck/ CHEC of grammatical errors |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Spearman's rho | Teaching Experience | Correlation coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | N | 100 |
| | Spellcheck/ CHEC of grammatical errors | Correlation coefficient | .810** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | | N | 100 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 10, the relationship between teachers teaching experience and student's use of software for spellcheck / check of grammatical errors was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .810$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.810$ between teaching experience and student's use of software/ for spell check/ check of grammatical errors is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_7) which shows there is a relationship between teaching experience and student's use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.

3.7. Test of Hypothesis 8

$H_{8.N}$: There is no relationship between teachers' gender and student use of software for spell check / grammatical errors. $H_{8.A}$: There is a relationship between teachers' gender and student use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.

Table-11. Relationship between teacher gender and student's use of software for spell check/ check of grammar.

| | | Gender | Spellcheck/ CHEC of grammatical errors |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Spearman's rho | Gender | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | N | 100 |
| | Spellcheck/ CHEC of grammatical errors | Correlation Coefficient | .693** |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|------|-----|
| | grammatical errors | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between teacher's gender and student's use of software for spellcheck / grammatical errors was investigated using spearman correlation coefficient as shown in Table 11. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables ($R = .693$, $n = 100$, p value 0.000). The correlation ($R = 0.693$ between teacher's gender and student's use of software for spellcheck / grammatical is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_a) which shows that there is a relationship between teacher's gender (Male) and student's use of software for spell check / grammatical errors.

4. SUMAMRY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study on the current sample of this research showed the following:

1. There was a positive relationship between teacher gender and the teaching of persuasive/argumentative essays, with more male teachers teaching argumentative essays than female teachers. There was a positive relationship between teacher gender and the teaching of comparing and contrasting type writing with female teachers teaching more of this type of writing.
2. There was a positive relationship between teacher gender and communicating with students on drafts before final submission with female teachers communicating more than male teachers do.
3. More female teachers taught writing to analyze type essays.
4. There was a positive relationship between teachers' gender and student's use of software for spell check/ check for grammar with male teachers encouraging more use.
5. There was a positive relationship between teacher experience and communicating with students on drafts of their paper before submission.
6. There was a positive relationship between teaching experience and student's use of software for spell check/ check for grammar.
7. There was a positive relationship between teaching experience and the teaching of argumentative / persuasive essays.

4.1. Argumentation

According to Dickson (2004) argumentative essay is one of the most important areas of writing; its teaching —has a critical place in our classrooms and that the specific teaching of a variety of heuristics can contribute significantly to students' ability to write effective essays. (p. 34). In the same vein, Newell *et al.* (2011) opined that —the ability to identify the underlying argument, and its claims, warrants, and evidence, in reading and the ability to compose a high-quality argument, and its claims, warrants, and evidence, in writing are critical skills for academic success (p. 274). According to Yeh (1998) critical thinking is often linked with argumentation and the writing of argumentative essays and students ability to write effective argumentative essays which influences grades and academic success. (p.49). Yeh (1998) recommended that teachers need to spend time teaching students explicit approaches that would enable effective writing by students of argumentative essays (pp.77-87).

These studies are echoed in the current study which found that more male teachers taught argumentative essays than female teachers. This study also showed that more experienced teachers taught argumentative essays than less experienced teachers. Given the importance of argumentation in building critical thinking and overall school success, all teachers should be encouraged to spend more time teaching strategies for enabling students write effective persuasive/argumentative essays.

4.2. Communicating with Students on Drafts

If writing is viewed as a process approach, there is supposed to be more communication between teacher and

students throughout the process. One finding in this study revealed that there was a positive relationship between teacher gender and communicating with students on drafts before final submission with female teachers communicating more than male teacher. All teachers need to communicate more with students during the writing process- whether before writing, during writing or post writing/publication phase. This will allow the students to be well versed on what is required, equip them with skills on how and what to write, allow for collaboration and the production of better essays with fewer grammatical, content and organizational errors.

4.3. Use of Technology for Teaching Writing

According to Yancey (2004) —Helping writers develop fluency and competence in a variety of technologies is a key part of teaching writing in this century! (p.38). Goldberg *et al.* (2003) in a meta-analysis of research on writing reported that —instructional uses of computers for writing are having a positive impact on student writing. This positive impact was found in each independent set of meta-analyses; for quantity of writing as well as quality of writing! (p.19). The current study also found similar results that there was a positive relationship between teachers gender and student's use of software for spell check/ check for grammar with male teachers encouraging more use of it. All teachers should be encouraged to use technology for all aspects of writing especially in checking for spelling errors and grammar. Since English is a second language in Nigeria, this would be especially useful and helpful in the production of essays with fewer spelling and grammatical errors.

5. CONCLUSION

When students in junior and senior secondary school write more frequently and write various essay types with teacher guidance, they become more proficient writers. They also become more prepared for college and the world of work. All teachers of English Language Arts should spend time teaching all essay types and provide them with skills to become more proficient writers- claim counterclaim, evidences to support the thesis and the proper citation. All teachers should be encouraged to teach all types of writing at the junior secondary and senior secondary school levels. Teachers, through professional development workshops and during their pre-service training, should be equipped with strategies to make the teaching of writing interesting and relevant to students. This will include the use of technology and other resources. Finally, the teaching of writing cannot be a one shot activity. Rather it should be continuous, tied to the other content areas especially reading social studies and science. When these happen, students will write better and their performance all types of examinations will improve.

Further research should be carried out in the following areas:

- i. Level of preparation that fresh teachers (teachers with less than five years' experience) have during pre-service preparation in the university in order to teach writing.
- ii. Amount of teachers' self-efficacy to determine the extent to which the in-service English Language Arts teachers believe they can teach all types of writing effectively to junior and senior secondary school students.
- iii. Instructional strategies that teachers use most often to teach different types of essays.

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