



Influence of Ethics and Training on Students' Academic Achievement in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Phalga, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Influence of Ethics and Training on Students' Academic Achievement in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Phalga, Rivers State. A descriptive survey design was adopted; two research questions and two hypotheses were postulated. The population consisted of 831 (14 principals and 817 teachers) while the sample size consisted of 208 (14 principals and 194 teachers), balloting 25% of the population size. The census and stratified sampling technique was used. A researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled "Ethical Training - Student Academic Achievement Questionnaire (ET-SAPQ)" was also used for data collection. A validated instrument of 4-point rating scales was adopted. A test-retest method of reliability was adopted in this study. The pre-test and post-test scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable enough to carry out the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State agreed that ethics and continues training influence students' academic achievement to a "High Extent". Based on the findings, it recommended that: there should be focus on ethics as the primary reason for the existence of the school by teachers that will greatly give the staff and students a sense of belonging, motivate them and spur them to perform as expected; there should be a high level of training of training and continuous improvement of personnel, facilities, training methods etc. on students' academic performance and management must be fully committed to actualize it by constantly emphasizing the well defined academic goals and objectives of the school.

Keywords: Influence, Ethics, Training, Academic Achievement

INTRODUCTION

The quest for quality education which will equip the recipients adequately for effective living and for greater contributions to the growth and development of the society is the reason for the clamour of ethics and training in the administration of secondary schools. But quality however cannot be realized in a situation where the leadership and other members of staff (particularly teachers) in the secondary schools are not committed to its achievement (Akinsolu, 2010). The situation gets more compounded if the principals are not competent enough to occupy the position of visionary leadership. On the other hand, where the school heads are qualified and committed but the proprietors (owners) or the government fails to provide the necessary conducive learning environment, it will still be difficult for the management to be ethical in training in terms of the students' outputs in internal and external examinations.

In view of Selemani-Neke (2013), quality of secondary school graduates and the literacy rate represent the most revealing indicators for a country's educational status. Despite the rising number of secondary schools, the continued sensitization of the general public on the importance of investing in education, schools are still marked with shortcomings in the quality of learning which has drastically been affecting the students' academic achievement both at internal and external examinations. These are greatly associated with continued reliance on the old traditional ways of managing things and the absence of the latest quality management styles or strategies. In order to combat these problems,

educational stakeholders have to strive to ensure that all systems and practices are aimed at ensuring in producing secondary schools products which will be suitable for the purposive, innovative, efficient and overall benefit to the society. Therefore, the focus now has to be on the collective responsibility of the whole school system which derives from the study context of ethics and training on students.

Amadi (2013) argued that secondary schools were established to improve quality, leadership, teachers, and response to goals, continuous school performance and national development, hence schools need to adapt to evolving changes because change is inevitable in the new global society. National development is a process that can be enhanced through quality management of education (Ndoye, 2002), and quality education is very vital in every human existence and societal development. Students' ethical training facilitates the rate of development and increases the standard of living, paving way for national growth. Furthermore, secondary school education can only lead to national growth and development with the recognition of the teachers, the school management or administrators and the roles they play in the teaching-learning process. The quality of any educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers as no educational system can qualitatively be higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers. That is why Ukeje (2006) supported this idea when he stated that education unlocks the door to modernization and it is the teacher who holds the key to that door.

Quality could also be used to describe something excellent, good or something that meets or exceeds people's expectations. Ethical training is goodness, excellence, etc. in its totality. It is a state of near perfection. It is a collaborative affair in the secondary schools concerned with making sure that all activities and functions that will lead to the attainment of quality education as stipulated in the FRN (2014) are maintained. Ethical training on the part of the tutors and students can be achieved, in Rivers State public secondary schools, if quality is designed and packaged into the secondary education services through proper selection and application of planning, implementation and administration of secondary schools.

Ethics

Ethics require that institutions construct their codes of ethics to which all personnel must adhere (Uche, 2009). Ethics in education encompasses the domain of behaviour that is exhibited by schools to distinguish between right and wrong. Schools must therefore define their work ethics for the realization of objectives of education. Education is for life and not merely for living; it is not mere accumulation of information but values in action. This attitudinal orientation and value inputs would go a long way in academic performance of students with openness to new idea, and readiness to learn from others.

Integrity encompasses morals, fairness, honesty and sincerity. The vision and mission of an organization often determine the differential values within individual organizations. Some of these differential values are: achievement, competence, knowledge, creativity, innovation, agility, leading by example, autonomy, teamwork, community, valuing diversity, encouraging others. Organizations (schools) need to define their values operationally through their philosophy and mission; likewise they must define their ethical practices in writing and in verbal communication (Selemani-Neke, 2013). It must be noted that trust is a by-product of integrity and ethical conduct, without which, the framework of ethics and training may not be realized.

Trust fosters full involvement of all members of an organization. It secures empowerment that encourages pride of ownership and commitment. Akinsolu (2010) said when staffs are trusted to make decisions; they start to take pride in the organization for which they work. It provides an environment in which teachers and students feel valued and respected and this enhances productivity of the secondary school system. This is true with education as trust of teachers by the administrators fosters commitment and improved performance even to the students.

The emphasis on ethics and implementation is the hallmark of students' academic performance in public secondary schools. When the school has ethical codes of conduct, the students are motivated to a very large extent to achieve high academic results. The ethical principle emphasizes that everything done for the student must leave his academic needs satisfied before quality can be said to have been actualized (Lawler, 2000). As teachers and management discard the 'take it or leave it' attitude; the students' gain a sense of belonging, and strive to meet the objectives of the school.

Training (Continuous Improvement)

To achieve excellence, to remain competitive, and to manage the dynamics of the change, it is essential to improve continuously through training (PHCC Educational Foundation, 1996). Training strives for continuously improving the quality of products or services in response to continuous feedback. Continuous improvement is indeed equally applicable to each and every field including higher education; continuously better teaching, better training, better learning, better methods of teaching, improved curricula, better teaching learning environment, producing better citizens, better intellectual, social and professional development and many more. Formative and continuous assessment can provide feedback for continuous improvement in secondary schools to higher education (Reid and Sanders, 2007).

Continuous improvement refers to the propensity of institutions to pursue incremental and innovative improvements of its processes, products and services. Sherr and Teeter (1991) agreed that academic achievement has the goal of eliminating scrap, rework and unnecessary complexities. This goal is as a result of the continuous improvement in training the tenet of both teachers and students.

Continuous improvement in training is the building block that establishes the school in a competitive advantageous position, this begins with a commitment to zero defect. This is a philosophy of always aiming higher and finding a better path to achieve results.

According to Ahmed, Loh and Zairi (1999), continuous improvement in training is best described as a pervasive attitude which allows the school administrators and students see beyond the present and create the future. This, according to Dean and Bowen (1994) it means a commitment to constant examination of technical and administrative processes in search of better methods. This principle views organizations as interlinked processes, and that by improving these processes, such institutions will continue to meet the increasingly stringent expectations of their students. Oakland (1995) confirmed this view by positing that to maintain interest in quality, managers (including educational administrators) who are dedicated to the pursuit of never ending improvement in meeting external and internal students' needs must be developed, as this is the only way by which institutions will survive. Oakland (1995) posited further that the three basic principles of never ending improvement training are, focusing on the students, understanding the teaching process and all teachers committed to quality.

Continuous training emphasizes enhanced learning and experimentation; this enables secondary schools to continue to develop new skills and new capabilities. Continuous training therefore ensures that schools learn from results, improves operations and outputs from what it learns and standardizes what it does well in a documented quality management system which must be done in a planned, systematic and conscientious manner to create an atmosphere that saturates the entire school system. This approach to secondary school practice encourages incremental growth in the institution as innovations are bound to spring up all the time.

Bench-marking and Re-engineering are two major features of a continuously improving work organization:

- (a) **Bench-marking:** This is an acceptable standard within an industry against which organizations measure their own practices. Whiteman (2002) was of the view that the essence of bench-marking is the continuous process of comparing a company's strategy, products and processes with those of world leaders and best-in-class institutions in order to learn how they achieve excellence, and then setting out to match and even surpass them. Bench-marking has the benefits of cultural change, performance improvement and basis for human resource training, the aim is primarily to create and sustain excellence. It enables institutions not to be overtaken by advances and changes, and helps them actualize their plans. This enhances improvements on a continuous basis in teaching and learning.
- (b) **Re-engineering:** This is simply the efforts to strive for dramatic levels of improvement. Ross cited in Whiteman (2002) defined re-engineering as the fundamental re-thinking and radical design processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, services and speed. Moosa (2006) added that it is concerned with major improvements and as such examines the strategy used by the school to achieve its objectives, the process used to make products and services, the technology used in the school business and the teachers. This principle does not in any way try to revamp an existing process, but to enhance the delivery of the process and its products (students) without compromising its quality by improving the use of materials, labour and equipment.

Continuously training improves the academic programmes of the school, improving school facilities to enhance quality service, adopting measures to accommodate changes in training, and taking steps to attitude; the students' gain a sense of belonging, and strive to meet the objectives of the school. In 2000, Uwakwu, Oke and Aire viewed continuous training also improves teacher's performance by training and re-training through seminars, workshops, presentation of academic papers etc., has a positive impact on the level of students' academic performance.

Academic Achievement

Not many definitions abound on the meaning of academic achievement. A notable definition among the few existing ones is that given by Kinanee (2001). Drawing from the work of Amadi and Anaemoetu (2013), they defined academic achievement as the display of knowledge, skill, or accomplishment in an area of endeavour. It is the degree of success or accomplishment in a given area of training or study. Our operational definition given earlier indicates that academic achievement refers to inherent potentials within the individual which is displayed as knowledge attained or skills developed. According to Adediwura and Tayo (2007), Academic Achievement could be defined as the display of knowledge attained or skills developed in subjects designated by test and examination scores or marks assigned by the subjects' teachers. It is an expression of the student's scholastic standing the inherent potentials which in most cases combine with other sociological factors. Academic achievement in schools is usually measured by behaviour, which measures the extent of learning that has taken place within a given period of training.

Statement of the Problem

For decades now, the quality of students' achievement and performance in the public secondary schools in Rivers State and Nigeria has generated a lot of controversies among stakeholders in the education sector. There are complaints on both the quality of inputs and outputs of the public secondary school system. Hence, Okoro (2005) observes that most public secondary schools suffer lack of ethical personnel with academic and professional training and these falls short of what is required to provide quality education public secondary schools on students. Many blame the progressive deterioration of the public schools both in conduct and in academics on the quality of school administrators and management. And these have resulted in the poor performance of students in senior school certificate (SSCE, GCE and NECO) examinations and other external examinations giving odd route to unethical act of malpractices. According to Uwakwe et al (2000), the statistics (on state basis) of the candidates with a minimum five credits including English and Mathematics in the May/June WASSCE from 2006-2008 dwindled from 30.38% in 2006 to 25.28% in 2008, this poor performance gives rise to this study.

In spite of the importance of the good quality secondary education, much attention has not been paid to the administrators, heads, principals and the teachers in the service delivery of teaching-learning to the students and this has negatively affected our school outputs. According to Amadi (2013) and Ow'honda (2018), it is a problem to get quality of trained ethical teachers in the school organisation and how to get enough of qualified and experienced teachers for the fast growing system that have become very imperative in this work.

It is in the bid to check the poor performance of students (as a result of unethical and untrained teachers) in Senior School Certificate Examinations that this research seeks to determine the influence of ethics and training on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State with a view to enabling our school system look up for the better.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of ethics and training on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the extent ethics influences academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent training influences academic achievement of students' in public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent do ethics influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State?

2. To what extent does training influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of ethics focus on the academic achievement of students.
2. Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of training on academic achievement of students.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 831 (14 Principals and 817 teachers) in public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State. Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2019). The sample size for the study consisted of 208 (14 Principals and 194 teachers), balloting 25% of the sample size. The stratified sampling technique was used. A researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled “Ethical Training - Student Academic Achievement Questionnaire (ET-SAPQ)” was used for data collection. A validated instrument of 4-point rating scales was adopted.

A test-retest method of reliability was adopted in this study. The pre-test and post-test scores were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable enough to carry out the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1: *To what extent do ethics influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State?*

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of data on the influence of ethics on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State (N = 208).

S/No.	Statement	Principals [n ₁ = 14]		Decision	Teachers [n ₂ = 194]		Decision
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁		\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	
1	Integrity and good morals are very much upheld in the management of the school to achieve sound academic performance.	3.37	0.85	HE	3.1 5	0.69	High Extent
2	Management of the school ensures that staff are ethically minded in their daily work to improve quality of academic performance of students.	3.33	0.65	HE	3.2 6	0.63	High Extent
3	Entrenchment of teachers’ codes of behaviour in the school system improves students’ academic performance	3.18	0.80	HE	3.0 5	0.77	High Extent
4	Trust fosters full involvement of all the members of staff in the school system for the achievement of school goals and objectives.	3.29	1.10	HE	3.3 9	0.72	High Extent
Total		3.29	0.85	HE	3.2 1	0.70	High Extent

Table 1 shows that principals have a total mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.85, while teachers have total mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.70 on their rating of the extent of influence of ethics on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State. Both the Principals and teachers have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 – 3.5 implying high extent influence of ethics on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Thus, ethics influence to a high extent, the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does training influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State?*

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of data on the influence of training on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State (N=208)

S/No.	Statement	Principals [n ₁ = 14]		Decision	Teachers [n ₂ = 194]		Decision
		\bar{X}_1	SD		\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	
5	Training/continuous improvement of staff and students enhances the achievement of school goals and improved students' performance.	3.38	0.74	HE	3.30	0.65	High Extent
6	School facilities are improved on a continuous basis to enhance school's service quality and students' academic performance.	3.27	0.81	HE	3.19	0.71	High Extent
7	There is generally significant improvement in the training offered in the school for better academic achievement.	3.32	0.89	HE	3.23	0.73	High Extent
8	Appropriate and adequate use of continuous assessment provides needed feedback to students, teachers, and management and enhances students' academic performance.	3.25	0.85	HE	3.16	0.64	High Extent
Total		3.31	0.82	HE	3.22	0.68	High Extent

In Table 2, principals and teachers have respectively total means of 3.31 and 3.22, and standard deviations of 0.82 and 0.68 on their rating of the extent of influence of training on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State. Both the principals and teachers have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 – 3.5 implying high extent influence of training on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State. This implies that training influences the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent.

Hypothesis 1: Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of ethics on the academic achievement of students.

Table 3: Z-test analysis of the influence of ethics on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	S	S ²	Z _{cal}	α	Z _{crit}	Decision
Principals	14	3.29	0.85	0.72	1.19	0.05	1.96	Retain H ₀ : Z _{cal} < Z _{crit}
Teachers	194	3.21	0.70	0.49				

Table 3 shows that 14 principals have a mean rating of 3.29, standard deviation of 0.85, and variance of 0.72 on the influence of ethics on academic achievement of students. Further, it shows that 194 teachers have a mean rating of 3.21, standard deviation of 0.70, and variance of 0.49 on the influence of ethics on academic achievement of students. The calculated z-value is 1.19, chosen alpha is 0.05 for a two-tailed test, and the critical z-value is 1.96. Since the calculated z-value (1.19) is less than the critical z-value (1.96), the hypothesis of “no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the influence of ethics on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State” is not rejected. In other words, principals and teachers of

public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State agrees that ethics influence students' academic achievement to a "High Extent".

Hypothesis 2: Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of training on academic achievement of students.

Table 4 Z-test analysis of the influence of training on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	s	s ²	Z _{cal}	α	Z _{crit}	Decision
Principals	14	3.31	0.82	0.67	1.39	0.05	1.96	Retain H ₀ : z _{cal} < z _{crit}
Teachers	194	3.22	0.68	0.46				

Table 4 presents that 14 principals and 194 teachers respectively have mean rating of 3.31 and 3.22; standard deviations of 0.82 and 0.68; and variances of 0.67 and 0.46 on the influence of training on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State. The calculated z-value is 1.39, chosen alpha is 0.05 for a two-tailed test, and the critical z-value is 1.96. Since the calculated z-value (1.39) is less than the critical z-value (1.96), the hypothesis of "no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the influence of training on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State" is retained. Thus, principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in a consensus that training influences students' academic achievement to a "High Extent".

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This result agrees with that by Amadi (2013) that achieving top quality performance in all areas of an organization (including educational institution) is very important. Therefore organizations, including public secondary schools, need to define their values (ethics) operationally through their philosophy and mission; likewise they must define their ethical practices in writing and in verbal communication (Owhonda, 2018). To this end, it must be noted that trust is a by-product of integrity and ethical conduct without which the framework of ethics in training may not be realized.

The study further found that principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Phalga, Rivers State agree that training influence students' academic achievement to a high extent. This result also agrees with that by Reid and Sanders (2007) who asserted that teachers' training is indeed equally applicable to each and every field (social and professional development). To achieve excellence, to remain competitive, and to manage the dynamics of change, it is essential to improve continuously through training (PHCC Educational Foundation, 1996). Training strives for continuously improving the quality of products or services in response to continuous feedback. Continuous training enhances the quality of public educational institutions, since according to Oakland (1995), continuous improvement and training ensure that schools learn from result, improves operations and outputs. Thus training (continuous improvement) enhances students' academic achievement in public educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of ethics and training on students' academic achievement. The main hypothesis of the study was that ethics and training have a positive influence on students' academic achievement. The findings show that all elements of ethics and training contribute to enhanced academic achievement of students. Ethics and training practice that seems to play a major role in enhancing students' academic achievement. Ethics and training recognize that education system has little value if contents are not student- centred. Therefore, quality education system must be able to develop and attend to the needs of students and the teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made as follows;

- (1) There should be focus on ethics as the primary reason for the existence of the school by teachers that will greatly give the staff and students a sense of belonging, motivate them and spur them to perform as expected.
- (2) There should be a high level of training of training and continuous improvement of personnel, facilities, training methods etc. on students' academic performance. There is

- always a better way of undertaking academic tasks to enhance better productivity and public secondary institutions that seek out these better ways achieve better results.
- (3) Furthermore, high academic performance by students does not just happen. Management must be fully committed to actualize it by constantly emphasizing the well defined academic goals and objectives of the school.
 - (4) Teachers/staff motivation should be made plays vital role to focus on student's educational need. Motivated teachers can perform better than non-motivated ones. Students learning capability often vary from one student to another. As part of the continuous improvement, students' performance must be consistently measured and satisfied. Therefore, education institutions should establish a reliable and fast customer feedback system.

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